

Engaging with Difference: a conversation on dance practice, disability and inclusive leadership led by Kate Marsh with Annie Hanauer and Susanna Recchia (2023)

(automated transcript from otter.ai)

SPEAKERS

Heni Hale, Kate Marsh, Annie Hanauer, Susanna Recchia, Audience

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.

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

(2023 audio file begins)

Heni Hale 00:42

Hello, everybody, everyone at home, and the few people that are in the room. Welcome to Engaging with difference, a talk hosted by Independent Dance with three fantastic speakers who I'm going to introduce in a moment. My name is Heni Hale, I'm the co-director of Independent Dance. I'm a white skinned probably rosy cheeked female with brown long hair. Then also before I introduce our speakers for this evening, I wanted to say a few words about the context for how this talk has come about. So engaging with difference as part of a week long lab that ideas have been holding this week, that has been co-curated with Annie Hanauer and Susanna Recchia. And Annie and Susanna approached ID to try to with with the desire to do an intensive programme of bringing diverse practices that focus on different forms of inclusion and access in dance training. So as a non disabled lead organisation, this project also

forms therefore part of a wider project that ideas running a year long project that ideas running called dance it, dance it, that is exploring, as a general sense, creative and nuanced approaches to practices and training. And doing this via the foregrounding of disabled artist as leaders, and exploring ways to disseminate and share to a wider group of people the practices that many different or diverse practices that disabled artists lead. So it's a project that is a learning project for a whole range of artists and a whole range of artists have been invited to participate, particularly in this lab. And it's also a learning for ID as an organisation. That's enough about that. I think it's it'd be a good moment now to welcome our three speakers. So Annie and Annie Hanauer and Susanna are speaking. And it's being chaired by Kate Marsh who has also been present in the lab as a kind of, would you maybe call to call herself a dramaturg figure but I let Kate speak more about that. So is that a good over to the three of you?

Annie Hanauer 03:19

Yeah, ya. Thank you. Hi, everyone, I'm Annie Hanauer and I am a dance artist. I make things, I perform in other people's work, etcetera. I a white person with dark blond and grey hair and I have a prosthetic on my left arm. Is there anything else to be introduced about me?

Kate Marsh 03:49

Thank you. Thanks, Annie. And thanks, Heni. My name is Kate Marsh. I a white skinned woman in her late 40s. I have long brown hair with a fringe and I'm wearing glasses which ones I'm wearing like gold rimmed glasses. Tonight I am an assistant professor at C-DaRE The Centre for Dance Research where I'm interested mainly in the bulk of my my practice research is around thinking about disabled leadership, which I think is is partly how I've come to be here. I'm not I think Heni's introductions. Amazing. I'm not sure I'm quite as formal as a chair. I think it's just but also when Susanna has introduced herself. I'll talk a little bit about the shape of the conversation. Yeah.

Susanna Recchia 04:52

Hi, I'm Susanna my same name is Susanna. I have curly hair. My face and my hands tend to move a lot when I speak. And I'm a dancer, rehearsal director, mentor. And I just like to make things happen with people like dancing, in general.

Kate Marsh 05:24

And I'm going to do last minute improvised switch of agenda items. Because if I, if I give some context to the shape of the next couple of hours, and then maybe you two, can speak a little bit about the lab and how you think that makes sense. So we're going to be together for about an hour and 20 minutes now, just I know, Heni's already said, there's about feels like about 12 people in the room. Some of those people are participants that have been with us all week. Some of them are people who are just joining for the evening, I'm looking at you, you will know

who you are. And we will be in conversation with each other. And that feels like a really important distinction, that we haven't overly planned this, we're not sure what will come up, we might make mistakes, we might hesitate, we might need to take a breath. And on that note, something I always like to bring into these discussions is the complexity of language, that we may all use different language, different ways of describing something, they may land differently with different people. And I think it's really important that we approach that gently and with generosity. And understand that we will come from different places of understanding. So we will talk between us I know this, this setup feels quite formal, but hopefully we will warm into a woman to it. Yeah, we might move around. So we'll be in conversation, which, again, it's good to note that not only are we colleagues, we're also friends who have worked together in different capacities. And I hope that will be apparent. as we as we chat. We will then open up we'll take a short break shorts, come for break have a few minutes when we've finished our conversation. And then we'll open up to the people online. And the people in the room to broaden the conversation. I'm going to ask Susanna and Annie in a moment to talk about the origins of this lab and to share their conversations that they've had with each other. To give us some kind of feel for what's happened. One One thing that I would just like to acknowledge, this is in no way a reflection of the lab that will come later. This is my my thoughts from being in and around participating and being on the outside throughout the week. And it's to make space for the thoughts of the people who are here. It exists within this hour and a half. We're not reflecting on the experience of other people. It's completely our own observations. So who wants to go first? So my question is, it's not really a question of just how this lab came to be, what were the conversations you were having with each other?

Annie Hanauer 08:43

How many years back? Do we go? Where to start? I mean, maybe it's helpful to say Susanna and I really met dancing together. So we work together as dancers. And we met through that. And then since then, we've worked in a lot of different relationships. I think like we've facilitated things together, we've led a lot of very different kinds of sessions around the world, different places, different people. And we always have really, really juicy energising conversations around the edges of those events. And realise, I think we have like similar desires or passions around dancing and like what kind of things we want to make happen, or like offer given to this world of dancing that we both really love to want to answer.

Susanna Recchia 09:42

Yeah, I feel like I always when I'm near Annie, whether I'm talking or dancing, I have this this memory of past rehearsing and do it that required moving through space and kind of sharing the same material but perform In a different style, and I feel that's how we we live with each other we work with each other is like going alongside each other with different life experiences, but really constantly be tuning into what what it is that matters for me, what does it mean? What does it matter to you? In dance in our in life? An awful feeling? A meeting that say, oh,

yeah, as well as Oh, yes or no? Oh, so like where the space for both understanding and confrontation can happen without being either offended or alienated from each other? And also the real curiosity about Yes, but how does it feel for you? And same for you asking me? Yes, but how does it feel for you? And that has been the thing that also like this kind of really bland, open, honest conversation has led us to go to quite deep, not deep, but questions that maybe are hard to ask otherwise, in general, about art, access, and about how do we live together in this world? And how do we function? How do we exist and collaborate in general? Yeah, and I think one one element of us working together is also it's been a lot of travelling around the world recently said, which also takes a lot of takes time takes time travelling takes time to go between places they've signed, you know, eating out together. So also that there's always been like, this, this, this feeling that outside of the working hours in the studio, there's always been time to debrief plus to reflect. And to go, yeah, like to really go in time. Actually, we had time with each other, I think that feels really important. In that's it. Do you want to add

Annie Hanauer 12:01

Oh, about what's the inspiration? Yeah. So where to begin. Because there are a lot of different layers of what we've discussed and what we are hoping to offer through this week. And, and the thing that I think we both all, probably everyone in this room appreciate is that you have to just like propose something and then kind of see how it goes and adjust as you're doing it. Which for me is like the heart of dancing and the heart of working with this idea that we're all different. And we all like, work differently and flourish differently. But one of the ideas was to offer a lot of different perspectives in artistic perspectives into this question of like, what is it to work with access? So we wanted to offer like, a lot of different artists way of working with that question, either in their method or in their creative process. And yet, they're all very, very different from each other. So it's like, one of the things that I think I encounter a lot is that people sometimes, in a like thinking way are like, Yes, but what is the answer to be accessible? And what is the method and formula? And a really big thing, I think, for all of us is that there isn't one way there's every way. Yeah, and I mean, there are other layers as well, too. I think what we had imagined, for the week. Well, if you want to add,

Kate Marsh 13:48

I think something I mean, I'd like as we continue talking, I'd like to get more into this, this, the nature of these multiple offerings throughout the week. But something you're saying this is making me think about this really important distinction, that your dancers offering an opportunity to other dancers, although you're partnering with ID, you're not coming from an organisational stance, you're not people who regularly seek funding and run labs in this way. So you're, you're kind of what am i Are you Is there a desire? Was there a desire to create this offering these offerings with for the community within which you exist? Does that make sense? Yes. Yes. I don't know.

Susanna Recchia 14:48

Yeah, I think was like, part of the driving energy of this. It's like, who's out there who wants to work this way? Do you know out there that not just who those those are the Who are the artists who can offer but what the art? Like, as artists coming together? How do we teach each other how to work together? So I think it was a bit a call outside who's out there? Just to feel what what, what are the questions that are in the space that that are in the world like or in the community in the dance community that we can work through dancing, not through, like a series of discussions or like it's like working through moving, like moving through those questions. And meeting each other through dancing and understanding or or feeling what questions emerge from the complexity of being together? Because there's always a complexity in that. And I think in relation to what Annie said, the artists that we've invited like to name Claire Cunningham, Maiya Leeke, Anna Seymour, Laura Jones, Chris Pavia and Alexandrina Hemsley, these are the people who have who have been shared the practices these days. And yes, one of the words that at least come back for me a lot this multiplicity is multiplicity of approaches multiplicity of perception, multiplicity. Multiplicity, nothing more to add.

Kate Marsh 16:26

So Annie do you want to add to that, before I jump in?

Annie Hanauer 16:29

No, it's also just really precious to have time to dance together, where we're not trying to do anything or make anything, we're just experimenting, trying, being, seeing what happens being together, dealing with all that. And, and also for me, too, as someone who identify as disabled, you know, whatever that means for different people, but to actively welcome people in to be like, we want you here, please come. Yeah.

Kate Marsh 17:01

I mean, before I kind of, I'm gonna ask you both to talk a little bit more about this multiplicity of offerings. But I suppose it's an observation and observation from me that I think having kind of been around this so called dance and disability or inclusive sector, whatever language we're landing on at different points. What the question that often boils down, that is often boiled down to for me is who's in the room? And I think I've, so I've had a real interest this week in your invitation to really actively curate disabled leadership. And and I think there's a bigger conversation maybe for another time about that, that as a methodology of just a very directive, this is what we're doing. And and then, yeah, it feels really important. And I've really felt that this week than it's been. Yeah, it's been absolutely disabled lead, disability lead. And I think there'll be some really significant learning from that for all of us.

Kate Marsh 18:18

So you've talked about your curatorial choice to offer this multiplicity of, of artists and of offerings. And speaking from your own perspective, because of course, you can't We can't You can't speak from the perspective of the group. How has that been for you? What have you what have you observed? I'm not asking you whether it's worked or not. I'm asking you, I think, how it's felt how it has felt to be to see your curation of these different leaders doing different very different ways of working very different modalities. That how is that? How has that? What your observations your thoughts around, if that's possible to articulate? What have you noticed, I think, is what I'm asking.

Annie Hanauer 19:09

So much stuff. It's been amazing and super intense so far, because there's always just a lot happening, and a lot to manage or hold in the space and really exciting, juicy questions coming up, which usually happens with these kinds of meetings, which I really like, even though it's not always easy to know how to do that within the time we have. And I mean, we were just talking about this before outside, but looking at all these different perspectives, and ways of working. It just kind of underlines for me that there's nothing that's universally accessible for everyone. There's ways in that are easier refer some people that are not easy for others, there are ways like and that's like, super interesting and important, I think in how we work. So then I think everyone we've invited has really investigated a lot in their work. And so then how do we also super interesting for Susanna, and me like to hold, I don't know people finding their their way in, in different things, or not or whatever, you know, like, it's, that's been a very wonderful, exciting, challenging but great thing to engage with.

Susanna Recchia 20:47

Me, I recognise what something that I really, really enjoy is the desire for the invited artists who came to teach the desire to share everything they could, which sometimes meant, like a lot of information, but it's also like, I really felt it's like, there's so much that I could that I want to give and share. And and then I felt like, oh, this could be like three months residential, something. Or like a year worth, like, there's like, there's really this feeling of like how much so genuinely, so generously each artist brought into the room that could just be like taken apart and reflected and thought through which in a week is not possible, in a way. So I'm left with with the amount of generosity and the amount of information that is that has been in the room. So if anyone has funding for your project, we aren't open to discuss they weren't there, or we needed the whirlwind.

Kate Marsh 21:50

[Intelligible] we haven't I mean, we haven't talked about this yet. But just listening to what you're both saying there and thinking about this, this word multiplicity, Susanna, that that I think fuse really weighty that I think there's, there's a value in these different offerings, these

different mobile mobile modalities and ways of working that. Forgive me if this language is clumsy, but in in some way, creates difficult questions and creates tensions between between these. And I don't mean that in a negative way, I suppose what I'm realising is that in order to progress, and in order to be in and with those less easy questions, we need to have a balance of tension and harmony. Actually, if it was all all good if it I mean, I'm I questioned the value if this amazing group of people came together and just had a really lovely week. And that the end went, Oh, that was a lovely week of dancing. That actually there's something about that, what's that saddle is something about the sand in the oyster that makes the pearl something? Grind? Yeah. Yeah. The grit, thank you. That sort of needs that push and pull does that resonate?

Susanna Recchia 23:16

But one of the things how we started the week that we put in the space, and maybe we invited for everyone, but it's like, can we can space hold equal care and challenge? And what do we mean by care? And when we mean, my challenge is a whole other hour conversation about that. But it's, I think that's something that Annie and I share in terms of practising dancing is the deep understanding that through care, which I often associate with feeling, feeling grounded feeling, or feeling okay with oneself in a space, feeling comfortable in a space and how that can meet. And honestly, confrontation, but it's like, okay, how do we go beyond how do we how do we go beyond what we know, how do we go beyond what's comfortable in a way that brings new information and how then, of course, the other the other question is how then those information can be integrated. It's other yeah.

Kate Marsh 24:27

And good, good to just acknowledge. I mean, I can't I think yeah, just that, certainly within the conversation that I am often in, it's always good, I think to acknowledge that care is a really complex term in terms of crip identity and disabled identity that it's it's not it's not a straightforward term. So I think we brought, that that's there as well.

Annie Hanauer 24:51

Yeah, it goes in all directions. Anyone can be caring to others give and receive care anyone, everyone. That's it.

Kate Marsh 25:08

Okay, well, you both segued beautifully into my second provocation. And I'm not. Again, I'm not asking you about to answer this. But I think you've already nodded to this and that this notion of competing or conflicting access needs. And I should add that competing and conflicting access needs is, I found that when I Googled what happens when access needs are not the same, or something clunky like that. So they're not my words competing and conflicting, are borrowed, but they seem to do the trick. So and this is this is a, this is a broader question, and maybe something when we speak more widely when we open up to the group. I

wonder, when we think about this competing or conflicting, these competing or conflicting access needs in any group. I'm now wondering how labs like this, and dance practice more generally, might uncover things about how can we have through our practice? I suppose what I'm asking is can dance practice and research offer us something uncover something about how those how those different needs, may may be met? Or maybe navigated? That's really rambling question, can you get? Yes.

Annie Hanauer 26:35

Absolutely, I think when you invite lots of different people in the room, and acknowledge that we are different, because sometimes we pretend we're not, even if it's not about identifying as disabled, or whatever, actually, we all need slightly different stuff to work at our best. And I said to flourish before, actually, that's the word from Maiya earlier in the week, but like, to not just like, be allowed in, but to like thrive in the environment and get the most from it. So then it's like, really practical thing sometimes, like, music needs to be loud for one person. But for another, it's it's too much information to have loud music. Like very simple thing like that, which is kind of like a it's a structural thing to think about how we work in the space. And that kind of stuff is really great. And it can feel sometimes, like, how can we ever find a solution that works for all of us, but I think the only answer is that we have to be in flux. Yeah, like, we have to just, you know, get information from the people in the room support that, you know, make an informed proposal as best we can and then work responsively to what's happening, which is kind of cool, because actually, it's like, improvising and dance. I don't know.

Kate Marsh 28:01

But I think that that's kind of what I was, you know, I just I think I got a bit seduced by this image of it. That's what we do. We come into the space we we kind of collide we push we pull, we we kind of negotiate though those and I wonder, I don't know have that maybe this fantasy that dance practice may be a vehicle for for bringing, though that that that difficulty into entering because acknowledging that that needs that we're because we're in flux, and I think that's a really good term Annie to [intelligible] what before you said flux, which is better than mine? I was gonna say, is it about kind of being in the mess of what that is? And then just just kind of okay, what's happening here? What's Yeah, yeah, sorry. Do you want to add?

Susanna Recchia 28:56

No, I just, I just love the the word mess because it's there is the, it releases me from I have the word now is gone. It releases me from what's the opposite of failing, success success. I will never succeed, yes, succeeding. which I like because then I feel flux and process. Okay. I will always have to be negotiable within myself and, and and in the space so almost like it's like the danger of fixating anything is that it will create something where where we think close the talks. And actually, what maybe through this lab or through our experiences or We realise that there's not one truth. And the more we realise there's not one truth, the more we realise there are

different ways of perceiving the world, there are different ways of communicating, there are different ways of timing through which people can actually receive information, understand and process, there are different ways in which people travelled through the room that effect. So there's not one through so there's not one, one way of walking, there's not one way of jumping, there's not one way of holding an object, there's, there's not one way. So we always, it's always back to that thing of multiplicity. There's not one way and the more we can exercise ourselves, to move away from the strong desire that the human race has about wanting to have one truth, the more we can create situations where different people can coexist, in how they are, how they feel, how they behave, how they read the world, how they feel the world.

Kate Marsh 31:01

That's reminding me of something you said earlier in the week, when we were talking about the kind of binary, if you like, between mainstream or traditional, or whatever, well, you know, the contemporary dance sector, whatever, again, language, and, and how its its relationship to disability, or disabled identity Cripness, that that historically, and this is my perception of my experience that historically, the so called mainstream has kind of let let this community or whatever, whatever, whatever language you're using, into a little backdoor, and been, and we have borrowed space in this in this and, and actually, I think we've kind of a situation has developed where there's a co-existence, but it's it's there a bit set, there's the the truths, as you're saying, are in both those areas, I think. And that was a very rambly way of just acknowledging something you said about when we resist traditional structures, we can often become the thing that we have then resisted. So I wonder listening to you talk, is it about kind of just keeping in flux, keeping moving, keeping, questioning, and almost acknowledging, like you said, right at the beginning, you're never gonna find the answer. It's about staying in, in communication.

Annie Hanauer 32:34

Yeah, I went on a bit of a tangent because

Kate Marsh 32:37

Tangents are good

Annie Hanauer 32:40

For me, what keeps bringing me back to why I want to work in this world is that it's exciting artistically.

Kate Marsh 32:47

Yeah.

Annie Hanauer 32:47

And that thing, also of like, disabled leadership, which sounds kind of it's like a hot issue of representation sometimes and stuff. But it's really much deeper than that for me, like, I want to learn from someone who's who's experienced the world and lived the world very differently from me, because that is very interesting. And when we all get together with all of our bodies, and all of that stuff, and see what happens, then exciting artistic meetings happen. And sorry, it's sort of relates to what you're saying I losing the thread of it. But I'm having people who may be outside of what sort of like acceptable within that mainstream, I'm using like, air quotes to the extreme. Yeah, I'm having that person in a place of leadership, or I'm going to lead through sharing what I've experienced, and my perspective, excuse me, can be super powerful. And it's not something that actually happens very much. I never met a person like I've been since I was really young, and I never met a person who shared my physicality until I was like 20. Blah.

Kate Marsh 34:08

Was it me?

Annie Hanauer 34:09

It wasn't you. But I met you later. But yes. So yeah, just getting those different perspectives in the room. I totally, I think I went a bit. A different direction with that. Pardon me?

Kate Marsh 34:22

No, it's, I think we can go in any directions that

Annie Hanauer 34:25

Was that at all related to what you just asked.

Kate Marsh 34:27

I can't remember I asked. Let's say yes. No, yeah, I think no, it's I think it's all related. I think it's just about what yeah, this the Yeah, the the mess, the middle, the middle space between kind of just keeping it's all it's all interesting. It's all. Thank you. Yeah.

Susanna Recchia 34:51

But I would like to ask you a question. Yes. I just would like something that was we shared with the with the participants, what are you present with? Right now? In? I'm just curious, what are you present with, like with this talking or this week or because maybe one little parenthesis is just like, Annie and I wanted to had Kate on board, too, because kind of we knew that lots would happen to be there as a space holder as someone who's very articulated who's interested in researching the, the nit and grit, of the language that we use and what happens and that also as a practice, you do write and speak about those things. So also, we wanted someone who has that skill, as well as the dancing and experiential, to support and also to

provoke as like, Yeah, but is that what you mean? Is that what you want? Is that? Yeah, so I just would like to, to hear from you.

Kate Marsh 36:05

What am I present with this? I think? I mean, this is gonna seem like a cop out. But I think to go back to my room, my one of my first comments that what I'm what I'm present with a lot is who, who is in the room? Who am I sharing space with? And I think what this work, what this week, has taught me or not taught me, what I've observed, and it's something I've been present with recently in other contexts, is that that's not a static that question has to has to be, it's almost like, okay, who's in the room now? Who's in the room now? Who's in the room now? That it's that it's this, this flux thing, and I think, what I am what I'm so so the risk of being a bit anecdotal, when I started to research, dance and disability and leadership, it came from a really practical place that I'd been working in dance for, at that point, 20 years, I think, maybe a little bit less. And I began my career in dance, right at the emergence, the beginnings of Candoco, the beginnings of Stoppap, it was genuinely very, very new, to see people with different bodies, disabled bodies, on the professional stage. So like, actually, I need some, and this is quite telling, I think I also hadn't encountered a body anywhere near mine, until I was in my late like, no, yeah, probably early 20s. And certainly not dancing professionally. And, and what so that my very practical frustration came from a point of what's happened, because I wasn't seeing what I might have expected to see. I wasn't seeing disabled producers, disabled artistic directors, disabled leaders of organisations of dance houses, I was still seeing disabled people were restricted for want of a better word to these inspirational figures on stage, which is great, was not great. But rubbish. No, but it's important I, of course, performing and presenting is a big part of the world that we work in. But I wasn't seeing a trajectory into leadership. So it was very practical. So that's why I wanted to pursue that. And it's still of real interest. But I now my sense is that how we understand this world of I mean, I It's funny, when you talk about air quotes, I do it all the time, because language feels not enough, at the moment, or unsatisfactory or with I feel like we're finding on needing to find some new language because things are shifting. And I think is why I'm forever going inclusive, because I know Demy has in the room that I just need to it's not a satisfies. It's actually a very problematic word. But there isn't really a better one. So I just make a face inclusive, and hopefully people know what I'm talking about. So I think that's what I'm I'm present with and that's why this week has been really illuminating for me. I want to understand I don't I don't know how things are shifting. I think our our breadth of understanding of this question of who is in the room is broadening? I think we are understanding that that identity and lived experience isn't is different this or it's not different, but we're we're acknowledging many, many multiplicities of ways of being in the world. And I want to be present to to what that is. I want to be open to what that is and to understand the access is is very different to what my understanding or my experience of it was 20 years ago. Yeah. Does that make sense? Kind of? So it's still that question of who's in the

room, but it's kind of I want to keep that moving and keep. I want to understand how things are shifting.

Annie Hanauer 40:21

I like, sorry, I just had a side thought about this disabled leadership thing. Something that I think you wrote on one of our like, writing things down digesting what's just happened moments that's become a huge installation on the wall. Was what, what does this body know? Are someone wrote that? Did you write that? Amazing? And I thought, yes, exactly. Because our bodies know all of our bodies. No, no. So then, like centering that person, as a leader, who may have been otherwise cast in another role. And going like, what does this body know, is a really exciting way into a different movement experience, or artistic experience or way of thinking about dancing and all that stuff?

Susanna Recchia 41:15

And also, I would like to add that within that, well, there's this body No. So so the potential of what does this body this person could no more is the like, how do we had situations where learning feels? Okay, what learning feels doable? So that then we can also continually refresh the knowing and without getting stuck into this is what I know. But, yes.

Kate Marsh 41:51

I mean, you're I mean, this, I hope this, I can articulate this, you've just made me think of something that this, this gift of being in a space of growing your knowledge of developing your knowledge, is actually a real privilege. And I think it's often the privilege that if you are disabled artists working in dance it through for many reasons, that that, you know, we use that term that, that the term that is often used to describe the knowledge acquisition of disabled dancers, is bespoke training, which I think feels like a massive excuse. But we're not really attending to what we need to do with our training institutions, and establishments to just get this romantic. I mean, bespoke training is great if everybody's doing it. But I think this, it's, it's really important that we, that we understand it, it's a privilege to be in a space of doing or what don't I know, what can I learn more, rather than being stuck in, it goes back to me in that kind of static thing of, it's just enough to be inspiring, it's enough to be here, and to be given the space on stage or in a, in a training? And actually, it's, it's not about kind of a what do I know? And for me, that question of, what does this body know is actually around? What is this this body? No, that's not that's, that's about bodies and, and all bodies or bodies moving together or dance? That's not about teaching a module on inclusion. It's not about doing an inset day on, on disability. Which if people want to do that, I'm support it's not for me, but I unless everything goes really badly employment wise, and then I'll do anything. But yeah, I think it's it's a privilege space that we should all have access to. How do I how do I share my knowledge? How do I develop my knowledge, need to think about that bit more comfortably. But thank you for that provocation.

Annie Hanauer 44:04

That, sorry, that bespoke. I call it bespoke movement techniques. Because I use the word technique intentionally. I think that comes from Claire Cunningham, who was here on Monday, who sort of half jokingly says, I have Cunningham technique. Because really, there is a very sophisticated system that Claire has developed through her own body that did not come from a training institution that did not come from a pre existing system. And that is gold. I mean, that's unique that came from this person's own body experience and investigating deeply. What is movement for me and what principles am I arriving at? So for me, that thing is like, it's really funny because I use that as a thing of power, where it's like. Well first, everyone needs to have access to training and movement in any way they wish, first of all, but that's not the reality. So the things that people have had to develop and dig into, and have the resilience and courage and like, what's that? Like? Got to keep going with. That's super interesting. And that's the thing I want to learn about. I want to learn from those people.

Kate Marsh 45:29

Yeah

Kate Marsh 45:34

Welcome back, everyone. Hope you all have I know that people in the room has a bad day, if it's a nice break the break. Alison, is it? Oh, can we take a question? Couple of questions from the chat. And then we'll try and kind of keep the balance between the room and the online room.

Alison Thomas 45:56

Yes, I hope everyone can hear me. Just pop in the chat. If you can't see a question. There's questions from the chat. One is from Colleen. And she asked Kate, when you're talking about disabled leadership? Could you define what you meant by leadership? And just some more clarity around some of the language that wasn't super clear or explicit when you're talking about that? Specifically around leadership? I think.

Kate Marsh 46:26

Yeah, I'll try. I so I think that for me, there's a reason why it's it's hard to land on on kind of efficient terminology around leadership. And, and for me, that's because traditional language used to describe leadership doesn't fit non traditional ways of being in the world, or non traditional bodies. And I think that that's one of the things that I've really noted when I've looked into when I've researched into into leadership, that I kind of got myself into a place to my research, of just thinking that we needed to, we needed to kind of entirely rethink what leadership is that actually, much of the writing around leadership, including leadership in the arts is really dominated by Isley dominant dominated by notions of normative bodies,

normative body language, of what what we expect a leader to be like. So I think if that goes some way to answering what how I'm understanding leadership, is that I think it's I think, not how I understand it, I think it is a term that needs to be really re re imagined in a way that includes many, many more ways of being, and I don't think it does at the moment. To dig into Colleen's question a bit more. In this is perhaps easier to answer. When I think about leadership in the art, I'm talking about policymakers, funders, organisational heads at directors. And that's where I don't see disabled led practice enough. And that's often really frustrating to me, because I see and recognise disabled leadership all the time in the communities I live, I'm working, and I'm not seeing that reflected in the organisational structures that I have to engage with. I feel that the second half of the answer made more sense in the first. Yeah.

Annie Hanauer 48:48

Maybe, I mean, in the dance world, it's interesting, because we're not like a company with like a flowchart of like structures or anything. And so leadership, I was working with another artists who said something like, it's helpful if there is leadership in the room. And I was like, isn't that interesting? So you're kind of saying that, that could take a lot of different shapes or happen in a lot of different directions. So I guess for this week, we've sort of invited, you know, one artists or two artists each day to give an overall artistic proposal and hold, you know, the space, we've also sort of led or whatever, in creating this weak structure and inviting people, and that's happened through conversation with Independent Dance through lots of different inputs and evolution. So in a way, it's kind of like, yeah, it's a multi level sort of flowing thing it feels like

Kate Marsh 49:53

So I think I yeah, and I think, I mean, maybe that links into the other that but what just one small point to To add to that, I think I actually think even leadership opportunities in the arts are still dominated by this kind of normative ideology that, that there's still a slight just to go back to Colleen's question around language, that we still offer those opportunities in a language that is inviting non disabled bodies, but it's kind of saying, Come and be a leader, but we're still using the same language to talk about leadership, and it doesn't fit. And I think that's, that needs to re-thinking.

Alison Thomas 50:38

Does a follow up question, and she asks do you mean paid positions?

Annie Hanauer 50:42

Oooh

Kate Marsh 50:43

Yeah, yeah, I mean, this. Yes. The second half? I guess I do. I do mean pay positions. But I think that's a really that's a really complex question. In terms of our sector regardless. I think in the whole that whole kind of, I'm not sure that's the can of worms that I'm equipped to, to answer there. Yes, I do mean paid positions. Yeah. But I also mean, other positions as well.

Audience 51:13

Should we have another question?

Annie Hanauer 51:15

Sure

Alison Thomas 51:15

Yes. And Ruth asks about contagion. How in a shared space, are we affecting each other? Open to this, maybe this goes deeper or wider than specifically one person in a leadership role? Or one person leadership roles? I'm asking the questions.

Kate Marsh 51:34

Was that clear? No, I think that's that's fine. And I think that I've the reason why I wanted to go to that. One is I think it's it links quite nicely to Colleen's questions. And I think I, and then I think it's probably best if you two also speak about it, I think I got really interested in the notions of collective or collaborative or relational leadership, that that we really we actively resist. where we, where we cut off, or there is a resistance to the kind of Lone Ranger model of leadership that is one person that actually leadership can happen collaboratively. And I think in dance, we're really well, we do it all the time. But because it's not in those paid positions, it's not the director of a big dance house. We're not recognised, we don't recognise our practice as leaderful. And that's what I'm talking about when I see it all the time that I see. Dancers like being leaderful in their practice and choreographic practice, in research practices. But but it it gets separated from these are the leaders who are wearing, you know, sorry, generally white men in suits at the head of many organisations. And actually, that we're not recognising that leadership is happening collectively and collaboratively. Do you want to add anything?

Annie Hanauer 51:34

Yeah, this thing of logistics agent, which is an interesting word, but I guess like, sharing, doing this gesture, again, I think one of our interests with Susanna and I for this week was that learning is happening in lots of different directions. And exchange is happening in lots of different directions. So like, we're in or independent, interdependent, freelancy artists who work on lots of different projects, we are in dialogue with an organisation. We're inviting different people from different countries to meet the artists we've asked to propose, or you know, like, lead a session or a day or a half day. Can they also be in the mix of like doing and dancing and

all this stuff? So that it's not? Yeah, there's just more opportunities to meet in different ways. And one thing I really liked about leading or whatever, with Susanna, which we've done a lot in the past and now also with Kate, this week, in different ways is that it's just easier to support each other so that it's not this What did you say, lone?

Kate Marsh 53:18

Lone Ranger,

Annie Hanauer 53:22

Lone Ranger. Like that you have to be everything and do everything all the time for everyone. And it's, I find that really stressful so that one of the things that we've found over the years I think, is that we really naturally go with each other and like pick up if you can see the other person is like flagging or whatever. Yeah.

Kate Marsh 54:52

Question from the. Is there a question in the room?

Audience 54:59

Because I'm so knew and what I just heard about, you guys said, inclusive is not a good word in, in your experience, and I really want to understand more.

Kate Marsh 55:14

I can I can answer that a bit, there's another person in the room, I want to also jump in. I, if I can't say simply, the term inclusion implies that, that, in this instance, disabled people are being included in something that already exists being allowed in being kinda, and that that feels hierarchical. And there's a there's a imbalance of power in that. Demy do you?

Audience 55:45

Well, okay. I'm gonna say it. So the [intelligible] in me, doesn't, it feels like being included in some word, there's someone outside of a space, or people community or something, and you have to take him and put him in the space. And that's not how I think about myself. That's not how I articulate my practice, it's something I never want to be part of.

Susanna Recchia 56:36

And I don't know if it's in any way helpful. But sometimes when we talk about accessible practice, and how I have sometimes images of, of a ball. And there are like lots of windows, lots of doors. But everyone is out. And then when it's like it's a permeable space where people can get in and out. But there is a way in and there's a way out so that people know how to navigate that bowl, that could be a text, that could be a dance task can be a space, that could be a conference, that could be a dinner, that could be a building. That could be you know, the

ball, the ball can be anything. But they have the how do how does everyone enter and exit those ball? Does that answer your question? Do you want to pick an online or in person?

Annie Hanauer 57:44

I don't know. We've more questions flowing in?

Alison Thomas 57:47

Yeah, there's a couple of questions online, one for me to read out and one person that what they want to speak it.

Kate Marsh 57:55

Oh, that would be nice.

Alison Thomas 57:56

I read the original first one going older. So Hannah asked, I have Down Syndrome, and I'm interested in advocacy, is that that's familiar to you, and how do we approach this as disabled people? Then they said, I have a professional Instagram account, show and share what I do. Would you say this is the first step towards advocacy? Or would you say it's something you need to learn and understand from an educational point?

Annie Hanauer 58:26

Nice.

Kate Marsh 58:29

I mean, I suppose I had one would want to preempt. And that was before I respond to Hannah's question that I think there are many more people who who could probably speak more articulately about advocacy than I, I can, I think. I hope that ad advocacy, and the particularly disability advocacy is it comes down to someone's choice, someone's individual choice as as the person who's been disabled for their whole life. I, at times have advocated when I felt really positive about doing that. And it's been a really satisfying experience. And it's been really fruitful. And I've also had been forced to advocate for myself and others, and I found it extremely exhausting. And it's had a personal toll. So I think it's really important that we advocate on our own terms, whatever, that's not that infamy that's not specific to disability. That is about what you give of yourself in explaining or so I definitely think there's a role. But I, you know, I feel it should be the choice of the individual and intended Instagram. I'm far too old to be able to know whether that's good. Yes, you do. What do you think but what do you think about advocacy?

Annie Hanauer 59:58

I think The first step is getting together with people you know, and having conversations. And then maybe those conversations connect out to other artists or organisations or whatever who might be also doing the kind of work or advocacy that you're interested in. I have not that much experience a bit with like more formalised advocacy that's about like, you know, workers rights and policy and stuff like this. But I feel that the way I mostly act as an advocate is by doing the work I do, and doing the work the best I can, and choosing the way I work as much as it's in my power. So actually, you kind of already are doing it if you're in the dance world doing things. Because like, we were talking about before, all those meetings and learning happen, not just from someone reading, but they happen between people that meet to dance that have a conversation over coffee. So it's probably already also happening in your life. Maybe.

Kate Marsh 1:01:10

Shall we have the speakie?

Alison Thomas 1:01:15

Yes, Claire would you like to speak? We do have a projector in the room. So if you'd like to be [intelligible] that if you'd like to turn your camera on the speaker, CD. There, you know, that should be it now.

Audience 1:01:32

Okay, I identified with something that was said earlier about, sometimes not wanting to appear different and needing to? Well, the idea that you could embrace difference, that you're the kind of have to. But I was wondering there, you know, historically and sort of in it's very sort of understood that there are barriers to people with disabilities, perhaps, in, you know, in lots of different ways, including, perhaps in taking leadership positions, but and those would be sort of identified as external barriers. I'm wondering about the internal barriers. So the, the, the effects of social, kind of the internal. For me, personally, I have a huge resistance to being in a leadership role, even though I believe that it would be important and worthwhile and vital. But I can sense in myself, there is a there is a sort of who me kind of imposter syndrome with that. That I think it's somewhat comes from having a history of disability. Is there anything that you have to say on that? I mean, I hear you saying that, by doing it is kind of how you are advocating, you know, by being yourself and putting yourself out there and doing it. But yeah, my question is, what do you what do you kind of think about that there's different that sometimes barriers are internal. And, obviously, it's great that you're offering this thank you so much. Because I think that sort of having conversations like this, and having this happening, is like a really good step to kind of breaking down some of those barriers internally and externally.

Kate Marsh 1:03:47

I, I think, and this goes for me, this goes for leadership and advocacy, that you it goes back to me to that that point about how can we re imagine because absolutely internal ableism internal attitudinal barriers, I encounter it all the time. And it's especially difficult I think when you don't see yourself represented in in the area that you're working in, you know, that there's when there's, it's very difficult to imagine yourself in a being leaderful and so I really relate to that. You know, I grew up in a body that that nobody thought could be a leader of themselves, let alone and I don't ever see myself as leading others that I think that's a really important distinction. I see myself as supporting others and sometimes mentoring. But I suppose I see myself when I'm leading that I think when I'm leading points in practice, it's through practice. It's not about I am leading these people. It's been with people, but one point before I say if and they will soon You want to comment is, I, I, I feel really strongly that in that reimagining of leadership, we have to really understand that leadership might be quiet, it might be silent, it might be gentle. It might be all these things that feel opposite to traditional understandings of leadership that you know, how you command how you I mean, it's so traditional writing around leadership is so ableist, frankly, that it taught, it literally talks about how you stand in a room, how you hold yourself the volume that you speaker. So yeah, as in how you gesture how you are whole, you mustn't be seen to be vulnerable. And I'm really interested in his proposition. What if leadership is, is about vulnerability? And about all these? Yeah, yeah. Do you want to?

Annie Hanauer 1:05:53

That's beautiful. I, yeah, I was thinking you're not alone. First of all. Second of all, if you want to, towards that, then you have to do it in a way that feels like safe and okay for you at the moment. And that probably will change over time, or whatever. And then what I found really powerful, and one of the reasons why I want to work in this way and in these rooms, is being in community with other people that I know are dealing with similar stuff that I'm dealing with. Because then it's just like, oh, whoa, yeah, okay. We're all dealing with this stuff. And we don't have to be so secret about it. And yeah, what you just said about being vulnerable is amazing. Like, it reminds me of someone I know, who's a brilliant lecturer. And during COVID, she, for the first time did a check in with all her students who are on Zoom. And she included herself in that and really just shared what was going on, because it was really heavy, hard moment. And afterward, she told me like, I've never done that before. I never thought I was allowed to show that I was vulnerable and in front of my students. But they all really appreciated that, actually. And it changed something in our dynamic. So it's also Yeah, what Kate just said about these ideas of what we think that means or has to be like, and maybe looking for situations where the idea is not fixed. Some sirens going by outside.

Kate Marsh 1:07:33

Got about five, five or six minutes left. Is there a question in the room? I think there is some online, so don't feel pressured. But if people have questions, or comments, observations, and there's going like that. Zoom in.

Alison Thomas 1:07:53

Yeah, there's two questions. One and a comment in a separate question. So Kajsa asks, Have there been any learnings through the lab on disabled slash inclusive leadership within training institutions, these spaces are often made inaccessible to disabled dancers and artists and make it a lot harder for early career artists or artists that are trying to connect with industry. I would love to hear the panel's thoughts on this. And then Sophie has replied and said, echoing this, I work with young people with disabilities. And there's a huge lack of level playing field progression routes, and being able to access vocational training with a disability. Should we be fighting for the mainstream to be more accessible or create new, more inclusive reasons, dance careers, e.g. placements, or mentoring leaders and makers?

Annie Hanauer 1:08:46

All of it. Yeah, because some of those roots, like, a more traditional approach to dance training will be super, super interesting and valid for some people and not for others. Institutions. Yeah, I think they'll they have so much on their plate. But and I know a lot of training, traditional air quotes, again, places are thinking about that. And as someone who's sometimes interacted, and you know, been brought in to kind of think about or talk about or do something about accessible training or whatever. I'm interested in those institutions who have money and resources and full time employees doing that work themselves. And being in dialogue with people in the community in a in a meaningful way, in a sustained way over time, because it will take a very long time to change ingrained systems. Yeah, yeah. No, no,

Kate Marsh 1:09:56

No, I agree. I think that's absolutely There's one more.

Alison Thomas 1:10:03

There's one more. Can you talk about the lab experiment? He was paid to be in the room and who was paid, who had who paid to participate? And about power and privilege? What happened to the research and learnings from this lab and who has it taught?

Annie Hanauer 1:10:21

Wow, it's a big one.

Susanna Recchia 1:10:25

So we. Those were paid was me. And Annie, Kate, and the teaching artists. Participants had to pay in order to participate, and we try to find ways to make the lab accessible to people who might not have financial capacity to, to pay for it.

Annie Hanauer 1:10:59

Yeah, yeah, this was a long conversation too, with us and with Independent Dance of how to approach that, because accessing stuff, it's about a whole bunch of different factors. And having the money to pay for things is, is part of that too. But yeah.

Susanna Recchia 1:11:20

And then in terms of the plan, we are hoping that this is the beginning of annual series, but then with this lab will happen every year, maybe with different formats, different places, we don't know. But we are hoping it to be an annual event. Almost like as a way hopefully, that it becomes almost like a reference point for people want to return to or people say oh, there is that opportunity that I can go to that something maybe to look forward to something to to engage with that is there. And it's not just gonna go, there's not one off, I think that there's so much work that needs to be done in a way in so many ways around these topics that around people's experiences and people growth in a way everyone's growth than it was like this is just the beginning, really. So we're hoping to make it annual.

Annie Hanauer 1:12:15

Yeah, and just to say also, like, a, the lack of opportunities for, you know, disabled folks to just get in the room and do things and be together is one reason to try and do something regular. And also because it takes way more planning, putting access support in place for people to get there. And so if people didn't get it this time, then hopefully we can be together next time. And yeah, so we hope so. More in the future, we hope.

Kate Marsh 1:12:50

Demy?

Audience 1:12:51

No, I don't have a question. It's only common, and it's my rational. Thinking about the lab, tell about anyone else. But for me, this lab was one of the safest environments that that being and that we participated in a lot of different labs around the world. So it's not always the case. And it's not always acknowledged for someone let's it might not be their, their environment, or what they're thinking, but for me, it was one of the safest place to experiment and to think outside of the box and and get you new information that I didn't know existed. So yeah, so that's, that's what I wanted to say. So thank you.

Kate Marsh 1:14:02

It's eight o'clock Thank you, Susanna and Annie, but generously sharing your or being in conversation. Yeah, it's been really great to be kind of surprised by each other and hopefully big at the beginning of more. Thank you to everybody in the room who's made it feel like we're not talking into no thank you everyone online. But yeah, thanks again. To echo Heni's point. Thank you.

Outro: Renée Bellamy speaking in 2021

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