



Breaking Free: score for exploration

The Isolated Body

We decided to add this segment due to the circumstances that led us to bring this whole project online: the global pandemic of Covid-19 which has meant most people in the UK have been self-isolating, shielding, and working from home. We abide by rules around social distancing, meaning that we cannot touch anyone except the people that we live with. We also have not been able to visit many of the spaces we dance in: dance studios, gyms, and theatres have all been shut down. I am writing this just before some studios are about to reopen, 4 months later.

What this means is that the ways that we move through the world now, and the way we experience our own bodies, is profoundly different from how it was half a year ago. This has changed our movement practices as dancers, and also how we interact and communicate with others. I used to communicate very physically: I would always hug people upon meeting them or touch their arms for attention. Now this is impossible, and so are duets and all kinds of chance social interaction.

I hope these exercises can help us explore what isolation has done to each of us – the negative things, but also to draw some positives from it. Again, you can work through as much or as little as you wish from the 3 sections – and be kind to yourselves as you do it.

Part 1: Observe

1. Write down the movements you do many times a day – maybe the journey from your desk to another part of the room and back; maybe a part of the body you keep adjusting. If you can remember, maybe see if you can pinpoint how the ways you move have changed.
2. Observe your energy levels over the course of a day or several days. Write them down. It doesn't matter if they are very high or low. Think back to before our lockdown began and think about whether they have changed.
3. Once you've collected this 'data', spend a few minutes arriving before you work on the rest of the exercise. If it is possible for you to go outside, try a slow barefoot walk through some grass, letting the length of time between when the heel of your foot touches the ground and your feet be as long as possible, breathing deeply.

Part 2: Touch

Pick one of the following prompts:

1. Try to create a socially distanced duet, with someone you live with or an object. You could move around an object that is placed 2-m from you, or you could find

a way to dance with it, maybe holding it on a long stick (I found this amazing idea of a huge tutu to measure the distance <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qx-ef3U5qN0>). If it is a person, you could both move. Imagine this object or person is someone you don't know, and try to get closer to it. What feelings arise?

2. Create a short sequence of movements from the ones you brainstormed earlier. Perform this sequence in a very large space and then a very small space. How does the movement change with more or less space available?
3. Try dancing with a mask on the whole time. How difficult is it?

Part 3: Celebration

1. How have you found connection with people in this time? Has it been through voice calls, video calls, meetings in the park at a safe distance? If it is possible, you could make a choreography together – something a friend of mine has tried in Malaysia https://www.instagram.com/tv/CCxl3-tHjPx/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
2. Thinking about the way that your movement has changed, create some movement that celebrates these changes.

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