

# A note on the notes

Every week, the mentor set us small tasks to spur our engagement with their methods. While each week gave me a new set of questions within the parameters of the module, there was also a surprise by-product, an additional creation that I had not anticipated. On most occasions this was a new score that I used in dance improvisation; once, it took the form of an autobiographical text.

I am not reproducing all my notes here, but enjoying the process of reflecting on these surprise creations through yet another creation—this series of thoughts. I can't quite grasp the "original" concepts that we discussed in this programme, and so I will not attempt to capture them here. I suppose I am learning that at any given time, the information I have is a re-emergence of the memory of the last time I considered it. I am hoping to give up the pursuit of knowledge—or to accept that I will never know more than I do now—and to embrace the inter-action of momentary knowledge with my present self. As soon as I am finished with this website, it will be a record of the inter-action of a provisional set of information with a version of myself. Every re-reading will be a new writing, because when we revisit this page, we will not be the people we are now. I will most certainly not have this cup of coffee beside me the next time I read this draft. We vanish in much the same way as dance.

Each enactment of dance, however familiar, is new. Perhaps the score or technique is impersonal, a matter of pure mechanics, an indication that endless and objective reproduction may be possible. But the moment these scores enter my consciousness, they engender new relationships within my psychophysical being. Every repetition is fresh, every cycle of respiration distinct from the one before it. After four months of receiving the gifts of every mentor and participant's thoughts and explorations, I am growing more and more convinced that perhaps the "product" of practice is a myth. I do not practise in order to shine on stage; I practise to meet myself again and again, whether on a yoga mat or studio floor, in a sketchbook or journal, or even in the humdrum rhythm of household tasks. I am arrested by the possibility that two or more practices can meet—that as I meet myself in my dancing, I can also meet my colleague or co-performer, who is also meeting themselves. Given the state of affairs in the world because of COVID-19, my thirst for meeting this other I—who is you—must wait. In the meantime, I am fed by the stories of my fellow artists as they journey through this peculiar moment in time with new perspectives on art practice.

I have begun to wonder if these artistic by-products that I have created over the last few months are telling of the nature of artwork—or at least, of a certain kind of artistic creation. Fruits, flowers and leaves fall from trees when they are no longer needed; the tree continues to grow and give its resources to fresh buds and leaves. What the tree sheds is only as

beautiful as the tree is nourished; and so it follows that any artworks I create can only be as vital as I am filled with vitality. Even as I consider this possibility, prompted by some of our mentors, I also wonder if time, space, and our inter-actions with them—which manifest as artistic creations—are less linear than trees and more rhizomatic in form (yes, yes, cue the Deleuze and Guattari references). This is more than a metaphor; it also troubles my recent conception of artworks as *by-products*. If artistic practice is really one of vibrating, interacting multiplicities, then it is *not* geared towards one conclusive end. But we consider "end" and "product" synonymous—indeed, many of us even use colloquialisms like "end result" and "end product" to describe the thing that we, and our labours, ultimately produce. What if we are not producing at all—how, then, do we conceive of the artwork? We can easily let go of the idea of an *end* product; but I also invite you to suggest alternatives to the phrasing "by-product."

I hope that the various pieces of material that I share here can inter-act with each other and with you, creating various strands of vibration, some resonant and others discordant.