

SPIRIT COMPASS

One Year On: Conversations with Lucy Suggate

Conversation Two

In August 2020, six months after the last presentation of Spirit Compass at Nottingham Contemporary, Lucy Suggate conducted a series of conversations with some of the people involved in the project. These conversations capture reflections and memories of the experience of the work from a variety of viewpoints, offering an archive of the work and an understanding of how Spirit Compass, as a layered piece, spills beyond the performative event.

In conversation two, Lucy is joined by Ramsay Burt, Professor of Dance History and Director of the Dance, Drama and Performance Studies Research Institute at De Montfort University. In this episode Ramsay and Lucy discuss some of the key ideas in Spirit Compass and Ramsay's experience as an audience member.

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Lucy Suggate: How do you, how do you make work, how do we make contemporary dance work in this environment? So, I'll just park that question, but it, it became this thing around how do you occupy space? And as a solo figure, what I often found is that the traditional, inherited, perhaps let's say contemporary compositional concerns that, or the formal aesthetics of composition, didn't really apply to the singular figure in space, what I experienced is maybe the guy that, poetics of space, he's another French...

Ramsay Burt: Bachelard?

Lucy Suggate: Yeah, this idea of building space from the experience, from the individual sort of experience or from your own poetic or moving experience. So often if I was performing solos I would be like mining the space, so creating it as I was moving,

or what another thing I observed happened is I would, in a way, time travel, so I would situate myself in quite imaginary spaces, so I would often time t', I'd find myself on a beach, you know, I'd be performing in a theatre but I'd find myself on a beach somewhere, and I'd have a sense that maybe it was three hundred years ago, so this idea that (laughs) you can project, you can imagine space, so again this perceptual tool of the moving body in space and how that can transform into something real, or something functional or practical, or you can dissect the space or understand it in a compositional sense. But then what I also experienced was this almost hallucinatory space as well, or, you know, liminal, maybe people refer to it as a liminal, liminal space or liminal spaces. And I think that, through the practice of moving and dancing, this interest in space, or this interest in, you know, what is, what is the relationship between movement, organisation and therefore, the choreographic, yeah, has evolved. And again, the idea that *Spirit Compass* in a way is an accumulation of the last decade long research, actually, and the research not only practically in movement, but also in how you, yeah what concepts or what philosophies, or the kind of notion of creating a large choreographic field where movement, philosophy, ethics, all of these, this site of multiplicity maybe I talked about, this idea that perspectives, human bein', you know, beings, lived experiences can, can all come together or exist in a site, in a choreographic site.

That was possibly the sort of starting point of *Spirit Compass* and this idea that actually we are, if we look at the context of, we look at our, yeah, our environments, yeah, that we are in, we are in a perpetual state of crisis, and how that feels slightly different, sort of in the last twenty years, that feels like perhaps it has accelerated and will continue to accelerate. If we look at sort of dance-making and choreograph, you know, choreography in the late part of the twentieth century and where we are, where we are now, what we're having to focus on now. So again, you're right then, this idea of singularities or, I suppose this term fractals is quite popular at the moment, this idea of things that are small but that can also replicate themselves on a large, larger scale as well.

So this idea, I suppose, and that's also why I like the idea of a choreographic score or perhaps a choreographic field, this is the more appropriate terminology in that it's a space that can deal with detail, practicality, but it can also deal with, yeah, global concerns. It can bring in multiple philosophical approaches, some, you know, ridiculous emergent theories and ideas that don't even have language yet, so it sort of creates this space where those, where contradictions can actually get along. And maybe that's also an environment that I feel, in terms of a social environment, that it's also somewhere, it's a field or it's a place, like the choreographic field, you know, is it a place that could be replicated in society.

You know, if we're talking about fractaling it, if we're talking about scaling the fractals up, are these spaces something that can, can also transfer, translate, and observing that when you are in a state of movement, of course, the most obvious thing is that things move (short laugh), things change. And I think the tidal, you know, the notion of the tides or the notion of the sea, as a kind of site or a, yeah, as a kind of site, actually, this vast space that we know exists, but we also accept that it's constantly changing. You know, even if in, that's in a narrative sense that, you know, when we look at stories or it's a stormy sea today, or it's a calm sea, you know, even in that very sort of simplistic description of it as a space. You know, when you really start to interrogate it, you realise, well I, you know, my understanding of the sea is also that it's been incredibly important in sort of feminist thinking, particularly the notion of the sea as this feminine object, it's something that is so vast that is constantly changing, and is, is difficult to depict, is something that, yeah, again, sort of really seemed to resonate with the work that I was trying to make. So it has an identity, but that identity is constantly changing and moving with the people, with the ideas, that it is in a state of flux.

And how do you, and it would seem to be that our society, or our structures, has a real problem with, with flux, with things that fluctuate. We're really drawn to fixtures, we're really drawn, we're drawn to objects, we're drawn to, you know, our buildings, you know, for buildings, the dwellings that we live in, they're fixed structures and that actually nature is much better, or much more capable and much more adaptable at dealing with that constant change. And I'm also curious about how, yeah, that movement could integrate into those fixed systems that we have. And that can also be around ourselves and our perception, it can be how we view something, it can be language, that feels often at times very fixed, the way we structure organisations, the way we write things, you know, all of these things are very sort of, yeah, we repeat and they, they, they have a kind of approach to them or a method to them, a regurgitation to them.

So I'm interested in that, that need for that pattern, for these patterns, and the repetition of these patterns, but I'm also interested in how those, in recognising how those patterns can shift. And I think that was one aspect that was happening in *Spirit Compass*, and accumulated from the ten years' work. And then also at the same time in, in observing these patterns and in observing how things work, you also I think get to realise what is present and what is absent. And I think in terms of, of dance production, you know, how difficult it is to make a piece of contemporary dance, even in the broadest sense, how odd and how strange that is, but also how necessary it can feel to do that, and again it comes back to, I suppose, to these energy systems around the, you know, like the sea,. You can, you can never tell the sea to stop being the sea, or

you can't tell a tidal system to stop, you know, that's how the energy is developed and that's how it's used.

Of course, human beings have tried to move the sea, but the sea will, you know, the sea won't stop moving and I think that's a little bit like, yeah, how I would like, if bodies behaved, if bodies were able or encouraged to behave a little bit more like the sea: this kind of immense sense of, you know, to tap into those extraordinary senses of energy, of power... and what would that feel like.

Ramsay Burt: So, but there is a reason for wanting us to do that, which links back to the kind of climate catastrophe in so far as people are, the systems through which our society sustains itself – 'sustains' is probably the wrong word – is totally exploitative and in an unsustainable way, and it is causing catastrophe.

I dunno, I kind of, just one of the things about the current pandemic is the way that these viruses are things that have jumped from, jumped species and that they jump species often because of the changing way that we have been exploiting the natural environment. Something like: you know, so I've been a couple of times to Senegal, to Germaine Acogny's school, Ecole Des Sables, which is in a fishing village, Toubab Dialao. And they used to fish, but now the kind of huge corporate fishing boats are sweeping up all the fish, so they don't have the access to the fish that they used to eat. So there's more use of bush meat and so, and hence, and of course the jungle is being, you know, invaded. And that's how these viruses are getting into human society and then spreading. So there's, there, you know, so there's all those reasons for, and that's just kind of like one example, there's so many examples like that.

And so a kind of dance work that is about, that is slow and about, I mean you talked about cooperation, about people working together in, somehow. Ane one definition of ethics, a kind of Spinozan idea of ethics is, you know, that it's getting on with other people who have a similar energy to oneself, so that with, by putting energies together, you can do more than you could on your own. You also talked about the kind of liminal state and I think you have talked about it being like a meditation and that, that movement, certain kind of movement patterns can be, if not autohypnotic, they can at least change the state of consciousness. They can alter one's state of consciousness. I think if as a spectator I am tuned into what's happening, I sense that change of consciousness. I think that's how performance can work. And so it's creating a sense of kind of tune-ness of, enhanced sensitivity and awareness which are kind of lacking in our society because of the exploitative nature of the extractive, industrial corporations, but in whose interests our society is constructed. I've tried to make it more political.

Lucy Suggate: (laughs) Just a couple of things: I think that when you were talking, the notion of awareness actually dropped into my head or this idea that, you know, as individual human beings but also as a collective mass, I think what we've done is, we've negated our responsibility to cultivating our awareness and we've occupied or we've busied ourselves feeding this consumer, capitalist machine. And you know, that is really, that sort of energy system that the capitalist machine sort of generates, not only in its output, but also in what, in how it attracts us and our activity, is absolutely, you know...if you really sit and consider that, it is quite, it's quite phenomenal. And then of course the impact of this global, capitalist machinery and the fallout from that is just tremendous. So then you kind of answered: well what can I, you know, what can I do? What can I do to become.. you know of course there's practical things that we can be doing, but there's also this sense of developing awareness. Or actually, for me, through moving, you know, again this idea of: in a state of movement, a lot of difficult questions somehow enter into my consciousness, which if I wasn't moving, I'm not sure I would think about.

So again, I'm really sort of keen to, or I'm quite insistent on this movement, this continuous moving practice, because in a state of movement, dance, you know, I'm able to make, yeah, I'm able to think about these really difficult and challenging aspects of experience. And one of them is, you know, perhaps we could generalise and say, well the reasons why we're in this sort of catastrophic, capitalistic state is because of our human interest in power, ambition and our turning our back on responsibility and awareness. So in a way, perhaps, the movement practice or the movement field, or the choreographic field can be a way for me and others, if you're interested in doing that, of renegotiating my relationship to power, responsibility, and ambition, actually, because I think ambition and competitiveness are an absolute principal or, you know, of the capitalist system that we're in. So again this idea of the whole framework, so, in a way to make a new choreographic and performative framework, or to at least attempt to assemble that – it wasn't that I was also trying to necessarily diminish everything that we have. I mean, you know, I wasn't trying to, as we might say, reinvent the wheel, it was actually just, sort of taking the performative wheel and just, you know, maybe opening it up a little bit or examining how you construct dance, how you construct movement, how you invite people in, what are you asking them to do, what are you asking the public to do, what is your relationship like with the institutions that are essentially funding the activity and can that become like an ecology. So rather than, I mean I wasn't necessarily completely successful all the time, because it was also to dismantle procedures, actually also takes a lot of time and a lot of conscious effort and awareness, actually, and a change in awareness. So it really did raise these questions around, you know, what have been paying attention to? What have we been paying attention to consciously? And where is our attention being drawn unconsciously, and

how do we redirect that? Or how do we become available to the whole picture, you know.

So you also raise these questions around human capacity and complexity, that we really are going to require some skills in metabolising complexity in the next generation. Because if we look at even the simplest definitions of sustainability, they are asking us to consider, you know, economic value, environmental value and human value. That (laughs) itself is clearly, feels really logical when you look at it, yeah, to create a balance, we need to find this balance between nature - human, human - life. But actually when you start to interrogate it, or you start to either hold the whole global system in your, in your own body, it becomes, yeah, it can feel overwhelming.

At the same time, I think I and many other people that are in a kind of long-term movement practice, will have experienced moments where you feel like you transcend your human boundaries. And your capacity to think and do, will grow beyond what you thought was possible. And there's these moments, you know, I've experienced moments where it's felt like my imagination, which we all know can be an incredibly boundless perceptual tool, has attached itself to my body, to my bones, and carried me somewhere else. So again this idea of, yeah, so I suppose what to do with that skill? What to do with that labour, actually? What to do with that human potential and that human capacity?

Ramsay Burt: I kind of wonder if, my sense is that at the moment we can't go back to how things were and that we've seen that it's possible to change. And it's a matter of what, where do we go. And I wonder if sometimes things like *Spirit Compass* can offer one a glimpse of how things might be otherwise, so that they, there can be a model for imagining something different in a way that, you know, if only, if only more people could be like that. That's the kind of awareness, the kind of in-tuneness, the kind of sensitivity, the kinds of working together and the kinds of slowing down, the kinds of meditative altered consciousness: those are all kind of things that could speak to one from outside of the rarefied space where the performance, which is after all in an art gallery, which is a kind of rarefied space. But somehow we make connections or things speak to us because, because of what problems we are facing outside. So that, you know, it's not so much perhaps.. you seem to be talking about kind of individual responsibility. Yes, there is individual responsibility. But there's somehow, there's understanding the structures, you know, the more you can understand what the structures are. And you're talking, you were talking just now about understanding what the structures are within which you need work, in terms of the institutions, in terms of what the gallery wants, what the people who are funding you want, what the structure of the independent dance sector allows in terms of dancers that you want to work with. And just even how

invoicing works, you know, knowing and understanding that, making people aware of some of those things, you know, can be revelatory, can help us understand it doesn't need to be like this, and it's not just that change is necessary but that change is possible and that this is what it might look like.

Lucy Suggate: I suppose actually what I'm trying in the choreographic scores, actually, or in the choreographic fields, is this idea of being able to hold the individual and the collective. Partly because what I realised is that actually, you know, we have these things like, well let's take an institution. You know, it's often a building, but actually the institution itself is made up of a collection of individuals and what happens is, you know, if I'm to critique that, say like a generic arts institution for being incredibly dense, heavy, bureaucratic, policy heavy, and making... and that when you take as an artist, you go in and you take your creativity and your creativity just absolutely spends most of the time just being stifled. It's like, in a way it's like a wave power of itself, you know, like I'm trying to swim in this environment and open all these possibilities and take all these opportunities in the spirit of collaboration and that, but somehow the behaviour of the institution it almost seems like it's intent on dampening down the creative spirit.

And this is not necessarily intentional, but it's a kind of the, the unintended consequences of those structures. But then when you take away the structures, you're like: yeah but there is a person that is implementing that structure or driving that structure forwards. So it does become very complicated on who is responsible and what is responsible. And I think it sort of raises loads of questions around structures and systems. But at the end of the day, we as beings interpret those structures. And again they are very human, this organising system is a very human way of doing it; this fixed, rigid way is a very human way of doing it, it's a very Western European way of doing, it's a very 19th century way of doing it. So yeah, once you start to peel away, you realise that more information ends up coming into the frame because there's historical considerations that need to be understood, as well as of all of these structural structures, and then all of these like perspectives as well, these human perspectives.

So you start to look at the landscape, or you start to sort of go: What is this? Like, how have we got to a point where I can be a contemporary dancer and it is considered a career, it is considered labour, it is considered work. It's both a bit alien but also entirely fascinating around what becomes possible in terms of what we as human beings do with our time and energy. But there's a real, I suppose it's just, often the time I'm just thinking: oh things are just really odd and obscure and how do I... I suppose in a way that very human way of trying to make sense of it and trying not to become too analytical, but also to be aware of... again, or maybe what happens in that moment is let's say the arts institution and the artist, I think they, they can actually be, that tension

between the two can actually raise many interesting questions. So for example I often think: well what would happen if an organisation entered into a state of dance, or a state of movement in the same way that I do and other artists do? You know, what would that look like? And how, how do we begin that possibility? What would it look like if the organisation, whether that's a university, an academic situation, an art, you know, a gallery, a dance house, a theatre, what would happen if they were more embodied? What would happen if they placed compassion as the absolute goal of everything that they did? So, I suppose in that sense there is this moment of...you know, interestingly if we track that back so that the, the, the movement practice, the choreographic, the performance practice give rise to these questions about structure. It's just convincing the structures. (Laughs)

Ramsay Burt: Of, of course, the, the art galleries want dancers to come in and do things, but they may not understand what it is that they're asking for. And, you know, the institution at some levels is aware of its tendency to be top down, for power to flow only in one direction. Have you come across the writings about The Undercommons, so this is Fred Moten and {Stefano} Harney, Harney and Moten, The Undercommons, I'm making a list, I'll send you some things.

They were writing about being within a university and they were writing about...Fred Moten is an African-American academic, particularly a kind of Afro-pessimist, sort of ideas, that's mainly what he's been well known for. He's also a poet, and so he and is it Charles Harney, I can't remember, they're talking about what the neo-liberal kind of capture of the university structure, the kind of targets, the students as customers, the NSS – our NSS scores have just come out, so this time every year there's an analysis of why, how do we get the students to like us? You know, and should that be what the university's really about? But also the way that pressure on universities around cancel culture, that the universities, the kind of liberal, progressive thinking in universities is under attack, increasingly difficult for it to, to take place. And if it takes place, it's as much because of people doing it despite the university. And they use this wonderful image of the settlers in the Wild West and they're settling the nomadic Indians' lands and they're bringing the cavalry in to protect them. And the kind of Western film of the cavalry brought under attack and they feel that they're under attack from outside. Whereas actually, it's the people who are outside who are under attack by the cavalry. And that what's outside is the commons, something that is there for everybody, and what the force of the cavalry and the kind of legal structure of land ownership is capturing and saying that it would, it is being wasted, these are resources that are being wasted, they need to be made more productive. So somehow it's like the institution: you're talking about the difficulty of trying to make a space for a movement practice within the institution. And it may be that, you know, the institution is set up in a certain

way, I'm thinking of going into an art gallery rather than a theatre, and they have their kind of insurance policies around what they've got, they've got their outsourced gallery attendants, you know, they've got all of these different structures. And it's not that they're set up to stop people moving (laughs) it's just that they're trying to capture what you do to exploit it. But in doing that, the impression for you is of it making it very, very hard for it to, to happen

And yet they do want it to happen, you know, (laughs), the conundrum, you know, and they, in some ways. Or do they want the kind of liberating kind of future thinking that you could bring to them? Do they want that, somehow, despite themselves? Do you know, maybe, it's so much more it's so much more complicated, but it's really worth...

Lucy Suggate: No, no, no, I absolutely agree, and I think it's worth... you know, there's a couple of things that really struck me there when you were talking, which I wrote down: capturing and protectionism, capturing and protecting – and a lot of this idea of, well again, let's look at where the capturing comes from. The capturing comes from the inevitable structures and boundaries that are there to sort of contain and frame and protect, protect from the inside and protect from the outside. And then there becomes this, you know, this idea of the legal structure, you know, and the legal structure is about protecting and capturing things as well. You know, protect, you know, a health and safety structure, or protecting the objects, protecting bodies. Well why do we need to do that? Because if you didn't protect them, they'd be damaged, so again this notion of risk averse, or spillage averse, or this idea of everything needs to sit within its frame. So when we start to structure things, you know, we not only – and again it's something of our society that we've created. And when I'm talking about society in this moment I mean the economy, I mean our buildings, I mean every aspect of the functioning society as soon as we, you know, that we live in. They're all, we're all about these straight lines, or this demarcation, you know: I live in this space, that means that you can only come in if I invite you in, you can't, you know, we can't wander. So again this notion of settling, that then translated into sort of boundaries, ownership, protecting. And it, and it leaks into our language, it leaks into the imagination as well. Also the Western imagination is something that's very binary. So and what these structures and boundaries, do it's like: you're either in or you're out (laughs). So it's like, you're on that side or you're on that side of the boundary.

They become, they're also in our thought patterns, they're in what we eat, how we eat, they're just filtered in everything, we embody them as well as them being externalised. So of course what's the interesting thing around movement and especially if you're moving in altered states, is those structures that you begin in, very quickly you transcend them actually. So very quickly you're sort of like, you know, I want to go over

there and I can't because there's a wall (laughs). Part of me wanted to remove the back wall of the space that we were in. But of course, I couldn't 'cause that would be impossible to do. So the only way round it was to try and make it appear like water or translucent. So again using sort of spectacle or trickery to sort of suggest that it's there, but it's not there. Very quickly the architecture of every single space in the gallery became limiting. And then you could say, well, on reflection, then perhaps I'm making the wrong work for the wrong space. But then by that time, you know, we don't have these resources where we're, you know, I'm not in that position where I can go, 'oh hang on a minute, this work needs to happen here and I'll just put this in here.' It was, you know, these sort of errors or again these unintended consequences of: actually I've made a piece of work that is moving beyond the physical space of this building, but we have to somehow still fit it in. It's like, you know, square peg, round hole type scenario, which we're all aware of that. But it does raise this question of structure and what happens with movement and structures. And then if I take us back to the sea and the coastline, you know, we know that in our environment catastrophe that's happening, what we are also seeing is this erosion, as the sea levels rise we are seeing the erosion of land. And, again, the time that that's taking, that that takes or how that builds or how we understand that, but also the sort of dramatic nature of that as we see these swathes of landscape collapse and disappear into the water. And of course they seem even more dramatic when somebody's holiday home is hanging off the edge of the cliff. But yeah this idea that, that there's something about movement – and I suppose also the tagline to the piece was, you know, 'where there is movement, there is change' – was this idea of this, I suppose, incredible force and energy that comes with when you move, which means you actually can change structures, not only within yourself but also in other people's perception of structures or experience of structures, and I think also institutionally as well. But that's also to say that it wasn't as well – you know, again the intention was there. If artists who are experiencing that hear, some would agree, some maybe would say, 'well actually we didn't go far enough,' or in the doing of that we dropped... yeah, I suppose the only analogy I can sort of describe right now is it felt a lot of spinning plates and obviously at times we would drop them. So in our desire to create this energy, what happens to the ethics?

Ramsay Burt: Are you aware of, do you think that, so BALTIC, Nottingham Contemporary, Turner Margate.

Lucy Suggate: Yep.

Ramsay Burt: Do you think they're different now? Do you think that, and Baltic, were were you the first of the pieces at BALTIC?

Lucy Suggate: Yeah, I mean, yeah, I'm the first of the CONTINUOUS, yeah.

Ramsay Burt: And, and so, it would be interesting to know if the next, Zinzi?

Lucy Suggate: Yeah, Zinzi will be going next year, fingers crossed.

Ramsay Burt: And, and whether she has a different experience, whether the institution will have changed as a result.

Lucy Suggate: I would say yes in the conversations absolutely and particularly in the people that I worked with, in their awareness of what's required, absolutely yes. I think there's something interesting about... it goes back to what we were saying slightly before which is, you know: in a way galleries perhaps were there, or galleries are part of these institutions that have been set up to basically provide art for the public. So they are very public and audience focused, so that's their capturing. So their capturing is the public and the public experience and there's something about that results-driven approach that I would think in any organising or any organisation means that often, you know, that's the direction you're going in. So again there's an end product, so it's about productivity, so it's about the production of that experience, and that capturing. And the process, so how you get to there, is often perhaps not paid attention to. And I definitely know that this awareness of process and how you do things is coming into the, into the question. Of course the problem then becomes: that's great if it's happening to one area, but how does that reach, how does that spill out into the other parts of the institution and the city.

For example, I live about a mile and a quarter away from the sea. Of course I'm much more aware of the sea when I'm stood on the beach, but the sea's still there, it's still working. So again that thing of proximity, which again I think is what the gallery space, as a performative space, is really opening, is opening up. But ironically proximity now, proximity to work and bodies now is... we're not entirely sure how that's gonna continue. Whereas it's a lot safer for me to be next door to a, a kind of bronze Perspex sculpture than it is a sweating, hot human body right now.

Yeah, so there's all sorts of things. So what I think what I'm trying to say in a rather long, rambling way is that I am convinced that spillage happened and energy spilled out. But again that energy requires attending to and continuing. I mean that's the real capture, that's quite interesting, and interestingly enough Arts Councils don't do that. What Arts Councils, what the funders are interested in is: did the public have a good time? And can the public articulate that immediately after seeing that? You know, there

is very little effort and attention into what is the ongoing impact of witnessing and being involved in work.

Ramsay Burt: I remember I was in, in Munich with Walter Heun...

Lucy Suggate: Yes.

Ramsay Burt: And he'd programmed some dance works in an art gallery, and being with him at one of the performances and he's saying: usually, he knows, he recognises at least by face his audience. And here he is in this art gallery, and it was all the art galleries kind of private view list, and it was a totally different audience. So one of the things that perhaps happens when dance goes into an art gallery is that someone, either some of the dance audience are coming into the art gallery, but also the art gallery audience is seeing dance. So there is a different sort of audience that are coming. And then whereas the dance...you know, I stayed for the whole, as soon as I got in, I don't know how soon after the beginning, I think I was in right at the beginning of *Spirit Compass* at the BALTIC and I did stay right to the end, whereas there were a lot of people going in and out. And it may be that the people who aren't so used to going to see dance will see it and will spend different intervals, and they may come back in again as well. Maybe the dance audience, I think we're trained to (laughs) see it all, you know. So I don't know, I'm just kind of speculating whether one of the things, one of the changes is in the reach.

Lucy Suggate: Yeah, I think also that as well, actually, you know, all of the performances were free as well. And one of the reasons for that, for me, was: I really wanted to encourage people and families to come and see performance and dance without the fear of, well we can't afford that so if we don't like it, we've, you know.. We again had this concern about...it's considering what are the barriers, so what are the boundaries, what are the barriers to engaging with this work?

Ramsay Burt: And do you know if they did?

Lucy Suggate: Yeah, there was a lot of evidence that there were. We did actually...we were quite popular actually with young children, which is really strange because that was not necessarily a demographic... But young children, sort of pre-teen children, really enjoyed the space. And one of the sweetest things was in Margate, was where I could see outside the room, these two children sort of having a tantrum and I was just watching them. And it transpired that their parents had told them to, that they had to go, and they didn't want to go, they wanted to be in the space, and so they were having this

proper tantrum because they were being pulled away. It's one of those moments where you're like, darn, if only the Arts Council were there at that moment...

Ramsay Burt: (Laughs)

Lucy Suggate: ...but like, yeah, it was just quite interesting. I mean again, I think this idea of multiplicity or a site of multiplicity was not just only for the artists involved, it was also really wanting to, you didn't necessarily already always do that, wanting to create a space where: 'I don't have the capacity, I don't want to watch something for two and a half hours, I'm not interested in that,' or 'I'm not, that space is not comfortable for me, but I would like to pop my head in and, and leave. I'd like to have a degree of autonomy on how I witness this work.' And it was, I mean it was a constant balancing act because also in the beginning, actually, I had envisaged that the, that the island would be a bit more ad hoc, and so that people could also, so the rocks would be everywhere, and people could actually sit everywhere. But in a kind of test, what we found was that people turned, the public turned very quickly into consumers.

So they positioned themselves – and again this idea of structures and how we understand spaces, you know, they were entering, they read the space that: 'this is a space where I'm gonna position myself so that I can see everything, so that I can consume everything.' And it just, the energy in the room was awful, it was just awful, it just became that we were performing for them and that was not the piece at all. So very quickly, sort of like two weeks before the premiere, like in the very sort of last – we didn't have very long to rehearse together, the notion of the rehearsal, again, was very different, I suppose hence why I did a lot of the work on a structure, was because again we didn't have the resources to have people there the whole time. So very quickly I, and I actually sat on the beach, and I was like, 'well I'm watching the sea from a shore line and, yeah maybe I can create a shoreline that gives people a space to witness the work and be in the space, but allows the artist to go into their practice without too much disruption.'

(End of interview)

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