Locating the trace: an exploration of tracing and the choreographic process

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ABSTRACT

A practice-led, studio based research project investigating the creative process of ‘tracing’ as a choreographic methodology, Locating the trace examines the notion of ‘trace’ in choreographic practice. By drawing on theoretical and philosophical notions of ephemera, disappearance, repetition and temporality, and by questioning what is trace in relation to choreographic practice, the project develops a conceptual and practical approach to choreography as a ‘traced’ act. Informed by theoretical propositions that challenge the assumption that choreography is ever fixed, or repeatable, the research investigates the implications of approaching choreography as a permeable and unstable form.

Within the context of this thesis the term trace can best be defined as an experiential attribute located in the body, which may include physical and psychical sensations, and as source material, can be tracked and shaped through a choreographic process. In shaping this material through processes of generation and regeneration, the research examines how choreography can retain ‘traces’ of movement action/and or experience in the final form.

The research is undertaken through four phases of the choreographic process: locating experiential sensations in the dancing body; the creation of movement material; the development of choreography through processes of re-composition; and the dancer’s performance of the choreography. Through these four phases of the research, Locating the trace analyses the choreographic and performance practice of ‘tracing’ in motion.

The outcome of the research, a solo performance work, The Very Still, created with and performed by dancer Phoebe Robinson, draws together the research experimentation in six sections of choreography. At the intersection between the choreographic form (traces), and performance of the choreography (tracing), The Very Still invites a detailed exploration of the research themes, where minute and subtle traces within the performing body are closely observed. Locating the trace, considers the creative possibility of tracing as the means to evoking that which remains traced and never fully present, and as a creative process offering alternate representations in choreographic practice.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

1. The thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD except where indicated in the Preface.

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

3. The thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

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INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

This section maps the emergence of the notion of 'trace' as a significant research interest in my choreographic practice. I begin by identifying a ‘trace’ of movement in a work created previous to this research, The View From Here. Then, guided by the work of choreographer Sara Rudner and Roland Barthes' theory, I analyse this 'trace' to show how I have arrived at the research interests followed in this project: trace and embodiment; trace and the generation and regeneration of movement; and trace and evocations of time.

The View From Here

The View From Here, a full-length choreography for five dancers, was inspired by the vast difference in the geographic location of where the collaborating artists lived and worked - Melbourne, Australia and Berlin, Germany; and the related themes of travel, disconnection, estrangement, proximity and distance. I was interested in the question of how to conceive of, and develop, a choreographic process that would explore how images of people and place can be held in our consciousness, memory and physical body, and how we can define our search for people and place through the efforts of our imagination, as well as our physical movement.

The process to create The View From Here progressed through two stages: the first, inventing movement; and the second, fragmenting and recomposing though a series of manipulations. What was left at the end of the process was residual or fragmented movement referencing other points in time; movement that always referred to something other, to something that was now absent, but had left its mark. The majority of the movement material that made up the final choreography was a version of something other; it had a history of a series of workings and re-workings. This fragmenting and recomposing process is heavily influenced by my study with American post-modern choreographer Sara Rudner.
The influence of Sara Rudner’s choreographic processes on the research

In the late 80s and early 90s I studied dance in New York City under the tutelage of Sara Rudner.\(^2\) Rudner, dancer with Tywla Tharp Dance Company (1965 – 1984)\(^3\); “director of her own company the ‘Sara Rudner performance ensemble’ from 1976 – 1982”\(^4\) and current Director of the Dance program at Sara Lawrence College, New York, is renowned for her approach to dancer training, where she optimises the individual’s performance capabilities through rigorous processes of movement deconstruction and reconstruction. As a dancer taking Rudner's class, I was drawn to the way in which her approach to movement education — to interrupt the comfortable and known neuro-muscular pathways of the body in movement, by imposing restrictions, additions or subtractions to movement phrases — caused unexpected physical and emotional responses.

In her class, Rudner would teach a phrase of movement. It would then be ‘deconstructed’, that is, taken apart through tasks such as performing only the coordination of the movement of the left leg with the movement of the right arm. In these tasks, movement gestures and pathways through the body are re-combined in a new way and the dancer must find an alternate way to coordinate the action. This is often uncomfortable and difficult, yet by creating different emphasis through deconstructing the movement and only performing parts of the phrase; aspects of the movement pathway that were less consciously noticed are highlighted. At the conclusion of the deconstruction process the dancer returns to the original movement phrase having experienced different versions of the phrase, and re-integrates what was learnt into the performance of the material. For me, this often resulted in the movement feeling fuller, or denser within the body, producing greater knowledge of the pathways, connections, regions or parts of the body in movement.

While Rudner's process developed my understanding of performance, I was also struck by the potential of her process to prise open movement structures and to elicit new sensations and responses. Rudner's method of deconstructing movement presented a way to feel the absence of movement as present, as still current and felt internally within my body, shifting my attention beyond the obvious ‘steps’. The moment of deconstruction, of the loss of movement, offered a new way of experiencing choreography.
Fragmentation and ‘The View From Here’

The process to create *The View From Here* (influenced by my experience of Rudner’s processes), involved extensive composing, fragmenting and recomposing movement. When I watched the dancers undertake this process, I perceived tangible traces of choreographic patterns left in the body after movement was broken down. The imprint or the impression of the pattern remained. If a dancer learnt a whole body sequence, but then only performed that sequence in their arms, it seemed that the dancer was still embodying the whole pattern of the choreography without actually performing it. ‘Traces’ of the absent choreographic movement resonated in their legs or torso, the body vibrating in response to the felt sensation of the movement. It seemed that the movement actions that were made absent were still present, although they were not being demonstrated literally.

During the process one particular moment illustrated how this method held potential for further investigation. To create movement that embodied one of the work’s themes, ‘estrangement’, the dancers in *The View From Here* — Deanne Butterworth, Tim Harvey, Carlee Mellow, Phoebe Robinson and Daina Block — undertook a series of choreographic explorations combining two phrases together. The first phrase, a fluid sitting phrase that shifted around on the floor, explored ‘disconnection’ from another person in the ‘here and now’ or ‘present’; and the second phrase, a series of gestural actions created from the dancer's memory of their duet partner touching, or connecting with their body, investigated a feeling of ‘connection’. For the purposes of our experiment, we named the sitting phrase ‘present’, and the touch gestures ‘past’, as they were drawn from the dancer’s memory.

The process then involved switching between one movement phrase to another phrase, and back again. The dancers improvised the switch, performing the sitting phrase, and then fracturing the action to insert the touch gestures from the second phrase, and then back again. This was a complex task because the dancers were required to cut the flow of the movement, perform with clarity the exact sensation of another person's touch gesture on their own body, then seamlessly switch back.

In one particular moment, the significance of what we were trialling was overwhelmingly potent. As I watched, I noticed that one of the dancers, Deanne
Butterworth, created this exchange with all the fullness of the time ‘present’, and time ‘past’. It was as if, magically, it was not her hand, but the hand of another. Time had become fractured. Deanne remained within the present moment in her own body, but combined a previous moment into her performance at the same time. I could sense two moments in time at once. The transformation of her hand, disconnected from her body, was entirely ‘other-worldly’, she had, for that instance, embodied the action of her duet partner on herself, splitting herself in two. It seemed that Deanne had successfully enacted what I intuitively named a ‘trace’ of movement — a moment from the past — preserving the precise quality of the touch and fullness of the gesture within a complex choreographic construction.

When I remember this moment I see it almost like a photographic still, rather than as a series of movements flowing together as is traditional in dance. I don’t recall the movement before, or after it. I don't know if any of the other dancers in the studio saw this moment, or if Deanne felt it differently, but I was struck by the clarity and intensity of her performance to evoke multiple choreographic moments at once: the traced moment from the past in the present moment of her performance. This provoked my interest in the density of information within the one seemingly ‘still’ movement, and in response, I turned to photographic theory.

In film theorist Laura Mulvey's book, *Death 24x a Second*, she discusses Roland Barthes concept of the *studium* and *punctum* in still photography. She explains the *punctum* as: “based on a separation between the eye of the photographer and the eye of the camera. A detail, probably unnoticed by the photographer, suddenly captures the viewer's attention and emotion.” Mulvey writes that Barthes

...sums up this aspect of the *punctum* as ‘this vertigo of time defeated’ [...] Such a disordering of the sensible in the fact of sudden disorientation is similar to *déjà vu*, involuntary memory, a suddenly half-remembered dream or the strange sense of reality breaking through the defences of the conscious mind. These are all mental phenomena that overwhelm consciousness and they happen, as Barthes says, ‘in a floating flash’... .

This description resonates with my experience of watching Deanne. It was as if she had performed the *punctum*, the hidden detail behind the choreography, where time had seemingly ‘broken through’ Deanne’s performance, sharing the qualities of surprise that Mulvey describes. Barthes writes that this ‘break through’ happens in an
instant, where the *punctum* within the photography, he states, “shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me.” I felt the *punctum* breaking through the surface of the body sitting on the floor, the “prick” as Barthes describes, as the hand of the other came into play, was enacted then withdrawn.

*Emergence of the research*

In Barthes writing, he discusses two attributes of the *punctum* that guided my interest in the notion of ‘trace’. The first is found in Barthes statement that the *punctum* “is an addition: it is what I add to the photograph”. In this idea, the addition enables the apprehension of the image, completed through personal supplementation. This calls to mind the notion that the image is somehow missing some information, is only part of the whole picture. In the second idea, Barthes writes that the *punctum* holds the possibility for development beyond its surface appearance, explaining that: “the *punctum* has, more or less potentially, a power of expansion.” This idea is significant in conceptualising an image, or in choreography, a movement, as being able to extend beyond its boundaries.

In *The View From Here*, the ‘traced' moment enabled both addition and expansion in the same way as Barthes' *punctum*. I was able to add to the choreographic image through a choreographic ‘trace’, triggering my memory of the duet. I could imagine, in my mind’s eye, the whole ‘scene’ of the duet the gesture was drawn from, and add the absent movement that had been taken away back into the choreography as I remembered it. The movement gesture Deanne performed expanded towards phenomena beyond the surface appearance of the movement. A ‘trace’ of choreography had enabled this to happen.

Through observing the occurrence of ‘trace’ in *The View From Here* and analysis of Barthes theory of the *punctum*, I concluded that the notion of ‘trace’ held potential for further choreographic research, raising several questions for my practice. Can residual traces of movement lead to other sensations — to other experiences, to other phenomena? What can be uncovered through a process of tracing? What can be highlighted that would otherwise be unseen? Through reflecting on these questions I arrived at three areas of interest investigated in this project:
• The notion of tracing 'within' the body as the means to create movement, where ‘traces’ appear to be located within an embodied, kinaesthetic density, rather than during the flow of choreographed movement.

• The creation of choreographed movement 'traces' through processes of generation and regeneration to embody aspects of movement action and/or experience in the final form.

• 'Traces' appearing to refer to multiple evocations of time other than the 'present' moment of the performance.

Research questions

Throughout the dissertation research questions emerged as the research progressed, addressed sequentially as they arose, however, three guiding questions were identified at the commencement of the research:

1. How can absent movement be made present as felt sensation in the body and understood as ‘traces’?
2. How might traces be maintained in the dancing body through a choreographic process?
3. To what temporalities does trace refer in choreography?

Preliminary studio investigations/research participants

At the beginning of the research I undertook two short periods of investigation in the studio to refine the research parameters. During the first, I worked with dancers Phoebe Robinson and Daina Block and created sequences of movement focusing upon stillness. This was in response to my perception that traces appeared within stillness in *The View From Here*. In the second period, I worked with dancers Carlee Mellow and Joanna Lloyd to experiment with the notion of trace, memory and choreography, trialling methods to ‘trace’ back through choreographic works we had created together since 1995. These explorations were instructive in clarifying the direction of the research, revealing that although an approach focusing solely on stillness and/or trace as memory held potential, and would undoubtedly be intertwined
within the research, the notion that traces of choreography are somehow located 'within' the dancer’s body as internally felt sensation required a different starting point. In response, I set up four phases of choreographic research to structure this enquiry:

1. Locating experiential sensations in the dancing body

2. The creation of movement material

3. The development of choreography through processes of re-composition

4. The dancer's performance of the choreography

The research was shaped as a solo study, created with and performed by dancer Phoebe Robinson. I made the decision to create a solo study to narrow the field of participation and focus and deepen the research, concentrating the exploration within the body of one highly skilled performer with whom I have a shared background and history. During the creation of the work, dancer Natalie Abbott and Honours student Rachel Vogel participated in the studio exploration.

**Documentation**

The accompanying DVD contains two versions of *The Very Still*. As the research is presented within extreme lighting states, the DVD contains documentation of the performance presentation, and of the choreographic material alone. The work was created in six sections. Each section is documented separately and can be selected individually for viewing.
Locating the trace: methodology

While I am aware of current debate surrounding the status of dance research and examinable practice within the academe, as discussed in Dancing between Diversity and Consistency: Refining Assessment in Postgraduate Degrees in Dance, I have chosen to discuss the project methodology through the lens of practice-led research. In the report, the authors, Phillips, Stock and Vincs outline and discuss several terms used by Australian Universities to identify dance research involving practice, for example, "practice-based research", "practice as research" and "mixed-mode practice as research", while noting that these terms are "in a state of flux". Phillips, Stock and Vincs note that the term practice-led research carries several understandings, one of which according to Haseman, defines this research as "an experiential approach that does not necessarily flow from a preconceived research problem but rather commences from what emerges in practice." Broadly, this best describes the approach taken in this research: the project began in practice and was driven by practice. However, the reality of academic research is that research questions are initially proposed and then challenged, discarded, explored and/or replaced by further questions as the project progresses. At points in the research the theoretical or practical may lead, and therefore, redefine how the research may be viewed from a methodological standpoint. However, in this research, the overall project is driven by an overarching focus on practice and the import of the outcomes for the field of dance and choreographic practice. Therefore, the purpose of the following methodology statement is to elucidate and articulate the characteristics of the research methodology particular to this practice-based investigation. My discussion of the methodology aims to identify, through borrowing from Massumi, Haseman and Mafe and Melrose, the methods particular to this project.

Locating the trace is a practice-led, studio based research project, undertaken through four phases of the choreographic process. Each phase employs an overarching research methodology that incorporates experiential and analytic observation and reflection on choreographic experiments; dialogue with research participants; and analysis of choreographic strategies in relation to theoretical and philosophical discourses. The research draws on a diverse range of sources, including dance theory, philosophy, critical writing on other practitioner's work, and extends the focus on dance to photographic theory.
The studio research takes a phenomenal approach to practice. Along with the broad traditions of phenomenology, the research focuses upon embodied experience — reflecting on that experience as it is experienced — to articulate the research in action in the specific moments it occurred. However, it should be emphasised that my approach to the research foregrounds the experiential phenomena of practice without necessarily contextualising the outcomes of this research in terms of theoretical phenomenological frameworks. Description of emergent phenomenal experiences are articulated and derived directly from the research, and then analysed in dialogue with a range of practice-based, theoretical and philosophical sources.

The use of description to illustrate practice research outcomes attempts to conserve the precise detail of the movement experience, recognising the importance of the participant's internal perspective to the research. The influence of theoretical and philosophical concepts is palpable, but at the same time, my aim has been to use the experiential work ‘on the floor’ in the studio to lead the investigation and speak to the research questions. Brian Massumi writes: “Exemplification activates detail”. Where possible, I have attempted to locate, within the detail of the movement experience, the “deviation and digression” that Massumi argues opens up re-conceptualisation of concepts, and not the other way around, which would be to take a concept and ‘apply’ it to the studio research.

The participant's inner narrative voice, recorded through studio dialogue and represented as italicised text in the writing, makes use of the specific expression and terminology employed between choreographer and dancer to unlock processual issues and findings. This is an attempt to understand how the specificity of choreographic language can be used within the academe of practice-led research paradigms, and to offer this to extend the discipline of dance research, while acknowledging, as Haseman and Mafe argue, the necessary "re-purposing" of creative terminology, techniques, languages and documentation methods required in the research context.

Following Haseman’s proposal that “Practice-led researchers construct experiential starting points from which practice follows. They tend to ‘dive in’, to commence practising to see what emerges”, the research articulates strategic experimental beginning points that are expanded and developed in response to the research
findings. Using observation, documentation, studio dialogue and feedback mechanisms between choreographer and dancer to reflect upon and analyse choreographic methods, the research incorporates the participant's experiential responses and strategies in meeting the challenges of the choreographic experiments. Therefore, the studio research is both strategically ‘set up’ through proposing hypothetical scenarios, tasks and methods; yet responsive to emerging creative possibilities as they occur from moment to moment in the process. Creative conceptualisation of choreographic strategies, and realisation of the research remained flexible, with new creative discoveries directly influencing the progression of the research as it occurred.

Mindful of the implications of multiple participant perspectives on the research, the choreographic methods developed through the research focus on tracing as both a choreographic and performance practice. As a consequence, the research places a degree of commitment and trust in dancer Phoebe Robinson, quoted extensively in this dissertation, and privileged in Chapter Six, where I focus on performance.

Alongside of the conscious use of strategic methods during the research, my twenty years experience as a choreographer informs the process. This experience forms a continuum that is extended and questioned within the context of the project. Haseman and Mafe note that the context of emergence in practice-led research underpins the recognition of what they term “novel outcomes” of research. They write:

Emergent novel outcomes occur as processual logics and methods are followed as well as contradicted or undermined. This pattern is necessary so there is sufficient similarity or continuity with past contexts for the novelty to be observed.

'Context', therefore, is crucial to research. In my research, it is used in two ways. First, the systematic process of the research is tracked to show how research outcomes emerge and develop. Specific moments of discovery, hoped for, but not always achieved, are not always isolated incidents, often occurring following investigation that may take hours, days, months, or even years: a slight change to conditions and elements between one experiment and another can produce both subtle, or sometimes, radical new discoveries. By mapping the progression of the work, the research
findings are shown in the context of the overall research phase, with the aim of making available each step to stimulate and open up further potential areas of research for others in the field.

Second, context, following Haseman and Mafe, also refers to the background of the research, the grounds upon which new experiments are tested. To contextualise my practice, I focus on the work of Sara Rudner and Trisha Brown, along with other dance artists and those working in theatre and the visual arts. The immense influence these dance artists have had on my physical practice remains a deeply embodied resource. This influence is brought into dialogue with recent writing on their work, and with other artist's practices, including the work of American choreographer Meg Stuart, whose discussion of practice is a critical resource in the research. Stuart’s work is of interest as it stems from similar influences to my own.²⁶ While there may be many other choreographers’ work relevant to this research, I have chosen to draw on these artists as they have a deep connection to my practice and provide the most relevant source of contextualisation for my research.

Importantly, dancers are crucial to providing context in choreographic research. Dancers bring continuity to new research endeavours through familiarity with a choreographer's style of work. In choosing to work with Phoebe Robinson, I wanted to ensure that my recent choreographic practice would be represented as an embodied presence, and be available as a resource in this project.

Although Haseman and Mafe argue that “similarity or continuity”,²⁷ are crucial to note the emergence of new discoveries in practice-led research, they also propose that “complexity”²⁸ is a key characteristic, negotiated through reflexivity. Complexity in this research is represented by the combination of written and practice-based literature derived from both dance and other forms, in conjunction with the emergent studio practice evolving through the course of the research. A reflexive approach to this complexity underpins this project. Reflexivity in practice-led research, according to Haseman and Mafe, can be understood as occurring when

...a creative practitioner acts upon the requisite research material to generate new material which immediately acts back upon the practitioner who is in turn stimulated to make a subsequent response.²⁹
Through responding to research materials 'reflexively' while bringing together studio research and relevant literature to inform and contextualise the research as it occurred, the process resulted in the generation and regeneration of material as the four phases of the research were followed. While the chronology of the studio research is represented sequentially in this paper, the writing of this dissertation occurred before, during and after the studio research was completed. Chapter One reflects my emergent philosophical understanding of the research themes, largely undertaken early in the process, but refined, reviewed and developed as the research progressed. Similarly, the Chapters focusing on separate stages of the studio research evolved as emergent strands of contextual material were uncovered and threaded into the research.

The outcome of the research, *The Very Still*, is the culmination and synthesis of the studio investigations undertaken throughout the research process. My discussion on the work itself largely concentrates on the exploration of processes leading to the creation of the presentation, rather than an analysis of the performance outcome itself. Professor Susan Melrose notes in relation to a performance project created by UK artist Rosemary Butcher, that the work done previous to its performance, “*has been realised*, can be identified ‘in the work’, albeit imperfectly; *how* it was realised, however cannot be seen”. This dissertation attempts to uncover the ‘how’, the processes at work to create *The Very Still*. Through this approach, the project creates an opportunity for others to gain insight from the articulation of the internal perspective that comes out of making and performing choreography.

**Introduction to the dissertation**

Chapter One examines the notion of trace in choreographic practice, drawing from theory and philosophy. Reflecting the chronology of the research, the Chapter outlines my emergent understanding of 'trace' in relation to choreography, establishing the philosophical underpinnings that have guided the project. Themes of trace and ephemera, disappearance, repetition and temporality are examined, some of which are drawn upon in later Chapters as analysis takes place in situ and resonates with the studio research.
Chapter Two focuses on the first phase of the studio research, *Locating experiential sensations in the dancing body*, considering the role the body plays in tracing as a choreographic practice. It proposes the dancing body as the material site of embodied phenomena, and explores how movement sensation as perceived by the dancer can be used to generate ‘traces’ of movement action. Utilising the framework of the seemingly non-productive state of stillness to undertake this investigation — influenced by somatic practices that focus the dancers' attention to microscopic sensations in the still ‘state’ — the research takes this framework and develops choreographic strategies to track the sensorial ‘inner’ world of the dancers’ embodiment, revealing how nonconscious movement and gravitational forces, actively occurring in stillness, build and produce spontaneous movement traces in the body.

Chapter Three discusses the second phase of the research, *The creation of movement material*, where the potential of perceived bodily sensations as source material for choreography is developed. The research examines methods to detail, define and intensify sensations in the body to create a movement vocabulary, establishing the process of ‘circuiting’, as a method to develop inner-felt sensation between choreographer and dancer. Setting the process of noticing, capturing and shaping movement sensations in the body into motion, the research analyses the use of definition, description and language in the creative process, re-defining the choreographic act as a practice of 'tracing'.

Chapter Four focuses on the first stage of the third phase of the research, *The development of choreography through processes of re-composition*, investigating methods to re-trace movement using pre-existing, ‘set’ choreography, uncovering methods to find degrees of 'disassociation' in relation to the material. It documents the dancer's response to the task of 'tracing' choreography. Then, it extends this exploration to the use of mediatised versions documented on digital video as a tool. This section reflects on how the practice of performing set movement scores can be understood as 'tracing'.

Chapter Five concentrates on the second part of the third research phase, focusing on fragmentation methods. This gives a detailed account of how choreographed movements are prised apart, opened up, and re-created to produce residual fragments
of movement, placing emphasis on the embodiment of the remaining material. I outline the main influences on this phase of the research - American artists Sara Rudner and Trisha Brown, reflection on written literature, and my own experiential participation in their respective practices. Methods to recompose fragmented movement using both structural attributes and imagined responses are described as offering new choreographic strategies.

Chapter Six analyses the fourth phase of the research, *The dancer's performance of the choreography*, focusing on the research outcome, *The Very Still*. The question of how approaching choreography as a process of ‘tracing’ can unlock movement forms and re-open choreographic structures is examined through two foci. The chapter firstly examines the dancer’s process in performance and the development of strategies to intervene or disrupt choreography, thereby loosening the bind between set choreography and performer in performance. The second part discusses the manipulation of lighting elements to generate further possibilities beyond those already considered in the construction of the choreography. Bringing body and light together, the Chapter concludes with a discussion of the notion of trace and disappearance using selected theoretical sources, to show how the performance and the presentation of *The Very Still* offers new evocations of 'trace' in performance.

In conclusion, the project findings are drawn together to propose that the research reveals new insights into choreographic processes, developing new methods and articulating previously unstated aspects of practice, re-defining traditional understandings of the choreographic act. The research articulates ways of destabilising the practice of choreography based on privileging the ‘pure’ score, and offers alternate methods to break the predictability of shaped movement. Proposing that the dancer's performance embodies movement attributes and experiential resonances and sensations of choreography, rather than complete choreographic forms, the research uncovers the role of sensation, association and memory in the creation and presentation of dance as a 'traced' act.

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1 *The View From Here* is a multi-disciplinary dance work, incorporating choreography, sound, text, video and design, performed by five dancers, a lecture performer and live composer/musician, created by Sandra Parker in collaboration with Siegmar Zacharias (Text), Steve Heather (Composer), and Margie Medlin (Visual design) performed by Carlee Mellow, Daina Block, Phoebe Robinson, Deanne Butterworth and Tim Harvey. The work was created in Melbourne, Australia and through a creative development residency at the Sophiensaele in Berlin, Germany in June 2005. The work premiered in
Melbourne in 2005, produced by Dance Works and was subsequently presented at the Joyce Soho, New York, USA, in January 2007 by Sandra Parker Dance.

Retrieved July 27th, 2010 from Art publications <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1083/is_9_74/ai_65324955/c>

3 E. Dempster, ‘Sara Rudner Dances’, Writings on Dance, No. 8, 1992, p. 35

4 J. Butler, ‘University Project - Sara Rudner, Director Dance Program, Sarah Lawrence College Interview in conversation with Jean Butler’, Retrieved April 15th, 2010 from <www.movementresearch.org/publishing/?q=node/566>


6 ibid., p. 62

8 I am retaining the italicised punctum with Mulvey to maintain Barthes’ use of the term rather than the dictionary definition.


10 ibid.

11 ibid., p. 55

12 ibid., p. 45


14 ibid., p. 12

15 ibid., p. 12-13

16 ibid., p. 13

17 ibid., p. 11

18 ibid., p. 12


21 ibid.


25 ibid.


27 B. Haseman et al., ‘Acquiring Know-How: Research Training for Practice-led Researchers’, op. cit., p. 219

28 ibid.

29 ibid.

CHAPTER ONE: Trace and choreography

1.1 Introduction

This Chapter is concerned with theoretical and philosophical notions of trace. The purpose of this examination is to establish the philosophical thinking that has guided the research, specifically by investigating how choreography can be conceptually understood as a 'traced' act and the performance of choreography as 'tracing'. In the first section, I analyse the practice of 'recapturing', laying the groundwork for a discussion of Derrida's notion of trace. Then, I turn to Eduardo Cadava's writing on photography to examine the notion of trace and temporality. To conclude the Chapter, I articulate the potential for trace in choreography as offered through theory, outlining how this examination has influenced the studio research.

1.2 Recapturing choreography

In dance theory, the notion of trace has come to be associated with debate surrounding the ephemeral nature of the form. Dance appears and disappears, and on its disappearance, dance does not remain a solid entity to be returned to, leaving theorists with the problem of how to treat the disappearance of dance. A quote from André Lepecki surmises the issue: should critical writing focus on dance “as an art of erasure; as opposed to dance as an art of presence and inscription”?1

A similar question can be asked of choreographic practice — is choreography an art of erasure of movement in time, where what is left behind is transformed to recollection, memory, image or traces of dance? Or is it a practice of writing movement to create a determined presence, where dance is treated as ontologically solid and stable, marked by its appearance as visual forms?

The first consideration when thinking of choreography as trace, where movement embodies characteristics such as the “mark, token, or evidence of the former presence, existence or action of something”,2 is that creating choreography that contains these attributes runs counter to the choreographic process as it is commonly understood.
Choreography ordinarily involves organising, defining and shaping movement, rather than creating only the ‘evidence’ of a movement. For André Lepecki, the process is based upon the choreographer’s desire to “recapture” movement. To illustrate how choreography can be understood as recapturing, rather than capturing, he uses the example of taking improvised movement — movement already captured through improvising — and 'recapturing' that movement by transforming it into set movement patterns where it can be remembered and performed again. This suggests that any production of movement, in an improvisation, or through other processes of movement generation, is subjected to recapturing to become choreography.

When I reflect on my choreographic process, I recognise recapturing as a fundamental, yet important aspect of my method. After generating movement through improvisation or other means, I undertake a process to define what it is, how it is performed, and where it originates and resides within the body. Through this process, I detail each movement using verbal description, visual images, physical directions, anatomical information, and other metaphors or methods to identify and affirm what is understood as the choreography. This leads to the creation of what I term, a 'movement-image'. For example:

*I am focusing on my elbow, the tip of the ulna, rotating inwards while thinking of the image of 'corkscrewing' that part of the body in space, as I do this I drop the arm from the shoulder socket and step forward with the left foot.*

Through recapturing several times over, the 'image' of the movement is developed. Like a score or script (as understood in musical or theatrical terms), body parts, qualities or metaphors that make up the choreography are defined to the point where it can be remembered and performed again. Although the process of defining set movement and the repetitious work to develop a movement-image intends to secure the detail of each movement, the process of recapturing detail also involves an escape, where some aspects of the movement evade recapture.

From the beginning of my creative process when movement is just being conceived and developed, differences between repetitions of movement are experienced as detail which is added, subtracted or redefined. Often differences are consciously noticed as
changes are made, or they are triggered through human error, technical difficulty, or simply through the felt sense of difference in the feeling of the physical body from one day to the next. Even when movement has been recaptured to the point of being defined so that it can be repeated, difference pervades; it takes over, permeating movement with slight change to knock movement off course, setting off a vibration effecting other movement in a sequence, despite the best effort to perform movement as always the same.

André Lepecki observes that this return to choreography and the "endless striving to recapture a perfect moment, a perfect pose, spin, intention, that we believe can be realized again from its own disappearance" is a constant "choreographic reiteration of the vanishing moment". But rather than a pure reiteration, Lepecki finds parity between the repetition that dance enacts, and that of Derrida’s notion of trace.

1.3 Derrida's notion of trace

In Lepecki’s essay, *Inscribing Dance*, he discusses the notion of trace as it pertains to Jacques Derrida's philosophy. To show why Derrida's theory is important to the field of dance studies, Lepecki traces back through the history of dance to demonstrate how a pervasive attitude towards dance's ephemeral nature as loss, as unable to be captured within the boundaries of forms of inscription, has brought about "lament verging on mourning" for the inability of dance to ever be "fully translatable motion: neither into notation, nor into writing". To counter the perceived loss of dance, Lepecki contends that written notation, dance criticism, and other forms of documentation have favoured dance's visual appearance as the means to claim "what 'happened on stage'". He states that this concentration on appearances is a metaphysical approach, a form of "photology: the illumination and arrest of presence for the sake of History." In Derrida's words, "the entire history of our [Western] philosophy is a photology, the name given to a history of, or treatise on, light."  

To understand how photology is significant to the notion of trace in Derrida's theory, it is necessary to define the terms 'metaphysics' and 'presence'. Metaphysics, according to Collins and Mayblin, is concerned with "quests for an undivided point of origin, the logos" where “Logos can mean logic, reason, the word, God". In
metaphysics, the 'centre' or 'origin' is brought to full 'presence' to determine the nature of being. To locate the 'origin' opposing terms are used, one of which is privileged and carries the weight of full 'presence', and the other is “subordinate […] the term of absence or of mediated, attenuated presence.”

Photology, therefore, is concerned with the 'illumination' of one of the two terms. This is considered to be the metaphysical origin of the phenomena in question. Lepecki asserts that in dance writing, adopting photology to document dance relegates dance's ontological status to visible appearances, to what is most obviously brought to light under the gaze of the viewer, prioritised and privileged to counter the disappearance of dance.

While Lepecki's discussion is focused upon the hold the metaphysical, documental tradition has placed over dance through photology, in a similar way, the process of creating choreographed movement can also become caught in a descriptive, fixed and bound relationship, a desire to create the meaning and appearance of movement in its full 'presence' so that it can be returned to and repeated.

However, Lepecki cites theorist Mark Franko’s attribution to the move in dance theory beyond photology to Derrida's notion of trace. Rather than documenting dance through focusing on visual appearances alone, Lepecki asserts that Derrida’s critique of metaphysics has enabled the 'centre' or the origins of dance to be destabilised and conceptualised in another way. It does this though the notion of 'trace'.

Lepecki identifies the repetition of movement, as a “special sort of repetition”, not a pure reiteration, or a return to 'presence', but one he claims is aligned with Derrida’s notion of trace. He writes:

The vanishing traces of the dance lead us to the Derridean definition of trace as difference (where trace leads us not to a stable referent, but to a fluid, endless chain of different traces)…

The notion that traces of dance disappear and are different on return, challenges the idea that there can be an absolute 'centre', or a point of 'origin' within choreography. Equating movement with trace, in Derrida's terms, can be thought to de-centre any
claim to the full presence of movement. Through considering the disappearance and repetition of movement as difference, dance is freed of the attachment that secures the outward visible appearance of dance to meaning, to a fixed centre — loosening the binds of determined absolutes — becoming 'trace', neither fixed presence, nor absence.

Furthermore, internal to the process of making choreography, recapturing movement will produce different movement each time movement is repeated. It can be argued that with Derrida’s concept of trace, the process of recapturing movement produces a trace of another movement — movement becoming trace on repetition because it is marked as different from another version — where, to use Lepecki’s term, 'referents' within a movement-image are changed and de-stabilised.18

In my practice, a 'referent' can be understood to mean the defined movement attributes of each movement, for example, my elbow extends, I step under and fall forward. On repetition, my experience of the movement will be different, for example, when I step in a marginally different way, not as far under as the previous repetition. From a choreographic perspective, the inherent felt difference between one performance of choreography and another suggests such movement fits within Derrida’s notion of trace. The difference felt in recapturing and repetition renders the movement a 'trace' of the original movement.

However, in Derrida’s theory, the notion of trace is more complicated. Lepecki writes that in the act of repetition movement "differs and defers from itself, thus establishing the epistemological basis for the displacement of 'objective' description under the logic of the Derridean trace".19 In regard to Derrida’s theory of différance, he states, any

…signifying element (in a dance, in a text) is always already inhabited by and referring to another set of references, traces of traces of traces in an endless play of différance. Derrida coined this "neographism" to refer precisely to the "movement of the trace" as a deferring-differing detour.20

Lepecki writes that 'neographism' is brought about not only through the erasure and movement of choreography through repetition, but because "the observer is always in
difference with his/her own presence." It is not only the object that is in motion; the choreographer and dancer’s presence also changes. Under these terms, the play of *différance* underpins the shifting nature of the dancer’s presence where a dancer performing choreography engages in a process of signifying, through movement, the traces of traces that each moment of choreography offers.

Derrida’s notion of trace as *différance*, when read in relation to dance, redefines choreography as unstable. By thinking of movement as trace in these terms, all recaptured movement contains multiple references, where choreography can be thought to be trace and contain traces. Any movement can have several referents, it is, already a trace, a trace that refers to other traces.

What would be a process to create choreography without determining fixed and solid movement referents, where movement can be thought as traces of traces of traces, while remaining mindful of the process of recapturing movement as central to my method? Is it possible to define choreography when considering that movement is always different on repetition? To explore this problem, in the next section, I discuss selected aspects of Derrida's notion of trace in relation to three areas of the choreographic process: repetition, variation and fragmentation; movement structures; and the performer's presence. I write from the stance of choreographer, rather than philosopher, borrowing Derrida’s ideas as they resonate with this research.

1.4 *Derrida's notion of trace and the choreographic process*

1.4.1 Trace, repetition, variation and fragmentation

The first aspect to consider is the notion of repetition and variation, taking into account the desire to stabilise movement that underpins most choreographic processes. In choreographic practice, movement is usually created as if it is permanent and can be returned to. However, as Derrida's notion of trace shows, pure reproduction is impossible. This invites consideration of alternate processes that would take into account the play of *différance* as it effects and changes movement. Rather than focusing upon stability, *différance* could be considered as an active agent
in the creation of movement as trace, where recapturing and repetition would become a process of creative possibility, rather than a return to the same.

Heidi Gilpin, following Freud, proposes that repetition is the means for "new forms of expression, for new interpretations of experience". This suggests that rather than trying to recapture movement and experience irrevocable change or loss, repetition becomes a process of renewal between one repetition and another. Furthermore, it brings to mind the possibility to develop alternative choreographic permutations and variations with each repetition. It becomes an opportunity to create change, rather than a loss of what has been.

However, developing choreographic processes that make movement variations may force difference, but at the same time, it would also emphasise an original movement at the basis of the variation. This does not wholly address Derrida's play of différance. In Derrida’s attack on structuralism in Writing and Difference, he states that

…repetitions, substitutions, transformation, and permutations are always taken from a history of meaning [sens] — that is in a word, a history — whose origin may always be reawakened or whose end may always be anticipated in the form of presence.

This suggests that when creating difference by means of variation, the original referent will be maintained and present, preserving the 'origin' within the form. Although Derrida suggests that variations contain origins raising the risk of bringing about ‘presence’ rather than trace, Mark Franko suggests that Derrida’s theory of trace does not bring about enough "palpability and concreteness of differences". He asks: "How can difference itself display difference?" This leads to the question of how a choreographed movement or series of movements can embed, demonstrate or reveal different qualities, characteristics or changes within and between movements as a trace of another movement, and yet avoid any origins, variations, or stabilising elements that demonstrate this difference?

Creating variations, or the potential for choreography to be varied and changed 'live' in performance may offer a much wider field of movement possibilities, but any type of movement recapturing has a level of definition at its basis, necessary to determine
what is being recaptured so that it can then be repeated. This would not create trace as an "alternative of presence and absence", as Derrida suggests. Defining a movement-image to be recaptured, no matter how much of the movement is left to chance, is still problematic.

An alternate process could be found in methods to fragment movement. However, when attempting to create a fragment of movement by recapturing only specific aspects of a movement, there is something about the movement that is being made present. In the example of The View From Here, Deanne performed only the hand action of a duet. This could be understood as a trace of the whole movement. But the recapturing process may bring that fragment to full 'presence' within the body. The work of defining the movement brings it to attention, to 'presence'. In this scenario, it runs the danger of being no longer a trace, but just another movement. Solidifying movement gestures eventually shapes that movement as 'present', erasing its status, in Derrida’s terms, as trace.

1.4.2 Structural play: trace and structure

The second aspect of the choreographic process to consider is the creation and manipulation of choreographic structures. Here, I am using the term 'structure' as it relates to the organisation of distinct movements; to sequences of movement as they are ordered; or to the organisation of ‘phrases’ of movement or sections of choreography.

In Structure, Sign and Play in the Human Discourses, Derrida brings the notion of the 'centre', as it relates to the metaphysics of structure into question. Derrida’s discussion is useful to examining how organising structures can be reconsidered, opening up how movement can shift and change, and therefore avoid bringing any one element or set of elements to full 'presence'.

In choreographic practice organising structures guide compositional principles or rules, establishing set parameters, for example, movement shifting to the right. In Derrida's terms, this type of choreographic structure would limit possibilities. He writes: "By organizing the coherence of the system, the center of a structure permits
the play of its elements inside the total form"; the implication being, that structures close off movement possibilities where only movement within that structure can be performed. *Movement to the left*, for example, would not be included in the above example. Furthermore, as I have already discussed, repetition brings about difference. If differences arise when the structure is performed, they would be discounted, limiting creative possibilities.

Derrida points out that to move beyond the limitations of structures to avoid 'presence', the 'play' of the structure needs to be taken further than varying combinations or relationships between elements within the structure. He states that:

> Play is the disruption of presence [...] Play is always play of absence and presence, but if it is to be thought radically, play must be conceived of before the alternative of presence and absence. Being must be conceived as presence or absence on the basis of the possibility of play and not the other way around.\(^{30}\)

Derrida's suggestion that 'being' can be conceived through the possibility of neither absence nor presence has implications for reconsidering structures in choreographic practice. For Derrida, play must always come first. When thinking of how this might work in practice, I envisage a structure that is continually disrupted to avoid the dominating 'presence' of any one element. Hypothetically, a structure could be conceived with flexibility as to the inclusion or exclusion of certain elements. But this runs the risk of setting up another set of rules. Or, the dancer could defy the rules of the structure in performance. Therefore, the 'play' of the structure would take the form of performance processes that create structural deviations or departures so that movement appears as trace in a play of *différance*.

However, to conceptualise choreography as partially pre-written or organised, yet non-binding, might not be enough. Lepecki writes:

> For Derrida, only when dance happens off the record, beyond registration, when it escapes from the trap of documentation, when it vanishes into time properly, when it steps outside of history—only then does it generates*sic* a powerful disturbance within the field of signification. That is to say: for Derrida, dance must be improvised, must move before writing.\(^{31}\)
The implication of Lepecki’s suggestion is that structural play is best produced through improvisation. While improvisation offers an avenue for exploration because it moves the focus from “fixation […] to the event of movement of the dancing body”, it is still, in and of itself, problematic. Gabriele Brandstetter points out that although improvisation may appear to answer the problem, she questions improvisation as purporting to defy rules:

Does not the fact that improvisation workshops exist - as well as "improvisation Technologies" - suggest that the "unlearnable of unlearning" is also being built into a pedagogic framework and that the "lack of rules" of improvised movement is itself being translated into patterns?

In addition, Brandstetter also questions how a movement without any referents can be 'read'. She asks:

Certainly, for a movement which in a strangely foreign way has cut off every reference to known and recognisable bodily motions is perhaps "virtually" imaginable. But would it be readable?

That is, how would movement be communicated if the entire performance event were to move beyond any organising structures or conventions that help to define the viewing and performing experience?

1.4.3 Trace and performance

The third area of the choreographic process to consider in relation to Derrida's notion of trace is the performer's presence. In this context I am using the term 'presence' to refer to the engagement between the performer and choreography. An elusive concept, ‘presence’ in these terms is most appropriately defined by Mine Kaylan, who writes that presence is "attributed to a quality of engagement between spectator and the performance text, where the performance act is foregrounded as the primary site of signification." According to Kaylan:

Presence is the ability to focus the attention of the body and mind to each moment in the text, so that the attention is always in the present and it is always in process; presence is the skill of an actor or a performer to be mentally and physically 'present' in the moment of signification between the performance text and the audience: it is, therefore, present-ness.
Mark Franko asserts that equating dance with trace "can prove problematic for it removes another sort of presence from dancing: the presence of the dancing subjects themselves". Franko notes that the transaction between the dancer and the audience is crucial to performance but left out of Derrida's notion of trace. Although choreographic strategies could be devised to ensure movement is not 'fixed', bringing it into line with Derrida's notion of trace, for Franko, the notion of trace is difficult because Derrida "leaves out of his discussion a productive aspect of appearances".

The implication of Frankos’ critique is that even if dance is organised as a playful improvisation where movement it not delimited, the appearance of the dancer is still productive and creates a ‘presence’. In my understanding of Franko’s notion of 'production', this means that to produce a performance, the dancer creates a ‘presence’ for the stated choreography in its full appearance. Can the process of de-stabilising ‘presence’ be kept alive through the performer's presence, rather than thinking the performer as only ever producing a full 'presence' in metaphysical terms, while simultaneously, showing “palpability and concreteness of differences”. To explore this idea in practice, methods would need to be employed to enable the performer to signify neither the presence nor absence of the choreography in performance.

In Kaylan's discussion of presence qualities of 'present-ness' can be manipulated through attention to the body and mind in the act of performance. I propose that recapturing could be used as a strategy to destabilise the metaphysical understanding of 'presence' through the performer's presence, but only if what is presented, and how it is made present is questioned. However, my examination of strategies that use repetition, variation, structuring and improvisation have been shown to incorporate a degree of presence of original movement that is difficult to avoid. Without some degree of presence, how can movement be shown as a trace?

In this section, I have outlined ways in which choreography can be understood as trace through Derrida’s philosophy, uncovering the problems, possibilities and opportunities of trace under these terms. On the one hand, the notion of trace as diﬀérance offers a way to consider movement as loose, unfixed, as always appearing different on recapturing. But at the extremes, this theory of trace loosens to the point that there are no definable attributes of trace. It is simply 'other' than presence or
absence. The implication being that for practice it becomes difficult to conceive of a process in which a trace of movement can be identified.

1.5 Trace and temporality

The process of examining Derrida’s theory of trace increased my awareness that recapturing acts as a fundamental, but powerful practice in choreography, often based in a myriad of assumptions regarding what and how movement is recaptured, both in the process of making work and in performing work; and, that central to these processes is the continual referral made to the retrieval of movement from the 'past'.

When I reflect on my studio practice, the process of trying to remember movement created in a previous rehearsal is charged with debate surrounding the issue of what movement was precisely as it was created moments, days, weeks or even months before re-performance. The process of re-performing movement precisely is often fraught with problems, time has moved on, the body has changed, and dancers remember movement subjectively in different ways. Trying to return to movement as it was felt at one point in time, to reclaim essentially what has disappeared, becomes, in a pure sense, impossible.

Is the act of returning to choreography a return to a 'trace' of choreography, because referencing the 'past' of movement, as if movement exists elsewhere, aside from and apart from the dancer, a return to something that at one point was claimed to be full, or whole, but now no longer exists? That is, if movement in effect is no longer 'there', does it become a trace of what it was formerly? And is the process of performance a tracing of choreography, because the repetitions in rehearsal and performance continually ask the performer to refer back to what movement once was, rather than what it now is?

To define trace through these terms would be to locate a movement trace in the temporality of 'past'. It could also risk casting choreography as irretrievable, unable to be returned to, turning back to the issues Lepecki states have historically cast dance's ephemerality as "mourning". The idea that a trace is temporally located in the 'past' formed the basis of my interpretation of Deanne’s gesture during the
creation of *The View From Here*. And yet, at the same time, I also experienced Deanne's performance as an opening, an expansion that signified other temporal associations.

When I recall my instinctive response to Deanne’s performance it seemed to be contained within the depth of an image, like a photographic still, rather than through the flow of movement. Although in my practice I am concerned with the moving body, my perception of a ‘trace’ in this way, and the use of stillness as a tool for studio exploration, (discussed in the next Chapter), brought about a re-consideration of relevant theory that would inform the research.

To examine the issue of trace and temporality, I turned to Eduardo Cadava’s writing on photography to challenge my conceptual understanding, while remaining aware of the differences between the form of choreography and photography. Initially drawn to Cadava’s writing because of his focus on the notion of trace, the implications of his theoretical propositions for this research were further reaching than first thought and have had a substantial impact on the conceptual and aesthetic aspects of my research. The influence of Cadava’s writing on the presentation of my work is discussed in Chapter Six.

Cadava presents a detailed analysis of ‘reading’ historical images, that is, our response to images and how we make sense of them within the form of photography, informed by the theories of Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida. His examination of reading images becomes relevant to this research when drawing a parallel between recapturing movement (choreography) and capturing imagery (photography); and by drawing an analogy between the notion that photography records and documents imagery, in the same way that choreography recaptures and documents a particular movement moment, creating a history of that movement.

1.5.1 Trace, history and disappearance

Cadava suggests that history is enabled by traces. History does not belong to the past, he writes, "but rather that it passes away; not that it has disappeared, rather that it 'threatens to disappear'; it is always on the verge of disappearing, without
disappearing." For Cadava, the apprehension of history, is "bound to the survival of the traces of what is past and to our ability to read these traces as traces." This evocation of trace brings the concept of trace to the forefront of the perception of an image. In relation to dance, it also suggests that if movement has been recaptured and documented, but disappeared, it has not entirely disappeared. Through the form of trace, the movement-image can be thought to ‘live on’.

Furthermore, in Cadava’s view, traces do not "belong to a specific time". This idea is important to alleviate the hold the 'past' of movement has over recapturing. Through employing Walter Benjamin’s concept of "now-time", Cadava demonstrates how traces are crucial to evocations of time beyond past. He writes that 'now-time' can be understood as the moment of reading an image in the present, the moment when the image becomes legible. However, rather than bringing about a comparative or relational reading between past and present, 'now-time', he writes, demonstrates "the movement at the image’s interior" where the moment of reading "conceives of the relationship between a past and a present as dialectical—that is, as imagistic".

'Now-time' provides a more expansive temporal framework than a direct interplay between 'past' on the one hand and 'present' on the other. Applied to a choreographic image, this suggests that movement created at one point in time no longer purely represents only that moment. Instead, movement, no matter when it was created, is always brought into relationship with other experiences of that movement in the moment of ‘now’. In this idea, there is no longer a straightforward relationship between the movement-image, the then of choreography created at a previous point in time, on the one hand, and the dancer’s performance of the choreography as it was set now, on the other. As Cadava emphasises, the moment of 'now' is not "substantial", but performative, the consequence being that performance can be understood as a process that mixes temporal references together in the one event.

Moreover, this mixture of temporal references is extended beyond past and present in Cadava’s theory. He writes that
…traces carried by the image include reference to the past, the present and the future, and in such a way that none of these can be isolated from the other, that the image cannot present the traces of the explosion it recalls—without at the same time exploding, or bursting, its capacity to (be) present.\textsuperscript{49}

With this idea, a choreographed movement can be understood to be dynamic and experiential, but never fully complete in time, it does not refer directly to one temporality, but shatters the illusion of temporal specificity. Traces within the movement-image might express aspects of the movement, yet the movement only becomes apprehensible in the specific instant of performance. Cadava describes the moment of reading in 'now-time' as "a time filled to the bursting point by it's own \textit{spacing}, by all of the images that are synchronic with it."\textsuperscript{50}

For choreography, this means that any performance of movement disrupts the temporal basis of the movement-image but also shows the potential of that movement. Cadava writes that the process of encountering an image "tears the image to be read from its context,\textsuperscript{51} producing openings and possibilities, where the image does not remain static, or left unchanged. Extending this idea to dance performance, it could be argued that the contexts of making, performing, presenting, and watching choreography — are all actively intertwined in an ongoing process of temporal decontextualisation.

If traces do not remain in the past, but are decontextualised from the past or origins, what are the implications for choreographic practice considering recapturing attempts to stabilise movement that was created at a particular point in time? And, for the performer, what is an approach to performance that takes into account how movement created yesterday, last week, or last month, read in 'now-time' will be decontextualised?

\subsection*{1.5.2 Trace and temporal possibilities}

To take into account how movement-images are decontextualised, where the past of movement cannot be retrieved and re-enacted precisely, recapturing could be approached to generate an 'image of an image'. This production of another image from a previously existing image is not simply a replication or reproduction, or a
variation or substitution, rather, a process of generation beyond the origins of the image. However, it does not only offer a way to ‘add’ new temporal permutations. Cadava asserts that traces can be thought to be co-present but do not always appear. He writes:

> Like the world, the image allows itself to be experienced only as what withdraws from experience. Its experience—and if it were different it would not be an experience at all—is an experience of the impossibility of experience….

In this provocative quote, I take Cadava to mean that what an image might evoke exists as potential experience, while simultaneously only aspects will be experienced. It is not possible, in these terms, to ever experience everything available to be experienced at any one point in time.

In the context of performance, when attempting to re-perform the assumed choreography — it moves here, feels like this, is performed like this — the process is never fulfilled because only aspects of what the choreography offers to be experienced will be experienced. Performance becomes a temporal subjective approximation. Cadava makes it clear, however, that although not everything will ever be experienced; this is not a loss, because what cannot be wholly experienced is not entirely unavailable to experience. He writes: "the image, bearing as it always does several memories at once, is never closed." There is always an opening in the image; it is never finite or contained in time.

In choreographic practice, it is assumed that each separate distinguishable movement moment is defined and fixed. But we can never be present to choreographic movement as it was created, not simply because it is lost to the past, but because the movement-image in Cadava’s terms, is thought to contain the simultaneous possibility for what is unknown or unforeseen to still be experienced.

In my own experience of performance, each time I perform choreography I experience it differently. The process of realising something of the choreography in performance, but never all of it, could be viewed as a limitation. Yet Cadava sees breaking with the image as essential to the structure of reading an image, and in this process it is "developed, like a photographic negative". The metaphor of reading as
developing, suggests that movement can be seen as the emergent potential of choreography, developed and "produced through an activity of construction". It is "still to come", suggesting the possibility for openings to directions, breaks, and fissures within movement forms. Although seemingly already complete, already history, choreography, under these terms, holds in a similar way to the photographic image, what Cadava describes as "the event of the promise." In performance, choreography that appears as stable is disrupted, drawn elsewhere, broken and formed at once, opening up potential for further discoveries.

When considering Cadava’s theory in relation to choreographic practice, the notion that a trace of movement only pertains to the past is challenged, proposing instead, that apprehension of an image cannot be complete in time; rather, traces within the movement-image bring about the means to temporal evocations beyond any specific moment.

Returning to Cadava’s suggestion that we "read traces as traces", making and performing choreography could be seen as a tracing of choreography, not the past of choreography, instead, a multiplicity of evocations that are simultaneously co-present. In Cadava's words, the possibility for an image to "bear the traces of what it cannot show […] to suggest and gesture towards its potential for speaking" is an evocative proposal. Trace becomes the means to suggest phenomena beyond the image, beyond past, not just residue, or remainder, but as the means to new and unforeseen possibilities.

1.6 Conclusion

Through this review of selected theories of trace and their relationship to choreographic processes, I have uncovered some of the limitations and possibilities of approaching choreography as trace. Derrida’s theory shows how recapturing movement to fix or stabilise referents within movement becomes impossible given the play of différance, where movement differs and defers on repetition. This implies that the creation and performance of movement is unstable, negating the possibility of objective interpretation or understanding of what a movement is precisely. And yet, Mark Franko questions the application of Derrida’s notion of trace to performance
because it does not wholly consider the performer's presence. Franko’s view is influential in conceptualising alternate ways of bringing together the inherent difference found in repetitions of choreography with performance practice, where the performer's presence can be employed in the practice of 'tracing' choreography.

In Eduardo Cadava’s thinking, traces 'enable' rather than 'represent' a movement-image, where an image evokes the synchronic co-presence of temporalities at once. Cadava suggests that it is impossible to be present to all the traces within an image rather, he asserts that the action of reading an image de-contextualises the image and opens that image to further possibilities.

Cadava argues that the encounter with the image is moveable, fluid, and dynamic. While Derrida offers a way in which to understand how choreography can be deconstructed through repetition, disturbing any perceived 'hold' over movement, Cadava's writing evokes development in action, a point of immediacy in the encounter with the image that resonates with performance practice. This brings to mind a breaking apart of the image as an unexpected and unpredictable emergence of traces within movement forms in performance.

Through reflecting on the relationship between Cadava’s understanding and choreography, my thinking is drawn from specific referents within choreographic forms — details, body parts or attributes — to the 'feel' of movement as an overall image. Thinking of movement in this way, I see the movement-image as shifting where there is no origin or centre. This reflects the same evocation of Derrida’s movement of the trace but offers an experiential and performative dimension that is difficult to glean from Derrida.

With Lepecki, Derrida and Cadava, a theory of trace does not emerge that directly addresses choreographic processes from the perspective of the maker, nor does an understanding of trace emerge that directly answers the question of what a trace 'is', by definition. However, this analysis has influenced my understanding by suggesting that the potential for trace in choreographic practice lies outside of the commonly understood practice of choreography, which is to stabilise, inscribe and define movement that can be repeated precisely. The implications of Derrida's thought may
well appear to undermine the notion that difference created solely through formal strategies such as repetition and variation, or substitution, will enliven trace within recaptured movement. This offers the possibility to research choreographic processes that move beyond these known strategies as I have understood and practiced them in my work previous to this research.

In this Chapter I have spent some time examining notions of trace in selected theories. Working in the studio environment is a very different mode of engagement with the body and with dancers who have not undertaken this level of detailed analysis. Often silent, conversation in the studio environment is largely functional and based on physical movement problems. However, in this project, this theory sat within my presence as I explored the creation of The Very Still and was shared with the participants through conversation as it resonated with specific aspects of the research.

With this theoretical and conceptual analysis in mind, Chapter Two focuses on studio practice, investigating the notion of trace as an experiential sensation within the physical body, the material site of the emergence of trace in practice. The research explores the problem that maintaining a trace within the body could preserve some aspect of that trace, challenging the assertion that documenting a trace would side with the metaphysical tradition and create the full presence of movement. Methods are developed to locate traces within the experiential body of the dancer while seeking to investigate, in practice, how traces can be maintained in motion.

3 A. Lepecki, ‘As If Dance Was Visible’, op.cit., p. 72
4 ibid., p. 73
5 ibid.
7 ibid., p. 129
8 ibid., p. 127
9 ibid., p. 133
10 ibid. p. 130
13 ibid., p. 45
14 ibid., p. 49
15 A. Lepecki, ‘Inscribing Dance’, op. cit., p. 131
16 A. Lepecki, ‘As If Dance Was Visible’, op. cit., p. 73
17 ibid., p. 73
18 ibid.
20 ibid.
21 ibid.
23 Collins and Mayblin define structuralism as "the study of human language, cultural and society as structures…components in their relationships of difference, exchange, substitution". See J. Collins et. al., Introducing Derrida, UK, Icon Books, 2005. p. 57
26 ibid.
27 Derrida, Jacques, op. cit., p. 292
28 ibid., pp. 278 - 338
29 ibid., pp. 278-279
30 ibid., p. 292
31 A. Lepecki, ‘Inscribing Dance’, op. cit., p. 135
33 ibid.
34 ibid.
36 ibid. p. 49
37 ibid., p.206
39 ibid.
40 M. Kaylan, op. cit. p. 49
41 A. Lepecki, ‘Inscribing Dance’, op. cit., p. 129
43 ibid.
44 ibid.
45 ibid.
47 E. Cadava, Words of Light, op. cit., p. 64
48 ibid., p. 65
49 E. Cadava, ‘Lapsus Imaginis: The image in Ruins’, op.cit., p. 39
50 E. Cadava, Words of Light, op. cit., p. 65
51 ibid.
52 E. Cadava, ‘Lapsus Imaginis: The image in Ruins’, op.cit., p. 36
53 ibid., p. 41
54 E. Cadava, Words of Light, op. cit., p. 65
55 ibid.
56 ibid.
57 ibid. p. 66
58 ibid., p. 64
59 E. Cadava, ‘Lapsus Imaginis: The image in Ruins’, op.cit., p. 36
CHAPTER TWO: Locating the trace in the dancing body

2.1 Introduction

How can traces of experiential sensations be located and used as source material for choreography? Chapter Two focuses on the development of methods to uncover, track and maintain inner-felt intensities in the dancing body, while interweaving and contextualising the research with theoretical sources and examples from other practitioner's work. There were six research steps in this phase of research, which show the sequential and accumulative development of the studio experimentation. Somatic practices influenced the research, with further understanding of the sensory body extended through Brian Massumi’s notion of affect, sensation and movement. Reflections on my studio research have uncovered three informing frameworks: the use of nonconscious sensation; gravitational forces and stillness. These elements have been shown to be a source of sensorial movement action and led to an understanding of how this movement can be defined as ‘trace’.

2.2 Studio research

2.2.1 Somatic practice

Through this phase of the research I worked alone in the studio using a video camera and a diary to record my exploration. I began in stillness, working towards building a ‘receptive’ state, focusing inwardly on my physicality by removing distracting thoughts, concentrating on the felt sense of my body. My approach to working with the body in this way is informed by somatic practices that have been an enduring influence in my choreographic practice. I have studied Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, Susan Klein Technique and Release and Ideokinetic techniques, and Kinaesthetic Anatomy with Irene Dowd, whose work as a Neuro-muscular trainer focuses upon functional and kinaesthetic anatomy for dancers. These techniques have informed my approach to movement exploration, where visual imitation is de-emphasised as a learning tool in favour of an internally sensed and felt awareness. Using imagery, anatomy, visualisation, touch and improvisation as methods to focus
attention to the inner-felt body, somatic techniques in dance investigate modes of alignments and efficiencies in movement to develop greater awareness of the ‘use’ of the body; either for refining movement technique, or for the purposes of improvisation or other composition methods.

2.2.2 The receptive state

Through studying these techniques I have established a practice of attending to, and heightening, the inner-felt sense of my body. This practice is undertaken in the first moments of somatic techniques, where time is spent standing in stillness, often with the eyes closed, or on the floor in the 'constructive rest' position, lying down with the knees bent up. Sensing the body and ‘tuning in’, builds a "receptive state of mental and physical alertness", where distracting thoughts are put to one side. I perceive this state as a sense of spaciousness, openness, yet connectedness to my body, where the body feels as though it is available to movement and an energetic charge is present, and the potential for movement to emerge is heightened.

The process of building a receptive state of awareness can be compared with Husserl’s concept of “epoché or ‘bracketing’”.

According to Christian Beyer, in the same way that receptivity focuses attention, ‘bracketing’ uses “a first person point of view, so as to ensure that the respective item is described exactly as is experienced, or intended, by the subject”. Therefore, when I focus on my body, I perceive the object of my attention, the felt state of my body, from my own experience. However, the problem with this method Beyer notes, is that

…one cannot, of course, decide whether in a case of what one takes to be, say, an act of perception one is currently performing, there actually is an object that one is perceptually confronted with.

Beyer notes that one’s perceptions cannot be judged valid, or otherwise, as it is not possible to step outside of oneself to make a case for their truth. In response to the problem, he contends that in Husserl’s thought

… phenomenological specification[…] must not rely upon the correctness of any existence assumption concerning the object(s) (if any) the respective act is about. Thus, the epoché has us focus on those aspects of our intentional
The notion that 'bracketing' focuses attention on the object at hand, closing off attention to the 'extra-mental world' is useful in understanding how in a similar way, receptivity sets aside the outside world. Extraneous assumptions, thoughts and feelings are 'bracketed' off to deepen one’s immersion in the inner-felt body.

However, after 'bracketing' to build a receptive state in a somatic practice such as ideokinesis, the body is re-invested with imagery and visualisation, such as imagine the skull floating like a balloon, to generate "imagined sensation". This stimulates the nervous system and the body to move in new ways. Ordinarily, distracting and extraneous thoughts or feelings would be quietened to ‘neutralise’ the body and re-invest it with imagery. However, in the first stage of the research I became curious about inner-felt sensation prior to the process. I noticed that by simply attending to the body in the receptive state, the body and mind were already actively at work where physical intensities, sensations or images were at play. This insight led me to depart from the trajectory of ideokinetic practices to undertake further investigation into the sensory capabilities of the body.

A statement by dancer Kevin Kortan also influenced this departure. Kortan opened up my thinking about the dancer’s inner-felt experiential world through his poetic description of standing still for the entire thirty-three minutes of Trisha Brown’s work "For M.G.: The Movie". He writes:

Meanwhile as we made the dance, I stood and waited and stood and wondered and stood and angered and stood and laughed and stood and cried and stood and stiffened and stood and relaxed and stood and breathed and stood and directed my body and stood and listened to my body, my heart, my spirit and stood and waited and stood…

In this description, Kortan outlines a wealth of physical and psychic responses to standing that he feels internally while seemingly doing ‘nothing’. Inadvertently, this becomes the material of Kortan’s dance. Without moving per se, palpable sensations came to Kortan's attention, the inner-felt world teeming with corporeal activity.
To investigate the use of inner-felt experience as material for choreography, I turned to Brian Massumi’s, *Parables for the Virtual*, and his theory of affect, sensation and movement. Massumi puts forward ideas about the body and sensation from which I have selected aspects that align with my investigation.

2.2.3 Affect, intensity and sensation

The notion of affect, as commonly understood, pertains to the idea that something makes an impact upon, or can be felt as changing our experience physically or emotionally. Dictionary citations note examples such as “the damp winters affected my chest”, or “the poetry had an affect on me”. There is a noticeable relationship between stimulus and a felt response.

Differently, in Massumi’s complex, but important theory, the sensory potential of the body lies within affective aspects of embodiment. For Massumi, affect grounds the emergence of sensation and feelings that are present to our attention, positing that affect acts as the fundamental base quality of our body’s state of being, the underlying quiet vibration of the body in a state of readiness before reacting to stimulus. This quality of the body, he writes, is "the perception of one’s own vitality, one’s sense of aliveness, of changeability". Eric Shousse offers another explanation, emphasising the sensorial nature of affect. He writes that affect is: "the half-sensed, ongoing hum of quantity/quality that we experience when we are not really attuned to any experience at all." Together, these theorists offer interpretations of affect as a qualitative, energetic charge, a tonal register in the body; half perceived, subtly present; felt, but not defined as this or that. Affect is going on in the body as long as we are alive, a predisposed qualitative state always present and always occurring.

In my reading of “pre-reflective consciousness” as understood in phenomenology, theorists note that the pre-reflective “is before we do any reflecting on our experience”. That is, I feel a certain emotion or physical sensation such as pain but I have not yet reflected on that experience in order to talk about it or communicate it in some way. The explanations given by Massumi and Shousse regarding the body’s affective state posit affect as a ‘half-sensed’ energetic bodily charge that in my
understanding may be related to pre-reflective consciousness. However, given the practical/experiential focus of this enquiry, philosophical and theoretical discussion of the relationship between pre-reflective states and intensities and Massumi’s notion of affect as they relate to practice, is an area of further investigation for others. However, these concepts and their considerations have at times suggested courses of action in what has been an emergent method and helped frame discussion of experiential outcomes.

2.2.4 Affect and the dancing body

In Massumi’s theory affect acts as the grounds for the emergence of sensation. He equates affect with 'intensity', stating that intensities are the "first glimmer" of sensations. Intensity becomes sensation when a "variation in intensity is felt" and change in the body is registered. Happening together, intensities and sensations form "a complex dynamic unity", always at work and proliferating throughout the body, where affect acts like a "virtual co-presence of potentials" alongside sensations that arise only to recede again or be taken over by other sensations. But if affect is essentially ‘virtual’, albeit co-present without being a dominant feeling state, what does affect offer for further understanding of the body's sensory capacity?

In her discussion of the body in dance practice, Susan Foster notes that while the dancing body is subjected to practices and regimes that insist upon "physical constants", the body is in a persistent state of change, evidenced by aging, injury or illness, for example. Foster proposes that although differences are felt and noticed, they become what she terms "bricolages of extant moves", incorporated into a pre-existing "but not alternative, sensorium". In contrast, Massumi's notion of affect offers an opening to sensory potential. He states affect carries with it the capacity or "tendency" for change, operating

...like a reserve of potential for newness or creativity that is experienced alongside every actual production of meaning in language or in any performance of a useful function — vaguely but directly experienced, as something more, a more to come...
If affect offers ‘something more’, this enables the potential to foresee alternate sensory potential arising from the 'reserve' Massumi suggests accompanies all movement. When moving, tapping into affect takes attention beyond what is obvious, or habitually sensed. Movement beyond prescribed choices, known vocabularies or personal preferences that organise the body's sensory possibilities can be imagined.

Furthermore, affect offers a way to conceptualise the ‘whole’ body as available to alternate movement choices. By 'whole', I mean the entirety of the body's material mass, beyond the regions or parts of the body that are usually focused upon in dance practice. For example, a movement such as: *I drop my head and feel the weight of the skull*, would also carry with it the co-presence of intensity in the toes, legs, torso, arms, fingers, for example, even if they are not directly in focus. Strong sensations in one part of the body become part of the subtly felt charge of energy enlivening the ‘whole’ body at the same time. With this idea, the body's material capacity beyond sensations associated with dance training techniques or personal movement habits is extended.

Through this analysis of affect and sensation, my understanding of how a trace of experiential sensation in the dancing body can be conceptualised was developed. If affect is co-present to sensation, then it can be inferred that there is always a continual state of emergence of what can be termed 'traces' of intensities and sensations resonating within the body, even those experienced as deep, faint or distant. An experiential ‘trace’ can be understood as an incipient intensity becoming sensation as it emerges, always holding the possibility for ‘something more’. This radically changes the way in which movement sensation is conceptualised.

In this phase of the research I remained focused upon the felt sense of the body and the emergence of affect and intensity from within. However, I remained mindful that it may be possible to investigate the issue of the relationship between the body and a particular situation or place as it affects embodied intensity The relationship of moving and the concurrent ‘outside’ world was not entirely nullified, but later in the research, in Chapter Six (6.3.2), I discuss the emergence of the notion of ‘associations’ between moving and everyday conversation as significant in affecting and contextualising the movement experience.
In the next section, I discuss the first step of the studio research, where a 'trace' of sensation emerging from the affective body is investigated, exploring methods that take into account how intensities and sensations are co-present.

2.2.5 Step One: The emergence of movement sensation

At this point in the research, I was confronted with the potential schism between my experience as a practitioner internal to the process of making choreography, and Massumi's theoretical propositions. While my reading of Massumi's theory furthered my conceptual understanding of the sensory body, practical understanding is another matter. What does it feel like to internalise the notion of affect? Can I feel affect? How do these ideas relate to the situation of choreography where attention to the body is heightened beyond that of everyday life?

Noting that the issue of affect itself is problematic because identifying 'affect' is difficult; I avoided applying Massumi's theory to my practical exploration. Instead, I focused on working with the idea of whole body 'intensity', allowing parity between intensity and affect. In the following discussion, I use the term 'intensity', to articulate the energetic charge felt in what I refer to as the 'whole' body, and use the term 'sensation' as Massumi does, where a variation in felt intensity is noticed.

To begin, I built a receptive state standing still, noticing the intensive energetic charge in the whole body. I waited for felt intensity in any part of the body to draw my attention then increased my attention to that intensity. Increasing intensity happened with different degrees of subtlety. My purpose was not to produce movement, but to experiment with how conscious attention to intensity produces physiological change. Purely by ‘responding’ to a particular intensity, heightening attention to intensity, a reaction in the body was produced. Internally, this felt as though the body was readied for movement to emerge. Daniel Lepkoff describes similar phenomena. He states how “While lying in constructive rest, when the body wants to go somewhere or do something, the muscle cells trigger; they ready themselves to carry out this intention.”28
‘Increasing intensity’ heightened conscious attention, triggering physical activation as though that intensity was ‘amplified’. As Lepkoff describes, a muscular change was felt, but this could also be understood as a change in the nervous system, an awakening or enlivening the body; felt as a thickening or flooding of energy to that specific part of the body. This produced a change in intensity, a recognisable sensation that seemed to evoke a certain character, shade, or tone. However, I could not name these intensities, or describe them as a known sensation, for example, ‘itchy skin’. Through these experiments several issues emerged.

The first issue was the problem of focusing intently on the body to amplify intensity, where anticipating, or trying too hard to produce a sensation drew my concentration away from the feeling state of the whole body. In contrast, relaxing concentration and allowing attention to wander was found to be more effective. Focus was more easily retained on emerging sensations and ‘whole’ body intensity at the same time.

This method reflects the principal in Alexander Technique of "non-doing", echoing dancer Megan Nicely's suggestion that desiring movement takes attention away from focus on the body in the present moment, limiting the potential to observe the inner-felt. Rather than "end-gaining’ or reaching for a known position or goal", the principal of ‘non-doing’ in the Alexander Technique is used to "observe our initial impulses and patterns", and in turn, to open up our choice of response. Prolonged attention to the body and ‘non-doing’ in the receptive state enables the dancer to notice the potential available before movements manifest as reactions. In the research, maintaining a gap between noticing a sensation and moving in response heightened the present moment experience of the body, exposing further potential beyond immediate responses.

The second issue to emerge was the abundance of intensity in the receptive body while ‘non-doing’, exposing an overwhelming choice of stimulus. American choreographer Lisa Nelson describes a process she uses to attend to the complexity of stimuli in the inner felt body when in stillness. She names this process 'tracking', and states that it enables her to follow her "interior life", the shift of her “attention, imagination […] and desire". ‘Tracking’, as Nelson explains, offers a way to watch
the emergence of sensations at play within the body, where the changing landscape of felt intensity and sensation can be observed.

This leads to the third issue, the problem of tracking simultaneous intensity and sensation. I noticed that it was difficult to attend to the complexity of intensities within various regions of the body while amplifying felt intensity in a specific part of the body at the same time. Although I attempted to concentrate upon the body as an entire ‘echo chamber’ to focus on both the co-presence of intensity and emerging sensations, I became aware that my attention could be quickly swept up in a dominant sensation in one part of the body. This resulted in a loss of focus on my whole body. In response to this problem, I practised giving considerable attention to the receptive state, so that when intensities were amplified and increased, they were grounded in, and emerged from, whole body attention. While impossible to perceive all that is going on in the body at any one time, this process alleviated the potential for sensations to take over.

Although I had explored receptivity and the inner-felt in somatic techniques, this step of the research opened up new creative potential to locate and track a vast array of intensity and sensation within the body. ‘Amplifying’ inner-felt intensity emerging from the whole body, while attempting to track sensation as it emerged, established a new method in my practice. This process of heightening intensity increased the potential for alternate sensation to emerge in regions of the body not usually favoured, expanding the potential of the inner-felt body as a source for movement. This step of research had not yet investigated how emerging sensations could become movement. In the next section, the potential for the co-presence of intensity, sensation and movement is developed.

2.2.6 Step Two: The emergence of movement

American choreographer Meg Stuart\(^\text{35}\) recounts her desire to investigate what she terms "noise",\(^\text{36}\) observed during somatic practices. She writes:

As I continued to practice clarity in dancing—through studying Alexander Technique, Contact Improvisation, Skinner Releasing and Klein Technique—
I became more and more interested in turning up the volume on the internal noise I experienced. I wanted to let it leak out, expose the interior by giving attention to what I was trying so hard to block. How to translate the sensations and inner monologues into movement and vice versa?³⁷

Stuart's ambition to find a mode of translation from inner-felt sensation to movement reflects my aim to investigate this same problem. But, differently, I was not concerned to 'translate' the interior, instead, I wanted to find a way to concentrate on the affective body by feeling emerging intensities, then magnify intensity to develop movement, without 'converting' the inner-felt. I wanted to see if it was possible to move by 'escalating' intensity until it becomes movement.

To investigate a method, I explored a process of amplifying intensities in the still stance to the point of feeling movement emerge. This produced a physical 'triggering' where slight, micro movements, as small as twitches or flinches were performed. A distinct difference was observed between producing a full and complete movement and the emergence of movement that felt partial or suggestive of more movement to come. I characterised this type of movement as the activation of movement emerging from within the body, but not yet fully expressed to the limits of the body's movement range.³⁸

In these explorations I noticed the risk to inner-felt attention brought about through trying to 'move'. A similar problem was uncovered as encountered in the first step. Again my attention was drawn to the difficulty of concentrating on the whole body while focusing on emergent sensations and movements. In this context, I attempted to counter the loss of attention by focusing on what Brian Massumi suggests is the resonation of intensities and sensation moving across the surfaces and depths of the body.³⁹ He states intensities and sensations coincide with or interfere with other resonant echoes, intersecting to create "intensities".⁴⁰ I wanted to enable this fluid ebb and flow of resonant sensations in parts of the body with an energetic 'aliveness' still present in the whole body, a certain light and shade in the felt sense of the body as movement emerged.

This experiment established a method to retain focus on the whole intensive body while movement emerged, but in a very controlled manner. Working from the still
upright stance, and then returning again to stillness to repeat the process, had not connected any movement together or moved beyond the upright stance. The challenge then became how to extend this method to complex movement. This was investigated in a set of experiments discussed in the next section.

2.2.7 Step Three: Moving beyond the still stance

To extend the investigation beyond the still stance, I experimented with using the same process as the previous step, increasing intensity to evolve as a movement. But once that movement was completed, I repeated the process without returning to an upright still stance, building two or three movements together in a sequence that moved through space.

There were several issues uncovered through this method: practical functional problems; and the body's position after moving away from the upright stance, where new sensations were immediately felt due to the re-distribution of the body’s weight. The problem of new sensations suggested two ways of proceeding: the first, to use the resonant ‘after-effects’ immediately felt as stimulus for the next movement; or the second, to wait in stillness in the new position and scan for other intensities, then increase intensity until a movement emerged, repeating the process. In my experiments, the second method was more successful as it allowed time, unhindered by momentum and the strength of dominant movement sensations, to scan for new intensities in stillness that were more deeply felt and less superficially apparent.

In terms of the practical problems, if my weight is completely committed to the right foot, for example, it may be impossible to move with that part of the body without falling over, therefore, a conscious choice to move from another body part may be necessitated, even if that is not where the immediate intensity is felt. The practicality of controlling the flow of energy, momentum and weight, while simultaneously concentrating on whole body intensity proved challenging. Although most amplified intensity produced short movements able to be ‘tracked’, retaining focus internally was difficult if too much movement activity was produced. Falling, leaping or moving quickly through space, for example, demands an immediate proprioceptive reaction to avoid falling over, overriding attention to the inner-felt.
This process revealed the limitations and difficulties in trying to demarcate or close off one movement from another. I had wanted to keep movement defined and separate to track precise intensities and sensations, but functional problems, along with the ongoing production of new intensities and sensations when moving made the process difficult. These problems could be viewed as a limitation and a loss of intensive whole body potential. However, Massumi suggests that some of the body can be more strongly ‘in focus’ and other parts ‘out of focus’ without those parts disappearing, proposing that affect remains even when it appears absent. He states:

So when we feel a particular emotion or think a particular thought, where have all the other memories, habits, tendencies gone that might have come at that point? And where have the bodily capacities for affecting and being affected that they’re inseparable from gone? There’s no way they can all be actually expressed at any given point. But they’re not totally absent either, because a different selection of them is sure to come up at the next step.

From Massumi’s statement, we might infer that in my experiments, although a particular intensity provided the impetus for movement and provoked new sensations as the body energetically moved through space, other possibilities are still co-present. However, it is difficult to feel this potential. Massumi explains this is because:

When a body is in motion, it does not coincide with itself. It coincides with its own transition: its own variation. The range of variations it can be implicated in is not present in any given movement, much less in any position it passes through. In motion, a body is in an immediate, unfolding relation to its own nonpresent potential to vary.

Massumi’s suggestion offers an entirely different way of thinking about the co-presence of intensities and sensations in the body than I had expected. At the beginning of the exploration, I had assumed that it would be possible to retain originating intensities throughout the entire movement, but realised that once moving, further intensities and sensations are produced.

To experiment further with the problem of attending to the complexity of inner-felt intensities and sensations when moving, I developed a method to concentrate attention to the body that 'tracks' the landscape of the inner-felt. I experimented with developing extensive descriptive maps of emergent movement. For example, an
action such as, *bring the right hand from the right to the left side of the body*, would be outlined through focusing on the 'whole' body as movement emerged. This was a challenging exercise because the scope was extensive. For example:

*The feet are felt as heavy into the floor, the chin has weight. The weight of the right hand hangs down next to the body and the hand floods with intensity, as the intensity in the palm of the hand grows the inside of the hand, the pad of the little finger and thumb are felt as a parallel set of points with a void between them. The points then pierce the space as intensity grows and the hand moves to the side of the body. Intensity is felt in the right shoulder, the heel of the left leg is felt as heavier than the right.*

My research found that it is possible to work with the entire body to track action and intensity through this method, but intensity becomes an idea, producing a lag between sensations and registering sensation as a concept. Attention is no longer precisely in the present moment. This indicated that if this method was to be developed to create movement phrases that could be remembered and repeated, consideration would need to be given to the advantages and limitations of the process. Mapping aids in focusing attention to emerging sensations, but it also draws attention away from other intensities going on at the same time, delaying the ability to track intensity as it is produced 'in the moment'.

Despite uncovering that a gap can emerge between sensation and conceptualising sensation in order to track it, this step in the research was significant in establishing a process to generate action while maintaining felt intensity through focused attention to the 'whole' body. Methods were devised to draw attention to the 'whole' intensive body while movement emerges. This was essential to maintaining focus on the experiential. Without this method, it was found it is easy to by-pass attention to intensity and simply 'move'. The research demonstrated that when moving beyond the still stance further intensity and sensation is produced, necessitating a process that 'feels while moving'. Mindful that attention can never focus on all bodily intensity and sensation at any one time, in the next step of the research, I examine methods to open up attention to the co-presence of intensity and sensation outside of awareness.
2.2.8 Step Four: Nonconscious sensation

During the experiments in the previous step, a chance realisation illustrated another mode in which sensations were found to be co-present with movement. As I was going about tracking intensities in the arms, hands, upper body and head, I suddenly decided to ‘give up’ my concentration. In doing so, I realised that my body was encumbered by intensities that I had not noticed in my feet and legs. I experienced what could be described as ‘putting on another pair of glasses’: an immediate switch in consciousness. By giving up attention to one region of the body and placing my attention elsewhere, other sensations suddenly came into focus. This switch also happened when a stumble, a fall, or loss of control in a split second immediately drew my focus to other parts of the body.

Brian Massumi writes how sensations can be "nonconscious", outside of conscious awareness, noting that the “vast majority" of sensations are in fact nonconscious. Co-present to conscious sensation, nonconscious sensation is continually active in the body, but due to the enormity of the intensity at work in the body at any one time, is too vast to focus upon at once. Yet how can the potential of nonconscious sensation be used to broaden access to inner-felt sensations given that my experience of switching attention had come about through chance?

In the research, I experimented with actively relocating attention by making radical shifts in focus to alternate parts or regions of the body. This enabled a greater range of intensity and sensation occurring outside of my normal awareness to be observed. Uncovering a significant exemplar for broadening the potential for inner-felt sensation, this discovery led to the realisation that nonconscious sensation is not in extreme opposition to conscious sensation, but simultaneous to attention. Conscious attention can now be understood as a type of 'tracing' of the vast amount of intensities happening within the body at any one time, the manifestation of only a fraction of the breadth of the body's potential. In the next section, a further framework to observe involuntary sensation is discussed.
2.2.9 Step Five: Gravitational forces

During the previous steps, I noticed that the weight of the body, and its relationship to falling and to gravity was a concern as it impacted upon the production of sensation. Although the use of gravity is something I have explored extensively in dance techniques as the means to encourage more efficient balance and postural alignment around the 'central axis',\textsuperscript{46} this research step investigated how gravitational forces produce traces of experiential sensation.

In the 1960s Steve Paxton brought to dance a method of perceiving the action within the body produced through gravitational force that goes largely unnoticed; where in standing and relaxing, one is able to observe the slight and subtle engagement of the body’s musculature to maintain an upright stance. Paxton coined this the "small dance",\textsuperscript{47} where in standing still with the eyes closed, focusing inwards, one is able to perceive the tiny movements in stillness. In the 'small dance', he writes:

\begin{quote}
…you're put in touch with a basic sustaining effort that goes on constantly in the body, that you don't have to be aware of. It's background movement static — you know — that you blot out with your more interesting activities, yet it's always sustaining you.\textsuperscript{48}
\end{quote}

In the 'small dance', the dancer senses the involuntary vibration of movement going on in the body as the body maintains it’s standing ‘posture’, the result of gravitational forces acting on the body’s mass, continually pulling and tugging at the body’s equilibrium where muscles flinch and twitch, re-balancing the body’s mass around an unstable centre.

Paxton’s observation that movement static is 'background' to other activity parallels Massumi’s notion that most of the body's sensation is nonconscious, occurring without effort. Importantly, it highlights the importance of 'non-doing', in Alexander terms, to notice sensation. Paxton writes:

\begin{quote}
…while you're doing the stand and feeling the 'small dance' you're aware that you're not ‘doing’ it, so, in a way, you’re watching yourself perform; watching your body perform its function. And your mind is not figuring anything out and not searching for any answers or being an active instrument but is being used as a lens to focus on certain perceptions.\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}
To experiment with the production of traces of experiential sensation through gravitational force, I began in the still stance as Paxton does in his 'small dance'. I then worked with allowing the weight of my body to fall with gravity to the point of falling over, and at the last second, returning to vertical. This initially produced movement that was exaggerated to the point of almost literally falling. As the exploration progressed, this overemphasis was pared back to a less pronounced and subtler version, where sensations produced in response to varying degrees of falling were observed. I named this exploration 'hovering', where weight suspended and then recovered at the last moment created a dynamic exploration moving in and around a state of 'off balance'. 'Hovering' illustrated that the amount of intensity and sensation produced was consistent with the degree of loss of control of body weight. At the extreme, gestural actions or reactions erupted in response. Actions such as reaching the arms in space or grabbing at the air were provoked by the danger of falling, where muscles tightened and flinched to hold the body upright. This exploration formed the basis of Section Five of The Very Still.

Gabrielle Brandstetter suggests that the moment of falling is not only about reactionary physiological responses. She claims that it is a space for 'unforeseen' movement, a moment when the body finds itself in the status of not knowing which prefigures the emancipation from ingrained traces of the memory of movement. Not a point zero of knowledge or a complete forgetting, but a virtual limbo between bodily knowledge and lack of knowledge, between control and the failure of the controlling factor. This interval holds the potential of "another movement"... 

Brandstetter goes on to specify that gravitational forces hold the potential to open the movement experience to the 'unlearnt'; moving beyond intrinsically held movement patterns or known sensations. The moment of the fall cannot be known or controlled: pure force of weight when given to gravity has its own experiential quality. Hubert Godard suggests the space opened up at the point of the fall is a point of emergence, "a certain suspension of being, body and thought".
In the research, the development of ‘hovering’ suspended body weight between what Hubert Godard describes as “two poles”, without falling entirely. He explains that there is both a release of the body needed to move in the world, yet a tonicity that supports the body. Godard sees this space between as enabling life; too much movement in either direction would see the collapse, or conversely, the constraint of the body. 'Hovering', moved between stability and collapse, experimenting with points of suspension between the two. At times, sensation was provoked in reaction to falling, but when suspension was achieved an intensive charge was felt, where as Brandstetter suggests, 'another movement' was felt as emerging. During this exploration, I came to think that the moment of suspension holds incipient tendencies, in the same way as affect. Affect and gravity both charge the body with intensive potential.

The exploration of 'hovering' opened up an interstitial space to reveal intensities, and offered an alternate method to locate experiential intensity and sensation than had been explored in the research to this point. In the first steps of this phase, intensity was established, amplified and increased, and then moved. This experiment, however, suggested that it is possible to retain focus on the inner-felt body as movement is initiated through the force of gravity. This opens up the potential to consider the complex co-presence of these elements when moving, discussed in the next section.

2.2.10 Step Six: Stillness and movement

The final step in this research phase experimented with synthesising the research findings thus far, investigating a method that calls on intensity, nonconscious sensation and gravitational force at the same time. The complexity of intensity and sensation produced make it impossible to negotiate the precise combinations of elements. In response, I used stillness as an anchor. If the complexity of movement and sensory stimuli became overwhelming and I lost focus, I returned to the still stance to reinvest my concentration back to the inner-felt body and move again. This established a fluid alternation between stillness and movement. When compared to fully enunciated and defined choreography, the movement produced felt as though it was partial, beginning then receding, but never fully realised.
On reading Ric Allsopp’s description of Lisa Nelson's dancing, I recognised a similarity between his account of Nelson's use of stillness and my experience. He writes that Nelson's use of stillness demonstrates "a presence that is part of an unfulfilled process", where her dancing eschews either the fullness of presence or the reduction of stillness to a fixed representation. Both are occurring at once, he writes, as Nelson "manages to stay between them". Allsopp's description of Nelson's dancing is useful in distinguishing between modes of stillness and movement as an either/or, where presence is felt but remains ‘unfulfilled’. This description of presence could be understood as a ‘between’ state, neither a state of emptiness and vacancy in stillness, nor a complete or full presence in or through movement. In my experience, the emergence of felt intensity as it shifted and changed made it impossible for any one moment, in stillness or movement, to be brought to full presence. New intensities were continually produced, drawing my focus to alternate possibilities. In these terms, this movement could be understood as 'trace', as the movement did not ever reach a full 'presence', but sat somewhere between presence and absence. It offered an alternative to the full 'presence', in metaphysical terms that Lepecki suggests is problematic to Derrida's notion of trace as discussed in Chapter One (1.3). Concentration on the continual emergence of movement through focusing on intensity ensured that movement was never completed, or performed as 'present', but always 'becoming'.

2.2.11 Stillness and affect

At this point in the research, I noticed that I was continually drawn to stillness. Stillness offered a rich location to track inner-felt intensity and sensation, and was useful to anchor the emergence of movement. This set the course for incorporating stillness as a strong thematic and compositional tool in the development of The Very Still.

The use of stillness in dance is theorised in André Lepecki's critique of the relationship between modernity, subjectivity and body-image in his essay, Still: On the Vibratile Microscopy of Dance. Lepecki surveys stillness in dance history through its changing use as non-dance, as a grammatical pause, or as the source of
dance, arriving at an analysis of Paxton's 'small dance', described above. He concludes that Paxton's import in the development of the small dance lies in bringing about "introspective proprioception", allowing the perceived gap between subjectivity and body-image to be reconsidered. To argue why re-negotiation between subjectivity and body-image is important, Lepecki theorises the body as having "a proprietary relationship to its subject (the body always 'belongs' to a self). This gap, between the perceived inner and outer, Lepecki writes, is problematic because the dancer experiences "feelings of disconnectedness, dissatisfaction and alienation" between the body and body-image.

In choreographic practice, the outer body image can be understood as the choreographic script or score, movement patterns or instructions the dancer reaches towards to 'fill up', but more often feels unfulfilled. Lepecki argues for the importance of stillness as the means to re-focus perception on the inner-felt body, showing how Paxton’s ‘small dance’, demonstrates stillness as containing "layers of minuscule motions" and bodily vibrations that disturb fixed positions, representations, actions, or sensations. Lepecki stresses that through the ‘small dance’ subjectivity is destabilised:

As the subject stands still, listening, sensing, smelling its own bodily vibrations, adjustments, tremors streaming through, across, within the space between core subjectivity and the surface of the body, there is nothing more than the revelation of an infinite, unlocatable space for microexploration of the multiple potential for otherwise unsensed subjectivities and corporealties one harbours.

Furthermore, vibration within stillness dislodges any fixity in time. Lepecki draws from Bergson to redefine the notion that stillness is thought to be stillness in time. He states:

…any act, as long as it continues generating an effect and an affect, remains in the present […] whatever stirs and makes us stir (a force, an affect, a memory, an image) no matter whether visible or invisible, at hand or at a distance, physical or metaphysical, linguistic or visceral, constitutes a present understood as becoming.

For Lepecki, the act of stillness can be understood to contain continued effects and affects produced through the vibratile microscopy of sensation, a ‘becoming’ as
Bergson describes—a move towards, or away from something yet to be determined. In the still stance vibration dislodges movement from fixity in the present and creates a sense of indeterminacy, shaking concepts of body action and sensation.

Similarly, the concept of affect also opens up intensive potential. As Lepecki suggests, the still body, without movement, is charged with a vibratile intensity that is awakening or enlivening potential. This mirrors Massumi’s notion of the body as containing half-sensed intensities and resonant sensation, which can also be understood as a mode of continual change and disruption or vibration in bodily experience at the deep level of embodiment.65

Lepecki’s theory, read together with Massumi, furthered my understanding of the use of stillness in practice, extending my appreciation of the role stillness plays in somatic practices as I discussed in the first part of this Chapter. I now recognise that stillness offers the means to focus on the becoming of traces of inner-felt intensities and sensations, traces that are not complete movement ‘steps’, or that only refer to past acts. Through this exploration, stillness became a significant player in the research—grounding the examination of inner-felt sensation. In stillness, intensity is already and always going on in the body: a site in which new sensations and intensities within the body can be continually felt: the trace of movement yet to come.

2.3 Conclusion

Through studio practice and analysis of theories of affect and sensation, this phase of research puts forward the notion that a ‘trace’ can be understood as an experiential sensory movement, emerging from deep within the intensive body. The experiments undertaken in this phase of research represent significant exploration of the capacity of the inner-felt body, uncovering a new way of framing broad somatic awareness and the experience of the body as intensive. This is different to the focus of a somatic practice such as ideokinesis where images are taken into the body. The research has drawn attention to the tendency for limited awareness of one’s being, and the potential of the as yet 'unsensed' as a source of choreography.
Taking a new approach to receptivity, the research has opened up ways to access inner-felt intensity proliferating within the body as a movement source, articulating a new method to use intensity as an initiator of movement action. Although the perceived instability in locating and maintaining experiential sensation can be viewed as a limitation because intensity and sensation creates continual change in the body, the research highlighted the wealth of felt intensities in the body in any given movement moment. This established that a trace of sensation in motion is never singular, but active and evolving.

This research phase has concentrated on the location of sensation in the body and how that sensation could be 'moved', but had not yet recaptured or shaped traces of experiential sensation in a choreographic form that could be returned to. In the next phase of research, the processes developed in this phase are extended to experiment with methods to recapture and choreograph traces of experiential sensation to build a choreographic vocabulary.

3 A. Thompson, 'A position at a point in Time', Writings on Dance, No.1, 1985. p. 7
5 ibid.
6 ibid.
7 ibid.
8 Pamela Matt notes in the introduction to the website http://www.ideokinesis.com that ideokinesis is not one distinct technique or method. She asserts that the practice of ideokinesis is to “sustain mental focus upon imagined actions” and through this process, “improve the coordination underlying our habits of posture and movement.” For further discussion on the technique See P. Matt, ‘Ideokinesis.com/Introduction’, Retrieved September 3rd, 2010, from <http://www.ideokinesis.com/introduction/introduction.htm>
11 ibid., p. 31
14 ibid.
15 B. Massumi, op. cit., p. 36
18 ibid.
19 Massumi, op.cit., p. 16
20 ibid., p. 15
21 ibid., p. 14
24 ibid.
25 ibid.
27 ibid.
30 ibid.
31 ibid.
33 ibid. p. 28
34 ibid.
36 ibid. p. 15
37 ibid.
38 By movement range, I mean the extent to which the body can move out through space, with energy, using the full range of the body’s physical capabilities in a skeletal or muscular sense.
39 B. Massumi, op. cit., p. 14
40 ibid.
41 M. Zournazi, op. cit.
42 ibid.
43 B. Massumi, op. cit., p. 4
44 B. Massumi, op. cit., p. 16
45 ibid.
48 ibid.
49 ibid.
51 L. Louppe, 'Singular Moving Geographies, an interview with Hubert Godard', *Writings on Dance*, Melbourne, 15, 1996, p. 19
52 ibid.
53 ibid.
55 ibid.
56 ibid.
58 ibid. pp. 338-340
59 ibid., p. 346
60 ibid., p. 336
61 ibid. p. 338
62 ibid., p. 344
63 ibid., p. 346
65 B. Massumi, op. cit., pp.13-16
CHAPTER THREE: Recapturing the trace

3.1 Introduction

In this Chapter I discuss the second phase of the research, focusing on methods to use inner-felt intensity to create choreographic material, extending the findings from the previous research phase. Informed by Deleuze's discussion of Spinoza's notion of 'affect', the research experiments with methods to attend to, and intensify, inner-felt sensation, developing the process of ‘circuiting’ to share the use of sensation between choreographer and dancer. This research is then extended to create choreographed phrases identifying the specific use of detailing defining movement, and language and description. This proved important to the process of choreographing movement material as ‘trace’. The Chapter concludes by drawing the research practice findings into dialogue with theoretical notions of choreography, proposing re-definition of the understanding of choreography in my work as a practice of 'tracing'.

3.2 Studio research

3.2.1 The process of circuiting

At this stage of the research I moved from working alone to working with dancer Phoebe Robinson. Throughout this phase my participation weaved between physical experimentation, observation, reflection and analysis. I videotaped our rehearsal sessions continuously so that I could stay immersed within the research experimentation, without needing to stop to document outcomes. This research strategy enabled practical outcomes to be tracked while simultaneously recording analytic and evaluative discussion at the same time.

Although the previous research phase had articulated methods to locate and track experiential sensation in movement, it had not yet connected movement together or formalised set movement phrases (by phrases I mean collections of movement in sequences). Unsure of how these processes could be developed or would transfer to
another dancer, I used the same experimentation as a point of departure with Phoebe present in the studio, to use Phoebe’s responses as a stimulus to guide the research.

I began the research in stillness, ‘tuning in’ to the receptive body and felt intensity to ensure that movement was emerging from the inner-felt. This method had produced the richest source of experiential intensity and sensation in the previous phase. When a heightened intensity was established in movement, I repeated it, attempting to recapture the precise feeling of the intensities and sensations. While doing this, I set Phoebe the task of watching and recapturing the movement as it evolved. I added verbal information alongside of each movement as it emerged, describing the parts of the body I was focusing upon or the feeling of the movement, to build a ‘movement-image’, as I described in Chapter One (1.2).

Several concerns immediately emerged that indicated the limitations of the method. Firstly, watching provides information about what a movement is, but it does not reveal the depth of inner-felt intensity within the body. Secondly, adding further information through verbalising did not occur immediately as the sensation was felt, but came after: I was trying to translate my felt sensation into language after the fact, distorting the complexity of how it was experienced. Thirdly, as my focus was concentrated on my own experiential sensations and emerging movement, it was difficult to pay any close attention to Phoebe and how she was responding to the task. And fourthly, while having a dancer watch and recapture movement takes away the entire responsibility for remembering movement, complete reliance on another dancer to recapture becomes problematic. If I did not remain aware of the emerging movement I was unable to recall anything of what I had performed and could not repeat the movement. This placed the emphasis on Phoebe to recapture what she had perceived, leading to a process that may stimulate or generate movement, but only as a reaction or response.

To investigate alternate methods in response to these limitations, the process was refined by situating my focus somewhere between my body and Phoebe, standing proximally to her to see her peripherally, while simultaneously keeping some of my attention directed towards my own movement. This enabled me to sense Phoebe moving and to draw on her responses, while simultaneously maintaining the focus on
the generation of action from inner-felt intensity in my body. This method stimulated a circuit of generation and regeneration, where peripheral vision, self-awareness and copying were all blended together, collapsing the distinction between who was leading the process and who was following. We named the process ‘circuiting’ when inner-felt sensation emanating from and to, and between our bodies, was interwoven as we generated and recaptured movement.

Circuiting mitigated the limitations found using ‘watching’ in the first step of the research, avoiding reliance on demonstration as a tool to transfer choreography between bodies. In my practice, I have often found ‘demonstrating’ choreography to be copied is limited due to the gap between the internal feeling of movement, and the communication of the movement experience through demonstration or verbal explanation. With 'circuiting', although focus is not entirely on one's own inner-felt body, a connection is maintained to the inner-felt as movement emerges.

The heightened sense of awareness circuiting created between Phoebe and I was extended beyond the formal process of creation. Often we would not make any distinction between when our exploration was starting, and when we were stopping, continuing to 'circuit' as we merged in and out of movement exploration while we talked about the research, or took a break and our concentration was elsewhere. Incidental movement performed between one movement repetition and another was incorporated, for example, movement performed when a dancer steps back into position to repeat a movement sequence; the minutiae of actions performed on the edge of gestures as they are formed then dissolve; or other seemingly insignificant actions such as tucking hair behind ears, sniffing, preparing to move, stretching, and so on. Involuntary movement, occurring simultaneous to the process of concentrated movement invention, could be fed into the circuit of movement. This material is not usually used as source material for choreography but proved useful to stimulate the continued circuit of movement. In keeping with Massumi's notion of nonconscious sensation, I named this involuntary action 'nonconscious movement'.

Recapturing nonconscious movement seems contrary to working from inner-felt intensity, because it superficially takes the appearance of a gesture and tries to replicate it. However, the process of recapturing draws movement to consciousness
as specificities are articulated and movement is formed and embodied. The process then generates and uncovers more inner-felt sensation as movement is defined, contributing to the continual circuit of intensity in an ongoing process.

Circuiting was a new process in my practice, offering an alternate method to generate material between choreographer and dancer. The investigation of nonconscious movement when circuiting to recapture and shape choreography, opened up a new understanding of how movement can emerge between and through more than one body. This realisation led my attention back to the notion of affect.

### 3.2.2 Circuiting and affect

In his lecture on Spinoza's concepts of an ‘idea’, and of ‘affect’, Giles Deleuze explains the notion of affect as it pertains to more than one body. According to Deleuze, Spinoza writes of three ways of understanding the relationship between ideas and affect. In the first, affect is understood as “affectio (affectio) [...] a state of a body insofar as it is subject to the action of another body.” For Deleuze, this state interplays with another body whereby

...one body which is said to act on another, and the other receives the trace of the first. Every mixture of bodies will be termed an affection. Spinoza infers from this that affectio, being defined as a mixture of bodies, indicates the nature of the modified body, the nature of the affectionate or affected body, the affection indicates the nature of the affected body much more than it does the nature of the affecting body.

In a state of affectio while subject to another body, modification occurs, but Deleuze explains that this happens through the mixture of two bodies without knowing the causes, producing an idea without causes where

...every mode of thought which represents an affection of the body [...] which is to say the mixture of one body with another body, or the trace of another body on my body will be termed an idea of affection.

Deleuze writes that the problem with affection-ideas in Spinoza’s first concept, is that they are lived by “chance encounters”. He explains how affection-ideas differ in Spinoza’s second concept of ideas and affect, where encounters with another produce
“common notions”, points of agreement, that when viewed positively, bring about the power to act in a joyous or favourable manner. He acknowledges that chance encounters may be limiting in everyday lived experience and perceived as dangerous or threatening, using the example of bad encounters with people we don’t like to make this point. However, working to open the body to affection through the trace of an encounter with another could be seen as favourable for creative practice.

However, while Deleuze’s description of the effect of ‘affection’ on bodies provides a useful way to comprehend how a process such as circuiting can be a powerful strategy to enliven affective felt-intensities in a creative process with more than one body, to force a process such as this to occur would go against how affection is understood, that is, as happening without known causes. In effect, it cannot be ‘set-up’. I cannot engage in affection from the point of knowing what makes affection occur.

Therefore, a process such as circuiting where the affect of two bodies works together, is dependent on a methodological approach, rather than a pre-determined method; an approach that makes affect possible. By making space available to be affected by the movement of another body, to meet the trace of another, I did not need to know the causes, or to make ‘points of agreement’ with Phoebe. Rather, I needed to "create the conditions" for practice, as Meg Stuart terms it.

In Stuart's practice, importance is given to the atmosphere within the studio, mindful of how it impacts upon the process. She cites the “moments when the pressure is off” as potential for something to emerge that is not pre-determined. This is consistent with the development of 'circuiting' as a method to take the attention away from the direct production of movement and to allow the possibility of the unforeseen. This also echoes the process of 'non-doing' in the Alexander Technique where the point of emergence is prolonged, without being presumptuous about what might materialise.

Circuiting uncovered a new methodological approach in my practice. In retrospect, I see this approach to process as mirroring the theme of the research itself — a tracing of movement. By not being beholden to the expectation of a certain outcome, the moment when movement emerges from the body was elongated, and in the space
between beginning and emergence, ‘traces’ of bodily sensation could be recognised using the affective circuiting of bodily intensities.

Although circuiting uncovered a new method to generate movement in my practice, the question remained as to how this method could be extended to recapture movement. If I wanted to recapture movement through circuiting, would I need to know the causes of the movement — would the process need to embrace Spinoza’s second concept of ideas and affect, where encounters with another bring about ‘points of agreement’ of the cause. Or could I avoid causes, origins and referents and remain within a mode of sensing the affection of Phoebe’s movement as it circuited through my body to hers, and back to mine again. Could this be used as a generative process that also recaptures and stabilises movement?

To explore how circuiting can be extended to recapture movement that can be shaped and remembered, the research investigated methods to create choreographic phrase material. Two important elements were uncovered in the process: detailing and defining movement, and the use of language and description. Each of these aspects of practice occurred together within the process. For the purposes of this dissertation, in the next section, and the following one, I have separated them to discuss each area.

3.2.3 Recapturing movement: detail and definition

The process of recapturing inner-felt intensity while circuiting uncovered several difficulties, the first of which was the problem of retaining movement. Too much movement generated too quickly was impossible to recapture. Complicated co-ordinations and weight shifts became difficult to repeat or define, challenging our ability to catch and remember precise detail. When circuiting, the organisation of weight and body parts seemed to have a natural flow and sequence, but when trying to return to this movement, slight differences in weight placement would feel foreign, making it impossible to regain the original sensation. As occurred in the previous phase, too much energy overrode inner-felt intensity. When energy increased and overwhelmed concentration on intensity was lost.
The duration of movements also limited the retention of focus on inner-felt intensity. In extended movements the organisation of energy seemed to drive the continuation of the movement, negating the possibility of recalling felt intensities; the movement pattern could be remembered but not the experience of the inner-felt body. With shorter movements focus could be immersed in both more easily — a degree of attention to the movement as it emerged, coupled with a level of consciousness about how the movement 'felt'. Too much absorption in conscious attention to inner-felt detail stymied the flow.

Further problems developed when concentrating on re-capturing complex movement patterns. Repetition exaggerated movement to the point of over enunciation. Movement became over articulated, emphasising details that were not part of the movement as it was originally performed. Finding a balance between attention to inner-felt intensity while simultaneously recapturing movement so that it could be remembered proved difficult.

Rather than perceived difficulties hindering the process, the breaks, gaps, or absences in the experiential or cognitive understanding of movement as it was recaptured became a point of creative leverage in further explorations. When tracing back through recaptured movement and revisiting parts of the action, not every aspect of the movement was defined because the precise detail could not be remembered. For example, questions emerged, such as: “can it go, or did it go, it went drop, or did it go back, drop?” Through articulating felt possibilities, rather than exact detail, the specificity of the movement evolved as it was formed. Gaps were claimed as potential. In the example, drop, or back drop — one movement or two — the movement, back, may not have been performed in the first instance, but through the perceived gap, an opening occurred for further exploration of what had been only been approximated as a possible movement in the sequence.

In a second experiment, I wondered what it would be like to perform something of the ‘feeling’ of the movement, rather than try to define precise details, exact pathways or gestures. When discussing this point, Phoebe commented that
...it is interesting that thing of how things happen spontaneously, to find it, to re-do the movement exactly the same, is actually less like it than when you just pretend to do it. In trying to get each detail right you are never going to get it, because when you first did it you weren't thinking about it... .

Phoebe makes the point that trying to recapture movement exactly is impossible, because the movement was never really ‘known’ when it was first performed. The act of ‘pretending’ or acting as if repetition is possible, relies on an overall impression, buoying the return to movement and mitigating the need for specific detail. This process was used as the means to establish a 'rough shape', sketching out phrases by establishing markers, leaving movement relatively open and retaining a level of uncertainty in the detail of movement.

Can these methods be understood as ‘tracing’? In the first experiments, the process of defining movement by examining detail may be considered tracing. Attempting to define an experiential sensation can never arrive at precise sensation; it can only uncover a trace of sensation that leads to more sensations. Differently, in the second method, ‘pretending’ could be said to be ‘tracing’, if tracing is defined as reliving a past act, but similarly, it attempts to return to sensations that cannot be wholly relived. Attempting to actualise sensation in the body through physical or imagistic means inevitably leads to other intensities and sensations.

This turned my attention back to Brian Massumi’s assertion that bodily intensity produces more and more intensity through a process of resonation. This idea emphasises that sensation constantly changes, where intensity is not localised within the body and resonant action creates a trail of intensity that mixes with other felt-intensities. Recapturing to create a sequence of movement attempts to establish the same movement, and therefore, associated sensations, but any sensation felt will be experienced differently on repetition. This also occurs as movement is shaped, altered and changed as further detail is added, subtracted or emerges through the process. To examine one movement intently opens up felt intensity within and between movements in a ripple effect, as the edges of one movement meets or overlaps with the next in a sequence. Movement affects other movement. It is an ongoing process that proliferates intensity in the moving body at any one time continuing ad-infinitum.
3.2.4 Recapturing movement: language and description

When analysing the process of recapturing and detailing movement through the methods outlined above, the use of specific language was an important feature of the method. Language was used as a prompt to remember a movement or a phrase of movement. It was a tool to identify gestures, phrases or sections of choreography, where names became associated with choreography without being accurately descriptive of it, and as the means to define the attributes of the movement. For one movement in a sequence, a complex bodily movement was defined as *knee*, the only word we used.

The movement originated from the idea of ‘growing’ the knee into space. To perform the movement, the underlying image of the bone growing requires the dancer to sense and direct that part of the body in movement. As the knee moved out into space and the body was disrupted and dislodged, resonant movement rippled across the torso as the body righted itself back onto two legs. A similar occurrence was observed in another movement 'femur', where the femur bone rotated inwards causing a ripple of action through the spine, the shoulders to twist and the torso to 'flick', shocked into action as the body rebounded. In these movements, recognisable action appears in areas of the body other than the originating location. Although only one body part is used to direct the action, the whole body is involved. When I watched these movements, my impression was of something much more physically complicated and affecting than ‘knee’ or ‘femur’ would suggest. A strong kinaesthetic effect was created from the use of skeletal references to trigger movement.

To describe in detail everything at work in Phoebe’s body as she performed these movements was found to be unnecessary. When the action was performed the rest of the body followed. Articulating more detail other than the specific anatomical origin of the movement in the body and the direction of the action, or describing the resonant movement in other parts of the body would affect the performance of it. Too much explanation would force the movement of the whole body into a shaped construction that would draw conscious attention to the uncontrolled parts of the body, lessening the resonant affect of the movement.
Stephen Di Benetto explains that language becomes a limiting factor in the description of bodily sensation. He writes:

Part of the problem of trying to consider the operations of the senses in performance is the role of language as the limiting function in our description of, or even perception of, artistic experience. Language or words exist to provide the conscious filtering of experience into communication. Right away we have a problem – filtering. The mere use of language already filters the broad range of stimuli into a cognitive and linguistic framework – a framework that subscribes to the rules of semiotics and cultural socialization – a world that is different from the realm of the senses in which bodily perception rules.\textsuperscript{12}

As Di Benetto notes, language is problematic because inner-felt sensations are not easily translated or described, nor are they precise or exact in the first instance. In addition, encapsulating sensation in language becomes impossible because movement sensation cannot be held still to pinpoint exact, repeatable sensations that can be identified or described. To try to describe sensation would be to force bodily experience into a framework that may misinterpret that experience. If resonant intensities and sensations are multiple within movement, then it is not possible to describe everything about choreography given there may be only a minimal amount of nameable movement sensations recognised within the enormity of intensity going on in the body at any one time. The whole body affect of movement intensity itself within the knee movement, for example, remained mysterious and difficult to explain, and finally unnecessary to the performance of the movement. By leaving movement attributes felt, but unarticulated in language, the scope for how the material might be re-experienced remained open for further exploration.

However, using language to describe movement is a practical function of practice. How do we talk about movement, communicate or discuss movement without language? The use of language in the research as a tool to recapture movement highlighted how language plays on the ‘presence’ of movement. That is, it draws attention to the body and therefore highlights some aspects of the body in movement and not others. In our discussion about articulating movement in language, Phoebe reminded me that my perception of the movement, the external choreographic perspective, would not be something that she would be aware of, and that she would take the direction ‘knee’ for example, at face value.\textsuperscript{13} In doing so, she would perform
the direction of the movement unaware of any effect this might have for the viewer, or the ways in which it could be interpreted or described when perceived externally to her body.

I reasoned that avoiding over articulation or description would lessen the imposition of pre-determined experiential possibilities on Phoebe’s performance. I wanted to ensure that Phoebe had references to use without hampering her experience of the movement through restrictions brought about by overly defining the movement. I wanted to enable the potential for experiential exchange between the viewer and the dancer through the movement of the body, rather than defining meaningful corporeal representations, thereby resisting the description of movement and the articulation and interpretation of every gesture as this or that.

My resistance to overt movement description and definition favoured methods to ‘signpost’ parameters for movement that ensured choreography is permeable to the production of fluctuating and variable inner-felt intensities and sensations in the moment of performance. This opened up the question of how the act of choreography can be understood in my practice. If to create choreography is no longer purely, or literally the ‘writing’ of inviolable figurative forms as the choreographic act is commonly known, can it still be understood as choreography?

3.3 Trace and the act of choreography

In Laurence Louppe’s essay on choreographic notation, she suggests: “At its source, the movement of contemporary dance is multiple: formless, it reposes in the infinite sweep of its possible germinations.” Louppe’s remarks propose a challenge to choreography by suggesting that ‘formlessness’ is requisite to dance. In my research, the resistance to too much detail in the process of recapturing allowed the space for movement to exceed beyond definition, giving room to the body to move through action without determining every precise aspect. This could be a move to formlessness as Louppe describes. However, the containment of certain choreographic markers, step with the right foot, extend the arm, turn, drop under, for example, could also be interpreted as limitations to ‘formlessness’, a restriction to further development.
Loupee writes that, "To compose, to create in dance, is designated in French by the verb *écrire*, to write."¹⁵ Importantly, in her analysis of the etymology of the term ‘choreography’, she states: “To choreograph is, originally, to trace or to note down dance. This is the meaning that Feuillet, the inventor of the word assigns it.”¹⁶ Loupee remarks that since Feuillet, the term 'choreography' has been reassigned to describe the act of composing dance, instead of notating dance. She notes that

...to designate the creator of dance, the West has favoured the word that refers to the presence of the scribe within, the one who measures, consigns, registers, and above all archives. This presence stems from an irreversible inheritance that contemporary dance finds forever in its possession, in its very practice and in its concepts that designate it, despite its will for a clean break, despite its aspiration to liberty and independence with respect to the written.¹⁷

Loupee's explanation of the historical understanding of the term 'choreography' and its subsequent assignation to the process of making dances, is inspirational in re-thinking the act as Feuillet proposed, to 'trace' and to 'note', rather than to 'write'. The terms ‘trace’ and to an extent, ‘note’, both imply derivation, or extraction of only parts or aspects, while 'write', evokes a sense of compositional precision, permanence and definition. Could the original understanding of the term 'choreography' be reinstated to re-define the role of choreographer as one who 'traces', or 'notes', and in doing so, open the possibilities for the choreographer to shape movement in alternate ways?

Loupee states that the contemporary choreographer is involved in forms of making that do not necessarily involve a written nomenclature. She writes that concern is with the

...transformation of latent motor organizations, of the time and space that they contain, and of the play of exchange between these interior polyphonies and the objective spatio-temporal givens with which, among other things, the act confronts them. It is therefore above all a matter of an interior score, moving and intimate.¹⁸

The focus upon the interior in Loupee's explanation of the elements at play in choreography re-focuses choreography from the written figure composed by externally 'designing' movement, to elements internal to the body. She notes that the
interior score is "organic, non-figurative writing, a 'splashing'" \(^{19}\) where 'splashing' can be understood to have a quality of motility, of the interior "score within all of us". \(^{20}\) Louppe names "the ensemble of breathings, pulsations, emotive discharges or mass displacements which are focused on our bodies" \(^{21}\) as the material of choreography. This moves the focus of choreography on the writing of movement as set 'figures', to the articulation of the complexity of inner-felt bodily experience.

Louppe's observations challenged my understanding of the poetics of the contemporary choreographic act, a process that extends beyond the establishment of a pure vocabulary. Louppe's proposes that choreography, although defined, does not wholly depend on detail, writing that according to Conté, the choreographic notator, "movement has an essential truth that does not depend on the details of configuration." \(^{22}\) This brings to mind the notion that despite formal organisation, movement is co-present to inscription. For Louppe, choreography and movement can be thought as co-present, where “the sign has rejoined the necessity of movement, its profound reality.” \(^{23}\) The gap between what is 'signed' through the figure and what is excessive of the figure is co-dependent: movement and referent become one.

If choreography is not intended to create the pure sign, then the purpose of choreography can now be understood to inscribe something other, which Louppe invokes in another formulation:

> The inscription of movement would be memory itself, the shadow cast by experience. It would be the seismography of an intimate unfurling. As the wave is born from another wave, so the body alone can decipher the echoes of a resonance that returns, like a faded percussion in the material of paper, a rhythm that need only be awaked. \(^{24}\)

Here Louppe refers to the process of notating and ‘reading’ choreographic notation from paper, but this idea also supports the notion that devising and performing choreographed movement are also processes that envelop, and embed, memory and experiential phenomena. Louppe eloquently surmises how choreography, in these terms, becomes "the tracing of what the letter does not say, but where another text shows through, another reading of living substance." \(^{25}\)
In this research phase, with Louppe, I wanted to emphasise the 'substance' of the choreographic form beyond the superficial appearance of a surface choreographic representation. Louppe’s writing developed my understanding of how a choreographed movement ‘trace’ can be conceptualised as holding openings to what is not directly shown, but to phenomena beyond movement definition.

The practice of choreography can now be understood as ‘tracing’, evoking phenomena shown through the transparency of the choreographic figure, moving the emphasis from that figure as the signifier, to the substance within it. The choreographic form becomes a ‘tracing’ of the inner-felt world of the experiential encapsulated within, and opening out beyond its form — a living, breathing world of experiential alterity.

3.4 Conclusion

This phase of research articulated new processes to recapture experiential sensation, re-casting the act of choreography from an emphasis on written inscription to a process of 'tracing'. Beginning the process by 'circuiting' was an important finding, developing a method to open up affect as active and present within the process. This discovery was significant in changing the creative focus in my practice from the immediacy of 'making' movement to the protracted 'emergence' of movement, enabling experiential attributes beyond those obvious to conscious attention to be incorporated in the process. 'Circuiting' was found to offer an alternate, centralised choreographic method that combines participant responses and avoids the two-step process of inventing movement then setting that movement ‘on’ a dancer.

The creation of movement phrases through processes that ‘note’ details as the means to ‘trace’ experiential sensation, uncovered that leaving some aspects of choreography open, or unarticulated in the process of detailing and defining movement, is important to ensure movement forms are not considered 'complete'. The research articulated how the specific use of language triggers experiential sensation, without closing off further sensory possibilities. The practice of devising movement by attending to the specificity of each detail re-interprets the practice of choreography as Louppe invokes
in her discussion of choreographic notation, where movement forms resonate with the inner-felt world that seeds its production.

In the research thus far, choreography can be understood as 'tracing' aspects of movement, where the inner-felt experiential sensation of movement is fore-grounded. Through devising and articulating methods to choreograph using a light handed approach, the research established methods to trace experiential intensities and sensation without extensive definition, challenging the notion that recapturing inscribes or closes choreographic forms as written.

2 ibid.
3 ibid.
4 ibid.
5 ibid.
6 ibid.
8 ibid.
9 Studio conversation August 15th, 2008
10 ibid.
13 Studio conversation, August 15th, 2008
15 ibid., p. 14
16 ibid.
17 ibid.
18 ibid., pp. 15-16
19 ibid., p. 16
20 ibid.
21 ibid.
22 ibid., p. 24
23 ibid.
24 ibid.
25 ibid., p. 16
4.1 Introduction

The third research phase, being more extensive is broken into two parts; the first is examined in this Chapter, and the second in Chapter Five.

This phase follows the investigation of the previous research phase, examining processes to ‘trace’ movement. It considers how the fifteen short movement sequences created in the previous phase, some only thirty seconds long, can be extended and developed into a larger body of choreography while retaining traces of experiential sensation in further manipulations.

The first part of the phase concentrates on two research threads: 'tracing' pre-existing choreography; and exploring strategies to retrace movement material using digital video. Problems arising from this research led to a discussion of theory offered by Phillip B. Zarrilli, to develop an account of the relationship between embodiment, movement scores and the production of experiential sensations in the research. Through analysis of Zarrilli’s theory and reflection on studio practice, the groundwork is established for the second part of this research phase discussed in Chapter Five.

4.2 Studio research

4.2.1 Tracing pre-existing choreographic scores

In this research phase task based explorations were used as a method to strategically 'set-up' research problems; shifting the emphasis from the intuitive exploration that had guided the previous phases. The change came about through a break of several months between the previous research phase and this one. At the conclusion of that phase, we had established a substantial body of choreography that Phoebe could perform from memory. To continue with the development of The Very Still, one option may have been to reconstruct the phrases and assemble them together through
extending, manipulating and organising the material, as I may have done in my practice previous to this research. However, the break presented the opportunity to explore alternate methods.

To experiment with the phrases I set up a series of tasks asking Phoebe to ‘trace’ the material, using any of the sequences as she remembered them. I took the same approach as I had in the second phase and limited my explanation of what I expected ‘tracing’ to be, framing the instruction as simply as possible to avoid stating pre-conceived approaches and narrowing potential outcomes. As I watched Phoebe ‘tracing’ the phrases, movement appeared to evolve in 'spurts', at times disjointed. Small fragments of recognisable gestures or actions appeared separately, in isolation, rather than in sequence, or mixed together in different combinations. The choreography was only partially realised, 'half-performed', when compared with the original.

Although the task produced movement that appeared as ‘traces’ of choreography because it shared the quality of a ‘trace’ as a partial attribute, my immediate concern was that the task was too broad and not specific enough to hone in on the specificity of trace as experiential sensation. I questioned how this method produced anything more than an improvisation on the material. Although, as I watched, I sensed there was something particular in Phoebe's performance that the task had provoked. To understand what this was, and how to develop the process further, I asked Phoebe if she perceived a difference between tracing choreography and improvising.

In our discussion, Phoebe noted a marked difference between improvising and tracing. She explained that her response was a 'tracing' of the choreography, because she would "make it up a bit more, rather than wait for it," if she were improvising. Rather than inventing movement from, or in response to the original phrases, she focused on returning to the original movement through three foci. First, she sensed and enacted the pattern of the movement; second, she referred to the underlying movement imagery and exploration that informed the conception of the movement, or both together. She described the latter approach as re-entering the creative process, citing as an example: "I remember one day something about pushing the elbow forward", where referring to the quality of ‘pushing’ the elbow became a way to
trace again within the body for the sensation of the movement. For Phoebe, the underlying sensory exploration was useful as a method to trigger her embodied movement memory, aiding in hitting 'pockets' that would open up; where from one movement more movements in a sequence would unfurl.

The third aspect of Phoebe’s approach came about through her interpretation of the task of tracing as an intention to return to the original choreography, as if it was immutable. This was an unexpected outcome. Treating the material as if it was solid forced movement traces to arise as it was impossible for Phoebe to remember and re-perform complete movements.

As I mentioned earlier, when I set up the experiment, I did not define what ‘tracing’ was, nor did I make explicit an assumption that the choreographic phrases Phoebe was ‘tracing’ were ‘finished’ or complete. In my mind, the choreography was ‘traces’ of choreographic movement, rather than wholly defined movement. However, the fascinating aspect of this process was Phoebe’s response to the task by returning to the choreography ‘as if’ it was completed. From the dancer’s perspective, this seems to contradict the notion that the choreography is unstable. Yet, it can be inferred that degrees of ‘completeness’ enable a return to certain choreographic signposts or markers that are simultaneously unstable, or retain the possibility for subjective interpretation.

The process of ‘tracing’ pre-determined choreography that retains a degree of ‘openness’ allows space for further traces of traces to be uncovered. However, for this movement to be felt as a trace, it was necessary for a type of ‘layering’ to be part of the process. Tracing a trace assumes that a traces already exists. ‘Tracing’ therefore, could be described as a form of ‘writing over’ what was already there. I imagine this, in visual terms, as 'drawing over a drawing' where the first drawing still shows through. An example cited in British Theatre Director Tim Etchell’s book Certain Fragments furthered my understanding of how this process can be understood in relation to the embodied process of performance.

Etchells’ describes watching dancer Wendy Houston perform a monologue made from movement and spoken word, where “she asks for the audience to call out
years—anything from 1959 to the present day. Although Houston’s own performance directions or intentions are not documented in Etchells’ account of her performance, the 'years' she returns to can be assumed to trigger Houston’s recall of past actions or events. Watching her perform this monologue, Etchells recounts:

The act we are watching is precisely a struggle - a dance that knows it cannot ever get back to the past but which knows that the past can live (changed) in the present by an effort of will.

Furthermore, Etchells describes how this act of recall manifests. He writes that Houston’s performance was made up of

...half-formed gestures of some dance that she hasn’t yet made, a jumble of phrases that she will dance in the future but which for now are only a body’s way of thinking aloud.

This description of her bodily thinking, the effort and work to engage with material drawn from another point in time, presents a strong example of dance as residual embodied experience inscribed within the body and memory at play 'behind' performance. I felt this 'behind' in Phoebe’s response to the task of tracing the phrases. The term 'behind' became a useful way to identify this quality of traced choreography where 'thinking' of the movement patterns, an interior conjuring up of movement, elicited movement reactions felt as emanating from 'behind' the surface appearance of the body, from the depth of the body as it moved through space. This was similar to Etchells’ discussion of Houston's performance. It appeared that Phoebe was 'thinking' of the movement but not fully 'performing' the movement.

In the next section I discuss the key elements found to be at play in the practice of 'tracing', that enable the choreography to be sensed as 'behind' the dancer's performance, separated from the performer and only partially present.

4.2.2 Trace, disassociation and remembering

On analysis of Phoebe's tracing, two factors were important to the process: 'disassociation' and modes of remembering. The first, 'disassociation', occurred through the break between the period of research when Phoebe learnt the
choreography and this phase. Through returning to the choreography some months after it was made, the lapse of time forced a literal struggle to perform the forgotten movement. This showed a loss of connection to the choreography. Not a complete severing, but a degree of distancing; making it difficult to remember.

The second element, 'remembering' was specifically used in the task of tracing where disassociation forced the active use of memory. Remembering became an activity, a task, and a method to re-connect to choreography, as distinct from conjuring up specific recollections about the experience of performing choreography and then using those to create a new version. My intent was to use remembering as a process to revive choreography purely as it is remembered in the immediacy of the task, without concern to remake the original movement.

‘Tracing’, enabled an immediate, direct response to choreography ‘disassociated’ from the performer, while ensuring that the difficulty of performing movement when partially forgotten and ‘under rehearsed’ was undertaken freely. In this way ‘traces’ of choreography are entirely the dancer’s response, without question to the accuracy or otherwise of their likeness to the original choreography. 'Tracing' exposes the embodied residual movement sensation of choreography as recalled by the dancer.

However, the key finding of this experiment — that degrees of disassociation are significant in uncovering the experiential sensation of choreography within the body of the dancer — was predicated on the timing of the exploration within the chronology of the research. If this experiment was to be developed as a repeatable strategy, how could the lapse in time between learning and remembering the choreography be taken into account? If we had undertaken this experiment at another time in the research, Phoebe’s memory of, and familiarity with the material would be different. This raises the question of how a strategy such as this can be 'set-up' within a choreographic process. At the extremes, too much familiarity with the material would make reproducing the movement relatively easy to achieve, and too little, would diminish any hope of remembering the movement. This problem provoked the next set of investigations where alternate methods are examined to disassociate choreography from the body of the dancer.
4.2.3 Tracing the trace

This group of experiments began by watching the videotaped recording of Phoebe tracing, then selecting several small sections to recapture from the tape. By doing so, I aimed to use the tape as a way to experiment with tracing where Phoebe would be using an alternate source of the original choreography. Phoebe would in effect be 'tracing the trace' from the tape. My aim was two-fold. First, as the dancer’s familiarity and experience of choreography changes depending on the stage of the choreographic process, I saw the use of mediatised choreography as a way to experiment with a version that Phoebe didn’t know and had never learnt, so that her memory of the original choreography would not directly impact upon the task as it had in the previous step. Second, I saw this as a way to extend the findings of the first research step and discover more about how versions of choreography, apart from the ‘original’, might produce alternate traces of experiential sensations in the body of the dancer.

Using the tape raised several issues. The first was the use of mediatised material itself; a flat, slightly blurry, digitised figure enveloped in light and shade. On the tape, clarity of detail was difficult to see, and the fact of Phoebe needing to face the image of herself on tape and mirror the action — creating an oscillation between the left and right sides of her body — brought about problems of transference. This raised the question of what aspects of movement can be perceived and recaptured from recorded movement. Given the noticeable differences between Phoebe tracing 'live', and the material on the tape, the question became: what were we seeking to trace using this material that appears as markedly different from the original?

This question could be answered through a number of approaches. The first would be to assume that the tape, by virtue of the fact that it was a document of Phoebe’s tracings, was already a trace of the original movement. Therefore, all we needed to do was recreate the movement verbatim from the tape. However, when we initially set about doing this, the process raised further issues.

After watching the tape over and over to analyse, practice and recapture each part of the movement, Phoebe could easily perform the movement pattern. The shape of the
movement captured on tape was recreated, but there was no 'behind', or sense of underlying movement sensations. Learning the material from the tape risked solidifying the movement, losing focus on felt intensity or ‘in-the-moment’ aggregation of fleeting resonances, making the material no longer trace.

I then considered another approach, which was to select aspects of the movement to recapture: particular gestures, combinations of movement or qualitative nuances as a way to emphasise the movement as residual, broken and fragmented. After experimenting with using the tape in this way, I came to the realisation that focusing on these attributes alone brought about a new version of the movement, a variation on the tape that emphasised particular details. While this may lead to interesting avenues of creative exploration in trace as difference it did not bring about the perceived 'behind' I had felt in the first experiment.

At the same time, I noticed that I was not only looking at the tape itself, but also inadvertently including my embodied memory of the choreography; the feeling of performing the movement as we worked with the tape. As I watched, I remembered the original material; my experience of Phoebe performing the experiment ‘live’; and the moments of surprise as Phoebe produced different movement combinations. These perspectives played with and against the tracings captured on the tape. Recapturing becoming an interaction of my inner-felt sense of the movement, and my perception. This moved the recording from being the sole source, to the inclusion of other experiences.

In addition, a further problem was uncovered while watching the tape. I noticed a marked sense of hesitancy, a particular sense of delay in the timing of the movement. This had come about because in the first experiment, Phoebe was re-connecting with movement patterns she had forgotten, feeling her way into the movement again, literally hesitating as she eked out the choreography from memory. Trying to recapture this sense of timing was extremely difficult because the gestures, co-ordinations and sense of delay between movements were radically different in the tracings on the tape compared with the original. The analysis needed to get the timing precisely the same as the tape would make the material, in the end, very well known and remembered. There would no longer be any sense of hesitancy or disassociation;
we would simply be constructing another choreography that could, in the end, be easily performed.

At this point, strategies using mediatised tracings did not yet evoke the same sense of experiential sensations at play 'behind' the choreography felt in the first experiment. I had intended for the movement to remain disassociated, but concluded that although the tape provided a point of difference, recapturing the material enlivened the fullness of those differences in a new pathway. Without another strategy to circumvent recapturing and to avoid bringing the 'full' movement to fruition, we would simply be recapturing a variation rather than traces of experiential sensation of the choreography. This outcome brought to mind the problem articulated in my discussion of Derrida's assertion that 'variations' risk retaining the presence of origins rather than trace, outlined in Chapter One (1.4.1). In this experiment, remaking a variation brought the entire movement pattern to 'presence', creating a solid movement pathway. As Derrida had suggested, this would not bring about 'trace'.

And yet, an unexpected moment raised a further possibility. As Phoebe was rehearsing the tracings on the tape she slipped back to the original version, intercutting the original into the traced version. This was a mistake, but through a lapse in memory, or a habitual response, the original asserted its presence within her performance, becoming the trace behind the tracings. This brought about a key revelation in the research.

In Phoebe’s slippage between different versions, multiple embodied experiences of the choreography coalesced. More than one version of the choreography was recalled: the original and the mediatised tracings were at play together. This showed how traced choreography could be made from melding different variations and embodied memories, invoking the possibility of complicated and intricate relationships between experiences of choreographies within the body of the dancer.

In retrospect, my experience of watching the tape could also be understood as a mixture of remembered kinaesthetic responses at play. Although at the time this stood out as significant, exemplifying the complex imbrication of memory, sensation and kinaesthetic experience felt when 'watching' movement, I did not follow this
trajectory practically, or explore how this finding contributes to, and impacts upon the development of processes to trace choreography. Instead, I concentrated on Phoebe’s responses, drawing the conclusion that learning movement from the tape would not lead to uncovering experiential sensation or to reveal more about how choreography can be understood as situated ‘behind’ the body of the dancer.

However, this research drew attention to the myriad of possible sensory evocations that can be enlivened through altering the representation of choreography. Importantly, it also showed that for disassociation to provoke experiential sensation of choreography, the dancer needed to have deeply embodied intrinsic experience of movement. This was most clearly illustrated in our first experiment where Phoebe drew on her embodied memory of the choreography to trace the movement. The method of tracing from the videotape was less successful because Phoebe had little direct experience of the movement to reference, and therefore, could not produce the same experiential sensation 'behind' the movement. This uncovered that degrees of disassociation at the same time as deeply held experience of choreography are key to provoking experiential sensation when tracing movement.

4.3 Embodiment and the choreographic score

To inform my understanding of the complex relationship between choreography and the dancer's experiential embodiment of choreography, I turned to a theoretical source in the form of an essay by Phillip B. Zarrilli, *Senses and silence in actor training and performance.* Although concerned with acting, Zarrilli’s theory is relevant to the research as it offers a framework to consider the relationship between what Zarrilli terms the performance ‘score’ on the one hand, and the actor’s performance of, and experiential embodiment of the ‘score’ on the other. Zarrilli uses the term ‘score’ to refer to the “set of actions/tasks immediately at hand […] the qualities and constraints of the aesthetic conventions received or constructed for that particular performance.”

This definition parallels my use of ‘movement-images’ to name the collection of movements that make up the pathways or physical instructions, images and metaphors followed by the dancer. Therefore, in further use of the term 'score', I am referring to the movement directions and instructions the dancer follows in the same way Zarilli describes.
To explain how a score is ‘approached’ in performance, Zarrilli uses the term ‘thematised’ as a way to identify specific content, ideas or directions set out for the actor to perform. He terms this score the "aesthetic 'outer' body". In my practice, I understand the thematised 'aesthetic outer body' to be the chosen qualities or instructions and directions contained in a movement-image, such as: *step out to the left as if avoiding something on the floor, turn the head to the right sharply, dip the chest by collapsing the sternum and squash down through the right side.* In Zarilli’s theory, this outer body or score is reached towards and inhabited through the "aesthetic' inner body-mind".

Zarilli’s concept of the ‘aesthetic inner body-mind’ is formulated through his adoption and extension of phenomenology, borrowing from post-Merleau-Ponty theorist Drew Leder’s notion of the “lived body”. In Leder’s theory, the ‘lived body’ in everyday life is largely absent and forgotten as we focus upon the external world of action and ideas. Comprised of two bodies — the "'ecstatic' surface body" and the "'recessive' visceral body", Zarrilli explains how the ordinary experience of the surface and recessive body can be thought as absent. He writes that “the body constitutes a null point in our perceptual field, we experience from the body”, therefore, we move in the world without needing to consciously attend to every aspect of our body's functions.

In these terms, I do not need to focus on each minute action of my hands, for example, as I type on this keyboard. The body is forgotten as we reach out into the world through the senses, using proprioception as a guide. This disappearance also happens in the recessive body, which Zarrilli explains as "characterized by interoception", where the viscera recede from consciousness and disappear, as is the case for functions such as digestion. Zarrilli writes that when brought together, the “normative disappearance of both surface and recessive bodies is reversed when we experience pain or dysfunction.” That is, in everyday normal activity, we do not need to concentrate on or attend to our body unless we are drawn to it, or we choose to, which is the case for Zarilli’s ‘aesthetic inner body-mind’.
Zarrilli uses the term ‘aesthetic’ to describe the ‘inner body-mind’ because unlike pain or dysfunction, the work of consciously attending to the body, of noticing how the body is engaged in performance, is an aesthetic one. He uses the example of yoga to show how this practice

… allows for a shift in one’s experience of the “body” and “mind” aspects from their gross separation, marked by the body’s constant disappearance, to a much subtler, dialectical engagement of body-in-mind and mind-in-body.16

Similarly, in choreographic practice, I rehearse a thematised movement score by engaging my ‘inner body-mind’ in relation to the aesthetics of the movement score. I inhabit the choreographed movement score by placing my attention between, and to, both my body and the realisation of the prescribed movement.

Zarrilli writes that this practice of attending to an external score engages the "physical body and attention (mind) in cultivating and attuning both to subtle levels of experience and awareness."17 This echoes the practice of 'attending' to the body in release and ideokinetic practices. In these practices positions such as constructive rest are used to focus upon the inner-felt body, developing awareness of one’s patterns of use, movement preferences or inhibitions. However, in these positions, movement is not the goal per se. Instead, the distraction of accomplishing a particular movement is removed and attention is given to the feeling state of the body.

I contend, with Zarilli, that movement actions can be approached in the same way as a still position such as constructive rest. However, performing a movement score is different because a complexity of ideas, intentions and movements are processed, making it a complicated negotiation between the score and the inner-felt body at the same time. In Zarilli’s theory, this is complicated by the assertion that multiple bodies are involved in the process: the outer body or score; the 'aesthetic' inner body-mind; together with Leder’s notion of the surface and recessive bodies, four bodies bound up in "modulation or oscillation"18 where attention, awareness and disappearance to and of the body shift and change.

Zarrilli explains this shifting play between the performer’s bodies as a "organic/perceptual circuit".19 Circulation occurs, for example, when focusing upon
the outer aesthetic body to the point of forgetting the inner-felt body; or, focusing too intently on the feeling of the inner ‘aesthetic mind-body’, draws attention away from the performance score and the next movement in the sequence is at risk of being forgotten. Zarrilli proposes that in performance the actor "operates with a ‘dual consciousness’: in a constant modulation of the four bodies with all their ambiguities and tendencies, always ideally thematizing the unfolding score.”

Zarrilli’s theorisation of the modulation and ‘circuiting’ of the multiple bodies at play within acting opens up the possibility to consider the balance, interplay and oscillation between attention to the inner-felt body and the external performance score. If modulation is possible, degrees of attention to the score and the embodiment of the score can be re-imagined. However, while holding the promise of drawing attention to inner-felt experiential sensation necessary to my goal of creating movement as 'trace', it is further complicated by Zarilli’s assertion that through rehearsal and performance the score changes, becoming what he terms, ‘intrinsic’.21

Using the example of a pose taken from an Indian martial art, Zarilli explains that mastery of the pose leads to what was "extrinsic becoming intrinsic and ‘intuitive’".22 This happens, he explains, because incorporating a new movement skill creates proficiency so that intuitive adjustment happens as one moves and the score seems to disappear from consciousness.23 Over time, through practice and skill acquisition, the score becomes 'second-nature' as proprioception takes over; one does not need to constantly attend to the action required. Like any known complex movement skill such as walking or bike riding, movement seems to happen automatically.

In this phase of research, a shifting internal/external modulation between score and embodiment was demonstrated in the first experiment where the original choreography became a string of partial fragments. The score had changed, although still intrinsically embodied. In the second experiment, the choreography was placed extrinsic to the body through the means of digital video. Phoebe’s slippage between the tracings captured on tape and the original version drew the original, intrinsic movement back into focus, even though her attention was directed externally to the new version. In this instance, the original movement patterns had become intrinsic, imprinted upon proprioception; but then resurfaced, called up, albeit by mistake.
These experiments uncovered the potential to change the focus on choreography by 'thematising' the choreography in different ways to provoke experiential sensations. In our discussion of how a score could be treated differently, Phoebe suggested a possible solution to the problem of using the tape. To re-find the quality of 'hesitancy', as I mentioned earlier, she suggested a process to "imagine it before I do it", creating a delay in the timing of her performance. Rather than realising the original choreography authentically, she would foresee the movement in her imagination then wait for a few seconds to impede the movement, changing the performance of the score, and therefore the score itself. Many choreographic experiments such as these could be investigated, but the research showed that for changes to scores to be successful, underlying experience of the score is needed as a reference.

Through analysis of Zarilli’s theory, my understanding of the practice of embodying pre-existing scores was extended. The relationship between the score on the one hand, and the inner-felt attention to the score as it is intrinsically embodied during the choreographic process, is much more complicated than a straightforward two-sided relationship between the inner-felt body and an externalised choreographic score. The notion that choreography is always 'external' is problematic, as is the proposition that choreography always becomes 'intrinsic' through practice and rehearsal.

4.4 Conclusion

This phase of the research articulated the potential of disassociation to uncover the intrinsic sensation of choreographed movement pathways within the body of the dancer. ‘Disassociation’ modulates choreography and the dancer's performance, changing both in the process. The two elements are intertwined: dual partners in the production of traces of experiential sensations.

Furthermore, the research also demonstrated that experiential sensation is maintained through disassociation, but only if it is pre-empted by a breadth of accumulated experience of the choreography. This was a surprising outcome. The dancer’s previous encounters with choreography as it is rehearsed, re-rehearsed, changed,
developed and even only partially remembered or sometimes forgotten, was found as essential to facilitating a degree of resonance with the choreographic form. The embodiment of choreography as trace is enabled by a complex temporal play of different versions, evoking sensations drawn from multiple experiences. This enables choreography thought as forgotten, to be present in a new way.

Through processes to 'trace' pre-existing choreography, the methods developed in this phase of the research shifted the emphasis on understanding choreography as it was created at a particular moment in time. The 'set-up' of the research was revealed as important — how and when processes are undertaken — raising issues for how methods of disassociation are reliant, in part, upon modes of remembering. Given that the rehearsal process is usually continuous to ensure that choreography can in fact be remembered and retained, the research provoked my thinking towards strategies that would force the recall of choreography in less than ideal ways, some of which are explored in Chapter Six where I concentrate on performance strategies.

The experiments within this phase of research did not progress the research to the point of making choreography retained for the purpose of creating The Very Still. However, the exploration was significant in informing the second part of this research phase where strategies to fragment and re-compose movement are developed that can be maintained and remembered. Phoebe’s input and response to the research problems highlighted the role of the performer in the realisation of choreographic disassociation, leading to the conception of the research exploration undertaken in the final research phase, discussed in Chapter Six.

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1 Studio conversation March 25th, 2009
2 ibid.
3 T. Etchells, Certain Fragments, Oxon, Routledge, 1999. p. 71
4 ibid. p. 72
5 ibid., p. 71
7 ibid., p. 58
8 ibid., p. 57
9 ibid., p. 54
11 P.B. Zarrilli op. cit. p. 50
12 ibid., p. 53
13 ibid., p. 50
14 ibid., p. 54
15 ibid.
16 ibid., p. 55
17 ibid.
18 ibid., p. 58
19 ibid.
20 ibid.
21 ibid., p. 53
22 ibid.
23 ibid.
24 Studio conversation March 25th, 2009
CHAPTER FIVE: Tracing the trace: Part Two

5.1 Introduction

The previous Chapter focused on the first thread of this research phase, investigating methods to trace choreography, finding that a degree of disassociation between the choreography and the dancer’s familiarity with movement was instrumental in creating traces of experiential sensations. However, the research had not yet established a method to create this same disassociation in choreography that could be remembered and repeated. To investigate how this could be achieved, the second part of this research phase develops strategies to fragment and manipulate choreography, examining how choreography can be disassociated yet retained as experiential sensation, while building choreography towards the creation of *The Very Still*.

The Chapter is divided into two parts. The first investigates methods to fragment and recompose movement, contextualised in relation to Ramsay Burt's theorisation of Trisha Brown's choreography. The second outlines the role of imagination in the process of fragmentation, uncovering that imagination is a somatic response, offering further explication of how 'traces' of choreography can be understood as experientially embodied in movement.

5.2 Studio research

5.2.1 Fragmentation strategies

Fragmentation, in my understanding, is a compositional process that breaks apart movement. I have used fragmentation strategies in my previous work, for example, breaking apart the arm gestures of a phrase into a series of fragments without using the rest of the body, then reconstructing them in a new phrase, or breaking apart a duet, leaving one dancer to perform the same actions without the support of a partner. Meg Stuart also gives an account of this type of strategy used to create her work, "No Longer Readymade". She describes how in the work two bodies are holding hands and one walks away, "marking traces of a meeting". The remaining
body, for Stuart, becomes "the outline or trace of the movement", a still image that marks the absence of the other dancer, encapsulating the remains of the interaction.

In the first part of this research phase, Phoebe’s performance of ‘tracing’ could also be understood as a process of fragmentation. It showed the remnants of choreography in ‘splintered’ pieces, like a shattered glass, where shards are not evenly divided or measured. There was also a level of discomfort in Phoebe's presence, a type of stuttering of enunciation where movement appeared as 'half' performed, but within her whole body rather than separate actions. This was a markedly different quality to performing some of the movement fully, with other parts missing as I had practised previously, or removing a whole figure from a duet, as Stuart describes. It appeared that in Phoebe’s tracing, fragments of movement were resonant of whole body action, even though only aspects of a particular movement were performed.

In this step of the research I investigated methods to fragment movement drawing on my observation of Phoebe 'tracing', to find out how it is possible to fragment movement with this same quality, but so it could be recaptured and repeated. However, the first consideration was that Phoebe’s 'tracing' had come about using movement that was difficult to recall, raising the question of how conscious manipulation could create this same quality. What method would provoke a degree of difficulty in the physical articulation of each movement fragment as Phoebe had experienced in the task to ‘trace’ the choreography?

The first strategy involved working with the fifteen phrases created in the second research phase, combing through and 'editing' the movement. The process involved extracting the distinct part of each movement where weight is transferred, removing any stabilising movement, stopping points or moments of rest, to the point of stumbling and falling. Fragmenting ‘weight shifts’ focused on the transition moment within a movement, the movement in the middle of locomotion between one step and another, or the through moment of a step. Removing this fragment from the overall pathway aimed to ‘section off’ the centre point of the action so that movement was felt as missing from either side.
A second strategy, 'arresting movement', involved stilling action somewhere before a movement was completed, halting the projected trajectory of a movement midstream, then finding ways to divert or redirect the movement in a new pathway. This resulted in two fragments conjoined together; the first, the arrested step, and the second, the new fragment found from the point of the arrest.

In another set of experiments two further methods were developed using inner-felt sensation to trigger movement before it was arrested. The first, 'false starts', involved performing a ‘tightening’ or ‘clamping’ of the musculature as movement emerges, halting the ‘start’ of the movement; a second method, 'rotating bones', used the idea of bones rotating as the means to begin moving before arresting the action. This strategy concentrated on the skeletal structure of the body rather than musculature. By rotating, for example, the ulna and radius outwards around each other, the bones of the lower arm move in a circular fashion drawing the humerus into rotation in the shoulder socket, reaching a point where movement is restricted because of the limitation of the anatomical structure of the shoulder. The arrest of rotating body parts as movement begins, but is cancelled or withdrawn before reaching the 'end point' of the rotation, fragmented action felt as continuing.

While I have described the guiding principles of each strategy, the process was not straightforward. For example, some movements were not long enough to be cut, or did not flow out of the body in a way that could be easily stilled, driving the need to find alternate solutions. This was a reminder that anomalies are the product of choreography, as William Forsythe notes. He states:

Choreography elicits action upon action: an environment of grammatical rule governed by exception, the contradiction of absolute proof visibly in agreement with the demonstration of its own failure.

For Forsythe, although a rule may be in place, the choreographic process produces irregularities. In the research, fragmentation strategies were set up as parameters within which to work, without discounting unforeseen outcomes. Anomalies were embraced. Prioritising the possibilities of each movement rather than the strategy or the rule per se, kept the process responsive and flexible to the emergence of fragments in unexpected ways.
In my practice previously, I have attempted to use fragmentation strategies as a way to expose inner-felt sensation by making something about a particular movement absent, only performing the arms of a sequence, for example, as I mentioned above. This has had minimal success. Sometimes the missing parts of a sequence could still be felt as present, resonating or vibrating in the body, and other times, the dancer’s attention would simply be drawn to the part of the body moving.

In this research, the development of methods to fragment movement using a type of film editing technique — cutting movement fragments to halt or arrest movement, fracturing and breaking apart movement within the flow of movement — fragmented what I term ‘whole’ body action, exposing a kinaesthetic ‘after-image’, a physical resonance beyond the cut. Methods to ‘arrest’ movement created a jarring vibration and oscillation in the dancer's body because arresting movement half way through a movement and trying to still the body in a single instance is physically difficult. Unlike the instant snap of an apparatus such as a camera, trying to precisely still the body while it is charged with momentum and energy is in a strict sense, impossible. Movement beyond the point of the cut is still felt. This was an important new finding in the research. When whole body action is cut and arrested through motion, underlying sensations at work are exposed, without separating one part of the body from another.

5.2.2 Recomposing movement

After creating discrete fragments, the problem became how to reassemble movement fragments sequentially, while retaining each fragment as disassociated from the original and disconnected from other fragments. In the effort to recompose and avoid making seamless connections and fluid sequences, concentration upon the separation between each movement was of vital importance.

To begin recomposing, the treatment of the 'beginnings' and 'endings' was the first consideration. After a movement had been fragmented, new inner-felt intensities and sensations were noticed. This presented the first challenge — how to preserve the distinct qualities of each fragment to ensure clarity was maintained.
Although movement changed from the original when fragmented, some aspects remained where an original attribute could be used to 'stitch' together one fragment to another. For example, Phoebe explained how she used the same ‘initiation point’ to move "from the position that I’m in, trying to imagine that I’m in the correct position. I use the same initiation point to merge back into the material." Here, 'initiation point', is understood as the specific place within the body where movement emerges. Thinking of the ‘left hip’, for example, although the body is re-shaped in a different way than where 'left hip' is usually felt, could be used to move to the next movement in the sequence. This strategy enabled Phoebe to reconnect fragments while making as little as possible of the gaps by not giving them any specific attention or focus.

However, at times, direct connection between one fragment and another became impossible due to physical limitations. For example, a fragment requiring a 'drop' of weight was impossible to perform because the previous fragment had already established the body weight where 'drop' would be. Rather than changing the movement, the 'drop' fragment was retained as a ‘silent movement’. The action was imagined, felt internally within the body. This kept the same restraint in the body that 'drop' created, triggering the physical response to connect the next fragment. Although we avoided using extra movement, large weight shifts or too much momentum needed to rebalance the body’s weight produced unexpected movement. This was included as a necessity but only by keeping fragments as clipped or unfinished as possible, resisting the force of weight smoothing the connection.

Although I attempted to avoid connecting fragments in any even or measured way, the process demonstrated the difficulty in keeping movement separate, and the pervasiveness of weight, momentum and energy to bring separate movements together. To counter fluidity while recomposing, I emphasised the interspaces between movements that fragments leave unregulated. I concentrated on the body’s nascent qualities: the fall of the body’s weight and the impulse to begin moving; attributes concentrated on the emergence of movement without concern for how those movements would be completed. The use of inner-felt sensation was found to be essential to re-composition, to emphasise not only the distinct edge of one movement and another by sensing the cut, or arrest of movement, but also the resonance of
movement beyond the cut as it vibrates in the space between one fragment and another.

### 5.2.3 Fragmentation and visual perception

Throughout the process of fragmentation and recomposition, while on the 'outside' watching Phoebe, I noticed that I was using my visual perception to offer ways to cut or reconnect movement. Initially, I questioned the lack of direct physical feedback when positioned on the ‘outside’ of the work. Despite the realisation that my own kinaesthetic sense is at play when watching, I could not feel the precise sensations in the body in the same way if I was fragmenting movement within my own body. However, both modes, internal and external, proved valuable to the process.

Internally, Phoebe suggested ways in which phrase material could be fragmented and recomposed by offering her inner-felt perspective not obviously apparent from the outside. This was valuable when recomposing, where instead of reconnecting fragments sequentially, joining fragment one, two, three, and so on, Phoebe was able to draw on fragments from any of the phrases, playing out sections of the material as though each sequence was in the background, or in the back of her mind, at all times. The visual external perspective, while it offered the possibility to rupture movement from the outside, lacked access to this embodied memory.

Recognising the limitation of my perspective and the importance of Phoebe’s contribution, I resisted forcing or over emphasising my viewpoint, discounting possibilities that I could not feel physically. Over articulation would make the connections between movements defined from a visual perspective rather than an inner-felt one. On this point I follow Sara Rudner's example. In her process, she writes:

> I suggest something and then the dancer who is actually doing it comes up with something so much better, just naturally, because something has suggested itself to this person. It just comes out. Then I say, well, that's the sensation and I think your sensation is better than anything that I ever thought of: it's clearer... ⁸
Sensation felt by ‘doing’ the movement was found as ostensibly better, as Rudner suggests, not only because the dancer can draw on a more deeply felt sense of the movement, but because fragmenting, cutting up, or recomposing movement changes the sensation of performing that movement. Rudner writes that in her method of deconstruction: "You are in a process of sort of 're-neuralising' your body, connecting in new ways, getting new sensations". Consequentially, as I watched Phoebe I could only glean something of the new sensations: I could not feel the new physical intensities within the body in the same way.

The use of an external, visual perspective to fragment choreography ‘in the moment’ while Phoebe performed the movement, like a film running in front of my eyes, differed from processes I have used previously in my practice. Although the lack of access to the dancer's deeply felt sensations appears limiting, external visual cutting and recomposing was also important to the process because it forced new sensations to arise. Suggesting ways to fragment or recompose movement without knowing if they were physically possible disassociated the choreography, forcing movement forms to open up in ways that moved against the predictable flow of movement. Together with Phoebe’s perception of the movement internal to the process, cancelling out aspects of movement by arresting, cutting and stilling movement worked against fluid reconnection, creating gaps that made movement difficult to perform. This forced a form of disassociation, but differently to the first part of this research phase. Now disassociation was consciously performed by removing parts of a movement, leaving the resonance of absent movement, suggesting movement as still about to happen, or appearing to have happened.

This provoked my thinking as to how these strategies can be understood to open up space for what is not revealed when only performing fragments of movement. In the next section, I discuss the influence of Ramsay Burt’s analysis of American choreographer Trisha Brown’s work on my thinking. I articulate how Burt's theory has deepened my understanding of how fragmentation strategies hold the potential to expose affective traces of movement intensity resonant in the body of the dancer.
5.2.4 Trisha Brown, affect and movement composition

In an essay on Trisha Brown’s work, Ramsay Burt argues for a re-reading of Brown’s oeuvre.11 Outlining the shift in her work from early explorations into improvised movement to a focus on structure, Burt notes that her work has always held in tension two artistic concerns: the first, the body and ways of moving through exploration of improvisation and somatic practices; and the second, the organisation of movement in conceptual choreographic structures. Burt contends that this shift in Brown’s work from the openness of “her ‘free-wheeling, semi crazed, now you see it, now you don’t’ dance improvisations”12 to abstract movement sequences organised in mathematical structures, was a move that focused the viewer’s attention on movement as an activity, revealing the qualities of her movement exploration within "a neutral aesthetic space".13

Citing art historian T.J. Clarke’s theory, Burt concludes that this reduction in Brown’s work is akin to avant-garde art practices that purposefully avoid conventions thought essential to the form.14 Radical at the time, Burt writes that the concentration of movement within structures in Brown's work consequentially brought about a new focus on affect and emotion. It enabled, he writes, the audience to feel the "affective power of these absences that make even more immediate the visceral materiality of the undisguised efficiency of dancing bodies working to the limits of their abilities."15 That is, for Burt, in a neutral space abstract movement exposes the work of the body and affect is felt. To illustrate his theory, Burt uses the example of Brown's recent 2002 work Winterreise, created in collaboration with singer Simon Keenlyside.16 Burt asserts that the work exposes the "generally imperceptible physical work needed for voice production in performance",17 avoiding direct emotional expression. Instead he writes: “the productions’ antiexpressive vacancy created an empty space for affective resonance.”18

While Burt’s proposal suggests the possibility to consider how framing movement within a particular performance space, the design of a space, or chosen site for performance creates ‘affect’, my research takes up Burt’s proposition that the body itself can be understood as affective. As Burt points out, the issue of situation and place is important, but I am not taking up this line of enquiry in my research.
Instead, while Burt's essay gives theoretical consideration to affect in Brown's work from a perspective external to the work, in Brown's description of the structure created for her work, *Glacial Decoy*, she outlines a framework for movement exploration that creates absences, and can also be understood to invoke space for affective resonance. Brown describes how she disrupts the obvious connections between movements by throwing movement ‘off track’ to avoid the expected, working with "falling, and its opposite and all the in-betweens." She states that when making *Glacial Decoy*, she set out to change "the meaning of move $a$ by the introduction of move $b$ [...] while $a$ is still going on", creating an alternate route out of the obvious flow of movement. For Brown, these possibilities set up a string of potentials, such as, "something that will occur in move $f$." Movement is set in motion then vacated, interrupted or abandoned; the consequences of a movement trajectory made absent as potential or possibility. She explains:

...I’m always trying to deflect your focus. When 99% of the body is moving to the right, I will stick something out to the left to balance or to deflect it, or to set up some sort of reverberation between the two [...] To determine what comes next, I study two poles — the easiest way out which is the logical progression or instinctive recovery, and the hardest, which is usually another cancellation, which creates its own subsidiary fireworks.

It can be inferred that in Brown's structures, space between movements left unfilled can be thought as physically affective, ‘reverberating’ intensities and sensations when movement is arrested or diverted. Some years after my own experience of learning Brown’s choreography, I remember the feeling of resonant intensities within my body when performing her choreography. Discovering Burt’s theorisation of Brown's choreography as affective has reframed my understanding of the possibilities within compositional structures that leave gaps and opens up spaces. Instead of a loss of the presence of movement in these spaces, resonance persists and sensation is produced.

However, the focus on affect in Burt's theory again raises the concern, as it did in my discussion of Spinoza's concept of affect and recapturing movement in Chapter Three (3.2.2), that while choreography can be theorised as affective, affect cannot be 'applied' to, or forced within a choreographic process. In response, my approach has been to placing trust in physical action to invoke affect. Fragmenting movement
creates actual physical change, without forcing an affective or emotive response. This approach is a methodological one, echoing Ramsay Burt's link between Brown's use of "conceptual structures" and what French literary theorist Maurice Blanchot proposes as the "artist's relation to their work". Burt borrows from Blanchot to discuss how Brown's methods "destabilize notions of authorial presence", recognising the "limits within which an artist controls the discourses operating in their work". My goal in this research phase was to avoid asserting my presence, or other presences upon the process, but to construct fragments of movement that would resonate, without forcing or contriving an emotive or affective outcome. I did not adhere to the strictures of a pre-determined mathematical structure in the same way Burt describes is used in Brown’s work, but sought to ensure that experiential sensations brought about through fragmentation were exposed through the process. Spaces created by disassociating and fragmenting movement were left unfilled, to ensure gaps and absences within the flow of movement would resonate with the missing movement, vibrating like an aftershock, exposing the trace of the experiential presence of choreography reverberating in the body.

5.3.5 Fragmentation and imagination

During the process of fragmentation and recomposition I noticed there were other significant factors emerging in the research that were enlivening experiential sensation other than a focus upon ‘pure’ physicality. I noticed that imagining movement was becoming an important aspect of the strategies; where, for example, in the process of ‘arresting’ movement, imagining movement was called upon to foresee the trajectory of movement as continuing before stilling the action. This was important to ensure that movement resonated beyond the cut; if not, an isolated, shortened version would be produced where tension is dropped and movement ends.

To extend this finding and investigate how imagining movement impacts upon the retention of experiential sensations, five tasks were set up as outlined below. Each incrementally changed the balance between ‘imagining’ and ‘performing’ movement. Beginning from a still stance derived from a phrase named ‘vague’, this exploration informed the construction of Section Three of The Very Still.
1. ...stand still and think of all the movement of the body in the choreography so far...

2. ...stand still and think of all the movement of the body in the choreography but every now and again perform some of the movement...

3. ...imagine the movement in stillness, switch to performing a 'fuller' expression of the movement and then return to the imagined version creating a distinct cut between the two modes...

4. ...switch between imagining movement and performing the phrase 'false starts' and back again...

5. ...switch between the phrase 'fast travel' and stillness, imagine the movement, then switch back to 'fast travel'...

In each of these experiments, Phoebe interpreted the task as she wished. Terms such as 'switch' and 'fuller' were not specifically defined. As I watched, I felt a degree of movement activated in Phoebe’s body in each of the tasks. I concluded at the time, that the fourth and fifth experiments were more successful because they demonstrated an extreme change between imagining and performing movement, where the vibration at the point of stilling movement was more clearly felt. This may also have been influenced by my earlier experience of cutting movement in film-like edits; and the play of my own imagination, where I could see and feel the movement continuing.

However, on reviewing documentation of the studio research, I perceived the first and second experiments as containing a richer embodied movement vibration. In retrospect, I noticed that the concentration on imagining without the distraction of movement focused my attention to the slight and subtle activity going on inside the body, where muscular and nervous system responses were concentrated and intensified. And yet, this contrasted with Phoebe's feedback, where at the time, she mentioned that it was "so hard to remember the material when you are not doing it".28 Movement is not usually separated from the dancer’s physical body and concentrated within a thought process without any physical prompts or kinaesthetic feedback. On the outside, I perceived the process as creating resonance in the body, exposing the
muscular, physical tension that would be needed to perform the full movement, but for Phoebe, it was problematic.

The activation of tension within the body by ‘imagining movement’ extended the deeply embodied practice of ‘amplifying’ movement from inner-felt intensity as developed in the first phase of the research. But now, in this phase, whole movements were imagined, conjured up by sensing the action ‘as if’ it was being performed. Due to the difficulty of the task of imagining movement, it also offered an alternate method of disassociation, provoking traces of sensation of the choreography to come to the surface of the body.

In the next section, I articulate a further use of imagining whole actions, investigating ‘recasting’ movement as a method to create traces of experiential sensation in movement.

5.2.6 Recasting movement

In the fourth section of The Very Still, Phoebe moves through a series of positions on the floor. As this series of movements was fragmented and recomposed, I noticed similarities begin to emerge between movements, not between physical pathways or steps, but the ‘image’ of the movement. At first, I was not conscious that I was focusing on movement in this way, then, I realised that I was continually referring back to a specific movement we named 'remote' as a way to fragment and recompose.

The ‘remote’ movement involved projecting the arm out into space while seated on the floor, a reference to the everyday, to the ‘remote control’ and watching television. Apart from this reference to quotidian experience, the movement came out of an exploration of two physical ideas combined together: the first, maintaining a relationship between elbows and knees while moving; and the second, the projection of parts of the body into space while the rest of the body remained still. As we created this phrase, I found myself drawing on the feeling of the 'remote' movement as an isolated, almost photographic still, placing myself back into the tone of the movement, the weighted feeling of the body on the floor, the isolated projection of a
This strategy could be described as reproduction rather than fragmentation, although we were not entirely reproducing the precise movement. ‘Re-casting’ seemed a more apt way to describe the strategy, as the movement was remade in a different bodily form. Although this strategy seemed unrelated to fragmentation processes, recasting created discrete, isolated movements, more like fragmented still images, without any flow or connection between them. On the floor, without the pull of gravity, there is less need to ‘transfer’ body weight from one place to another, making the shift of the whole body easier to achieve. This minimised the need to focus on editing out continuity between movements, enabling clear separation between one fragment and another.

Discovering that imagining movement was playing an important role in re-casting as a fragmentation method drew attention to an observation Sara Rudner recounts in an interview with Elizabeth Dempster. She states that through deconstruction: "I also think that your imagination is opened up in the process. Once you have different somatic experiences your imagination opens up and allows new things to come out." Albeit a brief reference to the potential of imagination within her work, Rudner suggests the power of physical change to trigger unexpected imaginings. In the research, the exact moment when I felt and recognised the movement 'remote' is now lost. I cannot explain where ‘remote’ came from. It was not a movement about a memory per se, but a fictional association. It may have been triggered by the sensation of the weight of the body on the floor or the arm gesture, instead of a personal memory, but it became a powerful illustration of the possible connections between fragmented physical movement and imagined responses.

5.2.7 Imagination and sensation

In an essay by Deidre Sklar, *Unearthing Kinaesthesia*, focusing upon cultural understandings of the senses, Sklar notes that in the Cartesian understanding of the body and mind
…meaningfulness, cognitive operations, are divided between the formal, conceptual, and intellectual work of reason and the material, perceptual, and sensible work of the body; constructed this way, the body provides us with sensory perceptions, while the mind conceptualizes these as representations.  

She goes on to suggest that Kant proposed an alternate view, where instead, "the mediating factor between sensation and conceptualization was imagination", but for Sklar, it is with philosopher Mark Johnson that imagination can be understood as attenuating the polarity between body and mind:

Imagination, Johnson argues, works not merely reproductively to duplicate or reflect experience but productively, as an ongoing activity that structures experience by organizing perceptions, figuratively, into patterns. Johnson calls these patterns "image schemata" or "embodied schemata", for they emerge from and give structure to bodily experience.

In this theory, imagination contextualises felt bodily experience, while felt bodily experience can be understood as organised through the means of imagination, drawing on the reservoir of lived experience. The movement ‘remote’ therefore, can be understood as the production of physical experience through image; and the image 'remote', part of my embodied schemata of the choreography, along with the structural aspects of the movement — the extension of a body part while the rest of the body remained still.

Embodied schemata extend beyond physical attributes to include phenomena such as language. In the second research phase I grappled with the use of language, wary of delimiting the sensory potential of movement. Here, language was used in another role. The word 'remote’ named a movement, but also made it possible to share my imagined response with Phoebe, the word itself evoking a particular physical sensation. Sklar explains how this is possible:

It is common enough to discuss abstract theories without feeling the somatic reverberations of words. But it is also possible to bid words to participate in the somatic schema they represent. Then the process of thinking with words becomes a process of evoking their somatic reverberations. For example, if I say to myself "ball," I recognize the letters to refer to a ball, but I can also summon what I saw or felt or remembered when I said the word…

In conversation, Phoebe noted how a complex play of imagination and language manifested for her in the research, suggesting that, "different movements need
different triggers”. For some movement there are easily created associations and images, and for others, the physical aspects of movement take precedence. We noted that ‘remote’ could have also been called ‘arm lever’ or ‘extend from the side of the ribs’. On this point, Phoebe also suggested:

I think it becomes all of those things [...] you get the image with the words [...] but then you can also have the thought and then you say something – so there is the capacity to have a thought that doesn’t have language.

Working in the studio, imagined responses became a useful tool to articulate felt sensation when moving, however, the use of imagination did not replace the focus on the physical body, but when easily triggered, broadened embodied schemata, or what I have earlier termed a 'movement-image' in my practice. Fragments can now encapsulate language of thought, visualised images and felt bodily sensation, opening up ways in which 'traces' of sensations now extend to the complexity of our embodied schemata.

Uncovering how physical sensation cannot be wholly separated from other manifestations of experiential phenomena was highlighted through this phase. By keeping the atmosphere of our work together within the studio as informal as possible I tried to take the focus away from rigorous fixation upon choreography as precise and defined. Instead, I prioritised discussion and informal conversation. Through this fluid play between conversation and moving, associations between movement and our daily, often mundane lives were noticed, then borrowed and adapted as ways to identify felt sensations. While most of the associations made during the process were not retained in my mind, for Phoebe, associations became a useful tool to remember movement. This use of associations in the context of performance is discussed in the next Chapter. To illustrate the extent to which associations were used in the research, Phoebe’s associations for Section One of The Very Still are included as an appendix.

When I set about undertaking this research I did not expect ‘imagination’ to arise as a concern. I was wary of the subjective melancholic and nostalgic associations inherent within a theme such as ‘trace’, avenues of research I did not wish to investigate. I narrowed the scope of the research to focus upon the physical manifestations of choreographic processes. At first, the emergence of imagining movement in the
research represented an anomaly in the trajectory of the project and one that could have been discounted as irrelevant to the research questions. Through analysis of the phenomena at play when fragmenting movement, the realisation that imagining itself is also a somatic process was an important finding of the research. ‘Tracing’ now incorporates movement sources of lived experience, removing the boundary of movement practice with the outside world. This notion has set up a trajectory for further research beyond what was been uncovered in practice through this project.

5.3 Conclusion

The research undertaken in this phase of the project extends extant choreographic methods in my practice, uncovering new processes and re-defining how a choreographic fragment can be understood. The significant outcome of this phase was discovering that disassociating set movement through fragmentation methods is dependent upon 'thinking' the whole choreography by envisaging or imagining movement before it is arrested or stilled. This was found to create a resonance of action beyond the point of the cut, maintaining a connection to the whole action. A fragment can now be understood as not just an isolated part of an action, but resonant of the entire movement event.

Furthermore, this resonance — felt movement made absent but maintained as sensation — was enlivened if fragmentation strategies are concentrated upon sensation. By focusing on experiential sensation within the movement phrase, notably, the shift of weight and the muscular and skeletal arrest of action, fragments become iterations of sensations. The extension of this finding to the use of ‘imagining’ movement as a tool to fragment movement producing experiential, somatic resonance, extended the understanding of a trace to the complexity of embodied sensory experience beyond a focus on pure physicality.

This phase of research set out to shape the choreography for The Very Still. The next phase moves to the context of performance and presentation, investigating how embodied traces of experiential sensation can be retained in performance when fragmented movement forms are 'set'. It considers the risk of choreography becoming intrinsically embodied, and therefore loosing attention to 'in-the-moment' felt
sensation, closing off choreography from further sensory exploration. Methods are
developed to locate and maintain experiential sensation when choreography has been
defined and seemingly complete.

1 In my 2005 work, The View From Here, dancer Daina Block performed one half of a duet
alongside of the whole duet performed by Timothy Harvey and Phoebe Robinson.
47
3 ibid.
4 ibid.
5 William Forsythe is an American Choreographer and the Director of The Forsythe Company
based in Frankfurt, Germany. For biographical details and information on the company see
The Forsythe Company, Retrieved September 10th, 2010 from
6 W. Forsythe, ‘Choreographic Objects’, Retrieved September 10th, 2010 from
7 Studio conversation April 9th, 2009
9 ibid., p. 40
10 Trisha Brown is an American choreographer. Biographical information can be found at
Vol. 37, No. 1, 2005, p. 18
12 ibid.
13 ibid., p. 12
14 ibid., p. 18
15 ibid.
16 ibid., p.12
17 ibid.
18 ibid.
20 ibid., p.31.
21 ibid.
22 ibid.
23 ibid., p.33
24 R. Burt, op.cit., p.19
25 ibid.
26 ibid.
27 ibid.
28 Studio conversation, April 23rd, 2009
29 E. Dempster, op. cit., p.38
30 Sklar, D., ‘Unearthing kinaesthesis: groping among cross-cultural models of the senses in
performance’, in A. Lepecki and S. Banes (eds.), The Senses in Performance, New York and
31 ibid.
32 ibid., pp. 38-39
33 ibid., p. 44
34 Informal conversation March 10th, 2010
35 Informal conversation March 10th, 2010
6.1 Introduction

In the previous research phase I established methods to fragment movement, disassociating movement to shape choreography while foregrounding experiential sensation. Although ostensibly 'complete', this fourth phase of research considers the danger of choreography becoming ‘set’, developing strategies to address this problem. Two research threads were followed. The first examines methods to 'unlock' and 'process' choreography, re-opening choreographic structures by drawing on the dancer's embodiment of, and manipulation of the choreographic score. The second investigates the use of light to disrupt the visual apprehension of movement. To discuss how The Very Still can be understood to embody 'trace', the final section focuses upon the research presentation and the notion of trace and disappearance.

6.2 Studio Research

6.2.1 'Unlocking' movement

At the conclusion of the previous research phase the movement for The Very Still had been choreographed. Strategies had been found to break apart movement to create fragments of the original phrases, while considering how the sensation of that movement remains embodied. However, when movement patterns are finalised and practised they risk becoming ‘closed off’. As noted in my discussion of Zarrilli’s theory in Chapter Four (4.2), when movement is practised it becomes intrinsic within the body, no longer external, but ‘indwelling’. Intrinsic embodiment is useful for performing phrases without needing to 'think about it', but it can also risk loss of attention to movement, even though the dancer’s attention to movement is complex, varied, and to more than the choreographic pattern.

In conversation, Phoebe recounted how for her, the process of becoming proficient at performing choreography results in a narrowing of sensory feedback. In her
experience, when the score is new, sensation is plentiful, as it becomes familiar less is felt, it becomes ‘lighter’ as it recedes. She noted that it is difficult to know if the sensations that were very obvious and ‘real’ in the early stages of learning movement are still present in performance, or if ‘exaggerating’ movement in order to trigger sensation, or just trusting that it is still present, is an effective way of performing movement once it is known.¹

The gap Phoebe identifies between feeling sensations when movement is first created, compared with when it is 'known', highlights the problem of the loss of attention to sensation when movement is practised. ‘Sensing’ is an attentive process. If the same level of attention is no longer needed to perform movement, a 'disconnection' results between choreography and sensation. Meg Stuart sums up how this disconnection manifests in her discussion of how dancers are not always in 'the moment':

In any given situation, what is going on in your head and what is going on in your body never exactly coincide. One is always thinking, remembering or imagining, superimposing layers on the experience at hand, which confronts one with the impossibility of being totally present. […] I also notice that most dancers are rarely actually in the moment or are not entirely in their bodies. Either they are ahead or behind themselves in time.²

In the research thus far, the experiment that demonstrated the closest alignment between a movement score and the dancer’s attention to movement was shown in the task to ‘trace’ choreography in the first part of the third research phase. In that task, Phoebe's attention was drawn exclusively to re-performing the movement from memory. A problem-solving exercise, the experiment was instructive in pinpointing that something ‘less known’, and ‘unsolved’ about performance is essential to bring movement to attention. Setting up a problem to solve focuses attention without directing that attention to a known outcome.

6.2.2 'Unlocking’ strategies

To explore strategies that refocus the dancer’s attention to the production of sensation when moving, yet take into account how a score becomes intrinsic within the body, the first step in this research phase investigated ways to re-perform a set score. This
came about in response to watching Phoebe rehearse Section One of *The Very Still*, where I noticed that the process of reviewing and rehearsing the movement began to encourage the 'disconnection' Stuart speaks of. In the section, Phoebe performs a long series of gestures while standing in one area of the space. The sequence reflects the research undertaken in the second phase, where movement was created by increasing inner-felt intensities in the still stance to generate movement, then waiting for another intensity and moving again. Each movement was formed separately, creating a slight gap in time between one movement and another. Moving in around the still upright stance, the phrase was also created while attending to the play of gravitational forces on the body’s weight.

To develop a task that would draw Phoebe's attention to the material, I asked Phoebe to use the gaps between each movement in the sequence to insert a slight weight shift through stepping, or adjusting her feet; working against or in sympathy with gravitational forces on the body’s weight. The insertion of additional movement emphasised or countered the pull of gravity on the body, requiring Phoebe to renegotiate her ‘balance', setting off a charge of sensation and reforming the choreography. Although this strategy was effective for this section, exploration of Section Three revealed another discovery.

In the third section Phoebe stands still and changes position very slowly. To ‘unlock’ each still stance, movement was broken down to find gaps in the sequence where the movement pathway could be disrupted and diverted. Initially, I asked Phoebe to change her stance, shift her visual focus back to the direction she had just been looking, move her focus back to the correct position, then move on to the next stance. In this case, breaking down the movement did not create any change in attention; we had inadvertently added more movement: the movement of her head. This was adjusted so that Phoebe changed her stance, shifted her visual focus to ‘anywhere’ in the space, and then moved to the next stance. In the end, the change in focus helped to enliven Phoebe's response, but also showed that changes to movement pathways alone do not always draw a strong attentive response.

To refine the method, for Section Six, we investigated a strategy named ‘sinker’. In ‘sinker’, Phoebe interrupted the trajectory of the movement by 'slackening' the body,
folding the joints, letting go of held tension, then reinvesting the body with tension to return again to the preceding stance and move on with the sequence. Phoebe noticed that during and at the point of the ‘sink’, her attention to the inner-felt body was drawn to the task of releasing the muscles, changing both the movement pattern and attention to her body at once.³

Through these experiments I found that reorganising movement within gaps in the choreographic structure did not easily activate or align the dancer’s attention to movement. To find the precise strategy to ‘unlock’ movement proved difficult, but consideration to experiential attributes — gravity and muscular tension — was found to re-activate attention through physiological change.

While unlocking through making physical changes to trigger sensation was uncovered as effective, it is also essential to point out that the choreographic construction of *The Very Still* forces a disassociation that stimulates attention to sensation, because the choreography is difficult to remember. There is little repetition of movements or sections of movement. In Section One for example, there are no repeats, metered rhythm or structured patterns to reference; an ongoing stream of different movements is articulated over the course of ten minutes. This is extremely difficult to remember even after extensive practise, heightening the probability of forgetting and creating a level of tension in performance. Making the choreography intricate and difficult to perform aimed to diminish the effect of practice on intrinsic embodiment, reconnecting the dancer’s attention to the choreography as it unfolds.

In the research, elements that remain undecided forced the dancer to ‘trace’ an alternate route through the choreography. This finding doubled as a method to fragment movement, extending the research undertaken in the second part of the third research phase, but now, taking fragmentation strategies into the context of live performance. Creating gaps and connections between movements dampened the inevitability of sequential choreographic phrasing forcing movements together through momentum, energy, practice and familiarity.

Through unlocking strategies, the repetition of *The Very Still* in performance became a practice of ‘tracing’, rather than just a direct referral *back* to choreography, as it was
set. This was a reminder of Cadava’s theory of trace and his discussion of Benjamin’s ‘now-time’ (1.5.2). Unlocking performed the dialectical play between the past and present moment of performance in ‘now-time’ that Benjamin speaks of:

It isn’t that the past casts its light on what is present or that what is present casts its light on what is past; rather an image is that in which the Then and the Now come together, in a flash of lightening, into a constellation.

‘Unlocking’ by interrupting set choreography activates the potential for a multiplicity of temporal ‘traces’ at once within performance, references to the choreography as it was created, but also altered and changed in the present moment of performance. In the moment of ‘now’, constellations of temporalities are developed beyond a return to the pure ‘past’ of choreography.

6.3 Tracing in performance

6.3.1 Processing the trace

In October 2009, three months after The Very Still was presented for examination, I gave a paper on this research at the Monash University “time.transcendence.performance” conference. During the presentation, Phoebe performed Section One of The Very Still, in which I noticed a marked difference in Phoebe's performance compared with the examination presentation. It appeared that the break in time had caused a degree of disassociation in a similar way to the third phase of the research where Phoebe had traced the choreography. However, in this instance, Phoebe's performance did not share the same struggle to remember the movement, the gestures appeared the same, but they had changed in emphasis, they had become ‘unlocked’ from the original.

In our discussion about the difference between the conference performance and the examination presentation, Phoebe stated that for her, performing The Very Still at the conference was “processing it not repeating it.” She commented:

At the conference, because I had known the material really, really well, it was still there, but I was remembering it as I was performing it, so it felt more alive because I was in the process of remembering it, but that thing of it
Phoebe’s revelation that ‘knowing’ the material was integral to ‘processing’ calls attention to the importance of knowledge in the performance process. In Jaana Parviainen’s writing on dance and epistemology, the notion that ‘knowing’ underpins a different performance response is explained by the idea that bodily knowledge is not only a ‘knowing-how’ to perform movement, but also a knowing that establishes “a corresponding understanding”.

In Parviainen’s theory, ‘understanding’ is created through the tacit acquisition of experience, illustrated through Parviainen’s example of driving, a skill that cannot be replaced by knowledge of the mechanics of a car. ‘Understanding’ in dance practice, for Parviainen, comes about through practising a particular movement skill until it becomes “sedimented in the dancer’s body”, where it is thought to ‘indwell’ and becomes "tacit". Parviainen cites how this indwelling also occurs in music practice, where playing the piano, at first a difficult task, after practice, “demands that the fingers be left to themselves.” The same idea can be understood in relation to dance, where after practice, the body seems to ‘know’ how to perform a sequence of movement.

But ‘knowing’ tacitly is not a static capacity. Parviainen states that bodily knowledge is “the living body’s movement ability”, facilitated through a combination of skill and reflectivity. To explain the concept of ‘reflectivity’, Parviainen describes the body as a “being with two sides” that work together. For example, in tasks such as practising the piano, the pianist moves attention between the score and the hands to learn the piece. Reflectivity enables switching between what is already known tacitly and the task at hand, as the two mix the “old and well-known with the new and unforeseen […] to develop our potentials.”

In conversation, Phoebe mentioned that she spent a lot of time rehearsing the movement
...in a way where I thought this isn’t how I am going to perform it, but I’m just trying to understand the mechanics of each movement. I remember really feeling that was what I was doing at times, getting it in; so that it could be intrinsic; so that I could forget it; so that I could then look for it, and be alert with it; so that it is sort of sitting there.18

Phoebe's account of the need to 'know' the material in great depth, yet at the same time 'forget' and 'look' again for the movement to process it, seems in opposition to the purpose of knowing the movement in the first instance. ‘Knowing’ movement connotes an assumption that understanding is already established therefore, there is no need to go through the process again to ‘look’ for the movement. But in this relationship between 'knowing' and 'forgetting', movement is not in fact entirely forgotten, instead, tacitly indwelling within the body. Forgetting is not about forgetting everything known or understood. Understanding remains, making it possible to call on that understanding to re-perform movement in new ways. However, this can only happen if the notion of an original is relinquished. This is important to enabling the flexibility for knowledge to be re-accessed and 'processed' anew. When approached in this way, 'processing' moves beyond pure repetition, it calls up difference.

The differences noticed when movement is processed can be understood to produce 'traces', not pure repetitions, or recognisable variations on an original, but subtle changes and slight deviations. This calls to mind a practical, embodied example of an alternate way in which Derrida's notion of trace as différance discussed in Chapter One (1.3) can be understood in relation to dance. It makes clear how in practice, 'processing' movement enacts différance, generating traces of movement stimulated by the reflective play between the dancer's deeply embodied understanding of choreography, and the task of performance.

The gap in time between the examination and conference presentation produced a degree of difference that was more apparent than noticed between the daily cycles of rehearsal. It can be inferred that this difference was also continually at work through the research process and the examination presentations of *The Very Still*, albeit in subtler ways. ‘Processing’ as a method to activate experiential change in performance
and unlock choreography established a strategy in which choreography becomes *différance*, a trace of a trace, avoiding the fixation of movement forms.

### 6.3.2 The performance of associations

While ‘knowing’ and ‘forgetting’ were uncovered as significant to ‘process’ movement, the use of ‘associations’ was also important. Throughout the construction of the choreography ‘associations’ arose frequently, some examples of which I have described earlier such as ‘remote’, in the third phase. At the time of making the choreography, I did not envisage the ongoing potential of associations to contribute to Phoebe’s method of ‘processing’ in performance, but for Phoebe

> ...every single movement had this association to a story or an image or whatever we were talking about in the moment we made it, I just had to recall those associations, and that was sort of how I remembered that movement [...] not just the movement part of the choreography [...] the thought process behind it."}

Uncovering how associations were useful as tools to not only remember movement pathways or actions in performance, but also the ‘thinking’ behind movement was a surprising outcome of the research. As noted in Chapter Five (5.3.1), associations came about using complex sensory, anatomical and imagistic attributes to build embodied schemata. An association such as 'remote', for example, creates a link to movement without dictating the precise action. Here movement is repeated, not verbatim, but by tapping back into the 'world' of the association. This uncovered a useful choreographic formulation for unlocking further traces of experiential sensation when movement forms are set.

The development of methods to re-open choreography in performance by ‘unlocking’ and ‘processing’ using 'associations', demonstrated how the choreography in *The Very Still* is permeable and can be re-experienced in new ways. With these methods, choreography for *The Very Still* can be considered as a traced outline for performance to be re-encountered, the agent for action, generation and re-generation, rather than instruction for an exact 'how-to'.


The use of methods to 'unlock' and 'process' movement value the dancer's capacity for sustaining awareness, engaging with imagery, and maintaining an embodied engagement with trace(s) to construct the choreography in real time. The processes foster a whole being engagement with affective implications that I have found to be palpable, contributing to a particular aesthetic stance that has distinguished the work from other forms of dance. This suggests a new experience for performer and public alike, leading to a further line of enquiry for my own work and that of other researchers — to investigate the implications for performer ‘presence’ or ‘liveness’ arising from the unlocking and processing of associations from an audience perspective.

6.4 Presentation strategies

6.4.1 Lighting strategies

In the final presentation of The Very Still I extended the practice of unlocking to the lighting and spatial design. Although I had not initially considered the visual aspects of the research presentation as within the scope of the project, the visual design became significant to the investigation. New avenues of exploration were opened up to consider how visual elements could evoke traces of experiential sensations within the dancer's body in performance. Through examination of Roland Barthes notion of the punctum in my background investigations; Eduardo Cadava’s writing on trace and photographic images; and research on the work of Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto,20 these readings influenced the aesthetic investigation of The Very Still through the ‘lens’ of photography. Photographic processes and techniques, including ‘developing’, ‘flashing’, 'snapping’, and ‘framing’, were investigated. By experimenting with lighting states that disrupted the appearance of the movement, I aimed to show how movement made partially visible could be felt as a ‘trace’ in performance.

*Developing/fading*

The Very Still is composed of six sections, each of different lengths. The long sections (one and six), use incremental states of visibility and invisibility to examine how an image can be ‘over exposed’, or fade away over time. In Section One, the
light fades over the course of ten minutes working against the static qualities of the movement, saturating Phoebe’s body from front and side angles. In ‘the very still’, the mid point of Section Three, this is exaggerated to the point where Phoebe stands still for an extended period of time and light fades from a bright state to darkness, to the point where she almost disappears. This created a strong sense of uncertainty in the perception of her body. Although Phoebe remained still, the change in lighting state suggested movement resonating in her body, so that it appeared as if she had moved, or was moving.

**Flashing/ Snapping**
The use of flashing light, like the burst of a camera flash, erased and severed the image of Phoebe’s movement, creating a break or rupture in perception. Flashes played out in a number of ways: to ‘over-expose’ the movement then return the dancer to darkness (Section One); to create a break and re-develop the image again from a dim state to brightness (Section Six); and to ‘over-expose’, illuminate, and then return to darkness repeatedly to create a series of ‘snapshots’ (Section Four). This exploration culminated in the final moment of the work where the light flashes, then snaps to black out as Phoebe turns away and lifts her foot, arresting her image and fragmenting the movement. We do not see her put her foot down, leaving the residue of an after-image to suggest the continuation of the action. Like a film edit, fragmenting movement by cutting the image through snapping the lights to black, focused attention to the absence of movement remaining as sensation after the cut.

**Framing**
The lighting design used the walls, floor and architectural framework of Studio B221, making spatial frames to contextualise the body. In Studio B221 steel beams run vertically from the ceiling to the floor dividing the brick walls into three sections on each side of the space. The lighting was designed so that each section of the wall could be lit separately, creating discrete frames of light to alter the textural appearance of the wall. The design enabled a change of colour from warm brick earth tones to cool steel tones, reminiscent of the open white light of an empty film or slide projector, or the monochromatic silver of an overexposed photographic negative. Illuminated walls combined with a blend of lights in the centre of the space simulated the relationship of a subject to a photographic backdrop (Section Five), while also
disconnecting Phoebe’s figure from the walls. She appeared neither directly connected to, nor completely separate from the background, creating tension between her body and the performance space.

6.4.2 Photology

Through adaptation of photographic techniques and processes to the lighting design, I wanted to find methods to interrupt the audience's attention on Phoebe. My purpose was to avoid presenting the choreography as complete or full within the space. I reasoned that if choreography is a traced act, it would distract from the choreography if it was presented as whole or complete through the use of ‘full’ light exposures. I wanted to evoke the sense that traces of experiential sensations within the body appear as though ‘half performed’, or ‘half present’, by finding a way to focus visually upon what is not shown and withheld.

I was also mindful of Andre Lepecki’s reference to ‘photology’ in his discussion of Derrida’s notion of trace as outlined in Chapter One (1.3). Lepecki’s argument that photology creates “a mimetic reproduction of the blindness at the core of metaphysics”, a “scopic body” that only sees the body in “optical-descriptive” terms, was influential in the decision to subvert illumination and avoid the full ‘presence’ of movement. Conscious of the metaphor of illumination within the notion of photology and how this might relate to the presentation context, I questioned, in practice, how presenting The Very Still, could be ‘unlocked’ through resisting the pull towards illumination. I took the reference to light literally, using techniques based upon photography to avoid perpetuating an optical and descriptive presence for the body and movement in the research presentation.

6.5 Performance, disappearance, absence and presence

In this phase of research my attempt to ‘undo’ fixation through ‘unlocking’, together with the use of light as a method to destabilise the appearance of movement, echoed some of the theoretical preoccupations uncovered in Peggy Phelan’s discussion of the ephemeral nature of performance.
Phelan argues that performance cannot be documented or re-presented; instead once a performance disappears it is transformed to something “other than performance”. Any subsequent record or documentation of performance “is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present.” To make this point, Phelan uses French artist Sophie Calle's work to show how an artwork can be absent, but then used to create new forms; continued as present through description and memory. Phelan writes of one of Calle’s projects where she photographed the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston then interviewed visitors, asking them to describe paintings that had been stolen from the museum; placing transcripts of the interviews next to the photographs. Phelan suggests that Calle's use of descriptions is a way to “remind us how loss acquires meaning and generates recovery”. She states:

Calle asks where seeing and memory forget the object itself and enter the subject’s own set of personal meanings and associations. Further her work suggests that the forgetting (or stealing) of the object is a fundamental energy of its descriptive recovering.

Phelan’s suggestion that disappearance revivifies the absence of the artwork, becoming present in another mode in Calle's work, opened up my understanding of the opportunities ephemerality brings for renewal, change and difference.

Central to Phelan’s assertion that the recovery of absence generates new forms, is the notion that disappearance enables that recovery. She writes: “Performance’s being […] becomes itself through disappearance”. That is, performance cannot occur without disappearance. Similarly, in Heidi Gilpin's view

…disappearance paradoxically manifests precisely what we presume it makes absent. It enables not only appearance, but perception, apprehension, experience and memory.

Gilpin's evocation of disappearance suggests a myriad of possibilities when considering the effect of disappearance on performance. With Phelan and Gilpin, disappearance is generative. However, another interpretation of disappearance is found in André Lepecki’s assertion that choreography always contains something absent. Lepecki writes that choreography is best understood "as an activity that surpasses the boundaries of the visual; to see dance as an incantation, already haunted
by spectres". In this idea, choreography is not only remade or reproduced through disappearance, where absence is recovered, but it simultaneously contains ephemera, or 'hauntings'. That is, dance is always invested with phenomena not entirely absent or present within its form.

Together, Phelan, Gilpin and Lepecki present two ways in which ephemerality and disappearance bring about the presence of absence in dance performance. Gilpin encapsulates these two foci in the following quote:

Performance, through its embodiment of absence, in its enactment of disappearance, can only leave traces for us to search between, among, beyond.

In the quote, Gilpin references the concept of trace as the remainder of performance to be returned to. I imagine these traces to mean memories of choreography, or materials such as video documentation or choreographic notation that exists outside of the body per se. But the notion that performance 'embodies absence' also offers possibilities. I take this to mean that the absence of performance can be palpably felt as embodied within the body of the performer. That is, although performance has disappeared, when returning again to re-perform choreography, the image and felt sensation of movement as it was previously experienced remains embodied as an absent presence, a trace of what has disappeared that can never be fully recaptured or revealed.

In the performance of The Very Still, methods to ‘unlock’ and ‘process’ choreography in performance open up and regenerate embodied absences. Movement forms, although altered and changed in the process of performance, hold the remains of previous iterations.

However, to assert that a ‘trace’ — experiential sensation of absent movement felt as present in the body — is literally evidenced in The Very Still, would move against the notion that a trace of movement can be made purely present. Practically and theoretically, a trace of movement cannot be made literally and wholly present, either in appearance in performance, or in writing through concrete language. I am reminded again of Derrida's notion that a trace is an "alternative of presence and absence".
claim that *The Very Still* ‘represents’ a trace of movement is impossible given that a trace, to use Derrida’s meaning, is neither brought to full 'presence', nor entirely absent.

My aim in this phase of research was to emphasise the immediacy of tracing as a performance process, maintaining the potential for performance to change and evolve through the cycle of disappearance and repetition from rehearsal to rehearsal, performance to performance. I wanted to ensure that the performance and presentation of the choreography would invite this change. This brought home the notion that performance, despite the work done to organise and control it, can never held as the same, or unchanged.

Peggy Phelan notes that retention of a performance is never possible. She states: "The challenge before us is to learn to love the thing we’ve lost without assimilating it so thoroughly that it becomes us rather than remaining itself". Phelan's thought is a reminder that attempting to claim performance is counter to the change and difference brought about through disappearance and repetition. To ‘assimilate’ performance, to use Phelan's term, for the purposes of retaining what is lost, or placing a permanent ‘hold’ over choreography would be counterproductive to the potential to 'trace' the unforeseen. Through unlocking and processing, disrupting the move towards solidity, this research has made steps towards understanding and elucidating the nature of trace in performance, allowing it to speak from within and through the embodied process of disappearance and repetition.

**6.6 Conclusion**

This final phase of research advanced the notion that choreography can be understood as simultaneously ‘outlined’, yet permeable and changeable. This was demonstrated through choreographic and presentation strategies that open up pre-existing choreography to disrupt any tendency for choreography to become ‘fixed’. The choreographic and presentation methods developed in this phase of research used broad techniques of adjusting, extending or intervening, so mitigating the danger of choreography ever becoming purely and wholly ‘set’.
The research showed how choreography, while constructed of fragments, works best in tandem with strategies that fragment movement 'live' in performance by manipulating, breaking open and re-making choreography. Tasks to ‘unlock’ movement were found to bring about a distinctive activation of experiential sensation in the immediacy of performance, uncovering traces of experiential sensation beyond those originally felt during the conception and creation of the movement.

The discovery that ‘knowledge’ and 'associations' are requisite to processing choreography in performance highlighted the importance of the earlier phases of the research to underpin performance strategies and build a deep knowledge base. The implication being that the dancer’s work to clarify, articulate and embody personal associations is essential to grounding the activation of traces of experiential sensation in performance.

Exploration of lighting strategies suggested that for movement to be perceived as ‘trace’, the appearance of movement needed to be disrupted. Use of photographic techniques and processes to inform the lighting design uncovered the potential for extreme states of darkness and light to disrupt the perception of movement and avoid revealing the movement as complete.

1 Studio conversation May 7th, 2009
2 M. Stuart, Are we here yet? J. Peeters, and M. Stuart (eds), Dijion, Les presses du reel, 2010 p. 15
3 Studio conversation May 7th, 2009
7 Informal conversation, March 12th, 2010
8 Informal conversation, March 12th, 2010.
10 ibid.
11 ibid.
12 ibid.
13 ibid.
Hiroshi Sugimoto’s series of photographs *Theaters* were of influence. Sugimoto’s images are taken inside theatres, where he exposes a single photographic frame to an entire movie screening. This captures the light generated through the movie into one saturated white “blaze of light” in a single image. See T. Kellein, *Hiroshi Sugimoto Time Exposed*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1995. p. 13


H. Gilpin, op.cit., p. 106


Conclusion: reflections and directions for future research

Locating the trace has exponentially developed my understanding of choreographic practice methods. Attempting to unpack what ‘trace’ means in and for my practice has uncovered previously unarticulated aspects of my process and developed new methods. The analysis and clarification of choreographic methods generated through this research, and the distillation of outcomes in the presentation of a solo study, produced findings that will inform not only my own work, but also offer further research potential for others in the field. To conclude this paper, I articulate the significant findings of the research through identifying the following key terms, focusing on the implications of the findings for choreographic practice, while pinpointing avenues for future exploration.

Receptivity

Methods using receptivity, the attention given to the body to notice, identify and work with experiential sensation in movement, were extended through the research. Beyond the first moment of feeling a sensation in the still body before moving, receptivity was found to be crucial to notice and attend to the proliferation of sensation occurring while moving beyond the still stance. Receptivity uncovered how both conscious and nonconscious sensation are present in bodily movement, broadening the means to use inner-felt bodily intensity through offering alternate modes in which to access the sensorial world of the body in the creative process.

Uncovering the complexity of inner-felt intensity brought into question how receptive states of awareness are important to accessing the vast field of the body's sensations. Receptivity was found to be key to locating sensation, a fundamental element in choreography deserving further attention. Research to investigate the dancer's capacity to notice what is 'going on' within their body would expand the dancer's potential for deeper and richer engagement with sensation; consequently, offer access to a greater range of as yet unknown modes of corporeal expression.
**Recapturing**

Through the analysis of receptivity, intensity and sensation, and the realisation that sensation is always changeable, I have a new understanding of how sensation impacts upon the practice of recapturing. Derrida's notion of trace as a play of *différance*, together with recognition that sensation alters the feeling state of movement when repeated, provoked the formulation of new approaches to choreography. This establishes a different equation between movement definition and uncertainty in the formation of movement in my practice. The research articulated the value of leaving aspects of choreography unknown, relinquishing precise detail.

The research offers new processes that employ flexible choreographic referents including attributes, images and associations to articulate movement pathways, challenging the notion that choreography is a practice that devises full and complete movement forms. Instead, the research proposes choreography as a 'traced' form that facilitates movement possibilities, where choreography becomes the means to more choreography, a template for further investigation.

**Associations**

The research articulated a new use of *associations* in my practice, identifying the rich creative potential of associations as links to movement, rather than precise descriptive pathways. The research devised a new approach to articulate and map sensation through the use of interior narratives, simultaneously articulating associations that can be reinterpreted. This finding uncovered and exposed the scope of language and imagination in stimulating somatic responses to remember and re-perform movement, holding particular interest for further research. Recent advances in neuroscience point to the complexity of associations, sensation and movement in human experience. Neuroscientist VS Ramachandran proposes interesting research into the brain's motor and mirror neurons, the latter, found to not only assist in performing actions but in emulation, imitation, empathy, and inner felt sensation while watching another person move or being touched.¹ These discoveries have application for further research on how a 'trace' is embodied, opening up new avenues to track how felt sensory pathways through the body (and brain) can be traced through one's own body in a circuit with the body of others.
**Circuiting**

The recurrence of the notion of *circuiting* in the research redefined my methodological stance to studio practice. The process of circuiting showed how the affective engagement between choreographer and dancer prolongs the focus on sensation, rather than progressing straight to shaping movement, uncovering the generative potential of experiential sensation as it circuits between bodies. Through circuiting, the separate roles of choreographer and dancer are collapsed, drawing together collective participation in the co-generation of movement. By concentrating on the emergence of movement material rather than outcomes, circuiting brought attention to source material that initially seemed peripheral, but eventuated as a rich compositional source.

Circuits of attention between body, movement and choreography emphasised the flow between the inner-felt body and choreographic score and back again, as always emerging and re-emerging. Circuits offer a new thematic approach to creative practice and an area for further investigation. At the neurological level, VS Ramachandran identifies circuits as underlying the mirror neuron 'interface' as it connects between people, proposing that there is no separation between one's own "consciousness from somebody else's consciousness."² This has implications for collaborative creative practice, and also points to the value of this research in articulating the specific contribution of choreography not just to the field of dance, but also to the other research practices that are concerned with the body, movement and sensation.

**Disassociation**

While the articulation and exploration of associations in the research was significant, methods to disassociate were discovered as equally important, because the risk remains that repetition and rehearsal can shift to locking in or fixing movement, thus denying the complexity of sensation underneath. Disrupting intrinsic, proprioceptive connection to movement through disassociation forces trust in associations to re-make the connection. The value of deeply held intrinsic embodiment was found to be significant to the process of disassociation, showing that experience counts. Experience enabled the return to residual, intrinsic embodied sensations, opening up the possibility to use disassociation as a method to uncover the dancer's subjective
response to the state of disassociation as the means to reduce choreography to trace. A degree of tension between knowing and not knowing was found to be crucial to the practice of tracing.

**Processing**

‘Processing’ by returning to associations, and/or 'unlocking' to disassociate a choreographic text in the present moment of performance, developed new perspectives on how a score and the performance of a score can be modulated together to draw attention to the performer's sensory engagement with choreography.

Processing was also found to be a significant answer to the problem of trace being temporally located in the 'past'. Determining that processing is significantly distinct from 'repeating' movement, illustrated how referents and attributes can be re-visited to draw choreography from the past to new evocations in the present moment. This was an important finding in the research, re-defining my understanding of how a ‘trace’ of experiential sensation while embodied, does not distinctly belong to only one temporality, referencing not only ‘past’, but other evocations of time.

**Fragmentation**

The research uncovered that a movement fragment can be understood as more than a complete portion. The development of methods to disassociate movement extended my understanding of fragmentation as only pertaining to parts of movement forms, to a new understanding of a choreographic fragment. Fragmented movement can now be understood as a whole body action broken down, but remaining resonant in the entire body: movement shadowed with the vibration of movement beyond the fragment itself.

To extend these findings, further research potential lies in the advances technology offers for choreography. Borrowing from both the aesthetic and technical potential of contemporary chronophotography to capture the minutiae of the body's movement in fragmented images, the focus on photography and choreography within this project could be extended through further research in this area. Chronophotography, founded by such well-known figures as Etienne-Jules Maray and Eadweard Muybridge, studies time and movement through devices to capture movement.³
Chronophotographic practices could extend understandings of the fragment in choreography by offering further appreciation for how sensation is charged within the moving body as revealed through alternate methods to capture movement.

**Tracing**

This research offers a re-conceptualisation of notions of choreography as a practice of 'writing' or organising figurative movement, as it is traditionally understood, re-invigorating the potential of choreographic practice. The focus upon corporeal and functional issues inherent within practice in the research has extended the potential of choreography to suggest or to imply, rather than to describe or dictate meaning. Uncovering methods to present more than the movement of the body as the only movement within the space, the research has proposed movement extends and vibrates beyond the surface of the body's appearance. The focus on trace and tracing to find other than whole, figurative representations has thrown into question how movement is created and performed under the terms of choreography, leading to the development of processes, that I claim, re-define choreography not as a written act, but as a traced act.

*Locating the trace* has uncovered trace as an experiential element composed within broken and incomplete movement forms, the dancer's performance as an act of tracing, embodying the resonance of movement experiences and sensations in relationship to those forms. The implication being that the dancer performing choreography composed of ‘traces’ will be required to actively solve the problems associated with movement scores not entirely prescribed.

The research has re-defined choreography as the embodiment of attributes of dance — dance as association, memory and sensation. Through the processes developed in this research, I have sought to locate a trace that would evoke new possibilities, point to sensations beyond the moment of performance — the embodiment of absent worlds, worlds that are not lost to performance, but are yet to appear.

2 ibid.

3 For examples of recent work and discourse in this area see: P. St George (ed), *Sequences, Contemporary Chronophotography and Experimental Digital Art*, London, Wallflower Press, 2009


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APPENDICES

1. Program notes: *The Very Still* presentation

2. List of tracings: *The Very Still* Section One, by Phoebe Robinson

3. DVD: *The Very Still* - live performance and documentation of choreography
The Very Still

Choreography: Sandra Parker
Dancer: Phoebe Robinson
Composer: Steven Heather
Lighting Design: Alexandre Malta
Costume: Zohie Castellano
Understudy/Secondment: Natalie Abbott, Rachel Vogel

The Very Still is the outcome of my PhD research project, Locating the trace: an exploration of tracing and the choreographic process.

The work contains six sections of choreography, each developed by experimenting with different choreographic methods, examining moving within, from, and to stillness. Movement in The Very Still is arrested and re-shaped, resulting in fragments of action and non action, inviting a detailed examination of that which can only ever remain fleeting and finally, invisible.

The solo form is a concentrated focus on movement in one body. Phoebe Robinson and I have worked together since 2003 and our shared history has enabled us to delve into each singular moment of the choreography. This interrogation over the course of the project has resulted in a deeper understanding of my choreographic process and the role of the performer. My heartfelt thanks to Phoebe for her time and commitment to this project.

Many thanks to: Dr Elizabeth Presa, Helen Herbertson, Jenny Kinder and Alexandre Malta. Thanks to every one who has made a creative contribution to this project, including Steve for the wonderful sound; Carlee Mellow, Daina Block and Joanna Lloyd for your contribution to the development of the project; Rachel for your commitment to being our 'brain'; Alexandre Malta for your insight and artistry; and to Zohie – a big thank you!
Sandra Parker (Choreographer)
After graduating from Rusden College in 1985 Sandra joined Tasdance, performing in the work of Nanette Hassall, Neil Adams, Louise Burns (Cunningham Co) and Helen Herbertson amongst others. She then moved to New York, undertaking an apprenticeship with the Trisha Brown Company, and performing in the work of Meg Stuart, Risa Jaraslow and Wendy Perron. Returning to Australia, Parker has made commissioned work for Tasdance, Dance North, Buzz Dance Theatre, Sue Healey's Vis-à-vis Dance Canberra; the Victorian College of the Arts, School of Dance, and the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts; and several solo and group works.

In 1997 she created her first full-length pieces in absentia and Two Stories, touring in absentia to the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts and The Performance Space, Sydney. From 1998 - 2006 she was the Artistic Director of Dance Works, creating innovative collaborations with many artists and arts organisations, including performances at the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts 2000, 2002, 2003. International projects include an Asialink residency to Tokyo, Japan and the creation of Span with Shelley Lasica and American Choreographers Bebe Miller and Susan Braham, for Danspace, St Mark's Church, New York. Sandra's work has toured nationally and internationally to the USA, Germany, France and Portugal.

Returning to independent practice in 2007, Sandra Parker established SANDRA PARKER DANCE to continue the development, presentation and promotion of her work. In 2007 she presented The View From Here at the Joyce Soho in New York City, and created Playhouse for the Guandong Modern Dance Company, Guangzhou, China during an Asialink residency. Her most recent project Out of Light premiered at Gasworks in early 2009. In late 2009, Sandra will attend the Performing Arts Market Seoul, as part of the Australia Council for the Arts delegation, and will undertake a residency at Red Gate Gallery in Beijing, with assistance from the Australia China Foundation to begin the development of a new work.

Phoebe Robinson (Dancer)
Phoebe Robinson has been working in Melbourne as an independent dancer, teacher and choreographer for the past eight years. She has performed in Australia, New York, Berlin and Japan, in works by Sandra Parker, Lucy Guerin, Neil Adams, Jude Walton, Francis d’Ath and Kota Yamazaki. In 2008 Phoebe was the inaugural Housemate Resident at Dancehouse, a three-month artist in residence program to support the creation of new work in dance or physical theatre. During this residency she choreographed and performed Only Leone, which premiered in July 2008 at Dancehouse and was also performed in the East Coast Exchange at Critical Path, Sydney. Her previous works include Quiet Listening Exercises and Half Finished World made in collaboration with Julia Robinson and Felicity Mangan; and solo works, The Futurist and Emperor’s New Guns.

Steven Heather (Composer)
Steven studied percussion/improvisation at VCA(1991) and Performance Art at DasArts/Amsterdam (2006). Since 1994 Steven Heather has been performing and recording as a musician regularly in Australia, Europe, America and Asia. Apart from his current music projects/bands and work as a solo artist Steve has made numerous solo CDs, DVDs, performances and installations. Steve is also a co-founder of the new media/ performance group SXS ENTERPRISE with Siegmar Zacharias and Xander De Boer and designs sound, composes and performs regularly in the fields of dance, theatre, film, new media and performance.

Zohie Castellano (Costume)
Zohie has been interested in clothing and dressing for as long as she can remember and enjoys all aspects from designing for theatre and film, to fashion history, culture and of course, creating her own garments. Zohie is in her final year studying Costume Design in the School of Production at the VCA.
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