Background and Context

NightWalking is an event which is taking place within a context of increasing interest in the processes which lie behind artistic works. It is presented by ResCen, the Centre for Research into Creation in the Performing Arts which was established at Middlesex University in 1999. ResCen aims to further develop interconnectivities between the world of the professional performing arts and the university sector.

NightWalking marks the inception of a two year project supported by NESTA, the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts and the weekend has also received support from the South Bank Centre, Greenwich Dance Agency and from London Arts. This support has allowed the opening of a space, both physical and conceptual, in which dialogue and demonstration can take place, alongside multi-modal performances, installations, presentations and web-work.

In accordance with ResCen practice, this event is artist-led and the themes of the weekend have been chosen to enable fluid and salient communications centred around issues of process and the re-presentation of those processes. Magic (mess and misery); Making trouble; Collaborations; Confessional; Toolbox/box of tricks/tricks of the trade; Porosity; and Deadline/ lifeline/timeline all offered points of reference within the over-arching notion of the artist navigating the unknown.

This focus on process as navigation, casts the artist as a skilled practitioner operating in a domain of knowledge which is often highly specialised and which resists being reduced to a realm of mere inspiration and instinct. While both inspiration and instinct may be vital in the territory of the unknown, they are nevertheless highly refined tools, operating in concert with a rigorously honed apparatus which is assembled from disciplinary sources, specialised practices and particular sensibilities.

The consideration of process precludes a view of art as simply artefact or commodity and also offers opportunities to draw parallels with the working practices of others from scientists to architects. NightWalking therefore includes a selection of views from other fields as points of reference and to stimulate further reflection and exchange.

Regrettably, it has not been possible to include all those who expressed interest nor has it been possible to represent all areas of creative practice in the performing arts; nonetheless we believe that the selection that has been made exemplifies a range of working processes which will challenge and stimulate.

It is also important to acknowledge that many others have made, and are making, significant contributions to this area of investigation. NightWalking seeks to add to these debates and to provide an arena in which the vital expertise, ownership and responsibility of the creative artist can be celebrated. We hope that you will join us for this weekend and that it will offer you fresh insights into the richness and diversity of artistic practice today.

Professor Christopher Bannerman
Head of ResCen











Photos from top: *Passage* by Rosemary Lee (photo: Pau Ros), FANCLUB, Richard Layzell (photo: Sheila Burnett), Simon Whitehead and Pete Bodenham (photo: Maura Hazelden), Liz Aggiss (photo: Holly Murray)