Outside Looking In

Seminar Transcript

Wednesday 15 June 2005 – Evening Event

Venue: Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square
London WC1

Research Associates: Ghislaine Boddington
Shobana Jeyasingh
Richard Layzell
Rosemary Lee
Graeme Miller
Errollyn Wallen

Speaker & Chair: Christopher Bannerman

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Introduction by Chris Bannerman

For those of you who don't know, I am Chris Bannerman, Head of ResCen, the Centre for Research into creation in the performing arts. This is the last session in a day of presentations, but I am aware that there may be people who've just come for this last session. Also during the day, of course, people have had different experiences, depending on which presentation/workshop they went to. So this is an attempt to gather you together into one shared experience.

This presentation is also divided into two parts. The first part is a sort of more formal presentation, in which I will sit in the middle there, and present with my two colleagues. That will last probably about twenty to twenty-five minutes, and then after that we shall dispense with the table and make a big circle and have a more sharing kind of event. I'll say a little bit about that second part later in this session, after we've finished the presentation. But I did just want to say that this is a kind of summative event, not only for this day, but it's also the end really of a series of ResCen seminars that have been going on for almost two years, so we're partly showing you this as a way of showing you other domains into which we're moving. The work we've been doing has relevance and resonances with other disciplines in other arenas. The presentation we're about to give was actually first given at a seminar that was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and it was to a group that was largely concerned with creativity in education. So we have a slight shift in balance in this presentation which you will notice. But nonetheless I thought (a) it might be of interest to you as our research is moving into other arenas, and (b) that you might have thoughts and feelings about it.

When we have our larger group discussion it won't just be about the presentation, we will be referring to the events during the day, or indeed previous seminars that you might have attended. We'll have to make sure that when we have that discussion we are inclusive and that some of our comments might have to be contextualised because not everybody will have seen or attended the event. I'll remind you all of that after we've finished this presentation, and I'll now sit down and begin.

Before I begin the formal paper I should note that I am joined by two of the six ResCen artists, the choreographer Rosemary Lee and the artist and sound designer Graeme Miller – the other four ResCen Associate Artists are: Ghislaine Boddington, Shobana Jeyasingh, Richard Layzell and Errollyn Wallen. Please see our website for further details of these artists and the work of ResCen.

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This written paper, I should also add is only a partial representation as the totality of the 'paper' contains contributions by Rosie and Graeme, who will comment, exemplify or realise aspects of the theme.

The words I speak are written by me, Christopher Bannerman, Head of ResCen, the Centre for research into creation in the performing arts. And perhaps what I should say "What is ResCen?" And that will remind all of us to return to the essence, or first principles.

ResCen, is a multi-disciplinary, artist–driven research centre. It is designed to be a bridge between academia and the practices of professional performing artists. Established in 1999, its base is at Middlesex University in North London.



ResCen is centrally concerned with the artist at work, and with the ways in which the working artist, under the usual pressures of the arts marketplace, can: reflect on her/his own creative processes; document these processes; and make these materials, musings and critical reflections available to the wider national and international arts community and the university sector.

Six artists with significant track records are supported by the centre, as Research Associates. They represent a wide variety of artforms and creative practices. ResCen enables them to meet at regular intervals to share the processes in play when their works are being created. At the same time, these ResCen artists continue to develop their individual portfolios of professional creative practice.

The centre facilitates discussion and the exchange of ideas and information between the artists. It is also committed to sharing that understanding as widely as possible. By placing artistic practice in the context of research, ResCen recognises the investigative nature and rigour of the processes which artists employ.



Graeme Miller: [rings bell] There's a connection with some of the ideas on performing when you said 'portfolio', and I just wonder if that is something that I really do: accrue a portfolio. I've got a card here which says 'The Ideas Protection League' and 'Battersea Ideas Home'. And that's really to do with unfulfilled ideas that I have yet to find decent homes for. And rather than it being a sense of portfolio accruing, I think it's more of a set of remembrance of things. And what is in a slightly better condition is that these ideas are still waiting to find nice homes [rings bell].

Chris Bannerman: The work over the past two years has taken place with the support of NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) through a project entitled *Navigating the Unknown in the Creative Process*. This support has been vital to the work of ResCen and I must take this opportunity to thank NESTA for their imagination and courage in supporting such a venture; and their patience, as we do our best to resist any closure which would diminish the richness and complexity of the material. By listening to artists and providing a supportive resource for their work, ResCen aims to extend our understanding of how artists work and our appreciation of their art. In proposing the centre to the University, I remarked that the available literature on creativity was notable for the absence of contributions by artists, a group of individuals whose livelihood arguably depends on their ability to be, and continue to be, creative over a period of years, if not decades.

My role in the work of ResCen has largely been one of observation, both in the sense of witnessing the discussions and in the sense of offering occasional thoughts.

Rosemary Lee: [rings bell] I think being a choreographer is about observing, seeing and watching just as much as it is about making, and in order to be able to see you have to remain non-judgemental and open. In my best moments I can see; there is nothing in the way, but most of the time there's no clear way [rings bell].

Chris Bannerman: In the past two years we have begun to present seminars based on themes which have been drawn from the past four years of discussions, all of which have been recorded and transcribed. The material has not yet been fully evaluated in a formalised manner; that process has begun and we intend to utilise some innovative methods to carry on that process. The themes of our seminars have been identified by me, as observer to those discussions and the theme of this paper was also selected in this manner. Therefore, the material which is presented today has been derived from the self-reporting of artists and selected utilising the experience of observation. Some of the views expressed in this written account may be disputed by the artists, and if so, this will provide a focus for the further evaluation of the material. The main notion proposed today, is that a dynamic exchange between the polar duality represented by intuition and knowledge, this might raise significant difficulties of fixed definition, as is the concept recognises and privileges movement, flux and interdependency as absolutely key to the creative process.

I use the term creative process as 'process' or perhaps more accurately 'processes', acknowledges the durational change, the movement through which art works come into being;

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and 'creative' describes this process recognising the originality and innovation of the material created, or the ways in which it is gathered, combined or presented. The focus on creative process also allows me to avoid the word 'creativity', which is of course, an abstract noun, which could lead each of us, consciously or unconsciously, to interpret this state or quality, or word in a whole variety of ways. I am concerned that the discourse of 'creativity' that has been, and is being developed in a range of contexts, appears at times to offer a seductive vision of magical, spontaneous inspiration, coupled with an appealing absence of prescriptive structure or arduous attention to detail. This does not appear to be the experience of the artists, or at least it is not their exclusive experience of the creative process. This statement is significant not just because it warns against seeing creativity as an idealised, abstract quality, it also reminds us that this paper represents a 'situated understanding' which may, or may not be, applicable in other contexts and to other artists.

Graeme Miller: [rings bell] *Because the Angle is Right* is a story, I think from Iceland, about a man sitting on a fence, and he's got an axe. Another man walks by and he chops his head off, and all the other villagers say "What did you do that for? What were you thinking?" And he said, "I don't know, the angle was just right." And I think one of the concepts when you try to talk about any sustained creativity, is to do with the fact that you're working in time and you're working using the fuel of your own life, unrepeatable passages from your own biological process [rings bell].

Chris Bannerman: What I've heard the artists say, is that their work takes place in relation to a disciplinary framework, even when that work challenges the edges or boundaries or even existence of the frame. And it appears to me that this relationship to a disciplinary framework allows the intuitive, the inspirational insight greater scope, or greater significance as it is enhanced by the field of knowledge and experience that the artist has accumulated. Guy Claxton, in a previous ResCen seminar 'Intuition and the Artist', noted that a world champion racing driver found himself braking for no apparent reason as he rounded a corner, only to find that he had avoided crashing into cars which had piled up on the track in front of him. Months later he awoke to the realisation of a more rational, or self-conscious explanation: that he had seen the faces of the crowd focused away from him as he approached the bend when normally they would have watched his car, the car of the world champion. He braked because of an unconscious, intuitive message which occurred as a result of his accumulated experience and knowledge – an example of this dynamic relationship between these two polar dualities.

Rosemary Lee: [rings bell] Sometimes the word 'knowing' for me can be used too. When you say you know someone, it might be that you know them in a special context and the old version of knowing, and it struck me that maybe knowledge is about knowing in the deepest sense of word, and therefore, having an intimacy with your subject. So for an artist, knowing the stone, the material one is working with, or for me, knowing the dancer, is so intimate that I can sense what she or he might do next. Perhaps that links with the idea about the racing driver … ?

Chris Bannerman: This experience seems to be replicated in the creative process, although not always in relation to impending crashes, often in relation to impending deadlines or blockages. Interestingly…

Graeme Miller: [rings bell] The God of the Last Minute is my personal deity [rings bell].



Chris Bannerman: … the ResCen artists expressed a reluctance to speak of intuitive processes, fearful that they would somehow damage its presence or efficacy in their work. There was no certainty about the ability of intuition to be trained or enhanced but there was almost unanimity on the learned ability to trust the intuitive, both when it occurred and while, perhaps more importantly, waiting for its presence. It was seen as a vitally important aspect – part of the palette of strategies, a key element of the toolbox. And there was evidence that some artists developed techniques for encouraging it. Sometimes displacement activities would become necessary – tasks such as tidying things, sorting a diary or even taking a nap were all allowed in this waiting game, even after time and money had been devoted to hiring a working space and travelling to it. But most often the artists work while waiting for the intuitive insight, even if working in this context might mean 'playing' with materials or ideas. This often involves deep concentration and might take the form of solving a problem of structure or of content that will not 'fit' or take shape. The activities are characterised by the simultaneous engagement of the conscious mind, while holding an awareness of the unconscious, leaving space for the intuitive to arise.

Other artists too, report experiences that chime with those of the ResCen artists. The visual artist Anish Kapoor put it succinctly when he noted that it is important for the artist to have nothing to say, so that they can engage with the materials of the medium in a state of deeply contemplative play. And the writer Philip Pullman noted that beginning to write a story was like fishing at night: "there's a lot you can't predict.....There might be monsters there that could

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swallow hook, and line, and lamp, and boat, and you. These powers are not interested in any rationally worked-out plans concocted far away on shore; the fears and delights of fishing at night have nothing to do with rationality".

Rosemary Lee: [rings bell] I wonder if the fisherman knows the moment before the fish bites the bait? I noticed when I went to see Arsenal play, that the crowd know when there is going to be a goal. Maybe it's because I don't know enough about football, but there is something about the crowd and the speed of the team just before the goal's going to be scored (it is a bit like when Graeme talks about getting into the groove, there's a sort of vortex) and maybe you can tell just before the moment, that they'll catch it.

Chris Bannerman: However, Phillip Pullman…

Graeme Miller: [rings bell] Well let's think about play. There's an ideal of adult play that I find really hard to live up to, in the community. In fact, I find myself mucking around at the back of my own class. That means that there are two roles or different voices: one is a kind of parental teaching person; and there is someone else who's playing against that. I can shift between those roles or voices quite rapidly, but they can't seem to exist at exactly the same time [rings bell].

Chris Bannerman: Phillip Pullman only intimated that there are other, perhaps more consciously engaged parts of the creative process, involving the careful crafting of that which has been caught while fishing at night. Of course the article in The Guardian was addressed to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education and Skills and his message appears to have been carefully tailored to present those aspects of the creative endeavour that he felt were missing from schools today, in order to redress the perceived balance. This has two aspects which might also be relevant in the context of this seminar.

One is that the educational benefits of the performing arts are often presented as being principally concerned with the development of interpersonal and presentational skills and confidence. These are undeniably intrinsic to performing, but as Pullman notes this is the domain of the interpretative artist and creation in the performing arts, even though often a social activity has much in common with the unpredictable darkness and loneliness of a night-time fishing expedition.

The second point arises from his feeling that many so-called creative tasks offered in schools are reductionist and stifling and do not represent a serious engagement with a child's creativity. This leads him to say that "everything we ask a child to do in school should be something that's intrinsically worth doing, something we ourselves would be proud to do".

I am sure that the ResCen artists would agree with this sentiment, as would most people – in fact it is difficult to disagree when couched in these terms. However, once again I am concerned that he is projecting a romanticised view of art making, which focuses only on a particular phase of the creative process. It is a critically important phase, and it may be that it represents values absent, or under threat, in schools today; but my work with artists suggests that without knowledge and craft, such intuitive inspirations cannot be channelled into meaningful form. Furthermore it is the crafting and working of the material which relies on the combined application of both ends of the duality as both intuitive insights and skills of crafting are necessary. At times new skills are acquired through the making of the work, as Rosemary Lee has demonstrated by engaging with digital technology in recent work and this brings up another aspect of educational discourse today, the issue of the separation of skills and knowledge.

This cannot be addressed in depth in this paper, but what I have gleaned over the years indicates that once again, the two areas are not easily disentangled. A guest at a ResCen seminar, anthropologist Tim Ingold, has proposed an holistic view that sees knowledge and skills as absolutely interdependent. He is involved in a project linking anthropologists with students in the visual arts which should add to our thinking about these matters. This work is at an early stage but the ResCen experience indicates that while some skills have been transferred across media or contexts, they have been acquired in relation to a domain of knowledge, usually from contemporary arts practice and the artist themselves which we recognise and see as a domain of knowledge.

So this view of the artist as a skilled and knowledgeable practitioner does not sit easily with the stereotype of the inspired, intuitive, shaman-like individual, but these two personas represent just another way of expressing the dynamic relationship between intuition and craft. It is easy to understand why all sorts of skills are necessary to the artist.

Rosemary Lee: [rings bell] It suddenly struck me that when I'm teaching in schools I don't see many lost children. In order to know, you also have to know the unknown in order to define things or, you have to be lost. So it strikes me that maybe the purposeless as well as the purposeful needs to be incorporated into the curriculum [rings bell].

Chris Bannerman: While it might be assumed that artists are free to choose every aspect of the content, as well as the context of their work, a moment's thought will reveal that this is not so. Difficult working situations often arise, as much of the artists' work arises from commissions which are unpredictable in a number of ways. Creative artists in the performing arts must have, or must develop, skills of negotiation as the realisation of their work most often lies in the hands of performers as well as funders, producers and

technicians amongst others. These skills are part of their toolbox, as is intuition and a key part of the artist's work is to be ready, almost at any time in the process, to utilise these tools. While there may be specific times in the creative process when one end of the spectrum is more fully engaged, as in the 'beginning to write' phase which Philip Pullman described; the ability to call on intuitive abilities seems to remain significant, even when more overt crafting and structuring is taking place, which is often later in the process. At this later phase intuition is often used to solve problems which seem intractable and which inhibit the completion of a work to the artist's satisfaction as Rosemary Lee once described this situation in relation to the Dance on Camera work *Infanta*.

In that case, the work was literally finished and everyone preparing to leave the editing studio when Rosemary retreated into a solitary intensity in order to capture the final image, which she felt, was missing. In this case it was an intuitive leap which resolved the situation, but a leap which took place within a deeply developed field of knowledge.

Rosemary Lee: [rings bell] In a toilet.

Chris Bannerman: This brings up the 'negative capability' referred to by the poet John Keats, which has been cited by Charles Handy and others in business as a key attribute of those who work in the arts, which they advocate as being of benefit to business. Keats' definition of 'negative capability' was a state in which the artist "is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason". Of course it is not 'fact and reason' that the artist requires, but often it is a solution and the ability to sustain the process through the mysteries and doubts stems from the consciousness of knowledge and experience, even if the solution ultimately arises from the unconscious and intuitive realm. In fact at a recent ResCen seminar the artists were asked how they dealt with feeling thwarted and perhaps surprisingly there was, for once, virtual unanimity; being thwarted is a great stimulus which enables the searching out of the creative solution. Ghislaine Boddington, another ResCen artist has spoken of keeping an openness right to the very end of the process, and, indeed, a sense of danger. While Richard Layzell and Tania (those of you who saw the presentation by Richard today, and others can see the information on the website) represent a dance of conscious and unconscious processes which inform their work/Richard's work.

It is tempting to speculate how this dynamic relationship is acquired and developed and a growing interest in neuroscience might offer some insights, although I believe, not yet a complete picture by any means. A recent seminar at the South Bank Centre presented by LIFT, the London International Festival of Theatre, featured the work of neurophsyiologist Dr. Mark Lythgoe and he noted that there are two neural strategies for processing sensory data. One he called 'top down' and it involved seeing and forming patterns, structures and meanings from the information received; while the other, 'bottom-up' processing involved allowing the data to remain unnamed, unsorted so that patterns, structures and meanings could be negotiated.

The second sounds very much like Kapoor's 'contemplative state of play' and there are numerous references to this kind of experience by the ResCen artists. But equally there is mention of the rigour of the artistic process, Graeme Miller refers to 'time's arrow' and notes that "you can't un-fry an egg". This might seem self-evident, but for those engaged in time-based performance it seems to imply that the playful state of 'negative capability' and 'bottom-up processing' is balanced by the inevitability of each moment, dependent on the last moment and shaping the next moment; until the moment of performance.

Graeme Miller: [rings bell] Commenting on that, the first time I did a piece of work, I suppose, absolutely from the top down, was a piece I did in Vienna. In this piece, I conceived every bit of the process in one go. I stuck absolutely to that to my surprise. So it didn't require any sustained openness on my part at all, just dogged tenacity to make it actually happen. But, I was absolutely amazed at how alive the final thing was as an installation, so it did have a different kind of life. It began absolutely from a formal notion, and my further engagement with it was a question of hanging on like a pitbull terrier. It required a sense of measurement of pain also. So even though I still agree with Chris' point, it's more complex [rings bell].

Chris Bannerman: Errollyn Wallen has said: "Emblazoned on my mind in gigantic theatre lights is the word FINISH. I must. There's a palpable fear in my belly, and I wake up in the middle of the night sweating music."

This might be called 'time management' of a very high order, and not only in the working process but in the art work itself as the manipulation of the perception of time seems to be an important skill employed by each of the artists. And there is another sense in which time is relevant for the ResCen artists. Each of the six artists has decades of experience in their field. While the saying goes that "each person could write one novel" the ability to sustain creative growth over decades is clearly exceptional. One factor that seems to have emerged is the artists' curiosity and deep engagement with their work. It is not just that they develop problem-solving skills, they appear to have fine-tuned the ability to look for interesting problems. Problems which spur them on to new and innovative solutions and problems which appear to resonate with others who are drawn to the work as performers and spectators.

Rosemary Lee: [rings bell] If I retrained and got a grant to give up dancing because I got too old, I would like to be a detective.

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Chris Bannerman: Once again, conscious calculation and intuitive recognition or re-cognition appear to both have a hand in this – a partnership of the conscious body of knowledge and the intuitive insight which is so vital to their professional practice.

This partnership of what can be seen as diametrically opposed qualities and processes, has lead to the proposal of the dynamic relationship between what is seen in polar opposites. In the context of the arts in education, my experience of the ResCen artists might make a more appealing message to those concerned with skill and knowledge and might dismay those for whom 'creativity' should have no bounds. But to date, this observer has noted that the unconscious, intuitive flash, the inspired moment when the pieces fall into place – all are part of the creative process and no doubt are important for our education – but equally for artists, this is matched by the craft, skill and knowledge which give meaning and significance to the outcomes of creative process. This relationship resists a simplistic explanation and challenges us to identify appropriate ways of developing more widely the abilities that artists appear to demonstrate, but if we wish creative processes to drive what is called the knowledge economy and appears to be central to the future of the United Kingdom, then we could do worse than listen to the voice of artists.

That concludes the formal part of the evening. We'd like you now to make a circle.

There has been a series of seminars that have preceded this evening. And so we want comment from you on any of the sessions that have taken place today, the presentation that has just happened, or, indeed, on any of the ResCen seminars that have taken place previously. What is happening now, is that our focus is shifting more along the line of the written word, or visual image into a book form than on future seminars.

This process of seminars began in May 2003 with a seminar called 'Intuition and the Artist' with guest Professor Guy Claxton. We moved on in November to 'Transformation and the Artist' with Adrian Rifkin as our special guest. In February 2004, the seminar focused on 'The Artist as Catalyst' with Professor Tim Ingold. In April 2004 there was 'The Artist Working/Playing' was an internal discussion with external participation with no special guest. In May 2004, 'Motivation of the Artist', again, an internal discussion. In September 2004, 'Motivation of the Artist and the Psychoanalyst' was with Dr. Hanna Segal. In November 2004 we did a presentation seminar 'Mis-seeing: vision, experience and prejudice in the creative process' with our special guest Daniel Glaser, the neuroscientist. In January 2005 the seminar on 'Making Space' with the geographer Professor Doreen Massey.

So that series culminated in today's event which we designed in order to have a sense of returning to practice as part of our format for presenting. We've enjoyed this interaction with people and hope that we can keep it up in less structured formats. But now for the rest of the evening, we welcome comments and questions from you. I think each of the Research Associate Artists have prepared a question about their presentation which they may put to you at any point. But really we welcome thoughts and comments from you. So we now turn it over to you.

Audience Member: In the grand mix, I wonder if you had discussion about the involvement of audience or the incorporation of them into the idea, or a magical relationship between 'out there' and people coming to the work?

Chris Bannerman: I think it has come up from my observing, and other participants may have comments too. I suppose our focus on creative process does away with that, but we were always clear that we were all to feel that the process culminated in the interaction with the audience.

Audience Member: I know that the performance for audiences may be different from the fine art trajectory. I just wondered if that could be discussed…?

Chris Bannerman: That reminds me of Graeme Miller saying that he makes his work for an audience of Graeme Millers.

Graeme Miller: Yes, but they're in disguise. Some of them have wigs. Do you mean in terms of these events?

Audience Member: Well I just wondered whether 'audience' figures in the discussion at all. You know, in theatre, you put something on for an audience.



Graeme Miller: Yes, I see what you mean. It does. We're all involved in that, and its part of the remit of this relationship. I think Errollyn is someone who has articulated it quite well. It is a connection early on with this moment that's going to happen somewhere down the line, where something is actually performed. There's a very strong connection with the performer at that point, which, in the case of, say a composer, will be someone else. Then projecting out to an audience is something that I'm very aware of. That's exactly what it's about. But I find it's like firing bullets and then trying to run around and be the target at the other end. This perspective, the future imaginary audience perspective, I always find is me. It's a version of me, it's an audience filled

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with Graeme Millers – one who has glasses, one with a moustache…

Ghislaine Boddington: In my work, with the groups I work with, there's a lot of emphasis on the audience as a creative user, as a creative participant. I did talk about this quite a lot in the seminar, and I can see some faces around here that were in that session. In about fifty percent of my session we were talking around that whole area, particularly where there are interactive technologies, of course. I'm also a curator and a lot of what I do is putting together series for audiences – it's part of what we're thinking about all the time in our groups. In shinkansen, we've had an equal balance of artist/audience in every project. It's really important and never out of my head at any point in the process.

Chris Bannerman: It wasn't one of our research questions at the outset, so from my point of view I didn't push it, but if it came up, then we'd let it flow.

Richard Layzell: I think for me it's been good not to think about audience for a bit, and ResCen's given me that opportunity. It's not part of what we do. I can get a bit obsessed with it – you know, communication and all of that – and not take enough time to step back and be more introspective. We're being asked to research that. God, what a treat. It's fantastic. It's been that way for me.

Audience Member: I can't help but be provocative here and say that the audience in my context, dance, seems to be of consequence, or significance, other than when one's preparing your funding proposal. The notion of the audience is one that is as an outcome basis, it is good communication. But how about the audience in terms of sharing the outcome of the creative process? I think that directly correlates to the other audience member's question. It's nice to create something for an audience of oneself. However, I think what dance tends to do, or what dance research tends to do, is to be very insular with its baby, and involve the audience less by thinking "I'm not going to share that with them because that's a communication process", rather than thinking about sharing the outcome of the creative process.

Chris Bannerman: These are all very good questions, but they weren't what we were particularly looking at in our research. Although I think perhaps by selecting the Research Associate Artists who have decades of experience, we assumed that somebody must have found the work interesting.

Graeme Miller: Yes.

Chris Bannerman: And it was very important that the artists all continued to produce the work in the professional arena.

Graeme Miller: To answer that. So what's the difference between making work to be seen and making research work? Maybe they are different kind of things. One of my thoughts is that there are a lot of things that happen in rehearsal that an audience is normally excluded from. I've been trying, in my work, to start to try and re-frame a few of those things, with an audience in mind. And that does involve altering the work, particularly the use of time. There's a lot of boredom that goes on, but then there's a lot more exciting moments that seem to occur in those sorts of moments that are normally happening behind closed doors. So one of my areas of pursuit is how to make those moments happen in a kind of predictable way, so some of that's to do with unplanned events. It's actually more 'researchy-type' material, but research-type material can be occasionally absolutely thrilling, and an absolute privilege to be there. So I think maybe that's the other side of it, which is the positive side.

Audience Member: I've been to a couple of ResCen's seminars, and generally it seems to have been a very positive experience in terms of the understanding of different practices in terms of creative processes. I just wondered whether any of the artists, at any point, felt that they where shattering the magic; they didn't really know what it was…

Graeme Miller: Yes!



Rosemary Lee: Yes. I still ask that question. I sometimes wonder what is the change that has happened. One of the changes is that I started documenting. But I think that is also how life is at the moment. You sit here and all that is happening is being photographed. It's like when I get my notebook and write "I've sat down…" And then I think "Hang on a minute, just put the notebook away". That's not to dismiss it, I think that's always what you're asked to do – even the funding bodies want you to do research. It's a funny balance and sometimes I just leave it at the door. But I also consciously forget that I'm noticing things. At the same time, it may not be ResCen, it may just be with getting older, I am more aware of what I'm doing. I've always been self-critical, but maybe you get more self-critical, you judge yourself through your past work. So all of that may happen anyway. But not knowing is sometimes quite a good state to be in and it is definitely a concerns for me.

Chris Bannerman: We tried to maintain the notion that not everything can be said. We can talk about what can't be said if we choose to, but also we acknowledge that there are things that can't be said. Maybe that's partly why the performing arts exist and have a certain power.

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Ghislaine Boddington: The other thing is that we have these public seminar situations and we've also got our internal seminars and everything is documented. There's a lot of material from our days and our one-to-one interviews in which we can say that the following is confidential – it is our choice what we put into the public realm. I agree with what Rosemary said about being at an evaluation point when you are re-looking at things. That is a more protected and easier process to do in a group than to do on your own at home, muddling through it and maybe taking a lot longer, and not talking about it. I've valued greatly, in the one-to-ones and, in the group, the confidential material, because there's lots of material that doesn't come right out here, which is thought through and then comes out in the public environment later on, like now.

Richard Layzell: I still feel exposed when I talk about Tania. But the irony is that this creation of another person would not have happened but for ResCen. So for me it's created more magic, not taken any away. I feel exposed when I talk about her because then people say "How's Tania?" I just say "No… please…" But it's OK as well. I can't really talk about it, I'll try.

Audience Member: I just wanted to make a comment. I know this is a research programme about performing arts. You make the comment that there wasn't a lot written about creativity by artists. I suppose there are masses of things on creativity by poets. A lot of things we were discussing were to do with writing and how you document something. You were talking about going to write a book, you're going to have an outcome. Writers have always done that because they are using language obviously. You don't have a poet, or a writer on your panel because it's performing arts, but because they have always used language, there is a lot of material. There's a little piece of Osip Mandelstam from one of his poems outside in the hall. I've read his work, and it's incredibly interesting about all the art forms.

Audience Member: Hi, I wanted to mention about bringing poetry into the arts as well. Because nowadays there is MC-ing and it's in various areas of performance art as well.

Chris Bannerman: Yes, a very good point. There is a kind of dilemma about words, I'm not quite sure of the nature of how that is, but maybe that is a solution to the dilemma.

Rosemary Lee: We had the poet Michael Donaghy for an internal seminar. Sadly he died last year. He came and spent a whole day with us. We did some early discussions with poets. I read poetry and personally it affects me a lot.

Audience Member: I think the point I was making is that it is quite self-conscious. It's talking about unconsciousness and language sometimes, but it's very self-conscious. It's got a methodology that's very apparent. It often has a philosophy behind it, even if you don't agree with it, it's quite strong and structured.

Audience Member: This project has been running for about five years now and although it's not the only one which is working in this area, it's relatively new. I'm just wondering how did you see it working from the start? How does it inform the way, or the approach, that ResCen will work in the future? What were you expecting? How will it change your approach in the future?

Chris Bannerman: Good questions, yes very good questions. I suppose one answer is slightly anecdotal. Everybody at Middlesex University was invited to submit ideas for long-term research initiatives. This was out of a special fund that the Higher Education Funding Council of England made available to universities, but there had to be bids for them. So I did conceive of the idea in response to that opportunity, but it stemmed from a ongoing concern that we, in the university sector, were not fully understanding, or even engaging with, the practice of the performing arts world.

The process that followed the submission of an application was lengthy and included a series of interviews internally in the university. And finally, I was there before the university research committee and they asked me what the methodology would be. As many of you know, methodology is absolutely intrinsic to a research programme. So when I said to them "Methodology, I don't know". That's when I got their attention. Up to that point, they were making notes and pondering the merits or otherwise of the paperwork. I went on to explain that this had to be a negotiated process and that an established methodology risked portraying a guinea pig environment which would endanger the whole research endeavour. So the beginning was open, and we negotiated our methodologies through our exchanges. Now I also knew that it would be the first person reporting from the artist that would be significant. The artist's voice would be privileged so to speak and this might replicate some of the processes of making art work. There are certain known strategies that are put in place when you bring people together, even if you don't know what the outcome is going to be. Then you follow what appears to unfold in front of you. This represents what some people call the 'emerging' premise and the response to that is determined by the craft and skills gathered through of experience, as well as the intuition is a feature of arts practice.

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But how we take our work forward is a very good question and we have been discussing this point recently. And one of the notions is that we wind down these public seminars for a time, celebrating them through this summative event, before coming together to write our book and produce other outcomes such as DVDs focused on particular issues and aspects of the creative process. I hope from that, there will emerge the notion of where ResCen will be in five years time.

Of course funding is a factor in this calculation and, like so many areas of public life today, the syndrome of on-off, stop-go funding is a reality. One of the reasons we're so grateful to our funders NESTA, is that NESTA gave us a period of time, in which to grow and develop and so we are able to be here today considering the future. We plan to finish our NESTA funding with a book, other forms of publication and some more formal reports in order to make interventions in certain kinds of debates in areas beyond the performing arts. What will come out the other end, I don't know. That is the question of the moment for us. I hope what we stand in any case, is that performing arts practice is a domain of knowledge. I hope that people will learn to trust artists and that universities in particular, will learn to trust artists; to see that there can be a system which involves people working together without a rigid, predetermined plan – that they can formulate the plan together, as a self-organising microcosm. I hope this way of working will be recognised as vital and dynamic, replicating some forms of artistic practice. I hope that answers your question.

Audience Member: Yes.

Audience Member: Can I ask about the title, ResCen? I wondered – in relation to what you were saying about making the application and doing it the night before – whether ResCen is a title you remain happy with? Or has it raised questions, in terms of research and how you develop the methodology and where you're going? Do you sometimes think "I wished we hadn't used that word", or "I wish we'd used this word, or a collection of words"? Or have you argued or talked about that? Also, in relation to the word 'centre', you're connected because you've all gone through a series of processes, but is 'centre' a word that if you revised the name half way through your programme, would you come up with a different language, or name?

Chris Bannerman: These are excellent questions too. I hope and think that the debate has moved on, so many other words could be appropriate. As you have probably guessed, ResCen is a bit like the name of the computer file – Res from 'research' and Cen from 'centre'. I couldn't think of a name so I called it ResCen. I think it's a virtue having a name that doesn't necessarily mean something specific. But the questions about language and how the centre represents itself and the ways in which it constituted is definitely open to reconsideration.

Richard Layzell: It's got quite a good Google presence now. I think we'd be foolish to let it go, it's not perfect, I'd say, but it works.

Ghislaine Boddington: We do have a room at Middlesex University which is the ResCen room, and it's not just for us, it's for MA and PhD students etc. So we do have a sense of centre. But the question about the centre, we do meet in lots of different places but that is the centre.

Graeme Miller: When I imagine ResCen I often think of a doughnut shape, and that's largely to do with the peculiar role. On the one hand, it is quite complimentary and very nice to be brought out of the cold as an artist into an group that says that there's something about what you do that's intrinsically valuable, that is research, that is taken seriously. But I'm also aware that it's a particular group of six people, a sort of boy band or something. I know we are, in some sense, an arbitrary group. There has been a model in which we bring in guests and bring in partners. This expresses the idea that the group could just as easily be made up of them. We're not unique in our creative processes, not just in performing. So that's why we have brought in scientists. We refer to people who are cooks and people who are involved in creative processes in really quite different methods, and obviously we find a lot of commonalities with them. So there is an idea of being slightly porous, and there being space for other people to come in. In a sense, this session now is to include other people's expertise. So it's not a compressed centre of expertise, rather a kind of porous ring, hopefully with space to create a knock-on effect.

Chris Bannerman: But the other side of it is there's a way in which we've chosen to position ourselves in the academic world in order to achieve certain ends.

Audience Member: Yes that makes sense.

Chris Bannerman: Essentially, we operate in an institution and therefore respond to that context, as well as facing the external world of the professional performing arts.

Audience Member: Actually I have two questions, one is to the Research Associates themselves about what this means to them and is there a difference between research as practice, or practice as research, and practice as practice? Are the domains very different? That is my first question. The second is that I am really glad that you did this focus on the process, and that this website is available. I was telling Shobana that at Roehampton University we have students who study her work, but they study the work from the finished product, and the way they understand the work is in reference to what Shobana herself has said about the work, or in reference to what they've seen as video clips. Therefore, they don't have any understanding of the complexity of the process. So the artist is in a sense really right, and the work is referred back to the artist. And by

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focusing in this way on the process I think you have opened up a possibility for students now to access work of artists in a different way. So I commend you for that. But then my first question still is, is practice as research different from practice as practice?

Chris Bannerman: There might be two aspects of that. You also said "Is there an overlap?" Or you might be asking are the two things just one thing? It's not for me to say. I have been listening, but I'll let the artists answer.

Richard Layzell: Well I may be different from some of the other artists. But this process changed my practice, my practice has significantly changed. I don't know whether it was research or not, but through exploring process – exactly as you've described – subconsciously, more fully, more openly, more referentially to other fields, and other people. It's had a big impact on my work. And so that's just what I would say. So for me, they are different. There is still my work, but without this kind of shift of focus this change would not have happened.

Audience Member: So can you go back to your practice as practice after this?



Richard Layzell: No.

Audience Member: No?

Richard Layzell:
No, I'm fucked. [laughter]

No, my practice has changed. And I don't want to go back to it, it's incorporated it, but it's changed.

Chris Bannerman: But that might imply that research is practice and practice is research.

Rosemary Lee: Just in case there's any misunderstanding, remember that what we were encouraged, our job description was, to carry on being artists and to carry on making our work. We carried on with our work, but tried to reveal the process. Richard has said how he worked, but we didn't make new projects that were purely about researching ourselves. It has happened. It has infiltrated our practice. We haven't done separate projects that are only ResCen projects. Like what we're doing now or the workshops that Shobana and I did today, and Graeme and I have done where I've performed for him and I've tried to reveal the process in a quite performative way. I love those. So that's almost changed how I perform. But it's more like we're encouraged to reveal and look at ourselves and work out what we're doing, and be more articulate. What are you doing? What's recognition? When is that skill? And things like that. So it just informs how you make work, but we're not doing two separate things. Do you see what I mean?

Chris Bannerman: Errollyn do you want to say something?



Errollyn Wallen: I was speaking to Shobana about this. In the beginning, I resisted the idea of reflecting on my work, I was too busy trying to get it out, so that was very difficult for me for the first year in ResCen. But one of the things I've always been interested in is communicating and I have a passion for what it is to be a creator, and the idea that anybody can take part in that. So it's important that I understand what I'm doing so I can share it. I'd say that the work at ResCen has enabled me to follow that. And I'm doing it in a much more systematic way, and that has given rise to me asking all sorts of different questions. So I would say my work probably would have developed anyway, but now I ask different sorts of questions, informed by my work at ResCen.



Shobana Jeyasingh: In dance-making there's always an audience. It's usually dancers as it's not a solitary activity, it's something you do in a studio with other people. But of course traditionally there's been a cut-off point because you have an audience for whom you would traditionally prepare a dance. And in this kind of situation, I think what happens is that the audience then encroaches past that line and so you have an audience not only in the theatre or where ever you are showing the so-called finished product, but you also have an audience deeper into the process of writing in the studio. Of course it's not the same. An audience can never get into the studio because a lot of people would find that very boring. Usually what you present in this kind of forum is a concentrated, edited and 'made for the audience' slice of your process. So I think in some ways, it's probably quite impossible to share the process as it is in real time, because I think it would be a very unusual person who was willing to engage with it over such a long time. Inevitably I think even the process becomes, in some way, a product, which is interesting in itself.

Chris Bannerman: I'll give just a slightly different answer. I think that part of the interest in process was predated by certain shifts in scientific understanding in which we stopped pinning butterflies on boards to understand the

butterfly, because we realised that the butterfly was dead. We weren't understanding the butterfly, we were understanding a reified, dead object, the corpse of a butterfly. So eventually, we moved on to more dynamic, fluid understandings. I think the development of chaos theory and complexity theory, marked this kind of shift in our understanding, and we began to appreciate the power of fluidity and flux. So you've asked a question which is key to the debate about practice as research. Is there something called professional practice as distinct from practice as research? I think we might make a mistake if we re-define those things as separate, when actually there's a kind of dynamic at work. We are currently on a journey of unfolding understanding; therefore, that is the right question, but I think it would be a mistake to try to answer it definitively at this time.

Audience Member: I think there is also another way of looking at it. What one is beginning to think about when one describes the notion of "Can we define research?" is actually quite an old one. This struggle in visual arts really goes back some time. The visual arts still can't speak, as a form of research it is visual. In the 1950s and 60s there was a whole group of artists who worked with flux who called themselves 'plasticiens' and not artists, because they were there to be give rise to knowledge and the realm of the plastic. So you wouldn't be a sculptor or a painter or whatever, you would be a plasticien, that was a new concept. So the whole idea is not new, but the expectations about what it should be or could be if you like are obviously partly institution-driven, which is why you're working with NESTA and why you're writing a book which is a classic response to this thing called RAE. So it's a kind of subterfuge, in the sense that it's a presentation of work which will carry on being done. It may change in the process in some ways the artists here have said. And here, I think, the audience comes in, the audience can constitute as if their relationship with it is one of research, that they will recognise in it a 'figure' for something which would then be a satisfactory representation for what they themselves want to recognise as research. Now I don't think that's too complicated, but I think that there is something there which is terribly important about the relationship with the public which is transformed in the institutional and educational structure in less than twenty years so that this work can now be, if you like, projected onto, or recognised by an audience, and that which constitutes research. In that sense that's where the audience satisfaction comes in, it's not from doing something for, or to, the audience, it is doing something else with an audience other than that which you do. I want to put that in as something which may be useful to the debate.

Ghislaine Boddington: I was just going to follow on from that. I come from a dance background. I really agree with you, but I think there's been a lot of research, not so much in performing arts, and to me, that is the joy of ResCen. In shinkansen, we've always been doing research and working with process, but it wasn't recognised as a performing arts mode at all. So, in 1989 when shinkansen said we were doing research, it was not really understood at all in the dance and music world. And I think you need to have a chance for that to be acknowledged in a performing arts context, whereas there has been more acknowledgement of it in other art forms, like fine art, or the visual arts and literature. The other thing, I think, is that it's been really good to distribute the research out into a wider context. You can do research on your own, or in small groups etc., but there isn't always a distribution mode to provide wider access. So these discussions have allowed that to happen. And that's partly been important for me because I've got a big hang-up about re-inventing the wheel. If you haven't got work out there and people aren't talking about it… And I think that the audience in the research is also really important, and I think the more we work with a participatory audience to interact with work, and I can see that happening in my own work a lot…

Audience Member: But I'm also saying that the research isn't the same as the work of art. The research is a mis-recognition of the work art, which is a mode of educational practice. That's what I'd say, that that mis-recognition is a contemporary mode of educational institutional practice, but it is a mis-recognition which constitutes a whole new body of knowledge. John Thompson, who was a Research Professor of Fine Art at Middlesex finished off his career at a conference by saying "Despite all that, what an artist does is makes works". And yet, no one could be more responsible, in the visual arts, for making that mis-recognition available for a certain public…

Chris Bannerman: Hence our focus on process. Any other questions/comments please?

Audience Member: I have one question. When you started to research your own practice, was there any call for any training in the composition of your practice? If you would go back, for example to teach composition, would your research into practice inform any future teaching?

Chris Bannerman: Errollyn looks like she wants to say something.

Errollyn Wallen: Coming from music as I do, there's a centuries old way of analysing works of music. I found that when I was analysing my own music I was analysing it in the way of a musicologist. I feel much more confident and freer to talk about things with a slightly fresher approach.

Audience Member: So what would the difference be now in the way that you go about analysing your practice which is different from a musicology aspect? Would it also be a process thing?

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Errollyn Wallen: There's been a fundamental change in attitude. A lot of the musicology is based on many assumptions, so the word 'music' in musicology means mainly Western, classical music. Do you see what I mean? So I find I shrink from making those assumptions. Also, in questioning terminology and when you're talking about your own work, it's all right to talk about your own perspective, because there's a true authority there.

Chris Bannerman: I probably shouldn't say this, but as we begin to work on the book there's a notion that people might set tasks. I had a discussion with Errollyn about that and she said the task would be "you should go outside, listen to the movement of air, or wind and leaves in the trees, notate it". So that's a little preview, not to be in the public domain until it's published. But somehow, that represented a shift in the way in which Errollyn described music making and how she approached it.

Audience Member: That links into what I'm thinking about – I don't know if I've got as far as thinking but sensing – which is the word that you just used a moment ago which was 'process', as though this is somehow the key word with ResCen. How can we unpack process as being one of the central questions? I wonder what happens if you translate that into another language? For example, I'm thinking about the notion of Aboriginal journey of dream time. It's a very ancient, forever thing. It's not like suddenly we discovered process. Other cultures have been working with it on a very deep level, forever.

Chris Bannerman: And probably deep in our own past we have as well.

Audience Member: Yes.

Chris Bannerman: The notion of chaos theory is interesting because it seems to be developed out of a series of things that we saw every day and that were ordinary, that scientists had never looked at – such as the was in which clouds move. So there are some ancient things that are being used, or that we are returning to.

Audience Member: Absolutely.

Audience Member: 'Audience' has been mentioned several times today, and the focus on process as well. I think one of the things that ResCen has been doing as well is to, perhaps, extend the concept of audience. It's not only the audience that you see at a performance in the theatre, but also who reaches your website, or who comes to these seminars are somehow, a different kind of audience. I noticed on these activities that they have broken the barrier between the performer and the audience as separate entities. I think that has to be taken further and then we can probably change the definition of the audience, maybe working in different ways and environments. I'm thinking of ritual which leads on to what you were saying. Ritual is obviously going to be a process. You're not really trying to show the scheme, you're trying to reach a different level of thinking or understanding. What I'm trying to say is that the concept of there being an audience is already here in this context, but I'm interested if it can be taken further, and probably the artists that you're working with will have to create new environments and new places for audiences and for performers to meet and different situations and contexts.

Chris Bannerman: Well I just listen to what the artists tell me, but actually I think people have been telling me that sort of thing and that does seem to be a trend…

Ghislaine Boddington: It's more than a trend. I think that artists aren't thinking about that at all. I'm really glad that you've brought up the audience question because it's imperative. This is very personal, but I feel quite urgent on it too. I think quite a lot of people are feeling slightly desperate that all of us get our heads into a place where there is a more conducive two-way, and involved, situation happening between artists and non-artists as we see them – actually they're just as creative and often more so.

Audience Member: That's where the journey of ritual includes the audience in a much more active way.

Chris Bannerman: My first observation would stem from a recent conversation with representatives from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the people who fund much of the arts activity in this country. The word 'personalisation' came up, and a question about current arts practice was posited: are artists today engaging fully with the audience of individuals which is emerging? The notion is that we live in a society in which products, services, and perhaps even the arts are increasingly focused at individual needs and choices. From shoppers' loyalty cards which present customers with individualised special offers, to planned digital television advertisements which will apparently soon be individualised, the forces of personalisation are sweeping though our culture. The belief is that the arts and artists will have to respond. I can see the wave of individual choice clearly in our society, and I recognise that it's a very strong force. However, in my view, there is an equally strong aspect of the engagement with the arts – the sense of collective sharing and the fact that we are here today demonstrates its continuing power. So I see two opposing trends happening simultaneously and like other, I wonder what the outcome will be.

Audience Member: As a last word on community theatre art, I'm very aware that to create a work with all sorts of people – for example I'm working with Asian elders – that people have actually been forced into that kind of individuality, and taking them through processes to restore people to the group and a group of people is a really

healing thing to do. And I suppose one of things that really alarms me – and I support the work of ResCen – is that too much gets revealed, not to artists themselves, about what they know. My experience is that if you fear to know the thing that you know, when you suddenly realise you do know it there's always something else you don't know, and this goes on and on. But to reveal too much to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and to any corporate institution is really, really dangerous, because it's going to be modified and destroyed. And it fills me with alarm.

Chris Bannerman: Yes I recognise that position, and I feel that myself at times, of course. Is there a notion of knowledge, and a contribution to that knowledge? I suppose sometimes those things are progressive. I would like to see ResCen as progressive. But, equally, that knowledge is available and may be used in other ways that one wouldn't be very happy about.

Ghislaine Boddington: I think there's a very big difference between personalisation and individualisation. I know you didn't mean it like that. Personalisation within collective practice is absolutely what's happening. It's the slight change, the slight mutation, the unique thing that you make but which still means you are part of a group, and within a community which is why different networks are crossing over. It's quite a big debate, and too much to talk about now, but I just wanted to say that there is a really big difference there.

Audience Member: I think that is a totally different point. Ritual is the commodification…

Audience Member: It depends what kind of ritual…

Audience Member: …. or a shamanistic ritual is the exclusion of particularity…

Audience Member: It's a bit of a buzz word isn't it?

Audience Member: …If we're talking about something that goes beyond the individual… and something that is about singularity, it necessarily destroys ritual, as an ongoing aspect of the research business. So until we get to the stage of ritual, even against the idea that what ResCen is producing these ritualistic procedures, what I'm talking about in art is about non-ritualism procedures that are constantly resolved. Maybe that's a ritual – but I don't think so.

Audience Member: Yes I agree with that. A lot of the work I'm doing deals with the fact that people are trapped in mindless, oppressive rituals all over the place, and that often the techniques I use tend to explode this, and change them. And it's absolutely deadly and a form of social oppression, most of ritual that we find going on in society.

Audience Member: It's an unfortunate word because it's been monopolised by different semantic interpretations. Of course there are the deadening habitual rituals that are commodifying, and then there are the healing, community-building, sharing rituals, which give room for individual expression, and give space for the 'one within the many', and that is the kind of ritual that I would be mentioning.

Audience Member: Maybe that's right, maybe we should use a different word for it.

Audience Member: Well it's an unfortunate word because it's got such a lot of buzz around it. I think it's a word that's worth reclaiming and re-positioning.

Audience Member: What seems to me, as an outsider, is that the artist has been privileged in the last five years in the ResCen project: the artistic imagination, the creative process, the artist, the making. So the individual, that is where all these words come from, personalisation, imagination and so on. The individual has been prioritised. So, would ResCen consider more abstract notions of process: historical processes, the artist imagining history. Of course, you know I am coming at it from my own projects. Maybe that's one way to enlarge the whole focus on the process, and not be sort of centred on the individual, but on the collective, and the community.

Chris Bannerman: Yes, that may well be right. You may find at least an element of that in the publication. Any last questions on this. I believe there are some refreshments for us. We're able to have a glass of wine and carry on this discussion.

Audience Member: I think I put the cat among the pigeons there.

Audience Member: I'm interested in what you meant about revealing too much to corporate organisations, or to government, and presumably non-arts people. You said how they might distort, or destroy it and I'm interested to know more about that, how it might happen, and how that might be considered to be a bad thing?

Richard Layzell: I've worked a lot with industry, as an artist, and I think I would never have thought of doing that. I had these kind of fears. I'm not working in it at the moment, but see it as an opportunity, as long as one has one's own boundaries. I think one needs those boundaries, and then it's an extraordinary research opportunity. It's about a relationship I suppose. I'm losing the word 'audience' gradually and introducing 'relationship' because I find it more meaningful. So things only get lost if you let them get lost. Corporate people are people, industry is industry. I don't want to get into politics, but we would not be sitting in this room as we are. You have to get your money from somewhere.

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Audience Member: I feel that the knowledge that is being disseminated could be quite a powerful agent for change, in schools, or in government.

Richard Layzell: Yes. To be honest, I feel that the work I did in industries was really meaningful, and affected some change. I don't like this divide. It doesn't help.

Audience Member: That isn't the case that I was mentioning actually. I've worked in the private sector, as well as in public voluntary organisations – all over the place – and you have is to preserve your right as an artist: to be elusive. So what you do in one place, you don't do in another, so it doesn't get fixed. You don't get marked, you don't get pinned down, and if there's any value in doing all of these kinds of works, it's keeping shifting away from wherever it is they think you are, and that particularly goes for the trade unions for example, where I've also worked, so I'm not just picking on private industry. Any of these highly ritualised institutions with rigid structures need to be cut across. But you have to partly hide from them I've found the fact that that's what you're doing. Firstly they will never understand you if you describe it, and secondly when you do it they usually enjoy it in an immediate sense, so it's fine. For example, the strategies I use are never to provide packages of anything, or a clear outcome, or a box that can be ticked. And in instances of paranoia about ticking boxes, I might provide a box which will never be ticked, but which will be enough to calm them down so you manage to do what you were going to do. So there ways of handling these knowledges that are quite elusive and difficult to follow.

Richard Layzell: Well I just want to give the other view again. My experience of walking into industry was fearful but I was shocked, having come out of academia, at the contrast between the bureaucracy and inability to make decisions in the arts institution I was working in, and the flexibility and freedom I had in working in the corporate world as a creative person. I was staggered. So I wanted to give that view as well.

Rosemary Lee: An example for me would be where you go to a GP and you realise they're practising acupuncture after they've had a ten week course and then they have an acupuncture clinic. To really be an acupuncturist, you should have trained for five to ten years, or more. I feel that there is a danger when people see the practice of people who, like me, do know how to manipulate people. We have that power and we've learnt how get people to do things. And I'm really, really worried about that kind of knowledge being used, it's like neurolinguistic programming, all of that area, really bothers me. I feel that I have to use that power really carefully with respect to the people I'm working with. But if that's seen as something that you can make money, that can win people over, that can build pipe lines… Whatever it is we really should be careful. So if ResCen started to get funding from Shell, I'd leave. But of course, there's value in sharing and giving, and not trying to hide one's gifts. But it is how it is used.

Audience Member: I've a point to make about Make Poverty History, and talking about the power of giving…

Audience Member: I was going to come back to academia. I was recently asked to do a role in a research project, social science, to research issues connected with refugees. I looked at the project and realised that the particular form that I used which is theatre of the oppressed. I was being asked to use it, not for the people to find out about themselves and so decide what to do, but to find out about the refugees for the research project, and I refused to do it, because it's exactly that breaking point that you have to look out for and do something about.

Audience Member: But that's a very utopian response. I was funded by a foundation when I was studying in the US, and I know that it was implicated in whole colonialising process. So that kind of ideological take "where is the money coming from, and will I be associated with it because it's associated with them" will disempower artists and scholars.

Rosemary Lee: Well I know what you mean, that's a personal view – I'm not speaking for everyone.

Audience Member: No, but if it breaks the integrity of your art form, then you have to decide whether or not you wish to be involved in doing that. And I decided I wouldn't, on that occasion, in that way.

Audience Member: Another way I think about it as a post-colonial subject, because I live within these structures that are already given to me, is to negotiate them as intelligently and responsibly as one can.

Audience Member: Well in this particular instance I mentioned, I looked at that and decided it wasn't possible. There was a lot of detail involved in it. I decided it wasn't possible.

Audience Member: But most of us work in academia – and you'd be surprised where the money is generated from various ways in which we get students from abroad – is it all in good practice? I'd be very surprised if that were the case. Richard was right in saying that in academia, let's face it, very little gets done very easily. Most of us who have worked there are very aware of that. There's an awful lot we can learn through that, collaborating, and working for organisations…

Audience Member: But nevertheless if, as an artist and a practitioner, you are in a position where you have to decide whether or not at that moment in time, wherever the money came from, and wherever you are, whether or not

your practice and what you're being asked to do are in line, you have to look at those issues, you really have got to, because you could utterly destroy what you're doing.

Chris Bannerman: Yes you're really making a case for making an informed decision.

Audience Member: Yes, that is what I was saying.

Audience Member: …That could be a decision about whether or not you apply to the Arts and Humanities Research Council which draws up its specifications for all kinds of projects… they have a category for speculative research. You have to fill it in if you are, and if you point out at a meeting at the AHRC, that the special category should be for non-speculative research, they think you're crackers. So it is no better.

Chris Bannerman: Is that a good point at which to break for some wine and continue our discussion? Thank you all very, very much.

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