An Unfinished Mindful Body Meets Live Choreographies of Solo Dance

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Abstract

*An Unfinished Mindful Body Meets Live Choreographies of Solo Dance* is the dissertational outcome from my artistic research during 2012-2016. Live performances staged during August 2015 comprise the creative works component of my research outcomes and together with this dissertation represent my thesis.

My practice-led research is focused on implicating my self in research processes. This I have achieved with a focus which is explored in this dissertation via the terms *mindful body, unfinished body,* and *somatic attentiveness.* My research explores the notion that the body can be considered as unfinished, unresolved. My research shows that conceptualising the body as unfinished fosters a nexus where organically and productively dance is linked with bodily specificity.

Due to my training as a clown, and my aesthetic and conceptual interests including those derived from the field of Somatics, I have chosen when possible to avoid describing myself as a dancer, and avoid describing my work with performance, as improvisation. This dissertation offers productive complications of these terms.

The consistent application of somatic attentiveness throughout my praxis has provided a sense of continuity between experiences of movement associated with personal, political, cultural, social, and academic actions. A theme returned to repeatedly throughout my thesis is that the personal, the social, the cultural, the political, and the academic are enmeshed. No one precedes the other.

Another important set of considerations explored by this dissertation are inquiries into how being orientated by somatic attentiveness, links to values such as human development, and social responsibility. These explorations consider the socio-political agency of my work with live performance. This dissertation shows how installing my praxis into my everyday life combined concepts and practices from my history with Buddhist and somatic approaches. It paved the way for my current realisation which is that focusing on my specificity, including my locatedness, determines my response-ability, and becomes the first position from whence enactments relative to my self, to others, and to my praxis and to performance making, might reasonably be undertaken.

Phenomenology as a philosophical approach positions lived experience, and the body, centrally. My research has been significantly supported and furthered through exposure to materials from this field. The work of philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, Filipa Rothfield, Elizabeth Behnke and others in response to Husserlian Phenomenology has informed my work. Perspectives which have guided my inquiries have also come from autoethnography, dance theory and performance theory, through the work of theorists and philosophers including Carolyn Ellis, Bojana Cvejić, Danielle Goldman, Susan Leigh Foster and Ann Cooper Albright.
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Declaration

This dissertation entitled: *An Unfinished Mindful Body Meets Live Choreographies of Solo Dance*,
comprises only my original work towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other materials used.

This dissertation is less than 50,000 words in length, not including its bibliography and appendices.

Signed ____________________________________________
For Henry and Wilbur
Introduction

This dissertation represents written outcomes from my artistic research undertaken between October 2012 and August 2016. In August 2015 I presented *Finding Anchors and the Abyss*, a season of three live performances, which had as their central formalistic element my live solo performances of choreographies of non pre set movement. Together the dissertation and the live performances comprise my thesis. Readers are invited to view a video of the creative works available from https://vimeo.com/155204224

I perform live choreographies of solo dance. My practice-led research is focused on implicating my self in the staging of processes as performances. This is done via a mode of experiencing self, termed mindful body. Another term of importance is unfinished body. The usefulness of bringing these two terms together is explored throughout the dissertation. Perspectives from Phenomenology, autoethnography, dance theory and performance theory guide my inquiries.

My praxis represents a set of ambitions for dance performance making practices. My ambitions for these performances included foregrounding attentional practices, and mind body holism in performance. My focus on being a mindful body is derived from paying attention to my body, avoiding idealising my body and from accepting limitation. Attentional practices, framed and guided by such conceptual foci, combined with my kinaesthetic sensibilities to shape a particular performance poetics. These ambitions for my dance performances are fully described, explored, and contextualised in the dissertation that follows. During this process, links to other practices and conceptualisations are identified, discussed and explored. My experience is specific, it is “partial” and as Rothfield notes, it is dependent “upon its specific context of movement practice and corporeal engagement” for its meanings (Rothfield 2010, 310). As a result, space in this dissertation has been given to introducing the specifics, and considering the potentials, of the practice and corporeal engagement contexts particular to me, that inscribe my body, and my experience. Notwithstanding this specificity, indeed because of it, I have produced knowledge.

It was a conscious decision not to, at any stage, explore a relationship between my research and overarching “what” and “why” questions. To have overlaid these at any stage would have incurred distortions, oversimplifications, and would have misrepresented the nature, and the eventual scope of the research. My dissertation does identify clearly the central concerns of my praxis, and it maps evolutions and notes certain resolutions pertinent to these central concerns. All of this is described in detail. Noted and emphasised is that research questions did over time emerge and change. Noted also, is that the guiding aim of my research was that it be led by my artistic practice. The results of my research, my thesis, inclusive of live performance works, has been derived in first instances from artistic practices. The assumption that, for legitimacy or perhaps ease of evaluation, artistic practices in research contexts must combine to conform to research templates borrowed from other disciplines, risks obscuring the recognition that nuanced approaches proffered by rigorously pursued artistic research fostered in its own element is, rather than being in any way deficient, likely to be experienced as innovative and potent.

Chapter One features a clarification of terminology and my research methodologies. I provide clarifications of the following terms: mindful body, unfinished body, praxis, kinaesthesia, and somatic attentiveness. It also contains my considerations of how my specific understandings and approaches complicate terms such as dancer, and improvisation. I note also my use of the term
limitation as a helpful focus for my understandings on numerous fronts. My use of specific concepts and theoretical works from philosophers working in the field of Phenomenology is introduced. My use of dancing and writing informed by research approaches, particularly that of autoethnography, is also outlined.

In Chapter Two, attention to my everyday being as a mindful body in turn considered as dance and as praxis, is described and explored. Engaging my lived, everyday experience, continually as praxis, has significantly furthered and deepened my inquiries. I provide numerous examples of my own work in this context, and that of others. I also locate my own inquiries in theoretical and historical contexts.

In Chapter Three I attribute for further informing causes leading to and supporting my evolving of performance making practices based on a phenomenological level of experiencing. I am describing this approach as somatic attentiveness. While not purely based on practices and understandings from the field of Somatics, an exploration of the relationships between my praxis and this field is necessary. The relationship between my praxis and various attentional practices, including those related to Zen Buddhism, and additional understandings related to mind body holism are all developed in this chapter.

Chapter Four represents my attempts to create a sense of my own felt alignments between what happens in somatic attentiveness and how I attend to moving and composing for my performance works, both in process and in performance. Other representations of knowing and doing from practices of theorists and of other live performance practitioners are referenced. I acknowledge that contributions via this dissertational mode add to what was already offered to these topics via performance modes, found in my examinable live performance works. With this combination of modes I aim to provide both a sense of what techniques and influences inform my live performances and experiences of how these factors coalesce in the live instance.

For this PhD research period I have been concerned with solo performances, in which my own body is the centre for attention based practices, that lead to processes for live performance events. The event itself and the performance making practices that lead up to it are both characterised by being understood as processes. This has created research interest into questions surrounding the impact of this work on others. These questions are dealt with specifically in Chapter Five: Praxis and Interhuman Relationality. In this chapter and in the Notes in Conclusion which follows, I describe and discuss praxis responses to questions and issues surrounding notions of inter-human relationship. I include examples from my examinable performance works *Finding Anchors and the Abyss*.

As a result of this writing, and praxis processes more broadly, responding to limitation as a necessity has been recognised as contributing a core influence over my praxis. In combination with that recognition is the recognition, also attained via my praxis, that my self can be most tellingly described using the term mindful body. These recognitions in combination have led to my use of the term *unfinished body*.

From attempting to adequately account for my experiences of my praxis, I have arrived at the following overarching description. Physically/spatially, and historically/temporally, my limited
but unfinished mindful body can be described as an array of processes occurring within and upon my body, which involve movements between resolutions, and dissolutions. As long as I am alive, this does not end. My human body is both limited and unfinished. Inherently limited spatially and temporally due to its material dimension, it is also experienced as constant evolution, and change. In a final section entitled Notes in Conclusion, I outline the ways in which I experience, within my praxis, my self as a mindful body that is unfinished, unresolved, unmade. I will also outline how I consider the same mindful body as located, resolved, closed and limited. To close I will describe understandings that from within my praxis carry it forward.
Chapter One
Research Methods and Terminology

My research is led by my performance making practices for my live solo dance performances. These performances are centrally concerned with non pre set choreographies of movement, and my relationship to my own body. The following paragraphs provide a sense of my research in its methods, and in the specific meanings attributed to terms. The overarching term that incorporates all of these understandings, and indeed focuses them, is unfinished body, which also receives clarification.

Praxis and a Mindful Body

My research engagements are considered as necessarily corporeal, whether they are taking place in live performance, in performance making, in writing or in reading. “[T]he body cannot be taken for granted” writes dance theorist Susan Leigh Foster (2010, 291). Foster attends to the process of writing, from a corporeal perspective:

"Sitting in this chair; squirming away from the glitches, aches, low-grade tensions reverberating in neck and hip, staring unfocused [...] shifting, stretching, settling, turning - I am a body writing."

She recalls that before relatively recent developments in philosophy and neuroscience, the default Western theoretical assumption was that:

“the body was uninvolved, that it remained mute and still while the mind thought. [...] a body whose natural role [was] instrument” (Foster 2010, 291).

To theorise, is to enact another set of processes conditioned by physical presence, in movement. This dissertation, has been literally danced into existence.

To adequately address the thoroughly multi-dimensional nature of artistic research, throughout this dissertation one term is used: ‘praxis’. This describes the undertaking of physical practices as research and the undertaking of theoretical practices as research, and the simultaneity of these processes. The various constellations of actions and processes, incorporated in practical and theoretical doings, are referred to as praxis. Praxis is non-hierarchical, and does not infer degrees of involvement of practical-theoretical elements. “Praxis” has many interpretations, however the understandings I ascribe to it are derived from its usage within the research paradigm, Action Research.

While my project is not an example of Action Research, I choose to employ its concept of praxis. The concept of praxis I am using is based on the work of philosopher Olav Eikeland who suggests that researchers in research paradigms primarily concerned with “‘insider research’ [...] where practitioners research their own practices” have much to gain from considerations of the concepts attributed within Action Research to “praxis” (Eikeland 2016, 2).
Praxis refers not to practice, but to a theory of knowledge attributed to Aristotle as “explicitly multidimensional, non-reductionist, and relational” (Eikeland 2016, 3). Praxis for Aristotle is one way of knowing among many. Different ways of knowing, although irreducible to one another, are of the same dimension, and praxis “permeates [them] without reducing them” and reintegrates ways of knowing such as “traditional, practical, tacit, emotional, experiential, intuitive, etc.” which modernist thinking “marginalized as insufficient” (Eikeland 2016, 4).

Eikeland argues that use of the word praxis recognises that there are no formally different “technical or instrumental ‘methods’ or ‘tools’” (Eikeland 2016, 6). To make this point he uses dance as an example, and writes that in praxis:

“The end is carried within the activity. We dance […] gradually [getting] better over time although never perfect. The general form of the activity; getting into or approximating the perfected form or pattern, emerges as we practice […] Grasping the pattern at work in the practice and extracting it constitute the emergent concept. Starting point, medium, and end are formally identical” (Eikeland 2016, 6).

Sophie Lycouris, a dance theorist with experience of practice based PhD research (see Lycouris 1996), writing from a poststructuralist perspective, acknowledges that the:

“complexity of the relationship between theory and practice does not allow for hierarchical, causal or dialectical connections […] a range of possible relationships between theory and practice [are possible], including options that manifest elements of discontinuity.” (Lycouris 2016).

“Discontinuities” occur for example, when a corporeally based, un-languaged set of performance making processes resist documentation, or re-imagining in an other mode. Options that manifest such discontinuities may include creative works as research outcomes, or the integration of ‘un-theorised’ meta-texts within texts considered academic by traditional standards. This situation is common in artistic research, but does not destabilise recognition of theory and practice’s mutual integration.

Consciously undertaking creative movement as representative of intelligence, as representative of a mode of thinking, is important to my thesis. I acknowledge that the physical and the conceptual are related to one another, that indeed they are constantly cutting back and forth within one another. In either a predominantly corporeal mode of experience generation, or a predominantly intellectual mode of experience generation, insights can be experienced and attributed to the terms of their generation. However also presupposed must be the involvement of the other mode. This acknowledges that different ways of experiencing intelligence coexist and supply a matrix for human perception, and subjectivity. Throughout this dissertation, and indeed this thesis, my focus is on honouring the intelligence in physical, and theoretical representations. This has necessitated finding a term that addresses such an understanding for referring to my own nexus of body, subjectivity and mind. The term I have chosen is ‘mindful body’ and is taken from the work of Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (2011, 478). My self in an everyday sense, and in relation to my praxis, is understood as a mindful body. In this dissertation, mindful body refers to my self.
Mindful Body

As a philosopher, and Husserlian phenomenologist, who was also a professional dance teacher, performer and choreographer, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone has made “seminal” contributions to dance scholarship (Rothfield 2010, 307). For my praxis she contributes to some foundational concepts. In her book *The Primacy of Movement* (2011) Sheets-Johnstone makes a careful examination of the terminology and issues that concern mind body holism. In the chapter *Embodied minds or mindful bodies?* (2011, 477-521) her arguments constitute some of her more recent writings, and some of the definitional formulations she develops I uphold in this dissertation. Her term *mindful body*, attributes emphasis to mind body holism, while appropriately positioning body rather than mind as the term’s conditioned subject. The core challenge of 21st century research inquiries focused on human movement and beyond, Sheets-Johnstone argues, should develop from the position: “that the synergies of meaningful movement that abound in everyday life and in the kinaesthetic memory that sustains them, attest not to embodied minds but [to] mindful bodies” (2011, 478). This differentiation comes from Sheets-Johnstone’s examination of selfhood, consciousness, and cognition in molecular, physiological, psychological and philosophical terms.

Buddhism, which plays a role in this thesis (see Chapter Four) as a source of practices that have facilitated my kinaesthetic experiencing, is usually associated with meditation, mental training, enlightened minds, and axioms such as “release from suffering is won through a change in perception” (Epstein 1995, 18). Epstein also notes however, as illustrated by the Tibetan Bhavacakra, or Wheel of Cyclic Existence, that even in relation to certain understandings of Buddhism, the human being, in bodily form, comes first and is recognised as the necessary precondition for taking any path, including the path to spiritual liberation (Epstein 1995, 18).

Philosopher Norbert Elias argued that Western philosophy has long thought of individuals as immobile, intellectual “thinking statues” “sealed within unreliable bodies that obstruct us from acquiring reliable knowledge about the outside world” (Elias in Shilling 2012, x). Views of the body that it is to be rejected, denied, oppressed, and denigrated continue to fuel oppressions, recognisable on personal and on socio-political levels. Ideologies, and political projects have instrumentalised denigration of the body, mobilising it for political ends, because as Foucault writes when considering relations of power:

> “it is always the body that is at issue […] power relations have an immediate hold upon [the body]; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs” (Foucault in Goldman 2010, 146).

Concerning the use of mindful body to refer to an individual and their self-hood, does not imply that this project reduces a performer or any individual to their body, nor that it raises the body up over other aspects of human being. Rather I wish to focus on my recognition that everything that makes us human including our capacities for thought, and feeling occur because of, not independently of, our bodies. Use of the term mindful body is my attribution of emphasis relative to understandings derived from experience that is shared by many others including neuroscientist Antonio Damasio who argues that the body is “a foundation of the conscious mind” (Shilling 2012, x. My emphasis).
Susan Leigh Foster observes that in dance related discourses, the mind is often allied with the known, and the body with the unknown, this she argues is “an obfuscation, as unhelpful as it is inaccurate” (Foster 2003, 6). In *Reading Dancing* (1986) Foster notes that the body must be recognised as being much more than just “a physical instrument for an interior subjectivity” (Foster 1986, xvi). Like Damasio (1994, 237), Foster advocates strongly for understanding the rational, knowing, and mindful self, as residing not in the brain but throughout a body’s entirety: “all bodily articulation is mindful” (Foster 2003, 6). Although this view still challenges some “traditional views on the nature of rationality” (Damasio 1994, xi), like others before me, my praxis is orientated by this understanding, an orientation that rests on numerous and sustained experiences that such an orientation is the one that is most valid.

**Kinaesthesia**

In *Embodied minds or mindful bodies?* (2011, 477-521) Sheets-Johnstone renews her consideration of movement, or animation, as life’s foundational characteristic. This stance underpins her disagreement with a common use of kinaesthesia, as that which takes perceptions of one’s own movement to be synonymous “with body image” (2011, 512). This she shows as a common misapprehension and she argues strongly against it, because in effect it reduces kinaesthesia to an individual’s

“positional knowledge of the body… [When] kinaesthesia is pre-eminently not a *positional* sense but a *movement sense*, the experience of which constitutes a specific qualitative dynamic” (2011, 512).

Kinaesthesia, as understood by Sheets-Johnstone, and as used in this dissertation, refers to “*a bona fide* sensory modality” (2011, 512), an awareness of “felt bodily tensions and directional impulsions” combined with awareness of qualitative dynamics (2011, 514). To this I add what Elizabeth Behnke acknowledges in her discussion of kinaesthesia (1997). Behnke cites Cairns’ (1976) report that Husserl emphasised in experiences of kinaesthesia “something volitional or quasi volitional” (Behnke 1997, 183). This emphasis Behnke argues, translates into recognition that in Husserl’s reckoning, kinaesthesia has no final notion, but rather each individual receives an “invitation to evidence, to finding the phenomenon in question” for themselves (Behnke 1997, 183).

**Somatic attentiveness**

Incorporating awareness of volitional influence within experiences of kinaesthesia, are also implied by the term *somatic attentiveness*. This term implicitly upholds my belief, introduced to me by Sheets-Johnstone, that movement is a foundational quality of life. Such terminology, even when applied to postures or stationary instances such as meditation, or everyday activities, does not refer to a “postural notion” or mental snapshot of my body (Sheets-Johnstone 2011, 514). It refers to my experience of my self as a mindful body experiencing itself in movement, via somatic attentiveness, even when stationary. Furthermore I use the term somatic attentiveness, to refer to this mode of awareness because I am referring to a *dynamic* engagement between my self and my self as a mindful body. Somatic attentiveness should be recognised as a set of processes
that require activation, and not as something stable or somehow existing without my effort for bringing it into play.

Somatic attentiveness, is an important term for my praxis. It is based in part on understandings derived from the field of Somatics, which is fully described in Chapter Three. In this dissertation the word Somatics is capitalised when referring to the field of practices.

Somatic attentiveness describes my experiencing of being a mindful body, actively engaged with, and via my body, in qualitative experiences of my own specific body-hood. This includes experiences of movement, kinaesthesia, and experiences of the associated or independent perceptions of sensations, and or affects. Effects of this experiencing include what Fraleigh (2015) notes are concerned with human development, and what I explore throughout this dissertation, and in the final section, as a sense of my praxis’ socio-cultural potency.

An additional set of meanings influencing my use of this term are those in keeping with Philippa Rothfield’s use of the term. Rothfield cites ethnographer and cultural phenomenologist Thomas Csordas who used somatic attentiveness “to signify that there is no universal, invariant bodily self” (Rothfield 2010, 311). For my work Csordas and Rothfield’s usage is important. It invokes in my own applications of somatic attentiveness, my recognition that attending to my body is a temporal and otherwise highly specific experience. I use the term somatic attentiveness to indicate not only that I am a body paying attention to itself, but this attention takes place in ways and with results that are “culturally, socially and intersubjectively informed” (Rothfield 2010, 311).

Unfinished Body

Other work has gone before that uses the term or the concepts of the “unfinished”, and the “unresolved” relative to the body. Helen Thomas in her work, The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory (2003) notes a perspective which she attributes to certain strands of feminism. This perspective includes the assertion that “gendered identities are not stable, fixed or static but are produced through discursive practices” and it has drawn on the work of Foucault to support descriptions of the body as “an unfinished entity” (Thomas 2003, 48).

Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu are others who have also considered the body in terms of it being “unfinished”. Elias historically, and Bourdieu more recently were both concerned with the unfinished body and its social formation (Shilling 2012, 135). The term unfinished is considered by Susanne Foellmer in her book Am Rand Der Körper (2009) as central to one of Contemporary Dance’s main aesthetic principles. In her book, Foellmer examines a range of examples from ballet, the “grotesque dances” of the 1800s, dance works of the 1920s, and a range of recent examples including many from what Austrian dance critic and theorist Helmut Ploebst described as the “New Choreographies” (2001). From among this latter set of examples, the works of choreographers Jérôme Bel and Xavier Le Roy receive particular attention.

Foellmer writes that since the 1990s there has been a recognisable focus in dance on the “materiality of the body itself” in motion, performed via deformations and deconstructions of the body (Foellmer 2009, 12). Foellmer argues that a close relationship exists between such
Contemporary Dance works, and a particular conception of the body as primarily “intangible” and “formless” (2009, 15).

Foellmer argues for the recognition of an “unfinished” body, as a stylistic feature across recent developments in Contemporary Dance. My use of the term unfinished body, accepts Foellmer’s identification. The concept of body underpinning my praxis is indeed one in keeping with what Foellmer recognises as found in many other practices for performing Contemporary dance. The concept of body underpinning my praxis is what Foellmer describes as a set of Post Classical understandings of body, which she in part has drawn from Mikhail Bakhtin’s “grotesque body”, and these notions include: i) The body as “a process” represented by an “infinity of forms”; ii) The body as “under construction”, a “project”; and iii) A body as experience, experience that “never experience[s] its own completion” (Foellmer 2009, 69-70 My translation).

Complicating Contemporary Dance

The Contemporary Dance performance entitled Jérôme Bel (1995) employed minimal physical movement provoking a now infamous legal case against the International Dance Festival Ireland (since 2008 the Dublin Dance Festival). A festival patron argued that describing the work as dance was false and misleading (Lepecki 2006, 2). Xavier Le Roy’s Self Unfinished (1998) initially caused critical despair and was described as “non dance” and “anti dance” (Cvejić 2013, 10). Contemporary Dance has proved itself simultaneously an umbrella term for dance works that explore “a range of practices derived from or exemplifying modern dance, American Post Modern dance, dance theatre, somatic practices, and intercultural dance forms to name a few” (Brannigan Baxter 2014:1), as well as being an evaluative term which has been deeply troubled by its own inclusion of works by choreographers such as Bel and Le Roy, works that have been termed “new choreographies” (Ploebst 2001) and “experimental dance… new dance… body installation… [and] conceptual dance” (Lepecki 2006, 135). My awareness of the discourses attendant to these relatively recent developments of which the cited performances are emblematic, prompted my recognition that unorthodox approaches to performance such as my own require a consequent use of terms when describing and categorising praxis elements, if clarity is to be generated.

Due to my training, and my aesthetic and conceptual interests relative to live performance, I am choosing in this current research context to avoid the terms “dancer” and “improvisation”, if possible, when referring to myself and my recent performance works. I will focus instead on other descriptors to provide clearer impressions of my work and its foci.

In Western cultures familiar with dance performances, there are ingrained associations between the designation dancer, and physical proficiencies resulting from specific trainings. Describing myself primarily as a dancer may imply I have had those trainings, or that my performances specifically target conforming to, or wish to challenge, the bodily aesthetics those trainings produce.

Dance scholar Elfronsini Protopapa’s PhD thesis considers Jérôme Bel’s “obsession” with dance training as revealing his “eagerness to resist not only dancing but also the conditions that frame
dance production, and which privilege, support and promote primarily spectacular movement, executed perfectly by impressively skilled dancers” (Protopapa 2009, 9). I however have current interests elsewhere than in the social and cultural politics of dance training. Therefore, using the identifier dancer primarily when referring to myself is avoided, because to use the word on its own, untempered, would I believe involve ignoring the predominant meanings attached to the word, particularly those at play in Australia. Identifying myself simply as a dancer would imply I am using my performances to engage in dissent against those predominant definitions, which I am not. By avoiding the one word description of myself as dancer, I also avoid necessary distinctions on the basis of training such as untrained, alternatively trained, or trained, all of which infer hierarchies of value.

Anyone who performs choreographies of movement that remain unresolved - impossible to codify in relation to recognisable established dance techniques - calls to attention bodily specificity. I believe such performance also questions relationships between a social self, a cultural self, a personal self and bodily specificity. This questioning is undertaken in my case via dancing, however the important presence in my performance work is not that of a dancer, but that of an unfinished, mindful body. My research explores the unresolved body as a nexus linking dance with bodily specificity. Avoiding the term dancer contributes to greater possibilities. A more multifaceted presence is invoked, one that calls on referents both in, and beyond the artistic field of dance. The facilitation of a frank exchange with my own body, and with others, is among the primary aims of my performance work, and this I believe would be unnecessarily confounded if I was to use the term dancer in an unqualified way when referring to myself.

Contemporary Dance claims to distinguish dance creations on the basis of overall style and technique as being either, primarily historical, or primarily other than historical. However, controversies surrounding the emergence of so-called “new choreography” (Ploebst 2001) or “conceptual dance” (Lepecki 2006) suggest that the term Contemporary Dance accommodates competing and conflicting categorical impulses. Dance theorist Bojana Cvejić argues that the term has not addressed its role as a placeholder in dance history. She writes:

““Contemporary Dance“ doesn’t resolve the controversy about what postmodernist, as opposed to modernist, dance is[,] despite its intention to accommodate a pluralism […] it implicitly retraces the same kind of debate” (2013, 10).

The controversy Cvejić refers to is well known, and mentioned above, it concerns the fact that over the last twenty years some very prominent instances of Contemporary Dance have become prominent precisely because of debates involving claims they are actually “anti dance” (Cvejić 2013, 10).

As noted earlier, Susanne Foellmer (2009) describes the “unfinished” body, as being a stylistic feature of many Contemporary Dance choreographies, which have emerged since the end of the 1990s. I am arguing that a stylistic feature of my performances is indeed a presence that can be termed an unfinished body. My performances are also instances of Contemporary Dance, even while I argue that I should not be labelled simply as a dancer. I suggest therefore that my work
with dance and performance contributes to a complication of the terms dancer and Contemporary Dance.

**Improvisation**

A constant in my work as an artist has been the performance of improvisation. As a centrally important component of my work this term and its numerous issues require unpacking.

I am concerned here with dance improvisation as a Western concert performance form, that has roots in Modern dance and Post Modern dance practices and theories. Dance improvisation performances undertaken primarily via a utilisation of a specific dance technique vocabulary, for example Frankfurt Ballet’s *Improvisational Technologies*, do not feature in this inquiry.

In Modern, Post Modern and recent discourses, dance improvisation refers to methodologies connected to utopian notions of freedom, self expression, and holistic being. A widespread connection to these associations without qualification has compromised my ability to feel comfortable using the term improvisation when describing my practices with dance in this dissertation. In the interests of generating greater clarity, my work with improvisation will be referred to as work with *non pre set* movement or dance.

Initially my approaches to improvisation for performance were focused via techniques from Contact Improvisation. My early teachers Al Wunder, Martin Hughes, and David Corbet were influenced by Modern and Post Modern developments in dance improvisation. Critical works by writer-practitioners such as Steve Paxton, Nancy Stark Smith, Susan Leigh Foster and Ann Cooper Albright contained genealogies for the word improvisation. These genealogies, coupled with my own explorations of dancing and writing, defined my understandings. This PhD research has surfaced some qualifications I need to declare regarding my understandings and use of the terms dance and improvisation. In order that the emphasis in my work with dance receives clarification, I consider more detailed descriptors than “dance improvisation”.

Dance improvisation as a performance form, relative to Modern and Post Modern histories of dance, combines an unruly set of meanings. Meanings for the phrase elements have been assigned different emphasis, at different historical moments and in different geographical locations. Dance historian Sally Banes writes, “in a culture of abundance in the 1960s [dance improvisation] had a different significance - both for doers and watchers - than dance improvisation did in a culture of scarcity in the early and mid-nineties.” (Banes 2003, 77). In the current global epoch that is witness to heightened “screen time”, I wish to note that dance improvisation’s significance might be found in its deployment of somatic attentiveness. Particularly as such a deployment depends on an interest and recognition of an alternative set of values to those supportive of a preoccupation only with the surfaces of things and of subjectivities. Albright notes among the outcomes for her students of somatic attentiveness relative to dance making, is the recognition of “the importance of what is inside (their organs), as well as on the surface of their skin” (Albright 2013, 276).
Conceptualising Dance Improvisation

Theorists Bojana Cvejić (2013, 2015) and Sophie Lycouris (1996, 2009, 2016) have independently contributed to conceptualisations of dance improvisation for performance. Both note that the field’s discourse, despite numerous exceptions, is predominantly based upon empirical reports by practitioner-writers which they argue, makes for a discourse lacking in an overall cohesive, systematic and comprehensive theorisation (Cvejić 2013, 126: Lycouris 1996, 15-16). This has created a situation in which, since the 1960s, a number of approaches to dance improvisation in performance have been explored by practitioners, accompanied by a “circulation of many terms for not precisely distinguished or delineated notions” Cvejić (2013, 126). Of this history where makers have deliberately avoided “dance improvisation” when describing methodologies that employ dance improvisation as a performance form, Banes notes that during the 1960s and 1970s terms were used such as: “indeterminate choreography”, and “situation-response composition” (Banes 2003, 78). Mary O’Donnell (Fulkerson), in the 1980s established in Britain a tradition known as “New Dance” (Lycouris 1996, 14), and she developed “Open Form”, in which dance performance employs “simultaneous levels of decision making [… ] some [are] “process based” and others […] “set”” (O’Donnell 2016). Recent descriptions of methodologies based around improvised dance as a performance form, but using alternative terms to elicit a more specific approach, include Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema’s “‘open’ movement” (Burrows & Ritsema 2003, 33).

Steve Paxton advocated avoiding a languaged description of improvisation: “improvisation is a word for something which can’t keep a name; if it […] acquire[s] a name, it has begun to move towards fixity” (Paxton 2001, 425-426). Paxton employs mystification to address the heart of improvisation, which he believes language and an intellectualising mind will obscure by referring to what is already “known”. Author and practitioner Kent De Spain upholds preserving a sense of unknowable and unlimited potentials for dance improvisation. De Spain’s Landscape of the Now: A Topography of Movement Improvisation (2014) surveyed Paxton and seven other seminal figures from North American “movement” improvisation, including Deborah Hay and Anna Halprin. De Spain observed “significant disagreement” existed among the interviewees regarding what defines movement improvisation (2014, 5). He concludes: “Regardless of issues around structure […] movement improvisation includes the process of creating and /or choosing your movements as you are doing them. […]It includes everything from Margaret H’Dobler’s early movement classes to open Contact jams to the chatty madness of a Grand Union performance. It also includes real-time compositional choices within mostly “choreographed” material or attending to the “how” of navigating a crowded sidewalk” (2014, 4-5).

Although she may not reject the open definition of improvisation ultimately, Trisha Brown’s emphasis in her performance practices is on limitation. Danielle Goldman writes that Brown emphasises in performances rigor and structure, in order that improvised dance avoids being a “self indulgent dance of whimsy” which Brown calls “therapy or catharsis or your happy hour” (Goldman 2010, 59). My own response to a similar need for limitation and rigor relative to dance improvisation is somatic and kinaesthetic attentiveness. The experience of my attention relative to my anatomical realities, serves as the orientation, source of movement, and source of a sense of limitation, all of which I find necessary for supporting, sustaining and exploring dance improvisations.
Bojana Cvejić claims there are consistencies discernable since the Modern and Post Modern periods, found in the underlying values, which offers definitive limitations for dance improvisation: “freedom in spontaneous self-expression, body-mind holism, and the primacy of the physical, sensorial, and emotional nature of movement.” (Cvejić 2013, 124). Certainly improvisation was celebrated by Modern dance pioneer Isadora Duncan. Her biographer Peter Kurth confirms her famous interest in ancient Greek artefacts, where she found: “a perfect awareness of the body’s natural capacities and, especially, a consciousness of the sequence of movement [which she described in her essay The Dance of the Future 1903 as sequences that were] ever-varying, natural, unending” (Kurth 2003, 65).

Freedom, natural movement, creativity and a corporeal focus, are meanings with strong associations to, and regularly found describing, dance improvisation. These meanings led to improvisation’s embrace by Post Modern dance practitioner-theorists, and contributed to its rejection by late-Modernists who, seeking clearer connections between trained discipline and performance “kept improvisation off the concert stage as they struggled for ‘high’ art legitimacy.” (Goldman 2010, 60). Sally Banes argues that improvisation during the Post Modern dance period signalled meanings such as: the natural, authenticity, spiritual expression, self expression, and freedom (Banes 2003, 77). Freedom and self expression represented values which in the cultural context of post-war North American avant-garde performance, were enthusiastically embraced. Australian choreographer Russell Dumas ex dancer for Trisha Brown who currently works with ‘ordinary movement’ noted, as did Sally Banes (2002), that Post Modern dance was “a 1960s exploration of ‘democracy’s body’” (Dumas 2014, 19). Albeit an almost completely white democracy: “the Judson Dance Theater seemed democratic to some people in Greenwich Village, [but] their performances likely would have played differently uptown.” (Goldman 2010, 144). Notwithstanding this, improvisation and the pedestrian body in dance presentations, were two of Post Modern dance’s most recognisable contributions to the artistic field.

Jérôme Bel claims he decidedly eschews improvisation on the basis that “[it] supposes the intrinsic liberty of the individual and I think that is false.” (Sulcas 2016). Conflating dance improvisation with utopian notions such as freedom is challenged by Danielle Goldman in I Want to be Ready (2010). Goldman notes that politicians have claimed “freedom [as the] ultimate destination or endpoint to which most of the world aspires” (2010, 2), and the widespread unreflected and generalised use of the term in discourses of improvised dance is the reason for her work. I Want to be Ready highlights the “social, historical, and formal constraints that affect how people move, paying particular attention to the tight places [which, Goldman argues] celebrations of improvised dance frequently fail to notice” (2010, 139). For example, in Dances That Describe Themselves (2002) Foster refers often to “freedom”, acknowledging on occasion the term’s complexities. She writes freedom into her descriptions of the improvised choreography of Richard Bull for example: “Tacking back and forth between structure and spontaneity, dancers could experience how discipline and freedom converse” (Foster 2002, 67). Goldman argues, experiences of improvised dance described as involving a taste of freedom, makes false promises. Describing freedom as within our power to experience is “freedom-as-achievement” (Goldman 2010, 3), and dance improvisation becomes by implication a method capable of facilitating a transcendence of oppressions. Ultimately Goldman is arguing for the context of practices of dance improvisation to be recognised, and for a more flexible notion of
freedom - freedom as a series of ongoing practices. As such she ultimately concludes that: “improvisation, a practice intimately concerned with constraint, still relates to freedom” (Goldman 2010, 143).

Improvisation to Choreographies That are not Pre Set

The linking of a performance form to focus on the body via terms such as “natural” and “freedom” is still highly problematic for me. Any focus that is given to specific approaches within the umbrella of the term improvisation, has become swamped by the overtones that it nevertheless participates in supporting the ideology that improvisation has come to represent. Art and design scholar Malcolm Barnard, with reference to the works of Roland Barthes, accounts for my discomfort with the term improvisation when he describes the function of rhetoric in relation to ideology and imagery in *Fashion and Communication* (2002). In the following quote I substitute dance improvisation for image:

> “this is the effect of the rhetoric of dance improvisation; ideology is the process in which the work of culture is presented to be understood as the work of nature” (Barnard 2002, 96).

Internationally celebrated Australian dancer choreographer Rosalind Crisp, whose work with non pre set movement in performance is an important influence on my own, said of her practice that “movement is the result, not the goal”. Crisp described the aim of her practices as, not to experience a dancing body as natural, or with potential for transcendence but rather: “the aim is a ‘virtuosity’ of attention” (Crisp in Brannigan & Baxter 2014, 26-27).

My PhD research has surfaced clarity regarding how I focus my understandings of dance improvisation for performance. I embrace in performance a dramaturgy of continual process, a dramaturgy of instants, and I focus on somatic attentiveness as the basis for applications of choreographic tools. I practice with techniques taken from lineages of dance improvisers and dance improvisation pedagogy. However, I am aware of my cultural, poetic, biographic, and anatomical specificity. This awareness has led me to a sense of the efficacy for my dance making and my praxis generally, of recognising my self and my projects as defined by their edges, or their limitations. This acknowledging and embracing of limitations, or the edges that things and subjectivities have, which provide identification albeit in flux, is an interest I believe shared by Trisha Brown when she rejects dance as cathartic whimsy. In this sense, limitation conditions fundamentally my work with somatic attentiveness, and in turn with dance and my live choreographies.

I refer to myself as a performer, to my work as dance and as choreography, and to my performances not as improvisations, but as live choreographies of movement or dance that are not pre set.

Research Approaches

Phenomenology as a philosophical approach has provided much analysis and theory, that positions the body centrally, and for this I am deeply appreciative. Though I do not overtly use
Phenomenology as a research method, my project is in many ways an iteration or instance of phenomenological thinking, in the sense described by Philipa Rothfield (2010). She argues for the relevance of critical Phenomenology as a research approach, noting that whilst post-structuralist writers such as Foucault have given us the awareness that bodies are each specifically inscribed socially, culturally and historically, it can be argued that we still need research able to illuminate “what it’s like to live as that historicized, normalized, bodily subject” (Carter & O’Shea 2010, 286). This dissertation details my praxis with kinaesthesia, derived from somatic and Buddhist practices, and further derived from, and explored within, processes of live performances. Attentional practices integrated within these activities and processes, have constituted the basis for my research methodologies.

My methodological stance, a valuing of my lived experience as means of undertaking research, is due to several factors. The questions I have approached have been contained within the processes themselves. Therefore the evidence, in the form of experiential evidence, which I have used to address these questions has to a degree also come from these processes. Such an approach to research was engaged due to my determination to allow my artistic processes to genuinely constitute research, by remaining derived from and continually fed back into my own body, through my praxis.

My experiences were rigorously documented, examined, interrogated and challenged for relevance and wider links to others, and to theory. Approaches, derived from my praxis that manifested research outputs in the way described, if I am to be honest, are best characterised as improvisatory. They were diligently, and thoroughly pursued, and yet their patterns are unsystematic and tangential. Form and structure have become apparent, at this final stage.

Methodological approaches including writings in a variety of forms, reading, dance making, and performance making practices were all undertaken in ways characterised by responsive, or emergent approaches. The nature of the outcomes, as seen in the live performance season *Finding Anchors and the Abyss*, and in this dissertation attest to the efficacy of what is perhaps not the most orthodox approach.

Research approaches associated with the phenomenological method, and the conceptual work done by philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Sheets-Johnstone, Rothfield, Behnke and others in response to Husserlian Phenomenology has supplied much that I have been informed by conceptually. However this project is not based on an application of the classical phenomenological method. It has involved phenomenological descriptions, relative to examples such as those that can be found in Elizabeth Behnke’s *Ghost Gestures* (1997) except those descriptions have not been included as centrepieces of research data. The focus for this research has been to employ practice descriptions and documentations of a far less structured and preemptive nature. The documentation of a thorough consideration of those practices, their evidences, and the results they have produced, makes up this dissertation, indeed this thesis.

**Autoethnography**

My praxis has been focused on implicating myself in the staging of processes as performances. This is done via a mode of experiencing termed mindful body. To clearly refer to, implicate,
integrate and complicate such understandings, within this dissertation, I have included ‘un-theorised’ autobiographical writings as meta-texts. Memories, poetic reflections, sensation-perception/affect-feeling documentations, and personal histories are included throughout this thesis. They are considered un-theorised because although their inclusion invites their participation in the analysis and discussion undertaken here, as formations they have not been overly mediated, or challenged by theory. They are distinct units, un-reformed by theory, and although they originate from genuine sources they are unverifiable academically, so I expect them to be “accepted as empirically given” (Taylor 1983, 28). Their presence is to invoke the potential for contact with a sense of immediacy that physical presence offers.

Any representations of theoretics as research outcomes must necessarily be in terms of theory. However, through the incorporation of ‘un-theorised’ texts I hope to develop the content of my recognition that theory representations do not originate and become documented, independently of physical presence. Theory is one element among others conditioned by interdependence. In this, my dissertation bears relationship to examples including the book Yes? No! Maybe... Seductive Ambiguity in Dance (2006) by dancer, choreographer and theorist Emilyn Claid which is a poetic autobiography, “a theoretical text and a history” (Midgelow & Turner 2007, 205). The research approach that goes a series of steps further and “describes and systematically analyses (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)” is autoethnography (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2016, 2).

My dance performances foreground idiosyncratic movement and by doing so, they constitute the argument that the social, cultural, and political are enmeshed with the personal, and one does not precede the other. Autoethnography is recognised as a social scientific qualitative research approach and is focused on using accounts of personal experience to connect to and explore cultural, social, and political contexts.

My body, in the context of bodies belonging to professional performing artists working with dance, is relatively ordinary, perhaps at best a body that is alternatively skilled. My recognition is that successfully arguing a place for alternatively skilled bodies in dance, places different movement in view, and invites others to undertake the same reconsideration of valuations that I have undertaken in deciding to put my ordinary body, and my personal movement “on show”. This in brief is the basis for my argument that my performances have cultural, social, and political relevance.

As a teenager in the 1980s I recall a buzz in mainstream media around the word ‘Postmodernism’. Works by Roland Barthes, and Jean-François Lyotard in the late 1970s were among those participating in the dismantling of universal master narratives. The scientific method as capable of revealing “truth” was one such narrative. It began to be recognised that any scientific truth has limited validity, and such truth may change, dependent on temporal, cultural or personal conditions changing. Some researchers in social sciences experimented with adjusting their research methods so they were “closer to literature than to physics” asking, what if methods “proffered stories rather than theories [and were] value-centred rather than pretending to be value free?” (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2016, 3). These scholars wanted to produce “meaningful, accessible, and evocative research” that was “grounded in personal experience”,

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acknowledging and involving “subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher’s influence” (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2016, 3).

Dance and performance making practices are primary among my research methods, as is writing - including writing in the first person. Autoethnography involves taking first person writings and subjecting them to processes of re-contextualisation. This process seeks to explore broader meanings found within the texts, beyond their personal relevance. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner cite Mitch Allen, who notes that an autoethnographer is one who looks at their autobiographical stories “analytically” with “a set of theoretical and methodological tools and a research literature” (2016, 5). Undertaking research writing in this way creates research materials from myself, by acknowledging I am a nexus point of personal, political, socio-cultural and theoretical being. This aligns with twin beliefs, which are namely: this dissertation openly represents “my own attempts to make sense of the world” springing from “the idiosyncratic soil” of my own personal experience (Johnson 2016a). This is in combination with another belief which is namely: as I write the story of my self, I am writing the story of others. I do not write their story for them, but my self and my telling of my self becomes present as a reference which may be used by others as they will.

Vulnerability With Purpose: The Personal Within the Academic

The affective dimension of experience finding placement on, within, and throughout my body, contributes significantly to conditioning experience, including experiences of making live choreographies of solo dance for performance. Autoethnography is a structuring device for processing self reflexivity, including affect. It is “vulnerability with purpose” (Jones, Adams & Ellis 2013, 24). Sheets-Johnstone argues for affect linked fundamentally to movement, “there is a dynamic congruency of affectivity and movement” and she argues that such movement is not only “a defining feature of life” it is also a rudimentary sign of relational meanings:

“Humans are […] in proximity to other humans every day of their lives. They have feelings of comfort or discomfort, security or insecurity, solicitude or annoyance […] and so on, […] and normally move in ways coincident with the dynamics of their feelings. In the ordinary course of everyday human life, the affective and the kinetic are clearly dynamically congruent” (Sheets-Johnstone 2011, 454).

My own experiences of affectivity contribute importantly to my artistic research. Given the themes of my praxis, it is important that I achieve fluid connections between my personal, everyday life, and my life as an artist-researcher. Maintaining a reflective sense of my own experiences of affectivity, as a site for artistic research, supported conceptually by autoethnography, has assisted the cultivation of connection between my personal everyday life, and my praxis. Connecting these distinct but importantly overlapping spheres of my existence assists me to ensure that the developments my praxis takes are guided by larger frames of reference, and broader relevancies.

Personal stories concerning affectivity obviously have a place in autobiographical texts, but taking personal affectivity into theory and academic research via autoethnography, remains a socio-political act. Claiming space for such stories contests issues of authority and representation.
By including in this dissertation “true” personal stories, I take up social, academic, and political space with the personal. I argue for bodily presence, promoting a voice and set of arguments locatable in a specific body, as opposed to Denshire’s description of traditional academic writing as “disembodied renderings of experience” (2014, 840).

I also argue for inclusion of the personal within the artistic, the cultural, the academic, the political and the social, because the personal introduces to these realms human vulnerability. By putting the vulnerability of our selves, and of our real stories, into places such as our work, politics, our relationships more broadly, and into our art, we acknowledge our humanity. By taking the difficult and complex route of risking ourselves, we take part in furthering our projects given the conditions of greater cognisance of the genuine parameters those human projects are subject to. As Judith Butler argues, by recognising our softness and placing it in the centre of our social, political, and academic landscapes we begin to demand that human interaction takes place on human terms.

“we must […] risk ourselves precisely at moments of unknowingness, […] our willingness to become undone in relation to others constitutes our chance of becoming human. To be undone by another is a primary necessity, an anguish to be sure, but also a chance” (Butler 2005, 136).

Vulnerability in the context of this research is further addressed in the final section: Notes in Conclusion.

This project is not limited to being an autoethnography, though I have incorporated principles and practices from this research paradigm, for use among other research methodologies. For comparison, a research project focused in its processes and outcomes on autoethnography, Carolyn Ellis’ I Hate My Voice: Coming to terms with minor bodily stigmas is a good exemplar (Ellis 1998). In 2008 I reflected through writing, on a dance class I had participated in as a student. I re-explored that text several years later, as I began this PhD process. It was re-opened as a self interview, to begin to draw out some awareness of my stance relative to dance improvisation conceptually. The text included below is from this process and was written in December 2012. It stands as an example of similar processes that I have undertaken throughout my PhD candidature.

What is it?
A postcard with a picture of Mt Fuji on it. A beautiful picture, a painting. Its blue. Perhaps it’s the most famous painting of Mt Fuji. Actually in the foreground it shows a wild sea with huge waves and a boat full of men riding up on a giant wave.

How long have you had it?
Four years

Why do you still have it?
Because in 2008, a short time after my Dad died, I was in a dance class when we were asked to say the first word that popped into our heads if we had to define improvisation.
I said “Mt Fuji”. Stupidly perhaps, because everyone laughed. Maybe they thought I was being a smartass. Later at home I told my partner the story and then some time after that she gave me this postcard.

What does this picture mean to you?
It’s telling me about improvisation.

How?
This is such a famous painting. I guess it stands for me at the moment for art work generally. I was raised to think of art as something to be revered, but never made. Art just was. Art in my family never had any connection to real people living real contemporary lives, while making things. Now, the fact that I make art as my fulltime occupation is hard for my family to comprehend. What do I actually do? And besides that, what precisely is useful about what I do?

I treasure this card because I treasure the way art communicates and connects me to others. Art speaks of the meaningfulness, and beauty of life. My art is performing improvisation, so I feel a kind of fraternity with the men in the boat on the wave, and with the person who painted them. It was a Japanese person, and in my mind, this picture is a symbol of Japan. Japan is where my Dad died. He was at Tokyo airport on a stopover on his way to Italy for a long anticipated holiday with my Mum when he had a heart attack and died on the spot. I’ve kept this card around my processes with dance making, in part because I want to have my Dad present somehow.

My Dad was very practical, and he didn’t talk to me about feelings. I always felt like I am his opposite. He never seemed to understand why I did what I do. So I keep showing him more and more hoping he’ll understand. Now he’s getting to see things in detail, he’s sharing in my relationships, he hears certain conversations, and he can watch me as so much feeling comes and goes. I’m sure he’s loving every minute. This is how I understand improvisation. It’s the details of a life and the actual living of it. It’s working to find beauty and meaning in what’s at hand, and sharing those processes of discovery. It’s never fixed, it’s relational, and contextual. It’s life, sense, and feeling, given presence through physicality, artfully.

It’s all the above. Which must be why, when asked, I answered “Mt Fuji”.

This text introduced materials that contributed to the section on improvisation found earlier in this chapter. It introduced me to notions of *limitation* as contributing importantly to my practices and understandings relative to improvisation, and yet beyond scoring for improvisation. This text also influenced many of my subsequent written and performed research inquiries relative to my praxis, particularly in relation to praxis in the everyday, which is the subject of the following chapter.
Chapter Two

Praxis and The Everyday

“Novel... the idea of slowing down, of consciously inhabiting and living in your body, making note of each, breath, gesture, and stride. Yet this is exactly what we ask of ourselves [as dancers]” (Gallo 2011, 217)

This project has as its basis, my commitment to using what is “at hand”. By allowing my praxis to occur in the everyday, I accessed opportunities for practicing finding my interest in what is at hand. The processes this implies are focused by practices of somatic and kinaesthetic attentiveness. As a result I gathered experiences of the everyday making it anything but quotidian or “forgettable”. The everyday revealed itself as remarkable, not forgettable. Including my everyday as part of my praxis contributed to my recognition that my mindful body is the basis for my engagements with life itself. This recognition came from focusing on my somatic and kinaesthetic noticing of; “connections between breathing and inspiration” (Albright 2013, 276), connections between different qualities of my breath and my different abilities to theorise, and connections between my anatomy and the poetics of my dance practices, and connections between the syntax of my dancing in performances and the state of my marriage, or the health of my children etc.

Acknowledging the entwinement of my everyday life and my body centred praxis, created the potential for performance making practice to occur at all times. This contributed to my sense that my dancing in live performance is a form of autobiographical telling.

My everyday life has always been a site for experimenting with how I might live better. Attentional practices are what most clearly represent my arts praxis in my everyday life. Some of these practices were originally derived for my praxis from my responses in everyday life to questions of how might I live better. My theory, my dancing, and the identification of relationships to the practices and theories of others, have all emerged conditioned by overlaps between my personal everyday life and my praxis. This accounts for the presence of this chapter and of autoethnographic writings among my research methodologies.

Another important characteristic of my praxis in everyday life is dialogues and exchanges, connecting me with a sense of community, both artistic and personal. This feeling of connectedness helps both to sustain my praxis and significantly inform its developments. I have engaged formal and informal interviews with experts from my field and with non-experts. I have documented conversations with strangers, and I have initiated creative exchanges that involved sharing artworks with others.

Engaging my lived everyday experience continually as arts praxis, has significantly furthered and deepened my praxis inquiries. In this chapter, my everyday life as practice is described and explored. I provide numerous examples of my own work and of that of others, and I locate my own inquiries in theoretical and historical contexts.
“Contemporary art is saturated with references to the everyday”, writes artist Stephen Johnstone (Johnstone 2008, 12). The re-envisioning of the mundane and the ordinary as art has occurred notably in the West during the twentieth century, beginning with Dada. With his invention of ready-made sculpture, French Dadaist Marcel Duchamp explicitly exploited tensions between art and everyday life. Duchamp’s ready-mades “posed challenges both to conventional aesthetics and normative social relations… blur[ring] the boundaries between life and art” (Kowal 2010, 155). Duchamp did more here than blur the boundaries between life and art, he transmuted objects that were ordinary - unremarkable, unaesthetic - into works of art. Works like Fountain (1917) engage a constant oscillation, or slippage between something being ordinary so ungrasped by the senses, and something being an object of aesthetic focus. It is this oscillation that gives the ordinary in art its power and arguably a magnified sense of presence. Such oscillations in dance, occur in works such as Jérôme Bel’s The Show Must Go On (2001), in which there is no difference separating audience from performer in terms of dance training or even in terms of theatrical attitudes. By positioning these works on large traditional stages however the everyday actions of the onstage figures are reframed as aesthetic and part of an overall event, of which the numerous dynamic parts may be considered as the work’s choreography. My performance works also call into play a tension between the ordinary and the aesthetic but in less straightforward ways.

Ramsay Burt’s Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces (2006) considers the traces left by American Post Modern dance in examples of European Modern dance. On the book’s cover is a photograph of Mikhail Baryshnikov performing Steve Paxton’s solo Flat (1964). Flat performed by Paxton became an iconic example of pedestrian movement reframed as concert dance. The same solo performed by Baryshnikov however as Janice Ross (2009a) notes, goes beyond “the raw minimalism of the Judson Dance Theater ethos”. Ross argues that Baryshnikov’s dance is “driven by an intelligence and pleasure in the audience-pleasing aesthetic, and not just the functional aspects, of the movement he is performing.” (Ross 2009a, 161-162).

I am working from a movement palette that is not moulded recognisably by training with dance techniques. It is a palette made up of movement ranges that fall within the scope of terms like “ordinary”. However my performances call to mind Ross’ sense of Baryshnikov, in that interests beyond the staging of ordinary movement in its pure form as functional, pedestrian, guide my performances. Not classically trained in dance, I nonetheless have an evolved choreographic sensibility and I play with my palette of ordinary movement creating performances in which the movement’s ordinariness is integrated with attention creating an effect of sensitivity that is not normally correspondent with ordinary movement. The oscillation between aesthetic dance performance, and everyday movement however remains; only being handled according to my own idiosyncratic aesthetic sensibilities has complicated it. I believe a similar situation is found in works by Australian choreographer Russell Dumas, the noticeable difference being that his choreographic sensibilities have been significantly tuned and finessed by a long career choreographing and being choreographed on by some of the most celebrated artists in the field.

Dumas writes that he uses “a body perception and sensitivity training” that he has termed “ordinary movement” because of its capacity to address an “aesthetic sensibility steeped in the
everyday” and to “create a movement practice with which the audience can empathise” (2014, 14). Although he describes his work as using “ordinary movement”, I would argue that Dumas’ work as a choreographer adds a resonance and poetry to simplicity in movement, due to his capacity for recognising these dimensions genuinely exist in “ordinary” movement. Like Dumas, I do not appropriate ordinary, everyday movement into my work - I completely re-experience it. I have lost sight of its mundane-ity. In my performances I hope to transform the everyday, by simultaneously taking it seriously, as it is, on its own terms. I am not reframing something “ready-made” - I am taking a so called untrained body, and applying a focus on somatic attentiveness, kinaesthesia and choreographic sensibility. Movement is removed from its state of being functional and ordinary, by being framed as performance, and by being subject to a performer’s attention as it is being performed. My praxis therefore is the ordinary, but it is the ordinary subjected to active processes of performance and reflection. The ordinary in my performances is thus itself experienced and valued differently.

The Everyday as Praxis

The performance of solo improvisation and Zen Buddhism have been two important influences on my life and arts praxis, and both for almost twenty years. This is explored in detail in Chapter Three.

Australian performing artist Andrew Morrish remains an influence of singular importance for my praxis. In 2003, newly acquainted, we chatted as I prepared to record him in interview. I was all set up then realised I had to change the batteries of my mini-disk sound recorder. Apologising I fumbled around in my bag for batteries. He told me not to apologise. He observed that now important and necessary things for the interview were taking place:

“Its like washing my clothes and hanging them out to dry is an important part of my arts practice. It’s as important as performing improvised solos for audiences. Yes, hanging out the washing. I have to recognise that as an important part of my life, and important for my work with performance. If I don’t, I’m in trouble.”

(Morrish, Melbourne 2003 Pers. Comm.).

Around roughly the same time, a Zen teacher with whom I was working regularly told me to break any barriers between my everyday life and my formal practices of Zen meditation.

The conceptual interests, practice forms, and aims of my praxis are modelled after personal experiences with my life in the everyday. The considerations and discussions provoked by this have revealed attention as the centrepiece of my work with dance and solo performance of non pre set material. Basing my praxis in my everyday was largely achieved by somatic and kinaesthetic attentiveness, called into focus, as consistently as possible. This led initially to confrontations with notions of personal identity, and with how I attributed different value to different experiences. I became aware that praxis occurring in conventional settings such as academic presentations and indoor performance venues had a higher value than praxis activities, including dance and attentional practices, that were staged in the midst of my everyday life. Instances of praxis that began and ended without external witnesses or residual traces others might recognise were also attributed a lower value. The innumerable tasks that also support my
life, including cleaning and cooking, were also ignored. I was spending a large portion of my life, thinking of things other than what I was doing, and resenting the fact that I had to do mundane things, like changing soiled nappies or waiting in a queue at the bank.

The circumstances of my life forced me into reassessing my terms for attributing value. I had no option other than to focus on embracing in actual deed and not just rhetorically, that my everyday life and praxis were continually ongoing in the midst of each other. As a result, I came to have moments when, due to attentional practices, I came to experience genuine interest in how my mindful body negotiated mundane activities. Everyday life genuinely became a platform for pursuing attention based dance practices. I was compelled therefore to experiment with staging live performances for audiences in settings normally associated with my everyday life, such as my home.

**Inhabiting my Body and Re-Experiencing the Everyday**

My everyday life during my PhD candidature was ordinary, replete with experiences of parenthood, depression, travel, live performance, illness, bureaucracy, and death. I was forced to question the relationships between my praxis and my everyday life in August 2013. I was a PhD candidate pre-confirmation when my wife gave birth in our kitchen to our second son. I continued my research as planned, but soon things became unmanageable.

The way I thought being a performing artist must look, was now in conflict with how my life actually looked. To be a responsible father and supportive partner was much more demanding than I anticipated. I knew that if I wanted to succeed at being an artist and researcher, I would have to compromise on my involvements with my partner and our children. Writer Rachel Power describes similar issues faced by artist mothers in her survey *The Divided Heart* (2008). I continued to pursue studio practices, and I continued reading and documenting my inquiries. But no one in our house was getting any sleep and as I was being forced to compromise the quality of my work, I became increasingly stressed and resentful of my children and my partner.

I was provoked by reminders that identities and experiences can be fluid. Dancer and choreographer Deborah Hay writes “the act and object of seeing is undifferentiated. I am the performance I set out to see” (Hay 2000,100), and Janice Ross writing about Anna Halprin notes the influence exerted on her dance by John Cage and Marcel Duchamp: “art inheres in the ordinary. …if one shifted the context around [the] mundane… if one reframed the unnoticed, then this…could render the familiar strange, and the strange was art” (Janice Ross in Halprin 1995, 73). My then academic supervisor Don Asker was called “a farmer-dancer” (Cursio 2016). I began to recall the Zen lessons on practice in the everyday, and I recalled what Morrish had said, and which I still had not really understood. I realised that before I became a parent the aim of my practice was the exploration of bodily selfhood via live performance. My personal being as I perceived it, via conceptual and sensory investigations, was identified as unrelenting change: becoming a parent had not changed any of this. My responses to financial and social pressures had just obscured it. My fears of being left behind because I could no longer compete with others who had more time and more sleep, had led me to fixate on conventions for gaining recognition for my work when I could have been actually doing my work.
It was a call, a challenge to return to the primary aim of my project, to focus more on landing
within my physicality, and let my mindful body initiate experimentation. I had to genuinely start
again. I had to start with my body, and not start with an image or model of what it meant to be a
dancer, an artist, a PhD student, or a parent.

“There’s my clown training, and dance, but ultimately before anything else, my practice
has always involved being foremost a body, and paying attention! I can practice that
anywhere, anytime” (PhD Journal 1.11.13)

I took the challenge and began to explore locating my dance practices in studios, and in everyday
situations. I thought about Pina Bausch who is quoted in materials from *Pina Bausch and the
Tanztheater* an exhibition at the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn (4 March to 24 July 2016) as saying:

“Everything I do, I do as a dancer. Everything. Everything.”

I tried to foster a conviction that regardless of settings, and a necessary focus on task related
movement, if I was somatically attentive, I was dancing.

I revisited perspectives, collected and assimilated from numerous Somatics techniques and
teachers (including Wendy Smith, Pilates and Kinesiology; David Corbet and Martin Hughes,
Contact Improvisation; Rinske Ginsberg and Holly Huon, The Feldenkrais Method, and others).
I focused my thinking relative to everyday tasks such as washing dishes, by calling to the
forefront of my mind perspectives I have learnt such as:

i) Doing things with less effort, from The Feldenkrais Method “to enhance learning it is better to
reduce the frustration of irrelevant [physical] effort and increase the value of sensitivity and
grace” (Alon 1996, 67).

ii) Acknowledge gravity, from Ideokinesis “and learning to experience weight, what it is;
learning how to use gravity. Because gravity is not your enemy in dance, as many dancers think;
it’s your greatest ally” (Bernard, Steinmüller & Stricker 2006, 35).

I was recalling and revisiting my history with practices from the field of Somatics. Perspectives
such as those mentioned accompanied and guided me with familiarity, as I attempted to
genuinely inhabit my body, and move with attention. Dancer, dance maker, educator and theorist
Andrea Olsen describes this approach when she writes about “reading the body - body listening”,
Olsen writes that “embodied intelligence requires checking in and locating yourself physically,
emotionally, mentally, energetically, and spiritually” (Olsen 2014, 219-220). I had known about
such understandings for many years and I believed I had been putting such understandings into
practice. However until recent years I was not exploring and challenging these understandings
with a research mindset and a focused set of praxis tools.

By being consequent with my praxis activities focused around questions to do with how and why
my praxis occurs in the everyday, I was able to process *my own* versions of understandings I was
familiar with from dance and performance discourses. These understandings became my own,
relative to my own experiences. During this PhD research period, I came to understand what
Morrish meant about valuing, and thus being able and interested enough to pay attention to
A Relationship to Constraint, and Other Understandings Regarding Everyday Life as Praxis

Between 1980-1996 Deborah Hay ran a four month workshop for trained and untrained dancers called *Playing Awake*. Hay writes that it was a “laboratory for artistic growth… for reading the dance in everyone, each moment, equally, no matter what anyone was doing…” (Hay 2000, 80). During my candidature I was gradually coming into my own “playing awake” workshop that could read the dance in each moment. I asked, who or what was I, as I rocked children to sleep at 3am? I was nearly 45 years old, I was always tired, and my family circumstances were demanding and unpredictable for further reasons I knew I could not argue with. I saw no choice. I had to find value in the dance that I was doing. There was no other dance possible. I came to think of myself as a dance making-father-son-neighbour-writer. It was my only hope of being able to create a meaningful and robust research project. So I accepted the opportunity and committed to following it through.

I experimented with engaging with the everyday in different ways. I parented as performance practice, dancing for my children and my wife. I performed for small audiences of friends in my home. I moved the furniture or I danced around it. Everyday was somatic and kinaesthetic attention practice. I attempted to engage moment-to-moment awareness of my self as a mindful body. I attempted to suspend fixating on notions like: if I never rented a studio I was not really dancing, and performing at home is not worth as much as performing at a recognised venue for strangers. I attempted to allow such doubts while consistently supporting my attentional and physical practices.

In her discussion of improvised dance and “tight places” Goldman (2010) cites the work of Foucault, in particular his notion “practices of freedom” (2010, 4). Goldman’s overall project is to offer more flexible understandings of dance improvisation, and the concept of freedom in relation to practices of dance improvisation. By foregrounding contextual issues that instances of dance improvisation practices have faced and overcome, Goldman shows that improvisation can be considered capable of delivering ways of moving, despite or because they are occurring in “tight” places, places of constraint. Goldman notes that “one’s social and historical positions in the world affect one’s ability to move, both literally and figuratively.” (2010, 5). “Tight places” is a term Goldman has taken from Fred Moten’s essay *Taste Flavour Dissonance Escape: Preface for a Solo by Miles Davis* in which Moten references the story of a slave girl Harriet Jacobs. To escape her owner who was also sexually abusive Jacobs hid in an attic, or crawl space, for seven years. The space was narrow, the roof was low, she could literally only crawl and yet as Goldman notes, she managed a “series of ongoing and necessarily improvisational gestures” (2010, 3).

My constraints were relative to me personally, and on a different scale entirely to those Jacobs, or others featured in Goldman’s work, were subjected to. However it was due to an emphasis on process as product, built in to improvisation, that I was enabled to continue to consider if what I was doing was dance, and ultimately this was what enabled me to continue my praxis. The
domestic familial sphere of experience can surface great intensity. Pressures emanating from within this sphere can compromise relationships and lead to great suffering. I am very glad to note that as I performed for audiences in my home, on city streets and as I danced alone in our lounge room and kitchen and bedroom and bathroom, I was initiated into new ways of understanding dance. Goldman clearly agrees when she writes: “Improvised dance literally involves giving shape to oneself and deciding how to move in relation to an unsteady landscape. To go about this endeavour with a sense of confidence and possibility is a powerful way to inhabit one’s body and interact with the world. In this sense, improvised dance offers a very real practice of freedom that can be carried into more “pedestrian” spheres of movement” (2010, 146).

I came to recognise that I was changing my mind. I was being initiated into an alternative understanding of dance and artistic praxis. Remaining available to what was happening to me as a mindful body, via a committed focus on my kinaesthetic and somatic experiences, and to whatever I might find out, 24/7, was uniquely productive - it provoked what turned into a consistent and incontrovertible experience in which I understood dance as first and foremost attention and the accompanying movement could be potentially of any kind. I was ready to find, and follow my interest and I found a much wider variety of experiences and conditions interesting and of value. This return to my body, to the experiences that were happening here and now made me rethink what was meant by the terms ordinary, mundane, and everyday. I found value in the ordinary in ways that were difficult to describe with language but which I was able to honour and embody in dancing. I was led into the realisation, as Rothfield describes it, that “the domain of cultural sensibility is to be found in everyday life” (2010, 300).

**Attentiveness as Praxis**

The ordinary subject to reflection and analysis is something Marxist philosopher, sociologist, and theorist of the everyday Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) emphasised in his work. He argued that the aim of a critique of everyday life was to discover “what must and can be transformed in people’s lives, in Timbuktu, and in Paris” (Lefebvre 2008, 26). Lefebvre, writing in France, made the case that widespread social conditions of uniformity brought on by modern capitalism were what created the everyday as an analytical category, and what drove interest in it, which was shown by literature and the arts generally. Lefebvre conceptualised the everyday as what “surrounds us, it besieges us, on all sides and from all directions. We are inside it and outside it. No so-called ‘elevated’ activity can be reduced to it, nor can it be separated from it.” (Lefebvre 2008, 29). Kristin Ross asserts that Lefebvre “sometime in 1946” discovered the everyday, which she suggests he did by proclaiming “that most insignificant of categories to be worthy of theoretical attention” (Ross 2008, 42).

Rita Felski (1999, 15) acknowledging the work of Heidegger and Lukács, argues that Lefebvre did not strictly speaking discover the everyday as an analytical concept. However, although Lefebvre’s regard for the everyday was ambivalent, it was also highly generative, and so his contribution to analysis of the everyday was significantly different from that of his predecessors, particularly Heidegger and Lukács, who considered the everyday negatively. To them the everyday was representative of the unreflected natural attitude, which was inferior to the theoretical attitude of the reflectively engaged intellectual (Felski 1999, 16). In the context of my
work with performance and with my praxis generally the everyday does not stand for, or imply the unreflected, so-called natural attitude. From my PhD Journal:

My day’s haul after much deleting and rewriting (and hair pulling), is just 87 words. I. am. screwed.
It’s late when I get home. I’m tired and worried.
I sit down at the kitchen table. The house is quiet. I notice a pain in my shoulders and chest.
I breathe carefully, deeply, and I adjust my spine.
Sitting upright now I let my bones carry my weight. And I stop clenching my jaw like a psycho.
Oh.
Suddenly, I realise, for the first time today, I’m dancing. I forgot.
I’m dancing.
My breath releases, with a little whoosh and fills down into my belly. My joints seem to sigh in response, expanding. A delicate pulse of movement initiates itself and stretches my back which I respond to by continuing and inch by inch, I become a body again. What a relief. I’m in practice. Another breath. Triumphant. I’m suddenly ever so slightly happy.
(PhD Journal 12.01.16)

By engaging with dancing, by being somatically and kinaesthetically attentive, focused on my own body, and on the environment, is to be, but in a changed way. Hyper aware and focused for detail on my body, I move from being that which I do not attend to, to being as attending-to. To constantly sensing, and re-sensing, noticing and responding. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone describes it in this way:

“[Because] of the everyday familiarity of the [kinaesthetic] dynamic even with its circumstantial variations, we commonly pay it no attention, our “concern gaze,” as Heidegger might put it, being directed elsewhere… however, any time we care to turn our attention to it … there it is” (Sheets-Johnstone 2011, 512).

The Everyday and Performance: Performing on City Streets, Performing at Home, and Back to Performing on City Streets

Attending to my self as an unfinished mindful body is foundational for my live performances of dance. And although my engagement with attentional practices is supported by engaging in praxis at all times, including during moments of everyday life, my capacity for recognising and therefore attending to my self as an unfinished mindful body is impaired whenever I attempt to participate in social situations where I am known – i.e. in situations where myself and others consider me as an identity that is to any degree, resolved. This was a crucial realisation for this research. This realisation led to my conviction that I must go where I could focus on dancing, I became convinced that I must stage my performances in open air locations in the midst of a big city. I required places to perform where I could wholeheartedly dance, which is to say places where I could explore being unknown, as simultaneously I explore knowing myself via attending to myself as an unfinished mindful body.
In paragraphs that follow I note how home shows revealed themselves clearly as social situations in which a focus on dance making, and a focus on inhabiting a live performance attentive to my self as an unfinished mindful body, were hampered. Also noted is that this realisation had another link to my understanding of the everyday. When I perform in open city street locations as an unfinished mindful body, I do not depart from my everyday being, rather I become more fully integrated with all that I am, which includes my known identity as an everyday person with friends, family, a history etc. This experience of dance making as integrative of experiences of self also led to a heightened sense of being integrated with others. As a result I came to feel greater social responsibility, and greater capacity for sincere and meaningful social participation. I began to realise that my work with attentional practices in the form of live performances of dance choreographies that are not pre set, existed as social actions that create positive change in the form of integrative experiences felt by myself and by others.

My work with dance on city streets, with which somatic attentiveness was also a feature, began in 1997 with dance theatre duo Two Suits. Two Suits performed dance while dressed as businessmen, in everyday contexts. I have continued during my PhD research to use the same basis for instances of solo street performance. With the appearance of an ordinary businessman, I dance on city streets during times when I am surrounded by other ordinary businessmen. By being somatically attentive however, I assume a different attitude and I create a very different image. This is my attempt to artistically re-contextualise the movement normally associated with the businessman image. I do not do extreme or spectacular moves. I take the everyday image, and the everyday location, and my everyday movement, and via attention I transform my movement. Instead of walking, sitting, and standing in habitual ways, I move much more sensitively. And via a choreographic sensibility, I am able to make choices that reflect my interest in dynamics and lyricism. It is in this way that I consider myself dancing with the everyday.

My work revolves around exploring practices that upset the habits that would have me limited to regarding my self as just a brain on a stick. (PhD Journal 10.12.14)

Dance performances located in relation to the everyday also occurred during my candidature, as mentioned above, in the space Felski argues is most representative of the everyday – a home. Making her case for the home as a space with the same representative qualities as the everyday, Rita Felski argues that “like everyday life itself, home constitutes a base, a taken for granted grounding, which allows us to make forays into other worlds” (1999, 22). I performed in my home to draw out my questions related to my experiences of a blurring of identities, as I mentioned in the earlier part of this chapter. With my performances in my home, I was also hoping to access a “situation of trust” that Russell Dumas recognises as associated with the concept of “salon performances” (Dumas 2014, 15). I wanted to access this situation to support making myself as vulnerable as possible, which I believed was necessary for my performances to constitute a sharing of something meaningful and genuine. My aim also was to show my sense of value for the everyday, to show my recognition that the domain of the everyday is what makes my work with performance possible - it is the foundation for my forays into other worlds, and it is also, in terms of my everyday body, the site of attentional practices upon which my dance making is derived.
The home performance or the ‘salon’, is nothing new. Isadora Duncan was performing in French salons at the turn of the twentieth century, to small audiences sitting so close she was “brushing their noses with her toes” (Kurth 2003, 82-83). Jürgen Habermas in The Structural Transformation of The Public Sphere (1991) critiqued the role of the salon as a place melding public and private spheres. He considered social, cultural, historical and political ramifications of this melding. Russell Dumas works with what he calls a “salon environment”. Dumas writes that the notion of “salon practice” forms an important part of his research: “It involves a strategy of implication, designed to place the observer and the observed in a situation of trust and intimacy” (2014, 15). Another Australian choreographer Natalie Cursio staged a dance work inside her home of 13 years entitled The Middle Room. Doing so Cursio hoped to provide audiences with “a situation in which we can notice ourselves and each other in a way that is not always prominent in daily life…. We will be ordinary and not” (Cursio 2016a). A blurring of identities in Cursio’s The Middle Room was achieved, as noted by reviewer Gracia Haby: “Cursio traces the wall and door behind me, and I listen to the sound of her finger as it glides over the different surfaces that she is familiar with. Do I turn and look or stay, ears pricked? I wonder if the space feels different to her now that I am in it and it is a “performance” rather than a “home.”” (Haby 2016).

For one year from June 2014-2015 I performed numerous solos for invited guests. I experimented with different emphasis, and only towards the end did I begin to focus on dancing. This focus on dancing is what took me out of the salon set up, and into the street. In the street, I can easily become unfinished, and this state I finally recognised, is necessary for my somatic and kinaesthetic attention to determine my engagements with others, and to determine my engagements with dance and with dancing.

Using one example of the numerous performances that I staged in my home, I will consider the following aspects of my praxis: to value the everyday as what makes my work with dance possible; to engage with valuing the everyday as method for overcoming the everyday; and to honour the everyday and my sense of social responsibility by focusing on dance making.

In the end I realised that valuing the everyday can take different forms. I realised that when I practice kinaesthetic and somatic attentiveness as the basis for dance making I am beginning precisely by honouring the everyday body that I am. I realised that via this focus I am more able to create art works that constitute meaningful social gestures.

In Winter 2014, my mother was staying with me in my home, while my wife and children were away. One night I organised a performance in my home, to showcase three solos: I performed dance, Dani Cresp improvisation and Rohan Case performed as a solo musician. The audience numbered approximately 15, and was made up of friends, neighbours and a few who were strangers to me.

Honouring the Everyday by Focusing on Dance Making

In the hours leading up to the event I went shopping for audience snacks, which I later prepared and presented, and I spent several hours cleaning my home. Artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles has problematised through her work a focus on domestic chores as art, which she calls “maintenance
art” (Molesworth 2008, 172). Curator Helen Molesworth notes that contemporary artworks such as Ukeles’ suggest “that domestic chores… are not exclusively private but instead such labours are intimately connected to public events” (2008, 172). I was aware of Ukeles’ socially engaged artwork Touch Sanitation (1979-1980) in which she documented meeting every one of New York’s 8500 sanitation employees, to say to them “thank you, for keeping New York City alive” (Justin 2016). I was keenly aware of my own sense of social responsibility, and I wanted to integrate this sensitivity into my dance performances. This was why I took so much time preparing my house for guests. I undertook chores that afternoon and into the evening to make the performance event possible in my home. These chores as a set of actions mirrored the chores or activities I do in my home daily, and they also connect to all the so called artistic activities I engage with also every day. The everyday work I do as a parent, and partner, and member of a community, is intimately connected to the work I do with attention, and with dance. This situation of blurred identities enabled me to consider the effects of such a blurring on my staging of dance performances.

With inadequate time, I attempted to engage with my performance making practices: to create a connection, sufficiently robust for performing, with my sense of self as a mindful body. In the end my time to perform arrived, and I danced but in a hollow way. It was almost a parody of my praxis. I moved but without a deeply felt sensitivity to the perceptions and sensations of my bodily being. This failure contributed to my recognition that my ordinary self is not what I want to perform.

In this way I became aware of the necessity for confronting my everyday ordinary self with the opposites of the everyday, as described by Mike Featherstone, which include a “sense of mission… and the capacity to attain distinction” (1992, 159-160).

As noted above, Felski considers the home as a representative of the everyday. Staging performances in my lounge room was because I wanted to explore my integration of the everyday into my work with dance, to acknowledge that I harness its support for making dance. My everyday life makes my dance possible both in terms of supporting me as a person, and in terms of being that which I focus upon in somatic and kinaesthetic attentiveness practices which underpin my dance making. With her work Ukeles celebrates and effectively shows that she values that of the everyday, that which is denied as having influence or importance relative to the public sphere, where as a culture we locate acts of distinction and value. This is my project also. I too wish to recognise the value in what is not more widely valued. As a result of my home performances I came to recognise however that the sense of responsibility I have to acknowledging the role the everyday plays in my praxis was actually obstructing my praxis.

I wanted to forefront this blurring - the integration of my everyday life with my art. I wanted to do this for two reasons; i) To honour the everyday - and thereby make my performances based around a principle that I felt made them meaningful as instances of social action for a more just world, one that valued an important sphere of action - that which occurred in the sphere of the everyday; and ii) to further access the everyday body which as noted, forms the basis for my dance making via practices of somatic and kinaesthetic attentiveness.
I realised however, that to honour the everyday in my dance and performance making practices involved acknowledgment that kinaesthetic and somatic attentiveness uses the everyday body, but then as a function of this hyper-attentiveness transcends being identified as belonging to the category, “the everyday”. I came to realise that my sense of social responsibility, which was based within my sense of valuing the everyday, was not being translated into an artwork that had any hope of effectively functioning as a platform for raising awareness and recognition of the value of the everyday, so long as I focused on anything other than attentional practices that underpin my dance and performance making practices. Whatever potentials my work with dance may have for accessing notions of social responsibility, depend on my focus being firmly concentrated on attentional practices.

From this point, I came to see that engaging in praxis at all times, during my everyday life, and during performance making practices, was done to support my engagement with attentional practices which underpin my dance and my performance making. I proceeded by moving away from home shows, and towards performances in the street. It was in the street that I could become anonymous, a person undone, a person engaged in processes of finding my self via attending to my bodily being. I came to understand that potentials for performances of non pre set movement to have impacts on the level of social responsibility depended on transformations that might occur only if I persisted with focusing on dancing.
Chapter Three
Somatic Attentiveness

With respect to bodily-felt qualia generally, it is notable that the essential nature of the body is not to be in pain … or to see colours …, but to move. It would thus seem imperative to concern ourselves with animation, to investigate movement, self-movement. (Sheets-Johnstone 2011, 514)

My undertaking of contemplative practices, derived from the fields of Somatics and Buddhism, has contributed to honing the values by which I live. These values motivated me as I developed the specific aims, and forms of my practice. In this chapter I account for these aims and forms by addressing their origins. As a result accounts, already begun, are extended, of why I have appropriated my everyday experiences as artistic practice. These explorations provide the necessary background for an articulation of my dance, and performance making methodologies.

From Somatics and Buddhism, a Praxis With Somatic Attentiveness and Kinaesthesia

After nearly twenty years practicing Zen Buddhism, and somatic centred approaches to moving and making dance, I am aware of the numerous resonances, in terms of theories and practices, between at least those fields of practice and inquiry. The meeting of Zen Buddhism with somatic attentiveness with kinaesthesia, as a compound set of approaches to underpin movement generations and compositions in dance performance is not by any means new or unique. Dancing with Dharma: Essays on Movement and Dance in Western Buddhism edited by Harrison Blum (2016) and Dance, Somatics and Spiritualities: Contemporary Sacred Narratives, edited by Glenna Batson, Amanda Williamson, Sarah Whatley, and Rebecca Weber (2014) will be useful as stepping stones into many additional references for those interested in this community of practice.

My praxis in this compound approach, the meeting of Zen Buddhism with somatic attentiveness with kinaesthesia, is extended in unique ways through intersections with the everyday, and with clown, which will be further explored in the chapter following this current one.

Among dance makers working in post-war North America, when Zen interested a wide group of artists, one dance maker in particular is very well known for his strong interest in Zen Buddhism and that is Merce Cunningham (Sellers-Young 2013, 76). However, Cunningham had other primary foci than Somatics and somatic attentiveness, for his groundbreaking work with dance and choreographic processes, heavily informed as it was by Zen. Barbara Dilley was a dancer with the Merce Cunningham Company, and a member of The Grand Union performance collective (1969-1976). She designed the dance program at Naropa University from 1974-1985. Naropa University is a university founded by Shambhala, which is a Buddhist teaching and practice organisation with its lineage in Tibetan Buddhism. Dilley originated Contemplative Dance Practice, in which practitioners engage in somatically orientated movement explorations, immediately following Buddhist meditation (Shambhala Philadelphia 2016). Anna Halprin, a key figure in Contemporary Dance history, at various times explored an interest in combining Zen...
theory and practices with somatic consciousness as her set of orientations for dance making and live dance performance (Worth Poynor 2004, 38). Sondra Fraleigh, an important figure in the overlapping fields of Somatics and dance, wrote Dance and the Lived Body (1996) which theorised dance performance as an art form, from a conceptual basis grounded in somatic consciousness. As Joann McNamara describes it, Fraleigh offers “a concept of the dancer’s experienced, lived body as the central juncture for an aesthetics of dance.” (McNamara 1999, 177). With a subsequent book Dancing Into Darkness: Butoh, Zen, and Japan (1999) Fraleigh explored her personal experiences practicing Zen and dancing Butoh, which she argues is a dance performance form with “a somatic basis” (Fraleigh 2015, 4).

I will describe instances where my own praxis exploits links between Buddhism, and principles and practices I have derived from Somatics. I will first develop the meanings I attribute to these two terms by describing the relevant contexts that exposed me and my work to them, and to them in relation to specific meanings. These descriptions of contexts and my specific experiences support the later descriptions of my in-praxis applications of these terms and the practices I have associated with them. Firstly, in overview, Buddhist, somatic and dance practices integrated within one another within my praxis, functionally address what Sheets-Johnstone notes in relation to cognitive science: “if cognitive science is to make use of experiential reports, it should ensure that reportees are trained if not in phenomenological methodology, then in ‘auto-sensory observation’” (2011, 514). The practices, and the concepts associated with them described below have played a crucial role in my praxis generally by providing me with a heightened capacity for ‘auto-sensory observation’. This is so much the case that these practices and theories underscore kinaesthetic awareness, as performance making mode and performance making procedure.

**Somatics**

Philosophical work by John Dewey, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Alfred Whitehead all contained arguments for evolving understandings of mind body integrations moving beyond Cartesian dualism. These developments contributed to a context in the twentieth century for the development of meanings and practices associated with the word Somatics (Eddy 2009, 6). Somatics as a term relative to such understandings came into use following philosopher and Feldenkrais practitioner Thomas Hanna’s book Bodies in Revolt: A Primer in Somatic Thinking (1970).

Hanna argued for an understanding of soma that “does not mean “body”; it means “me, the bodily being.”” (Hanna 1970, 35). Such a definition needs a different term argues Sondra Fraleigh who proposes, for arguments sake, to include “Plato’s tripartite unity of soul, spirit, and mind” within Hanna’s bodily being, to give “soma-psyche” (Fraleigh 2015, xx). This composite term argues Fraleigh, represents acknowledgement that contemporary understandings behind somatic work recognise that “soma in its aliveness includes psyche in its fullness” (Fraleigh 2015, xx).

Hanna noted in 1986 that “Somatics is the field which studies the soma: namely, the body as perceived from within by first-person perception” (Hanna 1986). Although based on this shared premise, techniques and specific practices from this field are extremely varied in form and focus. Through the work of Hanna and others, and through a noting of their shared adherence to common underlying principles, the term Somatics has come to usefully identify this diverse set
of practices and techniques (Johnson 1986). Principles essential to Somatics practices as noted by Johnson (1986, 4-8) include: Careful observation, beginning at the level of personal perception; Deepening sensitivity to one’s bodily experience of being, and one’s bodily experience of others; Conscious differentiation between subjectively and objectively experiencing body; and an expanded sense of the implications of such engagements with self as mind body.

**Somatics, Somatic Attentiveness, and Dance**

Dance practitioners working sensitively with perceptual knowledge of their own body in movement, engage with principles also found in Somatics practices. Sondra Fraleigh notes that dance taught or practiced from a somatic point of view “takes on a set of values associated with perceptual knowledge, also including aesthetic and cultural experience.” (2015, xxiii). As Fraleigh argues, important distinctions support clarity regarding the nature of somatic work within dance:

> “We cannot assume that bodywork is always somatic. […] In somatically undertaken bodywork, *experiential values and human development* are at the centre”. (2015, xxiii-xiv)

I accept Fraleigh’s assertion that somatic practices have experiential values and human development at their centre. Indeed it is as a result of these values that my praxis has found integrated centrally within itself, somatic attentiveness underpinning processes leading to dance and performance making. Fraleigh continues:

> “The entire field of somatic practice may be understood in light of human development. Indeed, somatics is never simply about working with a tight psoas muscle; rather, it is concerned with the whole person. How could it not be, if movement infuses life and is important to healthy development? (2015, xxiii).

Having somatic attentiveness centrally positioned within my praxis acknowledges my own interest in human development, played out by terms which reference the “whole person” such as mindful body. This whole person or mindful body, is of course also inherently cultural and social. As noted, an important set of considerations throughout this dissertation inquire into how being orientated by values such as human development, and social responsibility, effect performance making, and propel a sense of the social and political agency of my work.

Broadly speaking, in Western Contemporary Dance settings somatic practices have made important contributions to dance methodologies. Eddy (2009) Johnson (2014) and Fraleigh (2015) all note that practice modalities exploring movement via principles now associated with the field of Somatics have been in place since the late nineteenth century. Prominent theorist of Somatics Martha Eddy, writes of the so-called pioneers of Somatics that they “discovered that by being engaged in attentive dialogue with one’s bodily self we, as humans, can…perform with greater vitality and expressiveness (Eddy 2009, 6).

In a 2002 edition of the *Journal of Dance Education* focused on Somatics, Jill Green notes that:
“Somotics is evolving into a sub-discipline in dance. Researchers are exploring somatic theory and practice while practitioners are incorporating Somotics throughout the dance world, in educational, artistic, and therapeutic venues” (Green 2002, 113).

Specifically relative to dance, practices from the field of Somotics are employed to various ends including: to enable optimum physical functionality; to treat injuries; and to avoid injuries by designing and applying training and performance approaches that focus on promoting and facilitating sustainable movement habits.

Theorist Don Hanlon Johnson refers to Somotics being foremost “a generative concept like cognitive science, or ecology” and he attributes in part the unexpected but highly reasonable and productive interdisciplinary collaborations seen to be occurring, to this term’s openness (Johnson 2016). I sense this definitive spaciousness relative to the term Somotics and that allows also my own productive utilisation of it. Much like Andrea Olsen, who calls into dialogue somatic approaches to making dance with desires for art making. Olsen describes a somatic approach to dance practice, based on her extensive experience with the field of Somotics, as the “trusting [of] the intrinsic intelligence of the body”, and “art making” she clarifies as her desire for “[shaking] up habits while giving form to emerging impulses” (2014, xv). My praxis is also representative of a similar conversation which I actively facilitate, also between art making, and principles and practices from Somotics, and dance. My work with Somotics is my own unique mixture, derivation and application of principles and techniques associated with this field of theory and practice.

My first experiences with practicing and performing dance were with Contact Improvisation and as Cooper Albright notes, this is a dance form fundamentally informed by, and dependent on “somatic work” (2013, 209). Also from this time of discovering and developing a relationship with dance I attended weekly Feldenkrais classes with Rinske Ginsberg. Although I continue to have a deep appreciation for The Feldenkrais Method and continue to avail myself of one-on-one consultations, I have also been significantly influenced in how I attribute sense to my knowledge and application of Somotics by the experiences I have had maintaining a solo dance practice. Barbara Dilley notes that solo dance improvisation practice is potentially deep “and necessary” as it brings an individual’s experience of their “inner world into this very moment” (Dilley 2016, italics in original). I have sought out dance classes with practitioners who support working with dance by focusing on development of an inner, somatic focus. Since 1998 dance practitioners whose particular guidance in class situations I have benefited from include Ros Warby, Tony Yap, Deborah Hay, and Rosalind Crisp. All of whom, in ways relative to their own specific practices of dance making, rather than attempting to inculcate a technique that would be formally reproducible and recognisable on any body, have instead emphasised in their teaching the means by which any individual might continue to explore and deepen their own sensing into their own bodies as a route towards dance making. This, as Rouhiainen describes, involves primarily a supporting of “idiosyncratic experiences” of body structure, and “functional bodily organization”, which she asserts as defining of a somatic approach to practice (2010, 57).

From my PhD Journal:

Moshe Feldenkrais has interpenetrated my body’s mind. Using his voice, I call attention to potentials I could enact and embody in any moment. Moshe’s in my pelvis, he’s
reflecting on how I choose to move my pelvis. He’s in my calves too. Because I believed him when he said that how I carry my calves has been socially determined. And Anna Halprin said “dance anywhere” and hey, I do! Fostering these spectral possessions of my own body is another meaning for practice in the everyday. But these characters and voices are significantly informed by Somatics. So is hearing these voices somatic consciousness? In any case it’s another set of experiences affirming my impulse to validate every movement, every posture, every breath as significant. And it is an appreciation of the limitless grounds for beauty and wonder afforded by a conversation with self as a mindful body. This, Somatics consciousness, facilitates this recognition, and subsequent explorations. It’s these voices from Somatics’ literature that mirror my own valuing of such a conversation with my own being. Such resonance gives me courage, and fosters my inner life. Writers from Somatics give my inner voices poetry, and society. (PhD Journal 06.03.16)

Before continuing by elaborating on the specifics of how connections exist between dance making, Somatics, and somatic attentiveness, I wish to account for what enabled my work with somatic attentiveness, which is a certain set of Buddhist practices and theory.

**Somatic Attentiveness via Zen Buddhism**

I do not consider myself a Buddhist, but due to a history of exploring a variety of approaches that promised a greater capacity for living well, I have had a significant encounter with Buddhism. Relative to this discussion of my praxis, and in particular my practices leading to dance making for live solo performance, Zen Buddhism contributes conceptualisations, values, and practical strategies that have supported and extended my work with dance and performance. As I emphatically concur with the following text from Sheets-Johnstone in which she observes that somatic attentiveness and kinaesthetic awareness benefit from a partnership with Buddhism:

> “Our attention to something as simple as our breath, as in Buddhist meditation, can indeed be kinaesthetically illuminating and illuminating too of the dynamic congruency of movement to emotions and the semantic congruency of movement to cognition” (Sheets-Johnstone 2011, 478).

Buddhism is a non-theistic global religion. The word itself is representative of a continuum of beliefs, and religious dogmas (Humphreys 1964). Like other words describing a set of globally dispersed beliefs and practices, Buddhism includes some elements seemingly incongruous with others.

Before I left Melbourne in the year 2000 to tour with arts company *Strange Fruit*, for several years I was intensely involved in meditation practice with guidance and support from a Zen Buddhist group (CHZG). Through this group I was introduced to a gentle, unorthodox strain of Zen Buddhist practice. The organisation and beliefs of this group have similarities to the group described in *Grassroots Zen* (Steger & Besserman 2001). Its Zen lineage, in part, is based on practices, beliefs and group structures developed by Zen reformers. Since 8th Century China and up until current times, Zen reformers have de-emphasised religious and dogmatic foci. This in
effect has made Zen more accessible to Westerners, particularly those disillusioned with institutionalised religion generally (Steger & Besserman 1991). At the time of my involvement, membership of the CHZG was gender and age diverse, everything was organised non-hierarchically, and numerous members were social activists and practicing artists. CHZG had a bare-bones approach to spiritual materialism. The room where we met to practice was an unused storage room in the grounds of a small primary school. Inside it was completely unadorned, just white walls and old carpet. “Tsao Pen Chan” properly describes the CHZG’s interpretation of Zen. Translated this refers to Zen meditation practice for lay people (Perle Besserman email correspondence 14.04.15; Steger & Besserman 2001, 1).

From my PhD Journal:

I rocked up unannounced, hoping for my first ever experience with meditation. As daggy as it sounds, I admit to thinking Zen was cool. I really did not know more about it than that. I knocked on the door. A man came out. He was tall, grey haired and wearing black jeans and a simple black t-shirt. He came out shutting the door behind him and he smiled at me. It was dusk and there were no streetlights but I could still see this was a friendly fellow. I liked him. I found out about two years later, that he’s a well known painter, with work in New York at The Guggenheim. But that night he was just some guy, and one of the group’s more experienced members, my welcoming committee.

“Can you sit with crossed legs?” He asked.

“Yes, I can” I replied.

“Well then sit as still as you can, and just follow your breath. If you get lost, if you lose concentration, just return to following your breath.”

“That’s it?”

“Yes” he said, “that’s it”. Then he added, “The session is nearly three hours. You can leave any time you want. Come on in and see how you go.” (PhD Journal 20.01.16)

Live Performance and Being With my Body

I sat with the CHZG group every alternate weekday, for two years. On the other days I meditated alone at home. I attended residential and non-residential retreats. I studied Zen theory and practice independently, and I received instruction from a Master whom the group flew to Australia from Argentina once or twice annually. It was this Argentinean Master who told me during a dokusan, a private master-student meeting during a retreat, that I should “smash anything in [my] mind that separates what happens on [my] meditation cushion, from what happens in the rest of [my] life.” Shortly after that meeting, I left Melbourne to live for two years out of a suitcase. I was touring full-time with Strange Fruity. Facebook and smartphones had not yet been invented. I lived in a quasi-meditation retreat. I meditated in hotel rooms, I meditated whilst being led from bus stops to train stations, to airports. I meditated whilst roaming unfamiliar cities. My everyday life was severed from local communities and familiar locations. Constantly relocating, with no personal connections beyond fellow cast and crew, I performed the same shows hundreds of times. Meditation grounded me.

I performed dance theatre on hundreds of occasions during this two year period, mostly to large audiences, and always outdoors. The performances had no dialogue, just lots of semi-improvised gesture and dance. I experimented with different meditative foci during performances. My
Attentional practices evolved given their germination in seated and in active, performative forms of meditation.

Between 2010-2014, whilst living in Berlin and then later when travelling to Berlin from Melbourne, I participated in a solo performance research group Ducks Berlin which I co-founded. This group shared a common language having completed workshops with the teachers Andrew Morrish, and/or Rosalind Crisp. Initially for two years we met weekly, for studio practice, and we showcased our work with solo improvisation in performance programs including nights at Tanzfabrik Berlin and Studio K77 Berlin. Ducks Berlin was made up of dancers, visual artists and performance artists. We encouraged each other to enlarge our range of what we considered acceptable materials for solo performance – so anything was possible. It was open improvisation - our own scaled down solo versions of The Grand Union (1969-1976) and like them, I too wanted to know “What is a dance? What could the outer limits of dance art be?” (Banes 1987, 218). Movement, dance as somatic and kinaesthetic attentiveness remained for me always near the forefront, facilitating and leading my inquiries. This eventually created my conviction that this, as dance, was my homeland. It was where I felt my strongest, where I could hope to undertake inquiries that would lead me into a satisfying sense of connectedness to others. Dance contributed the questions that felt most important. I began a process of removing everything that, throughout my history as a performer, had been crowding the stage.

I made rules, which were my own, but surely like any choreographer who gets a rush of clarity and who responds by listing summary exclamation I was reminded of Yvonne Rainer’s 1965 No Manifesto (Rainer 1999, 16). I was also aware of Rainer’s 2008 Manifesto Reconsidered (Hildebrandt 2015, 39) and Mette Ingvartsen’s 2010 Yes Manifesto (Ingvartsen 2016). The changes/rules I made are below. Making changes in this way had contemporary and historical links, which I have noted using italics. I said:

No to an emphasis on theatrical effects including makeup, costume, or characterisation.  
Rainer 1965: “No to transformations and magic and make-believe”.

No to structuring performances beforehand, nothing pre-known. No scores, no narratives.  
Rainer 2008: “Unpredictable is the name of the game”.

Yes to somatic attentiveness and kinaesthetic awareness as foci for practice, in performance and beyond.  
Ingvartsen: “Yes to materiality/body practice”.

Yes to what this set of foci made possible with regards to the poetics of my performances. And yes to this being categorised unconditionally as “dance”.  
Ingvartsen: “Yes to un-naming, decoding and recoding expression. Yes to style as a result of procedure and specificity of a proposal.”.

Yes to acknowledging there is a path on which I feel most at home, most whole and undivided - yes to practice with kinaesthesia and somatic attentiveness as the basis for my practice with dance.  
Ingvartsen: “Yes to organizing principles rather than fixed logic systems.”

As a result of these emphatic pronouncements which also represented changes and clarifications, I met with experiences of dance as containing potentials for modes of being, namely being a subjectivity as a body. Experiences were also new in terms of the depth to which I could focus
and the depth of certainty that I could perform this self’s fascination with its self, as body and the processes this represented were open for others to witness. In performance, I experienced a sense that the more openly interested in my praxis I could manage to be, the more connected I was becoming with others. At times, syntaxes of movement were endlessly fascinating. Concerns that I might find it difficult to be “creative” became irrelevant.

Dancing during these years, with a basis in somatic inquiry, revealed its capacity for complementing and being complemented by Zen practice. This led to my awareness of links between my dance making and a sense of moral purpose. I became aware that my dance making as a set of processes committed to being experimental artistic processes, also responded to a social responsibility dimension. Morality and value-appropriate action was found already integrated within my dance making as a result of my (ever deepening) body-aware or rather, mindful body, approach.

Mindfulness

Moving from the meditation cushion to my dance and live performance practices, the experiences I have gained from exploring non judgement in meditation, provided me with resources for live art making. I sense that what is most interesting about me in performance, comes from what managing my personal judgements affords. Practicing with judgement has opened the way for a greater degree of my self being present and open to being visible to others, in all my unfinished, unmasterful, ways. Working consciously with judgement has enabled me to be on-stage in ways I find interesting and functional. It has enabled live explorations with fewer feelings of shame and greater overall risk taking.

In moments my praxis has operated as a platform upon which its constituent elements might undergo transformations following their hybridisation with my other praxis elements. This has been the case in relation to both my practices of meditation and my practices involving somatic-principled, and somatic attentiveness as basis for dance making. These approaches met within my organism, and they infiltrated each other. This changed my understanding of their natures, and as a result I changed how I approached applying them within my praxis.

Mindfulness as a term used in relation to meditation techniques, is very well known. It refers in general usage, to attentiveness to what one is experiencing. Tibetan Lama Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche described mindfulness as a balanced state equivalent to “wakefulness”, also noting it “is being watchful, not watching some thing”, and the ideal tuning is to be “neither lost in daydream, nor holding our attention too tightly” (Trungpa 2010, 34). Zen mindfulness meditations I learnt involved sitting or walking and observing my breath, maintaining a released body. James Austin in his extensive study, Zen and The Brain (1999), adds that Zen mindfulness seeks to engage and sustain a “non-reactive bare attention, open to anything” (my emphasis Austin 1999, 126).

Sitting in meditation for lengthy periods, returning again and again to attentiveness of what is presenting itself, benefits me by giving me repeated practice with just “being with” and not “identifying with”.

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Enunciating a description of the “Zen stance” relative to judgement, Austin cites Freud’s writings addressed to physicians who wish to attend to the mental processes of others. To remain in a productive relation to judgemental tendencies according to Freud is simply to maintain a “calm, quiet attentiveness - of evenly hovering attention” (Freud in Austin 1999, 127).

Maintaining a willingness to observe, allow, and accept whatever I encounter during meditation is sometimes very difficult. This difficulty increases when I am in the midst of life, making decisions and acting upon them. In actuality, I work constantly with judgement. I have found the implied insistence by the term mindfulness on non judgement, particularly during heightened moments in everyday life and during live performance, to be highly problematic.

Aspiring to non judgement leads me to judge. I judge myself for judging and I resent my present conditions and I aspire to an idealised state of being located anywhere else than where I am currently in time and space. Although I know I should respond with non judgement, I believe I firstly must respond by focusing on valuing whatever is occurring. I am convinced that I must engage whatever response supports me returning, or remaining, with who and what I experience myself to be in the current moment.

Clearly I am not experiencing mindfulness practices as they are intended to be experienced. I do not deny the rhetoric of mindfulness as accounting for my difficulties. Chögyam Trungpa describes my experience as the result of a lack of “inspiration and openness” in which case “the spiritual path becomes the path of…desire. One remains trapped in the desire to improve oneself” (Trungpa 1987, 98). Nonetheless I must acknowledge my experience and respond by experimenting with responses. This I have done and as a result the term mindfulness has been removed from use relative to my praxis. I associate mindfulness with an aspiration for improvement and in my work with non pre set movement, it has been my consistent experience that if I allow aspiration for improvement to enter, I de-emphasise valuing what is here with me as my present condition. The extent to which I devalue what I am actually experiencing now, is the extent to which I erode the foundations of my praxis with non pre set movement.

Additionally, the term mindfulness has become problematic for use relative to my praxis due to its implied focus on “mind”. Like many people, through focused mindfulness meditation on a cushion in a quiet room, through returning again and again to present mindedness, I have had experiences of my self and of my own body as never before. It exposed selfhood to me as significantly bodily conditioned, and as modulating endlessly. “I” experience my self as a mindful body, and as a process, an unfinished, unfinishing, body. Cognitive processes, and subjective awareness participate within this unfinished body, in a rich symphonic experience of perceptual and affective being. And it is certainly not emanating from, nor in any way centred relative to my brain – it is relative to the entirety of my material and intellectual being.

An Expanded Sense of Value

The term mindfulness is inappropriate for use relative to my praxis because it is equated in my experience with non judgement, which implies the presence of an aspiration for going beyond judgement, which is an aspiration for self improvement. These connotations are anathema to my understanding of meditation, and of what supports my dancing. As noted, I am arguing instead
for an emphasis that I believe is somewhat different to the emphasis I sense is being inferred by the term mindfulness. I am arguing for a recognition of, and valuing of things as they are. Experiences including those that are desirable, undesirable or perhaps even destructive, must be valued equally. This move is not undertaken to attempt a transformation. It is also not to be mistaken as solely a valuing of the role undesirable experiences may play in processes that lead eventually to some kind of change. What I am describing as an important part of my praxis approach, is simply to value things and experiences, even complex experiences of suffering, on their own terms.

My praxis is an argument for embracing and valuing experiences of vulnerability and of failure, on their own terms. When arguing for an expansion of what might be considered valuable, I am not arguing for the suspension of judgement and valuation, nor for the collapsing together of what is good and what is bad. I am against the sublimation or transformation of difficult, painful, and complex experiences that induce experiences of disarray, disorientation, and feelings of being fragmented, isolated - indeed any form of suffering that is overpowering. Rather I am taking what I find to be the unusual step of wanting to stay with those experiences as they are. My first position is not to regard such experiences as potential participants in processes of change or of transcendence but to embrace and thereby know them, as they are. They do not represent potentials, they are experienced in terms of their own qualities. This is my argument for judgement and for a radical expansion of what is considered of value because I consider embrace of the disastrous to be necessary for a coming into awareness of its qualities, and this awareness is necessary for my praxis, indeed necessary for movement in a variety of senses.

In the sense I am describing, disastrous experiences are as important and as useful as the triumphant. Somatic attentiveness unlike mindfulness does not equate with affirmation, or with “non judgement”. Its practice depends on an expansion of what is considered of value to enable a genuine being with whatever is at hand, and to avoid a continual being with, while attempting to transcend.

Alain Badiou’s text Dance as a Metaphor for Thought (2005) explores Nietzschean concepts applied to derive a notion of dance as something pure and potentially transcendent. In Badiou’s discussion, dance is “the body devoted to its zenith” but, not in the sense of “an obedient and muscled body”, rather dance refers to “a mobility that moves without detaching itself from its own centre… [unfolding] as if it were an expansion of its centre” furthermore “dance is simple affirmation, because it makes the negative body - the shameful body - radiantly absent.” (Badiou 2005, 58-59). I am arguing for roughly the opposite, that dance be understood as the potential compositions of any unfinished mindful body. Through my praxis, I am arguing for the inclusion in dance of the shameful, the failed, the unfinished. As such I am wanting to distance myself from simple, unilateral affirmation, which is implied by mindfulness’ connection to non judgement, and to any implied collapsing of bad into good.

Rosalind Crisp as noted, is an artist of influence on my practice in many ways, which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. Crisp appears to have an understanding of judgement similar to my own. In an interview Crisp was asked if her dance practice involved “noticing and not judging, or […] understanding that everything is good or everything is interesting”. She replied, “It’s not that everything is good. There is a judgement. If some parts of the body are not available, not awake, not aware, then it doesn’t work, or it works less well. (Brannigan & Baxter
Dance, as understood within my praxis, involves applications not of mindfulness, but of somatic attentiveness.

Dance as understood by my praxis involves and integrates shamefulness if it happens to be there, along with any other cognitions, perceptions, and affects. My choreographies are not the outcomes of processes, but are themselves elements of processes. My work is to manage my attention, and make decisions in relation to what I perceive to be the unfolding poetics of a live performance or an episode of practice. Dance in my performance making and in my practices is process. It compounds action and attention. Perceptions inclusive of cognitions from any point along spectrums of positive and negative, all contribute to populating my choreographies of dance. Tuning my aesthetic sensibilities to be in deference to this understanding is crucial for the choreographic and compositional element of my performance making.

Mind, Body, and Mindfulness

The term mindfulness, in addition to what has just been explored, is also a term that relegates conceptions of mind body holism to a secondary position, if it can be considered as a term that independently invokes or acknowledges this set of understandings at all.

As noted, somatic attentiveness has led to recognitions of my self as a mindful being, as a self residing throughout my bodily circumstances. Contemporary writers, who have theorised performance in terms of an ontological understanding akin to what I am referring to, are those who have followed on from the work done by Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger. They interpreted in ontological terms, the epistemological work of Edmund Husserl (Behnke 2016). As noted in earlier chapters, reading analytical and experiential theory of this kind has fundamentally furthered and informed my praxis inquiries into my being and has led me to in-praxis realisations that my being is dependent for its capabilities and its subjectivity, on its materiality. Therefore the usefulness and relevance for my praxis of a term such as mindfulness is severely compromised.

Being attentive to whatever is being experienced, occurs throughout my body, and as an interplay - awareness, wakefulness, vitality and intelligence are dependent for their qualities as much on my central nervous system as they are on my autonomic nervous system, and my imagination. Like others in my field of practice, I have revoked usage of the term mindfulness.

Susan Leigh Foster uses the term “bodily mindfulness” as she acknowledges that body and mind are continually, newly, apprehending their “relationalities” (Foster 2003, 7). Ann Cooper Albright also expresses the awareness that the intelligence and subjectivity of human being is found in all instances of a body, on all scales of action, movement, and awareness. Albright uses the term “physical mindfulness” (Janus 2016). Physical mindfulness, Albright declares, refers to “the interconnected realms of embodied knowledge and critical thinking” (Janus 2016).

Furthermore, Albright writes that physical mindfulness “prepares one for improvisation [as a] kind of somatic engagement which leads to profound psychic reorganisation” (Albright 2013a, 267). The fact that these practitioners and scholars need to include additional terms such as physical or as I do mindful body, to indicate the experience of being transcends mind body dichotomies, may point to an inadequacy in theorising around this topic. Furthermore, also
indicated by this is an acknowledgement of the complexity of capturing neatly one’s relationship to states of conscious being.

My own work with mindfulness has led me to update it via application of the term somatic attentiveness. Somatic attentiveness as described, and based on experiences afforded by practices from Zen Buddhism has indeed contributed to my own “profound psychic reorganisation” including the transformation of my understandings of my self.

I recognise my self as an unfinished mindful body, and additionally I have had experiences that I am referring to as unitive. These experiences seated in Zen practice and somatic attentiveness, have supported my work with self reflective descriptions, and analysis. The resultant nuanced sense of my own experience, its kinaesthetic, sensory and affective dimensions, has made the work from Phenomenology as completed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gail Weiss, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, Philipa Rothfield, Rosalyn Diprose, and Ann Cooper Albright, come alive for me.

Somatic Attentiveness and Intersubjective Intercorporeality

An important image from Buddhist mythology “The Net of Indra” is used to represent all things in the universe as reflecting, and being reflected by all other things. Unitive thought is undoubtedly a cornerstone of Buddhist thought. Meaning of the term “interbeing” a term originated by Zen monk Thich Nhat Hanh is described in the following way:

“If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. […] We can say that the cloud and the paper inter-are… If we look into this sheet of paper even more deeply, we can see the sunshine in it. If the sunshine is not there, the forest cannot grow. […] If we continue to look, we can see the logger who cut the tree. […] We know that the logger cannot exist without his daily bread, and therefore the wheat that became his bread is also in this sheet of paper. And the logger’s father and mother are in it too. […] Looking even more deeply, we can see we are in it too…when we look at a sheet of paper, the sheet of paper is part of our perception. Your mind is in here and mine is also…you cannot point out one thing that is not here - time, space, the earth, the rain, the minerals in the soil, the sunshine, the cloud, the river, the heat. Everything coexists with this sheet of paper…” (Thich Nhat Hanh in McLeod 2012, 55-58).

Nhat Hanh writes of “realisation” as understanding, which arises from leading a moral life, and undertaking meditation practice. He suggests that “realisation connotes transforming oneself. This transformation creates a harmony between oneself and nature, between one’s own joy and the joy of others” (Hanh 1987, 13).

As Sheets-Johnstone notes, “the idea that everything is connected to everything else is hardly new” (2011, 481). Buddhist cosmology, as expressed by Hanh, in effect paved the way for my engagement with the unitive terms of Phenomenology such as Husserl’s intersubjectivity and Merleau-Ponty’s intercorporeality.
Sheets-Johnstone cites physicist Bohm’s application of Aristotle’s notion of form as signifying “an inner forming activity which is the cause of the growth of things, and of the development and differentiation of their various essential forms… [Form] was considered to be of essentially the same nature for the mind as it was for life and for the cosmos as a whole” (2011, 488). Sheets-Johnstone goes on to note that Bohm’s sequence of thought shows mind as part of nature, “to be understood as ‘the flowing movement of awareness’” (ibid.). Her point is to argue for recognition that in regards to “Husserl’s phenomenological analyses of perception and cognitional awarenesses in the form of concepts and the nature of internal time consciousness”, Bohm’s thought in regards to cosmology and the nature of thought itself, is “through and through Husserlian” (2011, 488).

Meditation and somatic attentiveness underpinning dance and performance making practices, have given me experiences that in turn have found deep resonances with elements from phenomenological theory. This will be explored in Chapter Five: Encountering Others. In the next chapter, my work relative to live performances is explored.
Chapter Four

Live Performance for Audiences

This chapter offers a general discussion of process and performative aspects of an element of my praxis, live performances for audiences.

My self as a mindful body represents a myriad of elements all of which are endlessly combining and recombining in what I consider an unfinished process that receives framings via events. My fingers tapping letters onto this screen (“keyboarding” as Don Hanlon Johnson (2014, xi) called this physical component of academic writing), is an example. This attitude has been for my praxis, across its numerous modes of articulation, this writing included, significantly formative. And it has, and will continue to contribute in important ways to the formation of my processes for live performances with audiences.

This chapter is partnered with my experiences of my live performance processes. I describe how I attend to “doing” my performance works, in process and in performance. Other representations of knowing and doing from practices of theorists and of other live performance practitioners are referenced. My aim is to generate a more expansive and complex sense for readers of how I engage with live performances for audiences.

The following descriptions were written on separate occasions during a performance and praxis retreat with collaborators and mentors Cobie Örger, Andrew Morris, Don Asker and Jane Mortiss at a remote performance studio (in Kiah, NSW Australia). They contribute a sense of the ideals I have in relation to my performances and hence some drivers motivating my works. Their inclusion acknowledges that as a solo performing artist, I am the platform upon which the formal and sensible dimensions of my performances play out, and as such it seems appropriate that I subjectively determine initially the terms for focusing further analysis.

1. My performances are the staging of my attempts to go beyond what I know. Going beyond involves attentive dance, shattering mind and body petrifications.

   My performances are live processes. They’re framings of attentiveness - they’re art, they’re live-ness. They are art, a body being and becoming itself.

2. What is this? It’s doing the impossible. I ask an audience to come, while knowing nothing about what will happen. I give myself durations. I engage tools. And I listen. (All the while being kind to myself if I notice I’m too old, or too boring).

(PhD Journal 6 - 7.07.15)

The terms live-ness, dance, and kindness will be discussed relative to my performance making. These terms emerged over time. Within praxis, writing and movement are drawn into close proximity. Extremely large volumes of discursive texts have been produced. Becoming familiar with certain terms via this process encouraged me to try bypassing urges to pre-emptively select the terms for engagement with my performances that are not from my own, un-theorised writings. Clearly the above as terms of engagement are not unique to me. They are nonetheless felt to be
strongly linked to my live performance practice. Through their clarification I hope to develop integrity of analysis.

**Live-ness**

My performances are attempts to stay for extended periods with *live-ness* - a maintaining of mindful body focused on attending to “what is”. Attention as a word implies focused mental energy towards an attunement of responses and a guiding of processes. Attention to “what is” defines when I identify as a performer. In praxis, attention tools set the parameters for what might happen. Kent de Spain surmises in *Landscapes of The Now* (2014), “At its very core, movement improvisation is an attentional practice” (De Spain 2014, 167).

The harnessing of my attention is fundamental to the quality of my presence in live performance. It is necessary if states and activities – experiences - might be known, unknown, or re-known, and perhaps experienced more vividly. Being a mindful body and experiencing the myriad of potential qualitative dimensions this offers, requires an attentional practice, and is not simply ‘paying attention’. Paying attention to what? For how long? And how exactly? These are all questions that need answers that will be further generative of further questions that need answers and so on. This is attentiveness.

Movement improvisation praxis as described by Barbara Dilley, is “raising attention up” (De Spain 2014, 169). Raising attention up, resonates with my experience in the sense that it is an effort to intensity, in order to notice in detail qualities of experience, and in this way to be “live”. In performance I focus my awareness on my perceptual and affective experience and I notice the response loop that I am in. I respond with movement, with crafting movement. My body and my attention through it, in it, on it, with it, because of it, is my link to the infinite, and to the concretely finite. And this, as a conversation with many voices, a conversation with my attention, never ends.

In an interview Andrew Morrish described treating each improvised performance as an event entered into, primarily in a state of not knowing. He described his approach: “I’m working at - not collecting great scores, but practicing the act of giving my attention to what the score is” (Roberts 2003, 18).

I am still exploring my version of Morrish’s “emergent score”. I find, or notice, materials as I am performing, and then working with these materials, objects of attention, becomes my content. I perform as I practice. In practice I am continually attempting to be aware of my self as a mindful body, a rich experiencing subject pulsing and flowing with others and the world around. I pay attention and I find and follow my interest as it becomes apparent. Always, when I begin, or when I get lost which I continually do, I return to noticing the dance of my concrete physical dimension, and my breath. Or my attention itself, where am I? As noted, Deborah Hay named her annual dance practice workshop *Playing Awake* (Hay 2000, 80). Hay remarks generally: “I have to trick myself into being in this body, into noticing time passing, so that I’m *there*” (Hay in Schouweiler 2016).
I also have tricks and tools for “staying awake”, along with my commitment to keeping the range of my responses open to allow if necessary the inclusion of anything theatrical, such as autobiographical storytelling, characterisations, etc. This keeps me guessing, it stops me calcifying in my notions regarding which of my movements are dancerly and which are not.

With the team for my Federation Square performances *Finding Anchors and the Abyss* (2015), Cobie Orger, and Andrew Morrish, I stayed for several days with Don Asker and Jane Mortiss to work on our individual and joint performance making projects. We were on a remote property in Eastern Australia, and we worked in nature and in a studio. Don Asker was for a time this project’s academic supervisor. Nat Cursio an Australian choreographer and filmmaker recently dubbed Asker a “dancer-farmer” (Cursio 2016). Asker reflected in an interview with me in July 2015 that he considers “live-ness” to be crucial for my work:

> “your work has become even more about, the very nature of performance as a sharing event. How one resonates with the maker, the doer, and becomes implicit in the process of making. This is possible because you are making sure that the art… That it remains close to its state of discovery. You are prioritising a kind of live-ness”.
> (D. Asker, Kiah. 15.07.15 Pers. Comm.).

Live-ness is as Asker notes, a determination to remain in a state of discovery. To keep myself as Hay refers to it, “awake” to my mindful body, to its state of self discovery, self as a concrete and etheric entity. Live-ness incorporates my commitment to my audience, that I am determined to discover my self as a mindful body, as an unfinished project, in front of them, here and now. Live-ness is my commitment to dance; that I will find here and now, what dance means to me now, today, in this moment. I will pay attention and I will find out what is important about my current experience, what is fascinating, what is disturbing, what is compelling, and from this I will choreograph an event in-situ. An event of live-ness and as such, a process.

**Impulse and Choreography**

This subsection considers the forming that occurs during my live performances of non pre set movement for audiences.

The concept and practice of the “small dance” was something I first learnt from Contact Improvisation pioneer Nancy Stark Smith, when she visited Australia to perform and teach in 1998. Most often, this is how I begin a session of dance practice. Nancy Stark Smith learnt the small dance from Steve Paxton who used it as a method for tuning a dancer’s perceptions to their own materiality. It has been described as a finding the limit “to which you could no further relax without falling down [due to a] sustaining effort that goes on constantly in the body” (Paxton in interview. Zimmer 1977, 11).

Tuning my perceptions to micro and macro level movements occurring in my body seemingly independently, enables me to understand what Anna Halprin means when she refers to “internal impulses” (De Spain 2014, 176). Halprin’s term refers to a self perceiving itself, and to the impulses that are noticed arising independently from within the body, having bypassed cognition, or as she describes it, mind.
As noted, I prefer an understanding of mind and body as entwined, as described by Foster: “all bodily articulation is mindful. … Each corporeal modulation in effort thinks; each swelling into tension thinks; each erratic burst or undulation in energy thinks. Each accented phrasing or accelerating torque or momentary stillness is an instance of thought” (Foster 2003, 7). I appreciate however the usefulness in the following differentiation that Halprin makes between instances of greater or lesser conceptual agency, relative to experiences of kinaesthesia, and the possibilities this opens up for understanding the forming of performance poetics that occurs in my performances for audiences.

“I have never given up on the notion of this polarity, that the mind can inform the body … without that you’re very limited … You can’t identify things, You can’t articulate. You can’t be precise. You can never develop a really refined craftsmanship … When you can get those two polarities so they work together, then you have the craft. Following your impulses without craft is not art. …to have the tools to create expression or artistic communication, you need to unify the two. (Halprin in De Spain 2014, 175)

As argued throughout this dissertation, I do not think the mind and body represent differing polarities. As noted in Foster’s quote above, crafting and choreographic choices occurring in my performances are deeply tied to my self experiencing my movement and my crafting as a mindful body, which refers to bodily involvement in intellectualisations. Although Halprin upholds an understanding of mind and body as polarities, she also clearly states her sense of importance which is similar to my own for integrating intellect with corporeality in order to achieve “artistic communication”. In this section, I will continue to explain how I create movement and in turn structure or choreography, from a flow of impulses discerned relative to my mindful body.

Formative Influences

Anna Halprin and Steve Paxton both employed improvisation in performances during the 1960s. With other dance makers working in North America at the time, including Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Simone Forti, Deborah Hay, and Lucinda Childs, they contributed in seminally important ways “experimental reflection[s] on the nature and limits of dance” (Banes and Carroll 2006, 50). The experiments undertaken by this group and others came to be definitive of the term (and period), Post Modern dance. These makers explored dance performances in which movement, if it occurred, was notable for its minimalism, functionalism, or pedestrian and everyday qualities. In doing so, dance historian Sally Banes argues, in certain instances they offered “refreshing antidote[s]” to approaches that “had strangled most modern dance for the previous two decades” (Banes 1987, 115).

Post Modern dance makers explored alternative approaches to choreography. They employed alternative performance structures and locations, they proposed alternative movement vocabularies, and they forefronted movement itself rather than forefronting instances of dance training predicated on conventional notions of virtuosity. The developments these makers introduced were influences of singular importance to my early teachers who included Al Wunder,
who studied dance and improvisation with modern dance innovator Alwin Nikolais. I became aware of Raimund Hoghe, and Xavier Le Roy in 2003. The poetics of their dance performance choreographies have also been a strong influence on the embodied choices that I make in my choreographies of non pre set movement.

In 2000 Austrian writer and dance critic Helmut Ploebst described Raimund Hoghe, simply and precisely as “a small […] hump-backed middle-aged man” (Ploebst 2016). In 2001 alongside Xavier Le Roy, Vera Mantero, Boris Charmatz, Jérôme Bel and other highly influential dance makers, Hoghe was profiled by Ploebst for his book-length survey *No wind no word: New Choreography in the Society of the Spectacle: 9 Portraits* (Ploebst 2001, 102). In 2003 I saw two works by Hoghe and we performed at the same festival the *Perth Institute of Contemporary Art Dancers are Space Eaters*, Western Australia. Hoghe and I began a conversation there that has been ongoing ever since.

Hoghe’s solo performance *Another Dream* (2003) was accompanied by a program note describing him as a “performer, playwright, and journalist [who] is widely regarded as the father of European performance and Contemporary Dance” (Melbourne Festival program 2003, personal collection). That description, and his solo performance, significantly adjusted my expectations of what a dance choreography on a major stage could look and feel like. Not just in regards to the kind of movement and the kind of bodies that I was used to seeing in relation to this artistic field, it was also the event itself, and the highly idiosyncratic vision it bore testament to.

The choreographic work of Hoghe, and Le Roy introduced to me the possibility for a body like mine with its history in trainings, could be entitled to discover live in performance, the forms and dynamics that it felt strongly about. This was license to follow my aesthetic sensibilities in performance. I was empowered by the work of such dancers to acknowledge the agency in recognising myself as a mindful body, as an unfinished body, and to recognize my dynamic compositions no matter how unorthodox, as dance choreographies. In a section to come below, I will discuss further the influence of this movement found within Contemporary Dance on my own live performances.

**Choreographic Tools**

In the previous chapter on Somatics and Buddhism, I accounted for the various practices that connect me with inner impulses. This term, as used by Anna Halprin, refers to a focusing of energy, originating from within the body, unmediated by cognition, and playing an elemental participatory role in the process of making dance choreographies. To complete this brief outline of what it means to me to use the word choreography in the context of my live performances, I focus now on how I bring dance and performance making tools into a mutual weight-giving relationship with my inner impulses, and my sense of poetics to create my live choreographies of dance making processes. As noted above, this is a reappropriation of Halprin’s notion of dance making representing a unifying of ‘impulse’ with ‘craft’, where craft depends on employment of “tools to create expression or artistic communication” (Halprin in De Spain 2014, 175). I take up Halprin’s distinction. I am also crafting dance choreographies, by applying tools, which condition my experience of my self as a mindful body. In many instances the dance making tools,
and the performance making, are my highly particular adaptations of tools I have taken from classes. In this regard, the tools of Rosalind Crisp have been a significant influence.

Over the past 19 years, I have been utilising and consciously exploring my own sensibilities relative to how I guide myself, and how I approach crafting movement, and choreographies, from impulse. My approaches have been challenged and enriched through exposure to the approaches of others. Ultimately I have been influenced but also determined to recognise and foster my distinctly personal ways for framing and focusing relationships between my sensing, perceiving self as a mindful body, and of ways into dancing that experience. After more than ten years of personal exposure to Rosalind Crisp’s dance making techniques, the tools I use for making dance are necessarily incorporating elements of her approach.

With her current foci for practice, in development since 2005, and entitled “The dance project”, Crisp deals with:

“a volatile group of choreographic principles which guide the way movement is produced by the dancer. The practice is not about memorising movements, but rather, about practicing ways of sourcing movement from any part of the body, at any speed or level, with any force or direction, for any duration” (Crisp 2016).

Crisp’s tools include highly specific “things to do” when working with the body. Including:

“Choose two surfaces of your body and explore bringing them together or apart”
“Let your eyes lead you around, and take that into movement”
“Choose a bone and let that lead you”.

In combination she encourages dancers by saying:

“Dance is whole body attention on flesh…”
“Movement is not word meaning, movement is movement meaning”
“Can your choreographer read what your body is writing?”
“Notice where things are coming from and dance the changes, not the image”.

Pers. Notes from workshops in Sydney (Critical Path 2014), and Melbourne (VCA School of Dance 2015).

My ways of working with perception, impulse, somatic attentiveness and a sense of self as a mindful body, have become focused and been infiltrated by Crisp’s work. The enunciations above are examples of ways of crafting dance that I have learned from Crisp. Within my praxis they have become unique, and often inflected with the influence of what I am calling, my clown-esque sensibility. The meaning of this compound term is in keeping with the common usage meanings for its component parts. The implications of what I call a clown-esque sensibility are explored more fully in both the following chapter, and the final section, Notes in Conclusion.
The above set of tools and encouragements, have in instances of practice been adjusted to pragmatically respond to conditions of my mindful body. This exposure to my praxis and thus to my clown-esque sensibility, has resulted for example, in the dialogues like the following:

Choose two surfaces of your body: I can’t. Something else is always taking focus. Ok, then: Let your eyes lead you around: Hey this reminds me of someone. Forget it! Stop trying to be Jerry Lewis. Choose a bone and let that lead you: Chase your bone you mean. Or let a bone chase you? Can your choreographer read what your body is writing? I’ll provoke my choreographer! I’ll hide. Keep secrets. Hey, don't forget to: Dance the changes, not the image. Yes! Just keep moving. Keep paying attention. Keep forming. Keep dancing. You’ll understand in a moment. Maybe not.

Choreographic Tools and a Clown-esque Sensibility

Failure as a concept fascinates me and I often dance aware of an emotionally charged tension between my body’s inherent exposure to both a sense of vitality and of failure. This is the making and un-making of my unfinished body. This tension was represented in the title of my final PhD performance Finding Anchors and the Abyss. My dance is crafted relative to an almost constant courting of failure, and a determination to resist failure. I put myself in grave danger of failing, and then I outmanoeuvre it, only to expose myself to failure again. This tension creates an energetic circuit that motivates and inspires my work, even in relation to the detail of how I form the tools that I use for crafting movement as indicated above.

If I focus on bringing two surfaces together or apart, as learnt from Crisp, I only remember this for the briefest of instants, and then my attention flies off. What two surfaces was I working with I might wonder, but it does not matter. My inability to hold focus is experienced as an instance of failure. Due to the presence within me of a clown-esque instinct, I instantly respond to this sense of failure by re-engaging with my task with renewed determination to honour my idiosyncratic approach no matter how stupid I may seem given my inability to hold focus to one thing. I continue to pay attention, and I remain in touch with my commitment to dancing with whatever enters my awareness. Perhaps I will take up with another two surfaces, or perhaps I stop, and breathe. Or perhaps I pick up another tool from those that lie in wait. Whatever happens, I am determined to survive the challenges I encounter in performance. I am determined to allow myself to fall into the abyss of not knowing what to do next, and I am determined to find a way to get out again. If I remain engaged and interested in what I am doing and experiencing, then I know I will find the next and most appropriate thing to do, tool to use.

Differently from Crisp, I combine kinaesthetic tools with the application of a clown-esque psychology and sensibility. This combination defines my approach to the use of kinaesthetic tools for making live choreographies, and it has been present since I first began to make dance performance.

Two Suits (1997 – 2003) with duo partner David Corbet, structured our improvised dance theatre to a large degree, by a consistent application of characterisation. The Two Suit characters were animated physically by emotion and irrational forces originating as sensation from within their own bodies. Both characters, while allowing their whole body to be seduced by sensation lost
inhibitions and, dancing ensued that was often cathartic. These characters always wore conservatively styled business suits. David’s other performance project at the time was company State Of Flux, and like my dance training at this time, the company’s work was based around Contact Improvisation. Two Suits represented for us both, a meeting place for kinaesthetic tools relative to forms such as Contact Improvisation and pedestrian and task orientated movement, combined with theatricality grounded in physicality, but driven by affective sensitivity and improvised narratives. This heterogeneous approach to choreography contained what has proven to be an enduringly fascinating combination of elements.

Words

In recent years, in addition to the tools I have described above, I have been carefully selecting words, and carefully placing them relative to my dancing, to engage further with emotional and psychological levels of experience for dance making. In the following paragraphs I tease this out to further articulate how I meet impulse with constraint, that is, to articulate how I “choreograph”.

Language is an important part of my mindful body, and it is significantly involved in my dance making processes. Dancers talk about experiences of dancing as being inclusive of opportunities to go to where “the body reveals its own mind” (Crisp 2016b). A fundamental basis of my praxis is mind body holism, which in part accounts for my interest in exploiting tensions that exist around a meeting of words with body. This I pursue in unorthodox ways to facilitate dance making, and to involve more levels of my being, including myself as a personal entity with an autobiography.

Raimund Hoghe notes that Pina Bausch used words in an effort to get her dancers’ subjectivities, and their biographies to take a place in her dances:

“Bausch’s method […] was that of bombarding him or her with questions. To answer the question was both a way to fill the dancer’s mouth with his or her own voice and also to reshape the dancer’s body, to give him or her a new corporeality.” (Hoghe cited in Lepecki 2006, 137).

I introduce words to access other dimensions of my mindful bodily presence. I use performances and performance practice as experimental situations where I can ‘test’ words or certain phrases, by experiencing them physically. Phrases emerge from any source. Then they accompany dance practice. If they energise and complicate my dancing, making it richer and more vital, then they are added to my collections. For my Federation Square performances I chose words and phrases from my collections that energised and supported my dance and performance making.

Words can theme instances of dance making, and sometimes in wonderfully obtuse ways. In 2014 I attended a week long class with a performer and choreographer who previously had influenced me via her writings, Deborah Hay. I observed how words function in a similar way in her approach as a dancer and as a choreographer. Hay introduced the focus for the workshop, using the analogy of John Cage’s “prepared piano”. She also refers to Cage’s invention in her recent book Using The Sky: A Dance (2016, 55-56), and explains the link between this analogy and her work with words:
“December 2006. The range of sound coming from the piano was more or less constant until John Cage created the prepared piano by introducing different objects that were placed between or on the strings, hammers or dampers. These outside components…added a whole new gestalt of sound to the world of music. In a similar way the dancer who performs my work has a prepared body…A question crafted by me, is introduced to a dancer who then directs that linear experience into the non-linear assemblage of her/his cellular body”

In the class I attended, Hay led the entire group of attendant dancers by firstly inviting us to simply dance, which we did. She then walked and danced among us, loudly and clearly enunciating questions such as:

“What if I practice dance where I practice relationship?”
“What if I let my whole body be my teacher?”
“What if every cell in my body is served by how I’m seeing?”

This continued throughout the week, and as we danced, we “practiced performing” and we were able to experience our bodies and our dancing being affected by this introduction of her words. Throughout the week periods of dance were interspersed with opportunities for questions. On one occasion Hay was asked about “dance forms”. She replied,

“What makes my dance interesting and relevant to me, and to an audience isn’t what I do, the shape is nothing! It’s how I engage with the questioning. If you fall out of that prepared body, you just go back to normal. I use these questions to keep me from getting lost, from distancing me from the audience, from letting me drop back into my patterns” (Hay 2014 Pers. Notes).

When I align and integrate words with Halprin’s notion of inner impulses, by speaking selected words, reading them, and imagining them, both during and before dancing, I really experience how it is a tool for significantly altering my emotional, psychological and physical body mind. Dancing begins to include a capacity for a dismantling of my habitual ways of moving and, in Australian dance maker Russell Dumas’ parlance, my dance and I are effectively “seduced” by words out of our attachments to habitual patterns – to mental loops and ways of knowing myself that I have settled unquestioningly into (Brannigan Baxter 2014, 16). Furthermore, by dancing with carefully selected words my unfinished body, my mindful body, becomes more vividly apparent. One word that has been particularly instructive in this regard, and one which has shaped how I orientate my performances, is kindness. As noted above, potentials of my emotional and psychological processing are harnessed for dance making purposes through the use of specific words. It is possible to see this process working via considerations of an example offered by the word kindness.

My praxis in this moment when particular words enter, remains focused on performance making, and on cultivating processes centred around non pre set movement, and creating live choreographies. In this context of a predominantly somatic and kinaesthetic focus, I add words.
All the while I am also aspiring not to fix specific points of meaning, or of knowledge, or of intention. The meaning in this case, of kindness, has a role to play. But the meaning is not explicitly employed. It is fed into my mindful body, it is implanted, or called upon, while I am dancing, while I am kinaesthetically and somatically focused. My dancing mindful body remains focused on somatic attentiveness, kinaesthesia and choreography. The word dances about in the air perhaps, and it remains always only semi-defined. Perhaps it remains nearby, as an approximation, as a not-knowing. Deborah Hay explains how this functionally operates when she writes relative to her “what if” questions, she cites Bachelard:

“the [what if] question is meant to inspire and engage the dancer in noticing the sensuality of the feedback from the question as it unfolds in his/her cellular body. The question is not there to be answered. And, to not look for an answer requires a lot of work for everyone. “….non-knowing is not a form of ignorance but a difficult transcendence of knowledge” (Hay 2016, 11)

In regards to my employment of the word, and words related to, kindness, I avoid any moral overtones or mawkishness in my dance formations because I do not know that kind of meaningfulness relative to my usage of the word. Rosalind Crisp writing about her latest preoccupations in her praxis for a workshop in January 2016, notes the following:

“This inquiry implies a close relationship between anatomical visualisation and fictitious imaginings and suggests that in the porosity between sensation and movement, feelings and images that concern the artist in the world may be pulled through the dancing body.” (Crisp 2016a)

My work with words, in this case the word kindness, represents a treatment that is well described as a “pulling through” or casting around of words relative to my dancing body. For reasons including this sense of close proximity between my bodily being and these words, it is also important to recognise that these words I involve in my dance making processes, like kindness, are not randomly selected. They are words with importance for my praxis. The fuller meaning of this will be found in the subsequent chapter and in the final section of this dissertation.

Thus far in this chapter, I have described how impulse meets form in my praxis. Now I discuss the specific iteration of this as seen in my examinable works, Finding Anchors and the Abyss.

Contexts and Receptions

At the intersection of footpaths that link a river walkway, a car-park, and the Melbourne cultural precinct “Federation Square”, I danced to accompaniments by sound artist Cobie Orger. This was the August 2015 season of performances entitled Finding Anchors and the Abyss. It was a season prepared and presented for examination as the creative-works component of my practice-led PhD. As performance events, they developed in response to my ideals for how and where my performance might occur to most effectively engage with its own core themes, as well as with the audiences making up the culture(s) and the society within which the performances were taking place. The chapter section that follows will include references to my performance making
history, and to historical examples from other makers who have staged dance performances significantly influential of my own.

In 2010 an observer noted that my live performances addressed a number of questions, the most potent of which “was the question of how to take oneself seriously as a dancer/mover [a question even more potent] for men who do not have conventional dance training.” There is no doubt that disparities between my performance training and “conventional” dance training are recognisable, and exercise a significant influence on receptions of my performances. Philipa Rothfield notes that contemporary Australian dance maker Russell Dumas is “sensitive to the dominance of balletic values in Australia” because “it affects the way in which his work is perceived and evaluated” (Rothfield 2010, 315). I am for the same reasons, also sensitive to this dominance. I am also aware that it is unreasonable to expect my performances to stand alone. As I endeavour to supply pathways between audiences and my performances I realise how important knowledge of the historical and contemporary contexts for my work is.

The central formalistic element of my performances in Federation Square was, strictly speaking, my technically undisciplined, everyday, dancing body. As noted, performing choreographies of non pre set movement with a body trained such as mine has historical and contemporary connections. These connections point to the ongoing worldwide legacy of North American Post Modern dance, which has particular relevance in light of contemporary developments in European dance, and how this is so will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Contemporary Resonances with Post Modern dance

Works from the Post Modern period in dance history made significant contributions to exploring and challenging dance, its kinaesthetic, and cultural values. Sally Banes in Democracy’s Body (2002) quotes New York dance critic Jill Johnston’s writing from the 1960s:

“The Judson dancers have thrown the idea of legitimacy into lovely confusion. For one thing the dancing itself is so physical in a natural way that it bears little resemblance to any conventional “attitudes” of dance. […] The notion of legitimacy becomes absurd. Dancing is what you think it is. Perhaps the whole world of movement is dance. So the question is what is dancing? And if you know what dancing is, what is non-dancing?”

(Banes 2002, 134)

As noted already, it has been these challenges, and contributions made relatively recently in Europe, that have paved the way for performances such as Finding Anchors and the Abyss to be considered by audiences as having a direct and legitimate relationship to the artistic field of dance.

In 2001 Yvonne Rainer’s Continuous Project/Altered Daily was performed by Xavier Le Roy and company Quatuor Albrecht Knust, at the Festival of New Dance in Agora (Citron 2016). Thirteen years later, with a lecture at MoMA in New York entitled Product of Circumstances Le Roy reflected on the experience of working with Rainer’s materials:
“this project was very important for me and still has a very big influence on my work. It was more than a way to access to the history of dance through the practice of it... it also proposed a lot of answers to my questions” (Le Roy 2016).

Bojana Cvejić dance theorist, musicologist, and collaborator with choreographers (including Xavier Le Roy and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker), notes it would be unreasonable to claim recent developments in contemporary European dance are simply a belated European response to the historic Post Modern dance period. She acknowledges however “we cannot deny this influence” (Cvejić 2016) noting elsewhere, these instances of contemporary European dance have a “loose and complicated rapport with the Judson period” (Cvejić 2015, xxi).

New Choreographies

The widely unpopular term “conceptual dance” was mentioned in Chapter One, and receives a more detailed examination here. This term has been used contentiously in response to the emergence in Europe, beginning during the 1990s, of choreographers who explored re-conceptualising choreography and dance itself, as the object of their performance works. Artists who have been associated with this term include Jonathan Burrows, Vera Mantero, Xavier Le Roy, Jérôme Bel, and Raimund Hoghe, all of whom make work that disputes the assumption that self evident notions underpin choreographic and dance based practices. Austrian dance critic Helmut Ploebst referred to this category of works as “New Choreographies” (2001). Subsequently André Lepecki wrote in Exhausting Dance (2006), that the term “Conceptual dance at least allows for historically locating this movement” (2006, 135). He argued, the questioning occurring in dance could be linked to developments during the late 1960s and early 1970s in conceptual art that shared with this new movement in dance “its critique of representation, its insistence on politics, its fusion of the visual with the linguistic, its drive for a dissolution of genres, its critique of authorship, its dispersion of the art-work, its privileging of the event, its critique of institutions, and its aesthetic emphasis on minimalism - all traits that are recurrent in many recent [dance] works in Europe” (Lepecki 2006, 135).

Cvejić argues the link to conceptual art was unfounded: “so-called conceptual dance isn’t based in the withdrawal of the perceptual. [...] the word does not prevail over the movement. There is no dogmatic prohibition of physicality (like was the case in Conceptual art that the art object was replaced by the theoretical object).” (Cvejić 2016, online). She also makes positive attributions towards a clarification of the term:

“Until the 1990s, one could get away with talking about dance performances by simply asking what the object of "dance" was [...] A work of dance was considered something of substance: the token of a certain style, language, idiom and technique [...] With the generation of the 1990s, however, another approach took root whereby the choreographer might no longer agree that choreography was a self-evident notion. Instead of having to give always the same answer when asked about the essence of dance, he rephrased the question: what was important now was not what choreography is, but what it could be. (Cvejić 2016a).

My dance generally and my choreographies at Federation Square were a result of my trainings, and my interests, and this combination seen in my performances has positioned me clearly in
alignment with such unconventional or alternative configurations of movement and body expressivity as associated with developments in dance performance seen in Europe and beyond since the 1990s. The wide variety of concepts of dance, observable in twenty first century Western dance settings is evidence that kinaesthetic and cultural values are ever changing. A growing number of people in Australia and elsewhere, when encountering the affective potentials of dance works such as mine, are willing to “elaborate” on their kinaesthetic sensibilities. This concept is Rothfield’s. In Differentiating dance and Phenomenology (2010) she refers to kinaesthetic sensibility elaboration, as a process, occurring


Such a “descent” is anticipated by my performances. Indeed my embrace of the works by artists associated with Ploebst’s “New Choreographies” (2001) such as Hoghe, Le Roy, and Bel, is due to my fascination and enjoyment of experiencing elaboration of my own kinaesthetic sensibilities. By pursuing my praxis in performances, in the way that I do, indicates that I expect there are others who also enjoy processes associated with extensions of their own kinaesthetic sensibilities.

Finding Anchors and the Abyss and Praxis in Everyday life

In Finding Anchors and the Abyss, performance making practices melded everyday life with the specific conditions of production, effecting a different kind of sensibility elaboration. By entering a phenomenological level of experiencing during production, a somatic attentiveness, or a bodily-mindfulness normatively associated with live dance making in performance, I enabled communications to occur between my praxis and seemingly unrelated activities, which became revaluated as praxis. I want to learn about dance, and about performance, but I also want my performance to emerge from and return to, informing and supporting, my everyday life. This is one of my enduring concerns. I am still attempting to foster engagements with audiences that exploit our similarities, and our differences, and which supports inquiries into human being. In particular, how being and dancing can support explorations into a sense of self as a mindful body.

Aspiring to incorporate both the atmosphere of a live performance for a theatrical audience, with elements of everyday life in the mis-en-scene of my final performances led to the work being held outdoors. At an early stage in my preparations for the final showings, it became clear that presenting free-of-charge outdoor events, in an accessible, inner-city space would appropriately showcase, and facilitate instances of my praxis being realised. A rawness and unpredictability that is part and parcel of such spaces added to the feeling that this was the best setting for these performance outcomes. Complications arose as a result of this decision that called a core artistic and praxis realisation into focus: namely that my praxis is not only being shown in the midst of everyday life but has importantly been occurring there, and should continue to occur there.

With very specific ideas about the kind of performance site that would be ideally suitable, I settled on two locations in Melbourne. Trying to organise events at these sites meant that for over three months I was involved in negotiations with three institutions; the University of Melbourne, The City of Melbourne and The Federation Square Pty Ltd management. Different levels of management at each institution had different needs, and I was required to proceed
through the bureaucracy of each level. On numerous occasions proceedings were completely derailed. For instance, just before the final performance season I received a phone call from a City of Melbourne representative who told me all our agreements and arrangements had to be cancelled. A population of homeless people had taken up residence at the site I had proposed to use. The representative told me, the City was committed to supporting the needs of homeless people ahead of cultural events such as mine. I was delighted at the City’s priorities but on another level I was suddenly very stressed. This recurrent stress cycle showed me that in the intensity of my desire to represent my final PhD performances in just the right way, I had forgotten to focus on attending to linking dance as somatic awareness with self identity, during dance making processes, including during my everyday life.

As I revisited an embrace of the realisation that everyday life is a mode and site of praxis, involving a making use of events and conditions as they are happening, improvising with a corporeal focus, including during venue negotiations, resulted in vastly reduced stress levels. This orientation to everyday life as a mode and site of praxis flowed into positive relationships with artistic collaborators, venue managements and with family members. Ironically, dealing with each moment respectfully meant I had to relinquish a determination to overcome any obstacles to attain, at all costs, pre-envisioned outcomes, which included showing my work outdoors. The payoff was that I was back in significant connection with my praxis, and so as examination drew closer, I was convinced that regardless of the final performance location, I was attending to circumstances in the right way.

My work relationship with sound artist Cobie Orger during the project and final performances was another instance of praxis as everyday life. Our interactions were a platform for, and a model for, how the principles of my praxis could effectively be taken into broader spheres of activity. Our collaboration involved creative and organisational discussions that were orientated by my awareness, tuned in ways more readily associated with my approach to dance making given its somatic attentiveness focus. Cobie and I organised and performed for live audiences, and passers-by on city streets on many occasions. In addition to performance practice, our collaboration generally served to effectively clarify the research.

During the final performance season, our collaboration offered another instance where the work of the praxis could be seen as functioning, effecting transformations. Our corporeally focused communications connected us in meaningful ways during performances, and often over distance. This contributed an additional set of experiences audiences might witness. Once we had been in praxis together for some months we began to reflect that due to the principles of the praxis, we were discrete subjectivities in co-presence with one another, effectively sharing creatively charged experiences. We both felt supported and inspired by the work. Cobie reflected that:

“This performance environment […] is about acceptance and vulnerability… those things support me. I brought out the saxophone, an instrument that I haven’t brought out in performance in ten years! And the first time that I do, is in front of an audience at Dancehouse! But, it worked. Because of how we work. We are enough. What we do is enough” (Orger, Melbourne. 08.06.15 Pers. Comm.).
Our collaboration became another mode praxis had for expressing itself, for its principles to be tested and for me to get feedback. I could see how things were affecting Cobie to know if how I was allocating weight conceptually within the praxis, was appropriate, and was leading the work forward in ways aligned with my aims.

**Forms Within Forms**

I wish to account for some of the origins of my determination to foster a unique formally heterogeneous, idiosyncratic approach to arriving at the poetics for my performances.

Although the aspirations I have for the poetics of my live performances have changed, I still identify as a clown and I consider solo dance performances of material choreographed extemporaneously as a mode of autobiographical telling. A desire to explore my autobiography in the midst of society and culture was initially why Two Suits took our performances to city streets, which was where people were. It is important to me to use artistic inquiries to explore questions of social and personal importance with my art, in addition to exploring questions of artistic form. As dancer and performance maker Eiko Otame describes it: "the impulse to dance comes from the desire to learn more about something or someone… For us (Eiko and Koma) it’s never about expression. It’s about exploration" (Eiko and Koma in Eichenbaum 2008, 270).

I toured as a company member with Strange Fruit for ten years (2000 – 2010) performing company repertoire in outdoor locations throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Strange Fruit “fuses theatre, dance and circus, using a unique elevated medium” (Strange Fruit 2016). Despite working in this mix of forms in 2000 I staunchly considered myself first and foremost a clown. At this time a performance work that I saw in Vilnius, Lithuania, by artist Leo Bassi, made a big impact and has continued to remain relevant. Leo Bassi, a third generation clown working with heterogeneous performance forms in a way that theorist José Sanchez calls “essayistic” (2014, 148), is taken very seriously by audiences, particularly in the moments when he turns to social critique.

I was moved to see Bassi working effectively in his own uniquely styled format. He was a soloist in an evening-length performance in a unique form that had clearly emerged from a combination of his trainings with performance forms, his personality, his biography, and his personal style. I still think that it is a potent choice for an artist making live performance to integrate themselves personally with their work. I like to believe my trainings with clown, Buddhism, Somatics and dance and my autobiography, my everyday self, were all present in the *Finding Anchors and the Abyss* performances.

José A. Sánchez professor of Fine Arts at the University of Castilla-La Mancha, and director of the research group ARTEA, writes his discussion of contemporary theatre works as an exploring of “new stage genres” (Sánchez 2014, 8). In particular he has a term that describes live theatrical work, which is “essayistic” (2014, 148). Essayism “allows the combination of a series of practices” including “autobiography… quotations, real reference and fiction” in performance works as they attempt “to understand reality from the ‘I’ […] without falling into ‘mediocrity’ or subjectivity” (Sánchez 2014, 141). The integration of autobiography with clown, with dance and an understated tone of social activism, continue to interest me.
Although my work has evolved to take very different forms and pursue very different poetics, my live performances have nonetheless grown out of my attempts to evoke myself autobiographically, engage others on a level of social and cultural questioning, and take advantage of my affinity with and training as a clown. I also want to move audiences, figuratively and literally. In Federation Square I created situations where audiences were mobile; they moved to stay warm, or to see the dance. In this way, perhaps in addition to the sense of participation noted by Sánchez, my audiences were physically engaging with my work and engaging their own corporeal circumstances.

Finding Anchors and the Abyss and Social Responsibility

The notion of social responsibility is important for me personally, and has been heightened and focused through my praxis. As noted in Chapter Three my sense of the interpenetration of all things, “interbeing”, intersubjectivity, and intercorporeality, has had the effect of making me aware of my responsibility to others and to issues of social justice more broadly. This interest led to an interest in art as social action for change. Although I do not propose to justify my dance making on the basis of it functioning as art for social justice, I do concern myself with knowing how my performances address my need for action in ways that I deem as socially responsible.

Sensing there was potential for developing and extending my praxis, at the beginning of my PhD candidature, I explored considering my performances as examples of social action for change. During this time I participated in weekly seminars held by the University of Melbourne, Centre for Cultural Partnerships. These meetings allowed graduate artist researchers involved in socially engaged artistic practices a chance to collectively explore research issues, and share findings. My participation in this group led me to feeling like a fraud. I was not able to say clearly and simply why I claimed my artistic project functioned on a level of engagement with issues of social justice.

As noted, an aspect of my praxis involves practices that focus inwardly, contemplatively to access experiences of my own body, my own perceptions, and my own movement. This has occurred whilst acknowledging that I am always held by relationships to others and to environments as Gail Weiss notes “[T]he experience of being embodied is never a private affair, but is always mediated by our continual interactions with other human and nonhuman bodies” (Weiss 1999, 5). My practice, concerned with my moving body, and with making solo performances, has social effects and invokes a reconsidering of relational norms. This is an acknowledgment of what Novak (1990), Foster (2010) and many others have argued which is that cultural performance of gesture leaves traces in others, and these traces are capable of generating responses across social and cultural divides.

Over time I became aware of just how operations towards goals of greater social justice occurred given the basis of my performances which have primarily artistic objectives and involve a relationship between an audience and solo performer. I can say now simply that my praxis produces effects that include transformations of fixed notions that may be held in relation to personal and cultural identities and practices.
The impulse to see my work as socially engaged, artistic activism for change, for a more just, more humane world, has not been resolved. It re-enters my artistic system that cycles through experiment after experiment. I return to this particular question of where my performances sit in regards to their social function in the final section: Notes in Conclusion.
Chapter Five
Encountering Others

In this chapter I describe and discuss praxis responses to notions of inter-human relationship. It is a shift in focus towards the role others play in my praxis. I include examples from my examinable works Finding Anchors and the Abyss.

Movement: Intelligence and Communication

Attention to my moving body is representative of my engagements with corporeal intelligence, and with my attempts to successfully negotiate platforms for connecting in meaningful ways with others. These ideas are what have orientated my praxis in regards to others, and their origins can be traced back to my first experiences of performing. As noted, some of these first experiences were on city streets performing with dance theatre duo Two Suits. Two Suits’ improvisations developed in part out of what transpired between our audiences and us. With movement we processed relational developments and with movement we responded effectively to each other negotiating personal and social complexity. This was my introduction to a heightened sense of justification for the relevance of claims for multiple intelligences. It also contributed experiences, that have been ongoing, that continue to underpin my determination to engage with philosophical perspectives that are derived from body and movement centred practices. This approach to knowledge and theory was introduced at the beginning of this dissertation.

The person responsible for the theory of multiple intelligences, Howard Gardner, in his original theory includes considerations of the “bodily-kinaesthetic” pathways an individual may take as they construct knowledge (Gardner 2006, 50). Maxine Sheets-Johnstone refers to “a kinetic bodily logos” discernable in all animate life. She argues, “behaviours evolve only because behaviours are essentially complex dynamic patternings of movement…thinking in movement is… a primary fact” (Sheets-Johnstone 2011, xxxii). My experience prior to Two Suits with a mode of intelligence that was physically tuned was limited to associations with sport. Focused experiences of dance-making made it evident however that I processed aesthetic and social information bodily and kinaesthetically, via my engagement of a mode of intelligence that complimented rationally focused modes of thinking through problem solving and into knowledge construction.

In The Primacy of Movement (2011) Sheets-Johnstone argues that the foundation for interpersonal experience is movement. She notes that infants are not pre-lingual, rather linguistic skills should be considered as post-kinetic (Sheets-Johnstone 2011, xxxi).

“The social dimension of this central ontogenetical truth can be profitably spelled out precisely in these terms: in the beginning, we relate to others in and through movement, through a kinaesthetically-and kinetically-inflected intercorporeality” (Sheets-Johnstone 2011, 514-515).
Movement, even in abstract formations as explored in my performances, is undoubtedly a potent medium for interpersonal communication. My explorations of the ways recognition of corporeality of self, and of others, influences my praxis have been informed particularly by the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) and concepts from the field of Phenomenology.

Phenomenology

Merleau-Ponty made seminal contributions to Husserlian Phenomenology providing, notably for this project, a post-rational and post-empirical focus. His philosophy was centred around explorations of the epistemic, and ontological ramifications of his notion that perception is both primary to all considerations, and necessarily embodied. Together with Edmund Husserl, and Martin Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty supplied the philosophical work that has been foundational for Phenomenology as a philosophical field. Phenomenology seeks to account for the structures of our situated being-in-the-world by focusing “on the body based somatic and perceptual senses [and] the ways our bodies both shape and are shaped by our life experiences” (Albright 2013, 2). This includes of course our experiences of others. Phenomenology is the study of how the world is perceived, rather than the study of theoretical speculations about essences. As artist researcher Susan Kozel writes:

“Phenomenology involves a return to lived experience, a listening to the senses and insights that arrive obliquely, unbidden, in the midst of movement experiments or quite simply in the midst of life (2007, xvi). […] This embodied approach to the construction of meaning … manifests itself as a way of living in the world that integrates intellect with sensory experience … it can be used to construct meaning, to celebrate the mundane as well as the extraordinary, or to critique thought, attitudes, or social structures” (2007, 2).

Encountering Intercorporeality

In 1998 I was changing into costume, and warming up before a Two Suits performance in a dark corner of a public bar, when I experienced an attack of nerves. My performance partner put one hand on my belly and the other on my lower back and he shook me for several minutes. Being agitated like this alleviated my anxiety, and the whole experience introduced me to two concepts whose importance for my praxis has been enduring. By being physically coerced into “waking up” out of an overpowering psycho-somatic panic I became aware of the connection between my visceral being and my sense of “self”. By connecting self with body I found my subsequent performed actions and cognitions to be differently tuned as a result of having concrete origins and references that were other than rational. The result was I was a better performer, because I was more able to connect to a felt connection via my body, to the bodies of others. Andrea Olsen considers the autonomy of the “brain in the gut”, also known as the enteric nervous system, and she notes:

“functioning below rational thought, our visceral body picks up on information that may not register in our conscious minds. This “instinctive” aspect engages another kind of intelligence and knowing, balancing our picture of ourselves as brainy […] when we
engage all the dimensions of our nervous system potential, we feel supported by, rather than in conflict with, our deepest motivations.” (2014, 205).

Whenever I prepare for performance I consciously undertake actions that will bring my sense of self to centre on my enteric nervous system. Focusing my attention there, I explore my physical sensations with touch, movement and breath and I actively contemplate these experiences as constituting fundamentally my selfhood. Thoughts, ideas, impulses, all arise during these processes and a physically centred selfhood begins to take shape. Identifying my self with my bodily being like this supports my being with others. I experience that “I am in the world and the world is in me” (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 8). In order to understand the other’s being-there, according to Merleau-Ponty, we do not resort to analogy or projection, we use direct perception and our perceptual experience. Countering rationalist traditions in philosophy that have existed since Plato, Merleau-Ponty believed that understanding my relationship with the world, and with the other, is achieved through me considering my embodied perceptions of it. Underwriting this process is the faith I have in my own natural perception of my self and of the world I inhabit.

Intercorporeality refers to a conception of a relation between self and an other, existing on a level of perception that involves a sharing of one's own body with the body of others, and vice versa. And this for Merleau-Ponty is a foundational element of human experience, in the realm of interpersonal social and perceptual relations. In The Visible and The Invisible (1968) he wrote of the self, other, and world as intertwined (49). Earlier, in an essay in The Primacy of Perception:

“In perceiving the other, my body and his are coupled, resulting in a sort of action which pairs them. This conduct which I am able only to see, I live somehow from a distance. I make it mine; I recover it or comprehend it. Reciprocally I know that the gestures I make myself can be the objects of another’s intention.” (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 118)

Clown

Following on from Merleau-Ponty, many distinguished writers including Susan Leigh Foster, neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, have constructed meanings for intersubjectivity, cognition, and a sense of self, by giving focus to their foundations in subjective experiences of corporeal movement.

Although recognising and employing the corporeal in a dynamic construction of meaning is not now unusual, it nevertheless seems to me that unchallenged Cartesian dualism and rationalism remain, with higher status, as the default conceptual foundations for my social and cultural milieus. This perhaps contributes to explanations for why I have experienced persistent degrees of social alienation, and disempowerment, to which I have responded indignantly by determining to explore engagements with others foregrounding corporeal considerations and means.

This determination conditioned my choices in artistic contexts, leading directly to my choice to pursue formal training as a clown. During the years 1998 – 2002 I attended three schools that focused on the study of clown, one in Australia and two in Europe. Although there are myriad ways to be a clown, consistent throughout the teachings I experienced was stress on the point that an artist must partner the evolution of clownish sensibilities with refining the skills
necessary for directly and constantly involving audiences in whatever they as an actor are experiencing.

My praxis as everyday life is rooted in my personal and particular experiences of being and yet it remains deeply committed to exploring social engagement. The methods I have for engaging via my performances with others, to a significant degree, are derived from my early training with clown. I will show examples of this operating in my PhD examinable performances *Finding Anchors and the Abyss* (2015). Firstly I will contextualise those examples with descriptions of concepts that though introduced to me via a practice of performing as a clown, have continued to be relevant even though the formalistic emphasis in my performances has shifted. Discussing clown relative to my current praxis sheds more light on important concepts that directly influence how I attempt connections with others. Those concepts include the body’s influence on self identity, and human being as necessarily inclusive of failure.

**A Clown-esque Sensibility**

As noted in Chapter Four, what supports my praxis in unique ways, and *uncovers* the vitality in what unfortunately I more commonly disregard as mundane, is the cultivation through performance making practices, of a sensibility I have termed clown-esque. This is explored here and in the following section, Notes in Conclusion.

A clown-esque sensibility, in essence refers to the following: in the immediacy of my current experience, I focus my mindful body by registering and engaging with what is phenomenally present. Rather than a priori “knowing”, my mindful body inquires into current experiences with focused attention. It is an attitude conditioned by playfulness, and is free from concerns that the mindful body cultivated might generate appearances of itself as being other than conventionally intelligent, socially appropriate or sensible. It encourages a questioning of norms, and undermines authority on all levels. Connecting this theoretically described attitude to my overall praxis are a set of performance making practices that come from my history in training and performance with the theatrical form, clown.

Wider issues concerning my interest in holding my attention focused on the qualities of my present experience, were explored in relation to somatic practices in Chapter Three. Specific points regarding how a clown-esque sensibility participated in my final PhD performances of solo dance choreographies requires further introduction.

“there were moments of strangeness. You would do something quirky, or just weird, and we didn’t know if it was meant to be funny or what. I think you’re a clown, but you don’t look like one” That was how a stranger responded to my dancing. How’d he know? (PhD Journal 22.09.2013)

I studied and professionally performed as a dance theatre clown between 1998-2010. In the performance works examinable for this research, knowledges from that period played an important role. That may not be immediately apparent however because in this performance instance, the clown was a clown-esque sensibility, and a clown without parody. Louise Peacock writes that the clown “exists in the land of imagination and metaphor, rather than the mundane
world of the everyday” (2009, 155). In effect a clown-esque sensibility defies the existence of the quotidian, the everyday as mundane. Furthermore the becoming of a clown, the movement from spectral presence into a living physicalised entity, is dependent on the modes imagination, and metaphor, equally of primary importance is an attitude of playfulness. Bringing these modes to bear does not transcend the everyday, or sublimate it, it defies the everyday as ever being potentially mundane, or unremarkable. These foundational qualities of a clown-esque sensibility, were brought to bear on my praxis, and my final performance works.

Clown did not participate in generic form, as a red nosed individual of distorted and inordinate energies and interests, theatrically exploiting himself and his failures for comic or sensational effect. The clown that was present throughout my praxis was usually nothing more than a quiet presence that facilitated the introduction of playfulness, imagination and metaphor. A clown-esque sensibility informed my sense of the potentials for what I was doing with movement. Integrated with my other praxis elements, this sensibility reframed my physical presence, and its personal, political, social, and theatrical terms. It’s defiance of norms, initiated a reframing of my experiences of my everyday life, and this was notable particularly when life was experienced as primarily oppressive.

Resonances Between my Current Praxis and my History as a Clown

The main influence on my clown training was the work of Jacques Lecoq (1921–1999). Lecoq’s pedagogy of clown requires a performer to establish a reasonable relationship with a sense of their own personal failings. He noted that “The great difficulty consists in…genuinely playing [one]self and not ‘playing the clown’” (Lecoq 2001, 147). Lecoq’s clown finds good humour in specific facts related to an artist’s personal weaknesses, their fears, and follies. Louise Peacock in Serious Play: Modern Clown Performance (2009) acknowledges “the centrality of the self in much clown training” (2009, 155). As such, Lecoq’s clown requires an actor’s use of transparency about their failings and the associated emotions, to connect, via their good humour, in an empathetic relationship with others. Philippe Gaulier a teacher of clown who taught at Lecoq’s school in Paris clarifies by example: “If we laugh when you are trying to be funny then you are a stand-up comedian. If we laugh because you are a beautiful person and you don’t expect us to laugh, there is your clown” (Gaulier London. 2001 Pers. Notes). As a clown in performance I learnt to reflexively defy the existence of a theatrical fourth wall, to explore direct engagements with audiences.

When I first saw the clown Leo Bassi’s performance work (Instinctos Occultos Vilnius 2000) I identified with his efforts to overtly explore his everyday being via live performance by incorporating with clown, autobiographical storytelling, idiosyncratic dance, and serious social commentary. I continue to design my own heterogeneous performance form, and knowledge of Bassi’s accomplishments, especially his use of a “restrained” rendering of clown, continues to energise my inquiries.

Embodied abstract movement formations predominate the immediately apparent aesthetics of my current performances. Nonetheless my performances remain in continual engagement with concepts and practices that either emerged from or which have deep affiliations with my history of performing as a clown. The term ‘restrained clown’ refers to the direction that my clown has
taken in my performances, leaving behind what is perhaps recognisably ‘clown’. Borrowed from Mary Bryden, the term “restrained clown” refers to an alternative to the generically representative knock-about clown. In her discussion of the restrained clown Bryden notes: “some of the most famous clowns of the past century have intrigued audiences because of their sense of containment.” (Bryden 2010, 359). Bryden uses the Swiss-German clown Grock (1880 – 1959), who performed in several languages whilst always emphasising a modest, understated stage persona as an example. Leo Bassi alternates containment with anarchic exuberance. In contained mode he is able to remain simultaneously a clown while, as noted by theorist Bim Mason, he may also offer “a highly intelligent and articulate view of modern democratic societies” (Mason 1995, 60).

Renowned Canadian clown teacher Richard Pochinko (1946–1989) envisaged clown as “an intensely visceral performance entity” (Hines 2004, 13). Agreeing, I practice clown in body centred ways, and as with my dance making, my practices for performance are all founded upon a somatic focus relative to my corporeal construction of self. Somatic focused practices in combination with clown, which as noted above is concerned with bringing to light instances of my personal failure, has made me aware of embodied being as defined by limitation. Art critic John Berger, wishing to give readers a sense of the corporeal space of limitation invites them to go to the emergency room of a hospital where we will find: “each sentient body’s awareness of itself. It is not boundless like subjective space; it is always finally bound by the laws of the body” (Berger in Albright 2013, 237). The shame I felt as a dancer due to my belief that I am defined by physical limitation, was the subject of my 2009 clown performance in You Me and the Mountain (VCA School of Dance, Melbourne 2009). Instances such as this, where I feel like I am a failure, are explored and exploited by my clown for theatrical and empathetic possibilities. This operation is founded on my desire to be seen by others, and to connect with them, joyfully giving as a basis for our meeting our most authentic state of being, our bodies, which can fundamentally be defined by limitation.

Revelling in my limitations, can only succeed theatrically if I am willing to let others see me in this way and perhaps conclude that I am ridiculous, even stupid. This willingness for a performer of clown is essential. I propose that the same willingness is necessary if an artist wishes to pursue a practice of live extemporaneous dance performance. Not because it is related to clowning but because it is the performance of live processes of experimentation and discovery, and the results will unavoidably include moments of relative success and moments of relative failure. The moments of relative failure must be considered of equal value in order to function as stepping stones into the next moment. As I pursue extemporaneous practices of performance making in live performances and in my practices of everyday life as praxis, I test being overwhelmed, or in pain, or being inside other instances that I perceive as relative failures. I realise that these instances of experience contribute in important ways to processes of creation, and should not be feared.

Clown’s social reason for being according to clown teacher and theorist Giovanni Fusetti, is to help people process failure, which he terms “anguish about imperfection”(Miller 2016). Fusetti argues: “In a group there has to be somebody that is the most stupid of all. And if there is not, some sort of opportunist, or victim, will be pushed into that role because the community needs that in order to transform some sort of anguish about imperfection.” (Miller 2016). Anguish is an
appropriate word relative to failure, because failure is not only when our will or desires are thwarted, when our imperfections are held up for us to see, failure is when, accompanying this we suffer and enter a darkness of doubt and incomprehension. My daily-life failures include the moments when I perceive I am not capable of maintaining a spousal relationship that is functional, or the moments when I perceive myself as incapable as a parent, etc. If failure and suffering occur in my life and art, I attempt to value and not overcome, but appreciate them as parts playing a role in a creative process. This aspiration has motivated my artistic inquiries into performing clown and live extemporaneous performance. I believe it underlies efforts to connect more deeply with my own humanity, and the humanity of others.

Andrew Morrish in 2003 described his approach to performing improvisation: “I’m trying to structure the piece as I experience it…[the piece is] what happens when I deal with what’s happening.” (Roberts 2003, 16). I understand my live performances in the way defined by Morrish: I am finding out what the work will be, as I am experiencing it. I am not defining it in moments prior to performing it. I can not begin to claim to commit to a practice of live extemporaneous dance performance, to “a letting of things happen”, if I am not practicing valuing happenings occurring in ways that might be different to what ideally I envisaged or desire. Failure should be reframed, argues K.E. Weick writing on the “aesthetics of imperfection”, and recognised as “an inevitable property” of any improvisation (2005, 173). Weick observes that jazz is a “haphazard art”, haphazard relative to the “planned, methodical, carefully crafted world of products” (2005, 173). In The Imperfect Art: Reflections on Jazz and Modern Culture (1988) Ted Gioia notes: “Errors will creep in, not only in form but also in execution; the improvisor… will push himself into areas of expression […] the finished product will show moments of rare beauty intermixed with technical mistakes and aimless passages” (Gioia in Weick 2005, 173). Although Weick and Gioia are writing about musical improvisations, the same principles apply to live dance performances of non-pre set movement. And it is important to make such work available to others because it offers opportunities for strangers to experience together someone challenging the edges of what they know. It is a moment of discovery, a moment of risk-taking, a moment of vulnerability, and a moment of focused creativity. These are experiences that participate in defining our humanity, and often the opportunities we have for experiencing such processes are limited to gatherings with family or with intimate friends. Bringing such experiences into a generalised social space normalises interpersonal sharing based on such values, including vulnerability that accompanies an artist going where they have not gone before.

Why Praxis is Made Available for Others

Anna Halprin’s Citydance (1977) was a full day’s journey throughout San Francisco, performed or “co-created” by dancers with members of the public who had read about it in newspapers, and passers-by. “The event gathered momentum as it progressed, with people joining along the way until the final exuberant celebration in the heart of the city with nearly a thousand participants.” (Worth & Poynor 2004, 29). At a workshop leading up to the event Halprin read out this statement:

“All the folks in our city, as in all places in the country and in the world at large, have the capacity to experience their lives as a dance, …I think dance, in its seminal beginnings,
was meant to have a purpose, and the purpose was a direct link and tie-in with the life of
the individual, the life of the family, the life of the community. My concern is to renew
and reaffirm these seminal purposes of dance... to give greater harmony and wholeness
to our lives” (Halprin in Ross 2009, 314).

While working for arts company Strange Fruit I performed at city festivals, and outdoor events.
Being paid to perform and travel the world was a dream come true but the underlying reason
why I did this for over ten years was because I genuinely felt I was connecting dance as somatic
attentiveness to “the life of the individual, the life of the family, the life of the community”. I still
want to experience performing corporeally focused, free of charge, in public spaces, and I still
consider that dance as somatic attentiveness is capable of establishing connections to others and
to the life of a community.

As noted above, an aspiration that guides my work is to experience the implications of knowing
myself and others primarily via my attentive sensing into and of my corporeality. Focusing on
myself as movement, flesh and blood to provide a platform for connecting with others, remains
how I propose to pursue connections with audience members. My belief that I am in degrees able
to fulfil this aspiration is due to experiences I have had with audiences while exploring slap-stick
humour and clown, and dance-making as a solo performer and with Two Suits. Whilst touring
with Strange Fruit, for months on end we performed the same material for audiences of different
languages, cultures, and religions. A significant number of individuals from a wide variety of
backgrounds reported to me that our work was registering for them deeply. Such experiences
have continued to feed my conviction that via dance or physicalisations predicated on my
attentiveness to my somatic experiencing, my live performances can communicate across
cultural, and social differences. By giving focus to the subjective corporeal foundations for
intersubjectivity, cognition, and a sense of self I experience myself entering into loops of shared
resonance with others.

This corporeal experiencing of others relative to my praxis resonates with notions such as
Merleau-Ponty’s intercorporeality. The understanding that underpins intercorporeality is referred
to by Gail Weiss: “my bodily existence is always already produced in and through the bodies of
others” (Weiss 2008, 94). My subjective sense of resonance with specific others provides the
basis upon which I discern my performances as constitutive of opportunities for interpersonal
communications. How my somatic attentiveness, keenly focused during performances, leads me
to argue for knowing something about my own experience and that of specific others,
specifically a sense of the validity of understandings such as intercorporeality, is an area of
contention.

Dance historian and theorist Rebekah Kowal notes: “In the field of modern dance, universalism
provided a basis for the operative assumption that dance as an embodied experience offered a
“human language” or cultural “common denominator” that could establish common ground for
heterogeneous audiences...” (2010, 10). The term universalism when related to the political and
cultural contexts of post war North America is linked with cultural-centric thinking. Dance
universalism in these contexts as Kowal explains was “promised on the white Western subject as
the norm” (2010, 10). Dancer and philosopher Philipa Rothfield takes up the issue of accounting
for the validity of subjective, “felt” experience as a basis for generalising ontological and

Rothfield notes that singular subjective experiences of dance and movement cannot be considered as representative of universal structures of how people know and understand the world unless those universal structures acknowledge within themselves a multiplicity of bodies. This is an acknowledgment of the specificity and biases of subjective corporeal experience.

“Dance is not a phenomenal presence whose totality can be apprehended in the immediate and particular instance. It is a heterogeneous, emergent field of practice and performance which is encountered by a range of subjects in a variety of ways. […] This is not a deficiency but rather an indication of the corporeal means by which dance is known.” (Rothfield 2010, 310).

Rothfield argues that dance practice as “somatic attention” (2010, 311), or “phenomenological corporeality” (313), offers an “ontologically pertinent” (316) differentiation within the field of Phenomenology. According to Rothfield, dance is known by myself and others corporeally, and we can consider such knowing as a basis for knowing about others and as our basis for communicating socially and culturally, but we must acknowledge the socio-cultural and historical limitations to any such claims.

“on the one hand phenomenological corporeality is a means to the epistemological terrain of intercorporeal understanding […] it also represents a limit according to which the object may be known. […] phenomenological corporeality is inevitably a prejudice, a form of partiality, limiting what can be known” (Rothfield 2010, 313).

Acknowledging its limitations, Rothfield argues that elaborations of someone’s particular experience of their dance practice (practice as somatic attentiveness, or phenomenological corporeality), remains an important and relevant contribution to critical and philosophical discourses. She writes:

“…the lived body, is a portal to a critical formulation […] whilst Foucault may well enunciate the workings of society on the individualized body, we still want to know what it’s like to live as that historicized, normalized, bodily subject […] The axis of lived corporeality may not be epistemologically reliable—its ‘findings’ remain provisional, its authority limited. But it is ontologically pertinent. Dance is one of those realms of ontological pertinence. Phenomenology represents a field […] framed in relation to subjectivity. The differentiation of that field represents an epistemological complication, a reformulation, a multiplication” (Rothfield 2010, 316-317).

As discussed in Chapter Three, performing *Finding Anchors and the Abyss* emerged from my praxis, via a taking of somatic attention pathways into extemporaneous dance making. It represented my attempts to connect with others, given awareness of potentials afforded by intercorporeal levels of exchange. It was a performed statement indicative of my agreement with
Anna Halprin on the point that people everywhere do “have the capacity to experience their lives as a dance” (Ross 2009, 314).

However it was also predicated on my awareness of wanting to celebrate the significant differences between myself and others - our corporeal specificity. This adjunct understanding relative to intercorporeality is posited by Rosalind Diprose who, building from Merleau-Ponty’s notions of intercorporeality, addresses a sense of “corporeal generosity” (Diprose 2002). Diprose’s conception of corporeal generosity is described as the “fundamental openness to that which is other, to that which is different or unfamiliar” (Weiss 2008, 93).

Exploring and experiencing the lived potentials of the beliefs as described above, is why I make live dance performances for audiences. How I have engaged concretely with these beliefs, and tested them, makes up the final part of this chapter here below.

How Praxis was Made Available for Others

Initially with *Finding Anchors and the Abyss* I wanted to make performances that would engage audiences by being compelling, by presenting to them a strong case for where they should look to find interest. But prioritising such an order of considerations in my making processes would have sold my praxis short. I began instead by focussing on the following understandings from praxis: i) somatic attentiveness underpins methods for extemporaneously composing dance; ii) this supports and is supported by a sense of self as corporeally determined and iii) these two factors facilitate connections with others. With a focus on these points, I proceeded to make choices and develop my final PhD performances.

In the final performances, few indications were offered regarding how audience members should watch, or to what they should give their focus to. An audience member for the final performance, dancer, dance theorist, and choreographer Shaun McLeod noted:

"You offered us plenty of space to have our own experience… in effect you said: You are responsible for the experience that you're going to have” (McLeod, Melbourne 2015 Pers. Comm.).

Offering plenty of space was deliberately done in the hope that audience members would question their expectations and consider their choices, and sense a relative freedom for responding. Spaciousness was engendered by the ambiguity of the event’s proposals. The nature of the event, and the roles of spectator and performer were all defined very lightly. Audiences had to consider their expectations relative to their experience. They had to find meanings for my presence and their presence with minimal information. It is a situation that audiences for a contemporary performance event, might have expected to encounter.

Alan Read is Professor of Theatre at Kings College London, and author of the seminal *Theatre in the Expanded Field* (2013). To conceive of a theatre in an “expanded field” Read conflates the terms performance and theatre. The word “performance” Read associates with an array of artistic actions notably those related to the visual arts field. Read’s theoretical project is undertaken on
the basis that in the twenty-first century categorically theatre has been subsumed into performance, and vice versa. Audiences of live performances such as mine know from experience that the field of contemporary live performance is inclusive of experimental and hybrid forms. This inclusivity Read argues is sufficiently widespread to have overturned the traditional sense of artistic paradigms as being categorically discrete. _Performance in the Twenty-First Century: Theatres of Engagement_ by Andy Lavender (2016) notes specific qualities currently associated with contemporary performance:

“subsequent to the ‘classic’ postmodern tropes of detachment, irony and contingency, many …performance events in the twenty first century entail altered modes of engagement on the part of both practitioners and spectators. They connect more overtly with social process. They involve a pronounced form of personal experience, often implicating the body, and sometimes… one’s sense of self. And they entail certain sorts of [audience] commitment.” (Lavender 2016, 3)

Inviting my audiences to undertake what were possibly familiar audience tasks, such as reappraising the specific nature of their own role, was done in the hope that audiences would actively engage, on terms mediated by my performance, with their own perceptions. Audience members might have freshly discovered dance, their environment, their meaning-making processes, and their own bodies in movement. To encourage participations of this kind, the work was staged outdoors and free-of-charge. No charge meant the exchange could be of a different order. It created a subtle shift in audience consciousness away from that of a customer receiving a product, and towards a situation of greater equality. I clearly was not offering a finished product, something already realised and known. The audience not having paid might have had less expectation of this, and perhaps greater willingness to share in the responsibility for something to occur. That something was an exchange of efforts, a rapport with each side of the performer audience equation delivering efforts to attend, be present and thereby enliven the meeting, and co-create the set of possible meanings. Contemporary performance theorist José Sánchez notes that seeking such a level of audience participation is common, often involving a “concept of stage representation as an invitation to reflect …obtained through a controlled slackness in […] execution and an apparent lack of concern for the finish of the work” (Sánchez 2014, 141).

To support such engagements audience members were individually acknowledged and welcomed, by myself or the host, Andrew Morrish. To further encourage a hospitable atmosphere and to further foster the sense of agency of audience members, the work was positioned in a place where paths into and away from the work were unobstructed. Audience members were free to make up their own minds about the work. If they were not curious, or did not find value and interest in what was unfolding, a discreet departure was easily available.

Although I gave audiences little to go on, there was one thing I had to deliver unambiguously, and that was my own presence. This turned out to be more nuanced that just turning up. Indeed exploring an exchange predicated on corporeality could only occur if I turned up, and was present so others might register and engage with that presence. The project’s videographer Lindesay Dresden, noted privately after an on-site rehearsal-performance “You’re like a pigeon, everyone is ignoring you” (Dresden, Melbourne 2015 Pers. Comm.). It was true my dancing was
going unnoticed. I had felt invisible on stage before. I recalled Deborah Hay’s voice calling out during a class when I and others were dancing “get back into this room! Be here, now.” (Hay Melbourne 2014 Pers. Notes). In that class in 2014, and again as I prepared for my final PhD performances in 2015, I realised I had failed to tune my somatic attentiveness correctly. Preoccupied with focusing on qualia relative to my self as a body in movement, I had slipped into obsessively pointed focusing. This in effect made me temporarily unaware of others, and of my environment. In my determination to achieve a strong, nuanced inner focus, I had prioritised giving attention to certain perceptions, while completely shutting out others. This was an intellectual, cognitive achievement, which occurred because I was falsely differentiating mind and body, and attributing greater worth to states of “deep” focus. I was being with my body, rather than being my body.

Buddhist scholar Dr Reginald Ray puts emphasis on corporeal tactility in Touching Enlightenment (2008). Here Ray argues that “the more embodied we are, the more aware we are of other[s]” (311). He notes that genuine inhabiting of the body is not associated with experiences of “mastery, and control. [To] fully inhabit our bodies, by contrast, is to discover our embeddedness in the world” (28). He continues: “the more we descend into our body […] we find that our “body” - far from being restricted to “me” - is actually in some strange way inclusive of the other” (311).

Recalibrating my focus was to return to honouring, in practice and not just rhetorically, the equality I proposed for my somatic attentiveness as dance-making. I was to allow my body to know, or as Maxine Sheets-Johnstone writes, to allow my body to think. She advocates for the equality I am referring to when she writes of “a body that is thinking in movement” (2011, 423). This involves practicing a rejection of separating mind and body, because, in the words of Sheets-Johnstone, such a separation denies “what I experience myself to be: a mindful body, a body that is thinking in movement and that has the possibility of creating a dance on the spot.” (2011, 422-423). The equality of mind and body is not easy for me to achieve: my practices involve the process of returning again and again to the body, after flights of thought. That process is underpinned by a commitment to equalising my relationship to the kind of thinking that goes on in my thinking mind and that which goes on in my body mind. My body is my perception of a vibrant materiality, a motility. My body also contributes a sense of its own offerings, tendencies, predilections, needs and wants, plus curiosity. The equality I am referring to is a crucial understanding that conditions my practices of somatic attentiveness and it is what terms such as Albright’s “physical mindfulness” imply (from Chapter Three). I asked audience members to engage their sense of responsibility, and I also had to engage mine. I consider responsibility in this context in line also with what Ann Cooper Albright describes:

“I think of responsibility not as an oppressive duty towards others, but rather as an ability to respond, an ability to be present with the world and as a way of being present with oneself. This is the fruit of kinaesthetic attention, a physical mindfulness” (Albright 2013a, 267).

This recalibration, made it possible for others to register my presence. Due to the location and the formalistic qualities of the dance this was still an unconventional and therefore uncertain offer to both potential, and pre-committed audience members. I tried numerous approaches for
signalling the event’s ethos as cost-free, respectful, and conversational. I inhabited the space, crew members were visible so any audience members-to-be could take reassurance and cues from them, and a host, played eventually by Andrew Morrish, was also incorporated into the event. The situation also led to a close collaboration with sound artist Cobie Orger. Beginning in March 2015 Cobie closely accompanied the creative process, performing with me regularly on the street, and at venues. These strategies were effective but to limited degrees - more needed to be done. I opted for approaching others directly and to do this I decided to increase the presence of my clown.

**Being with Others in Alternative Ways**

In 2013 Nick Papas, founding member of dance theatre company *Born in a Taxi*, introduced me to a technique he called “dials”. The technique involved an imaginary set of units (ten), which could be attributed to different performance modes. For instance, I could choose to perform “autobiographical storytelling” at a level of three units, while dancing at a level of seven units. Helen Herbertson in her capacity as supervisor of my Masters project that researched combinations of contemporary dance with clown once observed privately: “perhaps clown and dance don’t have to butt up against each other. They might merge. Or slide past one another…” (Herbertson, Melbourne 2009 Pers. Comm.). Working in solo performance with Papas’ Dials technique gave me experiences that extricated any remnant sense that different performance modes necessarily excluded or negated each other. This was further borne out in my final PhD performances at Federation Square, when the performance mode of clown provided just a slight hue to the forms that were visible, this presence nonetheless significantly informing me as maker.

When clown first returned to rehearsals outdoors at Federation Square however, I focused on emphasising it. I gave it nine units. I darted about ridiculously, or I physicalised extreme actions or postures. I mischievously, playfully, confronted passers-by, defying them to ignore me. I explored close proximities to others. I smiled, making myself a decidedly friendly presence. I openly returned other people’s gazes. I childishly waved to strangers until they returned a gesture. As a provocateur emphasising a playful attitude, I safely and effectively navigated into and out of experiences of exchange with others. I began to reintroduce greater degrees of dance, and I began to explore being with others while dancing in a variety of new and unexpected ways. Instead of remaining on site barely present, an invisibility, I now offered my self fully, bodily, corporeally present, and I engaged with outdoor extemporaneous dance-making that demanded to be noticed. I had come to offer dance as a series of provocations. I moved in idiosyncratic ways free of references to recognisable dance techniques, and simultaneously I demanded strangers respond. Together we began to formulate exchanges that challenged norms for socialising relative to the outdoor urban sites we occupied.

Michel de Certeau’s oft cited analysis of the living culture of everyday life, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988), is in part, a consideration of the ways individuals undertake everyday social practices, which contain within them, seams of responsiveness to power he calls “tactics”. “Tactics” in de Certeau’s conceptualisation are individual, mobile, responses to the power of sites, institutions, and governments (1988, 36). Foster (2002, 230) further describes them as acts with “no goal beyond the sometimes playful, always critical exposure of the workings of the
normative.” When at the Federation Square site I became more visible to others, and more engaged with our exchanges, I became increasingly aware of what I perceived as formal and informal powers surrounding me and others. These powers were apparent when I danced and others, passing by on their everyday errands deliberately ignored me, or watched me by throwing furtive glances as they ostensibly continued on their way. These powers also became apparent during the instances when uniformed private security guards watched me in an altogether different way to the passers-by. The guards stood prominently in groups, and stared. Occasionally a guard asked what I was doing, and when I said I was dancing and I had all the necessary permissions, they accommodated my presence.

De Certeau writes that entire societies “manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them” (1988, xiv), and he notes this occurs on a personal and interpersonal level: “[t]he space of the tactic, is the space of the other” (1988, 37). Myself and others integrated “tactics” within our doings, as we negotiated our impulses for how to respond to one another’s gestures, and actions, relative to our understandings of what were applicable norms for social relations such as ours. However, as Buchanan (2000, 105) and others have noted, it would be incorrect to suggest “tactics” such as that within what myself and others explored in Federation Square comprised significantly productive challenges on a macro level to social norms, or institutionalised powers. Foster writes “Although they attain different degrees of visibility, tactics could never muster the cohesiveness necessary to instantiate an alternative social order (2002, 230). A significant result for my praxis nonetheless did exist. Whether my series of outdoor performances were my challenges to implicit demands for adherence to social and cultural norms that others and the site made on me, or not, is not questioned. It was by experiencing them in this way however, that I experienced heightened agency.

My event was not shut down by the site, and I was not shut down personally, in any sense, by any provoked passers-by. My explorations of social and cultural “tactics” had in effect cultivated my sense of my praxis’ agency, validity, and therefore my sense of security in the legitimacy of my undertakings. This enabled my staging of my body, my autobiography, and my dance-making, to not be braced defensively against any sense of difference, I performed able to sense my inherent porousness to others and the world around me. In the words of Rosalyn Diprose, a “lending to and borrowing from the bodies of others” was possible (Diprose 2002, 89). It was clear that my praxis had facilitated intercorporeal experiencing because although many people responded to my works in modes such as dance or writing, I did not depend on these for information regarding the exchange between others and the work. I had experienced bodily certainty in performance. I had registered in performance others and myself as in a loop, on a level of exchange that was its own kind of knowledge, and not necessarily one that translated neatly into language or intellectual thought. Sheets-Johnstone similarly acknowledges such potentials for exchanges at such a level during her discussion of extemporaneous dance making Thinking in Movement (Sheets-Johnstone 2011, 419). Here she paraphrases neurologist Kurt Goldstein’s remarks on language, substituting movement for language to argue movement can be considered not just a communication tool or instrument, but “a manifestation, a revelation of intimate being and of the psychic link which unites us to the world and our fellow men” (Sheets-Johnstone 2011, 427).
Ann Albright considers the word “porous” in her discussion of the possibilities for “feeling” relative to exchanges between self and other, between interior and exterior worlds in *Feeling in and Out: Contact Improvisation and the Politics of Empathy* (Albright 2013a). Albright uses as an example inviting Contact Improvisation students to open the pores of their skin “wide enough to let the world in” (267). One student notes the proposition is similar to “opening your mind” - reflecting on the experience of the exercise the student notes:

“it is a palpable feeling of release, of spreading and opening your skin to the physical space and people around you […] allow[ing] you to be ready to receive, it also makes you ready to give.” (Albright 2013a, 269).

As the performances approached, I had refined integrating performance modes, and my clown participated as a set of essences, a sensibility, becoming all but invisible. I no longer looked directly at audience members, nor did I attempt to be overtly provocative. I was able to concentrate on my praxis. A finessing of my relationship, on a body-to-body level with others was possible. Using skin as a metaphor and specific example, Albright theorises regarding the permeability of our schematic and psychic edges relative to others. She uses terms that relate to my experiences in performance at Federation Square. Although I was not touching others as Albright’s students were, via my dancing body which is constituted by my somatic attentiveness practices, and an identification of my self and others primarily with movement and materiality, I was able to engage the same tuning of my awareness that Albright describes, to facilitate an intercorporeal exchange. To represent this experience I quote Albright’s work replacing her use of “skin” with “body”:

We can conceive of our body as either a boundary or a conduit and this shift in perception leads to a radically different understanding of the relationship between myself and the world. If my body is seen as a barrier to […] any kind of “otherness,” I might well approach life with a certain cold war mentality, shoring up any breeches in my defence system […] to keep me safe from the outside world. If, on the other hand, I experience my body as the porous interface between myself and the world, then I will be more apt to engage my body as a permeable, sensitive layer that facilitates that exchange. (Albright 2013a, 267)

Modifying and adapting the performance event incrementally in the hope that a more deeply connected sense of relationship with others might be experienced was ultimately successful. This was extremely satisfying for many reasons. Perhaps the most exciting part of this achievement was that such a sense of relationship had been established between strangers with minimal use of conventional communication methods such as words or even mimed gestures. It was an achievement based around a performance of abstract movement and this fact I found thrilling.

Taking the experiences as detailed in this chapter into the final remarks, I consider the social dimension of my work once more but from a different perspective. I also explore how the term unfinished body has come to be representative of my praxis.
Notes In Conclusion.

This dissertation has focused on exploring what it means to be somatically and kinaesthetically focused, in terms of contexts and practices for performance making. Furthermore this dissertation has explored implications of these foci on performance making practices, their involvement in my everyday, and some other broader considerations.

In previous chapters I have made references to my praxis as representative of certain ambitions for dance performances. My ambitions for my praxis include: to have foregrounded kinaesthetic awareness and somatic attentiveness in performance. These attitudes of attention are derived from, and continually furthered, by my experience of being holistically mind and body, at all times. Understanding my being in this way has been termed mindful body. My self in an everyday sense, and in relation to my praxis, is understood as dependent on my being a mindful body. My performances are the staging of processes, and formally they are live choreographies of solo dance. My praxis is focused on implicating my self, understood as a mindful body, into these processes-as-performances.

From my experiences of research processes that have responded to my praxis, and been formative of my praxis, qualities of key elements of my praxis, with effects beyond my praxis, have been discerned and are referred to via terms such as limitation, and unfinished body.

As a result of this writing, and praxis processes more broadly, responding to limitation as a necessity has been recognised as contributing another core influence. Limitation is an important theme for my praxis. In combination with this recognition is another recognition, also attained via my praxis, that my self can be most tellingly described using the term mindful body. These recognitions in combination have led to my use of the term unfinished body.

Following on from my attempts in this dissertation to adequately account for my experiences of my praxis, I can now offer the following overarching description of my praxis: Physically/spatially, and historically/temporally, my limited but unfinished mindful body can be described as an array of processes occurring within and upon my body, which involve movements between resolutions, and dissolutions. As long as I am alive, this will not end. My human body is both limited and unfinished. Inherently limited spatially and temporally due to its materiality, it is also experienced as constant evolution, and change.

In this final section, I outline the ways in which I experience, within my praxis, my self as a mindful body that is unfinished, unresolved, unmade. I will also outline how I consider the same mindful body as located, and resolved as a materiality with an undeniable relationship to limitation. To end I draw on the work of others, to outline understandings that carry my praxis forward.

My Praxis, My Mindful Body, as Unfinished

Considering my self as a mindful body in process, is addressed by the term unfinished body. As noted in Chapter One, Susanne Foellmer argues for the recognition of “the unfinished” as an
important stylistic feature in Contemporary Dance practices (Foellmer 2009). My use of the term unfinished relative to body and to my praxis is done to address concepts, recognised as associated with my, and with many other instances of practices from the field of Contemporary Dance. In this sense my use of the term unfinished body, accepts Foellmer’s work, particularly regarding the concept of body underpinning my praxis and recognised by Foellmer as found in many other practices for performing Contemporary dance. As noted in Chapter One, I employ what Foellmer describes as a set of Post Classical understandings of body, which she has drawn from Mikhail Bakhtin’s “grotesque body”, and which include: i) The body as “a process” represented by an “infinity of forms”; ii) The body as “under construction”, a “project”; and iii) A body as experience, experience that “never experience[s] its own completion” (Foellmer 2009, 69-70 My translation).

The unfinished body is my body in performances of dance. It addresses the sense that I am unresolved: I am historically a mixture of seemingly unresolved threads and practices. Moreover, I am open to change, I endeavour to remain unresolved, to remain open to affective infiltration and social contagion from and unto others. The nature of my performances is that both in practice and in performance, they are processes without completion. During these processes, by being focused on my kinaesthetic awareness and somatic attentiveness, I continually re-discover, re-imagine and re-experience my own body.

As noted in Chapter Four, clown is an ongoing presence in my work. As a character grounded by the visceral, it emerges from within my mindful body as attitudes, movements, postures and technical doings. A clown-esque attitude is based theoretically and experienced in my responses to my sense of self as a failure. It includes instances of my mindful body that while ebullient and vital are equally inept and inappropriate socially and physically. It is a vitality that nonetheless is identified with getting it wrong. This preeminent mode of consciousness affecting my mindful body, depends on the notion that as an identity it is unfinished. Clown depends on being unfinished in order to fulfil its identity as a representation of a self unmastered, un-known and un-knowing. Differently, it also depends on a recognition of itself as being unfinished to remain active, to remain enabled, to retain or regain positivity after another ‘flop’ or failure in an ongoing, inexhaustible series of failures. Arguably one of the most representative qualities of a clown is his or her openness, which also translates as vulnerability (LeBank & Bridel 2015). To be vulnerable commonly means to be open to injury, or to be easily hurt. To be unfinished is to be vulnerable.

Rothfield refers to “the theorist’s corporeality” as functioning as a nexus for developments of phenomenological insight. However she also notes that this corporeality “like other realms of face to face, body to body relations, it is also a field of vulnerability” (Rothfield 2010, 306). Vulnerability is a quintessential quality of being human. My identification as unfinished is partly my response to this recognition. This identification as unfinished, unclosed, unresolved, is also in response to my recognition that I want to remain open. I want to experience hurts and woundings. An embrace of my vulnerability is undertaken due to my belief that relationships with others and with the world are meaningful only to the degree that I am able to accept the mutual porosity that they depend on.
Porosity implies change, which invites consideration of the temporal. Referring to my self as an unfinished body in my praxis is in response to efforts to acknowledge my self as inscribed and conditioned by histories. There is no longer a sense that what I do as a cultural producer is definite. It will change, it will evolve. It is in this sense that Goldman notes (2010, 162) “the self is never finished”.

Understanding my self as a mindful body that is never finished, has been further clarified by understandings relative to language and writing. Language and writing do not necessarily imply historicity, however if considering social, cultural and personal productions that are in the form of language and writing then historicity may be considered a factor. This factor limits my ability to make universally applicable claims and this state of play resonates with my sense that my being, and my projects, remain unfinished.

Some histories of my self and of my body, are those which I write myself. These histories may or may not include the history of my self and my body as descendent from other white middle class farming Australians. My body and my biography implicate me and my praxis in many, many stories. For most of my life, before the last ten years, my reaction to the enormity of implied responsibility such historical entanglements entailed, was to hide in the shadows and deny or ignore my own historicity. Within the field of dance, I found support for this hiding, denying project. Sophie Lycouris writes that in discourses of dance, theory has been considered a “dangerous” abstraction that “undermines the crucial element of the materiality of the dancing body” inferring acceptance of the traditional approach of debasing the body in favour of “the superior mind” (Lycouris 1996, 4).

However, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone a philosopher grounded in Husserlian Phenomenology, writes of “the importance of experience”, and of the importance of taking “the challenge” of languaging experience (2011, 482). Ten years ago I perceived myself as excluded from the dominant discourses surrounding the cultural and social practices I was heavily involved in. I responded to that sense of exclusion by beginning to meet the challenges I encountered when I tried to language my dance and performance experiences. Awareness of myself as a contextual, historically conditioned figure, enables my efforts towards languaging my experience. I consider these efforts as instances, or experiments, always only partial. An example of a similar awareness is recognised by Antje Hildebrandt in the work of Yvonne Rainer. In Learning about the 60s: Choreography as a Practice of Archiving (2015) Antje Hildebrandt writes about Yvonne Rainer’s “Manifesto Reconsidered”:

“Rainer shows the redundancy of her earlier statement and undermines her own thinking forty-three years later. She shows that statements are never finite; they only mark the thinking at a specific point in time and context.” (Hildebrandt 2015, 39)

Dancers, distrustful of the capability written language has for adequately rendering their experiences of dance and dancing are easily found. Under the influence of Post Modern dance, for many years, I refused to entertain the possibility that writing could capture the experience of dance. At that time I understood dance as pure experience, immediate, and untranslatable into other modes of expression. However, writers such as Philippa Rothfield, and Ann Cooper Albright,
disabused me of this view. Rothfield observes:

“Postmodern, post structural and postcolonial forms of [philosophical] discourse dispute the notion that the immediate is prior to and analytically separable from the influence of the external world”.

She continues, suggesting that the sphere of subjectivity that construes understandings and beliefs about experience “is constructed through discursive and representational practices.” (2010, 309).

I have relinquished ambitions for writing about dance, in ways that would be capable of representing universal truths about dance and about being human. This has gone, along with my belief that there is something essential and pure within dance and dancing, that contributes a structure that transcends particularity, to be “of dance”. I have attempted to show, through this dissertation and with my performances, that the question “what is dance?” is a good question, but that a much better question, because it is aimed at generating discussions rather than definitions, is “what is this dance?”

I have accepted that my contributions to discourses, are conditioned by the highly specific nature of my mindful body that has contributed to their emergence. This is not a liability but a strength. Insights derived from my own experiences, make contributions to knowledge that are grounded in contextual relevance and open to operations of discursive practices.

Limitation

Meanings I attach to the term limitation are relative to its common usage. In the following paragraphs I outline the numerous ways my praxis and my being has come to recognise, and respond to being subject to limitation.

As Shilling sensibly observes, seeking “to live life apart from our bodies is …unrealistic” (Shilling 2012, x). Experiencing my unfinished mindful body via awareness of it as a concrete corporeal reality, thus “limited”, has entailed an ever present negotiation with acceptance and it has had unexpected beneficial effects.

A dance student of Ann Cooper Albright observed: “Within my tragically fractured existence, dancing is the one of the few times when I can be in one place” (Katherine Dohan in Albright 2013, 273).

In the chapter *Training Bodies to Matter* (2013, 270-277) Ann Cooper Albright describes instances from her dance teaching that fall under the theme of a shifting of dance pedagogy to an emphasis on “experiencing the sensate dimensions of one’s physical state of being” (273). Albright argues that such an approach is particularly relevant at a time when most of her students live out significant amounts of their lives “on a two-dimensional screen” (270). Albright describes an exercise in which she instructs a group of female adolescent students, taking them through a sun salutation that is accompanied by a litany of enunciations. It is what she calls “half Girl Scout pledge, half yoga mantra” (275).
We begin standing, stretching the hands to the sky (“I reach to the sky”),
then bend over and touch the ground (“I press into the earth”),
and spiral the body around (“I gather all the energy around me”).
Next, we take our right legs back into lunge and trace a semicircle with the right arm (“I
open to one side”), and coming back to facing front with the palms together in front of the
chest (“and Centre myself”),
repeat to the other side (“I open to the other side, and then centre myself”).
Next, we jump back into plank pose (“I create a bridge from my school to my community”),
and then come into child’s pose (“I gather into myself”)
and walk back to the front of the mat to stand in mountain pose (“and walk forward to
become present in the world.”)
To become present in the world. Just standing, aware of the sensation of that line of energy
running from the earth, through one’s spine, to the sky. Many of us take this moment for
granted. […] And yet, in the context of a middle-school environment with its chatty,
attitude-filled street energy, this can be an amazingly profound experience. Much to my
surprise, the adolescent girls in this program enjoy this sequence so much that they often
insist on ending most sessions with it as well. (Albright 2013, 275-276).

Albright is interested in a dance curriculum orientated by somatic attentiveness, because she is
convinced that her classes offer an important and rare opportunity for people, in this case young
women, to have opportunities to experience for themselves the circumscribed, concrete reality of
their physical lives. It is an opportunity for them to realise that to be a body is to be limited and
yet it is precisely this awareness of limitation that is necessary if her students are to have an
empowered relationship with their bodies and their selves. Albright writes that she brings her
students into contact with:

“the connections between breathing and inspiration, to feel the stability of gravity, to find
resistance through internal strength rather than external tension, to rely on lines of energy
to support their bodies, to realize the three dimensionality of their bodies and finally to
recognize the importance of what is inside (their organs), as well as on the surface of their
skin”. (Albright 2013, 276).

Somatic attentiveness and kinaesthesia provide the underpinnings of my dance making practices.
By directing my attention onto my experiences of being a mindful body, I realise that even when
stationary, I am in movement. Being endlessly in movement suggests perhaps I also experience
endlessly a sense of possibility and potential. However, as was introduced in Chapter Two, this is
not the case and at times despite being a body aware of itself as in constant movement, limitation
is the dominant characteristic of my experience.

I have responded to this, as was also noted in Chapter Two, by embracing this quality of my
experiences. My aspiration is not to improve anything, but rather my effort goes towards being
where, and how, I am at any given moment. As a result, numerous sets of effects have been
describes one set I have experienced, when she notes that mindfulness, which she describes as
offering techniques supporting us to “come to our senses”, allows us to recover from “the effects
of isolation, stress, trauma, and addiction” (168). Holler writes that somatic attentiveness, or coming to our senses, provides the means by which we can actually feel “the sensory, emotional, and intersubjective connections of ordinary life” (168). She continues, noting that somatic states, and a relationship to our somatic states that is focused by attentiveness and presence, rather than a hope or ambition of achieving something, regulates:

“the thresholds of sensory and emotional touch and thus help to construct the physical, moral, and spiritual health of the individual and the society. Lived in mindfulness, our daily acts can open up and extend our sensory lives in ways that allow us to feel cared for, capable of change and empathy” (Holler 2002, 168).

**Limitation Orientates Practices**

Limitation is recognised within practices for performances of non pre set dance. Richard Bull for example opposed binaries and sat limitation comfortably alongside notions of freedom: “I think Bull’s company members learned that freedom and discipline, and spontaneity, and structure, and individual and group are not opposing categories” (Foster 2002, 249). Dance compositions that were pre set were also not considered antithetical to his conceptions of improvised performance (Foster 2002, 340).

In my performance making practices perceiving my self as an unfinished mindful body, is experienced as an oscillation between being made and unmade, resolved, unresolved, finished and unfinished, porous and in flux, yet limited and located. A set of continual processes.

In *Improvisation in Dance and Mind: Manifesto (Phenomenologically)* Foster (2003) describes experiencing a sense of oscillation – in her terms it is not between resolved and unresolved but rather, she writes that improvised dance is a movement between the known and the unknown. The unknown becomes available due to an “engaging of the known” (2003, 3-4).

As noted in Chapter Two, in Danielle Goldman’s discussion of improvised dance in relation to limitation, or “tight places” - places of constraint where “one’s social and historical positions in the world affect one’s ability to move, both literally and figuratively” (2010, 5), Goldman cites the work of Foucault, in particular his notion of *practices* of freedom (2010, 4). Goldman aligns the concept of freedom with practices of dance improvisation, dependent on an acceptance of Foucault’s notion that freedom is not a destination. Freedom for Foucault, as noted by Goldman, is relative to a constant re-instigation of practices. Goldman links “improvisation and survival” (142), and she suggests that:

“the practice of improvisation […] is an incessant preparation, grounded in the present while open to the next moment’s possible actions and constraints” (2010, 142).

Understanding improvisation as incessantly returning to a state of preparedness has significantly supported my praxis. Attempting to pursue a dance performance based praxis given my social and cultural positioning as an involved father, and 40 year old un-classically trained professional performer of dance has been challenging. A sense of limitation has been continually foregrounded. Parenthood, death, grief, and depression have all participated in my PhD,
threading their way through my life and my praxis. This has demanded a great deal of resourcefulness and flexibility on the part of my praxis.

“[Dance] improvisation demands an ongoing interaction with shifting tight places, whether created by power relations, social norms, aesthetic traditions, or physical technique. Improvised dance literally involves giving shape to oneself and deciding how to move in relation to an unsteady landscape” (Goldman 2010, 146).

I have been able to continue working as an artist because my praxis upholds a practical, conceptual, and aesthetic framework that has proved capable of meeting and integrating itself with the limitations my everyday life has imposed, without becoming degraded. For me making dance performances may refer to a set of processes of “embodiment” which are not dependent on, or orientated by the production of “a particular style, [or] technique” (Albright 2013, 277). Cynthia Novak author of Sharing the Dance (1990) observes that dance improvisation is fundamentally responsive, and adaptive involving tensions “between thinking and feeling and initiating and responding and listening” (Novak in Foster 2002, 249). Limitations that affected my “ability to move”, highlighted a necessity for listening, or preparedness, and creative responses.

The aesthetic interests demonstrated by my performance making are also testament to a commitment to working with what is at hand, working with limitations. My performances feature a dramaturgy of instants, and not of beginnings, middles, and ends. My performances are not attempts at generating a sense of mastery, or transcendence, they are my attempts to remain for an extended time in relationship with what is at hand. The aesthetics of my performances therefore, like my praxis generally, are dependant on, responsive to, the circumstances of my actual bodily presence.

Brian Massumi also recognises and gives focus to links between constraints and potentials for agency. He uses “walking” to illustrate:

“to walk you need to throw off the equilibrium, you have to let yourself almost go into a fall, then you cut it off and regain the balance. You move forward by playing with… constraints, not avoiding them” (Massumi 2015, 12).

**Being a Mindful Body and Socio-cultural Potency**

Being a mindful body is a practice that requires recognition of self as having a material, thus limited, dimension. Recognising and valuing limitation is another participant in an unfinishing process and not an end point. It is an important participant in what Foucault described as “practices of freedom”:

“For Foucault, while liberation is often urgent and necessary, it is never sufficient for creating a full form of existence. He therefore emphasizes the need for “practices of freedom” (Goldman 2010, 144).
Goldman goes on to note that Foucault towards the end of his life considered practices of freedom as necessarily an integration of art and everyday life. Foucault experimented with “ambulatory exercises” and “meditations” both of which he classified as improvisations, in which he would practice his ability to be responsive (ibid). For Foucault, these processes were his practices of freedom, and were what he called “technologies” (Goldman 2010, 145).

Engaging in such processes constituted for Foucault an artful living of everyday life. He asked:

“couldn’t everyone’s life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object, but not our life?” (Foucault in Goldman 2010, 145).

Foucault’s entanglement of questions to do with the private, the aesthetic and the social are obviously important for me also. It is confirming too, as noted by Goldman, that Foucault a committed revolutionary, and active socially conscious philosopher considered attentiveness to oneself:

“involved a deep exploration of the constraints of one’s time and was not at all antithetical to the notion of social world or vibrant civil society” (Goldman 2010, 161-162).

I began this research period with a desire for a more just world, and at various points during the research, I have considered my art making techniques as promoting a self absorption, and not promoting engagements that might immediately be recognised as adequate instances of activism for positive social change. However, I have come to realise that, as Goldman and Foucault stress, social change begins and is sustained by the particular, in its immediacy.

Installing my praxis into my everyday life was an intuitive leap. It combined hunches both pragmatic and philosophical: pragmatic in that I had to do it if the research project were to survive, and philosophical in that such a move married well with Buddhist and somatic approaches. But in making that intuitive leap, I paved the way for my current realisation that my specificity, my locatedness, is the first and final position from whence any enactments of responsibility relative to my self, to others, and to my praxis and to performance making, might reasonably be undertaken. My earlier desire for art as social activism was attached to a vision of its enactment which was based primarily in utopian myths, and in relation to lives lived by others I admired, and not in action grounded by being relative to my own corporeal existence. Like Albright’s students quoted above, I come to this from valuing “experiencing the sensate dimensions of [my] physical state of being”.

In the face of violence, injustice and oppression occurring globally, locally, and personally, that must be resisted, I have come to realise that a highly potent act in the face of such situations is to bring focus to where my response-ability, my ability to respond, actually lies. That is, to respond by reaching for a greater fullness relative to my actual physical, minded presence. To respond while my self is understood and experienced as a mindful body. This is because doing so not only invokes a deeply felt sense of social responsibility, it does so while simultaneously foreclosing on responses that are rhetorical and empty. It is a grounding of my actions in relation to my body and to my ability to act. I begin to act with breath, with intelligence, realistically, and with a fullness of heart.
With her presentation for the 2016 Philip Parson's Memorial Lecture, Australian actor Kate Mulvany asserted that the arts saves lives:


Mulvany goes on to borrow a line from poet Alexander Pope, when she advocates for each person to participate in a communal action for greater good, by acting well their “part” (ibid). I have orientated living and my performance making practices, in relation to somatic attentiveness and kinaesthetic awareness. This has made it clear to me that my first obligation is to find value in my specificity, and the conditions of my locatedness. By practicing my recognition of my self as located, and by practicing my ability to remain in relationship with my locatedness irrespective of its condition or attendant valuations, I begin to initiate actions that are realistic relative to circumstances, and whether occurring in society’s margins or not, they are actions with genuine gravity.

The most important element for my praxis is extending the time I spend with my actual mindful bodily presence. Dance and performance making, theory, and a socially potent presence follows from this. As I have found, being consistently mindfully bodily present is challenging and yet always possible. It contains within itself experiences of being that are integrative and, as such, life affirming. Being a mindful body involves being unfinished. And being a mindful body means exchanging oneself with others, and with the world. Being a mindful body is foundational for my praxis, in which centrally positioned are live performances of solo choreographies, of movement, dance, that is not pre set.
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Appendix A

Two Creative Responses to my PhD Examinable Performances

I invited artists I knew to make creative responses to *Finding Anchors and the Abyss*, my PhD examinable performances. Below are two examples in written form. Other responses I received include: a sculpture by Romy Wenzel, writing from Philipa Rothfield, an improvisation to camera by improvising performer Catherin Magill, an improvisation to audience at St Martin’s Theatre Melbourne by Nick Papas, and an interview to camera with (temporarily injured) dancer Christophe LeTellier.

From Jess Huon.
Received 8th October 2015

He is again here before me – the artist Paul Roberts - the first person I have seen since landing back in this country! I received his message some weeks before when I was still in Paris. Will you come see my public dance performance? I blink my eyes, having just awoken from the longest sleep in my life - twenty- six hours with no interruption; I’m in a jet-lagged daze, my mind disorientated – a good state to be in whilst watching a man dancing in the streets of my home-city.

He is dressed for the occasion - crisp white shirt and black pants and what looks either like dancing shoes or black, cosy, Chinese slippers. Looking simple and elegant, he is lit by a street-light. He stands in the middle of a public walkway under Federation square, on a patch of mown grass, backed by the slow-moving Yarra river. He bares his alert, body to the strangers passing by. He does not hide his nervousness. I feel palpably relieved as I lean against a concrete post and watch him. He begins to move, his limbs loosening, energy rippling through him; the feeling of possibility.. You get the sense he could do ANYTHING!. . . I love seeing him like this, his face revealed in a public space- open, light, and expectant. I feel palpably relieved –I lean back into concrete post and watch him.

How nice, I think, to be delightfully disrupted within a space usually used for utilitarian purposes – a space commonly used to walk through in order to get somewhere else. He plays with his body, flexing, opening, lifting up on his feet and falling down. His movements seem to run on an instinctual force, and break through normal linear lines. He is exploring his range in front of us, both friends and strangers.

See what else we can do, us humans! See how else we can move down a street!

It is beautiful to watch. He both relaxed but precise. He is like some kind of bird now inside a man’s suit! Now he is all zig-zags and confusion and trapped energy releasing outwards! I’m now thinking a dramatic but I believe warranted thought - about all the horrible things that have been exploding into our world’s streets lately and how, right now, it is profoundly refreshing to witness a human eruption happening within the form of art, in the dancing body of my friend, in the heart of my home-city.
Yes, he is a magical missile! . . . He bolts head-one, light foot, face concentrated, almost falling, and we follow him! The sound of a saxophone trails behind, then a drum beat, emerging from a musician who disappears in and out of the dancer’s world but always remaining close at his heels. How rousing to see some-body’s inner life rising up from below to be seen on street level!

It’s what his movements seem to be breaking up – the habitual routine, the ‘known’ of the every-day, that really excites me. I don’t want to deter from my friend before me now moving like a sensuous, light creature, but I have been rattled about coming back here. . . . . This concern is what I tried to articulate to myself on the plane ride home, and watching him now, I think that it's got something to do with what I perceive his movements are gently attacking, gently probing- some kind of limited 'density.' Something heavy with fear and complacency, disguised behind something that may appear easygoing and carefree. Perhaps you could simply name it as a squelching of the desire to foster and claim our freedom, both expressive and otherwise, and then following that a very clear difficulty in sharing this freedom with others’.

. . . . These thoughts weave in and out of my friend’s moves

. . . . .But he is going for it. . . . . Now look at this, check the way my body can move like this, Aaaah, this feels good!!!!!!!This is how I gotta move. . . .

I’d sensed I was coming home more permanently. . . .I’d been surprised by my welling of tears looking at installation of the Beruit artist and activist Hatoum at the Pompidou - a map of the world made of marbles- such magic fragility. I had looked straight at Australia glimmering down below, acutely aware of the others around me also seeking out their home-country, also far away from home. And then the fact that I was one who could return home any time I liked. . . .

He does not say many words. Looking at a huge white truck pull up in the road next to the river he says quietly, with humour,. - they must be the toilets for all the people who have come to see to see me tonight!

He is being funny, staying in his own skin. He is not jumping out of himself for us- he is inviting us in . . .

Half-way into his dance I am momentarily quite struck by the fact that I smell very differently that I usually do. It becomes quite a distraction- what is that smell? What the hell is that smell? Is it an aroma from such a long sleep? The marathon sleep, that perhaps prepared me for my homecoming? It’s a very surprising smell, not one you might you might assume after sleeping so long. I smell unbelievable clean – in a kind of strange way - as if I have been rolled in a particular brand of floral disinfectant. I rack my brains until they light up.

The particular smell is due to the Syrian boy in the laundromat in Bellville who gave me his washing powder when he saw I didn’t have any. . . . About six years old, he walked up
to me, leaving his mother and sister folding clothes, and simply poured the white powder directly into my cupped hands. My Parisian friend had told me—these refugees, they have been sleeping in the park over there. . . .

My friend is making these streets his own. He can stretch his arms anyway he likes—no-one is going to hurt him for doing this, or tell him to go and do it somewhere else. Suddenly we are all taking part—he is like a moving Banksy, taking ownership of the street, and we are following him, everything around us in now taking part—and nobody has bought a ticket! It is free. We are all welcome. He has bravely invited us into his world—his magic—we are his kind of accomplices—in a space that suddenly shines with the intimate approach of another human being.

. . . I don’t actually think they are toilets, he says at a later point as the white truck opens up to what looks like a room filled with film equipment. Looks like something serious and secretive going on in there, he says.

The mauve tinged slates of stones are underneath us, (hauled down in trucks from the Kimberly)—the spire of the art center rises behind him, the black river is passing by as part of his set. He doesn’t say many more words—he dances and rolls up the steps, it is breathtaking, the flickering lights on his ascending body. I’m not sure exactly why but now I’d like to see him rant or maybe cry. He takes off. Nimble. Cutting loose. It is like he is walking on air. I imagine what he would say if he spoke more. What would this dancing man say? What else might this man in his magical world, whom right now is claiming his right to move any way he likes, utter? I suddenly want to hear what this free man is thinking!

There is so much I want to say, Hatoum had whispered, when you walked into the Pompidou. Her female urgent whisper fills out the whole top floor of the famous Pomidou. Her voice grabbed me, like my friend’s twisting mounting body. He is dancing and that is enough but I want to attempt to give him some words. I give it a go. Just to see. I scribble down the following. . . .

There is something inside me that I have to move. If I didn’t I would be sad. It brews in me like a beautiful storm. I am very aware I am alive. Why are we still living in the English’s fine teacups? There is a light here and I want you to see it. Because the night might snuff it out. See, all these video cameras, all the security watching us. Be careful of that. . . . .BE FUCKING CAREFUL WITH My MARBLES!

I can be as clear as a light bulb. Sometimes my heart is very bright.
See what I can do, see how I can move, see I want to move.
See what this body can do, fuck this I am outta here.
I refuse to conform to your fear and rhythms.

His challenge is light, it’s not angry. There is something of the sad, intelligent, European clown about him.

My friend works on you subversively, without you knowing it, without offending you.
I am doing it under the lights. Out-side of the establishment. You are all welcome. All those eyes watching us all the time. Who is watching us? I would prefer to keep it the sky, friends, and sincere strangers.

To me he seems more part of the river than the buildings. More part of nature than the concrete he pushes against.

*I am falling, falling, flooding thundering.*
*Oh god I am playing. Look at this, It's my force. It’s busting through. It might help you.*

*Hey slow moving river, how you doing my night friend? You don’t tell any-one they don’t belong here, do you?*

Jess Huon is an author of fiction (*The Dark Wet*, Giramondo Publishing), a teacher of Buddhist meditation, and she holds a post graduate degree in Therapeutic Arts Practice (RMIT).

From Kevin Jeynes.  
Received 8th September 2015.

Above  
Black sky, light years above  
Below  
Concrete, as hard as, concrete

Liminal, liminalities, limitless ness  
Thresholds of coming and going  
Spaces between  
Buildings  
Lines interrupted  
Designated edges  
Softening  
Shapes in metal grates  
Hold attention  
Emerging  
Readying

Careful spilling  
Forming re-forming  
responses coalesce  
Lines of sight  
Generosity
Words, intimate whisperings
Staying there, just there
Edges
Just there

Liminalities
between place, places
   Trusting trustworthy
Fine callings, edging forward, attending, linger, longing,

A veil is pushed aside,
   with one leaning gesture
   Finesse
   Finesse
   Finessing
   Follow, lead, suggest, gestate,

Left knee gives way
Right arm ascends
Torso sings
Flick
Flick
Flicking
   Follow, lead, suggest, gestation

Light years away, here,
Pathways, given opportunity
Beckon
Welfare,
Jump
Jump
Jumping
   Follow, lead, suggest, gestation   hand furthering span

I am, I am I am
Impulsive flailing
Just there, I hold, just there, I am held
Fall
Fall
Falling
   Spanning, was, is, will be, hand leading

A corporeal utterance
Flying, flaying, fleeing, freeing
   I watch your eyes watching
   Not with sight
But vision.
Hold
Hold
Holding
Concrete edge, escarpment invitation

Rolling to ease,
    Completion
    Into distance
    Streetlights
Voices
    The luxury of
    towards an end
Close now
    but far
Distance names her options, entices

Faces
Faces
    To face
Forward, backward
    Breath, breathe, expand, release, contract, release

Found, ground,
    Moving through
    Neighbours in the world.

There such as it is,
Exquisite attending detail
    present, presence
Moving moving still,
Still moving moving,
Moving still moving,

There
There
There
That's it
There
There
That's it.

That's it
Time offers respite
    and opportunity
Liminal
Thresholds
The edge
The edge
Of emergence
Familiar
That's it
Together
burrowing into landscapes
of opportunity.

Above
Black sky, light years black
Below
Concrete holds
In between
in possibilities
Liminal invitation.

A response to Paul Roberts Performance on 30th August 2015. Kevin Jeynes.

Kevin Jeynes works in counselling and Supervision Practice; He is a lecturer, and supervisor at The MIECAT Institute, and he is an improvisational performer.
Appendix B

Performances and Performance Lectures
Undertaken During PhD Candidature

Performances
2015

Skin
Dance on site, accompanied by sound artist Cobie Orger.
HillsSceneLive Festival. Gareth Hart Festival Artistic Dir.

Not Falling Dancing (on site) and
From Nowhere (on stage)
Dance accompanied by sound artist Cobie Orger.
MAPFest Art and Performance Festival Melaka. Tony Yap Festival Artistic Dir.
Malaysia.

Finding Anchors and the Abyss
PhD examinable performances
Dance on site. Accompanied by sound artist Cobie Orger.
Federation Square
Melbourne.

For Peers on Site and on Stage
Performances at Kiah as part of a improvisation performance research
intensive with Cobie Orger, Andrew Morrish, Don Asker and Jane Mortiss.

Dance for alternative venues.
Kyneton #4
Baynton St.
Kyneton

Dance for alternative venues.
Kyneton #3
Solo dance. Baynton St.
Kyneton

Urban Pockets #3
Dance on site,
DeGraves Lane
Melbourne

Urban Pockets #2
Dance on site,
Pellegrinis Café footpath precinct.
Melbourne
2014

*Zen, Death, Taxes and Dancing*
*Parts 1, 2, & 3*
Live Choreographies
Accompanied by Cobie Orger sound artist.

Parts 1 & 2 including solos by Dianne Reid.
On site, La Mama Theatre Carpark Precinct (cnr Faraday and Lygon Sts.)
Melbourne.
Part 3 solo dance on stage.
Dancehouse.
Melbourne.

*Artist in Residence Performance Showcase*
Berlin

*Solo Improvised Performance*
solos on stage, with Andrew Morrish.
Silke Z Studio.
Cologne

2013

*A night in.*
Solo dance. With lighting by Shane Grant.
Dancehouse.
Melbourne

2015

*Performance Lectures*

*Autoethnography and “What’s Love Got To Do With It?”*
The Little Conference: Improvisation Practices Conference curated by Dianne Reid.
Deakin University.
Melbourne

2014

*Performing Solo Dance as Action For Social Change*
Improvisation Exchange Conference and Festival.
Berlin
Not Knowing as an Artistic Research Strategy.
The Little Conference: Improvisation Practices Conference curated by Dianne Reid.
Deakin University.
Melbourne

2013

Embodying Everyday Life as Dance Practice.
The University of Melbourne Practice Led Research Symposium.
Melbourne
Author/s:
Roberts, Paul H.

Title:
An unfinished mindful body meets live choreographies of solo dance

Date:
2017

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/190982

File Description:
An unfinished mindful body meets live choreographies of solo dance

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