



Round table discussion

Report of Dance Dramaturgy Workshop 2018

Name:	Zelia ZZ TAN
Name of Activity:	Dance Dramaturgy Workshop
Name of organizer:	Ibsen International
Destination:	Beijing
Date of Activity:	From 27 August to 1 September 2018

Context

Ibsen International in China is presented in cooperation with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beijing, Royal Norwegian Consulate General in Shanghai and Guangzhou. The project was hosted by Ibsen International in collaboration with Goethe Institute China. The theme is "Dance and Drama Construction Localization Research".

This week-long intensive workshop was curated by Thomas Schaupp (a guest teacher at the Inter-University Centre for Dance in Berlin) and Fabrizio Massini (Artist director of Ibsen International in China) .



Introducing keywords

Process

This project was an open call to which I submitted my resume, choreographic work in progress and my motivation. I was selected to be one of the 11 participants. The workshop ran from 10am to 5pm everyday.

Three selected exercises in the process of my learning:

1. Present our artistic practices

The Warm-Up was to reflect our artistic interests and physical practice for clear impression. This practice required an artist to accurately show her creative personality and her artistic interest in a limited time. The introduction contained clear positioning and alternative aspects that I would choose to emphasize, and shared what I thought was related to listeners, so that information could be received quickly.



Warm-up episodes

2. Task of ABCD

One of the principles in dance dramaturgy is “extraction” or “dissociation”. The practice was as follows:

Four people in a group. The first person A, as a “choreographer” and an “interviewee”, shared with other three people a work that they were creating. The second person B, as a “questioner”, interviewed and asked A different questions around the topic of her/his work. The third person C, as an “interventionist”, interfered or interfered with B, questioning the question raised by B, and at the same time exchanged another perspective to challenge the problem. The fourth person D, as an “observer”, took notes and described the expressions, behaviors and interventional results of the three people’s discussion. D could generate their own thoughts and develop the logical relationship during the observation process.

3. Reflective mode of discussion

Stimulating question is the core in creation, and will bring the early concepts of a work into the unknown field. It is important to increase the richness of intention, find constant collisions and arrangements. Exploring the use of an element, a choreographer proposed a question that she wants to solve. Then in a round table, everyone responded to the question raised by the previous person in a rolling motion.

The materials that are motivated by developed questions often lead to the evolution of the problem from concrete to abstract, or opposite. The function that dance dramaturge plays will lead to further screening according to the needs of the work, then leave valuable questions that are sufficient to advance the structure of the work.

We were mobilized to answer questions with questions, as well as a collaborator or bystander the task of ABCD, it is necessary to practice the “critical mode” rather than the sharing of feelings.



My presentation

Gains

1. Artist's intention

I want to make a more relevant interaction between the workshop and my own professional practice by digesting my gains. So I wrote a reflection about the artist's intentions, using this perspective to ask what openness, context, dynamic are, without explaining the meaning of each word.

Openness:

Whether I want to let the audience feel or to understand the narrative development? By questioning the methods of my own artistic practice, I will have my own thought process and a process for the openness of the work.

Context:

How do I put my work in the context of contemporary society? What conditions do I need to create in order to motivate the audience to think? It may be necessary to explain the situation and let the audience enter the work to ask questions. The purpose of the choreography is not to provide an answer or to build an entry.

Dynamic:

Assuming there are two similar structure jitters, I could ask how to better introduce the concept through two parallel elements. Because indirectly discuss an analogous element can lead to clearer intention about the use of time, perhaps a change in the way of meaning or convergence.

In the context of dance dramaturgy, the basis of consensus is a method for shaping a dynamic relationship, because each work has its own structure. Next I will state my driving force and an artist's short statement, including context + the intention of my question+ question + related supplement.

Final summary: I am willing to think and explain the symbolism in my dance works, and use it in the creative process. This exercise is biased towards seeing contradictions and logical gaps from a dramaturgic perspective. The three levels that are extended are:

1. ask myself
2. work with partners
3. communicate with the audience

I am still exploring between extreme transparency and ambiguity.
How to present my artistic intentions?



Sharing art works for discussion

2. Critical thinking

During the workshop we started from practice to understanding the theory. Thomas explained this process is a more difficult way. It is about using challenging operations to inspire and train reflections from various angles. The principle is not omnipotent, because it is an open-ended method that needs to be developed according to the needs of specific artists and specific works. The form of physical presentation on the stage will be interpreted by the audience, but before this how can the choreographer effectively communicate with her/his partners in an collaboration? The people involved in the discussion may all be creators. Putting down our own personal aesthetic/artistic ideas is one of the ways. Or take dance dramaturgy as a flexible method centered on creative criticism to develop listening and analytical skills, which can promote collaborative art research.

In the discussion of presenting our artistic practice, we can comment on the background or actual materials to question an artist's work. It's like seeing the possibility of an element through a kaleidoscope, then moving to a dynamic development or conflict. Some questions can be magnified or reduced, which requires logic thinking, such as practicing progressively raising questions in a circle. In the process of analysis, I learn to actively build my own point of view. When translating into a cast role, it effectively raises questions, enters each other's context, and adds to their own analysis.

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Throughout the workshop, I constantly questioned how to ask question about my own work, perform with critical thinking and properly transform a topic in the discussion.

I summarized my thoughts recently. The purpose of my participation in the workshop was not to become a dramaturge. One of my reasons is, in an era where interaction is very important, as an independent art creator I need to express my intentions and ability to think critically. This would enable me to work better with a team and to make choices and combinations in the face of specific challenges or difficulties. I want to take risks with the desire to re-start, instead of stressing what I have; to discover new possibilities and tools, rather than internalizing one way into a model, unimagined space and counter-equivalent elements; to transform contradiction into favorable performance condition/foundation.



A group photo