

Case Study  
Helen Bailey  
7 May 2004

Tape 1

0:07

AP

It's the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 2004. We're in Bedford and we're talking with Helen Bailey. This is tape one of our interview. So, as I explained before we started rolling, it seems to be quite a formal structure but obviously we can play a bit with that as we go along, and it's really to allow this sense of comparison across the wide wide range of practices that PARIP deals with. I was wondering if you wanted to say, before we move straight into the questions, where are your research impulses located? If you wanted to talk a little more generally about your area of practice just to give a brief synopsis of what you're doing at the moment.

0:57

HB

Well, I've been working in the university context as a full-time lecturer. My lecturing area is dance and I've been working in the university sector for ten years and I've been undertaking practice-based research or... I'm not sure that I called it that, but I've been making work that... interrogates choreographic practices... for about eight years, and when I started work, for me the imperative to work in that way was about informing my teaching and... developing my knowledge and my understanding so... or perhaps I didn't understand it as research... but that's what I've been doing for the last eight years. And I've been doing that through a company... I have a company called Ersatz Dance who have a professional profile as well as perhaps an academic profile... and the area that I work in is in dance theatre so the work is... generally live. It's performed in a theatre context, it has its origins in dance but works towards interdisciplinary relationships with other... other performance forms. So I've collaborated with composers, with writers, with filmmakers... and then more recently I've started to collaborate and work with practitioners in the context of... new technologies, and in the last couple of years started to work on screen-based dance outcomes.

At the moment I'm working with a group of people in computing engineering and I'm looking at the relationship between live dance and virtual environments. So I'm working in a... in a virtual environment... so we have the technology in the university and really it's about working collaboratively with scientists and we're kind of locating that broad... I mean it's in its early stages, but we're kind of locating that broadly with concepts of presence and... the ways in which... understandings of presence and particularly space and time in the context of choreographic process and the relationship of movement and space and time.

Choreographic practice can inform way of thinking about those things for... computer... science. They're applied scientists, they want problem-setting, and so... I suppose that's my... role in that context. It comes out of... a piece that I made two years ago called Twenty-four Acts of Arson which has various research aims, but one of the, kind of... I suppose "niggles" or the things that I really wanted to... the paradox that I wanted to pursue was a sense of... place and placelessness in the context of live performance. To what degree does the space... is the space representational or it's inscribed as a place or is it placeless? So looking at that sort of relationship, and I'm quite interested in virtual environments as a kind of site-specific idea but also in how the real body and the virtual space... relate to one another to create a sense of site in kind of paradoxical way or virtual site, I suppose.

4:59

AP

And do you have... did you devise, or are you in the process of devising full research questions around this current work?

5:07

HB

I don't know that we've got that far at the moment and we've... I've spent about four days so far with some dancers... with... with somebody who generates computer imagery... and what we've... I think what I tend to do is... is work perhaps quite intuitively initially and then have to reflect on those initial interests and those initial starting to points to say "what are the ongoing concerns that I have and how... why is it that I find myself in this context and what is it that I'm now going to pursue?". So I don't think I would ever start a project, a piece of research from the basis of having a conscious research aim. I say "this practice will now consider the following... research questions" I think they're on the edges of your consciousness, that's how it feels to me. I know that there are kinds of... perhaps philosophical concerns that are on-going themes that interest me... if I... and for me it feels, without wanting to be sort of essentialist... the rational and irrational, the conscious and the unconscious. It seems to me that for me the place that I feel comfortable in is the place that is at the edge of my consciousness, the edge of my control. And for me the way in which that functions is through practice... through choreographic practice, through the making of something as opposed to writing. And perhaps how I view the activity of writing, which I more recently have started to work with as a practice, and tried to think about the synergies or the merging and emerging of writing for me as a practice in my process as a choreographer.

Prior to that I think I very much saw a dichotomy between the writing... writing as theory... as a kind of theoretical, rationalist, activity. And so I think I have to play first for a little bit longer before I can start to see what... what things might have potential to really... be pursued, or to what degree is it just a kind of superficial

interest in playing with the technology or, you know, seeing the lights or to what degree it has a kind of ongoing... area of interest.

So I think that in terms of the research aims it will probably have several, which move across both the context of the arts and the sciences. And this is the first time that I've worked in this way, so it seems that we're trying to... in working with computer scientists, really trying to find what... could be a common language for us. Because even when we start to talk about things like motion, we have such a different conceptual framework of that and the ways in which you might want to explore that or consider that. Or the notion of improvisation is a concept that's completely alien in that context. Of course, somebody who's flying you through a virtual environment in a way is improvising with the flight path through a virtual environment, but they don't necessarily conceive of it in that way. So it's finding some common ground and common principles from which to begin to formulate what might be our research questions. What we're working with at the university, there's an... infrastructural organisation called the Centre for Creative Technologies, which is directed by somebody called Andrew Hugill who's a composer and music technologist, and the whole aim of the research centre is to focus on... research activities that perhaps move across the boundaries between arts and sciences. So we're kind of located in that context, and I think we're working towards August when we're going to do weeks of quite... intensive work with two performers and a composer who has a similar interest in... relationship of virtual environments with sound. But we haven't had any discussions really yet, but we're going to spend two weeks of playing, really, to see what might emerge from that and see if we can create some kind of product that we can then stand back from to ask "what 's the potential of pursuing this further?"

10:18

AP

In *Twenty-four Acts of Arson*, was there a point at which you had to frame that within a specific set of research questions?

10:32

HB

Yes there was the point at which I had to formulate a set of research questions in applying to the AHRB for funding. But I'd already worked on... on the project to a certain extent then so... so it was making more concrete the research that I was already, perhaps, seventy percent of the way through it. So it was a... a two-year project... and initially... the initial research was undertaken in the professional context, I suppose, in the sense that the funding that I got was from Dance East, which is our national dance agency and it was research and development funding, but in professional context. And that was really... the aim at that point was to say "I want to... look at the degree to which digital animation or computer generated animation can sit in the context of live performance, so what are the ways that I might work in relationship to that?". So it was a quite practical aim, I

suppose, and so the work was done in that context. But having said that, alongside that there are always a certain set of philosophical concerns, I suppose, that I don't perhaps have to articulate as readily. When I start a project I tend to apply for professional funding because there aren't the same imperatives to try to articulate ... it feels to me that it's more, kind of, product orientated, that you say what is it that you're going to be doing. And I feel that at the stage when I start ... the ground is very open, and I don't find it so easy to... to articulate. So often my projects start with professional funding and then move towards... the point at which I start to formulate the academic concerns is either half way through or retrospectively. But that... but when I say articulate them I mean in the way that perhaps I'm asked to by a funding body or by... perhaps, you know, we want to XXXX to the RAE so can you now tell us what it was that you think you've been doing. So I think in, you know, in terms of making it public running journals that are constantly cross-referencing with reading that I'm doing with other areas of sort of activity and thinking and I think probably with something like Twenty-four Acts of Arson, apart from that practical aim about digital animation and... and live performance, I was really thinking about the structures of narrative and the construction of... of the... of identity and the self. That was one of the things that was sort of driving the structure of the piece and the content of the piece.

I wanted to look at the role of narrative and in particular I was interested in the idea of narrative resolution and the way in which I could use the notion of resolution continually within a piece to point up the constructiveness of narrative and the role of... of... yea. So I suppose that was... that was one of the kind of... aims in... in the making of the work. And then I suppose there's also the... the other ones that I was collaborating with the filmmakers so it's to what... again, its... often for me it's about finding methods and approaches to work in collaboratively. So how do we... how do I... how do you work... how was I... what were my working practices, so part of what I... what I think I'm doing is thinking ab-... is working on and developing methods for collaborative activities and... not only with performers that I'm working with but with artists from other backgrounds.

14:52

AP

And can... is there an identifiable process, I suppose, of devising those questions, I mean, even if it is a retrospective activity... is there something that you can identify as a sp-... as a process that's specific to you.

15:11

HB

I sound... I feel like I'm sounding really vague!

AP

No you're not, not at all.

HB

It's terrible, it's really, really difficult and I... and having said that it's retrospective, I now want to say that's not true at all, it's not retrospective, it's on-going but what I would say... and it sounds really slippery, but... the idea that, to articulate an aim feels like a product, and I feel that what I live through is a continual state of, sort of, process, really, and that what I've... you know, it's like when people say to you as a... as a practitioner "So, what are your influences?" or "Where did you find the idea for making this piece?" And I... you know... it can be many things, but I think I... I have an on-going kind of interest in issues of representation in the bo-... of the body so how am I dealing with these PEOPLE who are performers and how am I... how am I working with them and how am I... how... that's not answering your question XXX let me... let me go back. You're asking me to what degree I have a recognisable method.

16:18

AP

For... yes... for devising questions, but it sounds from what you were saying that... almost that the process for making the work is one at which somewhere along the line you arrive at a specific question that you have a range of themes that you're wanting to explore and perhaps...

16:33

HB

Yea. I mean I think probably 'cause I'm talking... yes you're absolutely... I mean I think 'cause I'm talking about Twenty-four Acts of Arson which I found particularly... hard... really, really, really hard work because I wanted to deal, in that piece, or what began to happen in the making of that piece -- because I focussed on this idea of narrative structures... structures of narrative... constructions of the self through narrative... those sorts of ideas -- was that I started to implicate myself in that process. So I started to look at the construction of myself in the making of this piece. What role is my... am I playing in this in this, in fixing the narrative of this process of making the work and therefore the content of the work and the relationships within the work so I started try and set up situations where I wasn't... predicting the outcome to... to try to get rid of this sense that I was driving it, in a way... so I did create fictional, sort of, structures for myself for the structure of the work, so that I had... I would create, kind of, systems, that I would then have to disrupt for myself, as a way of placing myself in a situation that was perhaps uncomfortable or uncertain. And so it became quite... I found it quite... a hard process because it was dealing with the construction of the self and so con-... it constantly in the paradoxical situation about thinking about my own role and thinking about my own role and thinking about the... the... yea... the role of author and the contradictions that that has in the sense of thinking about your role in the... in the process of making, particularly when you're working, sort of, collaboratively. So the... so I think that

piece was particularly difficult if I had to say what were the research... aims and when did they arrive, they arrived during the process.

But with something like a piece I worked on called Threshold which had a performance outcome which toured but... and then I subsequently wrote a... paper and article that kind of sat alongside, had a relationship to it. That seemed to have a much more explicit research aim right from the beginning which was to look at the notion of... of the duet or the dialogue or the opposition. So it was just working with that concept, really, of opposition, of binary opposition. And so taking those sorts of theoretical ideas of saying well, you know, I was doing quite a lot of reading, I think, at the time and sort of post-structuralist frameworks and looking at those sorts of things and so it was just really a prac-... it was very much a kind of "Here are some theoretical ideas and here is some... my creative thinking and these two things sort of merged and worked very... very coherently together and probably there was a... and there was a much more conscious initial decision to say "Here are some theoretical, philosophical ideas that I'm... that I'm thinking about, that I'm interested in and I want to try and articulate these within practice, not through practice, not to say that somehow it's illustrative, but that I would like to deal with and try to grapple with my... sense of these concepts in a way that is sort of perhaps... XXX different points of access to them, I think that's probably one of the... driving forces for me in making prac-... in working through practice and making practice rather than thinking... rather than perhaps... writing in the kind of traditional sense... that thinking through practice for me... I... feels quite a kind of... democratic form in the sense I'm quite interested in making work that has many points of access so that it ... it can be made available in a kind of professional context on the touring circuit where people can engage with something that has, perhaps... or you hope... is... grows out of a certain way of thinking, a certain way of dealing with, perhaps, ideas and concepts so... so, yes that's...

20:43

AP

I was wondering, then, how appropriate do you feel this, at least the institutional demand for research questions, is... in the context of your own... work. And it sounds as though you work very... differently on... through each different project, so...

21:00

HB

...I don't find... I mean I... I suppose... I don't find necessarily that, within the institution that I'm in, or within... let me have a think... I think that I don't find it to be desperately restrictive. I think sometimes it can be when money is involved, essentially, when... at the point at which I make a funding application, I don-... No, I mean I don't find it restrictive. I think what I find is that it's partial, so inevitably what you have to do is say "This is the totality of the thing that I'm working in, and for you, you want these sorts of outcomes". So that's OK, I can...

I can package it that way... and I can think about it in those terms, and that's not... I don't mean that what I'm doing is, kind of, chameleon-like and shifting what you do in order to suit to the various... the various, you know, imperatives. But I think... and I th-... my experience of perhaps... having to think about my work in the context perhaps of the AHRB, has actually been a really interesting experience, and one that has... perhaps forced me to be more... more conscious of my research aims, so I don't think I've... I don't think I find that in any sense, kind of, restrictive... the thing that I find difficult is the situation of my experience of... the RAE, which in... which has been to... to need to supplement the submissions that I've made with a kind of written statement about my work, and I found that as a format very strange and... you know, contradictory and at odds with the kind of things that I think I've been... pursuing in my own... in my own practice, really, particularly in the work where I've worked, where I have produced writing. I've tried to work when I have worked in... you know, in article form or paper form rather than in practice rather than to try and undertake a kind of performance or writing that is process-led, and that often is... polyvocal, you know, that draws on the voices of the... the performers or the people I'm working with and looks at a kind of text that allows for many, sort of, voices to try and... characterise the process that I feel I'm engaged in as, well as... as resulting in some kind of... outcome. And so I found... that idea of having to "fix" the work... in a short statement, and that process of translating it into that kind of text quite... quite... problematic. And I think that, in a sense, working in the, you know, a university context of that sort of sense of an institution, I've... I think that, perhaps over the last couple of years, people have become more accepting of the idea of practice-as-research but still it's... it is difficult for people beyond... outside the subject area to have any real sense of the value of that, I think, or to understand how that's working, so I think that is the context where it's difficult, really, and that has an impact in terms of resources, I think, and... and value.

24:34

AP

It's interesting 'cause you're... through the various projects that you've been working on... just this... we're coming to the more general question around research epistemologies and clearly you've pointed to that as we've been talking. I was wondering if you had anything... else that you wanted to say, either more generally or more specifically about how you feel that your practice engages quite specifically with that idea of epistemology within a higher education research context.

25:03

HB

...I th-... I mean I think the difficult thing is how you make the... I mean I would say... I'd say it... I feel that I am developing new knowledges and new... ways of approaching that, and particularly in terms of kind of... methods of working collaboratively. But I haven't really made any inroads into making that in any way accessible or disseminable. So I feel that I am developing new... knowledges

and ways of... of knowing about these things, but I'm not... I'm not sure that... and that's for me the difficulties, how I make those things, kind of... disseminable and available to... to other people. So I think there's something about the... about processes and methods for working that I... that I'm... I feel that I'm developing, particularly for me it's in the relationship between, perhaps... or how we... I don't want to use the terms "theory" and "practice" because it's just such a si-... ridiculous, sort of... or problematic... area to talk about. But in... writing and performance I feel that I'm make-... I'm developing some sort of understandings of what... and ways of thinking about... about that. And then also in terms of... in terms of the... activities of embodying ideas and concepts and... in the context of performance and dance practice. I don't know... does that...?

26:47

AP

No, I think that covers it. I think we'll deal with it probably a bit more in the dissemination question. I mean I find it interesting that you're equating that notion of research with dissemination, and maybe we could explore that a bit more either now or later on. But I think as well is interesting how... how, too, does your practice then engage with those issues of professionalism because you were talking about... working in different sorts of contexts and being... you worked and contextualised in different kinds of ways.

26:16

HB

Mm. Mm. I think probably I've been much more comfortable with seeing my work than probably the last... five years or six years in the professional context... predominately. So I found that it is seen academically because I am a university lecturer, however the funding... I mean, I'm using that to define it... but... I suppose that is part of the definition... you know... where... or who... or part of the conceptualisation of it is in terms of funding. I think for me... it's a... the professional-academic division is, or the notion of professionalism, for me is a really important issue that's located around the idea of quality. And I know that's kind of difficult.

28:07

AP

Yea: what do you mean by quality?

HB

Well, exactly. But... I think... for instance, for instance... OK, and I'm, you know, you may ask me to defend this position, but I always work in a situation where I work with – quote unquote – professional performers who I pay as professional performers to work... with me. And that... and the reason, I suppose, that I do that is because you... I... in terms of the work that I'm... or the out-... the WAY that I'm working... would want a certain level of, kind of, skill and ability to articulate and... experience knowledge in terms of dance practice, because only



possible from that... context. So, I think... I don't know if that's... what it is... what you want me to, kind of... talk about, really, but I mean that... for me the notion of sort of "the professional" or "professionalism" is really about the kind of... it's about a measure of... for me that indicates a measure of quality and I know that I'm on such difficult ground with this and I know that there are so many ways of arguing that, but it feels that, for me, in order for the work to have a validity for me, it needs to be able to function in both contexts. And that by no means is something that I would say is applicable to anybody else than myself, but for my... and partly is about this issue of... engagement with the work. That it... I think that I, perhaps, need to have the experience of seeing the work in those two contexts, in relationship to one another, in both a professional and an academic context. And the kinds of responses to the work that you... the output that you're producing... you know, have their differences in those two locations and are very important in terms of the way that you then reflect on your work and reflect on your own sort of development in terms of that... that work. Yes... XXX useful answer!

30:27

AP

It is because I think one of the interesting things is coming to grips with the slipperiness and perhaps the slipperiness is a good thing because we do seem... we do know what we are talking about when we talk about quality, but we can't articulate it.

HB

No. I know.

AP

Which just seems somehow linked with the inarticulateableness of what it is that we do anyway.

HB

Yea. Yea. That's right.

AP

So... I'm trying to sort of tease around those questions.

30:51

HB

Yea. Sure. I found it very interesting when... I did... a presentation at the PARIP conference and... we did a performance of Twenty-four Acts of Arson and I remember after the p-... after I did a sort of paper and we had a discussion and... people wanted to talk about... or the discussion seemed to be located around the paper, or the content of the paper and the kind of more... obvious or overt, kind of, academic or theoretical concerns, seemed to be the locus for most

of the discussion. And at no point was... yea, the practice seemed to be, you know, somewhere still on the margins even in the context of that discussion, and then the people who have been the performers in the piece, who I really wanted to come and sit in the space with me, not to say "Oh, she's the author, and we're just the... performers" you know "We're just the practitioners"... It seemed to me that they still felt that there was that... dichotomy. But what was very interesting was that somebody in the audience asked one of the dancers to talk about the experience of performing and the audience then started to get much more animated that it was almost as though that "Actually this is what we really want to be dealing with" but there was still a... lack of confidence or a... fear of going into that terrain of talking about the... the experiential, the... particularly in terms of the performance experience in the sense that, well, "Do any of us actually have the... are we in the context to be asking these questions, to be discussing this?" "Do we have the knowledge... base from which to discuss these things?" And so I thought that was very interesting, that it seems that in a professional context, you know... that... there is much more of an ease in terms of saying "Oh, you're a... OK" There seems a level of honesty there ... it may be something to do with the econom-... the, you know, the economic situations and exchanges of contract, you come in you buy a ticket you watch the performance, perhaps the criteria for judgement are... simpler in one sense, I don't know, perhaps there's not as much at stake, but it's... but it... so I'm not...but I'm not saying it's any way easier, but I think that there's... my experience of show... of performing... showing work in the academic context is that there's an unease about "Well, what is it that we're doing with this?" We still don't know what this is that's in front of us and how it is we're going to... what our relationship is to it, and "What is it that we're actually going to discuss... now?" "Are we going to say we like it? Is that our starting point?" "No!" (laughs) So it's... I think there's an unease that perhaps there isn't in the professional context, so... but that's not to say that I don't enjoy that, I mean I enjoy that unease 'cause perhaps THAT has an honesty which is about our, you know, intellectual endeavours and all those sorts of things... pushing... pushing at the boundaries of knowledge and where we... what we think we're doing. But yes, those two do have a... have a kind of... dialogue, I suppose, in your... in your experience in the development of your work, those two contexts.

33:58

AP

I mean there seems to be some kind of relationship... that reticence which I think everybody remarks on... because with commenting upon an academic paper you are putting forth your own position of statement in opposition to, or in the context of, the person giving the paper, whereas if you're performing, how do you bring that into that... I suppose one could term it "competitive/academic jousting".

HB

Exactly. Exactly. 'Cause you are inevitably in a process of translation, aren't you. So tell me, then, what were you doing? And it... and I mean this is always the

difficulty that you... and I suppose this is why I... you know when we started this I said "Oh I feel like I'm being very vague and inarticulate" and those sorts of things that, if you wanted... if it were something that you could say in a paper, perhaps you would do that. You know, and the point of working through practice... not to be at all romantic about it... but that you are trying to deal with slippage of meaning, the way in which things shift and move. I mean, for me, if somebody in choreography, that's particularly... apparent. You know, the motion between things, the way in which things shift and merge and are in a state of flux, is that... are the kinds of... yea, that's your experience... intellectually until you choose the... form for your research activities that best suits your experience of intellectual inquiry perhaps, and for me... the written paper, or that... those sorts of more traditional forms of research... or... no, then... I don't have a view on that, actually, but what I'm saying is if I were to try and translate... that idea of having to translate what it is that I do in practice into that form is an odd one! And so that's inevitably what you end up doing in that kind of situation. Yea.

35:46

AP

Shifting gear slightly... because you were talking about the importance of professionalism XXXX using professional... performers within your work. How does, or does your practice engage with and issues of around pedagogy. Either in terms of feeding into the teaching context or how the teaching context feeds into the work that you produce.

36:11

HB

...I've been doing quite a lot of work over the last couple of years on a... FDTL-funded learning and teaching project in reflective practice in performance and so, I suppose for the last few years I've done quite a lot of work in that context and, I mean, for me it... I find I test things often in the context of... of my teaching situation and... I think... being a practitioner has a... has a very... absolutely inform-... I think... when I first started making work in the context of being a university lecturer, it came out of a sort of necessity to develop... to... re-... what's the word I'm looking for?... reVitalize myself at the end of a, kind of, semester of teaching. So it was... it was in this... for me it served the function of developing my knowledge, my skills, my experience and so I think it was... it was seen as a sort of... it was partly an antidote but also a... a means of replenishing what I needed in order to go back into the teaching context. So I think right from when I first started... working in practice it was... in relationship to learning and teaching, so for me it's always had a kind of on-going... relationship. And... my teaching tends to be... studio-based work so I think... when I work in context in my practice, a lot of the kinds of by-products of my research might be an approach to developing movement vocabulary, or it might be about a particular approach to task setting, or to... judging or structuring of material or some kind XXX framework for thinking about process. Those sorts of things perhaps feed

directly back into the context of... of teaching. And I suppose the other thing that I think is really useful is that students... see your work and so I think it... what... for them to... and I know it was the same with any research, I suppose, but there's that sense that you are also risk-... taking risks and... and exposing yourself... which I think gives them a sense that there's an on-going process that we're all engaged in so it becomes less, perhaps less adversarial, I don't know. I think the work that I've been doing in... kind of reflective practice has been interesting in terms of going the other way, though, so I think, probably up until then I'd say that most of the... most of the time research activities would XXX develop my methods in terms of learning and teaching and the content of my teaching choreogra-... in choreography. With this project, with the learning and teaching research project, or pedagogical research project, that's been quite... that was quite interesting in terms of XXXX thinking about the way in which I use writing in the process of my own research, so what... what function that played for me in the develop-... in my practiced-based research activities. And then in terms of the work that I did last... some work that I did last year was to really look at the way in which... reflective writing and critical and creative writing merged in... in the process of... in relation to the development of my practice. And that really came out of that learning and teaching work, so... yea

39:40

AP

Great. Switching gear again... funding context. You mentioned a little bit about that but I was wondering if you could detail a bit more about... the funding context for the work that you've been producing.

39:55

HB

...well I've received funding from both professional and academic... contexts... from organisations like the Arts Council... and, you know, regional arts boards or whatever they're called now... and from... the national dance agencies and also from organisations like the AHRB so... most of the... all of the practice I think that I've done I have... I apply for external funding for, so I have some time that the university gives me for research activities which is great. I'm very lucky... but mo-... but all of the work that I do I do apply for external funding for, and I would say the majority of it is from professional context... I've tended to apply for, kind of, academic context, in the academic context, and this is probably something that I'm going to go on to do hopefully go on to do more of, but it's tended that I've applied to that for the kinds of outcomes that are not practice-based, they're papers or they're articles that have a relationship to my practice and that perhaps there's something about XXXXX conserved documentation are the wrong variety in process making so... but I'm not saying that I'm necessarily making that division that I apply to the academic funding bodies for... for outcomes that aren't performance based at all, but that just seems to have... seems to be what's happened at the moment.

41:27

AP

That's why I was interested... was there a mix of funding for something like Twenty-four Acts of Arson.

41:32

HB

Yea there was a mix.

AP

Right.

HB

So it was... it was... National Dance Agency and Arts Council and AHRB. So it's a... it was a mixture.

41:43

AP

And what aspects did each of them... well, I mean I suppose you talked about the Arts Council sort of being research and development and then AHRB once... sort of later stage.

41:52

HB

Yea. That's right. Yea... so... the... Dance East Regional Dance... National Dance Agency funding was for professional research and development. And then I received some Arts Council funding which was for final product and we performed that at the... South Bank Centre... well that was where it was premiered and it went to other places and... so that was very much sort of professional outcome of a performance product... and then... yes... a further performance and a paper that's now becoming an article was AHRB funding. But alongside that there was also teaching so there was both professional and academic teaching connected to that project so professional teaching from... through the South Bank with professional artists but then also, you know, workshops XXX so...

42:47

AP

And what about... resource and XXX context. Obviously you've mentioned that you get research time from the Institution. Are there any other resources that you call upon from an institution?

43:00

HB

Well... yes, I mean I have access to space, which is amazingly, again... I mean I don't know what the situation with other academics working in the university is, but it seems to me to be very... very generous and supportive, really... and very enabling that in the blocks of time when I'm not teaching or when I'm freed up from teaching that I have studio space available. And we have a theatre here on the campus so, I mean, I have used that, depending on the nature of the product, for production... for XXXXX work... for production time as well. So... yea, I think I... those would be the main kind of contributions of kind of, I suppose, in kind support that I get that I'm not having to fund externally are space and some technical support, yea.

43:53

AP

Great. ...yea, and I suppose the question that follows on from the previous two about funding and other kinds of in kind, I suppose, resource is how... how do you feel those contexts have shaped your practice?

44:15

HB

Well... there's a limited amount of time, I mean for me that's wha-... I mean I haven't... I want to but I haven't... and I think this comes out of a kind of... perhaps a lack of value that I've assigned myself to what it is that I do because I'm in the context of university where the idea of practice has been marginalised but I've... I haven't had a sabbatical, for instance, I haven't applied for time to buy myself out of teaching. So it means that you have a particular time period when you can work practically, when you can work in a studio for any length of time, so you... so normally... it's the kind of... that summer period between the beginning and end of the academic year when I do the majority of my work and some kind of work also in the Easter break. So given that, you know, I am on the teaching contract, it kind of works around that, really. So... and then in terms of things like dissemination, touring of work, that, I suppose probably one of the primary ways in which I've disseminated my practice has been through touring and so that's something I've had to negotiate around... around teaching. So... yea.

45:27

AP

So, although it seems operational, there is a clearly identifiable relationship between those...

45:33

HB

Yea... yea. I mean I don't think... I don't think it's really formalised. I mean that's again, I suppose for me... and it's probably specific to this university but I... again, because of the nature of the work for most people in other areas who

perhaps are driving the agenda in terms of research at an institutional level, there's a level of support, but also a lack of, perhaps, of knowledge and understanding of how this is different to other sorts of research activities that are more... that've... that have a longer tradition of being located in the university so... it's... it's something that you kind of feel like you're doing under the radar a little bit, you know, but yea... it IS supported

46:14

AP

... sort of moving away, I guess, from those kinds of operational questions... is really... how would you describe your devising process for practice as research. Is... do you have... I mean we talked about devising research questions, but actually devising the work.

46:38

HB

In... what's that? Sorry, could you just be a bit more specific? So I mean I could talk... Yea... devising the work in terms of my thinking about my work? The way I work practically with the people I work with? All of those things?

46:51

AP

All of those things.

HB

Right! (laughs) OK. Yea.

AP

Because I think that question of process is something that the community is quite interested in, and understanding how different people go about making practice as research.

47:03

HB

Yea. Sure... well, I think... I work discursively, I think, a lot with... I mean, I would say that most of my work is collaborative... I think I bring to the starting point a set of concerns which I suppose in the end become my research... or not in the end, but somewhere along the line become formulated as the research questions, or the research aims. So I'll come with a... but often what... because I'm working with people from a professional context, I mean I have... I do also work and collaborate with people who are practiced-based researchers, so I have worked with performers and composers and filmmakers who are located within the university context but all sorts XXX as artists. So in that context it's perhaps an... easier dialogue. But in the context of working with... professional practitioners, there's... there's a... there's also a process where you say "Well these are... these perhaps are my research aims" but it's not necessarily useful

to me... for me to articulate those to the people that I'm working with. So in a way those things become... the thing that you monitor throughout the process but it's not something that's necessarily overt in your dialogue with the people that you're working with. Sometimes it is if those other people also have research aims, so sometimes I find myself in a sort of cluster situation where I might be working with somebody who's a composer who's also working in the university and undertaking some kind of research through this project. Not that those things are necessarily for me... formally negotiated initially. I don't think I've ever been in a situation where I've worked with, kind of, people and we've sat down and said "OK. Let's think of a practice-based research project that we could do together." It usually starts, the dialogue starts around a set of... creative starting points, and those usually start from me and I will gather some... a set of people who I think will... work together and who, you know, might be around a particular set of, you know, media, that are going to interrelate in the context of a piece. And depending on their context, they may then also find a kind of research aim within that for themselves that sits, you know, in relationship to their own sorts of activities. But I think that's... that's quite an interesting one, that I do... you know, find myself sup-... working in dialogue but then also in terms of my research, working in isolation. So the way in which I monitor my research... make judgements about the degree to which... is this... is this working from a research point of view? The degree to which you're conscious of those judgements of your activity is the thing that I don't probably discuss with the people that I'm working with. So... the working process, or the methods for devising... are... is... the locus of that is the content of the work, the shape of the work, and the way in which I work, I suppose, is to work with per-... with... generally on a day-to-day basis with the... with performers, the dancers, and... I probably work largely speaking through tasks. I do create some movement mate-... Do you want to know in this kind of XXX detail?

50:31

AP

Um. Yea.

HB

So I... will create some... sometimes create movement on my... on my own body, and teach them, but I do that, sort of, less and less probably... so I usually work with kind of image-based tasks, sometimes with... with quite... literal activities... and I think what I aim to do, usually when I'm making a piece, is to create a kind of... or I have done in the past... to create a kind of... spend about a week where I work really intensively on a kind of initial first sketch that becomes a kind of improvisatory structure across a range of material that I sort of dip into really, really fast to just... so that we all have a sense of a whole... not necessarily so the str-... that might... that will be maintained, it's just a case of... of adding strata to it, but just so that there's... there's sort of a common... common experience, or something, then we can... we have as a basis for further development. But I suppose it really comes initially the making of... the



generating of material which... which is that... those first, kind of, for me, first kind of few weeks... is through tasks and through perhaps creating movement directly with the performers on... on them. So in quite a detailed way. So sometimes it will be setting a task for half a day and saying "Can you work on this?" and then... working through feedback, and through dialogue around that but then sometimes it's... it's perhaps more... a bit more descriptive than that about "Lift your arm" "Move this here" "Shift in relationship to that" so it can be quite... quite detailed, and then there's a kind of... the bit that I, perhaps, enjoy less which is the sort of... the structuring of the material and the... and the... I think the section for me where I feel that the kind of re-... the research seems to really Happen is during the process of generating material. And then there's a... period of... the kind of structuring which for me I find the most difficult and... and that's the point at which those sorts of slippery connections and interrelationships are built and that's... is the very difficult process and perhaps the... the process where the performers... where... the dialogue recedes and you start to externalise yourself a little bit from the work, and you start to have to make judgements from what feels like the outside to formulate something and then... yea. I don't know. Is that...?

53:11

AP

It's interesting because it seems to touch as well on those issues of the inability to... articulate or the inappropriateness of... of articulation because it's about... it's obviously not about setting all the cards out onto... on the table as you begin because otherwise... why would you begin in the first place? XXX through?

53:30

HB

Yea. Definitely. Well I think... I think... you know, it either becomes kind of stupidly overwhelming for everybody to say "OK... these are all the things that we are going to do" ... but I also feel that that then sets you up in a position that you don't necessarily want to be in as holding all the cards as well as setting them out. And I also think that in terms of working practically... it... you... part of the job, part of the method, part of the approach is to find... for me anyway... the setting of tasks, or the setting of improvisations, rather, is to find enabling mechanisms for that in the dialogue with another human being. So sometimes to talk, you know "OK. We've got these" sort of "philosophical concerns" doesn't enable you to make movement material you know... so often it's the translation of a... so it... basically you work through metaphor. That's what I find, that... might be WORKing on a research aim on a kind of philosophical idEa, but what I have to find is a... is an image that functions as a metaphor. But the image for the performer, for the practitioner XXX dialogue can be taken quite literally. Then as it's worked, it transforms again back to... having some kind of metaphorical function or some kind of... function in relationship to the... or conceptual... function as well, so I suppose... yea

54:45

AP

And do you have... do you use or devise formal strategies for the evaluation of the process, as you're moving on, I mean you were talking task-based exercises for actually devising the work. What about for evaluating how...

55:00

HB

From MY point of view, and are you... are you asking me that XXXX think about it from the point of view of the research or are you asking me about it creatively... I mean... or am I making (laughs) XXX separating, I don't know but I mean I... I would say that if I'm th-... I mean... my creat-... my response to saying "Well, do I think something's working from the point... say... LET'S say I wanted to be talking about myself as an ARTist as opposed to somebody who... let's say... then I don't think that I... you fe-... (whispers) God, it all sounds so ridiculous, so romanticized, I don't know, I can't re-... But I don't... I don't think it's something that I... no I don't have a formal process for evaluating at all. I mean I... I look at... things have... are... things are interrelated so you look at the relationship with, and response to, something else I suppose and... the, you know... the degree to which you make judgements about whether something is working is... I mean I... the criteria are different depending on the nature of the piece, I think, so the criteria are formulated by the project... by the work itself and I think that's why the point at which you judge early on in a piece is the most difficult because the framework isn't there. The framework for the judgement comes out of its interrelationship to the other things that you're making and I think that's where the fixing of the structure becomes for me the most difficult part because that's the point at which those interrelationships and the judgements that you have to make become foregrounded. It's the point at which you close and reduce, I suppose. At the beginning the opening up of possibilities is great so you suspend all of that and that's, you know... so I suppose... there's a point in time where the imperative to become critical to make judgements becomes more foregrounded, but I... I don't know that I make explicit to myself what those criteria are, 'cause I... and I think they probably change as the work develops. That sounds really... maybe... I don't know if that makes sense ...?

57:02

AP

No it makes perfect sense. Yea. But it's interesting 'cause you... you differentiate... working as creating work, working as research. So do you... what about if you think about it in terms of research... or are you again working...

57:15

HB

Well I think I am working it as a... I think that IS research. It IS research. It IS research for me... I think it, I mean it's difficult, isn't it, because you find yourself placing yourself in tiger traps all the time. I mean I... you know, we've gone... off

I am finding myself now as I talk to you realising how... how entrenched I am in a certain sort of traditional view of what research is. And so, you know, I... you have a view of what that is despite what you do... which is to be conscious ...of and to be rational and to extract subjectivity and ALL of those sorts of things which we KNOW, you know, our perPORted approach to research would be say "Oh, yes, but we can do this" but we also know how entrenched those things are or, I'm suddenly feeling that! (laughs) So... I also... I would say that when I work in that way, I think that's when I am doing things that are legitimately practice as research, so I'm not sure why I said "When I'm an artist"! But I think that's what I am doing what I do but what is difficult is to articulate that...

58:32

AP

Good point.

HB

... for me. So what is easier for me to do perhaps is to say "Ahhh! Well I'll bracket myself as an artist now 'cause then I can..." we have a view of how the artist works, maybe. But to say that I'm doing my ru-... that I... yea... so I mean I... yea... it is very difficult because I... it... the point at which you feel you're being the most productive is perhaps the time when you can articulate the least. And that's ...

58:57

AP

Good point for a change-over.

Tape 2

0:11

AP

OK, so we're on Tape 2 on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, start off with XXXX. So we ended on that point of... you started off... talking about... well, if I'm talking as an artist or if I'm talking as a researcher, and then we arrived at a point where, of course, it's ridiculous to... to talk in those boundaries... I suppose that takes us rea-... I mean I think we've talked about that sense of evaluation and how evaluation goes on in a sort of intuitive process for you.

0:44

HB

Yea. I mean I, you know, I do evaluate in other ways but I don't think I do those... I evaluate in more conscious, or explicit, ways when it's something that's perhaps required of me rather than something that I find productive. So I don't think that... I mean I... yes, of course I evalu-... I mean I reflect and evaluate on the way the work is going, as you say, intuitively, informally, through notebooks, through...

and I suppose that... that... if we can talk about sort of reflection as an evaluative process then I suppose... the last piece that I did, the Twenty-four Acts of Arson piece that THAT was a time when I formalised the whole... the idea of reflective writing as a... as a way of, I suppose, forming a dialogue with myself about the development of the work and the development of the ideas and the way in which writing... relates to or is a for-... is a practice within my process. And so in that sense that was a more formalised approach... to evaluation, but I think that that... it wasn't evaluation in perhaps a sense that it is somehow divorced or externalised from... the activity. So it... yea.

2:05

AP

Moving on to the next question, which is about authorship, I suppose, authorship and ethics and... just wanting if... wanting you to talk a little bit about how you perceive the makers of the work. You... talked about collaboration earlier on... Who are the makers of what you do...

2:24

HB

Oh, well, absolutely! I mean I think... well it's interesting, isn't it, 'cause, I mean, for the last couple of pieces that I've... worked on that have had research outcomes that have been... practice-based research and also professional... work that have straped those two things. I've been working with someone as a performer who's also engaged in post-graduate study, and so these... these works are forming part of his... degree, but he's working on it from the point of view of... he's a performer, so... but he's... you know, collab-... it's collaborative. So in THAT context, it becomes VERY interesting because in a sense of course he is auth-... you know, he... there it becomes much more pressing in the context of a... of a degree. But yes... I mean it's very... I... I don't think... I mean I feel if people have... I'm quite interested in pursuing this idea of kind of research clusters in which you each have a research... aim or research question so that there is... but I mean that only works in the degree to which the larger relationship works in terms of... the crea-... the endeavour as a totality, you know, so it's... you have to start up... I think I... I have worked myself where I would say I am not the originator or the author as such but I've collaborated on work, but generally speaking the pro-... the research projects that I've been involved in I would say that I brought together the people that I'm... that I've... that I work with, so... if that has some kind of bearing on authorship I don't... I don't think necessarily it does but I mean I would say that there... that I can make a claim for those... for parts of... for that... or part of that... or in certain contexts. I mean, if I'm showing work... that comes out of this research in a professional context, then... there is a way of crediting and I... for me the way I credit it is to say that I AM a choreographer or director that I work in collaboration with, or work collaboratively with, these... the following. And they may be performers and

they may be writers or... or designers or... or filmmakers. So I think, you know, in that context it... that you make an... you attempt to demonstrate that there's something about the way of working that suggests that there is a... not a single person author in this work. But I don't think... I haven't yet worked on a project where I've worked true or completely collaboratively on developing the research aims. I mean I think that's what I'm about to start doing... on the project that I'm... working on at the moment... working with a scientist. In that context it feels very much that we have to, between us, develop research aims, so I suppose... because I feel that often... in the context of project, I'm establishing my research aims, that I keep, as I said earlier... they're the things that I think about myself, that in THAT sense I feel... a sense of authorship... of the research, but it doesn't mean that I'm necessarily the author of the... of, perhaps, the final outcome, if that makes sense. Depending on context, I think.

5:54

AP

And in the case of the... the post-graduate student, for example, I mean, are there... are there formal issues that have to be negotiated in terms of... how he can use the work that he does with you as part of his degree, and how...

5:58

HB

Yea, I mean I think... I think it's around the issue of what, in that collaborative process, what is the... what is it that you're bringing to that process. So, I think he... he would... in his collaborative role, he's collaborating from the point of view of performer. I think, for me, the difficulty would be if that person was also saying "I am collaborative from the point of view of director choreographer" I mean I... you know, so I think the differentiation of roles within the collaborative process allows people to have a sense of their... authorial role within the construction of the whole... if that makes sense.[]

6:39

AP

Documentation!

HB

Yes!

AP

We get to the... these questions. So... what is the place of documentation, and how does it relate to process, performance, multiple outcomes...?

6:57

HB

Well, I mean I... yes... I thi-... I mean it's... yes, it's such a difficult one, isn't it! I don't know where to start, really, I mean PRACTically it's... you know, it IS, on a

pragmatic level, very important that... that something... particularly if you're working in the context of live performance where the work is lost, that if we are trying to build a body of knowledge, methods for working, the whole CONcept of practice-based research or practice as research or however you want to term it, that we somehow have... have... we develop that, we keep that, so I think as a kind of imperative for us in our discipline it's really important that we do that, but then of course WHAT it is that we're talking about and HOW we do that are the perennial issues, aren't they. And I think from the point of view of the au-... and this is what I was trying to keep going back to this thing that I've worked on but the AHRB piece... research that I was doing was trying to grapple... from my point of... from MY point of view with the idea... if I AM the author, problematic as that might be and... how we define that is, you know, all those caveats but... if I am the author of the practice what can I do to document my practice... what... what is it that I'm documenting, you know, and to what degree am I documenting XXXX So I think there are... there're some very interesting issues there about the role of the... practitioner in the role of documentor and what it is that you're documenting and what's the value of the kind of documentation that you produce and... I mean I always video work and I work a lot in the process of making work with... I video every single day of work and tend to watch back or video a lot of it and watch back a lot of that and that's something that I... I, you know, find extremely useful as part of my method of working and, as we talked about earlier, evaluating, I suppose, that's when it... that's, you know, part one of the mechanisms for that for me... but I also don't think that the v-... the video by any means is... is a particularly useful form for documenting live practice and I've... So I'm still personally trying to grapple for myself with what it is that I think is useful TO document about the work that I make, and then I think that there's... for me it's something about the process, but I'm not sure what areas of the process it is and I think "Well!" I think... but it changes but it certainly... I... I'm interested at the moment in a kind of... subjective sort of narrative-based document... -ting of the process that I go through in the construction of the work because there's something that I can learn from that, or take from that, about the way in which I DO evaluate and shift through and develop and move through the process of making. I'm not sure how useful that is for others... it is perhaps in the sense that they can see how some... you know, what somebody else's process is, and what it is from that position you document that... so your partial selection that you make and then what you view of that, so I mean I think that's... I would be interested in viewing more of those kinds of things from MY point of view... somebody who... who is enGAged in this activity... and I... it would be nice to find ways of making that more disseminable, I think, or more... well, or making it more accessible, so that I could, you know, I still think we hide our processes... generally, and that seems to me to be the... and certainly in the context of the implications for learning and teaching, the implications for developing, sort of, knowledge is... that's the thing for ME that we need to try and somehow make more... more accessible. I think the work itself is... is... sort of... speaks for itself and a video is a reasonably useful way of... you know, of... documenting that, it's not ideal but it serves a purpose, but I think there's... there's quite a lot of, for

me, interesting stuff around... process and how we... how to take account of that.

11:09

AP

'Cause we're also lured with video into thinking that... we ARE given... some kind of privileged access into the practice itself...

HB

Absolutely! We're not.

AP

... but of course we aren't.

HB

That's right.

AP

'Cause you were pointing to your notebooks before and arguably there may be material in there that as a document would be more... indicative...

HB

Absolutely. Absolutely. Yea.

AP

... both in your research processes AND be more useful to other practitioners to work with.

11:32

HB

Yea. That's right. Exactly. That for me is the sort of productive area... and I think the work... yea, the work is there, isn't it, for you to... for you to experience and things, but as you say it doesn't... it doesn't give you access to the... to the blind alleys ...

AP

And... and...

HB

... and... and... and the things that you go through in the making, in the creation of it. Sorry...

AP

You were talking... No!... you were talking about bodies of knowledge and that from a pragmatic point of view you can see why there needs to be something...

THERE! But of course there's the other side of things that the audience becomes the body of knowledge. The people who were there... during the process become the bodies of knowledge and can communicate what's happening in those events to other people and... how do you feel about that sense of... dissemination?... In terms of the on-life of the work.

12:27

HB

Yea, sure. Well I... I mean I... absolutely, I mean I think that's... that's... you know, it's... it's the... the role of memory and the construction of work and the context of the spectator's own... subjectivity and experience of work is... central to the work itself and... yes, that becomes the... the... you know, one aspect of the work's life and the work's on-going process of meaning and development and all of those sorts of things. I... I... there's work that I would like to... and it's not... it's not a-... it IS about... ex-... a first-hand experience and you can't have... I'm not saying that... in any way the video replicates the first-hand experience but I think that we... we are... we have become articulate and literate in our understanding of video, and we understand that it's partial, so I mean... I... and it's going back to the pragmatic, really... I mean I... on an academic or an intellectual level the... the role of memory and the... and the subject of experience of viewing the work and the afterlife of the work in memory is... absolutely central to the work, it's part of the process of the work, I think. But for me in the context of a community of practice or community of practitioners... I... course make it my business to... experience work if it's live work, to experience it as live work. Would I also think in the same way that I think there is use in reading somebody's written account, review of a work, that there is value in... in work existing in the video format. But it... but what shouldn't be claimed XXXX that it gives you access to something essential, that it gives you access to the totality of the experience or the totality of the research, it's absolutely partial, but... but I think very useful.

14:26

AP

OK. And what do you consider to be the artefacts of your work, and here I'm thinking of artefacts very loosely. It's... for you to interpret... What are the material... what are the USEful material traces...

14:49

HB

Well I have to say, I mean I know I XXXX earlier, but I think one of the things that I... for ME about my own work that I refer to more than anything are the notebooks... in the making of the work. So it's the things that probably are the most evocative for me of the work, are those. I don't... and I suppose... the... the things that are left behind from the product... the performance event itself, so... I suppose some of the... some of the... the things that I find myself keeping as I kind of, I suppose, in my mind, not as an archive! That sounds far too... too



grand... but as a way of... yes, I suppose it's the artefacts are the kind of costumes, and the set, and the... and the things that were lost or... had to be broken as part of the performance... threshold that I might always have... that that piece had eighty blown eggs in every single performance that all got destroyed as part of the piece and so I have... you know, a box of broken egg shells! that were... so... so there are things like that that are quite, kind of, significant, the tangible elements... that were transformed in the... in the activity of performing, I suppose... a useful thing that perhaps that I see less as artefacts for ME are things like video, so the things that are perhaps the more... practical or... methods of recording the work tend to be the things I refer to the least but I... but I use in the context of things like RAE or the Arts Council when they say "Let me see your work" those are the kinds of things that have a practical function but they're not necessarily things that... that take on... I think often it's the things that don't try to replicate or don't try to conserve or somehow... encapsulate the totality of the experience, the things that seem to be partial or... not... yes, incomplete... tend to be the things that serve most evocative function in terms of... being traces of... of the live event.

17:04

AP

And what about the... accessibility for other practitioner researchers in terms of their access to those other kinds of artefacts like... the potential for access to things like notebooks... boxes of broken eggshells.

17:22

HB

Yea, I mean I... I don't think that I've yet thought much about that. I mean I have thought about it, but I don't think I've done much about it yet, really, in terms of my own work, I mean I think the only things that I've... the place... the things that I think I've produced... apart from the practice are... in written form, and they... but they're not necessarily traditional, sort of, academic writing but they're... and they have been published, you know, so there are those, but I think in terms of making... accessible my notebooks or something, I'd... I would be... happy to do that! but I don't think... I mean... partly, I suppose, the idea that I... that it's never been something that's... I... as being requested, and perhaps also, because it's not something that I've... that I've seen as an area that I'm... that I'm focussing on, I've not necessarily thought too much about I might make those in and of themselves disseminable, so I haven't, kind of, worked in terms creating a website, or CD roms or, you know, and I haven't... I haven't sort of worked in tho- ... in terms of that, I suppose, I mean the closest I've got to that is the... is the, kind of, recent writing that I've done but... yea. So that... so I don't think it's something that I've really focussed on.

18:46

AP

Again, sort of returning back, I guess to the question around assessment 'cause we talked about devising, or not, formal methods of assessing the process, but what about assessing the actual performances in terms of how was, say, Twenty-four Acts of Arson assessed and that assessment could be brought... 'cause obviously there's Arts Council involvement, there's reports to the AHRB.

19:21

HB

I don't... well... to... I mean, on a practical level, Twenty-four Acts of Arson as a piece wa-... I don't think was assessed with the AHRB because it wasn't part... it wasn't part of the outcome, the outcome was... was written... so, I mean, in terms of... yea... I don't... I mean... it's very difficult, I'm just trying to think back to the times when work... when I have received external feedback and assessment of work and I'm not sure that criteria are ever that... are ever explicitly stated... and I'm thinking of recent... recently somebody saying to me "And of course your work is of a post-doctoral standing" and it's like "Well, what does that mean? I've no id-..." Do you know what I mean? There's enough in it there, so it seems to be those sorts of statements that are made, and I... I don't know... I mean I find it very... very difficult, I mean I do find... the... this differentiation, although I've talked about it a lot between the professional and academic... I wonder to what extent, really, there is that... that division, and whether it is purely about context and maybe it is about the particular sort of British tradition about what the... what the artist is seen as, that they're seen as sort of somehow... in opposition to an academic, I don't know, but... so I... I don't know... I do you want me to speculate on what I think the assessment criteria should be, or wh-... I mean in terms of my experience I honestly can't say that I've... I... I'm aware of... I mean I'm aware of criteria in terms of the Arts Council, I suppose, more so than... than an academic context but I... and they're about... quality, they're about accessibility, they're about... yea... I don't... I'm sorry I feel a bit, sort of... like I don't really have much to offer about XXX really...

21:22

AP

No, but I think that...

HB

It is very difficult, I mean I'm sort of scrambling for things, but I can't really... pin any-... you know I mean I have a sort of sense of what the Arts Council... but I don't think that I've every had any kind of written... explicit report on... I mean I've had to evaluate my own work and write evaluative, monitoring reports for the Arts Council and you get a... "That was very good. Thanks very much for that." and the same for the AHRB, but actually in terms of saying "Your practice as research is very... clear in its articulation of your research aims" or "It's an interesting piece of work" or "It's of high quality..." I can't... I'm struggling to think about how... I'd ever been in a formal situation where that's happened.

22:09

AP

But that's interesting because it links back to what we were talking about earlier and the reticence of people to engage specifically with the practice and to talk about that and... I think XXX also quite telling 'cause I mean there are criteria say, for instance, the RAE do have quite clear criteria...

HB

Right! (laughs)

AP

... but they tend... but it tends to be about, you know, international access so I'm...

22:32

HB

Well that's I mean... I mean... those I under-... I mean... I sort of unders-... having, you know, submitted to the RAE, I mean absolutely and... and... but those to me don't tell me much about the work. I mean I under-... you know, that's fine, OK, so... "Was the season that you showed your work in an international season?" "Did you tour it to international venues?" All those... but those seem to me to be quite, sort of... extraneous, really, it's not talking about the work, the practice, so... I mean I... I am... I mean maybe... tell me if there ARE those things, but I mean I... that's... those are the things that I haven't experienced, I mean the request from... to make submissions to the RAE... maybe they are... I know they are under... reworking, aren't they... they are being... but it's... but I... and the need to have an explicit research aim and... but that notion of "How is the actual work itself judged?" I... it feels to me that there's a gap, but that may be a gap in my knowledge as opposed to a gap in my knowledge as opposed to a gap in what is currently available!

23:36

AP

No I think... I think it is a gap, and that's why... I mean these questions about assessment XXXX questions about artefacts and it's trying to think about... there's a demand for assessment but the assessment... so far hasn't really touched on the specifics, but I think the same is true with writing-based research, nobody really sits down to assess how good your analysis of Chaucer REALLY was... but, you know, what are the potential... given that the live event passes, so that one cannot go back to something to look at it and assess its value, what then does one return to if anything for that assessment process, and I was just wondering if you had any thoughts around that.

24:24

HB

Yea... it's... I suppose this is what I was... I mean I keep going back to this recent piece of writing... I think I... on one pra-... you know, on one level you could, you know, there's the... there's the escape clause of the, sort of, video but it doesn't really... it doesn't really have the function, I think you've either... you have to engage with the work, if you don't engage with the work then I think... I mean for me the... the... I th-... but, again, this might be... it's obviously to do with my research imperatives or interests... the research is undertaken for me in the process... of the acti-... of... on the... you know, that's where... that's where the new knowledges occu-... are developed, or methodologies, or whatever it is, and this is... this is the by-product, this is the result and the... and the point at which you feel... that it's not an issue... I don't... I'm not saying I feel... "in control" of the process, but it's only when the work is produced and is out there that you... it is... just speaks for itself and it's almost that that is the result of the thing that you have done. So... to me it... the place that is... where the judgement could be made, I think, or where there should be some evaluative or assessment of... that you... the quality of what you've done should be through the... the processes and the markers within the processes of which you would be able to say... "This is..." you know... "Here I have done... and this is..." but how you... how you make that accessible to people I have no idea, I mean whether that needs to be mediated through writing or whether... I don't know... I haven't... I haven't... thought hugely about that but I mean I think the... the work itself is only one... is very much one aspect, it's a by-product, so I think you somehow have to make this process... central, or equal, to the outcome and maybe that's the same for more traditional modes of research as well but it... it seems particularly pressing for us because we... we... particularly in the context of live performance where you're dealing in... you have, kind of, discursive relationships with other practitioners... that that... all of those things... it's very difficult to claim that they're all embodied in this... one product and that somehow that is... that that's accessible or... or that you can un-pick those things, so I think, yea...

26:51

AP

You mentioned contributions to knowledge and them being located more in that sense of process. How would you define or articulate your con-... your own contributions to knowledge, or not your own, but the contributions to knowledge made by the practice as research that you've done and are doing. Do you think of it in terms of your contributions to knowledge.

27:13

HB

...Yes, I mean... I suppose so. I think it's... I would say that it's ... I would categorise it more as my own learning rather than the creation of knowledge but I... I suppose in the... in the sense that you are... pushing at the boundaries of what you know or what is known about something then I suppose you are

creating... new knowledges, but I suppose it's in... for me it would be in the... in the interrelationship of media and the formulation of... of choreographic imagery and the processes by which you do that and you can... and you... yea, I would say there's something in and around that that I think is probably the crux of what I... of the work that I'm doing so... partly methodologies, so partly working methods and partly in terms of how you generate and structure material I suppose would be the overarching area of... of expanding knowledge in my area, that's I suppose... I suppose what I'm working on.

28:22

AP

Which brings us then back into dissemination again, so how... how do you conceive of disseminating those contributions, those developments, those...

28:32

HB

Well I... you know, "the work" in that the result of those... those things happen... I mean I... because for me more... one of the things that is also I suppose a product is what happens for the spectator in their engagement with that. I don't know whether I can claim any sort of you know, sense of that as a research out... you know, part of my research but I think it's... and I suppose that's the same if you... if you write an article but there's... but I think there's something about the activity of the spectator engaging in the construction of the meaning of the... of the imagery or the thing that you're... that... that... sorry I'm... I've lost my thread. Where... what were we...

29:13

AP

Dissemination, so...

29:14

HB

YES! So I suppose that's... yea, that's... that's kind of... part of the dissemination of the knowledge is through engagement directly with the product...

29:25

AP

Although you're still left with the problem of... of process because...

HB

Yea, absolutely, it's not explicit, is it, by any means, no... I think the other way is through... is through learning and teaching, really, so it's in the context of... of mentoring and working with other practitioners, so that's all... I think, you know, the difficulty is to, or the thing to resist, from my point of view, is the sort of recipe book of XXXX so you don't say "So, you could do..." so it's a sort of, what you're

constructing in a way is a sensibility, or, you are constructing knowledges, but those things are the degree to which you can extrapolate those from the instance of the practice. Maybe that's a definition of it, I don't know, but, you know, it's... that they are quite specific, in a way. So how you make those... disseminable I think... I think... is difficult and for me one of the ways that seems to be the most effective is through the context of teaching and... or perhaps through the, kind of, workshop context, or through a kind of... dialogue with other practitioners working so I mean... with colleagues who are also practice-based researchers, that's what I often find myself in a situation where they will say "Come on..." "Come and see my work, come into the studio and get..." you know... so you find yourself in situations where you're giving feedback and you're drawing on your experience or you invite people in to watch you work and to give feedback, so that seems to be one of the most productive ways of making XXXX but it's not very large scale, or it takes a while for that to happen, but I think that, for me, that seems to be one of the ways that's the most effective... yea.

30:57

AP

It's quite interesting because this seems to be coming up more and more, I think, is that... that sense of discourse, or the iteration of the presence, not so much the live presence of people at a perFORMance even necessarily, BUT that sense of dialogue and discussion around the issues.

31:13

HB

Yea. Absolutely. Yea. Yea. And it... I think that's... I think that's right because I think... I think it is... very difficult to try and translate those things into a form that isn't... that's disembodied, you know... that's... I mean, again, without wanting to be, sort of, essential or anything, but it does seem that that's... that's quite crucial to... to what we're dealing with, yea...

31:37

AP

Now that, sort of, we're entering the realm of the sort of final questions, and there's that question about problems encountered and things you might do differently which may not seem appropriate in this context because we're not talking about a single... piece or project, but are there, thinking in terms of the community of practitioner researchers, thinking in terms of people who might be using this interview in terms of thinking about their own practice as research. Are there any golden nuggets of information about things... things to be thinking about, things that took you by surprise, things that made you really think "Ah!"

32:14

HB

Yea... well I do think, having said what I said about documentation, I think that now, I mean, being in a situation... so far in my kind of career and having

undertaken several practiced-based research projects, I would say that I should have thought earlier about what I thought about documentation . That's the big... that's the... crucial thing I think, that... and it's an odd one, in a way, because I... I would say... I mean I've got videos of all of my pieces, they're not particularly GOOD videos ... besides, I suppose there's that kind of... yes, you've always got the sort of slightly sort of obsessive sense that "I haven't managed to... contain it, I haven't got... I haven't got it there, it slipped away, where... what is it that I can show for what I've done?" So I suppose having said I don't think about it obviously on one level (laughs) preoccupies me. So I would say that... that's quite an important thing, I suppose, to see those activities as parallel, and I think that's something that I have done with more recent work, but I haven't done with past research projects. So... the... the... yes... the... as we were discussing earlier, the sort of artefacts that all... not the artefacts but also the outcomes, I think it's to... it's to say what... it's to think through, yes, what might be... what might be left behind, or what might be the things that you can draw on as evidence for your practice, and to think through the range of the sorts of outcomes or the sorts of artefacts... yea, I think that's really, probably the thing that I wish I had started doing earlier... and... what else?... I don't think... I don't think that you should... I think for people who are undertaking practice-based research, for me, I always ... try not to be afraid if I don't know what my research aim is initially. So I don't... I don't, or... not to be not afraid, but, or not to devalue what you do because your research aim isn't necessarily explicit from the onset of the activity, and to give value to the kinds of processes that are less conscious or more intuitive as a central part of... your process. And, so... and that some of the things that might be seen as "less serious" in a more traditional sense are... valuable.

34:46

AP

It's interesting because both of those elements are sort of opposite...

HB

They are, aren't they.

AP

... sides of... of the... here I'm mixing metaphors

34:53

HB

Well, what I'm saying be really conscious and g- collect all your (laughs)... yea!

AP

But it's also about, something about the anxiety of being within an academic context because clearly there is the worry of not having the research aim because one feels that one has to because one is working within... academia, and then with the documentation issue, that sense of... not wanting to engage

with thinking about modes of appropriate... artefact creation because if... because it's about the sense of, if one is choosing to work in this mode, within this context, and if one also accepts that sense of prag-, the pragmatism of having something there on a shelf... then it seems to be...

HB

At odds.

AP

... make the most sense to try and think creatively around that, in order, if only, to mediate...

HB

Exactly!

AP

... the anxiety about not having...

HB

Exactly!

AP

... a research aim ...

HB

That's right!

AP

... in the first place.

35:52

HB

Yea. Exactly. So I mean I... yea, exactly. So I think... I think... yea, I mean it is interesting to think that those do both come out of sort of anxieties, I suppose, but I don't think that, having said that about the research aim, I'm not... I'm not sure that it's a... it's an anxiety because I do feel like I have lots... lots of imperatives and I don't... and I don't mean pragmatic things I mean research imperatives driving what I do, but I'm not sure that I sit down and consciously formulate them before I start working in the studio. So it's not an emptiness, but it's a diff-... it's a... it's another strategy for... making them sensible, or articulating them, which isn't starting from position of sitting down and thinking, it's from DOing and thinking, and it's recognition that doing and thinking are not separate activities or somehow in a hierarchy, you know. So I think that... that's the thing that I would... say, but I also think then ag-... THAT it is imperative that you do have a research question, above and beyond the content and the shape



of the piece that you... or the work that you're doing, and to... for yourself to make that... to think through those sorts of strategies... yea... so...

37:10

AP

And how have you found the experience of representing your practice in that, sort of, retrospective area, in both... I mean you've spoken a bit about the AHRB but, more particularly about the RAE, I mean, how was it to translate?

37:29

HB

Well, I... I mean... what I was asked to do, and I don't know whether this is... this is common practice in other institutions, but I was asked to, for both the, whatever it ... was it two thousand? and the nineteen ninety-six, those were the last two.

37:44

AP

Yea, the two-thousand and one.

HB

Two-thousand and one, excuse me.

AP

But, you wouldn't have been doing it in two thousand.

37:47

HB

Yes, two thousand, end of two thousand, yes. Two-thousand and one and nineteen ninety-six, for BOTH of those I made submissions and for both of those I was basically asked to write about eight-hundred words? or something like that? on each piece of practice and it was quite, kind of... strict : "It has to be about this length" ! And... I treated it pragmatically, I think, really, that it was kind of, well this is a requirement but I did find myself being... get-... quite angry about how to do it, really, because it did feel.... I can... I mean I ... now I feel like I've got more of an understanding... why it was necessary or might continue to be nec-... or why it might have been required or requested because of the context, but I'm not sure that I think that it's... by any means solves the problem or that it... or that it's... it's the most suitable format, or whatever, but I know I found it... it was interesting in some... in some respects because it... it required me to... concisely... formulate my research aims, I suppose, so it asked me to do that, but I also found that I was having... that this... the thing that I find most difficult is this... or the most problematic... is this idea of translating, selecting out and translating from a body of work, a body of practice, a piece that for me is the outcome of my research XXXX extrapolate from that, and articulate in another form, what is already embodied there, and so... and I found that quite difficult,

and I think there's probably some difficulties there in the context of dance, particularly when you function in a... in a... I'm not saying that the body is non-verbal, but you know, that you function in a... in a language that's just motional, that you... there are considerable difficulties there to say... how... what it was that you were... you were doing in... in eight-hundred words, I think, so I... I... I don't know, I mean I'd... I'd guess... and the other thing, it felt to me that it was the legitimising mechanism for the work and that it was a patching of this very difficult area that we've talked about which is: what are the explicit ways of assessing the work. And if what you require as your... I mean what I submitted to the RAE as my Evidence was a video... I presume at their request, I don't know, I mean that's certainly what I was asked to do institu-... from within the institution. So... that seemed strange, you know, that... if you translate that to other subjects, to be asked for evidence of your output and a supplementary piece of writing... it seemed to mark the fact that the RAE as a body weren't sure how they were assessing the thing that they said was legitimate... to me. So I felt that... I wasn't necessarily on a level playing field with that as a... as a kind of strategy, I was uneasy about it.

40:57

OK. And... I suppose the final two questions then, how... how close is the relationship between your own thinking about your practice as research and this interview context, so how... how well, badly, closely or far aPART has... has talking about your practice as research your practice as research in this way.

41:23

HB

...No... well I think it's been very useful and very interesting to... to DO it... I think it's... having... having just... I mean I looked at the questions... I've looked at the questions a few times and thought about what my responses might be and they're different now in this context than perhaps what I thought, but I feel like some of the areas... if I was listening back to what I've spoken about, I think what I would say is "Well, I'm not sure you've given me enough detail and it sounds... it sounds quite broad, so I feel that I've probably... one of the things that I would like to get out of something like this if I were listening to it by somebody else, I think, is that I would want to know about what they do, what their process is and... when you were asking me about that I'm not sure that I... drew a very clear picture of that... so, I suppose that would be the thing that I would find... I would find useful the specificity of it but I won-... but I think... and I am struggling to... know what is valuable in this context about what it is that I do, and that might be how I view what I do in the context of somebody working in the university.... Yea, so I think I... I would be interested in hearing other one... other exAMples of this to see... yea, the specific nature of them, but I... I wonder whether I'd been specific enough or detailed enough, really, I think... you know, in a way it would b-... it might've been more useful for me to talk specifically through a single project to say "This is..." "OK"... but then, again, you know you are then constructing narratives you're tidying it up you're saying "Oh, this is how it

worked” and all that sort of stuff, so I mean it... it is... it is... difficult. But I think it’s interesting to have the commonality of a set of questions so that perhaps you do then draw out the... the specific nature of particular individuals, yea.

43:29

AP

Well you kind of... you’ve answered the final question which really is what’s missing, and I mean... obviously there is the absence of the work, there is also the absence of being able speak very specifically about people’s work because... of the breadth of the remit.

43:45

HB

That’s right...

AP

There’s a sense of “I ha-...” “I cannot ever be informed enough to ask you specifically

43:53

HB

That’s right, no sure. Oh I completely understand that and I think you know in... in the end you have to tread the line, don’t you, between... if I were to give you chapter and verse about a particular work, then... to what degree can other people extrapolate from that single instance, so of course that’s not necessarily useful... so I abso-... I know exactly what you mean so it wouldn’t necessarily be useful for me to just talk through in (whispers) detail this thing, you know... So... I think it’s... in THAT sense this is... this is much more useful, but having been through it I’m now beginning to think about other people listening to this and thinking “Yea... I’d...”... there’s lots of gaps there, there’s lots of inconsistencies, you’ve... you... on the one hand you say this, on the other hand you say that, but... ”Could you give me more information about...?” so I suppose what’s been really useful about it for me is that I recognise how... I’m functioning in an area where... there... I keep... where I keep falling off the edge of the map in terms of my own... sense of what it is that I’m fun-... the TErritory that I’m functioning within, that it’s actually... it’s a very unstable territory where there are dark areas that aren’t defined which perhaps I need to... define for myself or work on as part of the activity of the research. So I think what this has done for me is to help me understand that... so for instance that... I mean the things that... come out of, you know, this issue how is it... how is it assessed... I think it’s... you know, it’s really made me think about that and think about how little I think about that even though I’m within those mechanisms, so I think that’s really fascinating. Then the other area for me... that you’ve drawn my attention to is the... is process of documentation and the artefacts, and I think I’m perhaps too busy engaging in the making of the thing to think about... what else there might be.

So... those two things have been very useful for me because they're not things that I've... I've focussed on, but they're, you know, kind of central , so...

46:01

AP

But what's so interesting from... from MY position is being... taking part in these intereviews is what's flagged up for me...

HB

Sure.

AP

...over and over again, is the absence, that it's the sort of melancholy absence...

HB

Yea. Definitely.

AP

... because I'm... I can only access through talking to you...

HB

Yes!

AP

And that is going to be... in some way I'm holding the position of the everywoman...

HB

Yes, yes.

AP

... because so many people will not have that access...

HB

No, that's right.

AP

... so it raises all sorts of interesting questions about... the value of talking about practice as research in those general terms anyway, so if we're going to talk about specificity, how can we do that in a useful way... I think that...

46:40

HB

That's right. Yea. So... and there IS a real tension there, isn't there, because you f-... I feel drawn towards wanting to do that, to say to... as you say, not to YOU, but to YOU !... "It was like this" and well "OK. Let me talk about this specific day.

There was this section, we did this, we so worked on, and this is how my notebook... da da da” Do you see? But that’s only one... but that’s an example and... as you say... to what degree is that useful, but that’s what I feel drawn towards, now, at the end of this, is that actually what I want to do is... is sort of get down XXXX “No but it’s like this, you see!” and so I feel like... and that’s what I mean about this un-... this sort of unstable territory that I feel actually, sort of... it’s had quite an interesting unsettling... effect on me in terms of making me think about the areas that perhaps I just bracket off because practically you need to in order to do what you do , you know, so I think that’s ... that’s really interesting, but having said that I wonder if, you know, how useful hearing that is to people! But that’s been the... that’s the useful thing for me, you know...I don’t... I mean it’s interesting, isn’t it, ‘cause there ARE so many aspects to the activity of practice as research and I remember for the last Parip conference, the themes... and when I was thinking about proposing something I was thinking “But... it covers all of them” (mock whiney voice) you know, I kind of want to cover all of them but I know I’ve got to cover one of them but... and then there’s that sense of slippage across those and I know this time you’ve... not... it’s a different formulation, isn’t it. But again, nonetheless, I thought that was very useful, but it... what seems to be, or what I wonder if it’s something that’s been considered is whether practice as research should cover all the bases, you know, does... I mean I know that there’s a drive towards saying “There must be some...” you know “some kind of written output” or whatever, alongside the practice, what might that be, do we require reflective writing as part of.... activities as part of the pro-... so I... I don’t know, but I think the documentation thing is a really pressing one, isn’t it, and a crucial one... but again you don’t want to be prescriptive about what it is people should or shouldn’t do... have to do... in order to tick the box of... practice... of a research... or a valid research activity.

49:07

AP

Exactly because if you think about documentation closely enough, then there is no one recipe...

HB

Absolutely.

AP

... that will work because you have to do something that speaks TO your research concerns and your modes of practice.

HB

Yea. And it’s inevitably partial. I mean your term about the melancholy, the absence of the... of the practice is absolutely right, isn’t it, and the... the endeavour for documentation should never be to try and fill that. So... yea. It is a... we must be one of the few areas of activity in academia that deal with that...

have to deal with that ... lack of substance... lack of... you know, that... that issue of ephemerality. So...

AP

Great. Well that was... that was the end of it. Thank you very, very much...