

PANIC! Bursaries**Tora Hed *Let it Land*****Interview Transcription**

So my name is Tora Hed, and I'm a dance artist, performer and choreographer and dance teacher. And yeah, I will tell you about the project. I have already started it with my collaborators. And, yeah, I think I have to go back in time, to where the idea kind of took shape. And 2018, I was working as a dance teacher in care homes, exploring touch, in a way to reduce loneliness and isolation, that people that have dementia. And I was doing that, and then Corona came. And because yeah, I, the work I was doing had to stop, because it wasn't possible to work, delivering movement sessions in care homes anymore. So then I took on the role of care worker in a care home, which also involves touch to care for someone. And in a way, it's more practical touch. So yeah, and I think also, because I'm coming from a dance background is really interesting. I feel like I'm very used to working with touch and sensing other people's bodies. So there was something to do with working with dance and caring homes, working with the sensory way of touching, and then working as a carer where it was more practical touch.

Yeah, and alongside of that, in lockdown, I started together with six other dance artists here in Leeds to meet up weekly to dance in public spaces. And this was, yeah, we were in lockdown. So the spaces were quite empty. And it was really interesting to work with my dance practice in public spaces. So yeah, I think like those two, like, areas kind of informed this work in creating now. So I'm exploring touch. And I guess this is the starting point of the of the project. It has also developed because of the process and also that, yeah, it includes my collaborators. It's always changing on the way. But yeah, the the beginning idea was to explore touch in different scores and in the choreography in public spaces, and working with movement.

I'm working with two dancers, performers. So it's Sarah Maria Cook, and Inari Hulkkonen, who are the performers in the film. And then I'm also working with Sunny Vowles, who is an interdisciplinary artist, visual artist. And all of them are based here in Leeds. And yeah, we started some time ago, working, we have been working in different spaces in Leeds generating material. And, yeah, it's been, it's been, because of the different spaces, the material we have gathered has shifted and changed. Because there's so much going on in public spaces, rather than studio space, which is quite you know, it's quite focused, there is no interference. So, yeah, we started to work with I started to give the dancers different images to work from, and different maybe rules in the scores to work with. Yeah, so I think when I speak about scores, in dance, it can be different rules, it can be it can be informed by different suggestions. And I realised quite early on in the process that I needed to or for it to make sense, the research for it to arrive somewhere we had to start from, from the body. So working a lot with we we worked a lot with the sternum and the ribcage as a way of moving into space. And then, after some time, I got interested in the, the relationship between the hand and the sternum if that's if there is like a communication like so if the hand is feeding the sternum, or if the sternum is feeding the hand, as a way to move into space. And that's slowly developed into a score. They would then layered with more, a few more rules and suggestions. And it's something to do with keeping something alive. It's a sensory experience. I always asked the dancer when we work for a bit, I always ask like, "how did you feel?" And I think this is I think it's coming from that I've also been in dance projects. And a part of me is like, when I watch the dancers in the project, I'm curious to know how they feel. Yeah, it's just a funny thing I thought about the other day. Yeah, the sensory experience. And then also, again, the sensory and then the thinking, so it's two things going on at once. And so there's some sort of dissonance happening in the body, which is then visual for me.

Yeah, so we have, yeah, we have been working with a few scores. I think for now, we have four scores. And each of them have a different agency, and also different texture and quality. They all because we have been, we, we keep coming back to touch, but I think also touch is, it can mean a lot of different things, you know, you can touch the space around you, you are in contact with the ground. And of course, they're also working with touch together, exploring that. So yeah, four different scores. And spatially, they are different. And it's kind of working a bit as a

collage. So yeah, I feel like the scores, I'm not sure yet how it would be worked in the film. But yeah, I have them. And it's nice to be able to rearrange them and play around with them.

There is one score that was that started from a very simple text that I wrote down, it was just saying, "two people walk towards each other, wrapping their arms around each other." And then Inari and Sarah took that on, and they tried to work that out with a with movement. And from that, something came up, which yeah, because I had an image of maybe this, I had an image of like, yeah, I think this is what they will do. And there was something completely different, which is also very exciting when it comes to working. collaboratively, and, in a way yeah, to have, yeah, for me to be able to shift. It's nice that something can be spacious, in some ways. Yeah. But then we also working with one score that I keep coming back to, and I'm realising we have been struggling a bit with it, and then there's a part of me also, that it's a bit it's been hard to, like, let that go. I really want to have it still. I guess it's like I'm collecting material and then I feel like really, I would like to use them. You know, it's, but then I'm not sure if it's yeah, parts of me is like maybe I should let that go. But let's see. It's still in the process.

We also been working with very still images, which I'm calling sculptures. And yeah, and then something to do with letting something arrive. Yeah, I can watch that for a very long time. And I think the also for Inari and Sarah the way they entered the sculptures, it's also, yeah, it's something yeah, something to do with entering that there is an activeness, and then finding it, and then being with a stillness, and then I guess, again, because it's in a public space. Because there's a lot of things around the stillness of two bodies, that makes it even more present. And then there is, of course, tiny shifts that are happening. You know, it's even if it's still, it's still alive, right? Because of the breath. And, and it's small shifts. And it's also I think, because we're coming back to, we've been coming back to the same sculptures. And maybe, yeah, it's something to do with, they are also changing each time I see them. I feel like they're changing even though they are the same. And then some sculptures I'm realising, maybe in the beginning of the process, I was like, "I'm not sure". And now I'm like, like, "I love them". So it's, yeah. It's definitely something to do with the the softness of two bodies as well. That it's yeah, it's a sculpture that is alive. Yeah. And we've been working with, like, moulding as quality with the sculptures. It's two bodies. So it's Inari and Sarah. So

it's got, yeah, when I say sculptures, I guess. Yeah, it can mean a lot of different things. But it's yes, it's two bodies, I guess, moulding into each other. Some of them are, are moulding in and then some of them are also working with the tension. The there was a few lifts. So some of them are like more still than others. And again, also, there was something to do with timing of like, how, how long time does it take to arrive into the sculpture, they're creating? And I'm yeah, I'm curious to see how that's will, will be in the film to play with that.

I think more, more the research has been taking place in public spaces. Although the last performance I did was last December. And that was solo performance. And I worked, I performed in an old quarry. And that was quite great. It was lit by two torches. And was quite a simple yeah, it was really shaved off. It was very simple. I have to say score again. Yeah, a simple score. And yeah, so I guess it's something I'm going towards. And I think also because, at the moment, theatre spaces feels really far away. Or like a black box who's really far away. And I think that has happened the last year. And I'm also with that and also, again, maybe questioning who who goes and see dance in theatres, who is who is it for? And what if we can place performances in other places?

The research, so basically when lockdown happened, the first lockdown happened. As I mentioned before, we I was working once a week with a few other dance artists here in Leeds. And we worked for an hour in a public space, and that was kind of at the moment, the only dance practice I was doing. And, yeah, there was something to do with researching, or dancing in a public space that it can. Some it can be interfered. And, and I, I really enjoy that. And it makes it sometimes. Sometimes I check in with myself, and I'm like, oh, yeah, I'm dancing here. Other things is happening. And it doesn't have to become a precious thing that mostly just takes place, again in a dance studio, which also of course has its purpose, but I find it, yeah, I find my, my dance is being informed by what I'm seeing, and what is going on in the space around me. So I guess it's one more thing to deal with, to deal with the busyness and to deal with the information that I that I sense, you know, it can also be smell, seeing or hearing. Like one day with, with the collaborators for this project, we were working for a day, and we were super tired. And I was like, I wonder why you're so tired. And then I think it was Inari said, because we were working next to a big road. And she was like, "it's because of the cars". And then I was like, Yeah, of course.

So yeah, it's more things you have to deal with. And yeah, informs my practice in a new way which is exciting. Yeah. So we've been working in the South Bank, South Bank room. Yeah. And that has been really different. Coming from the outdoors to coming in again. And also for the dancers. Because, again, I think when you're outdoors, there is the sense of, of space is different. It's not like four walls or walls around you. Yeah this, they said that they were struggling a bit to come back to the scores, because it felt different. And yeah, and then that was also because we worked here for a day and then we went out again. And then yes, some of the material was like, wow, okay, yeah, it makes sense for this to be outdoors. Because that's where we started to create the material. But I'm also yeah, it's also really interesting for me to, to adapt to spaces. So, yeah, it has been challenged to work indoors with the material, but I also knew things comes up. And yeah, we were also working a bit outdoors just outside The Tetley. And if Yeah, it feels really good to be able to work in different spaces. Challenging, yes, we were actually yes, we weren't going to work in a place called the Cinder Moor. But now they have a COVID testing centre there. And then yeah, it I feel like it kind of reflects the time of it. But it's everything is shifting, like nothing is really.. it's just really hard to know, from week to week, where to be. So that has been a bit of a struggle.

But again, I think because we have been working in different spaces. It's it's, yeah, we can place it. It doesn't have to be in one specific space at the moment. The process, at least yeah. I'm trying to think of challenges. I think, yeah, I mean space, because I had this space in mind had to re-think and adapt a bit I guess. And then I also have to remind myself to just keep coming back to the work. We were off for like, two weeks, we didn't meet, me and the dancers. And then we came back. And then I was like, "Oh, nice. We're back again." Because it's easy that I'm I guess also because it's bodies, right? If I would work with maybe in other other material, like something that I can have with me, you know, it will be different thing maybe. But because, yeah, you know, we meet in yeah in public space or studio, it's, I can kind of just watch the films or like, read, what I was writing before. So yeah, it makes me if it's good, coming back to it, and just keep working.

There is one part in the material that I, every time I see it, I find it so exciting to watch. And it's something to do, It's the material where Inari and Sarah are working with repetition. So they are repeating a

movement. And they are repeating it, and then they speed it up. And then they kind of move down to the ground while it's repeating this movement. And I'm not really sure why I like it so much. I think it's something to do with, so when they're going down to the ground, they are keeping the same rhythm. And yeah, this had something to do with like, because of that rhythm is going it's something is like, it's kind of looks like it's it needs to be there that the repetition needs to be there because if it weren't there, they wouldn't have had slowly been going down to the ground. So it's something again, maybe keeping something alive just because or, or exhausting an image to keep repeating in movements that I'm finding very intriguing at moments. So yeah, I think that section is really yeah, I'm really enjoying it.