

APPENDIX 2:

Movement/ Body-Based Exercises

Prepared for Dance Engaging Science Meeting nr. 2
17th February 2012

Riley Watts:

The idea of holding a movement workshop for Dance Engaging Science, a workgroup of experts with each a vested yet varying interest in dance, seemed a worthwhile challenge to make. As a dancer I have come to realize the pivotal role of kinesthetic focus in the practice of improvisation. Without an intimate sensory understanding of one's body, it is very difficult to access the kind of spontaneous creativity which is hallmark to dance improvisation. For this reason I led an active meditation in which we could take mental stock of what is physically present in the human form, what relationships are found within the body, and how presence of mind relates to what the body actually does. Utilizing what I call an "inner camera," each participant had the opportunity to research within him/herself how visual imagination connects to the haptic sense of self. The idea in this particular Dance Engaging Science workshop was for the focus to start very locally within each participant, and then to expand the awareness outside the body into relationship to both the space and to others via Esther's proposed exercises.

Esther Balfe:

On presenting the assignment, I first explained the thought process that brought me to choose this specific task. Here was a group of people that had an entirely different range of experience and I was certain would have a different approach to the physical contribution to the task I was about to offer them. I lead them in with a very small taster of the challenges we as improvisers face on a daily basis (The group had been moving from Riley's warmup - imagining a camera inside the body or under the skin, aptly named inner-camera, and applying different qualities of moving). The first part of the workshop was chosen to gain an immediate awareness of space and recording that awareness and patterns one applies in the space. They were asked to walk in the space and to be aware of the traffic and other people's intention in the room. Then we tried the same with different speed ratios and level changes. Once the pattern had been established I asked the group to recall what they had done and attempt to repeat the pattern they thought they had done. We then carried out a similar task but this time got a little more creative in that we allowed 3 different paths for each journey, a varied modality for traveling was applied.

The second part of the workshop was aimed at creative thinking by building a construction from hand held wooden blocks and then transferring what was seen externally and applied to the body. Four tables were placed together in the centre of the studio and for each table a different number of colour building blocks. I asked four people to come forward and arrange the blocks to their own preference. The outcome was different for each individual so we had four very different looking constructions upon the tables. I then asked for the members of the group to choose a table and recreate what was on the table onto their own bodies, then the next stage was to take the structure on their bodyframe into the room and lastly to fabricate the last two tasks into a abstract physical form - purposefully being nonspecific in that they could devise their own rules of conduct. I also mentioned towards the end that if the participants wished to apply skills or tools to create a system then now was the time to do so.