



Transcription of recorded conversation

**Dance Dialogues: Rebecca Hilton & Chrysa Parkinson**

8 October 2020

**Tom Pritchard – 0:00**

So, good evening everyone and welcome to this Dance Dialogues conversation with Rebecca Hilton and Chrysa Parkinson. I'd like to begin by acknowledging that I'm joining today's talk from the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and want to pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and extend this to any First Nations people joining us today.

My name is Tom Prichard and I'm the Studio Producer here at Lucy Guerin Inc. I'm a white cis man in my mid 30s with short and brown hair and a beard. I'm wearing a denim shirt with a flowery collar. Behind me is a room with white walls, a wooden shelf at a jaunty angle, a small mirror and a chest of drawers.

So, on to tonight's talk. We're delighted to welcome Becky and Chrysa, both of whom are joining us from an early Stockholm morning for a conversation exploring what practice is now. Before I hand over to them, some brief reintroductions.

Rebecca Hilton is an Australian artist living in Stockholm. Her practices include performing, choreographing, teaching, conversing and writing. Over three and a half decades in dance she has worked with a range of artists including Russell Dumas, Stephen Petronio, Mathew Barney, Michael Clark, Tere O'Connor, Jennifer Monson, John Jasperse, Lucy Guerin, Ben Speth, Tino Sehgal, Xavier Le Roy, Scarlet Yu and Chrysa Parkinson, among others.

Rebecca applies embodied practices and choreographic systems to explore concepts and manifestations of GROUPNESS. Her research environments include, but are not limited to -



dance companies, universities, arts festivals, community contexts, friendship circles and family groups. Rebecca is a Professor (of Choreography) in the research area SITE EVENT ENCOUNTER at the Stockholm University of the Arts.

Welcome Becky.

Chrysa Parkinson is a dancer living in Stockholm, and sometimes in Berkeley, California. She has been performing and teaching internationally since 1985. Her focus is on experiential authorship and the performer's agency: how performers engage with, dismantle and reconstitute their worlds.

In the United States, Chrysa worked as a dancer for many years with many well-known and relatively unknown artists – touring a bit but mostly performing in New York City. Since coming to live and work in Brussels in 2005, Chrysa has created works as a performer with many well-known and some relatively unknown artists, touring extensively. She has also had the pleasure of collaborating consistently with several artists as a researcher, including Rebecca Hilton.

Chrysa is currently a Professor of Dance at SKH (Stockholm University of the Arts), heading the Masters program New Performative Practices since 2011, supervising PhD candidates and conducting artistic research in dance. *(For full bio, see end of document)*

Welcome, Chrysa

And without further ado, over to you, Becky.

**Rebecca Hilton – 3:12**

Thanks, Tom. Hello, everyone.

I'm gonna do this access description which is a new practice for Chrysa and I. So, I am a middle-aged white lady with black rimmed glasses and dark hair that's going grey. Behind me...it's a bit complicated...it's the back of a bookshelf with a transparent black wall and behind that is a grow light which is glowing purple so it looks like a disco in Berlin in the '80s. I have black headphones on and I look bit like a telemarketer.

I think that's it. Chrysa?

**Chrysa Parkinson – 3:56**

Thanks Beck. Hello, it's...it's very nice to be having this moment in this sort of simplified, but very complex situation. My name is Chrysa. I am a cis female in my mid 50s. I'm wearing glasses. I have a white background behind me I'm...I'm in my own home in Stockholm. I'm wearing a T-shirt from...that has the Chorus Line on it, I think it's an original from the early 80s, and a black jacket.

As I said, I'm very happy to be here in this conversation with Becky, with a focus on practice. I think that the other day we were in a conversation Becky and you said that we keep pointing to the gap, we keep pointing to what we don't really fully understand or know, and that it causes a kind of exclamation point in a sort of fuzzy area of lack of definition or something. I wondered if you wanted to talk a little bit about that in relation to how you experienced practice these days?

**Rebecca Hilton – 5:40**

Yeah, I mean, that thing of pointing to the gap, I think is quite relevant to one of my practices these days which is to, kind of, think about how the body of knowledge that I've learned over the years of having a dedicated dance practice, in physical practice, choreographic practice

a disciplined practice, a devotion practice, all of the things that that includes. Now it's in the context of often trying to, kind of, communicate that in ways, including but other than dancing.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 6:24**

Right

**Rebecca Hilton – 6:27**

So, that's a big gap I'm pointing to now that used to be totally filled...

**Chrysa Parkinson – 6:33**

with dancing...

**Rebecca Hilton – 6:27**

Yeah, that gap has to be not at all a gap. It used to be dancing and if you were having this conversation 15, 20 years ago, I would be really talking about the actual dancing practice. And now I'm pointing at it, now I have a practice of kind of pointing at the dancing practice somehow.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 6:58**

Yeah. I also just want to warn the audio audience. I really like long pauses. Sometimes I just like to linger in them.

**Rebecca Hilton – 7:19**

And I'm going to try not...just then I was like, "that's a practice", just like...I'm just gonna find, which is one of my practices, it's like I'm just gonna apply this word to everything in my life and see what sticks.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 7:34**

How it sticks. Yeah.

**Rebecca Hilton – 7:36**

Yeah. Somehow.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 7:42**

I mean, I was thinking about it today because I take a walk, I...I do a lot of walking these days. A lot of being outside I think it has to do with COVID, also. And what I what I realize is that it's not so much...like the walking itself is not so much related to my...what I've learned through dancing, having danced as a practice, it's the repetition. that's...that's significant. And I really have a feeling of what it means to do the same thing every day and get more and more attentive to the details of that thing. And that, in doing that...when, when I first started taking these walks, I think...I don't know quite how to say this but...I think I figured larger in the walk for myself than...than I do after a while taking the walk, it actually becomes about the place more than about me in the place.

**Rebecca Hilton – 8:48**

You began as the protagonist and now you're the scenery.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 8:52**

Yeah, I'm sort of part of the...a little bit more part of it or sort of just an aspect of it, of the place.

**Rebecca Hilton – 9:00**

You're a new materialist walking now.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 9:04**

Yeah.

And I think that...I just think that's one of the things that is interesting about sort of lifelong performance practices, is that you, you do become.... The sense, the self, the centrality of yourself loosens as you go on with it. Like you can't, it's...it can't remain only about your figure or yourself or what you can do. It sort of...it starts to spread out into how you can help other people do their thing, how you can become part of...part of the scenery, part of the conditions part of the...of the work that you do. And, yeah.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 10:03

It's funny cause I was thinking a lot also about repetition, you know like if I, if I had to. If I had to choose one word that would describe practice for me, it really is repetition. I mean, not, not something...repetition that reveals a kind of difference, somehow, but by repeatedly doing the same thing you're kind of framing the experience in such a way that you can really understand the complexity of it somehow.

And then I was thinking, Oh God! Then I had a real moment of heart self-revelation of, like, Oh, I just walk around with a...with a...practice is always looking for a host, you know? Like a virus or I don't know, and then I was...then I got my...I should have focused more in biology at the VCA high school. But, do bacteria need hosts?

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 11:08

Sure, everybody needs a host.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 11:10

Everybody needs a host.

So, then I realised, Oh you know, I had a long term...and I have not thought about this really in this way but when I lived in Australia between 2000 and 2017. I made I think 12 large-scale group works with Bachelor students. Hello everyone, some of you are probably out there! Really...and they were really repeating the same experiment, and the experiment changed

because of the people. The people doing it changed it somehow. But really, really for the first time I was like, Oh, that was really a choreographic practice in a really kind of particular way because it included this, like the repeating, the repetitions somehow.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 12:08

That...that each of those works was an iteration of the same...

**Rebecca Hilton** – 12:12

Yeah, they're like a suite but, you know, I never had the problem and I never had the problem with like, and I think because I wasn't operating in a market. You know that was never my interest I was working in institutions making work as part of a pedagogical practice which is another thing.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 12:35

You never had that problem of, of what?

**Rebecca Hilton** – 12:37

Of having to be original or having to innovate, or having to, you know, I, the practice was very connected to my deep interest in that in exploring that particular thing, this group of people, these conditions. The kind of balancing of making, facilitating somehow, somewhere where certain things could be explored, you know, but yeah. And now I do these, you know, these crazy word practices, I do. Where I just take the same word and I make a PowerPoint in all different colors doing some weird, and they're kind of invented, so they choreographies I think. But it's like my world has shrunk from a kind of 3d, my choreographic practice has shrunk from 3d in real life with 20 plus people to me and PowerPoint, and a screen and the thesaurus, you know. Which I'm not exactly sad about but it's um interesting.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 13:48**

It's also a thing of being, of ah, like portability right it's like you, you have you have exported yourself onto another continent into another culture into, you know half another language like there's so many ways in which you've had to kind of, you know, it's got to be, you got to be a small carrier bag that you're bringing over. And then from there you reach out like it's a kind of condensed compensation.

**Rebecca Hilton – 14:26**

But it's very interesting to kind of recognise, like I knew it was a huge transformation but to recognise the, the hugeness in scale and materials but there's something consistent about the practice... to me.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 14:40**

Right. I mean, I think that what is curious to me about your work, often is the complexity of the relations that you, that you create. And the simplicity of the structures that you use to create those complexities, it's the ratio of simple action to complex, um, perception is very clear, it's like it's a characteristic of how you, how experience your work. And also, just another thing that I also experienced with you, is the, how much you are not pointing to and how much you're not saying. Like you, this sort of restriction of I'm gonna just put these people into this context, I'm not going to say everything, all the poetics, all the politics, all the complexity that come out of that... I'm just going to let that happen from, from the experience of this container. These choreographic containers.

**Rebecca Hilton – 16:07**

Yeah, there's something about that, the light, the lightest possible frame... somehow. And the other thing... is that also, the social thing is that also it's like, I love that. I mean, I don't really understand it, but I really love it. This Deleuze, you can tell I'm an academic now... I'm quoting Deleuze, but um the thing on ethics you know, that he doesn't know what ethics is but if it is a thing it's this, not to be unworthy of what happens to us.



I know we've spoken about this before and you've had that expression before...

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 16:59

I don't understand that, I really literally don't understand that sentence.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 17:05

I don't think I do either. Well, yeah, well there's that. But the thing I do think I take from it, let's put aside understanding it, because I mean I am very hackademic in that way. Like I can't do a deep Deleuze dive, it's not in me. But that thing, I can kind of hack that out of that context and put it into this context, that would be a practice. But, to me, the not to be unworthy of what happens to you, reminds me to not think that to contribute to something isn't always to control it.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 17:46

Right.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 17:47

It's to, sometimes it's just to be ready. For whatever happens and try to be worthy of it. But I think that the double negative is really important there, because it has a kind of, there's a... It's not passive but it's backed off, it's backed away. It's not in there kind of organizing and fiddling and fixing and you know that... which is a tendency, I'm really a fiddler. So it helps me in that way but yeah, I don't, I need to work a bit harder on understanding.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 18:20

I think the issue of, of control how much, I mean I think that that might be something that we share or at least a generational... I don't know what it is but it reminds me... I mean, I think about that a lot, about control. I think about the relation between precision, which is, you know, I would love to be precise. Tim Ingold says this great thing about dancers, that they

can be precise, but they're not accurate. So if you really measure, you know, the exact amount of pressure, the exact amount of weight that's used repeatedly in the same action, it changes every time. It's not exactly the same. But, it, it, it gets it gets done. So that's the that the, the control that I would like to have is not um, to... I don't know about control, I don't know, I'm not sure about control as a quality. I like precision, I like to be within things, I like to have a clarity of understanding. But I'm skeptical I guess of control, in general, as an artistic...

**Rebecca Hilton** – 19:46

As in skeptical that anybody ever actually has it, or what's the skepticism?

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 19:53

Well I might be skeptical of my own desires for it. Like when I do want to control something I think, ooh, maybe that's taking me in the wrong direction. I'm not sure of the, like, I have thought about this a lot, the relation between authorship and ownership and control. I mean in my life and my practice they have not been the same. They don't go together. So...

**Rebecca Hilton** – 20:25

What about power?

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 20:28

Right.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 20:30

And control, like how do you think of those as... It's funny, control. I mean, I always feel like I give people power over me. It's one thing. But I let them do it, somehow, which is ridiculous because they're also just doing it, but that's been a way I've managed it over the years. Being like, I'm not letting you do that, somehow, you know. But control feels, and I don't, I don't know why, but just as the kind of feeling it produces in me is, is less visible than power.

It's something more tacit or something, I don't know, just the feeling of the word to me. But don't know.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 21:33**

I guess I was fine with like being... I think of power in very different ways, but as a dancer, having experienced physical powerfulness, both in in my own body and also in other people's bodies, like just the sort of momentum and strength. That's a very specific experience of like, yeah, the force, the mass of a body, the speed of like how in that action they can, like, do something amazing. As opposed to...

**Rebecca Hilton – 22:16**

So you don't think of power over, when you think of power?

**Chrysa Parkinson – 22:20**

Well, I guess I just realise, I think of it in two very different ways. Like I experience it in very different ways. It doesn't have even a metaphoric relation really like the power that I feel from... like in Sarah Perrin's dancing, dancing next to her, or in your dancing, or Martin Kilvady's dancing... as opposed to the power of the state to keep... you know, or, or someone's imposition or...

**Rebecca Hilton – 22:59**

The choreographer over the dancer. I remember, I mean, you know, you and I have both been involved in many conversations with many different people about the dancer-choreographer relationship, and I think we've had similar kind of like huh? Maybe, maybe not. Often I get kind of like, but yeah I don't, I didn't experience it that way really. As ah...

**Chrysa Parkinson – 23:25**

This, this kind of top, top down...

**Rebecca Hilton** – 23:27

Yeah, maybe I just decided not to... I mean it was there, I suppose, and more clearly there in some relationships than others, but I don't know. This thing about power, the power you're describing as like being next to someone dancing. It's like, yeah, I miss that.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 23:50

The force, the experience of the force of another person in space, like next to you, going by you...

**Rebecca Hilton** – 23:59

Yeah, or unison!

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 24:01

Unison?

**Rebecca Hilton** – 24:03

Unison!

Like when I consider how much of my life, I spent trying to get really really really really good at dancing in unison. Thank you, shout out to Lucy Guerin. The ah, and what a, like how powerful that actually felt without counting, a lot of the time it wasn't, it wasn't to a beat, it wasn't to music, it was just kind of managed, even though there would be a beat. You just have to manage this... ah, the relationship. People spend a lot of time dancing in unison with, Mia Laurence, Lucy Guerin, you know the part of me in this, I can feel them still beside me. And I was usually on stage left. In fact always.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 25:00

Of Mia?

**Rebecca Hilton** – 25:02

Or Lucy. I would just make sure that happened. That was like a secret practice.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 25:09

You liked it.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 25:11

I just have to be on that side. So, I would, we would be making the material and then I would just kind of wander around to that side, if I found myself on the other side I would just get the... like anyway, just insist on that. Yeah, I don't know why. But it wasn't ever like, Becky you be on that side and Lucy, you be on that side. Well Lucy was kind of inside it at that time, so it was different, but yeah, I just had to be on that side. It's also in class, I would have to be on that, on that side and kind of in the back-ish corner. So, I guess this brings back like what is, is a practice a habit? You know, is it a temporal spatial social habit, a practice? Is that what it is? I don't know.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 26:07

But I mean I think when you, when you, like you say, when you notice something repeating that doesn't necessarily produce the same thing every time, it may be... it may be a how, um I don't know if it's a habit or a practice. It's doing something else than producing a work or producing...

**Rebecca Hilton** – 26:29

I wonder if the practice, I mean maybe the distinction is, there needs to be some kind of conscious relationship to practice. Maybe... you know the, the... can you have a practice, can you have a practice that you don't know is a practice?

**Chrysa Parkinson – 26:51**

Sure. I mean, the circumstances that we're in right now, require us to articulate what we think our practice is, but we can be engaged in behaviors that are a resource for us, that are supporting, how we relate to our artistic lives without knowing, you know, without having to point to them, particularly. All of, I think a lot of people, a lot of artists are, they have ways that they... I mean for me, for me the thing about practice that's really important is that, I think it's really important to acknowledge the parts of our lives that act as resources to our artistic works and relationships, but are not products.

**Rebecca Hilton – 27:46**

Like things that sustain the possibility for... create the conditions. Hmm, what would those things be for you? Right now.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 28:01**

Right. I mean I, the way that I that I think of it, generally, like moving... like I need to move. I it's, it's really important for me to ah, move in space. Yesterday I was thinking of it, like trails, like continuity, maybe lines, in a way, but there's a, there's a movement in space from here to there somehow.

**Rebecca Hilton – 28:41**

And do you, say, do you do your like your walk in the morning, do you do the same walk?

**Chrysa Parkinson – 28:51**

Pretty much.

Yeah, just cause there's water. I like to go to the water.

**Rebecca Hilton – 28:59**

It's very beautiful, Stockholm, everybody in Australia, in that way, and also the way nature... I mean, is uh, is in the city. In a way that just makes me sad about Australian cities, because

Australian cities really could have been more this way. You know, but I mean, I think it's the archipelago, you know it's a, it's also an accident of the actual. The way the land masses are, but it's very beautiful, the access to nature you have in this city. Like, it makes something like this lockdown, but also we're totally not locked down. And have not been locked down at all so... but we've been locking ourselves down. Kind of.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 29:53**

I think, you know, well just one thing, I find Stockholm very mysterious, you cannot find out who, what the indigenous population was here, so nobody seems to know they... people say that the Sami people didn't come... they didn't come this far south. I don't know why. It's very strange. Anyway, I keep looking... I keep trying to find out.

**Rebecca Hilton – 30:24**

You know Sweden and Australia, Sweden and Australia are... I think this is right, I should actually investigate this further, so it's with a Asterix, but Sweden and Australia are two major kind of Western nations that have no treaty with the indigenous people. So that is a really horrifying thing that we have in common. Yeah.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 30:58**

How well, okay so, the yeah the question of why Stockholm is why it is, it's very mysterious to me how this place happened. Yesterday I was working with my friend Frank, we were outside and a woman, we were filming this little outside space. Each of us in it. This woman came by and told us that there had been a house in that place that was taken down in 1930. She said, it's funny, I felt like the Wicked Witch of the West, it was like all of a sudden there, this house had just fallen on the space with my feet kind of sticking out. And she showed us a picture of it, it was very beautiful. I mean people are so shy here.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 31:46

And that's a very unusual thing.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 31:49

Very rare that someone would speak to us. And I had, so actually that comes a little bit to the still, to the practice thing, because I was working with three words in the, in that, in a five minute score in an outdoor space. And I, it was horizon ancestry, and stillness. And uh, when I got to the stillness, I was looking out, and this woman walked by and smiled at me, and then I turned to another direction, and it's like okay I'm gonna stay in this experience of stillness and an elderly gentleman was there with his, with a friend. And the friend smiled at me, you know, I thought well this is so funny because like stillness seems to just invite interaction, it's invited here. Yeah. Like, suddenly, it's just, it's, it's bringing the, what I have thought of as the outside into just space. It was very beautiful moment for me, it was very poetic. So I thought, an interesting... possibly stillness does something because I feel often because I'm not dancing I think, I'm not dancing so much, I think that the question of when to move and when not to move is very difficult for me sometimes. It's like how do I, how do I answer that question. Do I get that thing done, or do I wait and like hold back and let something else happen, and so it's just the experience of stillness of ooh, the stillness lets, in my case, the stillness lets more in from outside.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 34:06

That's so interesting. I mean, to me it's funny because I think of your dancing over the years and I can imagine, lots of moving but also lots of stillness, like, somehow, so it's interesting, there's something there but I want to talk about this crazy... Oh sorry, go ahead any story about Rob Besserer is welcome...

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 34:33

Rob Besserer said, um, we... hmm there's a peanut gallery people are asking us to talk about specific things. We can't really...



**Rebecca Hilton – 34:47**

I think, we don't need to do that now I think, they'll do it later... you know what I mean, with the questions bit.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 34:57**

Rob said to me at one point, I hadn't seen him, maybe I hadn't seen him for a couple of years or something he said, Chrysa Are you still making beautiful shapes?

**Rebecca Hilton – 35:12**

Rob, like that's a compliment. This is something interesting about generations like this, this, like, that statement, if you, if you situated that statement in relation to a dance practice that was happening in the 70s, the 80s, and 90s, you know, it wouldn't really transform, according to the kind of fashions, somehow of the times you know. So just to be clear, Rob that's, that's no insult. In fact, the first time I saw Rob Besserer, who's amazing an dancer. He was in a la Lubovitch piece. I was in London, in 1984, I think, and he was in this, he was in a white, shiny white unitard, and a giant star shape position, kind of lights shooting out of all... like, so whenever I see him, that just pops into my head... the giant blonde Nordic star, somehow. But um...

**Chrysa Parkinson – 36:17**

You had something else, back a bit...

**Rebecca Hilton – 36:20**

Oh, I want to ask you like, Chrysa, the fact that you're out in public, dancing about is very... I will, I will say this... confusing to me.

It's not, it's not something that I uh, and it's, it's, yeah, it's really interesting. So it's a, it's a research practice, clearly it's the project you're doing. And that makes the whatever it's

producing there, but not central somehow. In this idea of like, you know, in any given practice where is the, what's the center. You know what I mean?

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 37:10

I didn't quite understand that.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 37:11

Well, I could. The old man sitting on the bench looking at you, still this remarkable looking person doing this graceful strange thing in the middle of the square where there used to be a house 30 years ago that he can probably still remember... I'm just kind of building the... You're not intending to do a public performance. It's just that you're in public, working on practicing what?

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 37:48

We are, yeah, we're working on finding ways to talk about the experience of dancing. Basically, we're trying to find conversation formats. And we film each other, sort of, working with a space. So we, there are these spaces in Stockholm like little rectangles, it could be like a bull court or a little circle, that has kind of gravel around it in the middle of a park with benches on either side. They're just these sort of open, little open spaces, and we've been using them as studios.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 38:39

And they're always kind of boarded, they're never... they're always graphic and that's like the high modernist in you?

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 38:47

Well no, that's just they're there, I don't think it's... Yeah, I suppose. High modernist, it's the thing of a studio, there's a space that's delegated, it's delineated and it's meant to be many different types of spaces to many different people. It's, it's, it's a kind of undefined. It's a

space that's defined to be redefined by the people who enter it. And they're outdoors, so it's COVID safe, we don't have to negotiate anything with anybody. It's just me and Frank. And I don't mean, I didn't, I mean the last couple of times I have done some, you know, some movement. But it's not because I am thinking I'm going to go out there and dance, it's because the question is how does horizon manifest in this space, and in my dancing and then I just started to spiral, like I didn't... it had to... something about a tilt to the spiral and then I made a movement, but mostly like I'm not, we're not really making, doing dance moves out there. It's more figuring out the scale of the space, how this aspect of it generates a memory, what I what the experience of remembering is in relation to dance as a practice, but the experience of repetition and memory, and then speaking about that with the other person.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 40:30

And the other person being Frank.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 40:33

In this case, yeah.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 40:33

Because it's also producing, I mean it makes me think like at any given time there's many, of course it's an obvious thing to say but, you know, there's many practices because you're also practicing being in public, being seen, it's not central. It's like, it's like um like a residue, residual practice. No that's not the right word... like a byproduct. Like some practices are byproducts of other practices so it's like where the attention is. So the people watching you when you're still, do they, do they just think you're a strange still person? Or are they like...

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 41:18

You know, honestly Beck, it's not so...

**Rebecca Hilton** – 41:22

Cause that's what I get interested in, because that's my practice.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 41:25

People don't stop and watch us, they see that Frank is filming, and they become interested in the situation.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 41:31

So the camera makes a... ah yep..

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 41:34

Much more the camera is the thing, the stillness is that when I'm still, I make, I end up in eye contact with people. Suddenly, like the fact that I'm still... I had, I had a moment of eye contact with this woman who was walking by, or this old man. The old man's caregiver. I had a moment of contact with him. And that, in terms of performance practices, was very interesting for me I was like, oh yeah, there's this capacity to be in a very different space from the person who's, who's passing by and still be in contact with them. Like to maintain my concentration in this condition, and also be present in the same world as a person who is having another life go by. Perhaps touching... you know I think we might even be a little bit, ending the time Beck.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 42:38

We are but I want to say one thing about that, that went really fast. Um, for us, um... The last, it's funny that you say exactly that, because the last time I can remember really having a performance practice in a, in a non... in a context that wasn't about performance, was

exactly this thing with gaze about trying to be, um trying to receive information rather than send... And this idea of being like, in like an animal in nature.

So I'm just like, oh, there's a deer, there's a rabbit I mean it does feel a little bit like Snow White on my balcony, sometimes, as you know it's like woodpecker... deer... rabbit...squirrel. But that was the lot, like in terms of practice, that was something like a pocket practice. I used to have a series of things I could just carry around. You know that I could do anywhere anytime, but they weren't... ah...

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 43:50

And there is something about the, the invisibility of being a middle aged woman, that is great for that! You could talk to anybody, nobody was worried. Yeah, it's so different.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 44:11

It is really true.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 44:13

Being younger... I'm not wearing it. I don't have fear, also.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 44:19

Hi, Tom.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 44:21

Hi, Tom.

**Tom Pritchard** – 44:21

Hello. Thank you for the last 45 minutes, it's whizzed by. We've got a few questions here. So we might jump into those. So the first one is from Ashley Barton, and it's directed to you Chrysa but Becky, feel free to obviously jump in and offer some insight too. So Chrysa, I've been thinking like a lot lately. Sorry, I've been thinking a lot about noticing lately. I wondered

if you might talk about your own perspective and noticing in relation to your statement about the repetition of your walking practice and to open up your awareness of place. How do you feel about this idea of repetition being associated with sameness, yet it seems to have a positive effect on you.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 45:06**

Yeah.

Oh, it's a great question. I think I, it brings me back a little bit to the question of innovation and, and making. Like the relation between innovation, making and awareness. And so, if my, if my walk has no pretense to being innovative, but I know that I am making it. I'm doing it, I'm, then my awareness is on what's happening around me rather than on what I can do to this place. Right. So, I think, noticing is a beautiful concept to bring in, and I say this. At the risk of repeating myself I think it's important to say that, as, as dance artists, we train ourselves, and we learn a lot about ourselves. In order to notice the world around us, not in order to necessarily know more about ourselves. So, from self-consciousness you go into self-awareness and into awareness of the world around you, with the abilities to notice what is happening there.

**Rebecca Hilton – 46:46**

That was beautiful. I like the thing that you can notice and listen at the same time, kind of multiplicities of different kinds of paying attention to. You know, somehow. I think about that.

**Tom Pritchard – 47:08**

So we've got another question here, and this one's from Niharika Senapati, and she says hello. I wonder if you could both, if you could talk about how ideas of rigor and practice relate for you. These words are often linked and it confuses me somehow.

**Chrysa Parkinson – 47:29**

I just have very simple thing to say, that I think we go through different phases, have different needs in relation to learning. Some of them are discipline oriented, and they have a lot of rigor and others, other phases it's very necessary to have a kind of blur and vagueness and openness and lostness. So, I think it's just you calibrating what or modulating the relation between rigor and practice is important, and as part of maybe maturity and having good guides.

**Rebecca Hilton – 48:15**

I think the term rigor always makes me go (shudder). The, maybe it's the rigor mortis thing. But I think a lot about devotion. As a kind of, you know, in terms of commitment or something I think more about. But also this idea that adding on to what Chrysa has said, you can have, like many practices at once. Sometimes I think we look for the holy practice, you know, but I think beginning... use it, if it's useful for you to, to think about what you do as practice then do it, and if not, don't. I would say. Like, you know, if the word is a prison, then just stop using the word. Somehow... would be my advice there. But I mean you can have very rigorous practices I like rigor in terms of like running really fast and getting really hot and getting your heart rate up, you know, that kind of rigorousness. But also, very passive quiet teeny practices that nobody else even knows about, you know, there's a spectrum that is important, I think. But also, just don't use the word, you know, we never used this word did we Chrysa? Like back in the day, practice was not a word. It just wasn't around, you know as a... and then it kind of has become very central and in an interesting way I think, it's with the rise of kind of dance and knowledge and these different ways to talk about all the different knowledges that are in a dance environment. And so practice is something that's very connected somehow to the dancer-ness I think. So that's, that's a really good thing about it. But I think yeah, if it... if it just kind of makes you feel bad. Don't, don't, don't use it, don't call it that.

**Tom Pritchard** – 50:30

So, we got a question here from Keely Geier. What are your thoughts on practice, on how practice is being transferred or passed down on to younger generations of artists and makers? Are the pressures of the industry such as financial, the need to create fresh relatable and successful work inhibiting the practice of young artists continuing to follow the intrigue/ interest of their own practice.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 50:57

Beck, I've been answering first so...

**Rebecca Hilton** – 51:00

Yeah, I know, I don't...

I'm sure I get, it's kind of related to what I just said, I think it's become a word that has a whole set of... that has become a bit chunky and demanding. And it began as a way, as a word, I think, you know, I mean, Chrysa it was really in contact with you that I began to think in relation to practice actually, however you know maybe 20 years ago but, but, um, I think the two of us have negotiated and navigated a world where those kinds of, the particular kinds of market forces you're describing, we're probably not the people who can help you through that. It's one thing I would say because, speaking for myself, I've really been like no I don't want to do that. I want to stay, working with dance and with choreography and in this field, and I'm very interested... we haven't talked today at all about... we both have long term pedagogical practices, teaching practices, that's not something we've talked about at all today but I think, yes. I imagine the pressures are immense, and I don't really understand how they manifest because I've not really had to experience them so that's not really answering, but I don't really have an answer. Yeah.



**Chrysa Parkinson – 52:32**

I mean, I really strongly believe that artists define their own fields. We make, we make the field that we're in. I mean, and you...so I think in terms of passing on practices... I think it's really important to focus on passing on the practice of noticing what you do, noticing how you're working, noticing what your resources are, noticing what you need. How much, how much of a community do you need? What kind of a community do you need? What, what is important about the now to you? What is innovation in your... what role does innovation take in, in your thinking. Is it important or not? So, I would say if there's something to transmit, it's that artists create their own fields, continuously.

**Rebecca Hilton – 53:53**

I would add into that like I... a big part of what I think... I do, and know you do Chrysa, is really try to literally pass practices. I learned this from Simone Forti... and I taught it here... like, like this citation practice, as much as one can, I think is in real conflict with the pressure to innovate. So, that is very tricky material. But I think, I think of it in... I think of rather than get rid of innovation, the relationship between convention and invention has become really interesting to me, and how you kind of navigate that relationship. Because that includes the kind of historical situatedness of where you learned what you learned, and also this thing that you're saying Chrysa, it kind of links the past to this idea of, we're always making new conventions. Xavier Le Roy said this to me many years ago, he was like, there will be a convention so you may as well try to make it the one you want it to be, you know. Which I found to be really useful advice. So I would say that. This navigating invention and convention and just everybody stop using the word innovation. Somehow because it's a... yeah, it puts a pressure, it puts the pressure in the wrong place I think.

**Tom Pritchard – 55:26**

I think lets try and squeeze in one more, one more question. So this one's from Chloe Chignell. In light of Chrysa's somewhat expanded description of practice, behaviors that become a resource for artistic lives, what happens to those behaviors when they enter into

the language realm, or of artistic practice, particularly in relation to both of you working in artistic research contexts. I wonder when, where, how, formalizing structures support the work, and where they need to be resisted? And a spin off question, is it useful for you to maintain an outside to your practice or an outside to practice?

**Rebecca Hilton** – 56:16

I would say in answer to the first, the outside, inside practice... to me it's really a perspective. I can, I'm coming into a talk like this in everything I do is a practice, and then I can go through my, you know, then at the same time I can kind of turn it off and nothing as a practice. So there, there isn't, it's not like a boundary. It's not like a hard line to me, it's a, it's a perspective, it's a noticing. It's what I'm noticing it to be and how that is kind of manifesting in the various situations or conditions.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 57:01

I mean, I, I think I also think it's not like what, what's resourcing... the behaviors that are resourcing and the perceptual modes that are inspiring or creating artistic context for me change. So it's not static. It's not something that I can say it's going to be the same in the next.... but yeah, it's gonna change. So I, I think... Chloe's... maybe I got a little tired, but the, the question is a bit complex, for me, I'm not, I'm maybe a bit lost...

**Rebecca Hilton** – 57:50

It's a question I think, about, about language. I think. It's about... yeah, it's about when you say formalising, you mean writing, Chloe I think? I would say. But so, something I would like to say in relation to that really fast, I know we have to finish. Language is always part of dance, it is an oral culture, like it is every... like language is constantly produced in any dance situation. So, I really, the kind of binary that begins to emerge between the art practice and the artistic research, those, those things, that, I don't find them useful. I've had a lot of conversations, those conversations lately in my role in the research centre here. So that's one thing to say, sometimes I feel like what maybe what I'm working on is some of that oral

culture, is beginning to get transmitted into a kind of literacy, a kind of... yeah, a reality and literacy, the kind of relationship between those things and the flow between them. So if your question was about that Chloe, let's talk more about that, because I would like to talk more about that. But I worry, we're back almost to the beginning of the conversation pointing at the gap, I mean I think language can get you to a point where it can't. So, a lot of the time when you're writing or talking about dance practice, you are, you do end up getting to a place where you just cannot... there's some things you cannot say. And that's why we do it. You know, so...

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 59:33

I think it's, I mean, I think, the, the thing that you bring up Beck... situatedness, citation and situatedness and citation, are textual practices, but they are not fixated prac... they're not fixing practices. So that there is volatility there is the potential for change, and there are durations beyond what's on a page, like it, like you know... this practice can be... it's a durational concept, it's not objects,

**Rebecca Hilton** – 60:18

It's not a machine.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 1:00:19

It's not a machine, or an object, it's something that is inventing and happening in time.

**Tom Pritchard** – 1:00:26

That seems like a very good point to end on. So, thank you both, Becky and Chrysa first of all for this deep dive navigation of what practice is over the last hour. I think we'd all agree it's a perfect conversation to finish off our Thursday and hopefully a nice one to begin your Thursdays, so thank you both, first of all.

**Rebecca Hilton** – 1:00:50

Thanks.

**Chrysa Parkinson** – 1:00:52

Thanks very much.

**END**

### **CHRYSA PARKINSON – BIO**

Chrysa Parkinson is a dancer living in Stockholm, and sometimes in Berkeley California. She has been performing and teaching internationally since 1985. Her focus is on experiential authorship and the performer's agency: how dance situates itself in practitioners' lives and how performers, in turn, engage with, dismantle and reconstitute these worlds. Recently, Chrysa has been creating and performing embodied essays: 'Disorienting Front' (La Caldera, SKH), 'Weaknesses' (Mette Edvardsen's Afternoon Editions), 'The Cove' (within Jonathan Burrows' '52 Portraits', Sadlers Wells), 'Damaged Fragment' (within Boris Charmatz's Expo Zero, 20 Dancers for the 20th century), and 'A-chronic Visitors' (within Adrian Heathfield's 'Ghost Telephone', Sydney Biennale).

In the United States, Chrysa worked as a dancer for many years with Deborah Hay, Irene Hultman, Jennifer Monson and Tere O'Connor, among others. Since coming to live and work in Northern Europe in 2005, Chrysa has created works as a performer with Jonathan Burrows, Alix Euyradi, Eszter Salamon, Meg Stuart, Rosas/Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker, David Zambrano, and Zoo/Thomas Hauert.

In collaboration with Jeroen Peeters and Oralsite.be, Chrysa created The Dancer as Agent Collection, consisting of essays, drawings and interviews with dance artists and theorists



from the Dancer as Agent Conference in Stockholm. She has had the pleasure of collaborating consistently with several artists as a researcher, including Frank Bock, Rebecca Hilton, Janne-Camilla Lyster, Paz Rojo and Gabriel Schenker. Chrysa is a Professor of Dance at SKH (Stockholm University of the Arts), heading the Masters program New Performative Practices since 2011.