

SAISERIT

A MAN WITH SIGHT BUT NO SEEING

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION



In offering an insight on the creative process of my solo, I will be borrowing from [J. Hincks' Five Facets Model](#). Adopting this model offers me a language through which I can verbalise the development of my work for others so that its research dimensions can be accessed.

Since its development in 2000, Hicks' model has been used by different creative practitioners to help realize work in the visual and performing arts and to aid writing. The model identifies five phases in a creative process which are titled as follows: **Delving, Raising, Assaying, Articulating and Outwarding**. These phases are not expected to unfold linearly and consequentially but they are likely to intersect and overlap in a creative spiral structure that can be identified within the macro and the micro stages in the creation of a work.

PHASE 1

_DELIVING

This initial phase of development of my solo was heavily influenced by a regular listening to American author David Foster Wallace's speech 'This is Water'. In his work the author invites us to question the origin of our belief system, arguing against 'unconsciousness, the default settings' and defining blind certainty as 'a close-mindedness that amounts to an imprisonment so total that the prisoner doesn't even know he's locked up'.

[CLICK HERE](#) to listen to the original speech

FOLLOW THE FASCIAE

16-12-16



standing and observing

volumes in the body standing on each other,
like ^{not} bars of soap

following their journey, attending to their needs,
in the present moment.

No judgement, no right, no wrong.

where do I settle?

observing the new settling place.

starting from the feet, find the balance and equal
distribution of weight. How does that affect the structures?
How do the volumes settle in relation
to this?

Focus on the two halves of the body. Imagine them made of
sand. Imagine this sand can trickle from one side to the
other according to the need.

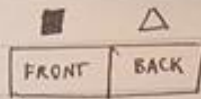
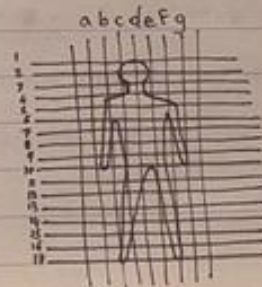
Focus on the breath. Primordial form of movement.
Supporting us from the inside. Relating to our volumes
from an inner perspective.

There are countless movement possibilities
within each of us.
Why striving to be the best representative
of movement arrangements inherited by

Giorno 1

GENERARE del movimento

weaving patterns



Wallace's words, together with the sound of his voice and the rhythm of his speech, offered vast inspiration to my thinking and vivid imagery to indulge in whilst exploring movement material in the dance studio. Short phrases, postures, gestures, scores were all allowed to emerge freely in those days. Often associations would arise whilst moving and listening, and they would be noted down in different forms such as writing, drawing or video recordings.



[Footage from rehearsals](#)

During this phase of spontaneous creative flow I also gazed at works by other artists that resonated with or had deliberately expressed themselves in response of themes of close-mindedness as well as physical, cultural, social or mental imprisonment. This 'gazing' was light touched and non-systematic at this point, mainly fuelled by curiosity and a desire to be inspired and to orient myself.

As a result of this explorative phase, a collection of short dance episodes linked together, with no interruption, was assembled and shared under the working title 'Blind Certainty' on 22nd April 2016 at the Contact Theatre in Manchester, as part of TURN 2016. The purpose of the sharing was that of collecting impressions from peers and audience, as well as personal reflections on the performing of the material, in order to lift up those ideas that felt most relevant.

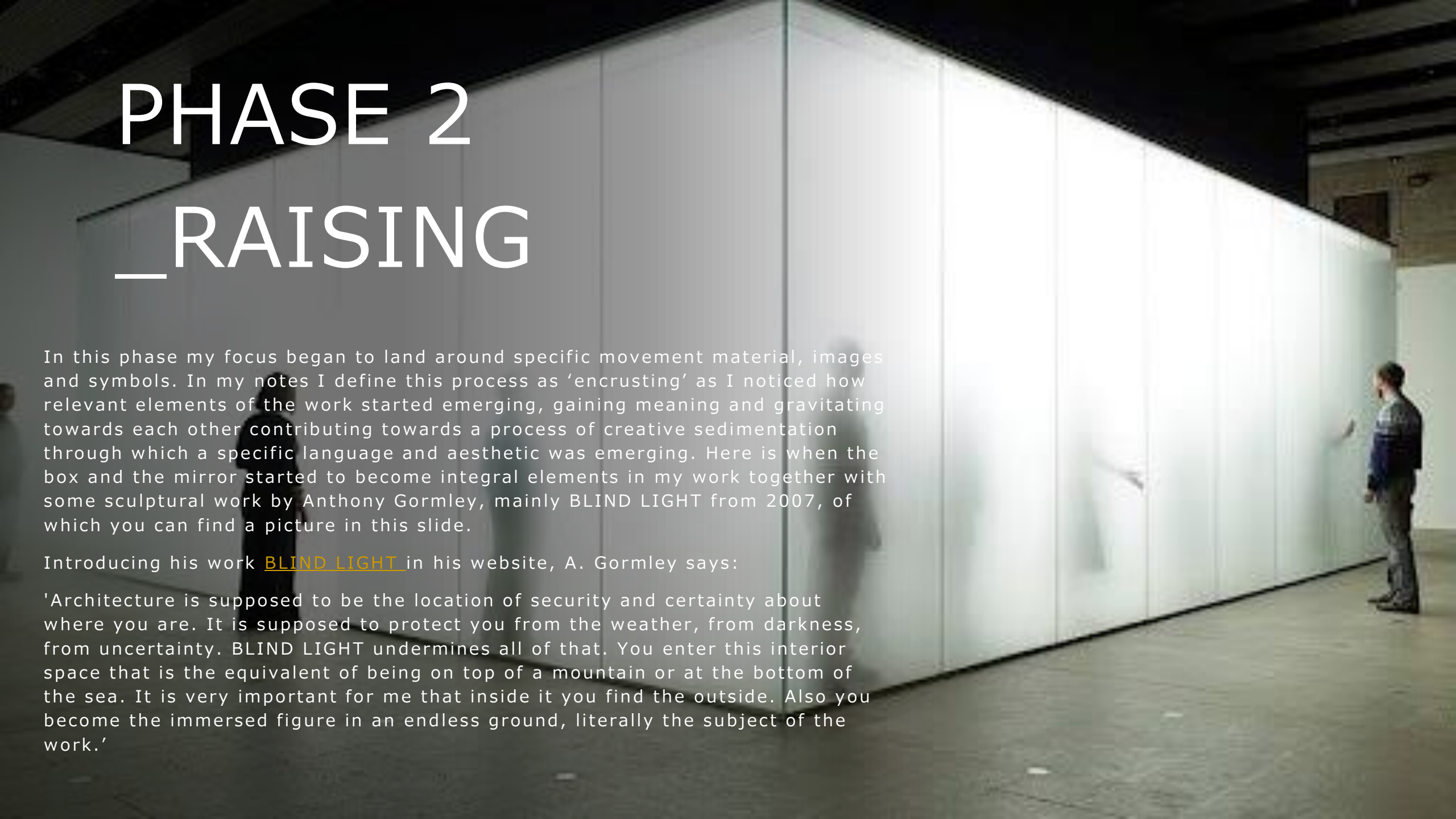
PHASE 2

_RAISING

In this phase my focus began to land around specific movement material, images and symbols. In my notes I define this process as 'encrusting' as I noticed how relevant elements of the work started emerging, gaining meaning and gravitating towards each other contributing towards a process of creative sedimentation through which a specific language and aesthetic was emerging. Here is when the box and the mirror started to become integral elements in my work together with some sculptural work by Anthony Gormley, mainly *BLIND LIGHT* from 2007, of which you can find a picture in this slide.

Introducing his work [BLIND LIGHT](#) in his website, A. Gormley says:

'Architecture is supposed to be the location of security and certainty about where you are. It is supposed to protect you from the weather, from darkness, from uncertainty. *BLIND LIGHT* undermines all of that. You enter this interior space that is the equivalent of being on top of a mountain or at the bottom of the sea. It is very important for me that inside it you find the outside. Also you become the immersed figure in an endless ground, literally the subject of the work.'



This process of Raising, or more specifically in my case 'encrusting' to use a term that emerged from my journal during the process, echoed the process of creative mythology described by Joseph Campbell in the fourth volume of his Masks of God series:

'In the context of a traditional mythology, the symbols are presented in socially maintained rites, through which the individual is required to experience, or will pretend to have experienced, certain insights, sentiments, and commitments. In what I am calling 'creative' mythology, on the other hand, this order is reversed: the individual has had an experience of his own -of order, horror, beauty, or even mere exhilaration- which he seeks to communicate through signs; and if his realisation has been of a certain depth and import, his communication will have the value and force of living myth- for those, that is to say, who receive and respond to it of themselves, with recognition, uncoerced. Mythological symbols touch and exhilarate centres of life beyond the reach of vocabularies of reason and coercion'

(Campbell, 1968)



Props development 1



Props development 2



Rehearsals snapshot. Giorgio De Carolis



Antony Gormley. POSE, 2016

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

A research question arose for me at this point in the process of development of my work: **how might creative mythology inform the development of a solo for contemporary dance performance concerned with the representation of close-mindedness?**

The material, the 'signs' to use Campbell's words, I gathered in those first two phases of the creative process were heterogenous in nature, including movements, postures, images, work by other artists, sound etcetera, an archive of elements different in nature but all connected by my personal experience of them as a tangible representation of close-mindedness. A subsequent process of Assaying was about to start, in which the material was going to be considered, applied, associated, evaluated and selected in reflexing cycles of refinement towards the Articulation of the finalised solo.



Rehearsals snapshot. Giorgio De Carolis

PHASE 3

_ASSAYING



In this phase, movement phrases and scores were created in which a heavy wooden brick-filled box and a convex round mirror were incorporated. Both objects represented qualities of close-mindedness that had been surfacing through the creative process and gained a strong symbolic connection to the work.



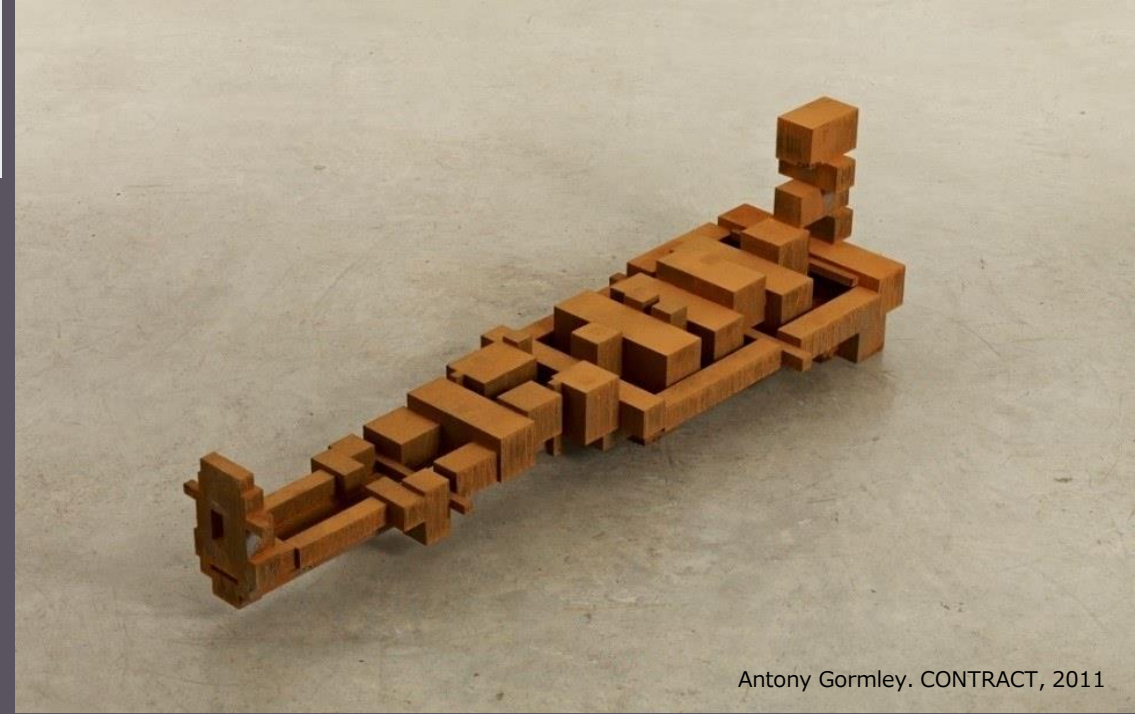
Rehearsals snapshot. Giorgio De Carolis



Props development 3



[<CLICK HERE](#)
to view rehearsal
footage drawing
"lost' dances' from
selected work by
Antony Gormley



Antony Gormley. CONTRACT, 2011

Movement was also extracted from sculptural work by Antony Gormley, specifically CAST BLOCKWORKS (2005), PROPPERS (2001) and SLABWORKS (2014-2019), drawing from choreographer Lea Anderson's compositional approach to finding "lost' dances' in the work of painter Schiele (see bibliography).

Gormley's sculptures were used as a dense, weighted, tri-dimensional, pixelated template from which movement material and postures could be extracted and reimagined within the choreographic language of the work.



Antony Gormley. GAZE II, 2015



[SAISERIT \[Turn 2017\]](#)

The piece was named SAISERIT, adopting the reverse spelling of the name TIRESIAS. Tiresias was a prophet of Apollo in Greek mythology; he was blind and famous for his clairvoyance. Despite not being able to see he could understand reality in its totality. Through SAISERIT I wanted to represent the opposite of what Tiresias stood for, reimagining, through a process of creative mythology, what an embodiment of the human trait of close-mindedness might be.

An 18 minutes long work in progress solo for traditional proscenium theatre performance emerged at this point and was shared both in Italy and in the UK, accompanied by workshops and Q&A sessions, to collect feedback and for critical reflection.



Performances and workshops calendar:

-23rd November 2017, SAISERIT, Salford University. Workshop, performance and Q&A

-23rd October 2017, SAISERIT, Edge Hill University. Workshop, performance and Q&A

-Week of 13th November 2017 at ZArts, Dance Manchester. Guests: Bridget Fiske, Joseph Lau (Manchester Dance Consortium) and Deb Ashby (Dance Manchester). Residency, performance and Q&A

-28th April 2017, SAISERIT, as part of Turn 2017, Contact Theatre, Manchester. Performance

-27th April 2017, SAISERIT, as part of MishMash, Media Factory, Preston. Performance

-7th April 2017, SAISERIT, 7th April 2017, Rotonda a mare, Senigallia, Italy ('Sotto a chi danza'. Tracce di giovane danza d'autore nelle Marche). Performance

PHASE 4 AND 5

_ARTICULATING AND OUTWARDING

Through the process of presenting the work, I perceived more and more a jarring between the fact that the work aimed to invite the audience to reflect on the value of seeing beyond what Wallace would define our 'default setting' and the physical static spatial relationship imposed by a conventional theatre in which the audience is sat and 'receives' a predetermined version of a performance.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

A second research question emerged for me at this point: **How might a performance encourage an active audience rather than a passive one?**

An immersive theatrical experience of my solo felt like a more suitable attempt of abolishing the distinction between stage and the auditorium, by questioning 'not only the status of the spectator, redefining his/her place and role, but also the notion of ending' (Machon, 2013:22).

The audience was therefore made an active explorer of the space and of the work, being invited to be the agent of their personal meaning making process within the performance. By immersing the audience and the performer in the same space, together with props, video projection on three different walls and limited access to sound sources (for the purposes of which only 6 headphones were provided to the audience), therefore making it impossible for the audience to hold all the elements of the performance within their sensory field at once, I intended to create an environment that compelled the audience to take a personal stance on how and whether they wanted to engage with the work.





[< CLICK ON THE
IMAGE ABOVE](#)
to view a
short edit of
rehearsal footage

Despite the spatial relationship between audience and performer changed in this latter version of the work, the performer retained the same original intention of not directly relating to the public, the convex mirror being the only mean that the vision of the performer could relate to the surrounding world through, limiting its perception and distorting its reflection. The performer navigated through the movement phrases looping them relentlessly into an inescapable cycle of detailed, bound, repetitive, 'stubborn' movement vocabulary, through which a linear narrative was not provided and a non-prescriptive field of enquiry was presented.

SAISERIT was presented on 16th July 2018 at the Media Factory in Preston, as part of the international conference Transdisciplinary Explorations Into Performativity.

-See output document for more details-

TRANSDISCIPLINARY EXPLORATIONS INTO PERFORMATIVITY



Organised by Dr. Amy Rome

**A 4-day International Symposium of lectures,
practice-led workshops and performances**

16-18 July 2018

Hosted by the University of Central Lancashire's Faculty of Culture & Creative Industries' in association with the international directors of Paris-based Pantheatre Enrique Pardo & Linda Wise.

SAISERIT

Uclan 2018

Please, describe an image that you are left with after the performance

I am intrigued by the performer as voyeur
and by the audience as voyeur.
The audience watched by performer
And the secrecy of the camera
I am intrigued by the confound of the warped
mirror - an impossible space



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

SAISERIT

Uclan 2018

Please, describe an image that you are left with after the performance

The three witches with one eye
that they pass between them
in order to see the world.

WHAT DID THE AUDIENCE SAY...

'The struggle with the Ego.

Assured sense of self yet very distorted in the mirror.

A man stuck in cycles of behaviour challenges us to really observe and also to reflect.

The feeling of the room – peaceful, calm, hypnotic.

The audio is powerful yet it is beautiful to watch with or without.

I find myself with a calm yet playful feeling. Encourages us to analyse our own patterns. I began to be aware of my behaviour in the room and the behaviour of the audience around me.

A collective consciousness.'

'I am intrigued by the performer as voyeur and by the audience as voyeur [...] I am intrigued by the confines of the mirror_ an impossible space'

'A sense of freedom in the ability to strive and move into whatever direction you want to go for in life'

'Narciso, Narciso
looking for (his) place
in the world. Narciso
trying to see the world.
Narciso and how others
can see him'

'...I got the feeling that he was trapped inside the mirror, looking out at the audience.'

'The three witches with
one eye that they pass
between them in order
to see the world'

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Behrends, A., Müller, S., Dziobek, I., 2012. Moving in and out of synchrony: A concept for a new intervention fostering empathy through interactional movement and dance. *The Arts in Psychotherapy* [e-journal] 39(2), pp.107-116. Available through: Science Direct [Accessed 5 March 2018]
- Campbell, J., 1968. *The Masks of God, volume IV, Creative Mythology*. New York: Viking
- Foster Wallace, D., 2005. *This Is Water: Some Thoughts, Delivered on a Significant Occasion, about Living a Compassionate Life*. New York: Little, Brown and Company
- Hincks, J., 2014. Five Facets Model of Creative Process. *Choreographic Practices* [e-journal], 5(1), pp. 49-57. Available through: UCLAN library website <librarysearch.uclan.ac.uk> [Accessed 10 September 2019]
- Machon, J., 2009. *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
- Rottenberg, H., 2008. Lea Anderson, Dancing and Drawing the Past into the Present. Lansdale J. (eds). *Decentring Dancing Texts. The Challenge of Interpreting Dances*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.