



Touching the thing that touches you with Charlie Morrissey and Lisa Nelson (2016)

(automated transcript from otter.ai)

SPEAKERS

Katye Coe, Charlie Morrissey, Lisa Nelson

(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 2018, 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/forward-slash-library. This is a field recording of variable quality with a live audience at Siobhan Davies Studios.

(2016 audio file begins)

Katye Coe 00:42

So this is Charlie Morrissey. Frank can't make it tonight, and then I asked if I might have the pleasure of introducing tonight's crossing borders. And so it is my pleasure to introduce you to someone who is Charlie Morrissey, who's been in Congress, who was invited by Frank to be in conversation with Lisa Nelson, around the theme of touch. So Charlie and Lisa have had a series of Skype conversations. Lisa, in Vermont, sometimes in the studio happening that she and

Charlie Morrissey 01:24

she and Steve Paxton

Katye Coe 01:29

and Charlie, apparently from Yorkshire and also from the Pyrenees, over the last two months. Yeah. And so what will happen tonight is you will witness an edited version of some of those conversations with some additions live from Charlie. Welcome, Charlie - and Lisa.

Charlie Morrissey 01:54

Thanks. So it's probably good for me to say something about that I first met Lisa Nelson, who is an American dance maker, who she described herself as having been, you just have a quick look with my glasses as having been explored exploring the role of the senses, in the performance and observation of movement since the early 1970s. And she trained in dance at Juilliard in New York, and then she went on to work with Daniel Nagrin in Theatre Workshop. And she was she was working in dance, and then she sort of fell out with it. Basically, she realised that what she saw in dancing was just not working for her. And she wasn't seeing what she was satisfying there or wasn't able in a way to make or satisfying for

her either. And so she started to work with film and video cameras. And through this process of working with video cameras, both looking through through a lens and up there very manual in those days kind of editing process where you'd kind of turning these levers to make things go back and forth and stop things and big buttons, it's very kind of touch based activity, in a way, she started to get an interest in looking at movement and working with movement, in a way through this kind of possibility to be able to affect it there in her in the palm palms of her hands, and also to be able to really look at something in a very particular way. And I think through that process of doing that, she started to come back to dance. And she started to develop us a series of kind of scores in a way that are called the tuning scores. And the tuning scores are really a way for a group of people to come together and compose movement together with a few tools. And some of those tools come from that from editing in cells. So there are there might be things called like pause and re rewind or reversal. But in order for those tools to have any meaning there, they are underpinned by a whole load of different practices, which are in relation to the senses. And I guess that Lisa's work, it seems to me has been too explore how we see how we listen, how we touch, how we feel, how we perceive in a way through the instruments of perception in the body. And so I met Lisa in 1992 when I was working with Steve Paxton, and they live in the same place in Vermont. On a farm with a big studio there. And I sort of said arted to observe the work that she was doing with a group of people. But at that time a kind of collective that was they were called Image lab. And that was some Scott Smith, KJ Holmes, Karen Nelson and Lisa Nelson, not related those two, Nelsons by the way. And it was fascinating work to me quite I remember when I first saw it, I was a bit lost about what was really going on in it. And then I started and then I got a little bit involved. And then I started to take pieces workshops. And her workshops just completely blew my mind, actually, they just completely blew my mind, it was like, Oh, my God, this is something about working with the body, working with movement, which wasn't about making dance exactly, in any way that I didn't know, dance making to be it was really about considering what it is to be to find yourself in this body in relation to an environment. And to question everything about what I assume what I assume about the way that I perceive I perceive about what I see about the way that my eyes are taking in information or grabbing information or, and then of course, all of the the assumptions that I make about what those perceptions like how and so it was really a mind blowing thing for me. And I think that it has really affected everything that I've done since both her work. And Steve posted his work in very different ways. So just that's that's important to say. And also, it's important. So so we Frank asked me to have to do this talk and to propose the idea of me having a conversation with Lisa, that there had been this kind of format of people having come Skype conversations, and there's quite a few on online on across on the independent dance website that you can see. So to have these conversations, at least, and it's actually been a really brilliant opportunity to have these conversations, which we've ended up having like many, many hours of conversation, which was proved to be quite a problem when it came to me trying to edit any of that together, because you know, seven hours of us to blabbering away in our various from various locations. Yeah, has been a little bit of a challenge. And I've tried, I've got lots and lots of different versions. And what I've ended up with is a little collection of web clips, which I hope will somehow stimulate a few lines of conversation that we might have. Afterwards, after I play them, there's 26 minutes worth of material on there. And just I just think it's good for me to say a couple of things about some of the things that we talked about. So one of the some of the things that we're talking about on there are exercises that we know that that you won't necessarily know anything about, it's quite good to explain one of the one of the exercises that happened. And it may be, it's also quite good for us to just do one thing together. Like if we could all roll up our sleeves. So roll up a sleeve and just take take your hand and adjust to the sleeve that you've just rolled up and just just touch the elbow just feel, feel the elbow, just how it feels like the landscape and the way of the elbow. If you're exploring a little landscape with your hand, just move it around, you feel that you might press into it, or you might just touch the surface of it. And then just shift your attention and just use the elbow to touch the hand. Just explore that hand with your elbow. So really using the hand to touch I mean the elbows to touch the hand, you could do the back of hand as well, if you wanted to just feel with the elbow, just noticing that shift between a bone touching

my elbow with my hand or if I'm touching my hand with my elbow. Maybe we can just remember that. And so there's an exercise that Lisa does in, in her workshops, which she usually only does once, and what she will do is she will suggest to everybody in the workshop that they teach themselves a movement that they've never done before. So that's the exercise, they go off and then they teach themselves movement that they've never done before. And once they've taught themselves that movement, and they've never done before, what they do is that they get with a partner and the partner closes their eyes, and then they perform their movement for them, whatever their movement was that they've done. never done before. And the partner just listens to it, and just gets whatever image that they get from listening to that movement. And then the partner attempts without knowing anything more about it, but to do the movement with them in unison movement that they've never seen, the person's doing the movement that they've never done before. And then after that's happened, the person who with their eyes closed can learn the movement from their partner through touch, basically, so and their partner will just keep repeating the movement until that person has satisfying actually learned. And then they perform the movement in unison. Again, this person still has their eyes closed, so they can now be fully shielded. So I think I'm going to just put this on. And let's see, let me just introduce them. This is Lisa Nelson in her studio. And this is me at home in in Yorkshire.

Lisa Nelson 11:05

The thing that really adored me all of that about touch is that it every sense is complex. I find I I wind up every sense is codependent on touch, like touch the light without the touch and the lack of literally has to reach and touch the retina in order for there to be no visual ear saying or hearing the waves the eardrum in order to be a sensation, smell to taste to. So touch is like the master breaking so certainly like this user SYSTEM balance. Awesome. Yeah. Ah, how does that? How does touch dominate? It does because Harry's in the fall of

Charlie Morrissey 12:33

touch, yeah it's natural,

Lisa Nelson 12:37

a mood and a touch. sensation and to mean that we're down. Yes. So what I added to that, although I spent a lot of time exploring the hugeness of vision was related to dancing because it was so worked out in my own training. And nobody ever mentioned what you do with your eyes ever normally. Dance by like and also was rare that you saw right in the same way the eyes were both in dancer when I was growing up, but also because it's so necessary to be an audience. So all of that got me very focused on unpacking all the aspects of the eyes function in dancing, including light and seeing things that not dominantly see. There's more of every function. However, then I come back to the idea that touch so to do with you and and and mediately that thought that it was really a master sensory organ. Probably the most natural and, and I now contact improvisation with all partner dancing going back. I also feel dancing, social dancing, practical and contacting gravitation added something much more intimate. We're not by by design, but by making all parts of the body fair that all surfaces care again, or sending you see negation. Anyway, surface allowed for a much bigger exploration that touch.

Charlie Morrissey 15:31

So but then you know what I am interested always just being in a room, it's fun to do stuff. And we try and do things. And I guess I can certainly see things that I like more than others, sort of testing around, trying things out and seeing what will happen. And one of the things about that is about teaching, I feel that this weird thing about how it's quite difficult for a lot of people that seems to think that it's okay to simply for instance, have an experience, and to just let the body go into a zone, which it doesn't have, which in your description of the sort of animation there was doesn't have the boundaries of dancing or an idea that tells

you what your thing is, but somehow goes, Just go on mission don't go on a trip. And you know, when I see it happen, it's just so fantastic. And when people allow themselves to go there. And when it happens as well, it's not vain. Or when it really happens, I really see how this whole thing about the imagination with imagination is not a sort of fanciful ideas sort of heavy thing it's actually a thing that happens because you've got a body that can do do imagining and I and I in a world in relation to a world out there but in there somewhere in those otherwise you wouldn't do it. Again like in the class if you see something happen things happen what what kinds of things

Lisa Nelson 17:24

what what's changed over time? I mean, I could watch people stimulating a group of people in the room stimulating their skin by brushing their bodies on the floor with the attention you know, it provoking sensation on the floor, with this wiggly, you know, concave and convex body. And I really like the quality of movement that will come from the activity from that intention, the quality the the, the sensuality, you're not there were my qualities that are just just beautiful. The shapes and he was shaping I was ever not only recently but not as racked by a few years I used to be unbelievable. [unintelligible] This is the best performance I've ever seen. So, and then each one of those little structures and score for operations they had to do with letting the body solve a problem in relation to living environment. Or the blind learning simple well, that never gets old to me actually that was

Charlie Morrissey 19:27

described.

19:28

So it answers all my desires for fear. And it has a lot to do with the slippage of timing and to deal with that, so the music of it between two people the very obvious manifestation In automatic reflex patterns, you know, like you know eating food something and bumping into it, you know, instead of going to text

Charlie Morrissey 20:14

imagining where it is and where it's not

Lisa Nelson 20:17

really shaking your body to touch it also by touching it in then you did something else you know and then all you can watch what happens in the body. So, all of these kinds of automatic low brain beautiful movement expressions are evolving into this realm of desire and intention to get it right now it is oh, I want to know whether we're right you know, and and back and forth. We you know, the person was teaching us so, you know, shares some kind of goal or intention bucket has has to be use their skills the empathy they have to purchase won't open it will be a failure. So they know how to do that so their year of it and the anticipation you can watch you can merely read you know, what the intention or intention of both parts are? Yes, so the way to finally achieve so and emotions so gracefully owners United that I love one voice in unison with the giver and the receiver. see so much of instruction, that choreography, you know, how they finally decided to do it standing side by side. Here the beginning, knowing or not knowing what are the odds of each other in that way. And at the same time, oh, that is, I guess

Charlie Morrissey 22:58

that was one of my first starting point, is this thing about how we can think we can have an imagination because we have bodies and so, and then brings me back to the whole thing about touch. So, wasn't that neat? Maybe I'll stop for a minute, but it does believe

Lisa Nelson 23:18

it should make that segue.

Charlie Morrissey 23:21

Okay. It brings us back to the whole thing about touch because in that thing, you know, I mean, it's also just like tendons inside the way that I think that I may I'm making movement and is is a very such a is a very touch based things really about feeling something Yes. Okay. But it's also really that feeling something more, I would say emotional because that's not usually where I'm going. But it's about the something about substance and the feeling of my body, in relation to where it is and that it feels like it's so much about touch. In that sense. It feels like I'm looking for the same thing that I look for when I touch your body to find this information as I'm looking for that same thing in my own body when I do these things, because and rightly or wrongly or or, for better or for worse, that when I feel that there's more. I give it more valuable than when I don't know when I feel less or when I feel more paid to us as I'm looking for some

Lisa Nelson 24:37

questions. Emerging action in motivation or generation generating material or movement and through all the senses. That seems like we may agree very readily omit the act of dancing, we're using all of the senses. In a big fat dialogue, there's just sound or just touch. So that as a starting place, I mean, we take that as a given. Whereas, in the daily culture, people are operating mostly through vision in order to navigate your day. So, we recognise that something that we've been privileged to explore that all the other senses are implicated, even though we're depending on vision, and masking a lot of sensations by favouring what we believe is in front of our eyes. So if we, if we start from the premise, I was, I was, I remember I was complaining last time about all the, you know, the neuro science research that we get on the radio all day, and as always, in the media, that still focuses so much on all of the vagaries of building our opinions through our vision. And I almost completely I haven't heard anybody really go into touch. And that's so basic to our dance ghettos research, touch. And in terms of building an image of where we are, where our bodies are in Space Centre, and, and getting motivated to move the people touching or touching other things that are moving, like other people. So the crazy thing that's happening is, in this little analogy, is to try to start with what you brought up immediately, which was linking the attention, the sensation of attention to the imagination, like the almost the product, the product of the touch of the attention is an image or a thought, or that isn't always true. I feel you know, sometimes I am not translating, I'm just feeling the touch because you know, not translating and not getting Is it possible to feel this sensation without translating into an image like the body will do that if there's a reflex action elicited it's way faster than having an image before but your body will respond to the the input or the trigger to us and pretty sensational sensory firing or something. It doesn't mean doesn't demand it any image you find out after it works, you know what the Movement was

Charlie Morrissey 29:01

actually in movement here, it's still too far for him just even this facility fast. To meet I do much with it other than to know to other than to be other than to be aware that it's happening. And to feel it, feel it feel it really experienced. Maybe that feels different. Now, even so even the movement of my attention to doing the same thing, maybe it's often moving too fast for me to well, the images aren't staying for long enough. Sorry, I'm just Yeah, so in this it's making me think about how well, so much of what I think I'm playing like in my teaching, working is about how it is playing is playing with the closeness of those things, the closeness of how, where I take my attention and how I take my attention with what it amounts to, is has has the same kind of, yeah, by touch, I could, I could say top substance, or being as the actual touching as actually touching skin to skin or skin on thing. And I, I keep wondering what the, that's just no, just what you're saying is just just open something up a little bit for me that sort of thing. Because I you know, sometimes when I talk about substance have to talk about positions like this substance, if it's like, I

don't know, like, have a particular tone, maybe not, but a particular amount of stimulation. But actually, what you're saying makes me think about the attention of the above, of all other kinds of lightness touches as the maximum, the lightness of the touch of my attention. Sometimes when things you know, the things that go by that I'm not gonna be certain that I don't cling to so much. Because this seems like problem or an interesting problem to me is how to let all those things be included, rather than deleting the ones that don't kind of come up to a certain standard of tonality or something. And that was also interesting, as you mentioned this thing the other day about, let me start with repeat, keep repeating until until I actually get something on your screen with your upper body. As I was watching you, so this was another thing that was interesting to me. was watching does rewatching you? Well, I watched you like that the other day because I was there with you very different for watching you talk about this thing about in a sense. You know, I do this a bit. I don't know awkward and then rather than try to maybe make an open thing that can be useful and full of emotion or something that's really stupid generalisation for example, then I don't actually I look for the thing that then is almost like, the more awkward part. Where How can I keep going to the...?

Lisa Nelson 32:47

Can you sustain Yes, or No. Without make without moving it out are pretty common. Pretty. So that's a really nice practice. I find. I mean, it's challenging. Yeah. Really a great challenging thing to catch those and sustain them without? Yeah. Oh, I just thought of another weird. Maybe. Analog, like, in the sense of is my touch in the sense of this simple inversion and like, is, if I Well, first of all, it's my hand touching my elbow, or is my elbow touching my hand? Okay, well, whatever it is, I can invert that without. Well, if I sustained something either position or movement. It Okay, wait, I'm getting too complex really fast, just from touching it. Man touching my oversight elbow touching my hand. Now at that point. As I post that attention to myself, I'm paying attention to this interface between hand and elbow, but I'm not. I'm actually not moving my attention. I'm moving my imagination without moving my attention. My attention is staying where it is, with that wonderful thing that pigs who seem to have a very flexible physiognomy. What they do to scratch themselves on things because they always are itching, and they have itches, what they do the way they can own more their ship is so many He's in there just when they have that intention. And they'll get in the weirdest, totally weirdest positions you'll ever see of something that seems so stiff, you know, the shape that just torso doesn't seem to have any options of changing. Yeah. So the intention, that whole world of intention and attention. That's fun to play with in dancing. Because you don't need any special powers to play with it.

Charlie Morrissey 35:47

I mean, all of that thing that I'm describing to you about mine, my solo that I'm working on, which has the words, is really about me attempting to figure out more ways to switch my attention quite fast. Actually. It's quite, I mean, I'm probably typically for me, of course, I'm trying to do too much. But, but still, that's why I'm actually trying to do that's why I keep figuring out as I'm trying to do is do is to go from here to there. And even sometimes not to break the having to I'm trying to make jumps. And yeah, it's

Lisa Nelson 36:30

always what, what can produce that? What for each of us can produce kind of changing the physicality of the moment, or the Yeah, the physicality including one's awareness of it.

Charlie Morrissey 36:59

Well, does this make any sense to anybody, I hope. So I was sort of trying to pick out some different things in a way that we're playing with, I suppose how to how touch sort of transforms the way that I can attend to things. And I guess this, this example isn't particularly seems like a useful one to me, has been very useful to me, I suppose in terms of how I can transform my experience, from one moment to the

next, just by that very small switch of my attention. And one of the things that I have in common with Lisa is that is the teaching. We both teach, and we both spend a lot of time teaching, and we both it's for both of us, I think it's a real laboratory. And it's a real place of place to learn things. And, of course, a place where you can take lots of time, and in a way of time, you can take time to make discoveries about things. And you have all these people who are doing these things that you ask them to do. And it's it's a really, it's a really wonderful thing. So, yeah, just I suppose, you know, an all of this stuff at the moment is very interesting for me. For lots of reasons. It's interesting for me, because I had because the world is clearly going mad. I mean, it's always been mad, but it's going mad around us now in a way that it wasn't going mad around us before. And I'm sort of wondering whether there's anything that I've been doing, and that we're doing in these classes, and all of that, that I can call upon right now, in terms of, you know, what have I got my fingertips. So I'm kind of interested in the extent to which touch reminds me about that I'm here, because I'm always in touch. In some sense, that sense is always active. And, and this idea of substance, and that's very important to me and my dancing as much as it is in being here right now and dealing with the crazy situation that we're in. I think my my, I mean, I have lots of things written down here, but I don't. I'm sort of wondering whether there's things that came up from that for people and it sort of feels more useful maybe to let it open up and I might have more information I'd come out if we were to people have questions or thoughts or comments. So please feel free to ask anything, or something's not clear if something if anything's unclear from this. This

Katye Coe 40:01

about what she said about ways in which the eyes are composed. Yeah, the eyes being closed.

Charlie Morrissey 40:11

No. So, I mean, these were, I think that would say that I mean, she uses closing the eyes a lot as a way to because it's because we have so much to I guess, because we have so much to combat when we have our eyes open, that we don't have to come back, when we have our eyes closed, let's just put it that way, the world is a different place, when I have my eyes closed, it's just that simple. It's already there's a lot of novelty for me in a way that I more have to work out when my eyes are open, in order to make that happen, because I'm seeing everything and I'm so used to dealing with everything through sight. So the eyes going just this is a way for me to to have a different relationship to what's what's around me. And for my imagination to get to get to work in a very particular way. But I think Lisa would say that habit working with the eyes closed and spending a lot of time the eyes closed is just a way to, to draw attention to what I'm doing when my eyes are open. And also a training in a way to because when I close my eyes, there's a tendency as I begin to start to rely on the other senses in a very particular way. And those senses can become sharpened. And then when I open my eyes, it's possible potentially, for me to maintain that more heightened sense, I guess, of the other senses. And to maybe be a bit a little bit more aware about the potential of I don't know if it was in this, but about the the the the probable fact that we're getting a lot of information from the environment in lots of different ways that we're not noticing, that we can start to bring our attention to, and let that give us instruction in making movement or composing. And so when she's talking when she's talking about composing the eyes, I guess, you know, it's difficult for us to notice that we have habits about how we look, you know, there's like, or that one is stronger than the other, right? And we don't know that we're making this shift in order to make it happen. We don't, we don't think that the image is landing on the back of our retina, upside down. And then we're transforming it in our brains to make it the right way up. We don't think that we're seeing the world differently from other people. But of course, we always are, we're looking in different ways at different things, depending on our cultural upbringing, and our so it's just I guess, when she's talking about composing the eyes, she's talking about just bringing attention to the fact that of course, I'm doing that in order to even deal with this situation, what happens if I try to shift the ways in which I look and, you know, we're cultured to look in a particular way to look at each other for a certain amount of time, and then look away or look down? Or all of these

kinds of things? And what happens if I start to play with any of those tendencies or habits or customs? I guess, when I'm, I mean, when we're in performance, because I mean, God, you know, it's one of the things that we have to play with. And presumably, a question that we might have is how we compose our eyes to deal with that situation. If that's how

Audience 43:31

something has been the video about how the body becomes imagination, but then when I don't know what the connection is. Close your eyes, imagination. You're on the head. Because you're thinking you're picturing as wild or relatable.

Charlie Morrissey 43:54

No, I haven't. I don't I don't think I'm making that connection. I think for me, it's always I think, you know, there's gonna be a tendency in my eyes there's a tendency sometimes to think that imagination the imagination is somehow a sort of cerebral thing or something that we imagined pictures in our head but I guess that I think with with I think probably my attention is more brought to my eyes closed in a way how much I'm imagining with my body. But to me, it seems very clear that the reason that we that because if imagination was just was a very thin thing. That only happened in pictures. I think it would not carry us in the way that it does. But because I can imagine with my sense of the substance of things because I can imagine because I know I can imagine something something growing and getting bigger because I felt things that grow and get bigger or I can imagine myself flying because I've I can I felt something some bird enough that you know, so I guess, for me there's something about how we imagined things that, you know, in a sense, mostly, that our body can have some sense of, of the feasibility of that thing. So yeah, but I don't I don't, I wouldn't say that there was a difference between for myself between having my eyes open and my eyes closed for that. Just, it just seems to be like in the teaching that I do, it seems to me that when people close their eyes, they go into a different place. And they seem to be able to access a certain kind of deeper, physical presence. Let's say that just because in a sense, they're able to cut off a little bit of inflammation, really land and I see it. So it's not just I mean, I see it, I see it in the way that I said, I guess it's not an insubstantial thing, I see something take place in the body that makes them appear more clearly. To me. It's just about attention, I guess,

Audience 46:05

is imagination, then projection is more about it seems to be there's also pushing into an anticipation of the future rather than necessarily. site might be about situatedness. Trying to establish what is here and now. When Lisa was saying, that body moving towards this is the idea that the body moves, is actually actively pushing towards an anticipatory future rather than just resting. Present.

Charlie Morrissey 46:43

I guess that? Yeah, I don't know. I don't know. Exactly, I guess maybe an even a near future. I mean, Lisa, I think was trying to make a relationship between is is the attention of my touch on this. This piece of paper the same as my attention on that wall or on this is there's there is there a relationship between that? And how, in a sense, that that touch of the attention creates an image, I suppose it's something I mean, what I'm what was what she's talking about when she does an image is not photograph at anything, the more of an imaginative sensation in a way. So I don't know, I guess, may may be, or it's an image of the sit current situation, even I could think of his imagination as being I mean, I'm no expert. But that I guess I'm thinking of imagination as the possibility to I mean, the way that I think about it mostly is the possibility for me to transform in the moment, the possibility for me to embody a particular image. I mean, that's generally the way that I'm working with it in, in, in my own work and in the class situation. And seeing how an idea, for instance, arrives in somebody's body. And then the way that it arrives in their body allows the idea to grow and I don't know if that's,

Audience 48:20

yeah, because I guess what she says that she loves still. Yes, say I know what this is like. No. It's like, it's always somehow not yet. Yes, possible future.

Charlie Morrissey 48:42

Right. Yeah yeah yeah .

Audience 48:45

I know. Relationships. That is touching the blind learning somehow I should say, I don't know just yet. Yeah, I might know. Almost assume certainty, I keep moving towards that. And that's why there's always a few chances.

Charlie Morrissey 49:04

Yeah, she says this great thing, everybody's on the edge of everything they know how to do and I just think it's such a great gauge somehow. And I think that actually, a lot of her work is attempting to teeter in place. Before you so gone, styles going to just suddenly learn

Audience 49:24

about the connection between imagination and memory. Because to imagine something in a way you need to have experienced something in order to project that into a sort of an imagined something. Maybe a lot of the work to do with paying attention, which is you sort of need to do to explore things to higher levels, and you're gonna get better at doing it maybe it's part of expanding that sort of repertoire memory, which then may hmm, Obviously feeling something you have to face not so much difference between feeling something and remembering something or imagining something, and maybe connect with this idea of anticipation. You only can recognise your perception. Because you cognize the sensation. Before probably the first time you couldn't make sense out on the Bible deficient. Even perception has that. The only difference is whether the fifth day said, immediate fit. There is nothing but I have to make that. And then I'm trying to be recognised. For what I have, not only experienced but also ready to help the whole thing work. And I keep because she was talking about image a lot, I think was keep thinking like this. You mean? Like, the picture the visual? Or she means? I guess I was confusing with confused by what she really tried to say with the word image sometimes not as she was talking about.

Charlie Morrissey 51:24

That's a good, that's a good, really good she was

Audience 51:27

about she was talking about this raw experience of touch? And how easy is to create an image? Like choosing? How is it? Is it possible to keep the experience of the sensation of the touch without translating it into an image?

Charlie Morrissey 51:45

I think that Well, I think that's a good, really good thing to mention any, because I think Lisa's idea of image is not a photograph at all, actually. But that when we come to any when we when we apply our all of our senses to any given situation, that an image is maybe a far more complex event, in a sense, that happens in the mind and in the body. Or kind of something coming into cognition, I suppose that might that might be something that's felt in the body, as well, as much as something that's seen. It's like, yeah, it's a good,

Audience 52:39

that's an emotional response.

Charlie Morrissey 52:40

Well, it's I think it's something that arrives in your sort of, it's a constantly shifting thing as well. So it's not just one thing I certainly wouldn't call it in. I certainly wouldn't call it a photograph, because I don't think that's how we record things anyway, in that sense. But I think it's interesting, you know, Lisa's, you know, she's sort of been involved in the in the sort of in, in content improvisations, while a little bit in and out, I mean, she's never was a contact improviser person. I think she was interested in particularly in a way at the beginning, when it was more of a survival, kind of gain. And people didn't know how to do it. And therefore, you were really watching bodies, which were falling and attempting to survive that falling and in a way not, not with the same kind of sophistication, even though those people were sophisticated move as often. But I think that she is very, has always been very interested in in well, I guess what she What does she say? The does she say this or said something about? The sort of pre when she's talking about this? During the blind learning, this kind of all of these things that you do, where you're really not superior,

Audience 54:02

letting the body solve the problem or the situation?

Charlie Morrissey 54:05

Or have something? Yeah, and there was something I guess there's something about the night the night that they're not knowing that's just as very somehow no brains, no brain, that was it. She was saying low and I was just I was just sort of thinking about the value of that. And I think that a lot of her work in a way is probably going into that place as a place to as a as a site or a territory or landscape for exploration. When I guess the point would be partly so one of the things that isn't in this was was Lisa statement that she was beginning to wonder whether animation could save the world in the way that dance might not be able to. And the reason that she's talking about this is because you can really play around with image and you The Complete morphing of everything time and space in with with animation has always been very interesting to her because she's always felt that dance may be the OT, that was a kind of slight disappointment, that dance didn't play more with that territory of morphing time and space and the body and I, rather than just sticking to, to some extent, more versions of what we already know about what we're like, how we are in this particular kind of culture and this kind of society as a generalisation, of course, but But it's an interesting provocation to me. What are the things that we can do with with our attention, our perception, and all of these things that might challenge might be able to knock us enough far out of this kind of particular kind of cultural patterning that we have that that's something that we might be able to see something different? Yeah, I guess that that would be the thing. It's not just to be out in their own kind of weird world of nothing, for no reason, it's really to sort of challenge something about the way that we see things and might, then aren't have the possibility to change the way that we see things end up on not close enough off of balance that we can actually, that it could be useful to us. I guess that she would probably say that I had been a real sort of practice of years is attempting to be moving and then find the sort of bit that was the least. That was just what's the what's that? And then can I do it again, you know, without turning it into something that becomes smoother or beautiful or whatever? Can I actually stick with the thing that I just love? What is that, you know, rather than always being in a place of knowing or whatever. And I think that she said, of course, you know, that even that, of course becomes a takes on its own pattern. And and of course, lots of people in a way, attack constantly. I mean, breaking patterns and dance is almost like a pattern itself. But certainly, how can you like Mulligan? I guess? It's just a question of how can you go somewhere that you don't know, it's also nice that you intend to maybe try to make a beautiful upset. People view strangers? Well, I think that's also an important part of the work for her would be to deal with empathy to do with how this work, which is, I mean, so much of our work in a

way is about finding, finding different ways to perceive and working with different groups of people and not getting them to do your thing. But to have to deal with all the crazy things that they did that you don't like, want them to do, you know, and all of this kind of thing, or that or the different kinds of people and that so that awkwardness, also that invitation to those kinds of things is also a kind of an invitation to all the awkwardness and difficulty and things that are in the world in a sense, because I think, you know, certainly for Lisa, this isn't about practice to do in the studio, it's about a practice that she's practising out in the streets, in her dealings with people and in the way that she sees things and, and I really see that in her as well. I mean, even the way that she uses her eyes, too, can be very off putting, because she's doing something different with her eyes. But you know, she said that she she learned she did it, she could do this thing. You know, like if you put your you can do it if you want if you put your hand like this, and then you look through with both eyes at say like, you know, there's a bolt on the wall or something a little landmarks on when you look through both eyes. And then you close one eye, and then you close the other eye. And you might notice that whatever you're looking at with the two eyes through that hole in your hand, if you close one eye, it stays there. And if you close the other eye, it disappears. Yeah, and then it's like so this is this thing about that you have a stronger and weaker I am that the one is kind of making the other one. And also that you would often notice, I don't know if we're close enough to each other that when you go to turn to look at somebody, you could try it, you could turn to look at somebody's knee and they look at you. But that you'd often go for one particular eye actually first and then you'll go backwards and forwards. But you'll often go for this one and she said that she discovered after many years of having an argument that she was Steve Paxton and they'd always have the same argument, same thing. And she realised if you start looking in that eye and looked in the other eye, the whole thing completely changed. It was really weird because she was looking at it was like looking the other eye and then suddenly she just couldn't have the argument anymore, which was a kind of an interesting thing. aspects and I guess she's been playing with those kinds of practices of how these things might alter. And I think that's one of the things that's always really touched me about what Lisa's doing. You know, she's not, she's so rigorous about what she does and really clear. But it's not just about being in the studio, it's somehow about what it means to be here in this world in a body and to keep going between the studio and outside and somehow to wander, you know, to kind of worry something to work something. Yeah. Keep asking the questions. It's really great.

Audience 1:00:45

You mentioned that she works with empathy. In what context? Senses, she didn't really touch on it when she says,

Charlie Morrissey 1:00:55

Well, yeah, I mean, I guess that it's just in terms of, I guess, she the tuning scores that she works with are. So let me let's see, just a very simple example. You know, there's a group of people, we're a group of people may have some tools. So So I always find it a little bit difficult when I explain this, because when I, when I explain it like this, it will sound much more trivial than it is. And actually, when you work with these tools, there's a lot more, there's a lot of work that goes up to the point of being there. But say that we're a group of people. And we go into a space, and we have some tools, and we look into a space. And we've practised all of this, about bringing attention with all of the senses into the space, and we look at the space, and then somebody goes in, and we can start to tune that person, we can just tell them to pause. And then we can see the image, you can watch the image shift and change. And we can start to gradually make more complex compositions where you can reverse and shift the action that's happening around and you're constantly going in and out. So it's not like being a director, it's like, you're always in the image being the image and then you're out of the image and you're tuning in, you can call these calls from inside or out. But it's a very complex social thing to do. Being constantly paws by somebody or their or somebody, you know, the ways that people work in those are very kind of, I guess, it's a very democratic

process. And democracies can be a real pain in the ass and those kinds of situations where it would just be so much easier just to tell everybody what to do. And I think that that's where, in a sense, even in that place, you're practising this kind of there's constant conversation about other people's tastes and opinions. And to that extent, I guess, because it's a constant conversation, you're I think there's something about empathy, which is just about a constant inquiry, there's not like empathy. It's not a surface thing. It's about understanding more about why people do the things that they do. I mean, that would just be in a compositional place. But it's also if I shift the way that I look at something, maybe. And I don't know, these practices of touch and substance and connection to other bodies. I guess, you know, eventually, there is something there, which arrived, which is about empathy, because I'm constantly connecting to other bodies. And while I do that, it's impossible for me anymore to after a time to separate that person from in the way that I might tend to otherwise. I guess, I have to start going, Oh, okay. Well, I guess, I mean, I guess both of those things, but I guess that Lisa would use the word empathy as part of as part of what she thinks is what seems to be happening through the press doing. I don't know. I mean, I guess there's a whole kind of thing that is always talked about kinesthetic empathy and in watching a performance and, potentially course there are particular bodies that have resonate more with your body because

Audience 1:04:29

of emotional reasons as well, as well to show that we'll do something we'll be prone to be empathetic to

Katye Coe 1:04:42

working with the scores that [unintelligible] for a week, and then just talking to two things that happened during that week. That was surprised. One was that when you when you work, we work with them that you will be always in one place or another. But you'll never, you'll never an audience. So when you're seeing when you're when you're on the outside or even on the outside, but when you're here and the action is going on what I didn't realise for several days is that I was my scene was changing, the way that I received was changing. And that was because I was, I was I forgot quite holographic after a while. But also, I noticed that I was able to temper or shift when I might need to make a change. So I would, I think that my taste challenge will bring the experience of my scene changing. I think that might relate to anything, I don't know. I'll notice when I wanted to make things happen. Because my scene is being challenged with doing the work. And then there was something else that came up in the conversation there, which seemed to make sense, which was that she, she spoke about attention, being able to stay somewhere, while imagination is moving. Somewhere useful for me as well to kind of go. So my attention can be one last image to how I imagined how I'm experiencing it sensation is the image and how I'm experiencing that, that thing can change. Without me moving my attention.

Charlie Morrissey 1:06:56

She's talking about that here this hour, my attention is just here. But my imagination in that moment shifts.

Audience 1:07:05

So then maybe I can do that.

Charlie Morrissey 1:07:10

No, but I think a lot of these things as well. Which often come from a sort of burrowing into a kind of almost. And again, this is maybe why I was talking about this thing about having an experience. And sometimes it's but especially with young younger people, it can often be quite difficult to revive people just to have an experience. It's like, well, how will I be able to put it in my dance piece? Kind of thing is experience and, and yet to me, you know? Well, I like to jump into experiences myself, but But I see something happen. And I guess it seems like sometimes that's a portal away for my body to my question

might be, is it what is it possible for my body to think things that it's not possible for my mind? To do on its own? So Will my body take me to places? If I just go let it go there? That actually my mind on its own is not going to? It's not going to get? I? I'd like to say that it that it can that it does? Yeah. Okay to say that it does.

Audience 1:08:28

Think that will be low very versus?

Charlie Morrissey 1:08:32

Well, I mean, that's a, that's a question for sure. I wonder, the extent when you like you're talking about memory, and what we're remembering and our relationship to these kinds of imaginative possibility, possible experiences. And the relationship between what's behind us and what's ahead of us is the identity of God, this is really a bit of a leap, but the the experience of being in the womb or the experience of being a child before I've learned the particular kinds of culture, the topic, those kinds of deep, deeply embedded experiences, like physical experiences, maybe forming as a, as a creature, all of those kinds of things. What are those things? I mean, that's complete conjecture, of course, but I'm interested in I'm interested in the extent to which we're always informed by all of the moving I guess that's ever happened. It always amazes me is that we have, we all take it for granted. It's like, oh, yeah, you know, we were just this little sperm went to an egg and then you know, this thing happened. And then we grew like this. And we were like, a little fish. And then we came out but Whoo, for Christ's sake, out there into the world. And we've grown and we've done got to this thing, and it's just like, oh, yeah, you know, so what was the big deal? But I mean, come on. That's like a really big deal for us to have gone through that and those, that experience of that movement and that shift and that growing in the shop. But all of that has happened. It's all in there somehow. And I and I, so I'm interested in that in relation to those ideas of sort of memory and how the memory supports that. And in a sense, I suppose some of the more bizarre experiences that we've had in order to get to here. And I do think that those things are in the way that we again culture that we sort of decided to think about all of the way that we've grown with these things. It's not that I want to, it's not that I'm spending my time focusing on those things. But I'm interested to hold that in my, in my as a question in my imagination to wonder what what effect that might have. No, I mean, I know I mean, I, you know, I Do I Do I Do. I mean, I, you know, I bring up images in my classes, I start off with the story about the beginning of time, and that there was an exploit, you know, there was a big bang, and then all these molecules, and we're still made of those molecules now. And so there's a part of me that knows that that's just a story. And I'm asking people to imagine that. And there's another part of me that knows that it's a reality. And I'm interested in the place between the reality the story that I'm telling myself and and the whatever it is that I do in my body, to organise myself around that idea, the sensation of that idea, and whether that actually is whether the set to what extent the cells may be are engaged in?

Audience 1:11:26

Does it matter what the particularity will really be between those? Two? Do we need to find out? You know, really?

Charlie Morrissey 1:11:37

Well, I'm always interested in what science finds out about this thing. And I'm always I'm always interested in how I can have the conversation with scientists and but so, so yes, it is. But in the meantime, I'm happy enough to see what the experience is like. And it seems to me that since experiences, is our is a, you know, it's our playground, then I'm interested in how we can alter an experience. And to me, that altering experience is very much about touching things, and it's a very substantial thing. I'm not just talking about an experience that I can move through.

Audience 1:12:24

Probably would you say, from your experience, Lisa, would have a similar approach to experience in the laboratory being one thing, but science as a source of information is part of it as well.

Charlie Morrissey 1:12:44

That's, that's interesting. I mean, Lisa's work and my work are very different from each other. I mean, she would probably not be nearly so fanciful as I might, might, she might wonder if I was being a little bit fanciful in some of the things that I do. But, Lisa, well, so the first thing that I can think is that Lisa's work has been very influenced by JJ Gibson, who writes about perception about visual perception to colour and visual perception of the world. And that actually, that's one of the things that gave her a lot of clues. So as to, as to how we see basically, and what we're doing, what the eyes are doing, what they're seeing, how they're predicting what they see, etc. And so there is a relationship there with science. But I also think that she would probably say that the work that you know that the work that's happening in the studio is just, it's just as rigorous. And often it's very frustrating. I think, for her and probably for a lot of artists, actually, when we deal with scientists who just seemed far, you know, left behind us in some ways compared to the kinds of research that we do, really in the studio. And so I think that she, I think, in a certain way, it's so relevant, the science, because we're, so long as the thing that we're engaged in is about a real rigorous, deconstruction of the way that we're experiencing things, which is what she would do. So I mean, a big part of that practice is about talking and reporting, the experience you're having. It's not about just going off into the world and being all it's really about. Okay, so then what happened? And what were you doing then? And what were you doing that's really different by two degrees, or by one degree in this one? And so what's the difference between those two? And can we say, you know, all of all of those things, and in a way all of the exercises are there because they're so similar such basic, simple measures and the other thing, it enables you to, in a very scientific way, that sense to do these laboratory sorts of experiments without in the sense that I need to, to find whatever it is a result. Yeah, but to constantly collect the data,

Audience 1:15:12

I just suddenly thought that about using science and we spoke about earlier about imagination and experiences that you might have during research may be formed by scientific research, in a way, you know, enhance your imagination in a way, which might allow you to see something in a different way that you might not

Charlie Morrissey 1:15:39

see. Oh, absolutely. I mean, yeah, I mean, like Lisa's work is very much affected by JJ Gibson's work. My work is definitely constantly being fed by all sorts of science and philosophy. And anything that I'm reading is definitely, of course, it opens up the possibility, but it's possible for me to think. So I think that's a kind of move the movement backwards and forwards. And again, that's something that I'm just constantly seeing. And I've, you know, there's, this all comes to me from watching dancers in the incredible, amazing sort of physical intelligence that they seem to have, no matter who they're working with, you know, that some choreographer will ask them to do some ridiculous impossible thing. And, you know, my observation is that they don't, it doesn't all happen here, they just sort of, you know, they sort of start to look for it in their body. And there's this whole fantastic thing that so then I can throw a suggestion to the body, and then the body starts to do something and then that can come back to the idea and then the idea can come back to the body and there's this wonderful looping, feeding of the information. And then the information to the body gives us some information that that book gave us all the you know, and I just think that's a that's a wonderful thing. It's something about the substance, the substantiation of that the physical isolation, the embodiment of the thing that allows it to become to grow to live a little bit of the concept to go a little bit further because now it's become physicalized and so yeah,

Katye Coe 1:17:15

that feels like a pretty good moment - thank you.

Charlie Morrissey 1:17:17

Ahh talking! Thank you

(Outro: Renée Bellamy speaking in 2021)

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