

Virtually Real: the isolated connection community
Post-performance Panel Discussion
5 January 2018

Laptop Performance Laboratory: Modular Play - Joséphine A. Garibaldi (JG), Paul Zmolek (PZ), Bridget Close (BC), Geoff Gibbs (GG), Julie Stoverink (JS), Julie Leir-VanSickle (JLVS), Michele Ripper (Michele), Logan Castro (Logan) – and audience members (Q)

Q - I'm just curious – I know this the first time you guys meeting each other - so what was the original (unintelligible).

JG – So essentially we had done – when I was on Fulbright in Latvia I had the assignment of teaching a choreography class in Latvia and I also was teaching a choreography class in Idaho at the same time. And so I said “How am I'm going to do this”. And so I started using Google Hangouts to facilitate a process where the students in Idaho could interact with the students in Latvia. And so that's how that started. So the first project was *Global Corporeality*.

While we were there we met Aigars – for a different project that we were working on – we had several projects that we were working on. Aigars was not active on the internet project but Bridget and Julie LVS were. And then when we got back to the States the next year we thought “that was pretty cool, what else can we do? What if we expanded, instead of having two sites, what if we just reached out to additional sites?” So then we had Latvia, Idaho, England – was there anybody else?

PZ - We started with somebody from Finland but

JG – Oh so there was somebody from Finland but she had to drop out. So we did that project where we choreographed. And on this iteration we said, “how much further can we expand this?” And then, meanwhile we were doing residencies and meeting additional people, more people,

PZ – And also the lecture from the guy who was here – big guy

JG – Oh, Tere

PZ – Tere. And he was talking about his project where he had a piece that he took to different spaces and how that affected it. And so I was inspired by that and I thought could we possibly make a piece that could go to different spaces, with different numbers of people, with maybe even nobody, and try to create an adaptive modular piece.

JG – So, meanwhile we had connections with – we came here to Florida – and we had connections with Julie and Bridget had by that time relocated here. And in past lives we had worked with Geoff Gibbs in Washington state. Meanwhile Paul was working in Kansas and

started collaborating with Geoff. Geoff came from Canada to collaborate with Paul. I don't know how we crossed paths with Julie Stoverink, was a student of our back in 200.....1. And then we had met Michele in Cowwarr

PZ - Australia

JG - and she has a studio in Heyfield which is another small town. So essentially it was like we really enjoy these people and they come from different genres, they have different life experiences, different ages – and we thought what would happen if? And so we said “hey, how about?” And they...

Michele – Sure!

PZ – They all bought in

JG – We were all reeling from the election and we were striving to find a way to gather (unintelligible) So we were reaching out. In some ways it was unfortunate that Bridget was here and then Aigars was here because they had that Florida State University connection and we were striving not to be (unintelligible) So to allow the freedom to create without the spectre of my role as Chair. And so that has been an interesting struggle and they have gone through this with me the past two and a half weeks because it is very hard to be here while I still have an office up there (points)

PZ – We didn't have that residency experience while here at home

JG – While you are in residence we go as far away as we can get, in remote areas so that we have a buffer. It is always there. So that is how we landed. And we just started Skypeing regularly when people could.

PZ – Google Hangouts.

JG – Sorry, Google. So then it just developed

Q – They aren't sponsors! (laughter)

JG – And drawing upon each person's area strengths and building on our weaknesses

PZ – Well the reason we used Hangouts is that Hangouts Live records automatically. You can broadcast it and then you have a record of it on Youtube.

Q – It is hard to make a verb out of it though (laughter)

PZ – And so we set it – you can set whether it is private or broadcast to the public

JG – We met Geoff when we had our studio, our business Barefoot Studios in Washington. And so Geoff is one of our students.

GG – Did I have hair then?

PZ – You had more.

JG – You had more hair? I don't remember – you weren't shaving – but anyways. So it's all these people from our generations of our different lives. Our different iterations. So we are constantly repurposing ourselves in a way.

Q – I had a question about process and terminology. You did a good job of explaining what EQ 2 was, I thought. And then we went into the third iteration and you were calling it three, EQ3 and so then I got a little bit confused. I was trying to piece together how there was this spontaneity but also some planning involved as well.

GG – We have this diagram.

Q – Right but I couldn't follow.

Panel – You are not alone.

Q - I thought I had it down until EQ3 and then I loved the idea that here was this reversal happening where you (Logan) were playing off of the choreography (unintelligible) So explain ?

PZ – We had the Seven Words and then we brainstormed on the Seven Words. Then from those (stands up and grabs list of brainstormed words in installation) and these are versions of the brainstorming. So we – our free association – and we each picked four words each. For the first word I went – each person's first word for the first word – Significant Words and then...."juicy words". And that's a problem with the terminology.

GG – It was very fluid

PZ – So we have our seven significant words. and each one of them generate four, and each one each eight of us, had our lists – so each of us had 28 words. So I took the first word of each person and then strung them up and then we did EQ – start writing. We all started writing.

JG – We had to follow the progression of the words. You had to allow someone to come in with their, come in and bump you as you were writing. We had our rule which was that you had to follow the progression but anybody could buy in. So it was crazy.

BC – It was bizarre.

PZ – It was wonderful.

GG – If I could jump in for a second. The very simple, silly one-sentence answer to your question is that there are actually four iterations of the EQs. So EQ1 was this process with a group of these words. EQ2 was a process with a group of words. EQ3, which you saw the auditory version of and the movement version of, was one of those processes. And EQ4, forgive me if I am wrong, was used at a different performance of this stuff at the Fringe Festival.

JG – That was at the Fringe Festival.

GG – So the EQs that were created by this incredibly ornate string of words then gave rise to movement that matched each of these words as well. So the EQ3 that you saw was those words and those movements that everybody did together and tossed –

PZ – So everybody had seven words from EQ and then

BC – we got to pick them

PZ – you got to pick them – and then through chance operations those words were combined with Elements of Dance – body, space, time, energy – and also some conceptual words as well. Those were the prompts to create movement. And they also became the prompts for creating sound. So each one of us created movement scores and sound scores.

JS – I would also like to add that the prompts were connecting us. Even though all of us were connected to Paul and Jo in the start, all of us weren't necessarily connected to each other. And a friend of mine had actually taken the exquisite corpse process and started playing with it with friends of ours at home – where everybody offers some words – and it creates a really nice connection opportunity among people, especially in a community where we don't play games together and interact that way all that time anymore. So I thought the exercise was really beautiful in the way it bonded us together. We could watch all the different – we all think very differently – one thinks 'cyborg', and creating ritual from other people, it creates this fascinating hodgepodge of styles all in one. I think it talks a lot about us as a group and I would encourage you to try it.

GG – It's super fun but I got to say it is really hard to build a data base (laughter)

PZ – And then the seven words, each person had the four words – the Seven Words text that we did the staged reading for – each of us had our own four words from each significant word and we used that on our own to create phrases. I started writing first because I didn't want to have to pay attention to what anyone else was doing but people would connect.

GG – That was the other thing, when we were technically done, especially in EQs there had to be some sort of connective tissue so you couldn't have a sentence fragment – that's why some of the stuff starts strangely if you take it out of context because there is a lot of "And..." that's

how it starts, or “but”, but that also gives you a nice ellipses on either end so you can take those modules and move them around

JS - (unintelligible)

Michele – And there was Logan, who came in later

JG – He came in for this residency

Michele – And it has just been a lovely overlay. Because he is younger....well than some of us. But what were saying about how much information we gave you to work with?

Logan – 7.5 gigs, that was just audio, which was larger than the collected works of Webern.

GG – Just 7.5 gigs? I must not have sent you my RAW file. (laughter)

Logan – No it was the mix-downs It would have been heftier but just the mix-downs, the MP3 version of (unintelligible) all – 7.5 gigs. The thick copy at the end of the second movement, EQ 2, was all of it at once.

GG – We were going to auto-tune it so it was all

Logan – It wasn’t a legitimate thing we planned.

BC – So Tiffany had a question but she had to leave. Her question was “after doing this module, what information have we gleaned from doing three modules and treating this information this way” and more different ways because the information is very dense.

JG – I would defer that back to y’all because...

PZ – y’all?

JG – yeah

Q – I would like to say as an audience member I was glad that there was more than one iteration. I think that if I had only been able to see one iteration I wouldn’t have gotten as much.

BC – I completely agree. I have gotten so much out of this time having done it three different ways.

Michele – I think what has been amazing for me is even those really chance operations, stream of consciousness and all that, there were times, loads of times, where it all converges, where it all has meaning all of a sudden, like “Oh my God!” the movement, the meaning, you know

BC – connecting the dots

Michele – Yeah, it's just like how did that happen? Yet it was chance operations that did that, the dice and I loved the different ways that I think in the end we really tried to really create something that appealed to auditory, kinesthetic, and the vision. Unfortunately we couldn't get food into it. We could have done gustatory as well. But I loved the way the installation is an iteration, sound is an iteration and yeah, it's just these fantastic layers upon layers and the deep layers within the community that we formed. These visible layers – well, hopefully you can feel it through the performance but these other things have happened as well outside of just this performance as well.

BC – It's been interesting this time around because we generated all this dialogue so quickly a year ago – almost exactly a year – and then coming back and revisiting it just it is interesting to feel or not feel things anymore. I was very upset. I think many of us were very upset at that time of year. I think I was in a state of trauma at that point and so like having each other to be able to just riff like “arrgh” you know “President fuck” you know “arrgh” you know. And then going back and “no, no, I still feel that way” (laughter). And then there are some things, other things being like “oh wow, why did I...what was I thinking?” (laughter) But then Julie, also like having – I guess we both find it interesting to see what is still there, what is still like uhh (gestures towards heart with inward contraction) or what we have been able to let go.

JS – I would say that this process and particularly coming here and away from my personal life to dig into this together, some of the material that we worked with together recently and some of it we haven't worked with since last February, March maybe. It's just been a constant process for me of letting out, and letting whatever is going to emerge to emerge over and over and over again. And that's not always comfortable but then really amazing things come out of it. And I think that we have so much material that we can continue to do that because there is always something to let go of and there is something that emerges when we do that. So it really is kinda limitless. I personally, I hope that we will do more together with this material. I also would really love to explore some interactive things with other individuals and what that might look like. You know we got to, some of you I hope got to input your significant words in the randomizer that Geoff created. I would love to, I think that it is set up so good for the creative process in terms of here we have this method, right, come up with your words, now we are all going to create these texts, now we are going to take pieces of the text and create movement, now we are going to take those and create some sound and it just keeps building and it's a constant invitation to say “yes” to. And the creative process is so much about that and I think every human being needs to create and I think having processes in place that push you to say “yes”, “just solve the problem” which is a phrase I've heard from Paul and Jo a million times, just solve the problem.

BC – If you can't, roll the dice. (laughter) That's when you just let go, let go of control, just roll the dice.

JS – and there it is, see what emerges. I would love for more people to get to experience that with us with their own words.

Logan - and that would be what I have to add.

Q – I feel that it is going to grow, that's what I'm thinking now. I thoroughly enjoyed it, thoroughly enjoyed it. Just like all the words and stuff. I shared with Paul, I celebrate 21 years of sobriety and I happened to enter at that with what is going on here and the words, and letting go – patience, tolerance – it was just like “whoa”. This is not an AA meeting but it's a musical, dance, everything you all described, in my recovery, how I wound up here. To see all this – I'm blown away by it. I'm blown away by it.

Michele – That is so fantastic because we really felt as we were doing it that you could sense this is going to be...excited (unintelligible) audience members (laughter)

Q – It attacked every sense, I feel that

PZ – Except food

JLVS – Oh the food these people have been cooking for us!

JG – We have been breaking a lot of bread

JLVS – This woman and this man (pointing at Michele and Geoff) Oh my

Michele – We've enjoyed the food, unfortunately you haven't

Q – You have to forgive me for this question but at any time was there any conflict

JG – (stands up starts walking) No, no (laughter)

Q – I mean you create such beautiful, you know, but (unintelligible)

JG – oh yeah

Several voices chime in

PZ – No more than is usual with Joséphine and Paul (laughter)

GG – I would like to say this. There were definitely strong opinions, there were definitely heated debates but there was always – Julie was saying this – there was always that willingness to let go. There was always that moment where “well, we'll just create together”. There was never a table flip except when we were joking and would like (mimes flipping table) There was no real flip.

PZ – I washed the dishes (laughter)

GG - at no point did someone say “I will be in my trailer” (laughter)

Q – (unintelligible)

JS – I have never been part of a residency before, this was my first experience with that and I had been looking forward to it all year. Just go, create, make things, be with amazing, creative smart people and all those things happening but most of it, a lot of it was tedious and gritty and hurts your muscles, makes your brain hurt a little, and brings up emotions, things in you – so it is not glamorous. but I wouldn’t trade it at all, it is well worth it all.

Michele – I think that on top of it the egos, we might have a little (makes vibratory gesture by face) you know but ultimately we all were focused on the project. We wanted the best for the project so everybody brought something to the table and had something to contribute. Nobody was slacking it off – that would probably create some tensions if somebody was a slacker – but

GG - (unintelligible) a slacker (unintelligible) (laughter)

Michele – but ultimately you, what it meant for Joséphine here as Chair at the University as well. Deep respect for both of them (gestures to P&J) and the gratitude from us all to bring so that really wiped out any of that

JLVS – there is a deep level of respect between all of these people and there is also we are all creative, occasionally temperamental people – there is also respect for “I’ve got to go introvert for a minute” and then coming back “I gotta go be upset for a minute and then we will come back and then we will all get back to work”

JS – Just set your boundaries and take care of yourself. I mean with the topics we are exploring: we are talking about isolation, talking about yearning, talking about feeling decentered, we are talking about how to connect and create community. That can be a part of that.

Several voices at once –

Q – Isolation is my room, so isolation is solitude

Several voices – yes that was Michele’s

PZ - All the optimism in the text (points to Michele)

(Several voices) – yeah

JLVS – All the USans were like “shit” and Michele was like, you are going to be fine, you will get through this

Michele – that’s because I am miles away from anywhere

JG – We talked a lot about what collaboration really is and when it got a little bit raw we always went back to: what are our goals, why are we here, what did we set out to do. And we started out that way: what are our values, what is our value system – thank you for Michele for leading that – what is our values system, what are our goals, how are we going to achieve that and what do we want out of this? And so we kept going back to that but collaboration is a really difficult process and we know that

Logan – so much fun

JG – It is and the risk-taking so all of us just being willing to step into it and take that risk

Q – And that’s a message for us, the audience for all of us, a deep message: connection, touch, skin

Logan - I would completely agree from my perspective coming as the newest member of this residency it was the viscerality the need to bump into people and to explore the space and. It is really, from my conceptualizing of it, it was as if the art turned in on itself. It was all of the experience was here whether or not anybody participated was arbitrary. It was like constantly, a whirlpool, a tornado, a kind of centripetal force into the center point that everyone ends up participating. And for me it was like I was compelled into this experience simply by the way in which the words correlated, nested, diverged and needing to explore it to

Q – sucked in

Logan – exactly, before you know it you are inundated with this text and movement and the correspondence between them in ways that you would never anticipate. That would be my hope for the future iterations is the idea of audience interaction and that reinforcing of that centripetal energy towards the stage itself as the embodiment...

Q – she (another audience member) mentioned that she wanted to get up because we were behind over here so what was going on in that room

PZ – that was one of the original conceptions and I got vetoed...(laughter)

JG - It wasn’t that – we talked a lot about that – Paul and I are parallel tracks going the same direction – but anyways, we had talked about we wanted to invite people to be part of the performance while we were moving around and then I said that’s not the culture here, people are going to see chairs and they are going to sit. So we talked a lot about that and that is

something we would have liked to have shifted but we did not know how to set that up so we had to make some decisions in that regard but that was our goal.

Q (unintelligible) blocked by this one (points to plastic 'wall') and we were doing this (leans over to look under)

(Voices all at once)

PZ – so you were choreographed into it

Q – seeing it from the hip down, there is something very intriguing about that and hearing what is happening from the hip up. It is intriguing and it allows the audience to take their minds where they want and make it theirs

Q – Artistically I was thinking of some other kind of material that was clearer, more see-through to – I'm the kind of artistic, I do the back-drops – what plastic would be more clear that you could still write on with the Sharpie that you could still see through. But then you wouldn't get this effect with the going through it and ripping it and

JLVS – and part of the original process of collaborating with Google Hangouts was that you would log-on and maybe you were, my camera would freeze up and I would have to log-out, and then I would log back on, so you would miss part of the discussion. Or there was one time that my microphone wasn't on and so I was sitting there going “beeahhh! beahh! Why won't anybody listen to me?” (laughter) And so there is, within the process

PZ – we were doing Chat for (points to JS) Stoverink so there...

JS – Oh yeah, there were a couple times I just had to type in because I could see and hear but they couldn't see and hear me so it does mimic

JLVS – So there is a part of the process that we went through that is reflected in that, what y'all didn't get to see, a little bit of what was happening

GG – Or some of us were outside chopping wood and completely forgot to go online...

Q – You started to – you talked about this happening a year ago and everybody was in a certain place when that happened, we were all pretty startled, and that several of you mentioned that a lot of you let go of some things and that presumes that there is some listening going on that there is some hearing going on. How does that all come back to where you are now because some of you said you are in a different place now – sometimes (laughter) Does any of that tie together for you and does that have any implications for what we should all be getting out of this?

JLVS – I had to go in because I was naughty and didn't do my homework and I realized that I actually, when we got here, I need to record one of my texts. And the text with the hydra which I was talking about, that we just have to keep chopping off those heads, keep chopping off those heads, we have to just get together and keep chopping off those heads. And as I was re-reading it and recording it I was like "ah shit, that was this year!" We just gotta keep plowing through and keep working on it together. So that was like my little experience of that. Like OK, OK sometimes things suck but you have all these incredible people that are out there fighting the good fight.

BC – You know I struggled a little bit at the beginning with the idea of regurgitation. Because part of this is mind is saying "we've done this, it's over and why are we going back and revisiting it" like let's develop new material, where we're at now and then everybody was "no we gotta...." (laughter) "there is so much more to be discovered in the text" and I was "Ok, yeah, yeah, yeah" (laughter) and there is and it is true and there was a lot more discovered there but that is an interesting question because it was very painful and like do I want to go back when an injury is healed? Like a physical injury, like I go back and break my ankle again so I can get to that place but it wouldn't be that – in this case it was maybe the ankle was not completely healed yet and I wouldn't have known that if I had ignored these feelings because what I have to do to continue to function was to pretend that it didn't exist, that this being isn't, to just ignore it, I had to cut off Facebook, I had to cut off everything because it was just making me very sick so I ignored it. So coming back and revisiting it – I don't want to say re-opened a wound – because it was a healing process, kind of ignoring it, trying to ignore the sprain – but then to go back and this still really hurts. So I'm going to allow myself to sit with it and give it attention with my friends, in the flesh this time which was just oh so healing, so I don't know. Is it better to let go, get your big purge out and let it be? I would say it is like a journal, you go back and read your journal again you'll go back and find these things even if it is like you are different now and you would say "oh my gosh, I'm a totally different person" or like "I still totally resonate with that" So I think it is worth it.

GG - I would say on a much smaller level than that – because that's huge and big and important – and this more on an interpersonal, one-to-one type of a deal. The act of creating ideas on the fly and then immediately giving those ideas away to other people is an amazing community ritual because it is the difference between having an Aristotelian actual debate where you want your mind changed and you want to change someone's mind so there is a meeting there where the goal is to have one or the other change their mind but it doesn't matter, you are just trying to get to a new understanding. As opposed to the debates you see where someone is talking and the only reason the other person is listening is to counter the next argument. It is the difference between wanting to win and wanting to communicate. And that on a creative level instead was actually quite freeing because you like – there was this moment where, I like structure, everybody knows that (laughter) – the structure can be that there is no structure, I'm totally cool with that as long as we have an understanding I'm like whee understanding! There was this beautiful thing that happened in one of the EQs. It was actually EQ3. Where if you read it, it was a large substantive block and then a list, a tiny thin list – it was like boom, boom, boom, boom – and then a substantive block. And it happened over and over and over. And I

was like I'm going to foster this beautiful idea because we do it over and we need to and that was it. And so the last one, and it is this one because it was the last one, it was posthuman, and went through and I was like boom, boom, boom, boom, four tenets of Chen style tai chi, perfectly aligned just like all of these other things that had been randomly perfectly aligned to bring forth another discussion. So they were like love, fear, pain, regret, something like that same thing. I was like "adhere, listen, uproot, neutralize". And then the minute I wrote that someone wrote a huge paragraph over that and I was like "oh wait, we were..."

JS – This is such, this is so rich because when I think about letting go, part of it is not letting go of control, that is the part to your question about conflict. There have been times where I've really had to look at myself and how receptive am I to feedback. I thought I was more receptive than what I learned that I am so I had to sit with that a little bit. Jo's laughing because I think she knows, we've had those moments. And it's been really great actually. You get kind of set in a way of doing something.

Michele – and being something

JS – and being something and then you are just grasping and gripping, and then nothing can move anymore and nothing emerging and so it gets to a point where you kind of have to - I think this goes for political dialogue, it goes for personal relationships,

BC – physical body

JS – physical body, yes. And you just have to say I'm going to let go of control and see what happens. So it isn't just letting go of "I'm not going to touch that or feel that anymore", it's like I'm not going to try to control that and I'm going to see what emerges. It's kind of beautiful what happened. It's very scary – to go back to risk-taking – it's a very scary feeling, it's not comfortable but then you see these beautiful rewards come up. And I think we can only get that in our conversation when we are willing to 'neutralize'.

GG – So what you are saying is that you are the one who wrote that paragraph over (laughter)

JLVS – I kept losing my cursor. Where's my cursor? Where's my damn cursor?

JS – I don't know Geoff, that was a long time ago.

GG (unintelligible) (laughter)

JS – playfulness

GG – and it was giving it up.

JS – playfulness

BC – playfulness has saved us

GG – J-Boss!

Michele – The way I’ve looked at this collaboration and the way I’ve thought about this is like when you are doing an art piece for yourself it’s like you’re preparing – when you’re creating your own dinner party you create the menu, buy all the ingredients, know what plates you’re using, know what the table will look like, it is all going to be like that. But then on the other hand a collaboration is like ‘hey, everybody bring a plate’. You have some plastic ones, some (unintelligible) ones. So it is still something though. And it is still very rich. As Geoff says you come in, you have something to offer but you are also hoping as an artist that you are going to learn “oh that is an interesting way” or “I didn’t realize”. So when you go back to doing your own work again you’ve actually grown in dimension. And that letting go it’s so good. And it’s funny that you mentioned that – Julie met me at the airport, Atlanta airport, and we were yaking, yak, yak yak, just glad we found each other and we were going to the car and something happened and Julie said I’ve got to learn to trust and allow. And right through all of this there has been this thread of trust and allow. To trust in the process, trust we are all good people, trust we are doing a great thing and to allow and let go and allow things to come into you as well. So that letting go (unintelligible) through corporations, Its incredible when you think we’ve only got the answer, there’s loads of answers out there and (unintelligible) enrich it.

Q – I had a question about the embodied (unintelligible)

PZ – So the movement, so what we did is that everybody had the assignment to create their movement and video their movement and they shared it. And then we. And so the way the EQs were we created our EQs which were a phrase of seven movements from seven words. And then we had to incorporate one section each of our collaborators so we ended up with a 14 movement phrase. It was really interesting because we didn’t teach, because we intentionally wanted the drop-out and personal interpretation because we find that really interesting.

GG – and it was really good for me because I don’t do Modern Dance at all. (laughter)

Logan – that’s the spirit!

PZ – and so each person had their own thing. Joséphine did these 30 minute videos, where it was OK, how am I going to interpret this?

JG – I had rocks and dirt (Michele joins commentary)

PZ – And Geoff’s was doing Tai Chi based work, Aigar’s was doing capoeira inspired stuff.

GG – Lot’s of upside down stuff

PZ – and it is like, I don't do that stuff anymore so then it's like, OK, how can I take it and be true to what he is doing but make it work for me.

JG – So it was videos and we all uploaded our clips and then you just had to go off the video.

Q – This is not an evaluative but what is the thing that happens when you give in to this process and you have the words in space in time. Is there a different way that you are living the words that you have been doing now in space. What experience is that? (some of this is unintelligible)

GG – What I have found was that the movements that we internalized that we took – we made our own series and then we had to take other people's movements, internalize that movement added to our series – and then what happened was each of those movements became pivot points. When we actually saw other people move in their own styles while we were moving in our parts all of a sudden – “that's my movement!”. So all of this stuff that was based on other things comes together, it's like when there is a whole bunch of Romance language speakers in the same room, they are like “oh that word is just like our word” it is the same thing so you see all of these things line up and, like especially during EQ2 where we were doing full phrases just movement. There is a spot right at the beginning where when we were first doing it I was like “God, everybody is doing so many different things” but I start with a specific movement and then I realized so was Jelvis, (JLVS) she was moving too, and then when I completed the movement and it is a movement called single whip and I look over and all the way in the corner Jo was starting it. And it is like her version and it is like there is this beautiful cascade that starts happening where you start mapping – going back to room number one back there – you start seeing a map between your movement and the next person's movement and then, because the connective tissue was all based upon the same words, they all align and you did nothing to help that. All you did was wait, watch, and listen. And all of a sudden everyone is not in unison but is connected.

PZ – Embodying the movement and the text. So we did EQ4 with the Fringe Festival and we did 2 and. Two we didn't use it with the text but with three and four we did it with the text.

My....it's that unlimited semiosis where the movements, and the sounds, and the text are all deriving from the initial same thing and they comment upon. And as a performer it is really like “I didn't think of that” and if I had just read it off the page I would have not gotten it.

Q (Tom) – I think you are discovering the essence of it. Maybe by doing it that way what you are discovering what is really the essence of what everybody is saying. It is that listening and actually hearing instead of “I got that”. I'm gonna do and then you do your version that doesn't really capture the essence but the process that you set up seems to be really focusing upon getting to the essence

GG – You just touched on something that is really cool and it also goes to your question as well (points to other audience member) The other really neat thing that happens is you get it wrong. So you learn the movement by watching it but it is two-dimensional – it's flat – and you

interpret it and you are like OK, this is the movement because I watched it and then you put your version up and you assume that people are just going to get your version and then you come in and then see how three-dimensional the other movement is and you're like I did this (kicks forward with right foot) and you're like this (does circling movement with foot and additional arm movements) and so there's that moment again where you have to admit that your view was an incomplete view and then accept that.

BC – most times (unintelligible) (laughter)

Q – I especially enjoyed your movements(JLVS)

JS – I loved learning her movements

Q – Take this as a compliment, because I have that childlike mentality but that is what I got from your stuff.

JLVS – I like to play and I got to just come and play with my favorite people in the world for three weeks. Fantastic!

Q – A lot of the movement. We work with autistic kids, and they have their movements. And I saw a lot of that. There are a lot of little kids and they stop for a second and they just move their hands, move their heads, you know, whatever it is they are working. But I saw that in both of you. I was thinking to myself, maybe they have kids – while they were online the kids were playing, dancing

JLVS – Mine are big kids now.

BC – Also, to add to the question, the answers to the question, having everyone here in real time and space and moving with them, I was able to understand the text better. And I guess they were here right now “Paul, what’s this phrase mean?” “What did you mean?” “What’s this mean?” Just being in this space, sometimes you wouldn’t have to ask, just seeing what they were doing, feel how they are doing with their breath and that is something that gets lost digitally as well. Their breathing pattern. And so when they are doing the movement, you can go “oh wow, that meant something entirely different than I thought it meant looking at the video or reading it. Also very interesting to see how it would change in different times but there was usually a thread and it was usually the breath that would provide that information now that we are in real time and space that you can really get.

JLVS – It was interesting because it was really, you know we were talking about questions of community and can we build a community through these virtual tools. It was interesting because I really feel like we did. It really felt like we were a community and that these were people we were connected to before we came here. That being said, there’s something about being in face-to-face physical – I can touch you, hug you and see your face that just makes it

that much more real. And I feel going forward it makes it, now that we have this, we can go and re-connect virtually and it is going to be that much stronger.

BC – I almost think it will be more painful

Panel – aww

GG – Make little plushies of everybody (laughter) The Paul doll is huge.

Michele – As we have been two weeks on this that we have been running though that gradually we have had so many interpretations of the work (performs humming, head moving of several variations) and then we, what is the emphasis going to be, what is the real meaning of the thing you know because some of the text is not your normal language the words don't connect – it's not your series of language. Really had to enunciate through some of the things So it's been all of that to embody the text. And gradually having your movement and seeing. I know tonight felt different to how we started in the beginning. With my movement I felt.

Q – That's my next question now that it's come to this point, all this work, a year's gone by, two weeks of preparing for all this and then tonight now we are sitting here having this conversation, is this what you were looking to produce? Is there anything you wanted to change?

Logan – I'll say, from my part of it, what was really great about it – a (combine of mind?) – I am a huge fan of John Cage and this experience really, really influenced by chance operations, popularized by him in the 1950s. He has a great response to his friend Morton Feldman who is complaining about the state of the composer in this post-modern landscape. "All I want to do is be an artist even (unintelligible), sit in my room, sit in my chair and have my pipe and compose my music and being well-thought" and growing up in academia, growing up compositionally in an academic environment, that is really what you are taught. You are an auteur of this sonic world that you create, you make, you manufacture. And John Cage's responded to that by saying, "we you could always be a composer who doesn't have any thoughts" (laughter) What I really cherish about this experience is how limitless not having thoughts as we have been. The fact that the thoughts are already there between the synapses of each other's minds that you don't have to, you can, the relinquishing becomes joyous. And I would say taking it further the more people who can get involved with that decoupling of authorship and agency and all these words and keeping ego in nice little (flask?)

Q – What's the word, now that it is done, now that it has been performed, what word is it here?

GG – Oh now we have to go and do a new seven words? (laughter)

Q – One word for each person. A word that just (some unintelligible) We are all brain dead now. We've been thinking too much.

PZ – I have three words: for fuck’s sake (laughter)

BC – Can I answer the first question? Can I comment on the first question? My word is “ready” – that is what is coming to my mind – “Ready”. You were asking about “what’s next”. One thing that we have all been valuing, talking about our values is – process. And so the result for me – oh, part of your question was “is it what you wanted it to be” or “Is it the way we wanted it” and, for me, I never wanted it to turn out. It is more about the process and bringing people in to see the process. I could keep going and going and going, riffing and keep going and going. I would see no end to it. What we have found so rich about what we are doing is the process and that’s one of the things we wanted to share is the process. Snippets of our process.

PZ – And hence Joséphine’s insistence that we call it “iterations”

Michele – other than a “show” or “art piece”

GG – this wasn’t the “performance” this was a expression of the...

PZ – this wasn’t the “final product”

BC – but I look around at the installation and it is really cool. I had no idea that the space was going to look like this. I had no idea what it was going to be. I am really proud of my collaborators and I didn’t have any expectations but

GG – I was really hoping for a giant ball pit (laughter)

Logan – we’ve got this actor’s box.

(Multiple voices)

JG - ... and we had all this content. What we said was “how do we land on a structure?” That’s always the hardest thing, landing on a structure with which to assemble all of the material. And you have to be willing to let go of a lot of your precious

? – the control

Michele – yes

JG – and so we had to let go of a lot

PZ – We had some things. You (JG) wanted to, you really wanted to visit the Seven Words texts as we hadn’t done anything with them. I really wanted to see one of the EQs done simultaneously. Those were two things that we wanted. We knew we wanted an installation – we didn’t know what it was going to be.

JG – We also found this space to be just too (unintelligible) it's not our first choice as a space because it is just too perfect. I mean, it is a theater, it is too perfect. And so it doesn't have that raw, you know, installation where you can just set up and people can walk and it's more of a "happen by" or a

Q – I think it would be amazing in a gallery

Q – to me this is a gallery but I'm bringing to this my past experience to this space and I think of this space as a gallery for dance

Michele – that's a nice way of putting it.

JG – there are so many bells and whistles here. We had to pull back

PZ – Yeah, there is a pull "we should use this, we should use that" that was a temptation.

Q – (unintelligible)

Q – I have no experience as a school teacher, I don't really know about – so I don't know what teaching is like per se – I have friends who are teachers - there is something in this that could be pulled out and put into the teaching curriculum

PZ – Actually, that's where it came from. It started from creative dance for children

Q – because what you are doing, the whole, you use the issues you are dealing with and the screen for kids and we (?) like this. That what you are doing is that you are sort of circumventing it because you are still acknowledging the capacity, the unrealized capacity of digital environments but you are pulling them into real time and space. That kind of thing is something that needs – it has some legs.

JLVS – I actually, my kids are near grown now, they're 18 and 21, but they were younger when I first worked with Paul and Jo and we homeschooled them in a specific school of homeschooling called "Unschooling" where the kids have much agency. They follow what they are interested in, pursue their passions and it is amazing they learn a bunch of other stuff along the way doing that because, to facilitate that. And I was talking with them one day, I was talking about this methodology that Paul and Jo had introduced me to and I was like "Holy shit! It's like Unschooling for dancers" because they give you so much agency and so much trust. And they trust the process and they trust you as a performer as a creator as a dancer to contribute to that and then you therefore and it's so incredible. I've had people, I've worked this way when I've done shows with other people and I've had people drop out because "no I just want to be told what to do" and I've had people who are like, "Oh my God, this is amazing! I've made stuff!" And so it is really incredible to have that ownership and agency in what – and, of course this was a more collaborative process that even when you are working just with somebody as a

director it gives you so much agency and ownership and that is just so, you know, great for kids to be able to have.

JS – Well I think it is important for adults to have too. I think this method really makes creative work, creative movement work in particular, approachable and accessible. It kind of evens the playing field. So for me, for example, I haven't danced for 15 years. I wasn't really a trained dancer to begin with. Paul and Jo kind of helped me fall in love with it when I got to work with them the first time around. And so when we got our words and those were paired with– we sort of skipped this – so basically we had words and then randomly pulled out of envelopes were movement qualities. So you might get the word “isolation” and you might get “downstage right, vibratory, roll” and you have those and that would be your puzzle to figure out how to choreograph. So the beauty of that is that for someone who isn't a trained dancer or has been out of trained dancing for a long time you just solve the problem – right? Someone who is a trained dancer has to let go of some of that.

PZ – Trained dancers are difficult..

JS – So either way you have to force yourself out of your comfort zone. It doesn't matter how much training you have in formal dance styles. It puts you all on the same page. Now you might have certain things you can do with your body that you built up your strength for that other people don't have but you are still on the same playing field – you still have to solve the same problem. It's playful and it gives you ownership and agency and it pushes you to have that childlike heart. OK “how am I going to figure this out?” No matter what you came to do.

Transcribed from video by Paul Zmolek