



Transcription of recorded conversation

Dance Dialogues: Jo Lloyd and Rebecca Jensen

11 November 2020

Tom Pritchard - 00:00

Good evening everyone and welcome to this Dance Dialogues conversation between Jo Lloyd and Rebecca Jensen. I'd like to begin by acknowledging that I'm joining today's talk from the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Eastern Kulin Nation, and I want to pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. I wish to extend this respect to any First Nations people joining us today.

We're delighted to welcome Jo and Rebecca in a conversation exploring what practice is now. Before I hand over to them some brief reintroductions.

Jo Lloyd is an influential Melbourne dance artist working with choreography as a social encounter, revealing behaviour over particular durations and circumstances. A VCA graduate Jo has presented work in Japan, Hong Kong, Dance Massive, Melbourne Festival, for Chunky Move through Next Move in 2016, Live Works and Mona Foma. Jo has worked with choreographers Gideon Obarzanek, Shelley Lasica and Sandra Parker. In 2016, Jo was the Resident Director of Lucy Guerin Inc and in 2018 she received an Australia Council Fellowship. Jo is a resident artist at the substation. Welcome Jo.

Rebecca Jensen is a dancer, choreographer and teacher born in Aotearoa and based in Naarm, Melbourne. Her work leaks into the spaces between disciplines, defined by the specificity of dancerly thinking. Live, complex, change-orientated, contradictory and nonlinear. Notable works include *Deep Sea Dances* in 2017, *Explorer* in 2016, and *Sinkhole* with Jess Gall and Arini Byng, which is ongoing. With Sarah Aiken, Rebecca created *What Am I Supposed To Do?* in 2019 *OVERWORLD* in 2014, and *Underworld* in 2017. As well as ongoing participatory project *Deep Soulful Sweats*. Beck has a performance history with a



range of artists, including Jo Lloyd since 2010 and recently Lucy Guerin Inc. Rebecca was a recipient of the danceWEB scholarship in 2015, was artist in residence at Temperance Hall in 2018 and she will be artist in residence at Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, supported by the Australia Council in 2021. Welcome Bec.

And without further ado, over to you Jo.

Jo Lloyd - 02:33

Thanks, Tom, you're all good? So my visual description... I'm a white female in my 40s. I have orange hair, just past the shoulder. I'm in a black dress with a white background. Bec, did you want to do your visual description to start us off?

Rebecca Jensen - 02:59

Hi, everyone. I am Rebecca. I am a white cis-woman in my early 30s, sitting in a black jumper in front of a black background. I have blonde-ish, once blonde, hair that's pulled back tightly and gold earrings. Never done that before.

Jo Lloyd - 03:28

No, neither have I. So, I guess you know Tom did this lovely intro, thanks Tom, and did our bios... and listening to the bios, it's quite overwhelming and lovely. But at the same time, so much gets left out. And so Bec, you know, in the lead up to this, we were talking about, sort of, how our bios crossover. So I guess the first thing I think of is um, Luke George said, Oh there's this dancer that might, you know, be of interest or, you know, she might be someone you'd want to invite into the process. Because I was working with Luke at the time and it was you. And so that was where it started in 2010 when I first sort of came across you dancing and you came into the studio.

Rebecca Jensen - 04:14

Um, yeah, I remember that moment. Um, I remember going to your class at Chunky Move. Having seen your work before that moment, as well. So yeah, having an idea of your like, kind



of idiosyncratic and also like highly virtuosic movement language, I guess. Um, and yeah, that was a while ago and since then, now we, I have danced with you, no, for you in many works. I couldn't I don't know... I mean, many, many, many works and many things that also ended up not being shows in the end, perhaps. And also, you've come into my process more recently in a work for large group of dancers, *Deep Sea Dances*, and then also perhaps another kind of criss-cross in our, like, entanglement, I feel like we are entangled. would be maybe teaching as well, sort of teaching the same people in different classes. Yeah, through Chunky Move, Lucy Guerin Inc. And even VCA a little bit.

Jo Lloyd - 05:47

Yeah, and I guess, coming into this, we sat down, and sort of, you know, in some ways prepared. But it felt like it was unfamiliar and familiar, to sit down and have time to talk.

Because in some ways we prepare together for performance, whether it's, you know, in the context of me directing or bringing a performance to life or programming something or being programmed, or in your work, or in the transition between you teaching and me teaching, or there's lots of in between conversations. But really, until we sat down yesterday, it almost felt like we never really sat down to talk, which is extraordinary.

I mean, but we talk a lot, you know, in process, in studio, and about works that we see and about things that we digest, you know, others conversations, books that we lend each other. But in yesterday's chat, I think the first thing I wanted to ask or that I just thought I would ask is how do you work? Because I was thinking, you know, I've been in *Deep Sea Dances*, that work of yours, and seen your works. But I just that was my first thing, of how do you work? And then, then we went on to talk about, like, how does one work? And I don't know, maybe that's a good way to get rolling. Because it keeps changing, doesn't it? I mean, I think, in some ways, you and I both like, maybe I'm presuming, but I think we have that in common and other dance artists around us in Melbourne that we know of, you know, we tend to want to, or have a desire to, keep embellishing and changing our process or our practice. I don't know, there's something about always, you know, re exiting and entering.

Rebecca Jensen - 07:46

Always, always creating openings in order to sustain something or creating change in order to sustain something. When you asked me that yesterday, how do I work? I kind of freaked out because I, I feel like in many ways, I'm spread across quite a few ways of working, which is something I find super exciting. And maybe it's also connected to this idea of practice and what that might be and how do we define that? And this has been a kind of conversation recently. I was actually in a chat with some younger artists and someone asked like, what is this word practice? Like? Why? Why? What is it? How do I get one like, what? Why do I need to have one and a few of us who are a bit older in the chat, like we realised Oh, at this, this word actually only came about fairly recently, it wasn't something that was bothering me when I was fresh out of uni. But yeah, this this way, this, this whole thing about defining the way you work, um, I don't know if I have a resistance to it, or if yet, I don't want to kind of like set something in stone through, through defining it. But I think I do work in so many different ways. Like one huge part of my practice is working collaboratively with Sarah and I could identify some kind of key things that we revisit as a duo. I mean, maybe that's, that's a good way to define like, what do you keep revisiting or like, what can you... what can you not stop doing?

Jo Lloyd - 09:33

Yeah, and just your uncomfortability you know, like, do you think that's because, you know, that gives, that irritates something about being, it being stagnant. Or if you if you define it, then, you know, or is that just how I relate to that?

Rebecca Jensen - 09:56

Well, I think in ways, it's also a translation like I think, yeah, you kind of work how you work. And sometimes that's very... that forms a logic that's really specific to what's happening in the room and who's in the room and, and what the project is and what the context is. And you know, where the show will be, and, and all of this. And yeah, there's a kind of an assumption. I was talking to a friend Annabel about this this morning, briefly, but just an assumption that we



should be able to translate that into language and something defined or easy to talk about. It's not necessarily easy, it's not really the right word.

Jo Lloyd - 10:48

And I think the thing of, you know, even, you know, you bringing up the term practice, like, you know, a decade or two back process was, was something that was used a lot, and I was asked about what's your process, and, you know, I hope that my process keeps changing. But I think it's also the thing of words, the use of words, and I find the use of words, in the process, or in the studio working time, quite a delicate, kind of area, because language is so huge. And I think choosing certain words has always been important, so that I try to kind of value the transmission and the use of the body and, and also how important the use of words is including that in the practice, like how, how the body can transfer, or how can I invite others in, to what I'm doing and what I'm stimulated by. Like, I'm, I'm constantly trying to see what resonates, and you know that. But then what's fascinating, I think, is those moments that I gain an understanding of what it's like to be in the room while I'm trying to transmit these ideas. And for someone like you to be there, and often you'll bring up a question, and then I'll shift my perspective. And so how, how that contributes to that transmission. So, I'll understand the perspective from Beck in the room is this, and then how am I going to? How am I going to work? Because of that, like, I think that's something that's quite delicate, and of real importance in the working, in the room. And I think also being yeah, I think we talked a little bit about translation, you know, like, and how somebody understands. And I guess, maybe interpreting, how someone interprets that. And then you, you went on to something interesting to do with your understanding of interpretation Beck.

Rebecca Jensen - 13:13

Yeah, I guess, um, yeah... thinking. Yep, it's, it's interesting to be doing this talk with you Jo, because I have been in this position as a dancer in your work for so many years now. And yeah, like you're saying, like, us sitting down to actually talk about work outside of the context of the studio, where we may be working on something that's yours. I've been really hesitant to call things like yours, mine, I'm a dancer, you're the choreographer. And I think, yeah, in so

many ways, those, those words are really um, they could do with a bit of a question, or a rejig. And it's a conversation that constantly comes up often as well like, dances or collaborating dances, or, yeah, like what, um, I guess also that goes into conversations around authorship, which maybe we can talk to a bit later because I think that's a super interesting thing in your process. And I can probably speak about it in relation to mine, too. But yeah, I was thinking about how in, in France or in French, I also spent some time with some French Canadians, they use the word interpret to describe the role of a dancer. And I said this in the studio the other day, and it was funny because Jo and I actually interpreted what that would mean differently. I sort of took on interpret as like, oh, so it's like the translator like in a way maybe I'm this kind of conduit for like, Jo's thinking, Jo's logics through my body, through my sensibility, as like an interface with the audience. And then Jo kind of understood it as this like, I have an interpretation, it's not necessarily the same as the way she's thinking or it's not... maybe it doesn't even matter if the two things are actually quite different. Jo says something, and I do what I think that thing is. Which also seems to, you seem to like this space, in terms of how you deliver information. But it was funny how we interpret them differently.

Jo Lloyd - 15:40

(Laughs)... While we were talking about interpreting things, and then that thing of suspending the understanding, so that there's these gaps for your involvement, and which comes back again to the kind of onus put on the dancer, in the role of the person, you know, initiating the project. Or, you know, the practicing of the project, or the developing of the choreography, you know. It's like that thing of, you know, you are the work, you know, we are the work, all of us. But then at the same time, you know, it wasn't your desire to make that work. So you're, there's that balance of abandoning a sense of responsibility to allow you, or the others that are involved, to be contributing and be the work, but then at the same time going, well, no, actually take on the responsibility. Yeah, I think it's pretty fascinating. And there's a play with the, there's a big play going on. And I think it's sometimes been quite difficult for me as a collaborator, for others, and learning about what that is for people, then in my work to be contributing, and I'm on, it's an ongoing learning of how to respect that and work with that. So that everybody is, is, is working well, you know. But I think it's, above all, it's pretty, it's pretty

exciting, when it's, you know... for me to take the perspective that we're kind of all having opportunities to better, not better, but to keep increasing range in which, in which ways we're working. It's like bettering the form, you know, like, Terry O'Connor said, once, you know, like, what else can this form do? You know, and it's like, we're all trying to keep finding ways to set up, to work, to put out their share. And I think that's what's interesting. I like coming back to that idea that we're, we're, we're all, we're all in support of the form, somehow. Like, in the end.

Rebecca Jensen - 18:13

Yeah. When you were saying that, a quote just came to my head, and it's a bit of a vague recall of the quote. I actually can't quite remember. But something about yeah, I guess, I guess the form and, and dance and how dance is, like, equally like a speculative machine? And it's also like a practical force. Um, and, yeah, I don't know, it's maybe a bit of a segue into a new, a new kind of topic. But I was also thinking about um... yeah being in the room. Being in these spaces, which seem to open up in dance contexts where that there is this space for, like, a... you actually have terminology for this Jo that you use quite often, and I'll just steal it, a shared fiction to emerge. Like I, yeah, a space where these two kind of openings meet. Yeah, I don't know, do you want to talk about shared fiction?

Jo Lloyd - 19:30

Yeah, I mean, even that you phrase it, like you're stealing it? Well, that was something that Anny Mokotow you know, as a dramaturg, in the development of a work, observed and wrote in her notes, this thing of shared fictions, and I, you know, I sort of then took that as a framing. Yeah, and I think it's an ongoing, I don't know which way you want it to go from that Bec, but I was thinking of it as um pushing the real and the imagined, you know, like I think pushing the real and the imagined is always there. Often I think I'm working in paradoxes not to simplify, or anything, but it's becoming more obvious this, this thing of like the real, the real flesh, the real body, the real us in space, and then the imagined and how that can amplify and how far away they are from one another or, you know that often, often I talk about the dance on behalf of another, or this idea of a conduit, even when you talked before Bec of your like, perhaps moment of being a conduit for the translation into you, into the audience, you know, what I'm

trying to achieve or something but that thing of being the conduit, of the physical conduit of ancestry or? Yeah, just, I'm not sure maybe. Yeah, this dance on behalf of somebody, like. In some cases, to be clearer, so I'm not so ambiguous about it. But you know, I've looked at certain people in history, and then we do the dance on behalf of them, or I do it on behalf of them and then transmitted to you or, you know, in some ways, there's always this, passing through bodies. But then what those bodies are stimulated by, in themselves and allowing for that, I think. There's something we were talking about before Bec, of how care can be taken for what comes into the room, not just physically, but the behaviour, like where to where do you sort of decide what is permitted to find the practices or find the propositions for practice, or from idea to action? What are you going to admit, in order to refine what that is? And to make that, like, I'm often talking about an anchor or, you know, and so then I think, in terms of you're working, you know, you often have these large-scale works, collaborative works, and you're managing the engagement of many things. And so, then when it comes to your practice, when you're not so much in relation to others, it's like, what um. What gets omitted? And then what that allows for? And I don't know, I think that something you said, first up in this conversation to do with, like, it's more to do with like, in terms of how you work? How do you want to work, or what are you still holding on to? You were talking about that I think. How you worded it... like, what can't you not do? Or, you know, it's like, I can't leave that alone until I've solved it like, choreographic solutions. You know, me, I'm always trying to kind of take something that's like a junk idea. And then I see value in it, but I have to keep working on it to find some solution to go on with it. It's almost like, yeah, just thinking about how you go about. Like, do you create problems in some ways? I think there's this practice you have that I did, that a lot of us did, in the *Shared Time Accumulation*, accumulation, is that the right wording?

Rebecca Jensen - 23:33

Shared Time Accumulation, yeah, it was one of the, the kind of sections of *Deep Sea Dances*.

Jo Lloyd - 23:40

And, you know, that fascinated me to the point where, you know, I remember being in the studio, in a workshop situation... I wanted to, I wanted them to have a go at it. And I was like,

no, that's, that's Bec's. I'm not going to do that. Like, it's I respect that. And I think it was because I couldn't solve it. And it was, I'm often interested in that. And I think, I don't know, I just wondered if you wanted to talk about that a bit? About either that little practice as a e.g. of the way you sometimes go about things? Because you did talk about that work you made at Temperance Hall earlier, which was fascinating. And you were sort of deciding to deliberately not do certain things that you were noticing you were doing in other people's work, in your own work...and you were, yeah, maybe I found that pretty interesting. The kind of omitting, omitting practices to generate the practicing.

Rebecca Jensen - 24:34

Mm hmm. Woah, you just said so many things. (Laughs) No, that's fine. There was something I wanted to say quickly, just about um... Like, yeah, we have all these crossovers, but I think it's also like, yeah, I mean, maybe the interpret example kind of reveals also like our differences. And yeah, this this idea that we're like dancing on behalf of someone or like, we're a conduit? Like, I mean, you know, I'm always in rehearsal, I'm like, but what, like, how is this happening? Like, what is this happening? Like, what is this? What do I have to believe in to go there? And like, um, yeah, there's this kind of like, I don't know how to describe it, but I feel like it's a really big difference between the way we think about things and the way we work. And to be really reductive, I would say, I feel as though I'm very sort of like external, like outside in and feel like you're very inside out. And like, sorry, you're like cringing?

Jo Lloyd - 25:50

No, I'm not. I'm excited.

Rebecca Jensen - 25:52

Okay, all right. All right. Um, and like, yeah, thinking about that kind of... yeah, that trust, the situations that you set up that requires such, such a trust in the material that arrives from these kind of... sometimes the sources feel, it feels ambiguous, or it feels like, yeah. Maybe, maybe I was a conduit for like, something. Like this other thing that was in the room that I didn't know about, or maybe I just did something, you know, and that's kind of like this... there's this



slipperiness between like, who's me? Where's the dance? What's you? What am I doing? Am I doing Jo because I'm next to Jo? Am I moving in this way because I am next to you? And I think that that's a super interesting conversation. Or I'm next to Shian or I'm next to Deanne or Sheridan. Or is it coming out of these, I don't know... there's such a slipperiness in the room with you and it and a blurriness that you really encourage as well. And it's something that leans into like this kind of emotive space. Like, and even to the way movement can be sort of described, named, or not named, like there's a, there's an allowance for things to kind of, like, rise to the surface. Almost catharsis or kind of, like, chaos. I feel like in a way, like I'm almost... Yeah, I feel quite separate from that in a way.

But then it's like, I guess, this is the amazing thing about being an interpreter. I'm just going to use that word... Working with others is like that, yeah, you can really enter that space wholeheartedly. And it's like, I think you create a really generous environment for people to contribute. But at the same time, that can be also like, really demanding. That's something I wanted to respond... I also had more things to respond to, other things.

Jo Lloyd - 28:23

I mean, it's great. Because what you just sort of like, elaborated on, made me think I was interested in the *Shared Time Accumulation*. And you're practicing, and you're omitting of these sorts of practices that, you know, we're really different. And then I was thinking, I love *Shared Time Accumulation*, because I got confused. And I had to work it out. And I had to cope. And I had to manage it non verbally, I had to negotiate with others. And I think that's what I thrive on. Like, I love that. And in performance, I think I'm trying to work out why, why I like to set up performances that are paradoxical. They're that, and then they're both really strict and formed and I so I think it is very generous of everyone involved, but then I think it's also like, I think, I'm not deliberately trying to be generous. I'm just going... I always talk about like, it's like a meal I've cooked and I've wanted to share it. It's like, wow, amazing, tastiest. And when someone doesn't want to have it you're like, no, you've got to try it. But I think most of the time, you all go okay, I'll try it. And that's, I think, a really, you know I hope, and I don't think it is an ego driven place. But I think I just thrive on it and get excited by it. It's like, you know,

and then I get excited for others to be in that place. Because I think if I don't understand it yet, and I'm in that kind of slightly terrified place in performance with the audience. We're all there, then it's kind of where it should be. Because we're all working it out. Like, because even recently thinking, if it's too descriptive, what the vocabulary is, if we can name it? Is that a problem? You know, like... It's a very fine line, I think, or not a fine line, it's just a very slippery place of like, you don't completely do whatever. It's very framed.

Rebecca Jensen - 30:36

And that framing, sometimes even like, yeah, the way that's formed is sometimes, it doesn't even need to be spoken about. It forms, you're very aware of it, I'm not saying you don't know what you're doing. But like, maybe sometimes you don't. Yeah, of course. I mean, that's also great. But like, yeah, this... Yeah. I don't know. I feel like I guess in a way like that it's like a kind of, no, no, I'm not, I'm not gonna, I'm gonna change where you're gonna...

Jo Lloyd - 31:14

Were you gonna go into psychology?

Rebecca Jensen - 31:15

I was just gonna analyse you Jo, no. I was gonna mention what *Shared Time Accumulation* actually was, because it's just the name at the moment. And I just wanted to say, um, that, actually, yeah, Deep Sea Dances was a group piece. And, basically, within it, a kind of phrase was creative. And then it disintegrated across the whole work. That's a very basic trajectory of the work. But we, the *Shared Time Accumulation* was a kind of, I guess, it's a group score in which everybody is quite heavily reliant on each person. And so, there were 16 people. And you're basically sort of taking a form from someone that you see replicating that form, like a physical form, imagining what they will do next. And then doing that. At the same time, there's this sort of accumulating back and forward, happening. So you're constantly in this, the accumulating back and forth is happening, as we go forward and as we stop, you start from the beginning again, then you move to that point and beyond that point. So you're accumulating like a long kind of winding pathway of choreography that is interdependent within the group.

People cue each other, the timing becomes important. You get sort of, you start to kind of drown in trying to remember the specificity of each of the connections you make, and, and this, the steps you're doing. And yeah, I guess it had a precarity in it, which I am also really excited about. I'm excited about being in that space, where the responsibility is very shared. And the situation is precarious. And perhaps there's also the opportunity for someone to destabilise that if they want to. And that can be a great thing. That's sort of welcome or invited. I mean, that was a big part in that piece, which I also think speaks to some logic and in your working, whether it's in like a class context, or in a piece like *Overture*.

Jo Lloyd - 33:33

Yeah... I had thought back there, but it's gone now.

Rebecca Jensen - 33:39

I had a thought, but I'm also aware of time. But I had a thought just about naming things and not naming things. And that's something you talk about a lot. And it's also something I think about a lot. And it's also something I've found, like a lot of these practices, or maybe we can call them agendas. Another word you use a lot. That sort of come through in your works, it's hard for me to not take it with me when I go other places. And I guess this is related to that. You mentioned omitting, omitting information when you enter different spaces. And I feel like I do work across a lot of places with different people and I really consciously try to like not take something into the room that's from another place. But this, yeah, naming and not naming. That's something that I've become super, super interested in. So I don't know for people that don't dance is like naming, naming movement. You know, you, you throw your hands in the air, you pull your elbows in, but if you just do that action, you don't have the reference point, the reference points. You don't give it the rhythm that matches the words. The movement can kind of exist as this thing unto itself. And, yeah, I mean, I think that's like, so exciting. Like dance nerds, like, super exciting. Oh, It's so yeah, we name everything when we do it. We name everything. It's also like really territorial and colonial, perhaps you could say to sort of, yeah, name everything you do? I don't know.

Jo Lloyd - 35:38

Yeah. And in that thing of, I tried to, you know, be more formal with investigating a notation over the last few years. And then I thought, oh, maybe I've already got a notation. And then I was like, oh, no, for me, it's an ongoing notation. And then yeah, it's, um...

Rebecca Jensen - 35:57

Then how do you mean, a notation? As in like, notating, verbally? Or notating like writing stuff down? Or, like a consistency like calling something something? And then it's always that thing? Or?

Jo Lloyd - 36:11

Yeah, both the verbal and then the written. So... and I guess it could also be a way people work when they use the term score, you know, scores, and I've not used that, and I don't do it. You know, I don't use the word scores. But it's not like a snobbery or anything, it's actually more respect for something I don't think I have a real clear history with. It's like, using the word improvisation is fine. But it's also like it's of a time. And so, I think I was trying to escape my own time of, you know, I improvised, you know, but now it's like I try to refine what I'm actually doing. And that word, I don't include as much because it's not as useful or it's of a certain, I leave it to what it relates to in my head. So it's not as useful.

Yeah, I think, yeah, how do you collect choreography without these words? Or how do you collect repeatable, you know, there's something that my dad spoke about that he wrote when he was working in chemistry and drug research, and they had this journal, and it was called the Journal of Irreproducible Results. And I love this idea, and this term of a irreproducible results. And I love the idea that what happens without dance is a irreproducible like that, of course, we try to reproduce the bits that are a fascination or for me, I try to collect the bits that need to be seen, it's like what has been seen cannot be unseen. Like, so I guess I'm still fascinated with that process of collecting or how you, yeah, those value systems, you know, like, why is that more important than that? And then what, what you set up, like, what sort of choreographic



setup you make, for those things to happen, whether they're right, left hand circle, blah, blah, blah. Or whether they're, like, how can we not name them, but they can be reproduced to a point, you know. I think that really is kind of, of a fascination, ongoing fascination.

Rebecca Jensen - 38:35

And maybe there's like a kind of, like, pure dance kind of, like defined approach where it's like, I'm not naming because I'm not using language to define this. Or I'm not notating because I'm relying on memory and the fallibility of memory to retain this. And yeah, I think that's quite exciting.

Jo Lloyd - 39:03

What would that produce? Like, I don't know what that would bring into action. I was thinking of somebody who used the term byproduct, it might have been Jennifer Monson. But they wrote about the byproduct of the, of the doing or what I've called the attempt. Or, you know, what's the agenda for the attempt and what are you attempting and the attempt becomes the choreography and the choreography is the attempt, and then the byproduct is what the physical outpouring is and negotiation. Anyway, sorry, what were you gonna say?

Rebecca Jensen - 39:44

I was just gonna say I guess another way to look at it though... It could be sort of set like, you know, writing is choreography or speaking is choreography, or writing is dancing or speaking is dancing. It's really just all about how you perceive it, I guess, and what's most useful for the work.

Jo Lloyd - 40:06

What do you want to attend to? And how do you want to set up those focuses I suppose, states of attending to, and multiplicity or the simultaneity fascinates me. So that's something also I sometimes think that you know... leaning into your desire or omitting that desire. Like when do you, like... I don't know, it's sort of interesting, there's a common interest in often wanting to get out of your usual practice, or you know, your usual habits. And there's often that



desire to move on or to... But I remember thinking, what if we reiterate the, the problem or the... but then you end up in the same thing, and we often have the desire to not make the same thing, or...

Rebecca Jensen - 41:04

I think that's where I really look to, like, external structures for like, a scaffolding like... Sarah Aiken and I, in a lot of our work we kind of, and I think I also do this in my solo projects, looking for kind of connections, like things that can kind of almost be stacked. You're like, Oh, this, there's three people in this. And there's three people in this. So, there's three people. Yeah, and kind of like, I'm losing my track of it. What were you saying? I had a direction, I had one...

Jo Lloyd - 41:46

Oh, gosh, I've lost it too. It might be question time. Tom's just come in.

Tom Pritchard - 41:55

Why don't I jump in and see if that train of thought comes back a little bit later on. So, to those watching, now's the time to pop your question, if you've got a burning question for Jo and Beck into the chat. And we'll start with one from Oliver Savariego, and his question is about failure and the role of failure in your work in practice. Does failure actively pay or play a part in performing and creating? Or is there a conscious attempt at failure sometimes? He also offers the idea that failure, is failure more of a more an optional permission in the attempt? So maybe if we can just have a little chat about your approach to, or the role of failure within, call it process, practice, work-making.

Rebecca Jensen - 42:46

Um, I feel like it's really project-specific. Like, there's a project called *Sinkhole* that I have with Jess Gall and Arini Byng and it's, it's kind of designed to fail. It's sort of the whole premise of the thing. It's designed to collapse. And it's designed to create a situation in which people maybe aren't really sure what's, what is going on. With the opportunity for multiple responses to like, certain instructions, so in that sense, like, yeah, failure is like, it's almost the goal. So



maybe it's not a failure actually at all. It's not a failure. Um, yeah, I feel like it's... I don't have like a super clear answer to that. I think. I always make room for failure to be okay. Like, that's, that's often what a lot of planning is for work like, yeah, like, if not enough people come. Which can be a real problem with like a lot of participatory works, you know, you need to have a backup plan. Or you could allow that thing to spectacularly fail if it was conceptually relevant. But I mean, I find it interesting watching someone dance and that kind of space that might open up when there's a failure, or a mistake, or, and maybe that's just something to do with, like liveness and tension.

Tom Pritchard - 44:35

And can I jump back in and just picking up on the conversation about naming of things just to drop this in as well? Is it Do you find it useful to to name something as failure? Is that, is that helpful in the process? As opposed to leaving it as a kind of ambiguous feeling.

Jo Lloyd - 45:00

It's interesting because Bec started off with, you know... it's project specific. And, you know, I thought of, you know, *WAISTD* that you made with Sarah at The Arts Centre. It's sort of like what you consider a failure, like, and it's really good to think about, for me. Because I think, I think truth, what would be a true failure in a performance situation or in, in making work would probably be something quite extreme, you know. If someone got injured, you know, and the show couldn't go on or in the middle of it, or something collapsed. I think, yeah, like a sinkhole. But it's almost like it's extreme. So nothing for me is really that much of a failure. But I also think it's connected to shame. And I think, vulnerability. And someone said once your work is like the theatre of vulnerability, you know, and that's your theatre. And I was sort of thinking, yeah, I do thrive in that place. I like that meeting of personal in a public space with people that you don't necessarily know what they're with you watching you and you, you know, you want to try and take it to that place. So in some ways, yes, it's your consideration of what is perceived as failure.

Rebecca Jensen - 46:23

It's funny that I thought I thought of failure is like a spectacular failure. I don't like I was actually just reflecting on when you finish a performance or something and you have that feeling like that failed, you know. And sometimes it's actually quite, quite small, or it's like that flatness or not being able to generate a kind of energy. Performances are always so long, you can often like find a way to... fail and not fail equally.

Jo Lloyd - 46:58

Yeah, that post failure of a show can be really something you can't shed easily, like that can hang with you for a long time. That feeling.

Rebecca Jensen - 47:12

We failed once. Sarah and I maybe failed once it at Dark Mofo. We were supposed to put a lot of people to sleep on these, like, these mats that they said they would provide us. And they didn't provide enough mats and everybody was drinking beer, and the whole thing got pushed forward to 1am instead of 5am. So everyone had just, you know, taken some pingers and they were ready to go. And we like now you're gonna go to sleep. And we actually got booed. But like, I'm really happy that we failed at that, like, it was a really memorable moment. People told us we were boring, they yelled it out.

Tom Pritchard - 48:00

Maybe let's lift away from failure to I don't know, something more sustaining. I just wanted to have a conversation, get your get your thoughts on this idea of of call it what you will practice, process, art-making. And, and this, this sense of its journey over a long period of time. So not during one project, not during a short period of time, but over the span of you're interest in it. So there are just some words that jumped out of the conversation tonight for me, but also out of various bits and pieces of you know, copy for works that you've made and those kind of things. So I wonder if I can just throw some words into the space and see what comes out of it

in the sense of what holds your interest in what it is that you do. So some words... desire, responsibility, contribution, the in-between spaces, tension, and slipperiness.

Rebecca Jensen - 49:15

I wrote them down. Um, I mean, yeah. In terms of responsibility, um, yeah, I think a big desire of *Deep Sea Dances*, and I think it might have failed a little bit, but I don't know but failed spectacularly. But um, was to create a situation where responsibility is shared at all times, almost to the point where you feel kind of compromised, maybe because you were always and then we're always in relation to each other anyway, and performance, but then the piece was kind of designed in a way in which that you kind of couldn't move forward through it if you didn't have certain information which had to be collected through some interaction with someone. Yeah. And I like that situation where you're in it. You're moving in a way that you wouldn't usually be, because someone is creating that movement with you, or you're not sure who's leading. Or you're not sure who's... the power dynamics shifting or unknowing, I think there's always power dynamics there. But there's I guess that piece was an attempt to flatten them somehow, even though that was not happening, because I was also kind of in charge of the thing.

Jo Lloyd - 51:04

Yeah, maybe I'll go towards desire and responsibility. I think making the work *Confusion for Three* from around 2013 to 2015. And then coming back to it in 2018, I had this sense of abandoning responsibility. So, it was quite a difference, it was quite a shift in the way I worked on it with Bec and Shian Law. And I think what I was learning was this thing of people's desires that saw the work, and that would say, I just wanted this to happen, or I wanted to get up and join in. And from that point on, I started to think I've got to make these choices to set the work up, the choices are happening during the performance for the three of us. But then I realised that not fulfilling their desires was a great place to be like, to make a work that would stir desire. And so I've sort of tried to keep working with that idea of stirring desire, like getting an what's it called, a complimentary relationship with the audience in terms of your desire and



their desire being met and stirring it. Because, you know, it doesn't have to be fulfilled. The stirring is quite an interesting place to, to create. Yeah.

Rebecca Jensen - 52:53

It's funny in Confusion, I felt so aware of your desires within that work. And I do feel like I was consciously trying to not fulfil them, a lot, as a kind of role or agenda for myself in that situation. Which I'm sure you knew.

Jo Lloyd - 53:18

That's why I loved doing it. Because both you and Shian would be finding your own logic. You know, you found your own logic, and you took the opportunity into your hands so that worked. You know, I couldn't have made it. I couldn't have made it, because it was your engagement in it. So, I wasn't really fully making it. It was a proposition. That's something I really am fascinated by with that piece.

Rebecca Jensen - 53:57

And it produces such a tension. Another word that Tom brought up there.

Jo Lloyd - 54:02

Yeah (laughs) another word. I think we had no idea really what our intention was, which was also that thing of omitting certain things, a lot was omitted. And a lot was in there. So maybe that balanced or something? I'm not sure.

Rebecca Jensen - 54:25

Yeah, this something else. I mean, I know, I'm aware of time. But in-between spaces also, like really resonate with me. And I was, yesterday, Jo and I were talking and I kind of was like wow, have I ever like... when do I actually work with like dance, the materiality of like, bodies or like this kind of dancerly logic that I kind of speak about and it's even in my bio. Like, I often feel like I don't actually work through that on my body. It's something I'm super interested in doing. But I've maybe been a bit scared to do or I feel like perhaps that's fulfilled elsewhere like, like



in your work Jo? Um and yes, something about taking all of these logics, practices, and also applying them kind of to other mediums, or disciplines. or Kind of utilising everything, but with this kind of like, dancerly logic that has been created through dancing and being a dancer. But, um, yeah, something about that. And then also something just about the in-between spaces between bodies and how those spaces are kind of where the work is, in so many ways. Like I feel those spaces is so specific. And it really, yeah your body is an archive. I think it I feel like I carry a lot of dormant physicalities that have come through these relationships. And this sort of revitalised when I'm like, dancing near a certain person or... And they cannot be found in other situations. Like, I think there's certain people I dance with that I cannot dance that way anywhere else, like, it must be with those people. But like, yeah, it's, it's really magic.

Jo Lloyd - 56:46

And maybe it's also, you know, that thing of, you know, our lives and how dance appears in our lives. And looking at other cultures and how dance appears in their lives and different engagements and roles it plays, or how it's infused in your, you know, coming into the world. And, you know, it's quite distinct in, you know, for us, and I don't know, it'd be interesting, if that shifted, you know, like, that sort of, you know, categorisation of being. How it is... the logic in that? I don't know. I think I've said enough about that.

Tom Pritchard - 57:39

It feels like a proposition to finish with. Yes. So thanks, all, for joining us tonight. Thanks, first of all, to Jo and Bec, for the last hour, thoughtfulness and insights. Thanks for joining us. Thank you.

Jo Lloyd - 57:56

Thank you, Tom and Lucy Guerin and thanks for chatting Bec, for having a chat.

Rebecca Jensen - 58:06

So much to say.



Jo Lloyd - 58:08

Yeah, there's a lot of value in discussion. And I think this year has reminded us that. That we haven't had those accidental crosses of, you know, paths... to have those little in between chats after a show or after class or before, you know, and they're really valuable in what we all do. And I appreciate them with Bec and many people.

Tom Pritchard - 58:38

Thanks. Thanks both. So, thanks to everyone for joining us for this dance dialogues event. We hope you enjoyed the conversation. And if you did, hope you'll be keen to join us again for our next conversation. More will be announced on that shortly. And the best place to hear about it is our socials. So that's all from us this evening. Thanks again for joining us and see you all again soon.