



BODY AS MATERIAL

reflections on sharing, doing and making solo

A Critical Path Project

CHOREOGRAPH
INVEST
INSPIRE

CRITICAL





Bundanon. Joshua Pether, Ghenoa Gela, Alison Plevy.

Image: Julie Vulcan

Body as Material: a case-study

This case-study is part journey, part diary. It is self-reflexive and disarmingly honest. It is personal. It is about saying it as it is – not saying it as expected. It is about what it takes to create solo work. It is about what happens when you unpick, witness and support practice with four other people in physical and psychic space. When you start with all your body holds and explore where it resonates, attracts and repels – what does it teach you?

Body as Material: solo practice

Body as Material was a development project, which took place in 2016. The intention was to offer participants the freedom to take time to reflect, play and support each other through exchange, feedback and dialogue. With a focus on solo practice, it was an opportunity to uncover modes of practice and find new approaches to making work.

Initiated by Critical Path, it was a partnership with Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre (BMEC) with support from Bundanon Trust and FORM Dance Projects. Totalling four weeks, the residencies took place in March, August and November.

Artists

Ghenoa Gela, WeiZen Ho, Joshua Pether, Alison Plevy with facilitator and artist Julie Vulcan.

Text

Compiled and edited by Julie Vulcan from materials, image and text by Ghenoa, WeiZen, Joshua, Alison and Julie.



Bathurst. Body Test 3. Joshua Pether and Ghenoa Gela.

Image: Julie Vulcan

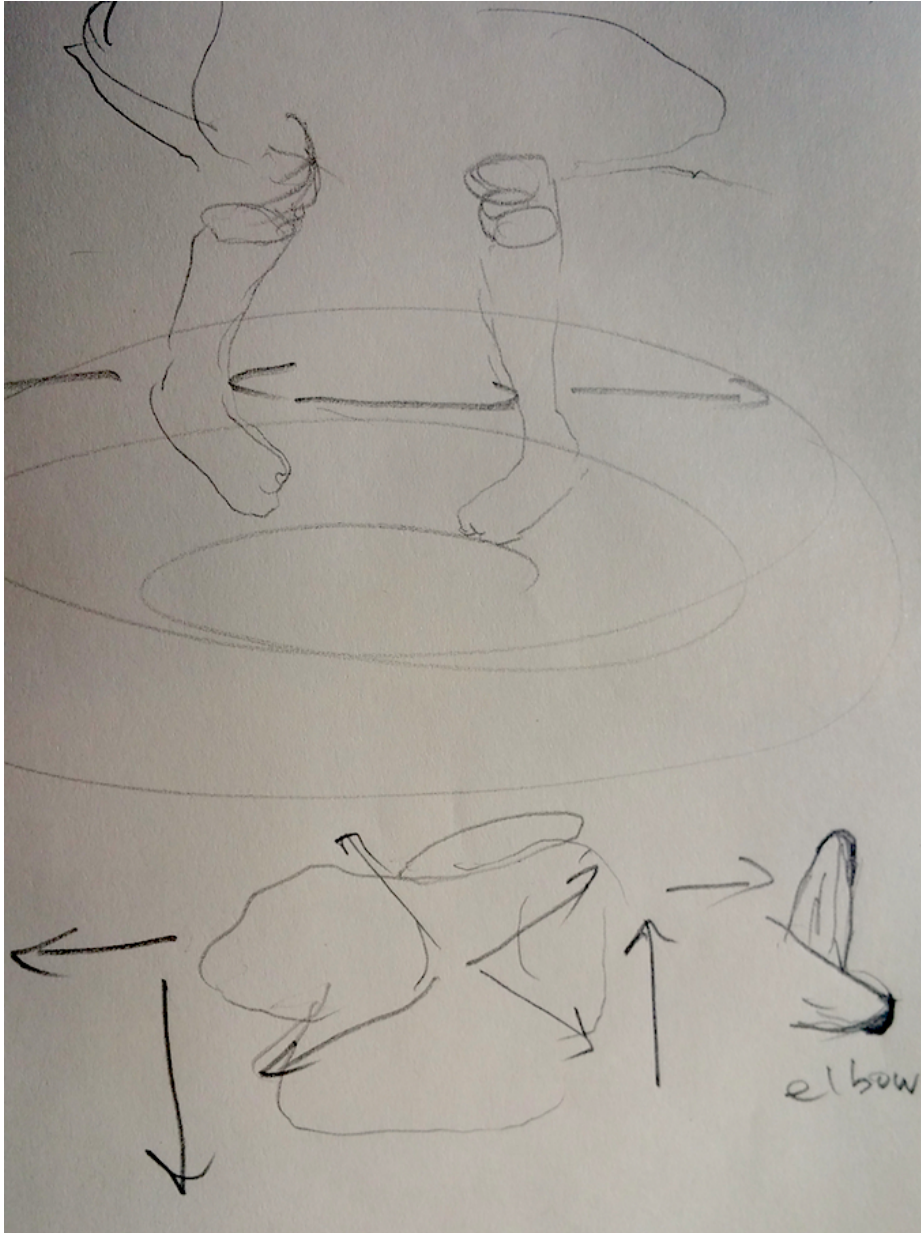
The residency and research periods offered an opportunity to disrupt the usual routines that we fall into when approaching practice and making work. Working against established patterns can be risky. From day one we established a safe space to allow open conversation and sharing. Each artist came to the residency from a different place and no one had worked with each other previously. This was a gift that encouraged a different mode of working, free from the comfort of familiar peers and creatives. Each person was in the process of moving toward a new solo work, some for the first time, which made it incredibly exciting and scary. Primary to supporting this vulnerable space was generosity.

Julie

I come with...

- An open mindset
- A willingness to step out of my comfort zone
- A generosity
- A flexibility
- An acknowledgement that it is OK to feel 'at sea'
- A listening ear
- A watching eye
- A feeling body
- A seeing ear
- A listening eye
- A smelling body
- A readiness to toss away the map or score
- A receptiveness to finding a map or score
- Respect

Body As Material



Rotate and Transform: working drawing.

Image: WeiZen Ho

"I reject the notion that I see the same colours as you, that I read the same words as you."

"I reject the notion that I am not an animal. I reject the notion that I am better than an animal."

"I reject the notion of ingesting cultural images without partaking in the history of anomalies and compassion."

"I reject the notion that everything has to be palatable."

"I reject the notion of identity."

"I reject the notion of putting on desires that are harmful to my intellect that has been in my body."

"I reject the notion that I need to be stressed by time. It will happen in time"

"I reject the notion that I always succumb to habits. I can find interest, curiosity and strength in breaking them, overcoming them, generating unthinkable uncharted alternatives."

Anomalies: an unpredictable turn of events, human or otherwise that defies or deviates from rational frameworks.

Compassion: an experience that allows one to be sensitive to another's pain or difficulty.

Body As Material



Bathurst. Bunya Pine. WeiZen Ho and Joshua Pether.

Image: Julie Vulcan

Un-sticking the stuck-ness

Where do we get stuck? What are the sticky residues that cling to our bodies inside and out? Are our bodies stuck when they favour a certain move? Are they stuck if they do not move in a favoured way? What about our viscera and fluids? What about stuck feelings, what are they sticking to? What nutrients (body and mind) do we crave consciously and unconsciously and what are we unable to assimilate? What do our bodies stick to and what do they reject?

Julie

I get stuck in knowing what I am doing in relation to my own histories and within the processes of what and how I approach and execute dance making. I get stuck with the projects and milestones laid out before me which often stifle the creative liveliness and vast possibility I crave. Another thing...I get stuck in doing, sometimes without actually knowing what I'm doing. I crave doing, sometimes perhaps to just do.

Because I am scared to undo, to look, listen and stop.

Alison

In looking to traditional rituals of cultural groups in South-East Asia, the question that haunts me is - how do I come into the common play of human-ness as immediately as possible, through family relationship dynamics like children and family-ancestral lineage? I enter fairly quickly into the difficulties of living and spiritual practice. I maintain that even in coming in to observe rituals that form my grandparents' practice and belief, I already come in as an outsider. How do I see myself differently from them? What form of otherness and judgement am I bearing? What can I offer them when what they share is the focus of my search?

WeiZen



The place where I get the most 'stuck' is in the process of making. The initial idea that forms inside and changes over time, grows and becomes a different entity altogether.

This new being - a stranger in a strange land - now needs to be nurtured and given the power to be able to change. To shift from its initial stages of conception to the adult being it is destined to become.

But now the parts are all in different places to what was originally conceived and it seems to be mutating. Legs in different places, ears where the nose should be, an arm for a head. How does one enable the propagation of this self without being overly protective of its original destiny? This is the dilemma I face.

Sometimes you need to love mutants!!!

Joshua

I try not to think about getting stuck, If it's not working then it's not working and I try something else. If the river is flowing one way you jump in and go with it, or you leave it and move on. If it's not meant to happen today – ok next!

Ghenoa



Bathurst. Bees.

Image: Julie Vulcan

Conversation in a garden on a hot day: all things affecting

I am not good with words.
How do I say what I know intuitively?
I relate to your fascination.
It is such a delicate place.
How do I say with my body what I can't disclose?
It makes me so angry.
I have no structure.
How to activate spaces of contemplation?
I am not sure if this is how I am supposed to do it.
Am I approaching it the right way?

Joshua tells us he struggles with how he positions, relationally, the internal steel rods that make up part of his body. Do they have anything to offer as a structure? In developing his dance practice, his legs became the asset he worked hard to compensate for any perceived lack in his spine. Together we talked about what would happen if he shifted the focus to his hybrid spine as an asset. What is the asset of metal? Alison suggests magnetism and attractors. What might this offer beyond a view of rigidity? – a way to actively step into the metaphysical and into the fluid. WeiZen evoked the abstract. How to understand what bone fusing to metal is. How can this open up imaginative and possible exploratory landscapes?

Ghenoa looks at the body and its physical responses to understand the knowledge of her own body. How it carries the score of its history, the broken bones and the scars of experience. Listening to the body talk – letting it take over when it needs to sleep, cry, eat etc. Relax and the muscle memory kicks in. Interested in gravity and its effects. Astronauts are two inches taller after a mission. Whoa!

Body As Material



The Material and the Immaterial

The nervous body
 The involuntary body
 The zero gravity body
 The hybrid body
 The overheating body
 The devotional body
 The psychic body
 The hungry body
 The weeping body
 The pain body
 The heart body
 The weighted body
 The obsessive body
 The magnetic body
 The cultural body
 The parasitic body
 The shivering body
 The fearful body
 The trauma body
 The lost body
 The colonised body
 The DNA body
 The scarred body
 The fused body
 The over stretched body
 The conditional body
 The vibrating body



Tuning the Antenna: cultivating sensitivities

In my shifting obsession with rituals of tradition, in particular possession rituals within animistic practices, I am motivated by many haranguing questions. How can the essence of these rituals remain intact for my generation and the next? How can one find ritual imagery that is connective and maintain a life engagement with it?

I find these rituals empowering for someone who has found it hard to be proud of my racial culture (Chinese Malaysian) and Chinese political history, bearing much shame around the illiteracy in my original mother tongue and further shame about NOT doing anything about it. So, it is not a bad thing to be startled by the incomprehension of acts of ritual. This arousal of curiosity can help uncover history both cultural and personal, from which another point of departure can arise. My son calls them “in-ordinary acts.”

It is one thing to imagine a performative ritual of time and place without reference to where the imagery comes from or is influenced consciously, unconsciously or coincidentally. It is another proposition altogether when the rituals of a particular culture, time and space (be it your own or another’s) are being observed to specifically inspire and influence one’s performance creation process.

In observing cultural practices, I come very clearly articulating my need and how I am seeking inspiration from their living rituals to influence my creation process. I ask them what I have to be mindful of and what they would require of me to be given this assistance? What do they need for me to proceed?

WeiZen



On the road. Pilot Vehicle Follow Me.

Image: Julie Vulcan

Conversation from a car: a transmitting body in a metal body

So I am in the car just having spent two days in Bathurst...
It feels really strange to be leaving at this point when we were really starting to delve into some personal material...

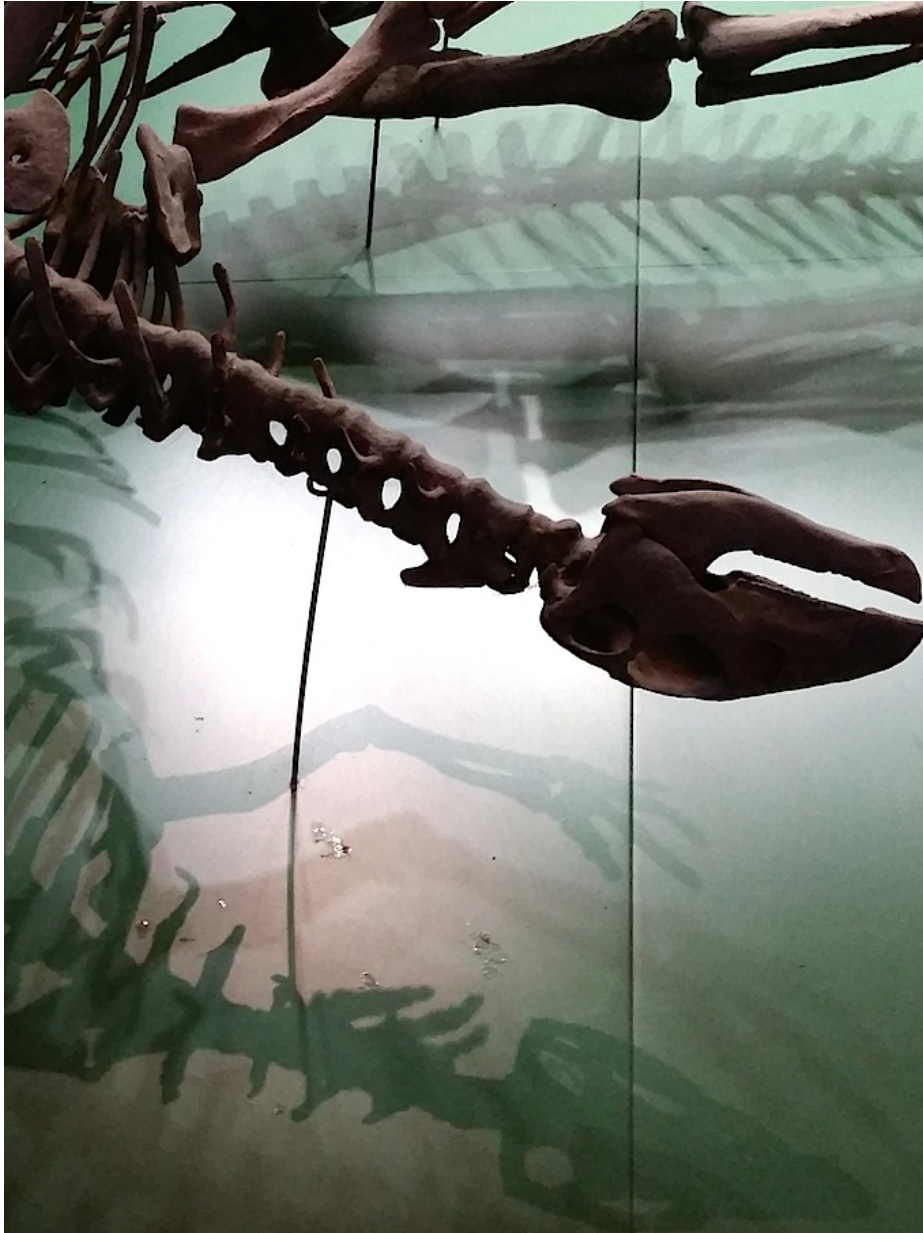
I feel like there was lots coming up for me, even just standing and working in the space. Little snippets of ideas of everyone's kind of perspectives on Body as Material were surfacing and starting to be embodied or coming into my research process through my body.

Something interesting - this conversation about presence and the 'I' as in the importance of the 'I' as being present with the body and with the movement...the differentiating factor between those two states. Was I truly whole-heartedly, in my whole soul, my whole heart, my whole person, my whole personality, in that movement? Or, was my body just moving with an absence of that? Just some questions there.

To look at this concept of the body as a communicative tool and a kinesthetic tool for others to experience what I am experiencing but through my body, through witnessing my body in that act, or in that motion. And that comes back to my body's experience of the environment and what I am trying to engage conceptually with there, in terms of ideas and issues around the planet and the relationship with humanity and the planet... How can my body be a tool and a communicative method to express these ideas? aside from the media; aside from the newspaper; or the radio; or whatever media you are listening to; or conversations you are having. The physical body's ability to empower and embody that and really, maybe, affect change.

I really look forward to meeting everyone again in Bundanon...

Alison



Bathurst. Fossil and Mineral Museum.

Image: Julie Vulcan

Trees, Rocks and Supercrocs: exploring transmaterial bodies

As we spent the first week in Bathurst sharing, listening, moving and engaging, we uncovered links and shared points of interest. This seeped out into the environment around us. BMEC occupies a site next to Machattie Park, inhabited by trees over a century old. I had noticed the Bunya Pine and it suggested an exploration, in relation to some of the discussions. So I directed our attention to it for a morning. There were also other sites that beckoned. Bathurst is home to the renowned Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum, a container for a multiplicity of material bodies. I was able to carry out one of our intentions and tossed the map away for the day, to follow a new one.

Julie

Over the time of my colonisation, my natural form (my body) has slowly begun to encase my invader to become one entity. There is an overall sense of invasion or disruption to my body as result of medical/western intervention. However nature has a way of adapting to these invasions - as is the case with my bone, which has grown over the rods. Being outside with the Bunya Pine, I realise how this ancient form has survived and adapted to its surroundings.

Perhaps a metaphor for my experience?

Joshua

An activity in Bathurst that later proved to be more valuable than I realised at first, was an excursion to the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum. Ideas, drawings, rubbings and stories were brought forward to the Bundanon Trust phase as prompts for improvisatory performances.

WeiZen



Great white shark tooth. Extinct giant shark tooth. Ammonite shell. Elephant bird egg.

A score for rock bodies

“There are three different groups of rocks. **Igneous rocks** are made when molten rock (called magma when below and lava when above the Earth’s surface) cools down and becomes hard. **Sedimentary rocks** are made of sediments: fragments of other rocks; the microscopic remains of marine organisms; or chemicals precipitated out of water. Sediments build up in layers and the weight of the overlying sediments compresses them into rock. **Metamorphic rocks** are made when pressure or heat alters any type of rock. Pressure comes from movements of the Earth’s crust and heat most often from contact with molten rock.”

Information sheet, Bathurst Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum

Sediment – is it similar to bone encasing metal – in relation to my spine? If this is true am I an ancient artifact? What is an artifact?

Metals from my place of birth – Pyromorphite, Azurite and Malachite –
Do these represent a colonisation of my body?

Joshua

“SuperCroc is an 11 metre replica of *Sarcosuchus imperator* - a 9,000 kilogram crocodile that roamed the earth 110 million years ago.”

Koedal. Crocodile.

Lineages to my mother and grandmother’s country.

Timelines through the periods.

Lifelines.

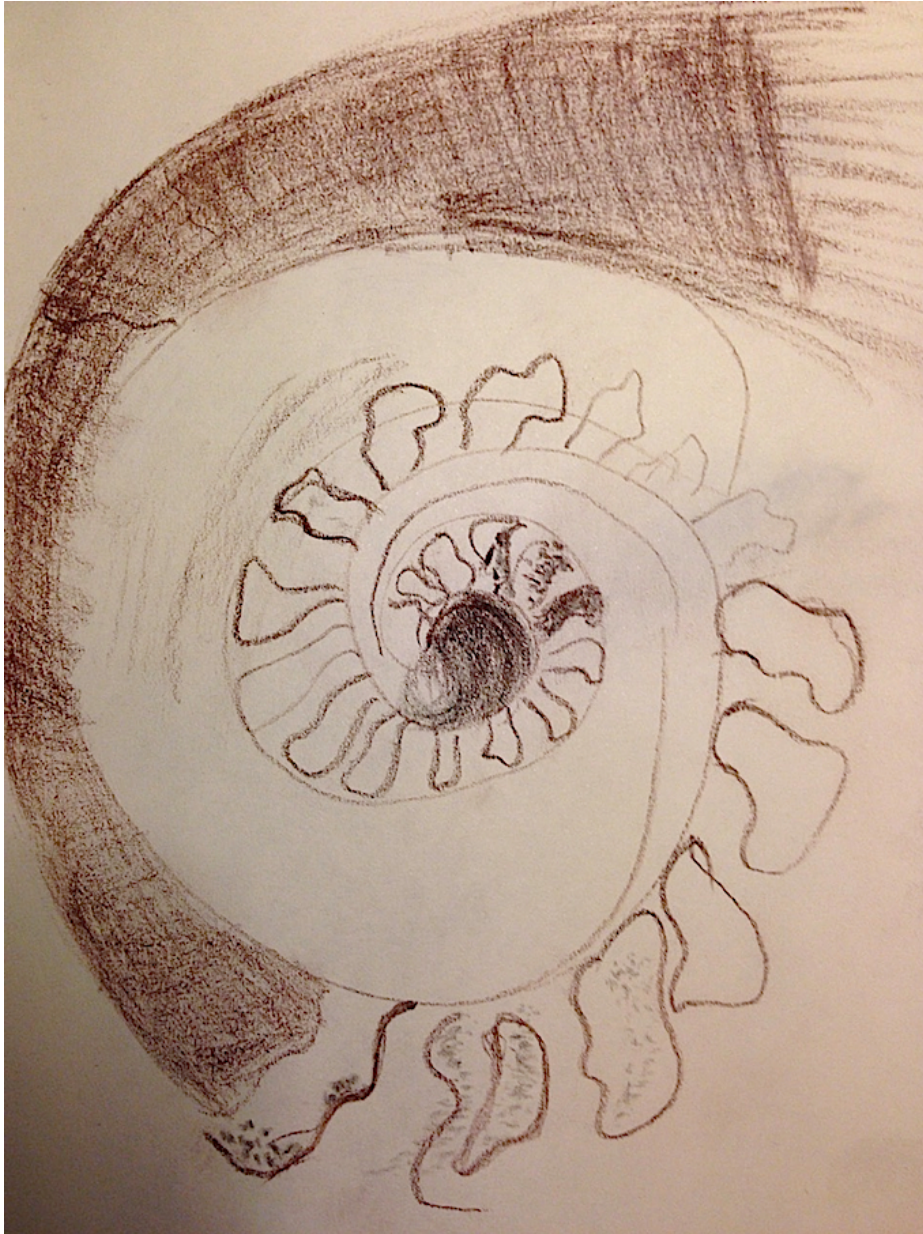
Ancestral line.

DNA.

Timelines of layering.

What is my layering now?

Ghenoa



Ammonite body: working drawing.

Image: WeiZen Ho

Body as another material. Body as another body

Performances at different periods through the day with at least one witness. I took into consideration the transitioning periods of the different times of the day and night and how it might affect the concept and ideas behind each session. The body and time conversing with the site's ecological, acoustic and affective environment. This provided a physical framework to locate the body across time and space to bring out the best of the concept.

WeiZen

1. Ammonite Body

13 March 2016, the hour before midday. Joshua Pether as witness. Dorothy Potter Dance Studio.

There are some key words that helped me build up imageries for my body to *attempt* to capture. The key for me is often *in the attempt*: relates to molluscs, octopus, squid, cuttlefish, tentative ink sac, possible digestive organs, filter feeders, radula, beak in the middle of the body, the body...

All of these help me build up a picture and I imagine: letting air fill up and move body through water, floating to fill out space + rush of current to speed up + suck cheeks in to pucker lips + rolling stomach flesh to activate and contact sacs and possible digestive organs + beak and cheek pockets filling up + floating head sideways and left cheek only filling up + concave back body + stomach rolling + breath + cheek pockets + beak + rush of currents + slow floating + push against wall + fossilising process *s l o w l y* → push against corner; suspended; freezing midway...

View **Video documentation**.

Body As Material



Bundanon. Fluorite body; Animal body. WeiZen Ho.

Image: Julie Vulcan

2. Living Fossil, Tree, Rock Body

14 March 2016, dusk. Julie Vulcan as witness.

The clearing opposite the writer's cottage.

Colour as form + camouflage + the grey's as an extension of the site. Rock shelves. Rock seams. Rock fractures. Balancing rock on different parts of my anatomy. Sauropod's legs. Cone heads, soccer ball. Living fossil like Wollemi Pine. Bunja, bunya, bunyi, booni-booni, bonya. Acoustic musical instrument.

3. Living Fossil, Fluorite + Animal Body

15 March 2016, dawn. Alison Plevy and Julie Vulcan as witnesses.

The amphitheatre.

Key word imagery: fluorite crystalises in a cubic motif...

My body attempts to follow ridge formations of an imagined cubic form. Shoulder-work minute. Knee bending slowly left then slowly right. Varying speed rates between shoulders and knee bending. Shoulders shift up like climbing stairs, then climbing down. Feeling of awe. Slowly, slowly open face and then mouth.

View **Video Documentation**.

4. Potus Sedere

15 March 2016, the hour before midnight. Ghenoa Gela and Julie Vulcan as witnesses. Dorothy Potter Dance Studio.

The body as a conduit for possession. Semi-dark, naked in plastic raincoat, in silhouette from ambient outside light. Rustle of plastic + voice/text + nocturnal textures + light rain. Text introduced after 5 – 7 minutes of moving in silence. Whispered loudly, sometimes fiercely, urgently, viciously. Ends with "Let the third body walk."

**Body as material**

A little bit manic at times.

An embodiment of emotion, thought and feeling.

Body as support

As gauge for knowing what to do.

Body as teacher

Churned up or ironed out – sit with it.

Body as truth

A truck ran over it.

The challenge to sit down and STOP.

Body as friend

Among other body as friends.

River bake-off. Pressure bursting out.

Body as unknown

Forever discoverable.

Understanding that I do respond and sense almost subconsciously a connection to place and environments in making work has become a great way to undo my stuckness. To be in, draw from, move in place, (framed perhaps by a particular idea I'm wrapped up in at that time) is a collaborative tool. I realise that I use and derive play, creativity and depth of connection in relation to context.

Alison



Bundanon. Heat. Alison Plevey.

Image: Julie Vulcan

Body as pressure-heat-cooker

A sharing of our processes at Bundanon was a beautiful beast. I was charged by the presence of the others when I was working and curious as ever to feel their energy and hear their experiences.

Spending lots of time outside, experiencing the heat.
Hot. Hot, hot stuff.

Three versions of the same thing occurred. Elemental heat experiments. Powerful, supported and formative for the unfolding work ahead.

Testing my work was playful and pressured. It was a sharing but it was a performance. I had not performed for these people before and simultaneously I was vulnerably exposing my processes and the intimacy of my artistic decision making before them. It was enlivening and conscious. Suddenly I became deliberately aware of the choices I was making and where they may have come from. Yet I was deeply embodied, grounded by the heat of the days - moving, baking, shrivelling.

I became free to play, test and show, grounded in a physical experience that was there, real, unfolding in my body. That was the work, and perhaps the performance.

I realised getting stuck could also be undone by sharing, exchange and conversation. Using the human resources around me. Many times I talked and often recorded conversations with the other BAM artists to enable new perspectives and shift my knowing.

Alison



The Body of Perception: tools and devices

The place I most get stuck is in understanding my role as a dancer with a disability within the wider cultural community. I always feel that when you identify as an artist with a disability within a dance context, you are always awarded some source of accolade for your effort - determination and perseverance - never for your creative capacity or artistry. To change these perceptions I need to make work that reflects the source of how I feel about this and also make the audience understand how it is to feel Aboriginal, male and a dancer with a disability. I feel this is a habit I come to through my process making and is essentially a selfish intention of mine.

However, is it a selfish intention to want an audience to understand my point of view? As creatures of empathy and emotion, I feel this is a natural and quite normal process. I also think no matter how gifted you are as a choreographer and/or performance maker, you cannot make audiences feel the full extent of your artistic vision, because as humans we possess certain levels of free will and autonomy.

I think to shift a perception requires a certain level of investment from the audience in the first place. They need to be able to empathise with your subject matter and to also be accountable for their own prejudices. At first I felt that a way to achieve this was through choreographic tools or psychological devices. Now I am not so sure. Perhaps a true shift in perception requires a shift in social order or change?

Joshua



Bundanon. Body Test 2. Joshua Pether and Ghenoa Gela.

Image: Julie Vulcan

Body Tests

The time at Bathurst was the gestation period for the experiments I would devise at Bundanon. I knew coming into this project that I was after something different but at the same time wanted to be able to challenge my body physically as I was accustomed to as a dancer.

'Body Tests' became for me a personal and mental challenge to endure for a set period of time a certain amount of stimulus as well as undergo the instructed objectification of my body through human and non-human intervention eg the gravity and weight from being buried under sand for x amount of hours; the beating with sticks and the Bunya Pine leaves – a sensuality with hard prickles; participants exploring materials in unconventional ways that are not easily read.

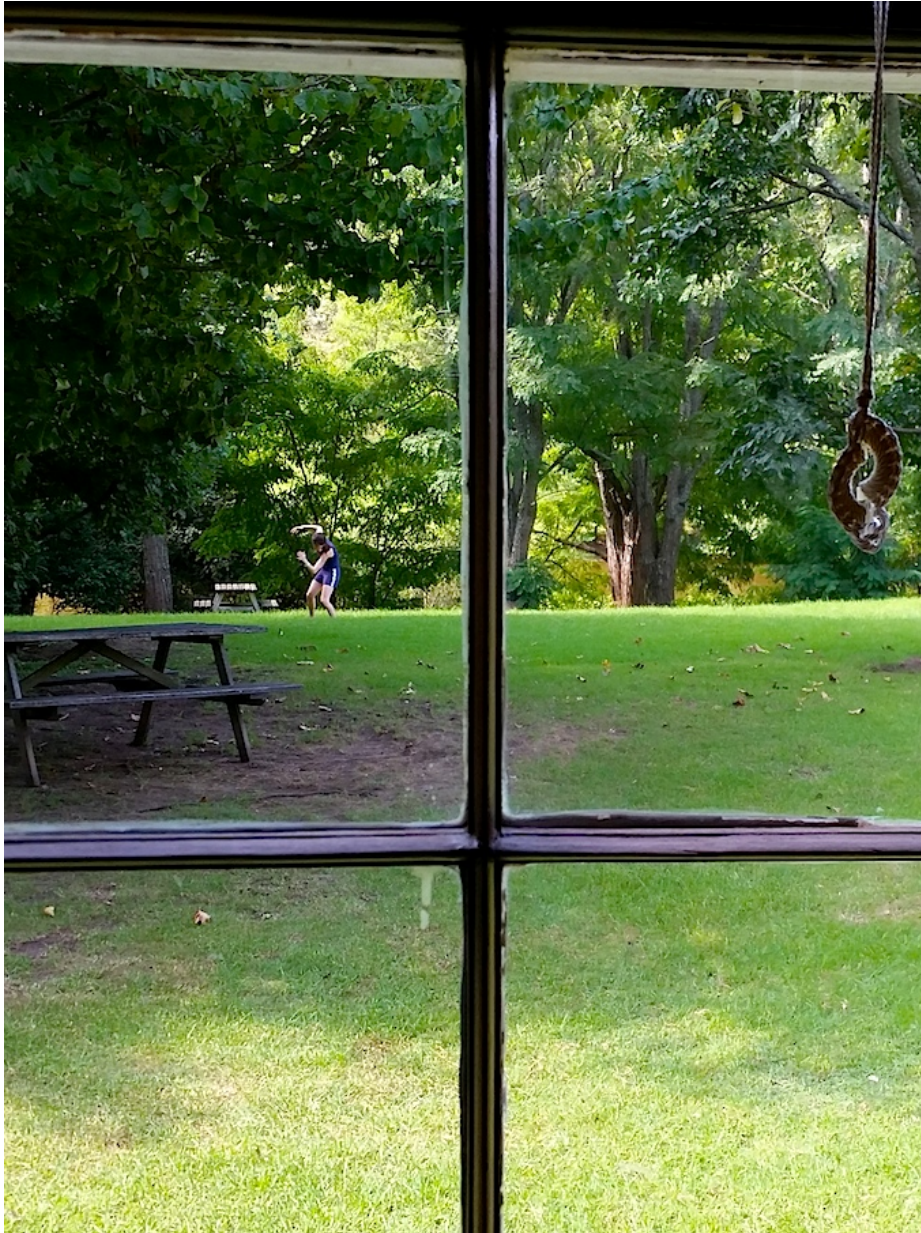
Body Test 1. Natural Body: being immersed in nature for x amount of hours while enduring the physical weight of the stimulus – sand.

Body Test 2. Body as Object: objectification of my body through both physical and non-physical means for a thirty-minute duration.

Body Test 3. Body as Form and Function: participants would move my body using set instructions for the duration of an edited soundtrack.

What wasn't apparent was the impact these ideas would have upon the participant/audience and how they became just as challenging for them to endure as it was for me. Although we had agreed to use a 'safe word', we had forgotten to establish it. The 'safe word' was to end these experiments but rather we endured through this experience till the set time expired. Looking back now I don't think I would have found the same result if we had the 'safe word' in place, so I am pleased in a way for this.

Joshua



Bundanon homestead grounds. Alison Plevy.

Image: Julie Vulcan

During BAM I was allowed time. Time allowed by myself, and a structure that allowed time. This is a huge luxury it seems, yet simply a necessity as an artist to deeply receive, be calm and be in tune with myself and what's buzzing with and around me. Similarly, space away from the familiar, enabled an ease with the falling into the work of unknowing, unpatterning, and therefore renewal.

Alison

I was inspired by Joshua's procedural and laboratory approach and I was interested to try it out and experience the process as the subject. Also, Alison's consistency in repetition to explore minute changes and shifts and transformations - the qualities of determination, courage and heart.

WeiZen

I was Inspired by
The research-based exercises of Josh.
The "doing" of Alison.
The discovery exercises of WeiZen.

Ghenoa

I realised after the body tests how integral the feedback response process was to development, especially in terms of what you assume audiences will do and what they do, do.

Joshua

I was inspired by the elemental work and environmental work of WeiZen and it encouraged me to explore spaces and ideas outside of the studio.

Alison



Amidst a table laid with a body I could not bare, a powerful work pushed perhaps me and my comfortability too far. Yet, it challenged me. Would, or could I approach making in this way? Was it's power in that it was so 'in your face'? Empowering for audiences and disempowering for the artist? What is this in relation to ideas of autonomy in revealing to audience their behaviour and values?

Alison

Ghenoa and I spent a lot of time telling each other stories, both personal and cultural. They were terrifying, affective and deeply inspirational for me.

WeiZen

From a place of what I thought of as 'no structure', I had to find what this was for me through language. So my yarns were a big part of my process to find my words.

Ghenoa

I work on the assumption that we are all influenced by something, whether through eco-environmental, collective, familial or personal history.

WeiZen

Midnight. In the darkened studio, after WeiZen's performance, the few lights across the way distort shadows through the rain soaked picture windows. Ghenoa and I sit enthralled and the wind blows. I am tingling. There is an energy that has shifted. It has been shifting all day. We sit in the semi-dark and talk story, talk vibration, talk place.

Julie



Bathurst. Exploratory exercise. WeiZen Ho with Ghenoa Gela.

Image: WeiZen Ho

Interruption. Continuity. Pause. Process.

On site at BMEC Bathurst and at FORM Parramatta, the spaces made me very aware of extracting from them exactly what they and their contents had to offer.

In the theatre technical storeroom at BMEC, I found, amongst many objects, some luminous workman strings that I used to tie up the grand piano. While I plucked and tinkled and tied the string, I decided to invite the group to participate for a minimum of fifteen minutes. The idea was for anyone to come and play with the piano, while I tied them to the piano for a period of time. I was encouraged after watching Josh's participatory sessions in Bundanon.

WeiZen

This is something important that I have continued to reflect upon.

What is the difference between dance research/practice and choreographic practice?

I remember we had this discussion at BMEC amidst a small group of community artists/producers. For me they are currently very separate.

The choreographic and making practice of working toward quite targeted ideas, expectations and timelines, I realise is something I quite enjoy and I thrive of it for the making process.

But...what if there is another way?

Because I want to have a daily connection - physiologically, intellectually and subconsciously - to my creative self, through my body and the medium of dance. How can I engage in a practice and research process that serves me each and every day?

What would it look like?

Alison

Body As Material



FORM studios. Hair cavity. WeiZen Ho.

Image: Julie Vulcan

At FORM studios, finding little sites within the one room; cavities; little shelvings; the pavement and road beyond the room. Letting the space lead me. I toyed with the idea of allowing a structure for participants to experience my body as material. This led me to consider body sheddings – my hair, my nails, contact lenses, blood. I wanted a way of visually leading or hinting to people to look in the areas I placed these small, intimate parts of me. I managed to locate red tape. Use what is there. How do you commune with a space like this? How do I contact its layers of history?

WeiZen

The multiple periods of connection we experienced together across the year were vital and necessary for a disruption and ongoing reminder of the importance of practice and research as an artist and in producing art. This remains powerful for me now - how to maintain a strength in my curiosity; inquisitiveness in my physical experience of my body; the processes that I employ to translate, respond and make sense of the world through my work. Daily practice - how to give a frame for this and do it, not feel bossed and owned by it but supported by it, continually undoing and knowing at the same time.

Alison

My experience during BAM has enabled me to assemble the beginnings of a working artistic process as well as direct me towards ideas that excite me as an artist. Before this I wasn't even sure if I had a process and what exactly it was. I always assumed that my process would be confined to a choreographic framework due to my background as a dancer but I found myself unexcited by these notions. I also needed to be stimulated because I found dance in its current form did not excite me anymore. BAM allowed me the time and space to uncover what I was seeking and this has been invaluable to me.

Joshua

Body As Material



FORM studios. Alison Plevy.

Image: Julie Vulcan

I Discovered

how I hold onto things and try and make them work within the process even if it isn't really serving it. How to step away from a darling.

Joshua

how much I love process and how previous academic skills can be incorporated into the process of making.

WeiZen

the importance of feedback and sharing. How much you can learn from more experienced artists when put in a nurtured space where you don't feel self-conscious, stupid or naive to ask questions.

Alison

collaborative stages - I love these processes the most! I grow so much and learn so much from everyone around me I find that's the best way

I work.

Ghenoa

the use of my research interviews with people opened new ways to inform things and how I could incorporate them into the process within the language/text and movement/text. A new approach.

Alison

what an absolute privilege and pleasure it is to facilitate process and exploration for artists. The space to have conversations and dialogue, unrestricted by external schedules, is so utterly important for practice research. I had short conversations; long conversations; conversations at 6am, at 11am, at dinner, at midnight. All this dialogue manifested, one way or another, in each artist's process.

Julie



Heatwave. Alison Plevy.

Image: Martin Ollman

That body then: this material now

The BAM experience has lived long in my mind and body. It still lives. The connections with the other artists I feel has waned since the BAM year, yet I am reminded by their approaches, and what they might do, say and create. Julie is a support in my mind and heart also. Learning to listen deeply yet lightly, through her incredible ability to do the same, is resonant for me now as I write and in particular how I now gauge my emotions and physiology in my practice. There is an awareness and a growing confidence in knowing creative interests and processes. Being ok to own them, go with them and then break them.

I thank Critical Path, Julie, Josh, Ghenoa and WeiZen for adventuring with me and investing time and energy in me and my artistic concerns. Lets see where these resonances continue to take us...

Alison

Now a year after BAM I find my process is still a work in progress. Things aren't necessarily clearer and the lines blur between what I know and don't. I find myself staring at a blank canvas half the time but don't know what tools to use as they don't exist or aren't the right ones in their current forms. Do I call myself a dancer? A performance artist? Can one just be called a performer or do we need to demarcate? I find there are more questions than answers and this is fine. As Julie our facilitator said to us one time – your practice is a lifelong process – meaning that you will be discovering it along your lifetime and it will inevitably change as you change over time. Knowing these simple truths keeps me safe in the fact that I do know what I'm doing I just need to work it out along my lifetime, and hopefully that will be some time now.

Joshua



Parramatta Park. Flying Foxes 2016.

Image: Julie Vulcan

I began *The Subtle Beings* Art Project, in 2016. It is interesting how, at the time, I felt fearful AND welcoming of BAM and other projects that came along, interrupting the two year process and schedule I had "planned". But it has been absolutely necessary for me. To arrive within BAM, during the period at FORM actually helped structure my first tentative attempt at participatory performance. The questions and thought processes uncovered, recovered and discovered during BAM parallels many other projects and helps me rethink and crack open different methodologies in approaching sites, their history and the intention behind the work. It certainly posed the question of how does one create sustainable performances that offer longevity to one's practice?

WeiZen

Two years on my life has changed so much. I now have a solid appreciation for structure and how it can shape things and understanding that structure is good in the right places! I still have a strong belief in my fluidity, which allows other things to happen. So yeah, I'm currently navigating how to do both! Which is fun!

Ghenoa

On the final day of *Body as Material* I drove through Parramatta Park. It was hot and as I came around a curve in the road I noticed hundreds of flying foxes in trees near the river. Resembling hanging fruit bodies, their dark wing membranes enveloped them neatly. The materiality of this megabat camp created an appropriate bookend to the 'Body as Material' journey. I thought of Alison and the ideas she had been exploring around climate change and how she had subjected her body to heating processes. What will it be like for our megabats in the future? How long will they survive before rising temperatures force one final mass heat-stress event. The material of their bodies destiny closely entwined to the mercury hitting a constant 42° Celsius.

Julie

Body As Material



Bundanon. Body Test 1 and 2. Joshua Pether.



Images: Julie Vulcan

Body As Material



Bundanon. End of day.

Image: Julie Vulcan

Thankyou

It continues to be an honour to journey with Ghenoa, WeiZen, Joshua and Alison. Since 2016 they have each developed works that have been presented in International and National festivals, events and galleries around the country. In some cases the works have direct relationships to ideas developed during BAM. In others it is the practice and process that weaves through. The ripples from 2016 have not ceased but rather continue to gain momentum. I look forward to engaging with multiple material bodies in the future.

Julie

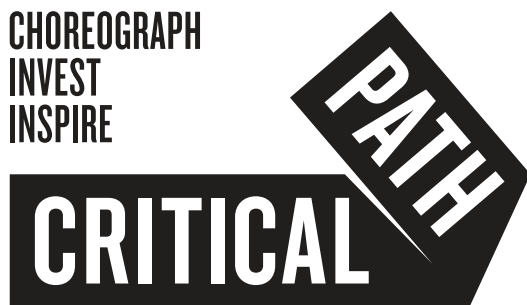
Ghenoa Gela is a Sydney based Independent artist and proud Torres Strait Islander woman from Rockhampton central Queensland. She is inspired by her family's stories and wants to increase awareness of her Torres Strait Islander culture through dance. She aspires to inspire.

WeiZen Ho is a Blue Mountains based performing artist working in composition, sound, choreography and movement. She locates imageries from living-hood, myths and dreamings, and excavates linguistic processes searching out their connection to identity.

Joshua Pether is a Western Australian based independent dancer/choreographer, originally from Queensland. He is of Indigenous heritage and identifies with having a disability. He is passionate about making political and culturally relevant work.

Alison Plevy is a dance and physical theatre artist, choreographer, and site-dance maker, working in Central Western NSW and the ACT. Her work communicates contemporary issues, human stories and explores performance within non-traditional theatre environments.

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We would like to acknowledge

The Wiradjuri people, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gathered at BMEC, Bathurst.

The Wodi Wodi people of the Yuin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gathered at Bundanon Trust, Illaroo.

The Darug people, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gathered at FORM Dance Studios, Parramatta.

The Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gathered at Critical Path, Darling Point.

We pay our respects to elders past, present and future.

Julie Vulcan is a Sydney based artist working across performance, installation, text, digital media, site responsive and durational forms. Her work has toured Nationally and Internationally. Julie was the Associate Director and subsequent Artistic Director/CEO of PACT centre for emerging artists, Sydney 2010 – 2014. Alongside her independent practice, she is a mentor and facilitator.