



# Open Forum: Future Facing with Siobhan Davies, Shobana Jeyasingh, Alexandrina Hemsley and Paul Hughes (2018)

*(automated transcript from otter.ai)*

## **SPEAKERS**

Alexandrina Hemsley, Shobana Jeyasingh, Audience, Cecilia Wee, Renée Bellamy, Siobhan Davies, Paul Hughes

*(Introduction: Renée Bellamy speaking in 2021 over spare guitar chords)*

Welcome to Independent Dance. This talk is part of our digital library, which houses an extensive collection of material to read, watch and listen to, drawn from ID's programme over the past decades. This talk is part of the Crossing Borders series, which ran between 2008 and 2019 and featured dance artists in conversation with people from other fields, including philosophers, scientists, geographers, and architects. The entire library is free to access at [independentdance.co.uk/library](http://independentdance.co.uk/library).

*This is a field recording of variable quality with a live audience at Siobhan Davies Studios.*

*(2018 audio file begins)*

## **Emma Gladstone 00:42**

First of all, I would like to thank... This year, back at university anyway, it's our 40th year the opportunity to look forward as well as look back at what's been achieved in that time of year we've gone into further to thinking hard about where to go now and how the scene is changing. So we got invited to hook up today to work on the future with you. So I'm gonna say we're asking for your time here, minute Cecil screen and leads our programme. Okay, so this is going to run for about an hour and a half and I'm going to hand over to our chair, Dr Cecilia Wee. Cecilia is a researcher and educator and curator and is currently head artist development at

## **Cecilia Wee 01:56**

So stay tuned. Thanks very much. And welcome everyone to this evening's open forum on teacher facing. So yeah, as Alan said, we've got about an hour and a half to figure out the future. And I'm sure that you're going to be brilliant, serious for this all. So I'm delighted to introduce a distinguished panel of practitioners from four different generations this evening. Su and Shobana and Alexandrina and Paul, and I'll tell you a bit more about that later on. So I'm hoping this will be reflecting on their experiences and understanding of dance today, and how this informs their perspectives on dance in the future. So I'm someone who's dance curious,

rather than dance knowledgeable. So I have to say that I probably bring more questions, this evening's conversation, live analysis. So to begin, I like to pose some of these thoughts. For example, when we dance together in an ageing population, in a world where climate change, and climate migrants are in reality, where automation will likely drastically change employment, as we know it, and what will be the place of dance in the context of Brexit, by 2037, will have outsourced so much of decision making to artificial intelligence that will be freeing ourselves up to carry out all of the tasks using a new set of skills. Will these activities be dance and choreography? By 2020, and we were really speaking earlier, maybe it's already happening, the average person will have more conversations than bots, and also intelligence agents, then their spouse. So how will dance reflects our relationships with bodies and each other in these might seem like super complex problems in themselves. But maybe by thinking through the future, in relation to the specific activities of dance, we can find ways to to imagine what it might feel like to live in the future. And perhaps I should also say, futures as employed, not future simpler, because I think there are lots of features I love the future is decided and that the future can do for us by our actions today. So I'm going to show a diagram. So this is the future sorry. And it kind of captures some of those thoughts, and it was popularised by futures researcher, Joseph Voros in the year 2000. And It's used quite a lot in design thinking as well as futures research. And I think it's a useful tool for structuring ways of thinking about the future by exploring the development of knowledge, and trends on style. So if might make it a bit easier, and we'll give an example of how it might be used or how we can think about it. So there's this relationship, obviously, between sort of, just because slice futures, in other words, it just like might happen, the plausible, which is slightly smaller, it just seemed it could happen, and the probable, which is, the futures that are likely given current trends, and then down near the bottom, in green is preferable. So for example, the Apollo moon landing was the profile feature, persisted, okay. The project began as really possible in 1961. And it was only one of the knowledge was created during the 1960s. It moved into the realm. And then the problem. And then it finally happens 96 tonight, so we can see how futures are made. By using this context. We can also see that, unlike the possible, plausible and probable futures, the preferable futures around emotion, and judgments, instead of about information and cognition. So I think it's useful to see and it will get to see when conversations on future making always reflect on what is valuable about the culture, something you do have, and also to use such spaces and moments as an opportunity to think about the things that you want to change in culture. And I think that the future is coming, is a way to say that it is us in the future, and that we are active agents of making change, and that there's a shared responsibility, because by making the future today, we can improve its demands. So lots of big ideas. Let me let me introduce this evening's panel. So she will leave this is a I'm sure

07:36

that everybody knows how she's created this wonderful organisation and space and continues to be a choreographer, and a inspiring leader in terms of dances and cultural activity. So our next speaker will be Shobana Jeyasingh. He has a founded by Dance Company in 1988, for instance, created over 60 original and critically acclaimed theatre sites, and an interface works, which toured worldwide Her current site work is called Contagion. And it's inspired by the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918. And it's currently on tour. I'm really short them and we'll say

something. And then, next, we have Alexandrina Helmsley. And she's been performing and choreographing in London and internationally since 2009. Alexandrina believes in dance and the body of the site for expressing health and body politics, she makes dances, short films, self produces and writes. She's interested in the liminal spaces connected with the fracturing, of displacement and emotionality. Alexandrina's works have been intersected live art, dance, dance, dance camera, dance criticism, and visual art. Since 2010, she's collaborated with Jamila Johnson-Small on Project O. And since 2016, with Seke Chimutengwende. On a new work Soon her writing will be already included themselves and today to the festival reader, and this year, Live Art Magazine. are not the end there is a futures code who is a London based artist working across choreographic and visual performance art contexts in collaboration with brown is as taken long as he presents interdisciplinary work in galleries and stages across the UK. A lot of civil servants, a former adviser who writes his opinion kind of results in these dogs tours by different restaurants in 2018 19. Take a more recent video on residence at Siobhan Davis dance with artist, Duffy, and they were commissioned to present a new performance to sort of the (unintelligible) art foundation performance upgrade suite classic. So the evening of sorry, the format of the evening will be this. Each of the panellists are going to solve the question, which was how do you see the future of dance in 2018. This is going to be followed by a discussion, and then open up to questions from the floor. But actually, before we get started, could you sign up as next year. And ask them how you see the future of dance. We're going to take one or two minutes

11:30

You're looking at me today, how to be with the dogs.

**Siobhan Davies** 11:44

I'm going to use two trigger words. One that is compost and one is organisational choreography. Compost, for me is a past which might give me legs to stand on for the future. And we all have compost. So I'm not just talking about me, I'm turning around and going what is the mulch within us, which may no longer be particular like an isolated moment. But that in its breakdown becomes nutritive to us. And it is on that nutrition that we can give us ourselves support. My perspective, I began to dance and knew nothing. So I had to borrow other people's bodies in order to walk in them in order to inhabit movement and try and then find out what that movement was. The next phase I'm being quick here is somatic where I could then in some ways, be the body I am and learn from that. So now the third phase is organisational choreography. And it is helpful to me to think that I am a body. I don't have one. But we are a body of knowledge. We are not Ness, we don't have to be instrumentalized we are something so it's not about just simply putting our knowledge to use with our knowledge. It comes out of us through a corporeal, intellectual, mindful emotional sense, you will experience that we are that rather than borrowing it once Oh, and the other thing is something that guy cracks and says that the body is an event. So it's a multiple form. The building the studio, the entire organisation with the enormous support of artists and alone, right, my programme, Director, we are looking at organisational choreography, because if we are knowledge, if we are movement, and we know and we do know that we have information, which has arrived within us through the collection of everything I've spoken about, if we are that, how is it that we can use a choreographic structure

and move that into the organisation? So instead of the big there being a division, choreography and artists on one side organisation on the other, how do we pull those together and use the skills for history that we already have? And why can't that be the organisational structure as much as anything else? And if we can inhabit that as a structure here, how else could that be? altered, adapted shift did, but use the knowledge that we are and move that into different disciplines? So yes, it will remain within dance and choreography, because that's what we are. But are there ways in which we practice that we have developed over history, not just contemporary history, over the history of dance in terms of folk dance in terms of cord dancing, in terms of theatre dancing, in terms of contemporary dance, and in terms of the dance of the future, we have this hugely volatile, active history of what we are, and why can't that be used right across the board? And are we able to make that happen? And I believe we can all together, do that.

**Cecilia Wee** 15:50

Thank you Siobhan.

15:52

Yeah, that's,

**Cecilia Wee** 15:54

it's really that's really inspirational kind of model for us to think about, I guess, how we act together, and how an art form can develop in its own way, as well as listening to lots of things that are going on in the wider cultural sector, about shifting hierarchies. And thinking about power in different

**Siobhan Davies** 16:24

ways. I mean, an including other disciplines, I mean, I'm sort of slightly take that as read, because I think that's what's been happening across the board. But by including other disciplines, then the knowledge is added to I just don't, I'm worried that we think of our skill as instrumental. Whereas I think of it as is, as what we've got.

**Shobana Jeyasingh** 16:48

If we want to do it, well, I've decided actually, I don't think I'm competent to, in some ways, predict the future or even look into the future, I don't think I'm going to be good at it. Because if someone asked me when I was 18, what I wanted to be here, I had no idea what it would have been doing now, I mean, the last thing in the world, with a foot is being choreographer in London. So I'm kind of very aware of the contingencies that actually affect any predictions of the future. And of course, any of my predictions would be kind of a preferential predictions, which have been easy to understand, because obviously, you know, I love dance and dance making. So any of my preferential future images would be more of that. And more of that influencing other things like suicide is Contra. So actually, what I'm going to do is, there were a couple of moments in my dance making experience, which actually made it very clear to me that, in fact, any future actually depends on certain, or it made me understand better, the context within which my dance making actually was happening. So whatever the future holds, I realise it's

those things, you know, whatever affects those things, rather than anything that I might want. So just to give you a couple of sample, I did a project called trespass, where I worked with University College, London, their architectural department, and the idea was they would make a robot, and I would choreograph a dance with with a robot and the robot didn't look human, but doesn't have to. So robot just as an artificial, the intelligent entity, there was a really interesting experience. Obviously, I realised I was actually choreographing the robot, but the person who programmed the robot, and it was, but so it was interesting to see how the dancer responded, how I could actually make a piece of choreography, which is very different to make a choreography between two humans. So one way you could think will actually be add more of this kind of thing. It may mean, we creative ideas might actually become more cherished. Or it could be the other way around. That actually, the primacy of, of the biological entity of a human might actually not be that important in the future. So that kind of made me think Well, yes. You know, my whole choreographic practice depends on the fact that there are biological entities that I work with. If they're not there, or the balance between that and artificial entity changes, then obviously, that's going to have a huge difference to the dance future. The other thing is when I was in Beijing many years ago, and I went to see the head of dance at the Beijing University, we're talking about choreography. And he kind of said, well, maybe you might like to come and make a piece here, but it would be with a group of people. So and he was kind of trying to tell me that actually he found a scene. The signature in a piece of choreography quite egotistic. He felt that actually, that really, choreography was a group effort. And so therefore, once you have loads of signatures, and so, I mean, I realised, actually I take for granted that my choreographic practice comes about because I live in a particular kind of economy, which is a liberal capitalist economy, which with a significant amount of state intervention, because while we're in America, where there's a significant amount of state intervention, micro choreographic future will be very, very different. Because I live in Northern Europe, where you have state intervention, you do have public policy, which, you know, together with education and help office now, obviously, it's dwindling, because when I first had interaction with the Arts Council was very much on the idea that arts could do when they were supported, because they couldn't hack the market. But now that's very suddenly and very powerfully changed, as your success or failure is very much judged about whether you can help the market or not. So it's those things. So you know, the, especially for contemporary dance, it's the sort of valuing of the individual voice, you know, people, some people may disagree, they might say, well, actually, why is the individual voice any more important than the question was, surely we should be making dancer actually celebrates connectedness with people rather than making dance that actually celebrates our individual voice. And, and in some ways, it also kind of connects to how technology has moved. Because, you know, sometimes I think we're actually I'm just creating content for my company, it is just a different way of saying I make dance. But I think when people say they make content, what becomes apparent is the whole structure is not it's the platform and the content and the consuming of the content, they're all one in the same act. So actually, the maker of content is not any more privileged than the maker of the platform, or the person who's consuming and interacting with it. So I think that's another huge change factor in how the future could look. Because I think when, you know, technology, and this kind of process of co authoring becomes more powerful. That certainly is going to have a huge effect on dance making as I have experienced it. Again, I don't know whether it's a good or a bad thing. Then accordingly, brilliant.

Thanks, everyone. You know, perhaps we don't need to rely on single people's unique voice, so believing unique voices ended with the last one. Brexit. Again, you know, politics and economics plays such a huge role that actually, it's almost like if you were saying, you know, the mulch that be grown is the water we're swimming in. But actually, it takes something to make us realise what our water consists of. And then certainly things that we've taken for granted, could change. And obviously, if and when Britain leaves Europe, so many things that need to change. And if we move away from the Northern European model of subsidy for the arts, from the public purse, and we move nearer to either China, or Russia, or Malaysia, or indeed America, then you know, that's going to be a totally different future for the others. Thank you. Thank you, Shannon.

**Cecilia Wee 23:58**

I was just wondering, because I guess, co authoring, co authoring this is a really, obviously it's really exciting. But then, one of the things that comes up with the process of co authoring might be conflict or difficulties, decision making and those sorts of processes. Do you have some reflections on how dance? Maybe a dance choreography has a particular idea about that?

**Shobana Jeyasingh 24:33**

I think we have it. I mean, it depends on what sort of dance you're making. Certainly in contemporary dances alone, and one of the good tradition of working with tasks. You know, were certainly for myself with my dancers creativity, as well as my own and, you know, the designer, the lighting designer, so it's always been it's put the roots of being a very collaborative action. And obviously, we still have the war between the performance and the audience. You know, we don't go to the audience about how they think I can finish this piece. And then sometimes I wish I could do that. But so, obviously, those words might be broken in the future, you know, but I think, in fact, I think dance has a lot to teach about core three.

**Alexandrina Hemsley 25:24**

I was wondering Yeah, just to build on really what's already been said. I think I and others, maybe we have bodies or identities that are impacted, physically impacted by a sense of a curved future, be that racism, sexism, homophobia, this sort of trends and systems of oppression that can marginalise experiences? So I think coming out of question, the future, really makes me want to hold that different histories create different futures, and always want to kind of question when we say we, what exactly do we mean and how to hold this way as a as a space where there are also divisions, and that doesn't necessarily undermine or cause the waiter crumble, but it's more just like a kind of, we need to have some kind of container. And of course, it's an idealistic container. So I'm sort of always trying to balance this kind of dystopian or pessimistic, cynical perspective, with a sense of like, but you know, dancing, so full of potential and the body and of all, kind of embodied practices or something, there's something about dance for me, I guess, as a bit of context. I do love improvisation, and making scores. And that always helps me just make a world that I would want to see or make a world that I can live through onstage or in a gallery or that isn't available to me, outside of that very, like particular quite precious space. I questioned a little bit whether or not the body will become a rarity in the future. I kind of feel like, maybe we were talking about this a bit downstairs that maybe we will just become more and more in demand because we're the ones that are like

plugged in to the body. There's also some writing by authors like Samuel Delaney afrofuturist, who kind of really play with this potential, though, of not being loyal to the human form. So a bit like you're coping with the robots. Sandra Delaney, there's a book called Babel 47, I think. And the characters have kind of these big cosmetic implants that give them like lions claws, or like Phoenix feathers. And there's just a lot of interspecies play in the past of that, as we continue to resolve and also like return to a sense of identity or identities. And that was a bit of a ramble. But what I did was I made a poem, I wrote a Nocturne, which is a form of poetry that speaks about the night I guess. And I was drawn to this idea of the nights as this moment where things can tilt and shift. So yeah, I will just read that actually. 2040 ad a Nocturne. The world is burning up and artists are burning out. Our lights flicker as we interconnect with OSI, an extended exhale, and a gasp that started decades ago. performance artists tideline lip soak fabric driftwood, marking where coastal land has washed out to sea. Trees are under the weight of infinite years. Forests are close to giving up. The future of dance looks like midnight, the inky night time where bodies suspend their desires and tensions or allow them to play out in dream waters, softer spaces. the cusp of a new day lies for a moment next to the underbelly of history, sharing a bed dance gets interesting again. Dance Acts Now or never dance assembles fleeting gestures and full blown three hour dance concerts no interval kind of like back in the day, there was an onstage downpour of glitter and ice. A man sobs with relief as the patriarchy untangles the collective sigh of spells threads of resistance from open mouths. uptempo where bodies are supported in their restlessness. Rather than trying to be tireless. We in our differences loop and negotiate. We in our differences observed the dust. The never ending continue and exposure finally stops. Or rather, these nighttime worlds are full of slippery slopes to the nowhere we won't have seen yet. For the mountain wide strides to be everything we have always felt here, pastels are out, mindfulness is out, mess and continuously cracking walls are in really in, we pound it all out and down the walls come patiently and explosively impossible. I know. Like cells finding simultaneous rest, and we burn down the walls come, and systems where bodies are assaulted by a gaze abuses of power, or touch, or a word that whips crumble, we in our differences, observe the dust, a final spasm, our finale

**Cecilia Wee 30:53**

Yeah, that was really beautiful. And I love the phrase, that kind of reframing we in our differences, and how actually, that's acknowledged, but dance. And that moment of performance is a moment to bring us together, and foster kind of want to experience things and to do things together.

**Paul Hughes 31:21**

To extend the presence of being the youngest person that was really just wanted to talk about like clips and hoverboards the whole time. This is what the you can do. So I was thinking about, like this, this question of how does dance engage with the future, how will dance kind of be engaged with the future. And there was this like amazing little sheep voting about all of these facts, and like all the technologies that will be there, and how our lives will be different with automation and these things. And then I remember being at a talk a previous independent dance crossing borders talk, where it's amazing people were talking about this project that we're doing with the NHS, and how dance can be kind of made use of in the NHS, and help recovery,

incredible results. But I think something I think a lot about is not just how come down to engage with the world or have an art to engage with the world, but have an art to disengage with the world, as well. And I think kind of, we know, to be suspicious of Silicon Valley, and then all these different means of harnessing capital through kind of new technologies. So maybe kind of I'm thinking of this future where we have ordered these amazing things. And then thinking like, wow, an exciting time for the body to be kind of clumsy with all of these things, and not productive and not smooth and, and sort of thinking a little bit about Charlie Chaplin in the factory and like, completely breaking the system of production. And so what a great challenge for kind of arcing current treated, can find new ways of getting in the way or tripping over or dropping things or breaking things. So this question of disengagement also feels very important. And not that it's, I think it's obvious or given. You can't see me sort of just easily disengaged in the world. But how do you resist modes and platforms of cultural production, which are used for a kind of powers that we all know, kind of exist around it. So this is kind of a thought in my mind. And then I was, I was kind of admiring this beautiful future can and I was thinking about these words of probable plausible and possible, this kind of escalation there. And I was thinking about, as well, not just what will be in the future, but like, who will be in the future? Who will still be around that in the future in 20 years time? And this for me a question of persistence and sustainability with that. So there's a question of who can afford to stay in dance for 20 years. And who will there will always be sort of new graduates to the artform who are very excited and keen and full of energy and willing to do lots of things for free. And but they also burn out and this is a problem. So if we're thinking about the future in that way, we could say a probable futures. Yes, there's some people who are still around, there are some people who have kind of become institutions or joined institutions. And there are some people who have burned out and stop doing it or become more specific in where they practice choreography. And that could be they kind of evolved to where they age when Academy all of these different ways that they negotiate, continue to practice. And institutions will rise and fall and our taxes will disappear and maybe other funding bodies will appear and people will surface somehow it will be artistic production. What's like a plausible future is like okay, well definitely there won't be an art cancelling Brexit and our kind of relationship to the economy of the continent will be a problem, all of these things, whatever. Seems pretty plausible. But also it's kind of plausible that artists will find ways of gathering and making things happen still and yes, we do. We're very into As with this, and some of these will last and become institutions, and some of these won't and never will get written out. And that's fine. And you people will do new projects and all of this thing of continuing and persistence. And then like what's possible, and maybe possibility here is really to do with significant institutional reform, about what what this economy is and how it works and how we make work and who is making work. And all of these things, and I can't imagine what that is. But I think about who, who bears the responsibility of enacting this change? Because we're all sort of in this scene and tried to make it work. And it's difficult for everyone. But it's particularly difficult for people who aren't middle class or aren't white, or who aren't men, all of these things. And so I think about if we're thinking about a future or a change in the future, who does the burden of speaking up or doing things or jumping in? Rely on? And how can you recognise the many very invisible Labours and efforts that people do to sustain the brilliant things that happen today, that continue to happen? It's like this incredible scene of UK Dance, that there's just like, who's got who's doing a lot of

holding up? And who could push them more and who can risk offering change all of these things, I think you're gonna find thank you so much. And thank you, thank you for

**Cecilia Wee** 36:32

kind of opening it up, to bring us back into the present in some ways and trying to lead us through this is kind of the journey towards Mykelti. Wandering all in? Got lots of questions. Before we started our conversation that downstairs we were discussing, suddenly, things that we want to discuss what not to talk about now. So maybe I'll start with makeup. What do you think? dancers and choreographers in the future will be like,

**Paul Hughes** 37:21

what would they be learning? This is such a cool question, because they didn't really study dance, or like, excellent. Have no idea what happens in conservatories? What do you think?

**Cecilia Wee** 37:33

What do you think that we need to be learning? I guess that's Yeah, see, yeah, that's the vital kind of thing as you know, or maybe later on, we want our teachers but yeah. Because we were talking about robots. We're also cooking downstairs about animals and an audience. Could their teachers be?

**Paul Hughes** 37:56

Oh, my gosh, I take that class. I didn't know I think a little bit I think about like, this interdisciplinarity. And it seems kind of endlessly, we go towards more and more blurring of these disciplinary things. I mean, in some ways, this feels really exciting. And that dancers Yes, should be kind of in contact with sculpture, and theatre, and philosophy, all these different disciplines. But I think also, I kind of really think there's, there's a risk with that if something lost around the specificity of disciplinary histories. And it's not nothing to maintain knowledge, it's not nothing to keep an archive. And I think I would want to, I would want to dance to still kind of elbow other disciplines out of the way and sort of insist on itself, whatever that itself is, but to retain the specificity to have a territory and to be willing to cross that territory and flirt and all of these things, but to kind of, I think, I hear something is lost in endless interdisciplinarity. There's still in use and having different different archives, different rooms, different histories.

**Siobhan Davies** 39:05

We live in a present that still favours the mind intellectual pursuit, nothing wrong with that, but I think we do need to uphold the, in the intelligence of being in the world, through every core parcel, neuron that we are made of. So the learning may, could be many ways of learning, but I think if we don't honour the fact that we are our corporeal knowledge has presence, then that will make our lives harder.

**Alexandrina Hemsley** 39:42

Makes me think a bit about what you were saying around responsibility, because if we have these institutions that produce bodies so that the kind of layer on desires and wants onto these bodies, where's this responsibility? And it's almost like, where do you want to take aim? Again,

it's like do What do we want to see come down because dance and dance training is still so rooted in hierarchy? And I yeah, I think we could take aim there. I don't know how maybe we can do it all together. But I think there's, there are questions, I think dance does still need to be asking about what we put our own bodies through if we value these bodies so much.

40:25

Shannon, would you like to kind of maybe

**Cecilia Wee** 40:28

you could comment on on or think about those questions.

**Shobana Jeyasingh** 40:33

Yeah, I mean, you asking, What would a dancer future training? What would it have to involve? Or would it be different than I was kind of thinking? I guess, we're not the only people who at certain times in history have caused lots of changes are happening. You know, I'm sure. Cars were probably incredibly radical when everyone's right used to riding horses, because suddenly, you could just like, shoot off with this incredibly speed. machine. So, but actually, classical dance homes, ballet, needless to dance, I mean, you know, they have survived for so many hundreds of years. And they've survived incredible changes. I mean, the biggest changes, suppose, I mean, probably even greater than digital technologies, when people realise the earth was round, as opposed to flop them in. Gosh, what an amazing revolution that would have been in people's heads. And yet, you know, dance technique probably didn't change amazingly. So, I think I kind of have a faith that, you know, we will we all need to remember, I think all this kind of historical, you know, maybe they may be taught a bit differently, I don't know. Hopefully, there will be taught a bit more gently historic transforms. So but I think there will always be one element, where it's about memory, you as human beings, we do treasure, our history as a group. So I think, you know, I have a feeling I mean, 2014, that formula readings. So I'm sure there will be groups of people doing ballet and button a couple.

**Cecilia Wee** 42:31

Maybe, maybe this is a good time

42:32

to open up to

**Cecilia Wee** 42:33

the question from the floor. Does anyone have any comments or would like to

**Audience** 42:43

know? I was so confused. I am interested about the legacy history. And you know, what to say about the mind kind of embodiment and disruption. And I think isn't the same, it's actually quite connected, because technique, and thinking about, you know, ancient Greek poetry, which still, you know, still kind of hard for some of the poems, and it's, it's still something to do with what that technique emotional level, the techniques dance, they, I was thinking that one is when one

dances inadvertently, I mean, obviously, the focus is developing that, but isn't that happens and isn't destruction, I think about what you said about the shareholders. And the fact that all this technologies of importance, do the paint the substance of it is for us, we're interested in disruption, not silicon. And I think that this is just happening all the time. And I think we just will, don't we think that we're just doing what we're doing now, which has been done.

**Paul Hughes 44:13**

I think for me, there's a little bit of a, I think I'm really, I do sympathise a lot, but you're saying I think there could be a little bit of a risk for me in talking around this role of like, the body and technology around this kind of idea of an authentic body, or like a natural button. And, and I think something that happens in that conversation that we should be vigilant towards, is one questions about like, what does the natural body look like, who's got a natural body with these things? And to is kind of, not necessarily fetishizing like an absence of technology with that because there's lots of people for whom technology is the kind of part of their daily life and, and kind of provide so I think I'm kind of with you in lots of ways, but just I feel like it's important to note that

**Siobhan Davies 45:03**

In my innocence, I think when I started a dance, I thought we will not I knew we didn't all have the same body. But I thought to some extent how I was learning would would bring them equality across different dancers because of the commonality of the technique. And it's, it's been a long learn that we we don't want, of course, when we're not the same, and actually, that's the glory. So you may want to work for an occasion, you may want to walk through a slightly narrower door with another group of people while you are learning something, but actually, you need at a certain point to expand and include whoever is there in in their everythingness. And I don't know why it took a while

**Cecilia Wee 45:54**

probably knows, what do you think about this relationship? Or? How do you think people will think about professionalism as the idea of professional lawyers and non professionals or amateurs? In in that future dance in the future? I mean,

**Shobana Jeyasingh 46:19**

if an interesting question, it kind of goes back to I think, what is going to be valued? Because, you know, in some cultures, like, you know, in Bali, for example, people dance, there's no, there's no concept of like, amateur or professional, everybody dances. I mean, maybe one can call it folk dance. But actually, it all depends on, people spend a lot of time learning, you know, and it was the same in Europe during the Renaissance time, there was no professional poet or amateur poets, if you're a poet, your report, I mean, you could also do other things at the same time. So I think it's to do with specialisation of certain things. I mean, now we're at a stage where we kind of think that if you're not specialised and you're not professional, that's the amateur professional.

**Alexandrina Hemsley 47:12**

And basses work that way more and more, this minimum, minimum salary that's going to be needed. It's going to have huge repercussions if it goes through for what the dance ecology looks like in the UK. And that's a very real and like you say, kind of, and very false kind of way of like, specialised, so rather than like Porthcawl to like keep things a bit specialist and kind of maintain integrity around certain things some of the time. This is like, yeah, no, this huge influence that's going to just redirect lots of stuff. And I yeah, I know. Yeah. How, how do we live? Have you lived?

**Siobhan Davies** 47:57

There seems in creasing hunger from, let's call them the audience for the moment. But I'd quite like to try and keep the idea of audience and artists on the on the Mobius strip together. But there does seem to be an increasing hunger for them want to not to be only the, they may want to be the observer for a period of time. They may want to be an interlocutor another time, and they may simply want to do some of it, but in in a way that is appropriate and enjoyable for them to do. So the dude, the again, we might be horses for courses in a way some people really want to spend as much time as they can to do this thing. Somebody may want to spend less time but be there and be relevant. And I feel that's happening more.

**Cecilia Wee** 48:51

And I suppose it's this idea that you can kind of feed multifaceted in your international response, depending on what you need at that time, rather than making a fix having this complex idea that you are this, you know, this is your this is your sort of relationship or your explanation for dogs

49:20

I guess still don't promote. So I was just saying. Like, as long as the technology improves, I feel like the live experience changes from these T shirts, there's I think that might see more of a shift in that in the future. For example, if you want to just sit back and watch it's very easy to go on to the internet and watch ads in that way connected in that way or through purchasing blu ray, was it stage two or stage four or whatever was going to be the answer needs to offer something in that moment that A simple spectator on screen can't get as sometimes as does anybody live? I'd love to see you get such a thrill from being alive. But I think that will maybe see more of a shift in that response? Or do you see more of these like, secret seminars and things like that, whereas it's going to experience what you can experience in a different way in a more interactive and inclusive way. And then that's quite interesting, and whether we'll see more of that in dance in the future.

50:40

You want some songs? Sorry. So we answer

**Cecilia Wee** 50:47

that. You might like to respond to that.

**Shobana Jeyasingh** 50:53

Yeah, I mean, certainly, there are two different experiences of opera at the moment. You can go to the theatre and see dance. And then there's a particular kind of specialness where you know, you're both existing in that slice of time. Or you can watch dance on screen. But of course, there's a bit of a difference, because dance on screen. The technique, this is sort of an added thing, because someone's got edited it, they filmed it in a particular way they've lived in a particular way, the whole other kind of tech technology that's between you and watching, it becomes even more mediated. So I didn't know I think, like the show that we were touring at the moment, I mean, we did a live stream. And you know, we just had 1000 9000 Viewers, which obviously, you cannot bet it's very, very difficult and expensive to get that amount of people when you're running around the country. visiting different theatres. Now, you know, that's something I think, because I think sometimes in the past, people have felt that that virtual audience was 1000, people who watched it online, are not real audiences, compared to the ones who, you know, bought a ticket or come to a particular place. And I think that I very much shift, because to me, they're both real. Example, somebody watched it in transit lounge at Frankfurt Airport, on the iPad, someone else watched it in the Great Hall in Winchester. And I don't know whether, you know, they're just both different. They're both on offer. I don't know what the one kind of audience is going to be more than the other. I don't think they will. I think my only kind of worry is that real time audience, unless one makes it free, might become a bit of a luxury product. So that's something I think you kind of got guard against. Yeah, it

**Alexandrina Hemsley 53:07**

makes me think when you're speaking about accessibility, and the internet is a very accessible way of experiencing performance that does slice across some economic barriers. I may speak to your questions, again of blurriness, because even then a lot in the live experience, now you have so many people like filming on their phones and this idea, I wonder what will happen to a sense of intimacy, or what will happen to the one to one performances, you know, I wonder if we'll maybe see a reemergence of that form, because of how often even the live experience gets mediated through a kind of screen, and also as a performer, the impact of that, but you're kind of, you're doing something that's so responsive to the like flesh in the room, and then you're like pixels are going out into these other spaces that kind of are beyond your level beyond your imagining, which is kind of amazing, but it's also kind of terrifying. This is the thing with the internet now. It's like, amazing, and very scary, same time. Do you think about

**Audience 54:13**

the, you know, what he was saying about the species being precious to them make them and I just wonder whether, you know, the digitalization of that Yeah.

**Alexandrina Hemsley 54:27**

I think it's definitely a tension that I like to play with. I've recently with my collaborator, Jim Miller, got a film that play well, it puts our bodies into a digital space as a way, again, maybe better flight control over it having a bit of command over that, because of precisely this kind of lack of control of the body and the images that can kind of come up so I I always like to see the potential and things I guess so I don't know if value would be subtracted. I think it's just more material to be aware and critical of but that that can still generate kind of like, really exciting out

of this world visual representations, because we also are only a body in this space in this time with this breath, you know, rather than, like, digitally, you can be anyone and anything. So, yeah,

**Shobana Jeyasingh** 55:16

I think it's kind of seems to be like different degrees of mediation, right, as opposed to a dichotomy between natural real time and digital. Because, you know, there's one thing we learn, I mean, as current proposal, people who've done even biology is mainly mediated units were kind of

**Alexandrina Hemsley** 55:41

meant cycles

**Shobana Jeyasingh** 55:42

by chemical entities, which have been continuously mediated in time and space. So I mean, even putting out a live stream, still, it's not an accidental thing. You know, you have to plan carefully how many cameras are going to have How is it going to be edited? Is it going to be lit in a particular way? Are we going to change something? How's the person going to make six different feeds? So it's just a, and yet in the theatre, there's also a huge degree of mediation in a way where it's the background to the choreography, where's the foreground? You know, what's the lighting design going to do to it? What's the costume going to do? So it's just a greater degree of mediation? So I don't really see it's just, for me, it's a difference in kind as opposed to a difference in degree as opposed to in kind. So it's more extreme in some ways. But then so lots of other things.

**Siobhan Davies** 56:43

Just curious, because we're talking about the the OS at this moment between audience and the thing that they're going to see within what, whichever medium. But if I, if I peel back, and I go back into words that we all know, practice and process. And I'm also wondering if there's a real curiosity about what this engagement we have in our different ways? Where can the interaction about process or practice be with the audience. And if they learned to value that or learn to give it accreditation, then we will have more opportunity to have practice and process? Because at the moment, it's that we could be losing that because it's not recognised? Or because it's not seen or it's not understood? So there may be other interactions as we reach the moment in which we might want the work to be seen in one way? What are the on the way, demarcations that we could enjoy?

57:52

Yeah, I was thinking that thinking about about baking in general is actually quite an optimistic endeavour. And he's opening up have to imagine something that you don't notice. It might be outside of that little code that you don't you don't yet know, that you do an embrace. Or also embrace not knowing as a cultural thing. I wouldn't use any space of pessimism and weakness.

**Paul Hughes** 58:26

I was I was talking to Alex from Europe in our search of live chat to your partner moment. And and we were talking about, like, Do you actually think about the future of dance at all? And we were sort of like, No, not really. But I was trying to sort of describe like, what my relationship might, it might be to it. And I think for me, it's much more about rather than like seeing things and aspiring to go towards them. It's about like, seeing things and like, trying to shy away from or avoid. And so it's like, sort of more like looking backwards into the future, looking at the horror of the present and the past. So I'm a big advocate of negative negativity and doubt, and suspicion and avoidance. Because I think, yeah, I think the unknown has a lot of potential. And sometimes Yeah, if you're only if you can only materially work with unknown or it's yeah, you can work to avoid that. And that can be productive I think

**Cecilia Wee** 59:32

Do you mean that kind of tension between the the unknown and and feeling that the the feeling that you need to confront it but also have a distance from it as well?

**Paul Hughes** 59:48

I think I'm trying to, like go into the unknown. I think it's an I think the that direction or movement is motivated from like a horror and loathing and dislike or to disentangle myself from what I only know too well,

**Alexandrina Hemsley** 1:00:03

yeah, that's what was gonna say. But sometimes there just isn't any distance, there isn't a distance. So yeah, it's kind of like, you can feel very static. So it's interesting that immediately speak about the future, even the shape of the cone that's like forward motion as it's very linear, and it's going this way. It's like, what happens to the what happens to the frozen moment? And yeah, like, when he was when we were chatting, I got this real sense of like, needing to do that, so that you can just take more and more in, but it's like this. Which, yeah, even emotionally, this is more like a disgust place. So yeah.

1:00:44

That's because maybe the side, Leslie,

**Audience** 1:00:54

at Fox, I think there's something about this painting that you were talking about which there's something about empathy in the line, for me, so it's a screen, which happens, it just starts as we sitting here in the shed. And there's something about the kind of acts of Bath, that no matter how you, whatever you do, however, you lay in the layers, and the layers and layers and layers and less related to common sense, meaning just live at the live moments and the empathy, what the potential is about, I think human beings always be drawn towards the accessibility of that. And that being a sort of an elitist experience is terrifying. But what I'm potentially hopeful of is that the science is seems to be somewhat catching up with this notion that artists have always known for millennia about them. It's about connectivity or something that, you know, it's hard to put words on. And I think that potentially does this type of thing. And I think, because there's no neuroscience and social anthropology, and all this science is catching up, and it's scary, it is

happening. And I'm hopeful, potentially, there is support coming from the map in a multidisciplinary way. Maybe looking in the future.

**Alexandrina Hemsley 1:02:38**

That gives me a bit of a bit of hope. Sometimes when you're speaking, I was thinking about how science can kind of pathologize the body or bodily experiences or even in like psychological terms, how fractures are deemed as like, impossible, really horrible things that we need to always work towards integrating into being one and then to being like, I accept myself for all the things I am. But I'm one thing rather than this kind of like, messy, like somewhat broken, trying to cope kind of place. And so yeah, because we, if dance can like reevaluate the sciences or help to evaluate the science, I think that's kind of amazing. But yeah, the self and how it how we live in this thing of like being in the world, how about is isn't about. It isn't about pathologizing, when someone might need to avoid something because of the like, status quo, and they're maybe trying to dream up a future in that space where others might see it as a void. And I think there's kind of this just the shift in perspective, isn't it? And I think, again, the body or like being with a body can help as a kind of guide.

**Shobana Jeyasingh 1:03:48**

Did this project with robots. I spoke to quite a few people at King's wood, the informatics department where they were heavily into building different types of robots. And actually, you know, it was quite interesting, because one of the things that they could they were they were physically the one that the action or they found the hardest to, to get any kind of artificial entity to imitate with walking like a human being does. And he was explained to me that actually, the reason I was so difficult because when you walk, you just take a risk. You said it's a bit like throwing a ball and just we hope that the other person catches it, because you launch yourself forward. And you kind of have a belief that you can actually recover and take the next step. So most robots that you see they're either on wheels, or they have a kind of really clunky walk because they and the other thing is that empathy, because there's one thing that they haven't actually managed to build, is that part of the human way of inhabiting

**Alexandrina Hemsley 1:04:58**

I had the voice it's very hard to Today in AI, I cannot like Martin Sims has exhibition on I think still running, where they made themselves into a kind of Avatar. They use that voice, but it was really hard to replicate. And even the robot does not, it just does not sound bites, but they were trying so hard to attend to this quite likely that something is happening. So internal, just can't be it can only be approximated.

**Siobhan Davies 1:05:28**

Just listening, sorry, just listening to it's a, it's your thoughts is becoming the words. And it's that distance and the intonation between the thought and the word which must be very hard.

**Cecilia Wee 1:05:40**

But that is also about the how the sound resonates within the body, and this body as opposed to another body. Question.

**Audience** 1:05:51

And I'm not quite sure this is a question that I've been thinking about some of the comments where they were talking about dance in other contexts, like, particularly in health context, like with older adults, it's generational complex, and in the NHS, and I was thinking about what you're saying about this being on a level that people make her the platform, and the consumer and that in some ways, it's a new platform for getting familiar feels like some way as an athlete finding funding for the value of conversate this is the value of balance, we do have an impact on these things in the world. And that also made me think about what you were saying about how our engages in the world and actually maybe we want to disengage, but there's this kind of complex relationship between the values that we know themselves have for for what also value the dance for about as far as I can say, that is not just there as a means of

**Alexandrina Hemsley** 1:07:06

mediating between another field

1:07:11

question I was interested in what you said earlier about organisation or reality plays something from from culture as in the arts and well policy or therapy or from the arts. And so sculpture as a group culture, organisation, culture is such

**Cecilia Wee** 1:07:47

a similar picture of architecture

**Audience** 1:07:52

site received our position between us on stage to notice any arts as, as the previous person sales,

**Cecilia Wee** 1:08:08

in arts and in NHS as a separate graphic people's organisation is.

**Siobhan Davies** 1:08:25

Think it starts with the fact that we are working within a developed bureaucratic structure which isn't going to allow us to thrive as well as our potential demands. So if the historical bureaucratic structure is in place, probably arrived, for good reason in different ways. But now I feel it's not the right platform. So it's no good saying it's not the right platform, what would be another kind of platform that would be recognisable, both to an audience to a funder but more importantly, to the artist because otherwise the artists can be in constantly in the fear of trying to survive without necessarily being able to negotiate with the organisation that might help them do that, or different organisations that might help them to do that. So is it devising common language? Is it devising choreographic structures that include things like questioning, risk, observation, empathy, clarity, argument, theory. Next, but all of those things are part of our makeup but they are quite often not the ones that are ever observed in a bureaucratic organisation, because they've learned not to do that, because they feel they ought to have, I don't know, some other

mode of, of behaviour or structure or learning, you know, how do you VET courses, their education is about how you learn to support the arts by being an organisational structure. And I'm not, I'm not just thinking about that, in, in terms of an organisation like ours is genuinely on the alert, to be sensitive and thoughtful. But if we are working within a bureaucratic structure, like the Arts Council, or a hugely bureaucratic structure, which is one government after another, or a huge bureaucratic structure is education, which is not necessarily feeding us in a good way. So my my thought is trying to find an alternative and robust model, which will help us to survive and if there's a bleakness that I have, is that I am hearing or witnessing or seeing artists that I value with my entire being. And it's getting harder for them. So it's my it's my, our way of turning around and going. Is there another way of doing that and trying to talk to as many artists as possible about how they might add to that, and trying to and not even trying, you know, my organisation very much trying to make enabled something like that. But it's unknown at the moment. But I think it's becoming more known. I couldn't tell you right now.

**Audience** 1:11:47

Yeah, sorry. I just I work very closely with some specialists actually have an interest. I think, responding more directly, also, people see said, encapsulates the organisational project really well, and it's a bit terrifying. And it could fail, which is something that I think we are is a thing that we have to be really honest about. And, you know, I think what we have the privilege, and it's a real privilege of doing is, is perhaps modelling something which that might be backed into a cultural sphere, which is what the person I decided we're very astutely pointed to, which is the larger social or cultural context in which we sit and thinking about how, I guess, capacities which we identify with. This is very clear, DSP native, I guess, into this artform, but actually, those are capacities which humans have. But they just patches are not called upon knowingly, as often as they might be. So whether I'm sorry. Whether we might? Yeah, I mean, it's sort of three distinct students talking about about contact, contact with process or contact with with the kinds of the messy bits of the art form and make those capacities amongst a wider public that they might have as well and set up follow different forms of activity together with you know, recognising our context is quite particular, we're not going to spread in totally adversarial facilities. Wouldn't that be great? But, but anyhow, we could share something we might learn from that which could be informative or observant of the wider

1:13:43

cultural social sphere. I think for you,

**Cecilia Wee** 1:13:52

hopefully, we can start working on it. Opinions through awkward groups. And then finally saying, someone someone else's questions, and I'm just gonna say it, and then maybe you can decide which one of those to respond to all. Okay? How will the futures is one lecture private and public spaces affects the ways that we move and the ways that we dominance? Why would we be dancing in 2040? And where will this take place? How do you think imagine technologies such as VR or impact on choreography for all ages are dominant on the one about the learning and the future of like? What's my view interdisciplinary practices for this collaboration and methods for making marks for the manage over the next few years? How will we proliferation of

nonwovens employees and creators faces not only changing perceptions and opportunities, but also shape dominance as an art form, and what issues campaigns will be eligible for bodies on the move? What will dance artists need to examine and investigate and investigate through their work?

**Siobhan Davies** 1:15:19

Can't remember the first question How

**Alexandrina Hemsley** 1:15:23

many of you see? Okay? Maybe it's a bit along. So yeah. The thing about VR, I suddenly thought, what if it can, VR can like cultivate a curiosity in the body again, or in sensation? Because we asked amazing, it's amazing. You go there, and you're like, it's great. So I just I wonder again, about this exposing process. And if firstly, people need to plug into their own physicality. And if maybe the privacy of a bedroom VR is the place to do it.

**Shobana Jeyasingh** 1:16:13

Simple one, but I think you want your questions was, would we still be dancing? Yes, I think yeah. Definitely. Call us on

**Paul Hughes** 1:16:31

that. I was thinking about, like, yeah, what will be urgent or something? And I think for me, it's like, I don't know, still, like, I think dance is weird. It's like, I'm gonna get up and move in front of you. And you get to watch me like that is that's still going to be weird in 2014. And like, we'll still be dealing with that question. There's more than like, that will perpetually be strange. To solve that.

**Siobhan Davies** 1:17:03

Problem I suppose in the positive sense, I think last year was the 50th year I've been involved in dance. And so I know it's not bad, is it? Oh my god. And I think I've lived through an incredibly privileged time for doing that. And I must recognise that so I really put my spurs on every morning and going that's important that somebody else is going to be able to do that a great deal so that's why I want dance to be here and that's why they will be here. And that's why you all again, help that.

**Cecilia Wee** 1:17:51

So very many things used to see them face to face as I was a three learning today and all us

*(Outro: Renée Bellamy speaking in 2021)*

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