This blog started as a documentation process for a collaborative climbing/art/dance project by Echo Echo’s Steve Batts and artist Dan Shipsides. V.N.B investigated the contrasting and comparable notions of climbing as sport and climbing as creative engagement. Now in 2012, this research is being developed for a dance theatre production due to tour the North of Ireland in October called 'The Cove'.

Friday, 19 October 2012

THE COVE - TEA and TECTONICS

Images and my initial response from The Cove performance.
I eventually got to see the full show at the Forum in Derry. With apprehensions about what the 'dance' would become and my hang-ups about dance-ily dance I was feeling slightly sick - what was the final result of all this work and what would my platform be used within???
All these feeling melted away seeing the platform again. I've not see it since the rehearsal workshop studios. It looked great in it’s initial configuration with the seating surrounding all four sides of the stage. This made it much more multidimensional and gave the audience a greater and less passive role - also confounding (if they stayed in their seat) any sense of an official or preferred viewpoint. It also echoed strongly the cove where one could take many vantage points down into it. At this show it’s a full house - I count well over a 100 people with some standing. I chose to remain standing and free to circulate around the performance.
The trust and understandings Steve and I had developed began to unfold as the performance began - the dance-ily ness did not manifest and the connections with the cove, our activities, my art practice - our shared and contended beliefs all started to mix and meld in an amazing hour of performance and installation. The dancers - all women with a clear passion for movement and ideas - not skinny athletic ‘body line’ dancers with just abstract technique and form - but beautiful and human. And facial expression - smiles - eye contact - human contact.
The performance moved from referential part-realistic to strange and mutated - social, organic, nature and human - rational structure to irrational expansion and contraction. Beautiful, deep, complex layered - non-linear processes - multiplicity and singularity, deviation, improvisation, then tight and precise. Otherworldly at times becoming something other and then prosaic and grounded in a task and mindfulness. Deleuzian in many ways - in terms of creative expansive philosophy through - and as - a creative form. This was underpinned by the music and lighting - each developing multiplicity and repetition and an attendant breakdown and reconnection with those mutating structures.
The platform goes through stages of configuration and un-configuration - inventive use and imaginative micro narratives - then it processionally moves towards a final configuration of a unified structure - glowing in the light. It’s glacial maybe - or at least the performance of it connects with geological time linking it and present time. The colour and material forms with their surface scratches and scrapes definitely had something of the folds of lava and weathering of time and nature that the rock formations surrounding the cove has. Perhaps this is where the deep embodied aesthetics and kinaesthetic derive from - bringing our actions into a continuum with deep time and place. I like that idea: making tea on a stove in a cove implicitly connecting with the movement of the tectonic plates while singing ‘a message for you rudy’. dan
The Cove is well into it's tour now. These images are from the rehearsal workshops and look amazing. Looking forward to getting some moving image up on the blog. Hope people are seeing and enjoying it!

Monday, 17 September 2012

Blocks and beats

Here's the platform blocks as they are being pushed about and un-configured in Echo Echo's dance studio. The dancers and director are working out different stages as they move it about towards the finished configuration. The music by Christopher Norby is excellent - very distinct and disparate phases from romantic strings, to drum and bass like ambience - to something like (but better) ozric tentacles to funky bass. Hard, off-beat, jerky, soft and mellow. Nice work. It will offer a great tension and complement with the hardness of the platform - although the platform is now mellowing with beautiful scratches and scuffs - becoming more alive. Will also be interesting when the lighting is developed.

dan
Sunday, 9 September 2012

Images of the COVE platform going together in my studio:
Wednesday, 5 September 2012

Production update:
Feel like a car factory bodywork fitter...
About halfway through fitting the dibond surface on the outer sides. Looks great - already the tracing of markings, scratches and smears is beautiful. The colours will need a touch up as trimming the dibond edges to fit scrapes up the paintwork.
Three days til deadline...dan
Thursday, 30 August 2012

Slowly slowly getting there with the platform blocks.
Heavy work - lots of surface to paint, paint and re-paint. They are quite heavy but not so difficult to move. I've been doing it alone using a set of wheels - pretty easy. The paint work will get knocked about - but we have to just go with that and touch up when necessary.
Think it's looking beautiful tho.
Bit of a worry about if it'll fit into the man's van...
Dibond to fit next.
dan