



Transcription of recorded conversation

**Dance Dialogues: Phillip Adams, Lucy Guerin and Rebecca Hilton**

4 February 2021

**Angela Conquet - 00:00**

Hello and welcome everyone. My name is Angela Conquet. I have the immense privilege today to be hosting this conversation with three incredible legends of Melbourne and New York, and we will be talking about this in a moment.

But firstly, I would like to begin by acknowledging that the four of us here today are joining in this conversation from the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and we would like to pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging, and to extend that respect to any First Nations people joining us today.

Today, I will do something probably a little bit radical, because I will not introduce the guests because I think they'd need no introduction, and also because I think the conversation that we'll be having in a few minutes around New York, and the time before and the time after, truly defines you biographically, and I guess not only.

I would only like to say a few words about me, I'm not at all famous, you three are. I'm Angela, I'm now an independent curator based here in Melbourne, among many other things, also the co-editor of Dancehouse Diary publication that is hosted by Dancehouse. And I'm also currently undertaking a PhD at the University of Melbourne.

I also have to describe to provide an audio description of myself, which is always an awkward exercise. So I'd say I'm a white woman in my early 40s, wearing dark green glasses and short hair. I'm sitting currently in my bedroom where you can see some of my plants, and some of my collections of the Japanese orbees.

I would like to invite the three speakers to provide a brief description of themselves. As I said, they need no, no further introduction. But before we jump into the conversation, if you would like to start perhaps Becky? Becky, who is with us on this side of the world, because she has left us a while to go to go to the dark lands of



Stockholm, and now she's back, back a little bit in Australia to enjoy the summer light, well, what's left of it today anyway.

**Becky Hilton - 02:29**

I was going to pretend I was still in Sweden actually...

**Angela Conquet - 02:32**

It's your dark side. Yes. Would you like to audio-describe yourself Becky.

**Becky Hilton – 02:36**

I am a 57-year-old white person, woman who looks my age. I have shoulder length brown hair and glasses. I'm sitting in a very dull room in my parents' house, it's got white walls and a horrible pine wardrobe on one side. I'm wearing black. I usually do. My mother just told me I don't...I never liked colours, even when I was a child.

**Angela Conquet – 3:09**

Well, perfect description Becky, and Phillip was saying earlier that you haven't changed in forever, which it's a compliment of course. Phillip, you're white.

**Phillip Adams – 03:18**

Yes. Hello, everybody. My name is Philip. And I'm sitting in an apartment in St. Kilda actually, minding two dogs. And I'm 55, white male. I have grey hair, and what's left of it I try really hard to part it to one side. And that's all I need to say.

The background that I have behind me is a cocktail bar. For some strange reason I just happened to put that in the backdrop too. And being a non-drinker, it's kind of ironic. Thank you.

I have black rimmed glasses on, and a white shirt.

**Angela Conquet – 03:55**

Thank you Phillip. And Lucy?



**Lucy Guerin – 04:00**

I'm a white woman in my very late 50s. My hair is cut in a bob and parted on the side. I'm wearing glasses, some lipstick and I have an almost Jackson Pollock-styled shirt on, that's pink and purple and navy. It looks better than it sounds. And I have a white wall behind me.

**Phillip Adams – 04:25**

I'm just gonna say for somebody in their late 50s Lucy, you look amazing.

**Lucy Guerin – 04:30**

Thank you, Phil.

**Phillip Adams – 04:33**

So young, you've never aged.

**Angela Conquet – 04:39**

Before we move into this conversation, that I have to disclose that I have actually a small surprise for you. My questions this afternoon are actually enriched with some very interesting questions that are coming straight from New York. From people that you know and you love. And if you answer well at the end of this conversation, I will tell you who those people are. Just to keep the, you know, the suspense going, to keep you focused. And you can also play a game of trying to guess who's asked which question, which is a difficult one. I'm warning you.

The reason why we're here today to talk about New York is simply because BalletLab and Temperance Hall, and LGI, Lucy Guerin, are launching a new program, which is called Out of Bounds, which is a new showcase program, very much inspired by the dance...dancescapes, of New York in the 80's, and 90's.

And, obviously, because all three of you have spent time in New York at the, almost the precise moment in time, I think it's, it's a timely moment to revisit those shared experiences, but also to talk about the importance of the context in shaping the artists in general, and more precisely the artists that you have become.



You were perhaps uncoincidentally, in New York almost at the same time. And Lucy was there from '89 to '96. Philip from '88 to '98. And Becky a little longer from '86 to 2000's. I think it was 2000s, yes. You were not the first Australians to land in New York, you were part of a second or third wave, it's debatable, but I will just say second. There were some Australians already working there, and there were some of them were quite influential, among whom Russell Dumas, Nanette Hassall and Eva Karczag.

For today's dialogue, I think I would like to frame this conversation from the perspectives...obviously, of your lived experience of those times. But I think I'd like to place the focus more broadly on the role of this context and the associated aesthetics, communities, and politics of that context. And the role all this played in nurturing you as makers, practitioners and thinkers. And also, as pedagogues, because you're all pedagogues. I think I would also more particularly be keen to hear in what ways the years that you spent in New York, influenced you or challenged you, in a manner that Australia would have not had you decided to stay here? And was it perhaps, as Phillip mentioned in his PhD in progress, I think that's what it's called, a PhD in progress, was it this moment in time, a 10 year rehearsal in the preparation of something important to come?

And I'd like to get you started with this quote by Sarah Schulman, who in her book, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, which talks about precisely those times in New York. She says,

*"Artists move to cities because they want to be part of new ways of thinking and new political movement. For it to work, they have to have access to affordable spaces, for unrecognised practitioners, and also to find time to make work. Diversity of thought and experience, that produces a dynamic mutual exposure to various points of view. Stimulation, unlimited raw material, pleasure, indifference, and regular direct access to great artists in their work."*

Before we get to talk about what you found in New York, when you got there, I'd like to start with the beginning with the obvious question, what were the reasons that made you leave Australia? And did you consult before going? And perhaps I would start with Lucy.

**Lucy Guerin – 8:50**

I think there are a number of reasons...Becky and I both worked with Russell Dumas, and all three of us, at some point, worked with Nanette Hassall at Danceworks, who both had had significant careers in in New York. And so,

there was that sort of drive, and that information coming to us that I think made us aware that there was another...there's another world of dance outside of Australia.

And I think probably the other thing for me was, although I really enjoyed dancing, I love dancing, I knew that it was something I hadn't felt that I really had found my connection to it, or what I wanted to express with it. A lot of my college training was kind of about, you know, sort of almost like, romantic love duos, and I don't know, it's a bit mean, that's a reduction... but stylistically, I hadn't really found something that I connected with...here.

### **Angela Conquet – 10:03**

Becky? Phillip? Who wants to go first?

### **Becky Hilton – 10:08**

Lucy and I had been to New York in 1984 with Russell. And I was just, like, there's so much to learn here. I can't imagine not coming here and trying to learn what there is to learn. And that's not on... I mean, it was an aesthetic and also an ethic, I think... This kind of different relationship to representation, or what a dancer looked like, or what a dancer's body could do, what was dance, what was not dance... It was just, much more, like we were talking earlier, much more swampy... It felt very fixed here. To me, like, this one person does this.

I had worked with the two people that were kind of... it seemed kind of... that I could engage intellectually, rather than only aesthetically with the work somehow. And neither of... those experiences were intense in different ways, and, yeah, I just wanted to get back there as soon as I got back here...

Lucy, and I spent quite a few months in New York, with Russell there. Russell basically looked at us and said, *ew you can't dance at all*, and took us off to New York to educate us, basically. I mean, it was, it was... there was beauty and terror in that, I would say... that, that was why I went, I was just... it was just like, oh, there's a place in the world. There's all this... I want to know... I can find them there. Romantic.

### **Angela Conquet - 11:54**

Yes, well is it romantic when Russell Dumas tells you can't dance and invites to go to New York? Debatable, but obviously, you knew what he was doing.

Phillip, for you the experience would have been quite different, because you didn't dance with Russell then, or did you?

**Phillip Adams- 12:12**

No, I didn't.

**Angela Conquet- 12:18**

So what led you to go to New York?

**Phillip Adams – 12:21**

A little different. I was a student at the Victorian College of the Arts in third year. And like Lucy was saying, and Becky, there was a real camaraderie around Danceworks, which were also lecturing at the Victorian College of the Arts. And company members such as Trevor Patrick, and sorry, jump in. If you recall all the names. Sue Healey, of course, and...

**Becky Hilton: 12:38**

Helen Garner...Nan [Nanette Hassall]...Beth Shelton

**Phillip Adams – 12:51**

And of course, already, that information was coming in. And Nannette asked me to join Danceworks and I toured with...Were you there Lucy? Becky...in Adelaide... no you were there with Lucy. Yes, so that conversation was born early, and I won the ANZ International Fellowship Award, which back then was 15,000 bucks. And that's a lot of money in 1988.

And so, there was this absolute immediacy in, in my understanding that New York was the centre... the dance centre of the world, it was the place to be, and to gain this knowledge base to which I couldn't have access to here in Melbourne.

And so with, you know, all the courage I could muster, I bought an airline ticket on Continental Airlines. I landed in Port Authority Bus Terminal in 1988. With the number of a friend, who knew a friend, who knew somebody



else, that I could perhaps stay with if I called them and I got there. So long story. And so I think all that youthful energy and not a care in the world, it sort of got me everywhere.

**Angela Conquet – 13:58**

So when you go to New York, you arrived, I would say, you know, the glorious Judson years were over by then, obviously, and that we know acted as... that those years acted as a 'purifier', as Gia Kourlas says it so beautifully in [one of her articles in the New York Times](#).

And I think if I look at how now, you know, Sally Baines talks about those years like late, mid to late 80's, she was saying that dance had become preoccupied mainly with...was very short of meaning. It was just reflexive. And the choreographic compositions became, you know, increasingly focused on systemization, and structuring, and endurance, and surprisingly technical skills. So, mastery seemed to be in against... perhaps that was what, that's why Russell was thinking that this is where you needed to learn to dance properly.

I'm curious what the atmosphere was when you got there, and what were the artists obsessed with when it got there in terms of, you know, concerns and urgencies. And as importantly, what were the conditions in which they were making work?

**Phillip Adams-15:12**

Well Becky, you were there first.

**Becky Hilton – 15:16**

Yeah, what happened. So I got off the plane. I think were we staying with Stuart? In Hoboken? Yeah.

And I got the Village Voice. And I opened the Village Voice. And they were like 100 auditions. And maybe I'm exaggerating, but heaps of auditions, heaps of classes to do. And you just went and did auditions, because that was a way to learn the place. And you did...I was doing three different classes a day.

And, yeah. I think I got a job right away with John Carrafa, who was an ex-Twyla Tharp dancer, actually. And then people saw me performing in that, and invited me to other...it was just on. It just was kind of happening. And it happened without the kind of stress that I felt here. Where I didn't quite fit...what Lucy was saying, somehow. I



mean, I was kind of a very facile dancer, I could make things look kind of okay, pretty fast. But it felt much more kind of, segregated and codified in Australia. The kind of styles, this person did that...where it just was much more mashed up.

Although now I recognise, it was just a bigger pool of the same style. We were very much downtown, below 14<sup>th</sup>, experimental dance scene. And there was a whole other modern dance scene... kind of Paul Taylor, which Mark Morris has more in that tradition. And then there was, you know, more kind of balletic contemporary ballet things. But we were, you know...and I mean, the AIDS crisis was raging. So, you're immediately in a politic, in relation to politics, in a way that just wasn't something that was happening at all here.

Every night, you could go and see something every night. Like a weird thing in someone's basement, or something at City Center. Movement Research began the Monday night the Judson Church series again. I mean, that was a little later... I'll shut up.

But it was very vibrant. And people were very open. Everybody was from somewhere else. No one was from there. So, it created this sense of... let's put on a show. No one had any money. None.

#### **Lucy Guerin – 17:40**

Yeah, I think that's very true. There was a sort of... even the dancers who were dancing with the bigger companies had very little money and weren't paid all year round. I think there was...one big thing for us was that there was classes, and that we would, every morning, we would probably from 10 to 12, most people would do a class. We would find the money to go and pay into a class. And there was ballet for contemporary dancers, but there was also a whole range of somatic classes. Klein Technique, Alexander Technique, contact improvisation, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's BMC, just a whole range of people with incredibly deep, physical knowledge.

And I think that that sort of approach, in a way, I think, was then reflected in the kinds of work that was being made, in that, for me, it really was about finding these vocabularies in the body or these... I don't want to say new ways of moving but kind of...not from technique, not from the various techniques that I had learned as a young person. But just sort of trying to find different ways of moving, and some of that included, you know, a lot of sort of articulation through the joints. And initiation was a huge thing, like initiating from different parts of the body... this is from my perspective. And release techniques, this distorting of hips and shoulders... and





there's a lot of straight arm dancing too, with kind of flat hands. I don't know why. Anyway, I don't know where that came from.

So, for me, I think it was really about kind of trying...once I began...once I realised that I really wanted to choreograph, which happened after a few years of dancing with people. I really wanted to find a unique vocabulary, and that was sort of a big part of my focus when I was there.

**Angela Conquet – 20:04**

And Phillip, were you going to classes, or you were already thinking about the choreographer you would become?

**Phillip Adams – 20:11**

No no, not at all. No, I think the majority of those early formative years, were going to classes and getting jobs and dancing. And, as what Lucy and Becky have described, there is nothing for me to add other than, you know, this late 80's and 90's, Angela, was super influential period of postmodern outlets that, you know, we're forming in this community of choreographers, and artists that were experimenting, and... like this vivid and explicit dialogue with performance art...visual art and critical theory being developed. That was from the past 30 years.

It was like they were falling in their... in the bloodlines of the postmodern Judson Church era, and still paying homage, but radicalising and experimenting within it, and exhausting it. Like there was nothing else to say in this language... As Andre Lepecki speaks so well, and in a lot of his essays...

So now just to wrap it up by just saying that, like Becky was saying, all this was playing out. We have to realise that what was shaping the identity also of the city, and the way that we were able to be in the ghetto together...whether it's that, what Becky was saying, the subculture of downtown. The aristocrats of the uptown concert stages, or the midtown kind of, bourgeois moment, the tails and stuff, there was still a shared camaraderie between everybody in the village voice, or the way we navigated those languages between PS122, St. Mark's Church, The Kitchen, Dance Space Project, Joyce Soho, whatever, we could rehearse in, these loft spaces, or other spaces that sometimes we're just so small, you couldn't swing a cat in it... Let's talk about Donna Riches later...



However, in all of that, like Becky was saying, the city was under siege. This was an epidemic of AIDS was like, you know, had its grip on the city and threatening the erasure of gay history and memory.

**Angela Conquet – 22:05**

We will talk about that more at length and more in depth in a second. But I'm just curious, to get a sense of how you perceived, I guess, this aesthetic that you were... that was typical in New York that you obviously, if you were not part of it, yet, you could observe it, or could you observe it while being part of it?

And I guess my question would be like, how would you describe this? This particular... yeah, what we now call the New York dance aesthetic of the 80s and early 90s in New York... because looking at, you know... yes, you mentioned Andre Lepecki, we know that with his article he wrote called, How Tradition Paralyzes American Dance, and I think, by what Lucy was telling me kind of everyone got really upset when he published that thing in early 90s. Because he said, or, you know, however...this dancing seemed to be disturbingly fixated on concerns and problems that had less to do with the world at large, that with the act of dancing itself. It was almost as if there was a young Americans in the 80s was still bound to the modernist concern of basing their creations on autonomy and self referentiality. Which is surprising because we could almost say this now of the European dance of the late 2000s, in many ways.

So I'm curious to hear from you how you analyse then, or maybe how you analyse now that particular flavour of dance aesthetics. And I know, it's quite a delicate exercise, because wherever we go into kind of nation specific conversations about what makes the specificity of city, it's not only about aesthetics, it's about politics and ethics and other flavours and tastes and combinations of these... But I would be curious to hear what words you put in it?

**Phillip Adams – 24:02**

It's a big question, I have to share it, we like... the confluence of styles was so dramatic, and there was definite influences that was specific in different genres. Like, I look at the masterful works of Tere O'Connor and I'll maybe just let that bounce to Becky and Lucy for a moment, these sort of psycho-American dramas that were more wanting you to watch cinema then wanting to watch choreography.

But then I would watch Jennifer Monson deploy her body politically and feminist-ly from one end of the stage to the other in protest, but also adopting a postmodern Judson attitude. But then you would get David Zambrano, was in contact improvisation. And then you would see Becky dancing with Stephen Petronio with his-off kilted balletic poise, inherited from the Michael Clarke-era, and then the fashionista over all of it. So, it was a confluence of many things.

But I kind of bring it back down if like, bow out there and just talk to Tere's front. Of who I still think today's...I think back to that era, my...and John Jasper's too, go directly to those two narratives, which were rife.

### **Becky Hilton – 25:10**

John was definitely in the Trisha Brown tradition. I mean, to me, the things you were describing earlier, Lucy... I think Trisha Brown cast the biggest shadow by miles, in terms of the vocabulary of dance. Like I think, Steve... many of those choreographers that came out of... that were quite influential at that time... although Tere and John are really interesting because they're a little bit iconoclastic actually, they didn't really fit into the kind of lineage, the system of lineage.

But like I danced with people that danced with Trisha... was the total kind of inheritance, inheriting a particular style. And kind of stylistics I would say. And it was about precision, and kind of... it was super technical, but it looked like, what this old thing? You know, it didn't kind of perform...perform kind of obvious virtuosity. But it was impossible to do, you know. So it had this interesting thing where it looked easy, but it was incredibly hard, you know, so it had this...the casualness of the pedestrian, kind of ethic in a way, that was produced from Judson church...became this super kind of technical style, you know. And that was really dominant, I think, for a long time.

Now Tere was much more like a mash up of Cunningham and ballet, which meant in Europe, where the company... basically the New York dance scene was supported by giant European festivals, paying for entire works. And when Europe, around about the time Andre wrote that article, just said, actually, we don't need you anymore. The bottom really fell out of New York dance. I mean, there was no money, you know, so...and Tere never... Europe never got Tere. Europe kind of got John a bit more because he had the connection with Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, you know, he was kind of a secret love child of the European Dance Theatre and New York post-modernism.

But I think the post modernists, were actually high modernists. I think we're...I think they misnamed it. I think we're in a postmodern era now. I don't think...I think all of the concerns of the Judson church bit... it was high modernism. I think. Now that I kind of understand more about, kind of, art history... somehow.

**Anegla Conquet – 27:48**

Yeah, yeah totally. I was just about to say, you know, Tere, unfortunately... Tere O'Connor, we're talking about Terry O'Connor and John Jasper's, for those of who are less familiar with the wonderful artists. And to say also the Deborah Hay herself, you know, arrived in Paris in the 2000's. I think that... for the first time. Whereas in Australia, she's had such a long history. Lucy.

**Lucy Guerin – 28:11**

Um, yes. I think there were a lot of different strands. And there was still this... there were still people from the Judson Church-era, who were still practicing... Simone Forti and Lisa Nelson, Steve Paxton... they were still around, they still teaching and performing. And I agree with Becky, that I think Trisha Brown just had a, you know, a huge influence.

And what on Andre Lepecki says, and sort of in as a negative in that, in that article about this obsession with the dancing body was really, for me, the exciting thing about being in New York. And this actual exploration of ways of thinking about dance and ways of... there was a lot of discussion about undoing habits, breaking habits... You know, like, Trisha Brown, sort of trying to do more than one dance at the same time, whilst reciting her biography or...yeah, ways of sort of cutting through predictable movement. And I think that's sort of where I...not in there, but in that sort of movement exploration, that's where I landed and where I became excited.

But I was also quite interested and a little bit afraid of this other kind of performance art element that was really strong in New York with groups like Dancenoise, or there was Dennis O'Connor, there was Karen Finley. And these... they were these sort of really messy kind of... lots of fake blood, lots of nudity, kind of, very rambling structures, and very politically active. And often a really strong queer aesthetic. So that there was almost, for me, these two things going on, and I guess I was really fascinated by that, you know, that other side and those artists are often performing clubs and, you know, other situations than just traditional theatres.

But yeah, for me I was in that camp of obsession with movement and the dancing body.

**Angela Conquet – 30:35**

It's beautiful hearing you speak because I think you talk about what inspired you, what influenced you then, and also the challenges that you're exposing yourself as artists and also, I guess, practitioners living away from home and being in this other world, which was not necessarily yours.

And that kind of takes me to my next question, which is, what communities were you part of when you were there?

Because I think one of the richest assets of New York in those times precisely was where the many dance communities, and the support, and the energy, and the dynamics that were circulating within those communities, in between different communities...and I know that you have... as much as you have many similarities in the way you've experienced New York, and there are also many differences in how you navigated those times.

And I'm just curious to hear from you, what these communities you were in, in what way they nurtured your inspired you. And where do you see the value of being surrounded and welcomed in? As people coming from somewhere else, how did you feel welcome? Or how did you find your way in, in a context that was not necessarily yours? And obviously, you were both inspired by it, and challenged at the same time.

**Becky Hilton - 30:02**

I think it wasn't really anyone's context, what I was saying before, I mean, everybody felt like everybody went there to do dance. And then everybody was from somewhere else, somehow. And even people who were from New York, weren't from...you know, it's like dance was a country. You know, experimental dance was like our own country somehow. We didn't call it experimental dance. What did... we called it modern dance. Contemporary Dance is a real European term. We just called it dance I think.



But there was lots of circulation between different, like, I danced with Michael Clark, but I danced with Stephen, but I danced with Jennifer Monson...I also dance with Tere, I danced with Neil Greenberg, I danced with John Jaspers... but like I had...I was very interested in circulating through all the different kind of ...the very varied landscape. It wasn't as bordered. Styles weren't as bordered, somehow, there at the time. I don't know if you guys felt that.

But at the time that we were there, there was much more overlap...there was competitiveness and kind of like, ew, you know, like Tere hated Stephens work... And but, you know, there was all kinds of... because Steven got lots of work, and there was lots of different...But people are really in it together, you know, the thing that was at stake was the form itself, not fame or fortune, because they weren't really an option, somehow.

#### **Lucy Guerin – 33:31**

Yeah, I think that's true. There's a lot of, you know, crossing of boundaries, and a lot of having to go beyond your comfort zone, I have to say, like that...I think that was one of the really interesting things is being in these dance situations, or with people from all over, that you just don't necessarily know how to navigate. But geographically, it was actually really contained, because we pretty much never went above 14th Street and probably, very rarely went below Houston. Although we did go down to Delancy as well. But, you know, I think back then, and I think of, you know... it was really a little patch geographically.

But I think for me, the community that really sustained and supported me when I was in New York, were this group of my female friends and Phillip. But like, Becky and the other dancers and... Ros Warby, who was there at the time, I think Ros is listening, hello Ros. And other dancers who worked with... like Chrysa, Sarah Perron and Mia Lawrence, they were our very close friends. And the people that we danced with, and the people that we interacted with every day, and made dinner for each other and went out to bars. And that was challenging and sustaining, and I learned so much from all of those people.

And when I look back on that, I sort of see all of us, kind of, between each other, and everything else that was going on in New York, just refining and learning, and kind of, figuring out what we thought and what we wanted and what was important. That's was probably very key for me as a community. And that was my peers.



**Phillip Adams – 35:50**

I'm the same, like Lucy and Becky I had a posse, you know, I danced with a pot pourri of choreographers.

And, you know, there's this moment, when you got a job with a company? It was a big sort of leap of faith when you had a permanent namesake to associate yourself with or...and I kind of find that a little bit disturbing later in life, like, "*oh, I'm dancing with such and such*". And you had this kind of moment of where you had your belonging finally, rubber stamped by being in a company situation. I danced with Bebe Miller, but also lots of independants like Donna Uchizono and Dennis O'Connor and I was more in like...

I sort of became more and more engaged with the queer identity of the city and the way that was circulating. And I think that you know, it's interesting because whilst the postmodern, the white, the dance of the white person, was the predominant conversation that was occurring between all of these languages and information sharing of the 80s, there was also a homosexuality and queer identity were rife in the city. And in the downtown scene....you could almost say like, the rehearsal dance floor and the disco floor between queer communities, both cooperated as uniting fronts. Yeah, of social reforming, especially in the gay community.

And on the west side, you'd have huge gay nightclubs like Mars, and the Tunnel nightclubs, but they were right next to the Kitchen and the Joyce Theatre. So, you only separated by 12th Avenue and a few blocks, right. And so, in the east side, you'd have King Tut's Wah Wah Hut, The Pyramid and Boy Bar, but that was next to PS122 and St. Mark's. So, there's kind of like, for the queer communities downtown ghettos were like, a makeshift of recreational disco and performance spaces, improvising and exchanging between communities.

And I was getting into that rhythm of experimentation. And that was kind of the queer, or the finding informative gay lifestyles, and shaping my cultural interest. And inside of that, maybe we'll talk about AIDS later, but that's a whole other conversation which gets...

**Becky Hilston – 38:03**

But in relation to that Phil, Richard Elovich, who started the Gay Men's Health crisis, was a director of Movement Research when it was at Varick Street. So ...and we would rehearse there, and so we all joined Act Up because



we thought Richard would be mad at us if we didn't. Like, it wasn't like a politic, it was like a, yeah, kind of peer group pressure somehow.

I mean, it was very interesting those overlaps...there was not the separation. No to separation between church and state, you know?

**Phillip Adams – 38:39**

No, particularly there was one group that formed in the East Village, and Becky you can vouch for this and Lucy, you would never go to the meatpacking district, Angela, unless you're in a cab, right? This is dangerous, really tough neighbourhood, really druggie.

And the, you know, that's where queer operates best. And so, there was this club called Click Club. And they welcomed everybody. And if you didn't like what they were preaching, get out. And they had a night called Mother at Martha. And this is where I met Dennis O'Connor, through associated friends, who was performing on the bar as Martha Graham, doing the most exceptional job, I must say, pitch turns and gut-wrenching spirals into the crowd, etc. So that, that pitch turn and spiral also performed at the Wooster Group, and it was performed at St. Mark's, like I'm just trying to say that was really important, as Becky was saying, we were acting up just as much in our community here, as we would go and protest on the street.

**Angela Conquet – 39:38**

Well, you all mentioned, obviously the big political moments of the times, which obviously was the AIDS crisis. And you were right in there at the same...at that moment.

And before we talk about that, I was really interested to hear you, Phillip, talk about the, obviously the queer politics, taking a bit of space on the scene, because it was also the time it went... and also black performance theory...because it was also the time when so many choreographers, actually black African American choreographers actually, started to be more visible, like Bill T. Jones and Ralph Lemon and Ishmael Houston-Jones and Bebe Miller. So, I think you having been exposed to all this diversity of not only aesthetics and politics, was definitely something that probably you would have not had here in...had you stayed in Australia or had you gone to Europe.



But I'd be curious to perhaps, to take a bit of time now to perhaps talk about the AIDS crisis. And I have this amazing quote from Ishmael, because... he's not one of the surprise questions, by the way. But he says, he has a beautiful quote where he says: *"In a certain way, my art practice has always been tied up with my activist practice. I was never dealing solely with the aesthetics. I was dealing with the social political world in which the work was being made."*

And Sarah Schulman again says...talks a lot about the, what she calls the rebellious queer culture, cheap rents and, vibrant downtown arts movement, which obviously after that vanished almost overnight, according to her. So I'm just yeah, I'm quite curious how, how aware and concerned and influenced you were by the political context of those years and precisely the AIDS crisis.

And whether aesthetically brief I mean, yeah, Phillip.

**Phillip Adams – 41:40**

I've got a few things to say about that. I was thinking as you're asking the question.

Um, well yeah, in this sort of rich tapestry of, you know, gender binaries, I was betwixt in between them, you know, that vanguard of choreo-political activism, we'll call it. And wallowing in postmodernist, purist abstraction. At the height of the AIDS epidemic. So, there are strange languages that... well not strange, they were competing languages that I would...was betwixt.

And as I danced through the AIDS epidemic, with my colleagues, you know, battling this terminal virus and joining the protested voices and strong of the community, alongside the rise of Act Up. I, you know, I have to single out American choreographer Bill T. Jones, in his performance *Still Here*... is one of the most resounding moments on stage of BAM, in 1994? Sorry, yep. Y

ou know, it was a full evening work. And he was exploring this, these experiences of receiving and living with life threatening medical diagnosis. And so... and then rooted in Jones's response to his diagnosis of HIV positive and losing his partner, Arnie Zane, several years earlier, I guess, his... the particular crisis, you know, was an autobiographical...

What I'm trying to say is this, there was this like, the autobiographical nature of near-death experiences were very much part of how the performances and the people that were engaged in them, were providing their bodies and using them as protested on stage. And at the same time bubbling underneath the surface as such, although my works, you know, don't commune with protest or activism in the way Bill T. Jones portrayed that, I guess, in his prolific choreography *Still Here*, mine is more resourcing of the fortunate miss, you know, near misses, and the substances of voice that take this flow of information to elation.

Like, there was this kind of survival and battling. And you saw that so strong, not just on the urban beat of the street every day, but in the activist work like Harris...I can't remember his name, Harris, Harrison? Somebody I dance with. I've gone blank. Can't remember, I just don't remember his name, sorry...where I would be in a hospital gown laying in bed and like acting out these really horrific and traumatic scenes in performance art scenario positions, and in different spaces, and usually in Brooklyn.

Yeah, I was, it was it was alarming, but I think of that now as like, I carry the virus, not medically inside of my body, but I carry the scars of that era, and the trauma and the deep loss of people. And I can still see these in my work, which is you know, which struggles with death, sex and religion and has a kind of epiphany, epiphanistic way of exploring those dynamic moments... can relate back to this trauma of New York and how it relates...it was part of, deeply part of the community.

But I have to say, you know, it was terribly sad Angela, you would be dancing one day with, improvising on one day in the studio, and the next day, they weren't there. It was, it was like that. And those stories really, you know, I hold dear to today because it was very... it shaped probably a lot of the, my work as it sits. Yeah, psychologically affected by that time.

### **Becky Hilton – 45:23**

Just to understand the context a little bit, because there was President Reagan refused to say the word AIDS. There was no health care. There was, there was no support, you know, it was called, if it was called anything, it was called the 'Gay Cancer' and they got it because they're, you know, they're gonna go to hell anyway, you know. So that was the context that this was all happening in. People had no health care, there were just fundraisers and, you know, donations and volunteering... this incredible network of actual practical activism.

But it had to happen... It was very...you know, AIDS also happened here, of course, but here we had a health, federal health minister, that gave out free needles, free condoms, and have that crazy, umm, Grim Reaper ad, which basically said, AIDS can kill everybody. Not only gay people.

So, we had such a different kind of context. There, there was no support, nothing, it wasn't even acknowledged, by the powers that be, that it was, that it even existed. So, we were dealing with that. So, there is significant trauma about that. I remember doing one of those activist... we went, we all went and laid down on the steps of the stock exchange. And were you there Phil? Lucy? Were we all there? And that the police had gloves, and we're really afraid to touch us. This was like 1988, or something. So, everybody knew how it was transmitted.

But the beautiful thing I remember about that is someone near me, maybe Monson, I can't remember, maybe Scotty Heron maybe, they just said, when they touch you really relax. Don't struggle and see what happens.

So, dance...choreography and dance was like, deep in everything, somehow. I think about that. So when the police touched us to try to drag us away, everyone just got really relaxed and, and the police, they got more gentle. Like touch and the way we responded actually changed. Briefly, and then they got really mad. But there was a brief moment of this amazing, communicated gentleness, you know, because we didn't struggle, you know.

So, I think to me, that was in the work with the body. And the identity of the body, and the fact that anybody could dance. And I guess the thing that happened in the generation, we were part of that was maybe a bit different to the Judson generation was, we began also to work with precision and technique and specificity, you know, because of all the information that was coming through the somatic teachings.

### **Phillip Adams – 48:15**

But also, Stephens work with Michael, Becky, also being very activist around the virus and... several works that came from their 'Jew-etic'...

### **Becky Hilton – 48:25**



Yeah, that was kind of later. Yeah, but yeah, and they tried to have sex in art gallery...

**Phillip Adams – 48:33**

But it was very fashionable, I have to say.

**Lucy Guerin – 48:18**

Yeah. And there was also, the government began censoring certain works. There was the NEA saga where artists such as Karen Findley and Robert Mapplethorpe, were not allowed to receive funding, they were censored. And also, I remember, I think we... do you remember this Phil when we're working for Bebe, I think we had to sign something saying that we wouldn't use drugs?

**Phillip Adams – 49:04**

Correct.

**Lucy Guerin – 49:05**

Or Bebe had to sign something saying...

**Becky Hilton- 49:08**

I would never been able to sign that in a contract...

**Lucy Guerin – 48:11**

I don't think we signed it. I think she had to sign it on behalf of the company or something. Anyway, there was this really strong, yeah, censorship. Which was on top of AIDS, so it was it was dark in a lot of ways.

**Becky Hilton - 49:24**

But the NEA, actually, the National Endowment for the Arts, actually got shut down. It was during the Jesse Helms realm, in the... so they actually removed federal funding for the arts based on the fact that they had funded a Mapplethorpe exhibition of him...they were called the New York Five or something, I think?



But it actually shut down the whole, whole federal funding system for the arts got shut down in that moment. And Philip Morris, Philip Morris came to our rescue.

**Angela Conquet – 49:54**

Just because I'm a bit mindful of the time, and there are a few questions that are waiting to be asked.

**Phillip Adams – 50:03**

It could be an entire...

**Angela Conquet – 49:46**

...Go on forever. And I would just love to...and we can rewrite the whole history of this from an Australian perspective. But precisely I would like to kind of, go to take you now back into the present moment. Right now. And like taking into consideration everything that I've just, you know, that we've just talked about, and we could spend so much more time on every single direction that we kind of tackled today.

I was just wondering what... if you are now to look back at...Phillip, you talking talked a little bit about how you carry certain things now in the way you make work. But I just, one of the questions that I have for you is what did you learn in those, in that time precisely when you were in New York, that you carry with you as somatically, firstly, and then in the way you have, you are now shaped, or you are, you act or operate the world, is as thinkers and pedagogues?

What's that irreducible something that, that you've gained with this experience that wouldn't have happened in any other way?

**Phillip Adams – 51:20**

I had so many mentors, Angela, like, everyone was a mentor, every dancer was an influence. And these were incredibly informative years of, you know, early education in movement practice.

And I guess, I bring all of that tissue of the city in the way that like, it manifested itself when I returned to Australia in 1998. And with enough energy to sink a battleship really. I was younger and had all the ambition in



the world to be making work. And that inspired... I think, without those, it's like, it was, as I said earlier, a big rehearsal for something that, was going to happen later.

And so, I would just...I'd take away from it the impact of being in the studio with these two lovely people here. And knowing that that camaraderie was an international flow of information and language that was, that made up the downtown ghetto.

And I kind of, guess I'm bringing that downtown ghetto back to Melbourne, in some ways. And I arrived here and it wasn't here. There was a little tiny version of it. So, I'll sign off there, because I'm sure we'll get to that. But...

### **Lucy Guerin – 52:38**

Yeah, I mean, I think, you know, when I think about it, there is so many things. There's just so, so many things. I think one of the most important things for me was that sense of community and that having people to talk to about dance in a detailed way. And so, and to actually learn how to speak about dance, that happened to me in New York.

And also, how to work hard because, you know, I had a waitressing job, I was never able to get a Green Card, so I did a lot of under the table waitressing till two in the morning, and then go to class and then have a, you know, try and make a work in four weeks, with two hours rehearsal, three times a week or, you know, very, very short timeframe. So, I think I learned to, you know, get cracking on things.

And I think one thing about America, or about New York, was I learnt...I think as Australians, we can sometimes be quite defensive in a... like that our first thought is criticism. And that just was not there in New York, people have this really, I mean, not that there isn't criticism, there is, but if you have an idea, or you tell someone something, their first response is, *"oh, wow, that's incredible, yeah, why don't you do that"*. And, I think there was a whole sort of layer of fear that, for me, was removed by my experience with, you know, in a different culture.

And also, the anonymity of leaving the place where everyone knew you and going to a place where there was just a lot going on, and... and where you could just sort of bury yourself and find, and find your people, and find the ideas, find the community that, yeah, that really supported you.

**Becky Hilton – 54:47**

Yeah, I mean, I think that's really the thing the...because of the particular socio-economic context, you... everything seemed much more about process. Like, yeah, you'd make a work, but you'd be making another one, and another one, and another one, and you'd get all that... so it became part of this kind of, continuum of kind of a lifelong commitment to an art form. And part of the reason it could be that is because of the significant communities you were part of there.

So, someone, you know, we all had that. Someone saw your last piece... I didn't even choreograph yet, I didn't choreograph till I left New York. I still wouldn't exactly call what I do *choreography*.

But yes. People kept track of each other, I mean, that kind of particular web of connectedness. And so, people would be critical, but it'd be in relation to... you were trying to do what you did, what you did in that work, how that transformed in relation to this work, how that was in relation to that. There was...there was this amazing kind of networking and thinking and doing going on. So I think wherever I go, I try to figure out how to generate something like that.

**Lucy Guerin – 56:13**

Yeah, because I think that, that is happening, that is a little bit more here in Melbourne than it was when we left. Like I think there was sort of the companies and they were quite siloed in a way, they didn't really connect with each other. And so, I don't know, there was...it does feel, it does feel different now I think. You know, even just that we're having this conversation together. Yeah, so, yeah.

**Anegla Conquet– 56:42**

But precisely because you are all pedagogues now, and you work very differently in your respective organisations and companies. And Becky, you are more now in the academic world.

But you all work with the younger generations. What would you say, what would you say is the most... in what ways is it important when you are in formative years to just leave home and go and train elsewhere, in general?



Is this something that's, something to do with, I don't know, maybe a kinesthetic acuity or some sort of bodily eloquence that you can only have, or you can only experience, or kind of filter through the body, with the body, if you are not in your zone of comfort?

And I guess this question also, kind of refers to the, you know, the communities of thought that you were part of. Not only communities as such at the other end of the world. So in... obviously now we're... the world has changed, and it will be difficult for a while to travel. But would you recommend to younger generations to experience this in the way to, you know, go and experience something completely different, and expose themselves to different contexts and whatever that may, may come with it?

**Phillip Adams – 58:00**

Well, I mean, dance leads to that conversation naturally, anyway. It is consistently exploring surfaces and spaces that are hard to talk about, and hard to get through the cracks.

And I think those dancers which, you know...bugger, bugger it that we can't travel, this... at this time in history, that's really, really tragic. But there will be a time when we can travel. So, travelling in our own community clearly is the next step, is a key for us to all continue to, to be online in a studio and to be in a studio online, it has to happen at the same time now.

I won't talk too much about it but I... exposure is everything in the world. I mean, without knowledge, your body can't grow or nourish and feel the textures and the nature to which draws you to a certain aesthetic and... you know, clearly mine into a very queer aesthetic and I found that posse to support that in the art world in New York.

And, I think... I'll wrap that up by just saying, here in Australia now, and how to find, and navigate a confluence of, you know... with the rest of the planet... without being able to travel there, has to happen in the imagination as much as it can happen with the local sheriff. Yeah.

**Lucy Guerin – 59:23**





It's really tricky now, isn't it because especially since COVID, and, you know, it's really tricky for dance because as we know, like being in the room with other people is a huge part of what we do. But there's so many questions now around air travel, and living in Australia and it's, you know, becoming a really political question, and an environmental question. And so much work has been done about how to take these... this kind of exchange online and yeah, it's really quite problematic.

But I think the thing about going and living elsewhere is, and it's an obvious thing, but you really become aware of your own culture in a way that you never have, you know, that you understand your own culture because it's seen from a distance. And, also, I think, for me, realising that, you know, Australians have a different kind of, national character in a way. Because I think... I had some sense that you have to be like a real hard ass, and you had to be this kind of, you know... an artist had to be a particular way.

But I think that that was some sort of European kind of, stereotype that somehow had, you know, I thought that I had to uphold. And... but then I realised, actually Australians and not like... I mean some are, but that's a generalization... but that we have a different character, and it's actually... it's all right to work in that way, and to embrace, you know, the kind of ways of working that we've grown up with. It doesn't have to, you know, you don't have to sort of always be measuring yourself against something that happened elsewhere.

### **Becky Hilton – 1:01:31**

I think we just have to think of this as somewhere else. In the same way that going to... I mean, I think the whole kind of, going somewhere to learn from kind of, masters, it's good. That's gone, you know.

And in fact, when we went to New York, the thing that really surprised me, in terms of... something I've been committed to my whole life, which pedagogy, was the way Simone Forti taught was... like, it was totally different to the way I'd been taught dance here, which was really like, classic traditional kind of models in a way... I mean, Nannette certainly taught differently to that.

But the...I think it's good, that's gone. And I think we're just gonna have to try to find other ways that are more local, to kind of challenge our kind of sense of what we know, you know? And I think that's really exciting, actually. And find your, find your people.

I mean, I miss three-dimensionality, I miss bodies in space, I miss...I'm terrible at this. And I'm just always like, what? What is? What's happening? Like, I can't... and when I actually see people in real life, their faces...I get so much information about dimension and colour and gesture that I get like, paralysed.

So, I think, to slowly come back from this, it's going to be really important to not just snap back and try to go back. Because we can't go back. But there's something to be found here. And that's coming from someone who fucking hates it, you know. But there's something, there's something exciting in the way we're being forced to change. And that's what we did to ourselves when we went to New York. We forced ourselves to change. And now this is forcing change upon us. So, I think there's always ways to learn.

### **Angela Conquet – 1:03:28**

Beautiful words, Becky, to be wrapping up this conversation sooner. And just to remind those who are still with us to pop up any pressing questions in the Q&A section. And I do have a question that is very much to the point here, and very much in line with what you were just saying, Becky.

*“Do you think there is the same mentorship in experimental dance for artists in Australia as there was in New York? Or are we still in the field of tall poppies?”*

### **Becky Hilton – 1:03:57**

I don't think anyone mentored anyone in New York. I think we just went and hung out with them. I mean, it wasn't... there wasn't structure. It wasn't kind of like that. Right? Am I...?

### **Lucy Guerin – 1:04:08**

Well, I think we had people that we admired. But I think yeah, the style... it wasn't hierarchical. It wasn't, you know... I'm, you know, it was more of a sharing, I think.

And it's... one thing that makes a difference is that I think that we... none of us had any money. And so there was a sort of...and the people that would, that were teaching us didn't have any money either. And there was a kind of equality in that.



Of course that is not something that any of us want. We want artists to be able to survive and to, you know, have a decent lifestyle. But that that, you know... I don't know quite how to resolve that because the introduction...you know, I think in Australia, we are somewhat better funded, it's still... but it's very unequal. So there, you know, there are people, you know, that run their own companies, for example. And other people who are, you know, struggling at the bottom.

So, it does create this... I don't know if it's tall poppies, but it's the haves and the have-nots.

**Becky Hilton – 1:05:15**

People in New York taught because that was the only way to make money. So the information was being transmitted. Because that's the way people...that is the... Imagine a profession where you get paid the most by being a teacher. I mean... so everybody taught. Not... and they weren't people that were particularly drawn to teaching, they taught because that was the way they could sustain themselves.

So, all this different kind of information was being constantly circulated. I think that's a really interesting...You know, you can't really teach what you don't know so...that created a very particular kind of community.

You know, I would love that. I would love everybody to teach. All the time. I think there's something community building about that.

**Lucy Guerin – 1:06:04**

You used to go...and American...teachers from New York were very demand in Europe. And you go, Becky, I don't know if you did too Philip, and teach in Europe for a couple of weeks and just make a fortune.

**Becky Hilton - 1:06:16**

And make enough money to be able to come back and work with Tere.

**Lucy Guerin – 1:06:19**

Yeah, yeah, and work with a choreographer who doesn't have enough...

**Becky Hilton - 1:06:23**

I mean, my whole time in New York, Europe, first as commissioning, like, choreographers, whose companies I was in and then as kind of commissioning me to come and teach, sustained my... that I managed to live all those years in New York because of Europe.

**Angela Conquet - 1:06:43**

And one obvious question that I do not have, is probably the perfect question to end on. Why did you come back?

**Becky Hilton - 1:06:48**

I wanted to have a baby.

**Lucy Guerin - 1:06:56**

And I couldn't get any sort of permanent residency. But I really wanted to come back and be closer to my family. And I wanted... I couldn't see a pathway in New York, like, you know, people that I knew that were brilliant choreographers and have Green Cards and you know, had the things that I didn't have, still were struggling so hard, so much to kind of get any sort of traction for their work, or any sort of support. And I just... I just couldn't see a pathway. So yeah, those two things.

**Angela Conquet - 1:07:32**

And Phillip?

**Phillip Adams - 1:07:33**

Oh, well, you know, many things. It's kind of a slow burn for me. I had initially come back to do some projects in Australia and some teaching with Sue Healey, I can't remember some other choreographers, or making works at the Victorian College of the Arts, I just can't see...remember at all.

And then eventually I kind of saw more opportunity in a land down under. And that was an attractive dollar sign, you know... where I'd lived 10 years working in retail and, like Becky says, half of the time you were out in the field in-residence making works at the Wexner Art Centre or Portland Institute of... University, Minneapolis.



Creating companies' projects and then performing them at these fantastic universities who could afford to commission them... Usually the last performance was in New York, where they had no money to present it at the Joyce Theatre.

So that company model kind of, was unromantic anymore, it kind of burnt itself out. And I created my first work in New York with a dancer that was Tere's boyfriend at the time. Sorry, Tere if you're listening, I'm busting you on this boyfriend... Who, and I still admire today. And I think he is the bee's knees, Greg Sokolow. And it was a commissioned from St. Mark's Church, Laurie Upritchard was the artistic director at the time. And it was an all-in program, which kind of brings us to Out of Bounds a little bit, because these moments were gold. When you had an opportunity to have an all-in moment... like everybody, pot pourri, go!

And you would show work, whether it was in a shitty little loft, had no flooring. Or whether it was in a beautiful pine wood floor like St. Mark's Church. Or in a dark, kind of, downtown somewhere... try finding it up a staircase, which is... a lot of that a lot of that happened.

I made it work called *Swashbuckler*. And it kind of, you know... Laurie Upritchard gave me my first opportunity. To make and believe that I could create something.

**Becky Hilton – 1:09:28**

Thank you. I think that might be my favourite of your works Phillip!

**Phillip Adams – 1:09:31**

Thank you. The first work!

**Becky Hilton – 1:09:33**

Isn't that terrible to say, but I remember seeing that, like and being like...ooh, cool.

**Phillip Adams – 1:09:40**



And so, I came home with courage. Like I put that backpack on as I left and landed at Port Authority Bus Terminal 1998 I had the backpack on. And I ride back home with like a new wealth of information that I... was a rehearsal as I said.

So coming home was a natural cause and effect of having made projects here and eventually land back in Melbourne and start teaching at the Victorian College of the Arts. And then there was this one moment called *Return Ticket*. And Ros if you are listening, here it was. It was commissioned by Helen Herbertson, the artistic director of Danceworks at the time, which was in Albert Park. And she asked Lucy, Becky, and myself and Ros, who was working with us...

**Becky Hilton – 1:10:27**

Ros was our dancer.

**Phillip Adams – 1:10:28**

Our dancer. Who was stunning. And Lucy made an incredible work called *Robbery Waitress on Bail*. I made a work called *Grey Area*, which apparently some people are still fascinated with today. And Becky made a piece called *Family*, which I played the dog, and with Lucy, her pet dog.

**Becky Hilton – 1:10:45**

My piece was terrible...

**Phillip Adams – 1:10:46**

So here was a moment that changed the... these New York choreographers that have come back. A next generation, call it that, of influenced from New York, and the piece was...the evening was called *Return Ticket*.

**Becky Hilton – 1:10:58**

And we got a really... the worst review I've ever read in my whole life in the Age. By Hillary...

**Phillip Adams – 1:11:06**

And then, I quote on quote, if I can remember I'll pull it up, 'Go back to New York'.

**Angela Conquet – 1:11:11**

Well, that's Welcome Home, hey?

I'm truly the last question I have for you. And then we'll have to wrap up because otherwise, Tom will have scald us all.

In what way do you think you've influenced the Melbourne or Australian dance ecology? Really in a nutshell in maybe a sentence or two. Because obviously, you've brought all these things with you, and with your bodies, and your knowledges, in what way? In what way do... Precisely do you think you have... you might have influenced what happened after, here in Australia?

And I know you Philip are probably reflecting a lot on this because you're writing a PhD. So perhaps you already know the answer.

**Phillip Adams – 1:11:55**

Can I be the last person, please?!

**Becky Hilton – 1:11:58**

No idea. No idea.

**Phillip Adams – 1:12:02**

Oh, Becky, seriously, come on.

**Becky Hilton - 1:12:04**

No I don't I mean I can't...

**Angela Conquet – 1:12:09**

We can also be very polite and say history will tell but I'm sure...



**Phillip Adams – 1:12:12**

Like she's the most amazing mentor and teacher that, you know... I still remember her dancing in a piece at the Kitchen called *Middlesex Gorge* by Stephen Petronio. And I still see that as she sits there today. I'm reminded of how brilliant an influencer she was. The moment she started teaching.

**Becky Hilton – 1:12:34**

I would hope that the thing... I don't know about what I do, but I would love to say to young people, be careful about the line between self-expression and self-exploitation. I think now this is something to really be, kind of examining, in kind of deep way, somehow.

So I don't know. Yeah, I can't answer other question. But I would like to say that to... and if anyone's interested, I have a really great, beautiful piece of article about this very thing. But I think to me, when I look at the younger generation, this seems to be a really tricky, kind of, binary. Just the constant working, the constant promoting, the constant applying, the constant, you know...that administration of self in relation to career seems really exhausting to me in a way that I didn't... I didn't experience.

So I'm totally not answering your question, but I'm just putting...

**Angela Conquet 1:13:40**

Your thought you're very good at, but I know you all, so I didn't expect you to answer. I was just throwing it in there. You don't know if it's my question or somebody else's.

And perhaps this is the moment to actually wrap up with a message coming from New York, which says: "*When are you guys coming back? I am at Basilica waiting for you.*"

I have not, I did not ask all the questions that were sent to me. I do have a beautiful one from, if I manage to find it now, yes, somebody else, you will guess who says:

*"Living on the Seventh Street between Avenue C and D, didn't it feel like you could easily run into a friend, the downtown new music scene, collaborators, someone who you had just saw perform, or have a crush on just by*





*walking from your walk-up apartment to PS122 on first and ninth, Dancespace Project on 10th and 2nd Avenue, or having karaokes at Basilica. I feel like so much information was passed on that street”*

And I have to disclose who the people behind some of these questions were, and those I have not asked you have answered indirectly. Huge thank you to Laurie Upritchard, Tere O'Connor, Donna Uchizono and Ros Warby. That was my surprise.

**Phillip Adams – 1:14:57**

Oh I forgot about Donna, god don't have...that show we did on that floor and it had no stage on it. It was called *Surfacing*.

**Angela Conquet – 1:15:08**

Thank you, thank you, thank you, legends and living archives for telling this piece of history. So beautiful of you for us and bringing it back into what is important today and how it connects with you and with us.

And thank you to all those who joined us in this fifth Dance Dialogue. Thank you, Lucy for hosting and offering this opportunity to have these conversations. And thank you Tom for wrangling us all, it was an absolute privilege to be chatting with you.

**Lucy Guerin – 1:15:42**

Thank you, Angela.

**Becky Hilton – 1:15:46**

And I also just want to quickly answer Christos. There was a choreographer particularly dealing with breakdance, Christos, called Doug Elkins. Who's still, kind of, super active so there was kind of crossover, but not as much as one would think. It was a, definitely a... pretty white space I would say.

**Phillip Adams – 1:16:07**

And much of it occurred in the subway, Christos, like it was a favourite...

**Becky Hilton – 1:16:11**

It was everywhere.

**Phillip Adams – 1:16:12**

I would spend hours just getting off on 42nd Street and then listening to the drummer, and watching the rapper, and watching the dude just go so hard at the most coolest stuff ever. That was just as good as attending Becky's performance on the Joyce stage, and Lucy's work with Tere O'Connor's *Nursing a Newborn Pig*. Like I would see all this every day. And wow, that's all I can say. It's that information is helpful.

**Becky Hilton – 1:16:43**

I think in terms of what we were thinking about before, the way bodies work. You kind of... we're absorbent porous things. So, I think living in that city definitely informed our bodies, you know, so all of that stuff was in the studio and on the street somehow.

**Lucy Guerin – 1:17:00**

It's kind of interesting, because it feels like it's influenced contemporary dance here in Australia more, in a way, than it did at that time in New York. It's just quite interesting. Sort of this second, third, fourth hand, probably watching on videos. So...anyway.

**Phillip Adams – 1:17:17**

It is really important what Lucy's talking about when Becky, Lucy, Jody came and performed at Dancehouse, like, here's another link to the city or Miguel Gutierrez and I working on *Brindabella*, Luke George making his way to New York... like there's never been... there's always been a flight booked out. That continued until this moment, really.

And when someone becomes known to that city, they bring back another iteration of time, space and ethnicity, genealogy of radicalism, politicalism, and gender politics. And we just kept... we just caught the last wave of the post- or high modernist, as you would say. It was the last kind of moment in history in the 90s, close that door. And it was, I don't know, I think of Sarah Mitchellson as kind of, like holding court, and the last moment at the Kitchen as she presented the most spectacle of it all. And then kind of, trashed herself at the same time and going, what I made a piece of shit.

So, I kind of... but then we saw that at the Guggenheim, then we saw it at the Whitney. And we keep seeing each part of that confluence here in Melbourne, also adopting that same narrative. And as the Victorian College of the Arts under Carol Brown has a new director and how that language is also shifting internally in there. A new generation will have another conversation to when they move to New York to bring back.

So if... you know what I'm saying, it's a cycle about New York, and it's something that's never stopped being a fascination. Going back to Russell Dumas and Nannette Hassall and can anyone say before that? Perhaps there was...

**Lucy Guerin** – 1:18:48

Oh yeah, Paul Saliba

**Phillip Adams** – 1:18:50

Paul Saliba. Great. It was a great moment.

And now here we are, and I just... you know, it's just like, I've just ...very, very excited to see to three of us together, and Ros, I just wish I... could see your face there actually because it just...

**Angela Conquet** – 1:19:03

I'm really glad Philip, you're writing this PhD after which we'll have to publish it, so we get to see, we get to re-live this in your own words, which are full of flamboyance and...

**Phillip Adams** – 1:19:15

That's funny I've never written about my life, I've only danced it. And to, you know, to give it as much as I can in words is terrifying, Angela, but I'm gonna have a crack at it.

**Angela Conquet** – 1:19:24

I'm sure it will be flamboyant as your dances are, and we can't wait to read it.

Thank you again. I think we need to wrap up. Thank you for those of us who are still with us, and thank you again, Lucy, Phillip and Rebecca.



**Lucy Guerin** – 1:15:33

Thank you.

**Phillip Adams** – 1:19:35

Well, goodbye!

**END**