

## Live Art in Scotland: Luke Pell

This interview was conducted online via Zoom on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021 as part of the Live Art in Scotland research project at the University of Glasgow.

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Stephen Greer (SG): For the last week or so, I've been starting these conversations by inviting people to talk to me about their first encounters or first memories of performance and performance art. I'm wary of the neatness of inviting an origin story, but I do like the idea of first encounters or first impressions, or first memories even if they're not accurate ones. So maybe we start there.

Luke Pell (LP): Yes, I was reflecting a little bit on this and where my first encounter might have been because I was a late starter, shall we say. I had previously worked in a hairdresser and a shoe shop and danced in clubs and then somebody said, are you sure you don't want to go into performance? I was talking with a colleague recently who I'll tell you about later, Catherine Long, who had been in some of the *Dazed & Confused* issues that Alexander McQueen, some of those images that he made. We didn't know each other then, but I was also modelling at that time, and I think that's what drew me to working in fashion. We could say it was appropriation, but some of that imagery, that Alexander McQueen, I think it was my first early teenage encounter with a live art aesthetic. I wasn't a very successful model and I think it's because I was more interested in the performance aspect than the selling clothes [laughs] so I got dropped quite quickly because I would turn up for castings in makeup etcetera which you were not supposed to do at that time. I think that's my first aesthetic pull and also thinking about the politics of the body as a young queer person, I've been drawn to fashion. I was dancing in nightclubs and my then-boyfriend said to me, are

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you sure you don't want to be a performer? I went to Winchester, which was then called King Alfs, it was a teaching college before it became a university, not really with any knowledge of performance in the way that my peers did. I had this kind of visual pull, but I very much always come back to all the artists who were teaching on the programme, who were practicing artists. I think it was before you had to have a PhD to teach, it wasn't mandatory. I was taught by people like Olu Taiwo, David Harradine from Fevered Sleep, Alex Hoare, Suna Imre, Jane Mason, and then we had guest people like Lone Twin and Clod Ensemble really early on. I was in my twenties when I was immersed into the world of live art and devised performance. That was really my first encounter, and because I worked in a theatre alongside that, I then happened to see contemporary dance for the first time, which is how I ended up getting into contemporary dance. I think the first companies I saw were Bode Lawal's Sakoba Dance Theatre, Lea Anderson's Cholmondoley's and the Featherstonehaughs and Candoco with work from Javier De Frutos, who I eventually ended up working for. I often end up talking about this with Candoco that I thought that was how contemporary dance was, and it wasn't until I worked in contemporary dance that I realised what I'd encountered that evening was very much not what all contemporary dance was! So yes, those are my first encounters.

SG: What in that work do you recall seeing as a possibility for yourself? Or was there a sensation of seeing that work and being attracted to it and knowing that whatever you would do, would ultimately be different?

LP: I think certainly in that early work, there were things around queerness and what I felt inside that I felt and saw in these manifestations. There was legibility there for me that I felt inside. Such a big part of the world that I've become a part of is to do with community and belonging, so I think that was a big pull. And then I think when I first began to see work from people like Fevered Sleep or Clod there was an attention to detail and a quality of attention which is something that is carried through in my practice, and thoughtfulness. The thoughtfulness of the body expressed in a way that I don't encounter in my day-to-day [laughs].

SG: Is that the link or the path that connects to, or drew you to dance and choreographic practices?

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LP: Yes, I think certainly with dance for me, I was in a conversation with Caroline Bowditch recently where she was talking about how encountering dance was the first time that she was invited to explore what this body could do, and I think as someone who grew up in the south of England in the eighties and nineties I was full, and probably still am, entrenched in shame and repression and dance was really when I began to celebrate my physicality and celebrate other people's physicality, but did something beyond words, as much as I love words. There's this thing that articulates stuff without having to say anything! I think particularly with that first encounter with Candoco, I absolutely fundamentally believed at that time that contemporary dance was a space where all bodies were celebrated and belonged and it was a lifting of the lid when I came into the dance field and realised that dance training, not coming from that background, was in many places entirely opposite to that.

SG: Yes, and producers' demands are really a very disciplined or disciplinary body and form.

LP: Yes, and particularly in the UK it has had and still has such aesthetic preoccupations around vocabulary, around what kind of bodies could dance, should dance and also what teaching and training is.

SG: Maybe this is a point to start talking about collaborative relationships or projects that have shaped your career, and particularly maybe people who you've worked with repeatedly. One of the people I've suggested I was interested in talking to you about was Claire Cunningham. I don't know if you could talk to me about that relationship and how you started working together?

LP: I worked with Candoco dance company for nearly seven years, looking after the learning and research department and off-stage activity. Claire and I met through that community. In my first year at Candoco we ran a summer lab and Claire alongside Linda Payne were both on that. Actually, it was flooded out so we only met each other for three days, but that was our first meeting. I remember then because Claire has a relationship and had spent some time in San Francisco and Berlin, she had a very different inquiry and aesthetic to lots of other people who were participating in that lab and a rigour and a resoluteness that I found really appealing. We built a conversation over the time I worked with Candoco and became friends, and then I think maybe one of the early BUZZCUTs I came to Glasgow to stay with her as kind of pals. Not long after that, she was working on the piece *Guide Gods* and

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because my practice has kind of always involved one-to-one, conversation encounter, working with words, speaking to people in different communities, there were questions that she had and so I became a sort of sounding board through some of that process. The person who had been producing her work at that time was moving to work elsewhere, she had some questions and we sat down and spent a day and looked at some of the things she was dreaming and hoping, and the support that she needed. I had been doing a lot of that kind of producer, dramaturgical work with people in the years that I'd worked with Candoco, and that's where it really became more explicit. I made an introduction between her and her now producer Nadja Dias, and we started to talk about the future projects: the dream of making a duet with Jess Curtis, who she'd previously worked with and the Elvis *Thank You Very Much* work. I was invited in as dramaturg for *Thank You Very Much* and since then have been working with Claire as the dramaturg on discrete projects but also in relationship to her practice more broadly. As I said, maybe in parallel or a similar time to that visit to BUZZCUT, I'd had a residency at Cove Park so some of that time was also when I decided to move from London to Scotland.

SG: Maybe we can pick up the thread of that, there's lots of stuff that I'd like to come back to. The residency at Cove Park, was that a residency you went to with a particular project in mind or was it an open offer just to work, to explore, I don't know if you remember?

LP: Yes, I do, it was the last year. For a long time, the performance element of residencies at Cove Park were mainly artists who were connected to Fuel and in the last year that that was going to be the case, I think it was Fuel's birthday and artists that they worked with like Clod Ensemble and Fevered Sleep nominated other artists that they thought would benefit from time at Cove Park, and to apply. So Fevered Sleep nominated me, and I applied. I had the seed of an idea, but also, I'd never had a residency, it was my first solo residency. I'd been on a European residency with other artists, but I'd never had a solo residency. If that answers your question [laughs].

SG: Yes, I guess I'm really interested in how that time or that space feeds a practice. I get the sense and I know that not all residencies are equal and that some of them absolutely come with, if not strings attached, quite concrete expectations. My impression of Cove Park is that there's a more open offer.

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LP: Yes, and certainly at that moment it was something I didn't necessarily know how much I needed because I'd been working within institutions for a very long time and within very specific frameworks. It was at a time before the new building was there so when I arrived it was like this hut on top a hill [laughs]. It was quite nice for me because Roanne Dodds was also resident there at the time. We didn't know each other, but we knew of each other through dance and Jerwood, so there was something familiar [laughs], but also not. I was there with a bunch of really brilliant artists working in other disciplines and that I think for me, having been very situated within dance for a long time, it was just great to be in a space, have time to write, to think, to move, and chat with people about that practice and also what this landscape brought to the fore for people. I spent most of my time [laughs] talking with people about this landscape and the changes in the weather and perception. I remember speaking with the sculptor Lauren Gault, who is Glasgow-based, and Emmy McLuskey was also working there at the time, and that dialogue with Emmy continued a bit for me. I guess it was an important watershed moment for me of shifting out of specifically being in dance and having been associated with one company for such a long time, and there was a welcoming of inter-disciplinarity and being there for process.

SG: The project that came out of that residency was the work called *In the Ink Dark*, is that right?

LP: Yes.

SG: Okay, can you tell me a bit more about that work? I encountered it during Take Me Somewhere festival.

LP: Yes.

SG: What's the story of the development from that seed, if you like?

LP: From the Cove Park time, I would say some of the text, this idea of writing a long poem which comes words from conversations with other people came from that time. Some of the core imagery or ways into somatic tasks that I worked with dancers came out of that time spent with the loch and the environment, the sort of thread of it was out of that. I realised I wanted to create a project and it was also a moment of some questions of my own grief and personal experience of loss that I was navigating at that time and whether to make a work and the ethical questions around that. Also, not wanting to make a work that was

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necessarily about death but was about different experiences of loss and how we find language for that and talk about that together. So, from then I went in for an RND I think with Creative Scotland. Actually no, I had a week of development with Metal, so thinking about interdisciplinary work I would really cite Metal and particularly Metal Peterborough. I think I had that when I first applied to Cove Park, I went ahh the artists that I see going here and the residencies that are awarded, that's the stuff that I want to do! I always felt a bit anxious about applying for dance residencies and theatre residencies. I was like, ahh this is my direction, and I certainly felt that also when I encountered Metal Peterborough. I had a two-week residency in Metal Peterborough, I took some of those ideas forward with a couple of dance artists that I'd worked with and had known for a while and also some of that conversational work, some research into libraries, and then that evolved into another phase of research here in Scotland and beginning to develop relationships with libraries through Edinburgh. The timing of that was during the year that we were doing the research for the first phase. Then in 2019 we re-imagined it for libraries and spaces in Dundee and then for Platform for the library at Easterhouse. In Edinburgh, the libraries here were under threat of being shut down. When I went to meet with libraries there was a real resonance there about a work that came and tried to celebrate personal, circumstantial loss but was also in a site, civic spaces, that might be lost. So that was in 2017, working in partnership with the Scottish Poetry Library and at the time the producer there, Jennifer Williams. We had this question of whether the work could go elsewhere. I haven't historically made work for theatre spaces. I don't think of making work to tour. There was something about the work that was made in very specific spaces, and we had a great time in them, we were gifted time in these different spaces. Also, the Leith theatre was on the edge of being either reopened or knocked down. The first night that we performed that was in the cavernous, abandoned Leith Theatre before it was being used by EIF, we were so privileged that LeithLate and Morgan Cunningham gave us the opportunity and the team there to inhabit that space and kind of celebrate it.

SG: Yes.

LP: So then, thinking about whether the work could come to Glasgow or Dundee...

SG: I guess you're shifting from a sense of the work as being site-specific to being – this is where I should know the words as a proper theatre academic – site-responsive.

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LP: Yes, absolutely, and very different. I reflect now on the work. We were performing in very old libraries in Edinburgh, and The Botanic Cottage, which had been moved by McDonald Road library, brick by brick down to the Botanic Gardens that year. These buildings that had this history were potentially being lost. The Poetry Library had just reopened, whereas the library at Platform, which is an extraordinary space, was a very different premise to bring that work and the score that the dancers work with, and what loss might mean on that site. Interestingly the history of loss in the city, relocation and that land became part of the process when we were considering making that work.

SG: Okay. We might be jumping around a little bit here, one of the other works that I was particularly interested in was *Take Me To Bed*, would that have been earlier or at the same time? I've lost track of my timeline; I should've taken clearer notes! [Laughs] I know that was presented within the context, I know it's been to a few different places, but as part of DanceLive up in Aberdeen?

LP: Yes. I think the first time, when we premiered it, that sounds very grand! The first time it appeared was as part of Unlimited Festival in 2014 at Southbank, and then we went to DanceLive in October, and then after that it was at DIG in 2000. My dates get conflated. It was at Dance International Glasgow, and then it went to Dansens Hus in Stockholm [and it's since been to CODA festival in Norway). It came about the same time we were talking about me meeting and developing with Claire, a person that I also had worked with for a long time at Candoco with was Jo Verrent who is now the Senior Producer for Unlimited. Jo and I after the first year of Unlimited, before she was working at Unlimited, had seen some amazing works, but we had a 'gin and tonic conversation' where we were like, oh there's a little bit of us that feels a little bit sad. I think we both felt a bit sad that there'd been an emphasis on, particularly in that first year of Unlimited, of disabled artists making work on a scale that they'd never had the opportunity to before. We had a conversation about is that just perpetuating what's gone before, this idea of what a company looks like and large-scale work, or dancing looks like this, or dance theatre looks like this? What would it be to make something that was more subtle, 'smaller dances' and with dancers who maybe don't leap [laughs] and traverse a huge stage. I guess in that time this constellation of relationships existed for us - with Robert Softley who's now at Birds of Paradise, but I don't think Robert was AD of Birds of Paradise then and Janice Parker and Caroline Bowditch. We all knew each

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other, and Jo and I went, should we just be really bold and ask if they're up for making something together? It was a direct response to the fact that we had both worked cross-art forms and we were interested in making something that was led by those ideas, rather than a screen dance or a live art film.

SG: It's interesting to me when I see how that work and maybe other works with similar approaches to bodies in the choreographic are sitting within the program of festivals like DanceLive and Dance International Glasgow. Maybe this is partly to do with who's programming Dance International Glasgow. For me it's a festival which is purely in a performance art and live art tradition or could be read that way, and spans from that all the way to work by classical ballet. There's less of the classical dance perhaps than in Dance International Glasgow, but there's a frame there which is recognising an interdisciplinary quality that's internal to dance as well as part of dancers' relationships to other forms, if that makes any sense.

LP: Yes, absolutely. I think also Dance International Glasgow at the time, it was when Tim Nunn was still with that program and his alignment with the disability community was very particular to Scotland - which is also partly why I relocated here, that alignment with and understanding of disability politics and where work by disabled artists also sat and was presented, not out-with of particular kinds of festivals. There was an understanding of what the work was trying to do.

SG: One of the other people who we've already mentioned actually, Lucy Cash, I know that sort of collaborative relationship is another long-standing one. Is that another relationship where you are working as a dramaturg or is that a different kind of artistic relationship?

LP: It's funny because, it's not funny – I say long-standing because it's been informally long-standing but formally it's quite new. I guess we knew of each other through the London expanded choreography performance community, but we first met again in 2011, before 2012, *On Landguard Point*, because Pacitti Company were making a work called *On Landguard Point* for the Cultural Olympiad. I was dancing in the image that Helena Hunter was making, *Sun Up*, and Lucy was at that time one of the filmmakers who was making with Becky Edmonds who she also worked with on *Straybird*. So, we met then, and I guess our dialogue and interest in each other's work grew. We then worked maybe in 2014/2015, with Emilyn Claid on a piece in Northumberland. Just our sensibility and our sense of process,

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and way of making was so aligned and then I moved to Scotland maybe the year before Lucy, but since we've both been here our dialogue has become much closer and we've been informally and more formally involved in each other's work. Lucy performed in *In the Ink Dark*, we've been writing together and over the past two years and I guess we've been focusing on making work as a duo, that's particularly attending to our interest in people, plants, performance and poetics. Sort of unearthing this parallel thread that we share, Lucy having a long-standing relationship working with Goat Island (and she's actually just finished a project that she's been working on with Mark Jeffrey), and me having a long-standing relationship with Fevered Sleep. The thoughtfulness and the researchfulness of both of these companies, I guess I can't speak for Lucy, but I think that we both feel their sort of spines through our practices and the kind of practices we're interested in. I guess that has become an interest conjoining for us [laughs].

SG: There's something that's always struck me as the significant about Goat Island, which is as you say, that attentiveness to research in all of its different forms but also the commitment of time that they have, that's involved in their shows which are evolved over two-year cycles effectively, if not longer. I'm wondering if there's something about the appeal of working over the longer period with people like Claire and Lucy which enables that kind of attentiveness to bodies.

LP: Yes, because I was taught by David Harradine from Fevered Sleep and that's always been such a fundamental part of their work, that has always really influenced me. When I trained, research was just a given, you gave time to research. It wasn't until I moved into mid-scale contemporary dance where you make a show in six weeks and it goes out for two years, that I was like, oh that's not how all processes go. But, in a sort of more serious vein of thinking, there's something that I think is really important about taking the time it takes to make work. Just thinking about the *In the Ink Dark* process, that's between 2013 and 2017 being the first time we opened that work. It was actually four years coming into being. Some people work amazingly quickly and make incredible work but taking the time to really think through something and work through something and find something particular is kind of pivotal for me. I think also there's this thing about working on a different rhythm that resists some of the structures that we're encouraged or forced to work in or are made available to artists. I think particularly with Claire and other disabled artists that I work with, that

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community that I'm part of is that we live and run on different rhythms, the normative rhythm for making doesn't work. I think that's also something that's become really apparent to me of late, when I'm reflecting on my dramatological practices with artists is that part of the ongoing conversation with them is that because they've had to find their own routes and develop practice out with some of the conventional structures, their practices is an interruption to those structures - whether that's presentation or training - and how to understand that and own that feels really key, I think. In the main, I prefer to work with people I've known for a long time, that's one of the things I really appreciate about my dialogue with Claire is that through conversation, through process and being attentive of her and what she does both in terms of a making space but also in a research space, I feel like I have a good understanding of her logics and how they inform her sensibility, her aesthetic, the way the work touches the world, how things get put together, the specificity of those rhythms, how things can't work together in a Claire Cunningham work. I think that carries through to me with all the artists I work with. I worked with Janice Parker, we still work together, but continuously whilst she was a regularly funded organisation. We spent a lot of time going through her previous work and following threads of thinking and practice through to be able to say ah, this has a resonance with the logic of your previous work, this has a thread of inquiry that has gone on and on and on and on and manifested in different ways. Especially with Claire, we talk about that a lot. This was a thread picked up in one work and has been now picked up and expanded upon in this work. So that sense of long-term research and how it unfolds, and I can only see that by having those long-term relationships.

SG: Okay, yes. I suppose the way I'm understanding it is that there's a real sort of respect and attention to process where the products [laughs], the works might be landmarks but what is developing between and around those landmarks is what is being attended to.

LP: Yes, I would say a lot of the work I do is about reflecting with other artists about the trajectory of their practice, how it's unfolded and understanding that better. Some of the things we talked about earlier about having done something but how does it settle into you, and you know it in your bones? To be able to name certain things or try and find language for certain things. That's not to say that with particular projects/productions that I'm not also very involved in editing processes and arranging material, but I think part of why I'm

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able to join people well in those processes is that I understand where they come from, I understand how their unique sense of process and sensibility leads to what they're doing in a room. I don't think, when I work with people (and I know this is an approach to dramaturgy or making theatre): 'first you do this and then you can or should sequence it like this or follow some sort of dramatic/formal/ritual arc and then it'll do that'. That's not the lens that I'm coming in with when I'm with somebody in the room, I guess it has a longer thread that follows through.

SG: Yes, yes. I'm interested in how this feeds one of the things that I know you're working on at the moment, which is the Queer Extension Programme, the artist-led online and correspondence programme. Is there a similar sensibility that informs that practice in terms of this exploration of connecting threads? I'm conscious that that's a very different mode with this online extension programme you're quite literally working remotely and perhaps working with people you don't know, but I'm interested in what form that process of paying attention might take.

LP: I think that's something that's core to my work: slowing down and paying attention differently. With the Queer By Extension model, there's an offer that's postal over a time that works for the artists or the people that ask to participate in that. They receive a pack from me and then they, on their own rhythm and on their own terms choose when they encounter those materials and that reading. It was a very deliberate choice. A lot of the other activity is happening online in a Zoom, there are some moments of sharing. I deliberately wanted to create something in this moment of the covid screen saturation and online exhaustion that invites a slowing down, taking a long time, or taking the time that you need to be with materials, and for something to unfold so that it also doesn't push towards an outcome, but by spending time researching something might emerge. It's interesting to see how that's unfolding for people. That's a more fluid process for some people and maybe not so for others. I think in the beginning I said I was a late bloomer in terms of coming into live art and performance. I waited a really long time before I applied for any funding or residencies anywhere because I think, and I still do think this, that kind of 'quick' turnaround, I can't work in that way. I don't work in that way. So in terms of those kind of relationships we described before with Cove Park and Metal, and Dance Base and The Work Room, Platform and Scottish Poetry Library, they were all seeded over a really

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long time and actually as an independent, I think developing those relationships which are different to a moment of presentation in a festival or a venue is complex, particularly when you're not a company that is an understood brand or you're entirely sure what you're going to get. So, I guess I have committed to taking the time to try to make those relationships, in order to make the work that might be possible, possible.

SG: I know this is something that you were working on with Claire relatively recently, I don't know whether it happened or not because of COVID. Are we talking about practices of care here?

LP: Yes, and how do you sustain those practices of care... I feel happy to be frank about, we were talking earlier about the 2019 iterations of *In the Ink Dark* and there were some things about making that shift, I feel when I reflect on it from an artistic point of view, some things were maybe compromised. It's a question that has come to surface for me, actually with lots of artists I've worked with over time where there's a necessity or an impetus for the work to grow, to go on tour or to be busier, that comes from a genuine desire for work to meet with more, and more different people, in more places, that something shifts and that can be thought of as a brilliant thing, step change or watershed moment in an artist's development, but I have a growing query about whether that's entirely true... maybe that's to do with the kind of attentiveness and slowness that I'm interested in inviting in work... maybe doesn't sync up so well with that sort of trajectory.

SG: Like a festival and a touring model, how you structure those in a way which allows for slowness and quietness and care, is really difficult when so many of the social and economic conditions of those things seem to be a lot of sitting around followed by a huge amount of frantic hurrying up.

LP: I think this is again one of the reasons Lucy and I started to work together. We were at a point in our lives [laughs] both in terms of our ages, the amount of travelling with work that we've done, where we're wanting to stay true to that slowing down and that quality of quietness and attentiveness and to do that together rather than apart. But also, maybe in this moment of the world there's a possible re-orientation that's going on with so many people and that feels like a thing to lean into. I mentioned Roanne Dodds earlier and when I was looking at your notes you were talking about Scotland particularly. Part of my coming to Scotland was also because Adrian Howells had said to me 'Scotland's been really good for

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me and my practice and the way I am'. And I remember Adrian earlier on in his practice, the subtlety and gentleness and the quietness that was present in some of Adrian's work, that there were aspects of Adrian's work that maybe were not revered in the way they are now, or as explicitly. That intimacy and quality of touch, that was part of his doctoral work for example. I remember having a conversation with him about that when I was doing my Masters at Queen Mary. We sort of connected over that. I think about people like Adrian and my late partner Nigel Charnock (I knew Adrian because he was friends with Nigel) and I think about Roanne Dodds who I knew at Cove Park. I think about Diane Torr, about Anna Krzystek, I think about Gill Clarke (who was a big influence on my thinking about somatic practice and an understanding of expanded choreography), I think of these as being artists who maybe were stretched or broken by those systems, about how staying true to their practice, and those other rhythms - what fracturing happens. Again, you asked a question about whose work feeds you, I think I have all of those voices in my head all the time [laughs] and it makes me desperately sad that they're not with us anymore because they so explicitly manifested an embodied politics. Sorry, that was a bit of a tangent.

SG: No, that was perfect. It will come as almost no surprise that Adrian's name comes up quite a lot in these conversations. So, this is the second time today I've had the chance to talk about Adrian so it's really lovely to sit and think about him. I think your reading of what has come to be valued in his practice, there's been a sort of reflection and a reappraisal, or a further appreciation of what his work offered. As you say, it offered so many different things in the different shapes that it took.

LP: I certainly feel like, when he said to me, oh I think moving to Scotland could be really good for you, it's been really good for me, and I met folk at BUZZCUT, you know I missed NRLA, I was not of that time, so BUZZCUT was really my first encounter with that memory of NRLA, but I felt like Adrian articulated an appreciation and an understanding of a sensibility and that quality of touch in his work – I don't mean just physical touch but the way that he touched – in the Glasgow scene that maybe wasn't as recognised or present or valued in the London live art scene and I really feel like I've seen a shift to an opening to the practices of care, of softness, of subtlety, not just because of that shifting with Adrian, but I do think of it as a turning point in my memory.

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SG: You've mentioned BUZZCUT there, and we've talked about a few organisations, we've talked about Cove Park, and I know that you've been involved with Dance Base. For the last few minutes, maybe we'll think a little about that broader landscape, I'm trying to think about what's a usefully leading question. I'm conscious that the relationships between choreographic practice and dance and live art are really complex, that could be a whole project in itself, although it's a thread in this one. So, I suppose my question is about your sense of the structures or spaces which have been particularly supportive, and maybe the leading part of the question is about whether it's organisations which are open to interdisciplinary practice which seem to be the ones in the dance sector which are closest or most open to live art.

LP: I wonder, and I say I wonder rather than I think for sure.. I wonder if.. The Work Room comes to mind immediately because it was founded by a bunch of different voices of myriad practices and perspectives, and if I think about Anna and Rosina [Bonsu] and Diane and Roanne and Kally [Lloyd-Jones], their practices are so different and I think that therefore has been a seed bed for how The Work Room as a membership organisation; and for how dance and choreographic practices speaking to live art might unfold. I don't think the fact that The Work Room is situated within Tramway and shares an office with Take Me Somewhere, that proximity [laughs], the physical proximity to other forms (and Scottish Ballet's in there as well) but that crossover feels very present, abundant in The Work Room membership and the artists coming out of The Work Room. My sense from having taught a little bit, or shared practice a little bit, at the space at Scottish School of Contemporary Dance and their proximity to Scottish Dance Theatre in Dundee is that there's a much closer alignment to dance theatre and a particular kind of contemporary dance aesthetic that is maybe one part of a spectrum of what contemporary dance might be. When I think about peers in San Francisco, New York, Berlin, Poland, Vienna and that kind of more somatic expanded choreographic sensibility, I don't know that I can identify a place for that in Scotland. I attended a lot of activity and worked as an assistant curator with Independent Dance, I mentioned Gill Clarke earlier, and was a member and Chair of the board with Chisenhale Dance Space in London when I was there, but that offer in London for dance is maybe more dispersed in Scotland. With Dance Base, I've been an associate since they began an associates programme a couple of years ago. What's been wonderful about that for me is

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that the artists that were chosen through those processes... I think were in the main a number of artists – I'm thinking about Claricia Parinussa, Farah Saleh, Robbie Synge, Aniela [Piasecka] – actually all of us as artists do have this expanded choreographic practice-proximity to live art interest. I think that was quite a new leaning in terms of dance spaces in Edinburgh's history with dance, other with the Fringe performances. When I think about more interdisciplinary spaces, I think about for example Simone Kenyon's recent work [Into the Mountain] for Scottish Culture Workshop; or I'm currently working alongside Hannah Tulikki and Jade Montserrat, as studio time artists at Hospital Fields, where we're all developing works which I think are all now going to be realised next year, that are in that space of interdisciplinarity, moving between visual art performance, poetics, writing, sound. I feel like there are organisations that are maybe opening to that before some of the dance organisations are.