

PRACTICE DOCUMENT 2:

PROTOTYPING

PRACTICE-EVENTS

*PRACTICE DOCUMENT 2 should be viewed in conjunction with
CHAPTER 4: PRACTICE RESEARCH: Prototyping & Situated Phases
and alongside the Practice Video: PROTO PRACTICE EVENTS*

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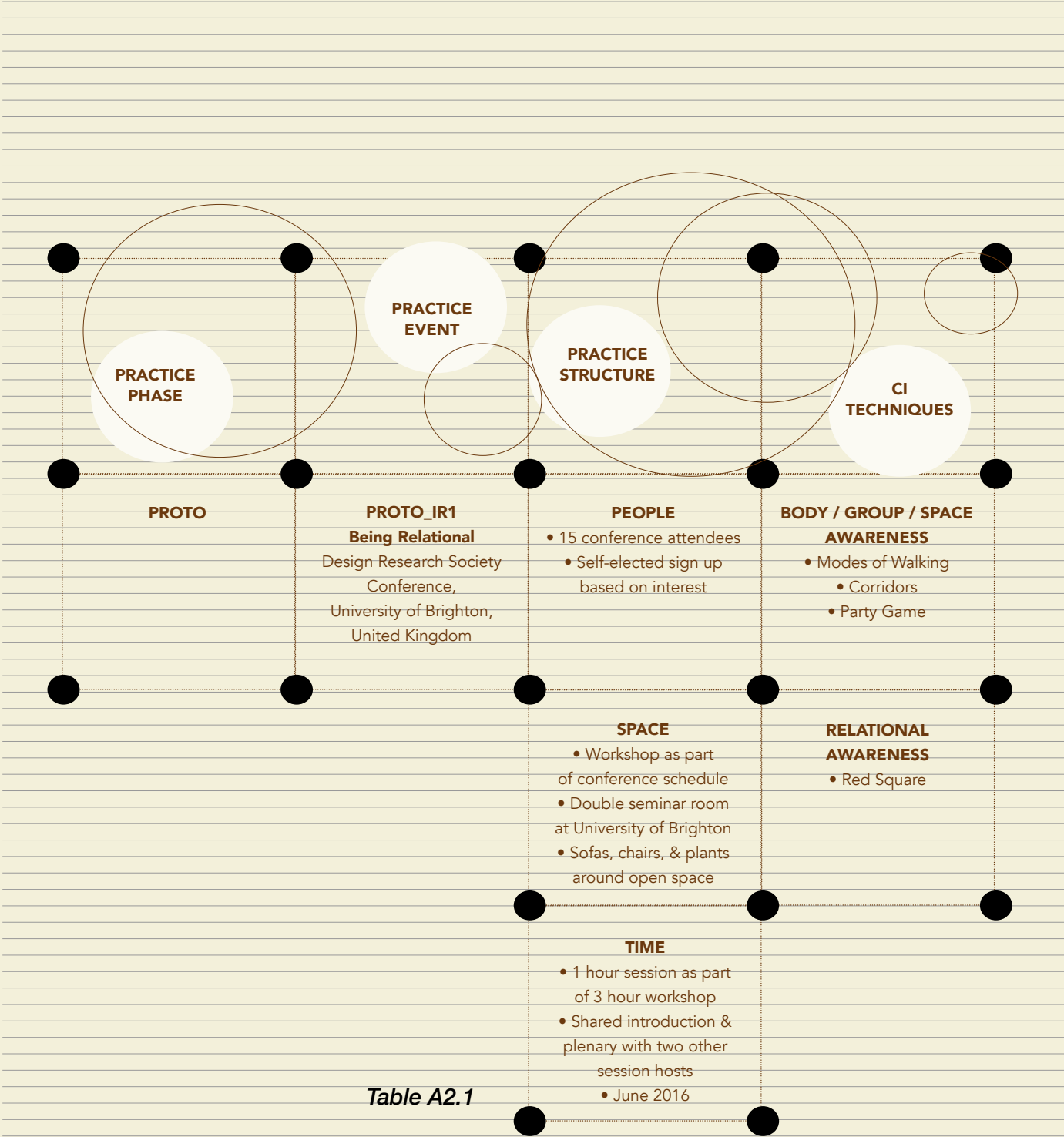


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PROTO_IR1:

Being Relational



Event description

This first practice-event took place during the Design Research Society 2016 Conference as part of its events program. It was hosted alongside two research colleagues, Caroline Yan Zheng and Kate McLean, as part of a three-hour-long joint workshop.¹ The joint workshop opened with shared introductions and consent agreements,² after which each researcher explored their distinct research themes in separate sessions.³ The joint workshop closed with a shared plenary. An internationally diverse group of 15 participants⁴ self-elected to join the workshop via the conference event listing. They were all designers or design academics in some capacity. For my workshop session,⁵ I set up a double seminar room to allow open space for movement, with sofas and chairs around the edges where participants could rest and observe the activities as needed.

Rehearsing the techniques

My session focused on the potential uses of choreographic and improvisational techniques as a design-research approach to exploring relational interaction in groups through the body. Four techniques drawn from Dilley and Shambhala Art were experimented with. Building on my research and applied experience of these techniques,⁶ they were selected for the dynamic bodied, sensory, and relational interactions they afford when working through group enquiry. The practice-research enquiry sought to observe the organisation and onto-epistemic processes of these techniques, in particular their bodied and relational opportunities for collective learning.

¹ van Rhyn, C., McLean, K., Zheng, Y.C. 2016. Being Relational: Entering the world of sensory & embodied communication design. [Conference Workshop]. Design Research Society Conference. University of Brighton, UK.

² See Appendix A in the thesis for access and consent arrangements.

³ The other researchers' sessions (not related to this thesis) introduced bodied interactions mediated by soft robotics and the exploration of smell-scapes.

⁴ I later came to think of participants as allies in knowledge creation, as *participant-allies*.

⁵ This initial practice-event was organised as a workshop, with the rehearsal-format only fully established during later practice-events.

⁶ This was the first time I engaged these practices outside the context of the Shambhala Art program.



Figure A2.1: Participants co-introducing the themes of my session at DRS2016, Brighton.

To open, participants were welcomed and — to displace a traditional presenter-audience pedagogic mindset — I invited participants to introduce the research objectives of the session using prompts I had prepared (fig A2.1). Participants were invited to observe, through their own bodies and those of other participants, their experiences of the body as a modality of relational learning and the onto-epistemic processes at play in the body-led techniques. Considering their knowing-nature as designers, participants were further tasked to consider the potential of these techniques as an experimental design-research approach. The practice opened with an informal iteration of *Modes of Walking* to ease participants into moving in the space and with one another, followed by *Corridors* (fig A2.2) as an extension of the walking activities and to introduce relational correspondence. *Party Game* (fig A2.3) allowed for the contrasting of verbal and bodied attention, and *Red Square* (fig A2.4) opened an enquiry into how relational awareness is enacted and observed through the individual and group body.

Dialogue during and after practice

A semi-structured dialogue on our experiences and observations concluded the practice-event, using prompts to review each technique and delve into the research objectives. Short discussions had naturally arisen during the practice, and after rehearsing each technique. This flow of doing and sharing indicated the movement practice as an integral part of coming-to-know. Participants shared insights, drew parallels with examples from daily life, and raised points of theoretical and practical interest. This all contributed to a forum of shared



Figure A2.2: *The Corridors technique being rehearsed by participants.*

knowledge, which was being referred back to as the practice and dialogue progressed. An assemblage of understandings for terms such as ‘group body’ or ‘bodied knowing’ was forming among the group, against which clarification could be sought as further insights were raised. The shared practice of the body-led relational techniques provided an interface for collective learning.

Summary of Insights & Observations: PROTO_IR1

This initial practice-event experimented with the viability of using body-led techniques in a practice-research format. It affirmed my initial intuition about the approach and direction of enquiry, providing the basis for further practice experiments. The event began to reveal some fundamental orientations and conditions required for enacting body-led relational learning with groups. Cultivating a relaxed atmosphere and a comfortable physical environment promoted daring and willingness to explore in participants. In this first experiment, my role was that of facilitator.⁷ This reinforced a participant-researcher divide and impeded the flow of practice. To introduce the operation of each technique, I embodied examples and verbally guided participants through rehearsing the techniques. A participant noted that minimal instructions supported deeper connections to others and the environment. Whilst it remained necessary in later

⁷ In part due to the existing constraints of an academic conference format, and co-hosting the workshop with colleagues.





Figure A2.3 (left & right):
*The Party Game technique being
rehearsed by participants.*





‘As I was looking from the outside in at how people were using their bodies and the relationships between them... I felt, and I saw, a process of negotiation constantly going on’.

(Participant during group dialogue)



practice-events to explain and physically model the techniques to facilitate their rehearsal, after the second event, I actively joined the communities in rehearsing the techniques. This opened the practice-research to relationally co-emergent processes where collective body-led relational learning could begin to act like a praxis of onto-epistemic infrastructuring. Provisionality and uncertainty emerged as features of body-led relational learning. Maintaining a level of not-knowing and an invitation to enter unscripted improvisation, whilst uncomfortable to a degree, guarded against performative expression — it informed the practice with an aesthetic of ambiguity.⁸



⁸ Gielen, P., Haq, N. (Eds.), 2020. The aesthetics of ambiguity: understanding and addressing monoculture. Antennae-arts in Society Series. Valiz, Amsterdam.

Figure A2.4 (left & right): *Red Square*, showing instances of repetition of postures and moments of relational proprioception.

Another participant observed that shifts in a person's movement often prompted complementary or extended responses in others, expressing this as a process of 'renegotiation and reassurance'. This reflected my proposition of relationality as dynamic correspondence and response-ability. Extending proprioception⁹ from the individual body to the group and contextual body, one might then arrive at the notion of *relational proprioception*: attending fluidly to the relationalities between the threefold body. The group further discussed how complexity quickly mounts during enactive engagement — even with the simplified movements of *Red Square*. There was the suggestion that, by design, this technique could enhance relational attentiveness to emergent actions and conditions in daily life. The sporadic and diffractive way in which participants shared their experiences during and after each technique indicated that interweaving the dialogue protocol as part of the overall rehearsal would better support a collective braiding of understandings, while also recognising the value of productive divergence. Such a dialogue protocol could also help participants remain attuned to the body-led enquiry, minimising tendencies to revert to head-first conceptual responses.¹⁰



⁹ The awareness of the placement and movement of one's body and limbs in space.

¹⁰ In later practice-events, this was mitigated by adopting a basic form of micro-phenomenological questioning.

PROTO_IR2

Game Changer

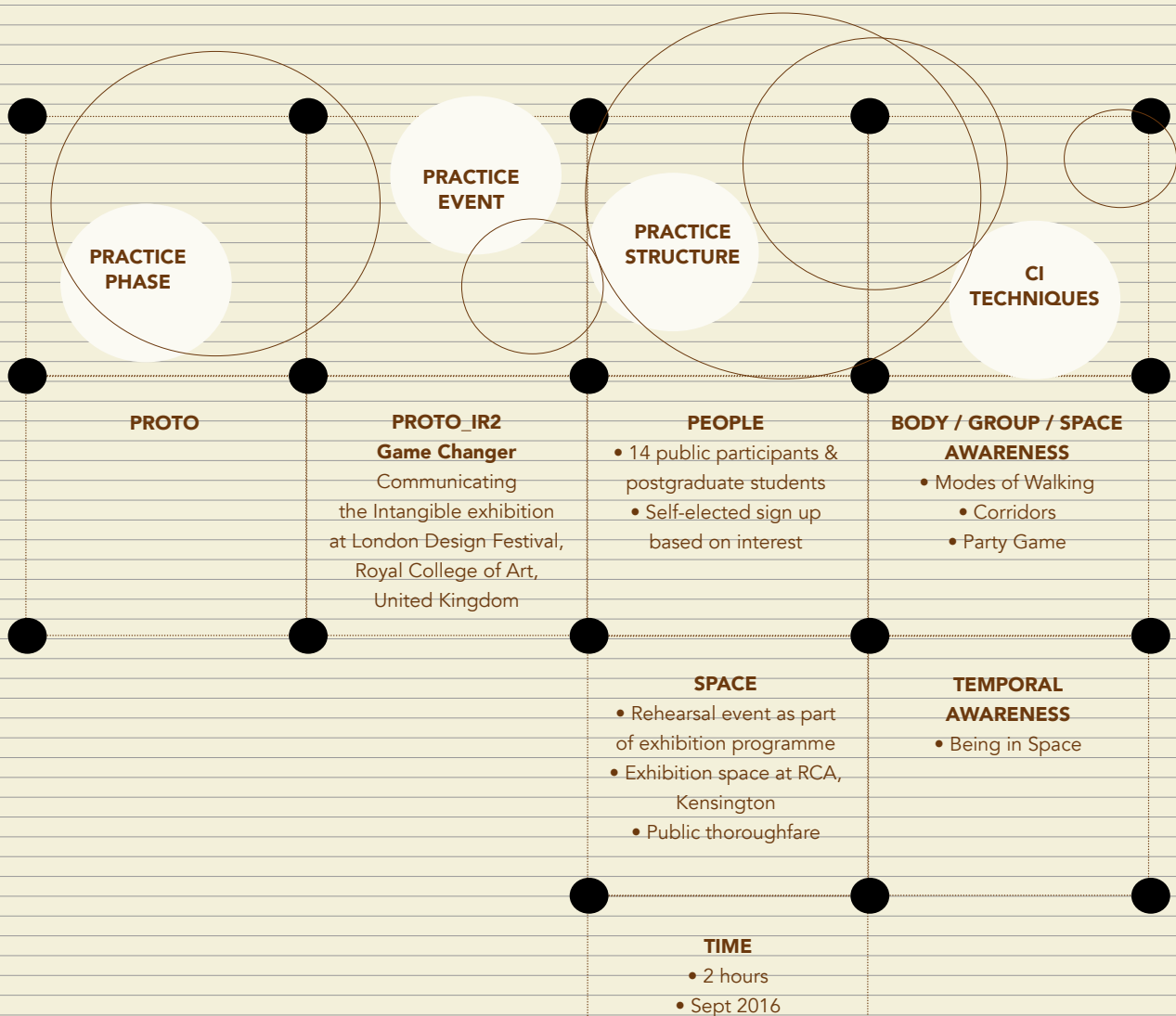


Table A2.2

Event description

The second practice-event was hosted as part of an exhibition entitled *Communicating the Intangible*¹¹ (fig A2.5) as part of the London Design Festival (2016). My event was open to the public and promoted as a 'design-research-in-action' workshop through the festival and exhibition publicity. Fourteen participants joined, of whom two were members of the public, one was a staff member, and eleven were postgraduate students at the Royal College of Art. The practice-event continued to experiment with what relational learning with groups through body-led techniques might look like, and to observe the onto-epistemic processes and underpinnings of the techniques. Building on insights from the first practice-event, adjustments to the introduction and guidance of techniques were made to improve simplicity and clarity. For example, verbal prompts were reduced at key points of practice to allow for the deepening of bodied and felt enquiry. Short informal dialogues were included between techniques to better interweave the collective learning arising from our shared observations.

Rehearsing the techniques

The emphasis of this event was on observing the organisation and onto-epistemic processes of the techniques, how the different techniques might function together as learning practice, and what conditions support collective learning through bodied and relational means. The techniques explored included *Corridors* (fig A2.6), with an extended version of *Modes of Walking; Party Game* (fig A2.7); and the introduction of *Being in Space* from Shambhala Art. *Modes of Walking* was again used to get participants physically moving. However, having observed its value beyond warming up during the first practice-event, I extended the technique with Dilley's movement vocabulary to provide more opportunities for connecting with awareness of one's individual body and building *relational proprioception* of group and contextual body. The practice-event concluded with *Being in Space*. From my experience of using this technique in Shambhala Art, I knew that

¹¹ Showcasing design-research projects from the School of Communication at the Royal College of Art.



Figure A2.5: The *Communicating the Intangible* exhibition at the Royal College of Art, part of the London Design Festival. **(top right)** discussing my research with visitors to the exhibition; **(below)** my research in the exhibition publication.

presenting yourself in front of others can be experienced as intense and revealing. As an ethical consideration for working with the body with groups, I chose not to film the activity to provide participants with a more intimate container for rehearsing the technique.

Summary of Insights & Observations: PROTO_IR2

The second practice-event surfaced that, beyond the functioning and organisation of the body-led techniques themselves, the physical conditions¹² and onto-epistemic orientations¹³ of the *practice-space* itself were actively shaping, supporting, or obscuring the possibilities for learning. This recognition developed into a parallel focus on the body-led relational *practice* and the qualities of the *space* in which the techniques are rehearsed.

¹² For example, the type of floor or the privacy afforded by the room, or the time allocated for practice.

¹³ For example, beliefs among individuals or the group regarding the nature of knowledge, or habits of passive learning or didactic pedagogy.

‘It felt quite intimate, quite comfortable right from the start. It felt like we were friends or something. We very quickly built up rapport, a relationship’.

(Participant during group dialogue)



Figure A2.6: *The Corridors technique being rehearsed.*



As with the first practice-event, the duration of the session constrained depth, underscoring the value of allowing time for participants to become comfortable with movement and to clarify practical aspects of the techniques. I observed that participant were primarily absorbed in their immediate experiences of enacting the techniques, which is expected the first time someone engages in such body-led practice. It meant they found it harder to comment on the functionality of the techniques or their application potential. This surfaced a distinction between the body-led *learning space* generated through collective enacting the body-led practice, and the *meta-epistemic space* of the PROTO research enquiry. For some, the co-creation of knowledge was unfamiliar, with expectations shaped by more conventional workshop formats, where knowledge is imparted rather than collectively generated.

Figure A2.7: (above & right) *The Party Game technique being rehearsed.*



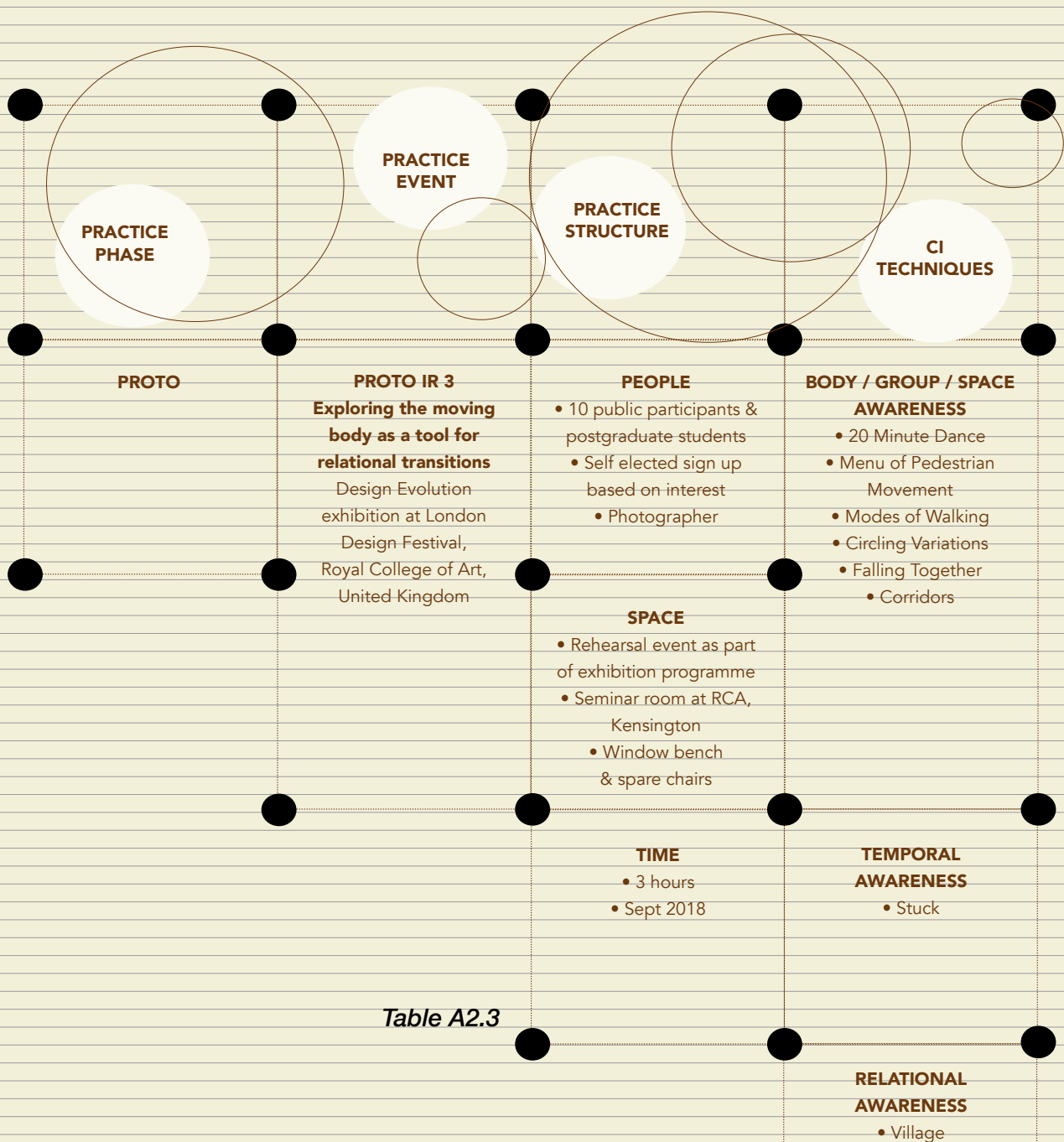
This called for a more deliberate opening of a relational space of enquiry and a further examination of my own position as researcher-facilitator. Learnings from the first two practice-events, and my prior professional experience of the importance of establishing a container of practice for supporting collective learning, began to shift the practice from a workshop format towards a rehearsal format.

Specific techniques were observed as offering distinct relational affordances. *Corridors* revealed how subtle negotiations occur at the boundary between self and other, with a participant commenting that one is not normally consciously aware of this in everyday life. Another felt that the technique fostered quick rapport and surprising intimacy between practice-partners. The sustained period of mutual gaze in *Party Game* provoked a spectrum of responses, from discomfort to enjoyment, opening discussion on the differing qualities of knowing that arise from verbal, linguistic versus non-verbal, bodied forms of presence. One participant observed how we ‘...can run out of things to say, and then you are left with that place and presence of the person without the words’, whereas another observed a difference in *where* the experience of verbal interaction and non-verbal bodied presence is processed. The *Being in Space* technique was described as demanding yet rewarding. The location of this practice event had some public access, which made it unsuitable and harder for participants to relax into the process of this technique.



PROTO_IR3

The moving body & relational transitions



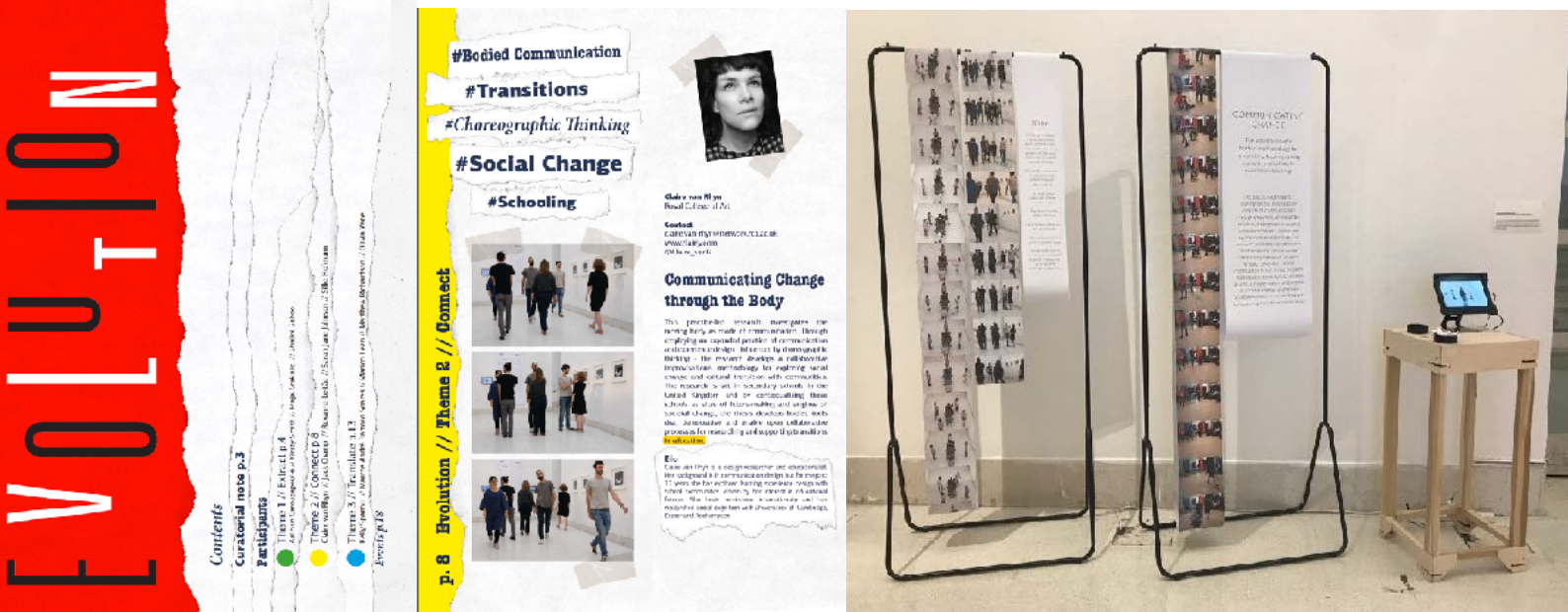


Figure A2.8 My research in the Design Evolution exhibition and publication.

Event description

The third PROTO practice-event took place as part of the London Design Festival (2018) exhibition titled *Design Evolutions* (fig A2.8).¹⁴ Alongside exhibiting elements of my research-in-progress, I hosted a public practice-event. The event attracted 10 participants from UK universities and changemaking organisations, including postgraduate students, researchers, and practitioners in adjacent fields. None of the participants were professional movement practitioners or dancers. In response to my learning from the event spaces of the previous practice-events, I arranged a carpeted double seminar room with natural light to allow for comfort and privacy. I also extended the event duration to three hours (with pauses and a break midway) to allow more time for the practice and dialogue to develop. Building on my additional experiences of rehearsal with Siobhan Davies Studios, this event was reformulated as a rehearsal rather than a workshop. The rehearsal format focused on creating a relational space for coming-to-know through the body.

Rehearsing the techniques

By this stage, I had considerably expanded the collation of body-led relational techniques (fig A2.11),¹⁵ drawing on continued research and training undertaken in the interim. For this event, I introduced additional techniques from *Sperling*, *Social*

¹⁴ Showcasing design research projects from the AHRC LDoc cohort as part of the London Design Festival, hosted at the Royal College of Art.

¹⁵ At this stage, referred to as *Choreographic Games Making*.



Figure A2.9: (left) Participants exploring 20 Minute Dance.

Presencing Theatre, and Corporeal Mime. In planning the running order of the various techniques for this rehearsal, I found I was increasingly designing according to perceived qualities and affordances that had come to light in previous practice-events. My additional engagement with these techniques in other settings (such as further training in Social Presencing Theatre, with Siobhan Davies Studios, and in Corporeal Mime) further informed my understanding.

Figure A2.11: The collated body-led relational techniques at the start of the third PROTO practice-event.

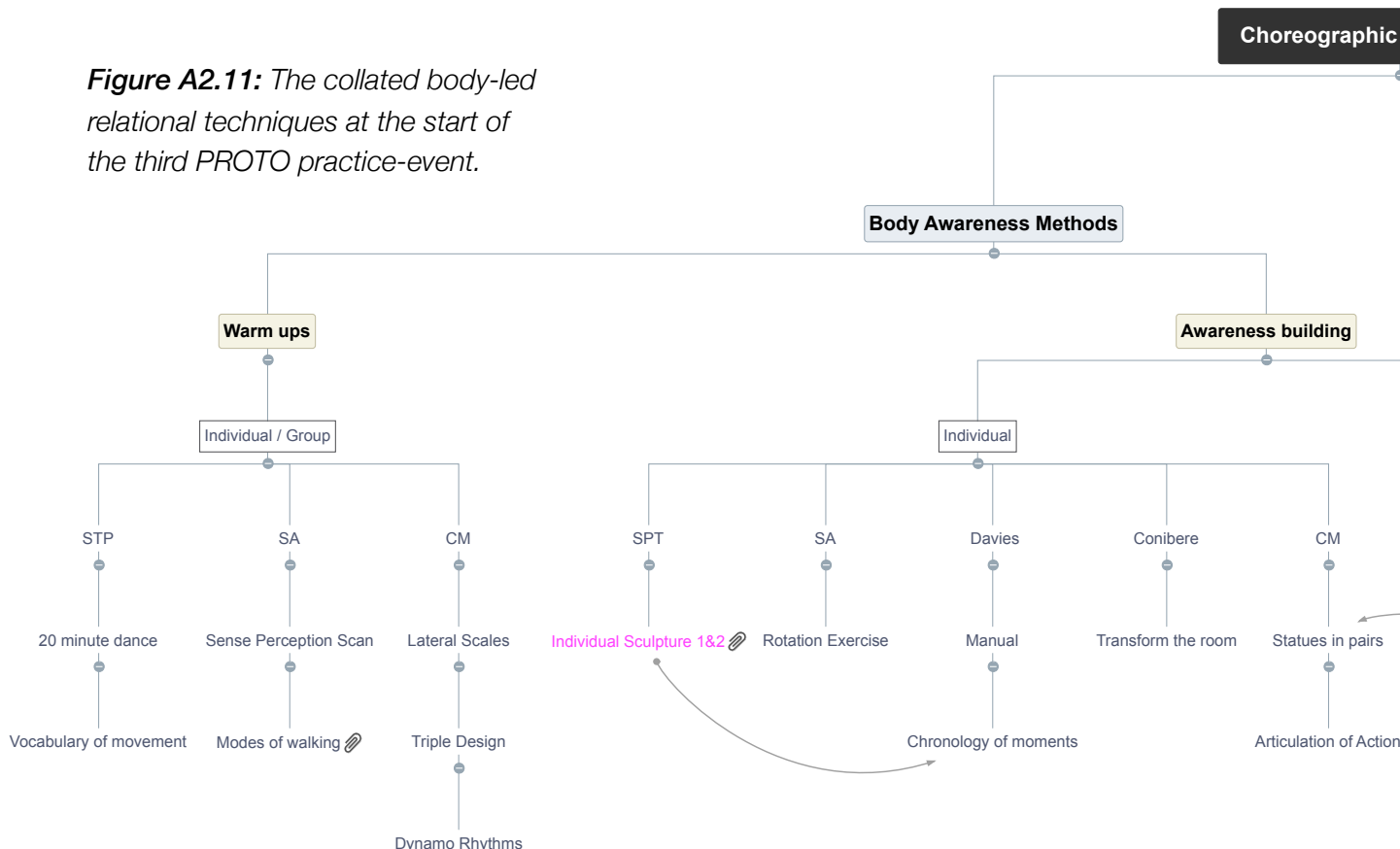




Figure A2.10: Participants during *Modes of Walking* (**middle**) and *Menu of Pedestrian Movement* (**right**).

For example, *Circling Variations* (fig A2.12) and *Falling Together* (fig A2.13) were combined with *Modes of Walking* (fig A2.10) to explore relational awareness of the individual, group, and contextual bodies. In this rehearsal, I also aimed to bring into dialogue techniques with similar orientations, for example, Dilley's *Circle Map of Space* and *Herding* and *Flocking* with Sperling's Group Study score for *Circling*;

Games Making

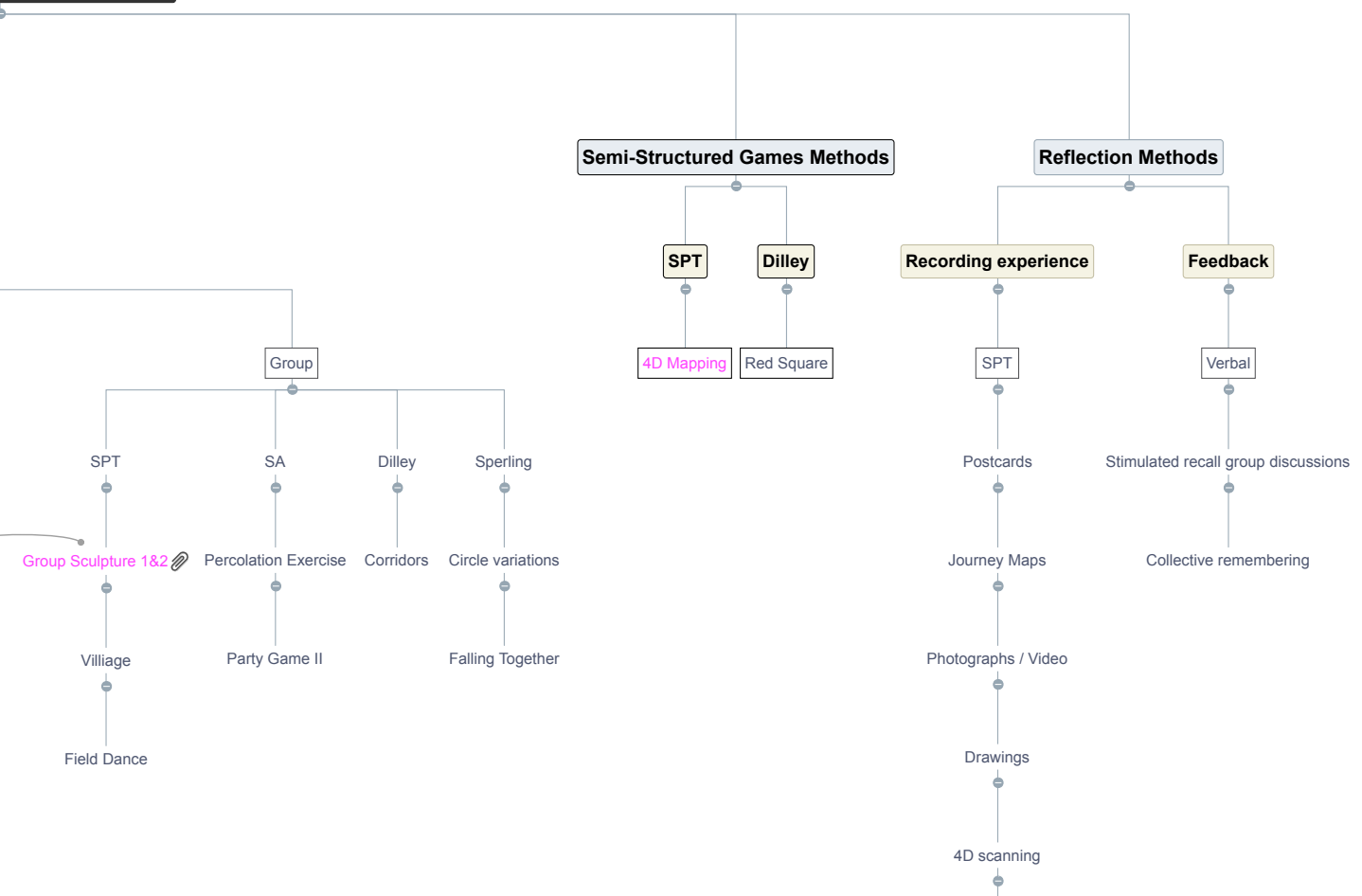




Figure A2.12: *Rehearsing the Circling Variations technique.*



Figure A2.13: *Participants trying to synchronise during Falling Together.*

or Dilley's *Four Postures of Mindfulness* and *Five Moves* with Hayashi's *Menu of Movement*.¹⁶ The techniques being explored were provisionally organised under three groupings (fig A2.11): *Body Awareness methods* (differentiating 'warm-ups' from individual and group awareness building techniques); *Semi-Structured Games methods* (including the more complex techniques such as *Red Square* and *4D Mapping*); and *Reflection methods* (including potential approaches for documenting participant experience and verbal dialogue). Over the final three PROTO practice-events, these technique groupings were further refined.¹⁷

To open this practice-event, *20 Minute Dance* (fig A2.9) displaced *Modes of Walking*, the latter interwoven to maintain momentum between techniques. An extended version of the *Menu of Pedestrian Movement* was introduced to reference specific movement vocabularies, including simple postures like sitting, standing, lying down, and dynamics such as proximity, direction, and velocity. This provided scaffolding for the semi-structured improvisation technique *Village*. We further explored techniques from *Corporeal Mime*¹⁸ to enhance movement articulation skills, but this was subsequently excluded because of the physical skill levels required from non-dance participants. *Corridors* was included again, and Hayashi's *Stuck* technique was explored in both individual and group formats, with the addition of bodied explorations of each other's individual stuck postures (fig A2.14 and fig A2.16).

Dialogue during and after practice

In addition to hosting a plenary dialogue, interim dialogue periods were included after sets of techniques to allow for regular collective sharing of insights and continuity between body-led and dialogue processes. To sustain body-led sensemaking during dialogues (fig A2.15), I adopted aspects of the Micro-Phenomenology explication technique.¹⁹ Building on learning from the Social

¹⁶ See *Practice Appendix 1: Technique Selection and Descriptors* for more detail.

¹⁷ See *Chapter 4* in the thesis for a discussion of the PROTO outcomes.

¹⁸ Specifically, *Lateral Scales*, *Triple Design*, and *Dynamo Rhythms* as developed by Étienne Decroux.

¹⁹ For more on how micro-phenomenology was incorporated, see *Chapter 4: 4.4.1.3*



Figure A2.14: *Exploring the individual Stuck technique.*



Figure A2.15: Interim dialogue in small groups after sets of techniques.

Presencing Theatre community, I incorporated the simplified phrases: *I felt*, *I saw*, and *I did*.²⁰ This provided scaffolding for sharing experiences and observations, whilst staving off conceptual meaning-making impulses and reducing interpretation or projection of what we might habitually or rationally *think*.²¹ During this practice-event, we experimented with written reflection protocols, specifically using Hayashi and Dutra's *Postcards to Future Self* and *Postcards to Past Self*, alongside the *Stuck* technique. This approach was not adopted in further practice-events to maintain focus on the affordances of the body.²²

²⁰ For example: 'When *I saw* you let go of your grip, *I felt* a sense of opening and you moved to a standing position', as opposed to 'when you let go of your grip, I knew the issues that kept you down were no longer bothering you'. In the latter, a conceptual interpretation overlays the observation of the bodied movement.

²¹ p166. Hayashi, A. 2021.

²² See *Chapter 3: 3.7* for discussion on methods not taken forward.



Write a note to you future self about
Sculpture 1

I DID / I FELT / I SAW

feet crossed
shoulders forward
torso arched
pecking through my
fingers

insecure but
safe

postures that
seemed ashamed
and with heads
down

not what I want
to communicate...

I want to not be shy, now I am,
but I think it closes me off
from Sculps. hope I am less shy by now future self

Name of your Stück

Shy in groups

Shy with strangers

Peek + see but not
look.



Write a note to you past self about
Sculpture 2

I DID / I FELT / I SAW

I fought the people helping me
exaggerate my posture.

→ the struggle of trying
to unclench my shoulders
and stand tall.

→ my second sculpture
still did not empower me,
although I tried to keep my
gaze forward.

Name of your Stuck-progression

Unstuck

Unst...?





Figure A2.16: (left) Explorations of each other's individual 'stuck' postures.

Figure A2.17: (below left) Participants reflecting and examples of written reflections of future and past selves from the postcard activity used alongside the Stuck technique.

Figure A2.18: (below right) Whole group dialogue at conclusion of the practice-event.

Summary of Insights & Observations: *PROTO_IR3*

The rehearsal format of this event fostered more horizontal interactions between myself as facilitator-researcher and the participant. Clearly and simply introducing the choreographic scaffold for each technique allowed semi-structured improvisations to develop naturally, with occasional verbal prompts supporting flow. These semi-structured journeys of body-led enquiry were balanced with an openness to provisional knowing and responsiveness to emergent learning among the group. Working with a wider range of techniques in a single rehearsal made it possible to observe their operations in parallel and begin discerning complementarities between them, in terms of their onto-epistemic affordances. Three broad qualities had begun to emerge among the techniques (*Body / Group / Space Awareness; Temporal Awareness; Relational Awareness*) informing the potential running order for practice-events, while also highlighting the value of maintaining flexibility to select different techniques to suit different enquiries and audiences.

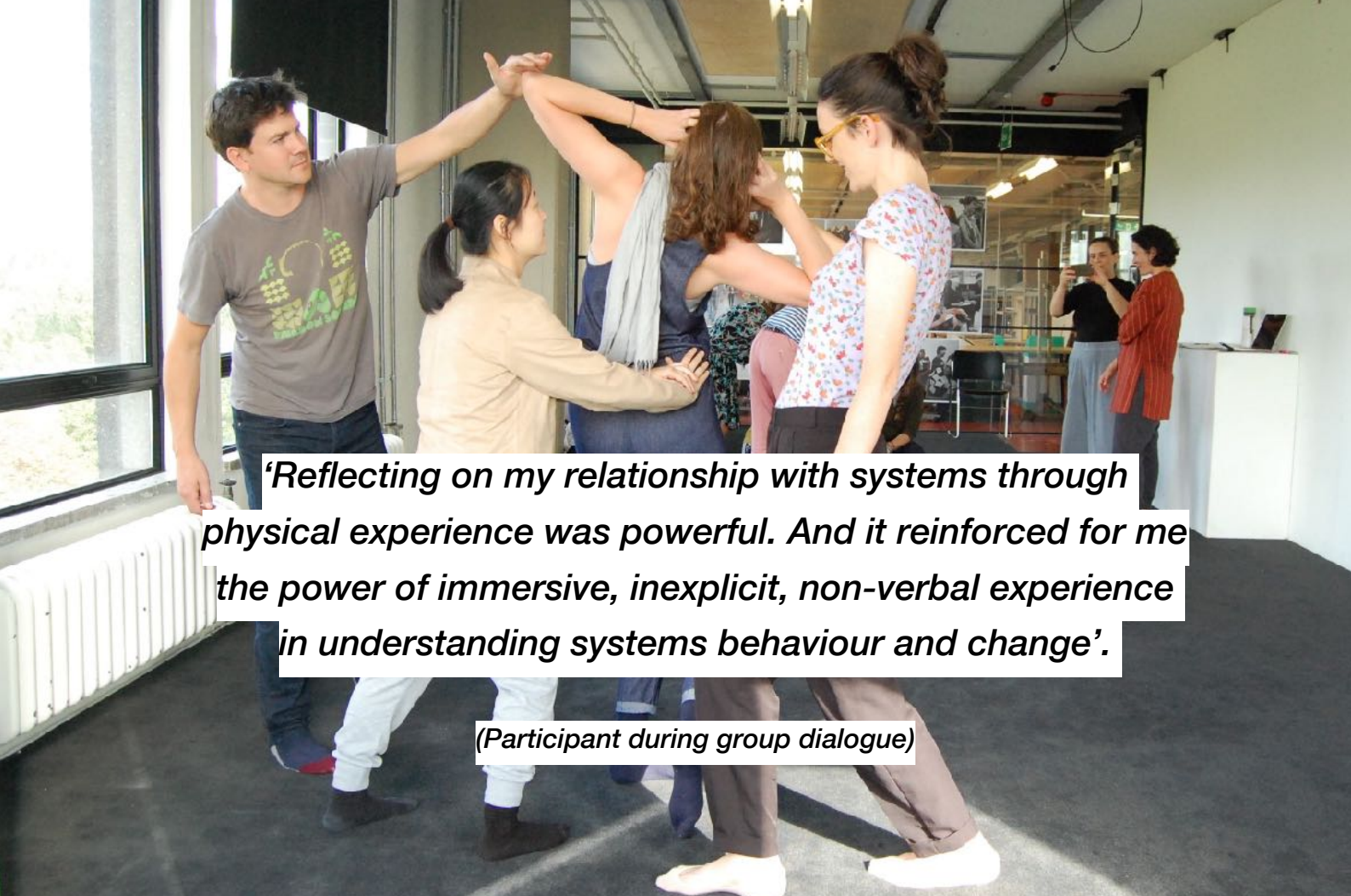




Figure A2.19: (above & right) Two examples of the *Stuck* technique as group activity.

The longer session length worked well, even with the increased number of techniques, although time ran out to rehearse *4D Mapping*. Participants shared that they valued the gradual progression from simple early movements to more complex, choreographed sequences, with one participant noting that the slow build was especially important for those less familiar with movement or body work. This underscored the need for sufficient time and sensitivity to group dynamics when engaging in body-led relational learning. Whilst the rehearsal room was inviting and carpeted, the size felt constraining for optimal movement for the number of participants.

Not everyone in this context felt comfortable with *20 Minute Dance*. Some found it grounding, enjoying how it ‘...built up from small parts and sneakily brought you into the sense of moving, transitioning, connecting’. Others suggested that certain audiences might find it awkward and would benefit from an even simpler warm-up. In subsequent events, I explored options for a more playful



‘Reflecting on my relationship with systems through physical experience was powerful. And it reinforced for me the power of immersive, inexplicit, non-verbal experience in understanding systems behaviour and change’.

(Participant during group dialogue)

opening technique, in particular, *Manual*. Both these techniques offer unique opportunities for connection with one’s own body and movement — essential for deepening body-led enquiry. Offering a *Menu of Pedestrian Movement* helped participants move into improvisation, and could be extended as confidence grew without restricting expression. I considered whether the *Menu of Pedestrian Movement* might serve as a means to interpret the meaning of movements, but concluded that creating typologies of meaning for postures, gestures, and movement would detract from their situatedness and relational emergence. Instead, meaning was left provisional, to be explored contextually and collectively through practice and dialogue. Techniques from *Corporeal Mime* were explored, however, the skilled movement articulation they require exceeded the requirements of my research application. Everyday pedestrian movement provided greater familiarity and accessibility.

PROTO_IR4

Bodied Knowing

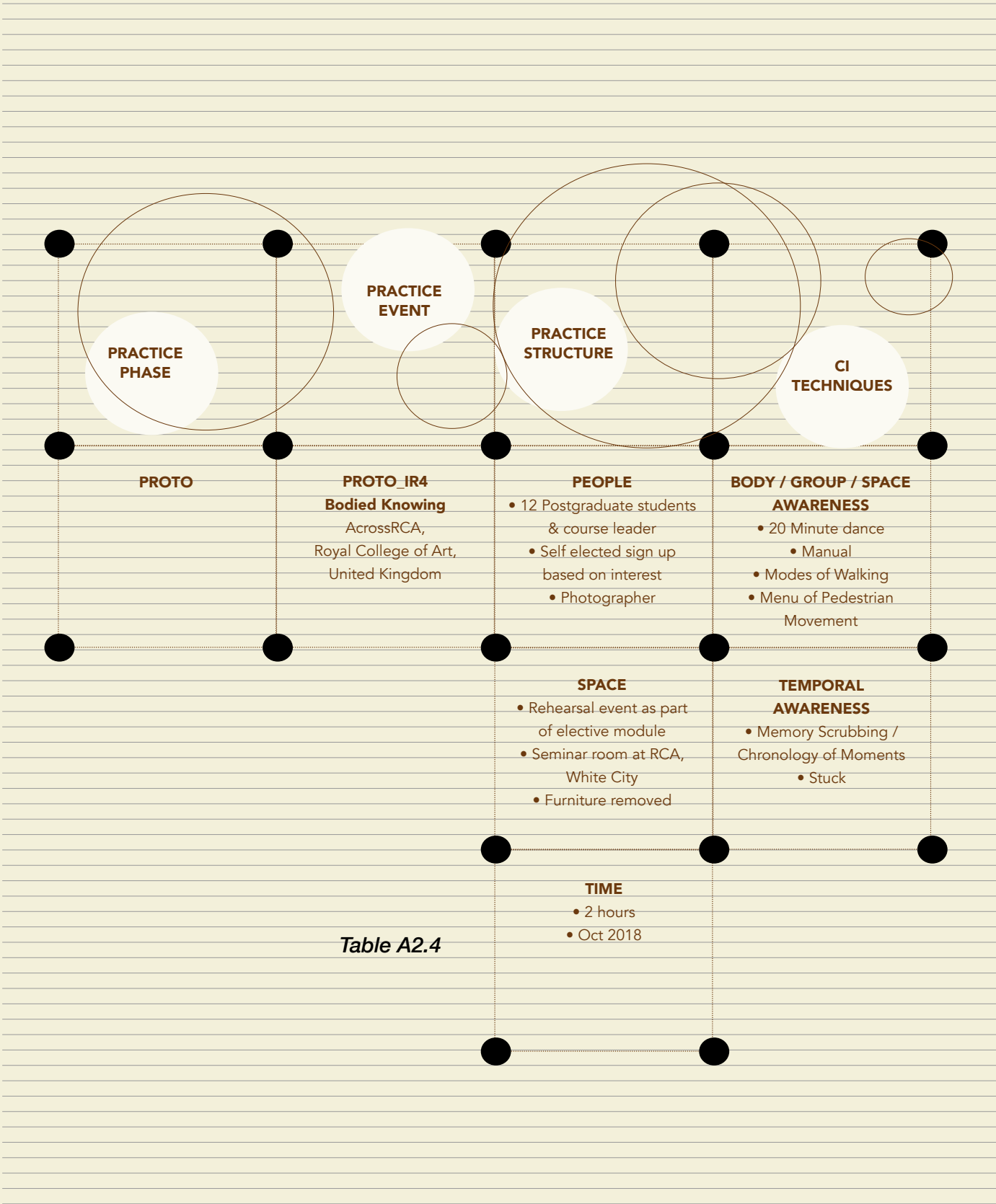


Table A2.4

Event description

The fourth PROTO practice-event, was hosted at the Royal College of Art during the college-wide interdisciplinary unit AcrossRCA (2018).²³ The event was attended by 12 Master's students from different disciplines and the course leader for the *Ordinary Pleasures* elective module, who had invited me to develop an introduction to bodied and non-verbal 'felt' ways of knowing and doing. This provided an opportunity to explore how I might select techniques in line with specific learning objectives determined by a learning setting. Students had self-elected to join the module based on interest. As before, none of the participant were movement practitioners or dancers, but some identified personal practices, such as yoga, as informing their sense of bodied knowing. The event was hosted in a seminar room, with a professional photographer present, arranged by the course leader.

Rehearsing the techniques

The particular learning objectives of the elective module allowed me to further experiment with the integration of two of the emerging operational qualities, namely *Body / Group / Space Awareness* and *Temporal Awareness* techniques. To work with the available time, I included six techniques, so as to explore each in sufficient depth. These techniques were selected to introduce the group to bodied ways of knowing, through attending to their own bodies, those of others, and our context, as well as exploring the body's access to temporal relationalities. Opening with *20 Minute Dance*²⁴ allowed for the introduction of stillness and movement as a *zeitgeber* or cue, which we extended to the investigation of temporalities later in the rehearsal. As a comparable opening activity, I also introduced *Manual* (fig A2.20) to build awareness of the sophistication and minutiae of movement across our own and other bodies. Moving into *Modes of Walking* (fig A2.21), I loosely included prompts from the *Menu of Pedestrian Movement*, such as location,

²³ For more on AcrossRCA see: <https://www.rca.ac.uk/study/acrossrca/> and <https://acrossrca2025.rca.ac.uk/>

²⁴ To help ease the group into the rehearsal, I requested for no photos be taken during *20 Minute Dance*.



*'I was thinking, how do you
actually stand up?'*

*(Participant during
group dialogue)*

Figure A2.20: Manual acted as a more playful opening activity to help ease participants into the rehearsal.





Figure A2.21: *Modes of Walking included experimenting with stillness and movement, and moments before and after still points.*

proximity, direction, pace/velocity. During *Modes of Walking*, we worked again with the temporal parameters of stillness and movement, specifically attending to moments before and after a still point. This prepared the ground for introducing *Memory Scrubbing / Chronology of Moments* (fig A2.22) as an exploration of the relationality between present and past through bodied knowing. As in previous practice-events, I used interim dialogues after individual or sets of techniques for the group to share insight and observations. As part of the *Stuck* technique (fig A2.23 & A2.24), I included written *I felt, I saw, I did* statements together with drawn reflections using journey maps and sensation intensity statements (fig A2.25).²⁵ The practice-event concluded with a plenary dialogue among the whole group.

²⁵ This reflection protocol was inspired by learning from Social Presencing Theatre research group at the Presencing Institute.





Summary of Insights & Observations: PROTO_IR4

Observations by myself and the group revealed conditions and orientations underpinning a body-led relational learning practice, alongside suppositions about the onto-epistemic processes at play in the techniques. In comparing *20 Minute Dance* and *Manual* as opening activities, the former again felt out of step for participants unfamiliar with bodied enquiry, whereas the latter was more playful and accessible. Social Presencing Theatre explains the value of *20 Minute Dance* as helping participants slow down, become grounded and open, and increase confidence and clarity in preparation for further activities. The students, however, reported feeling self-conscious and protective during the exercise, especially in the context of the college and among peers. The seminar space itself — including its size and floor surface — likely further contributed to this. *20 Minute Dance* is non-verbal, directly improvisational and body-led, while *Manual* includes verbal communication and a more conceptual aim, still allowing the development of bodied knowing. Because verbal and concept-driven learning is often more familiar than body-led approaches, the ‘ice-breaker’ quality of *Manual* worked better as a first activity with this group. These differences suggest that cultivating a safe, relaxed, and comfortable container is vital when initiating a body-led relational learning space.



Figure A2.22 *Memory Scrubbing / Chronology of Moments being rehearsed individually by participant.*



Figure A2.23 (above and right) *Exploring individual Stuck postures in parallel with peers.*

Stuck and *Memory Scrubbing / Chronology of Moments* allow for bodied exploration of temporal relationalities between the present and the future / past. Functioning primarily as individual learning experiences, they are conducted in parallel with peers and extended through group discussion which revealed shared and divergent insights. The onto-epistemic processes these techniques cultivate contribute to understandings and orientations supporting the relational systems practices like *Village*, *Red Square*, and *4D Mapping*. *Stuck* in particular works actively with uncertainty, provisionality, and emergence as principles of coming-to-know. Onto-epistemic processes observed include slowing down, relaxing reliance on logic and conceptual sense-making, attuning to bodied sensations and the emergence of difference. When practising individual *Stuck* postures, attention was centred on the individual and contextual body; in group postures, attentiveness needed to span individual, group, and contextual bodies. Cultivating itinerant attentiveness and mobility across the sites of the threefold body amounts to a body-led relational learning journey.





The *Memory Scrubbing / Chronology of Moments* technique builds on the supposition that repeatedly re-embodying a strong body memory²⁶ — effectively ‘rehydrating’ it in the present — reveals relationalities between past and present. This unflattening enables remembering the past from the present, and reflecting on the present from the past. This has the potential to widen one's perspectives on routes to alternative presents and pasts, which is essential to practices of re-storying / restoring.

²⁶ Such as the sensation of stepping out on a dewy lawn, first touching one's newborn child, or a moment of being submerged by a big wave in the sea.



Figure A2.24: Exploring the *Stuck* technique in small groups.

Onto-epistemic processes observed include suspending linear, one-directional conceptions of time, maintaining a sense of a *larger present*,²⁷ and cultivating awareness of *relational emergence*.²⁸ Participants reported experiencing the familiar as strange: for example, forgetting how to stand up, noticing a heightened sense of space around the body, or how focusing on a single sensation led inexorably to others.

²⁷ A broader sense of the present that 1) exists in parallel with our own immediate present (for example, at the same time as you are reading this, someone across the world is struggling to find enough to eat); and 2) exists in a wider sense than the immediate present, that the current moment is enlarged by attending to the moments astride.

²⁸ The arising of actions from the conditions of interdependence.



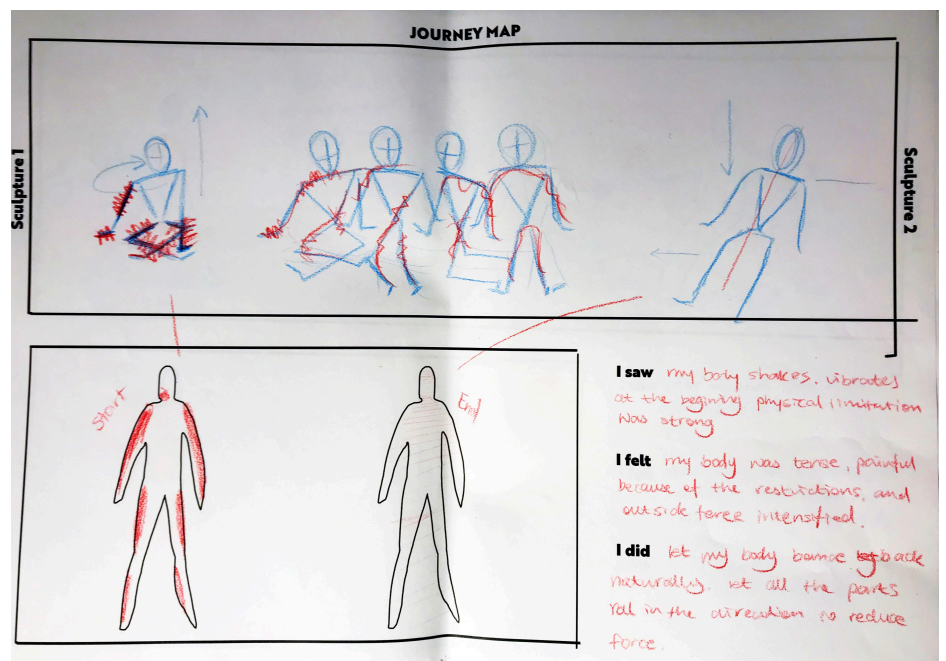
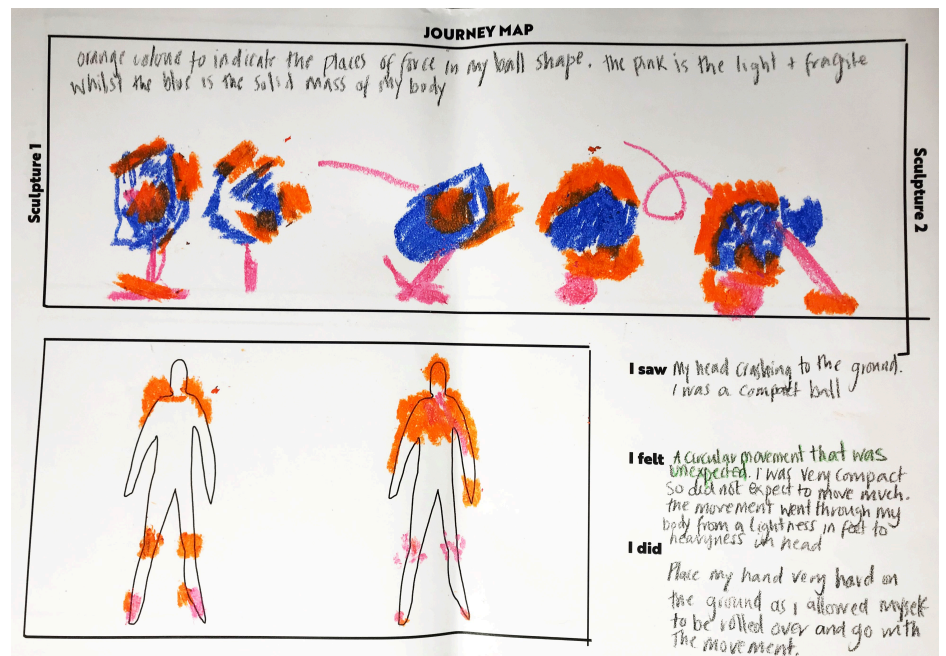
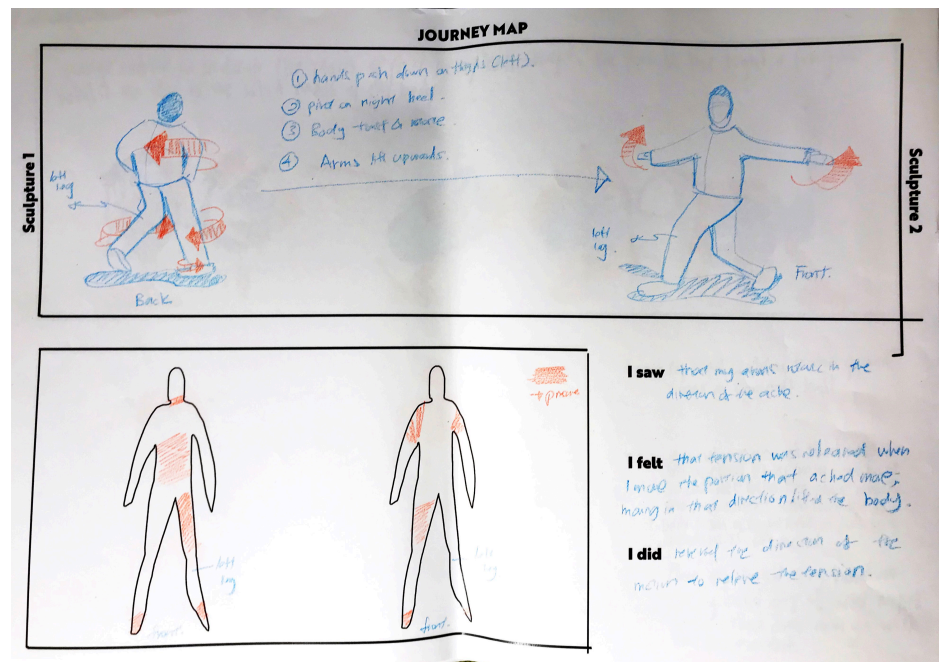
Trialling written and drawn reflections in this and previous practice-events led me to omit them from future rehearsals. Journey maps tended to externalise bodily action, abstracting it from direct lived experience. While participants found these tasks useful for individual reflection, the high variation and abstraction of responses did not suggest a meaningful means or use for analysis. Building on earlier events, embedding dialogue within the rehearsal — as a form of generative evaluation — revealed collective learning as itinerant, provisional, and attentive to emergence. Employing open, non-directive questioning²⁹ created space for diffractive avenues of collective enquiry to surface. Light³⁰ suggests that making evaluation part of a creative practice intervention allows better attunement between the researcher's aims and participant experience, which is important when co-creating knowledge.

²⁹ For example, inviting participants to share their experiences, observations, insights, or simply asking: What did we learn from that?; What did you experience?; or What did you find in your exploration?

³⁰ Light, A. 2022. How to think about / do evaluation? A practitioner reflection on generative evaluation [WWW Document]. Creatures Framework. URL <https://creaturesframework.org/creative-practice/how-to-think-about-do-evaluation.html>

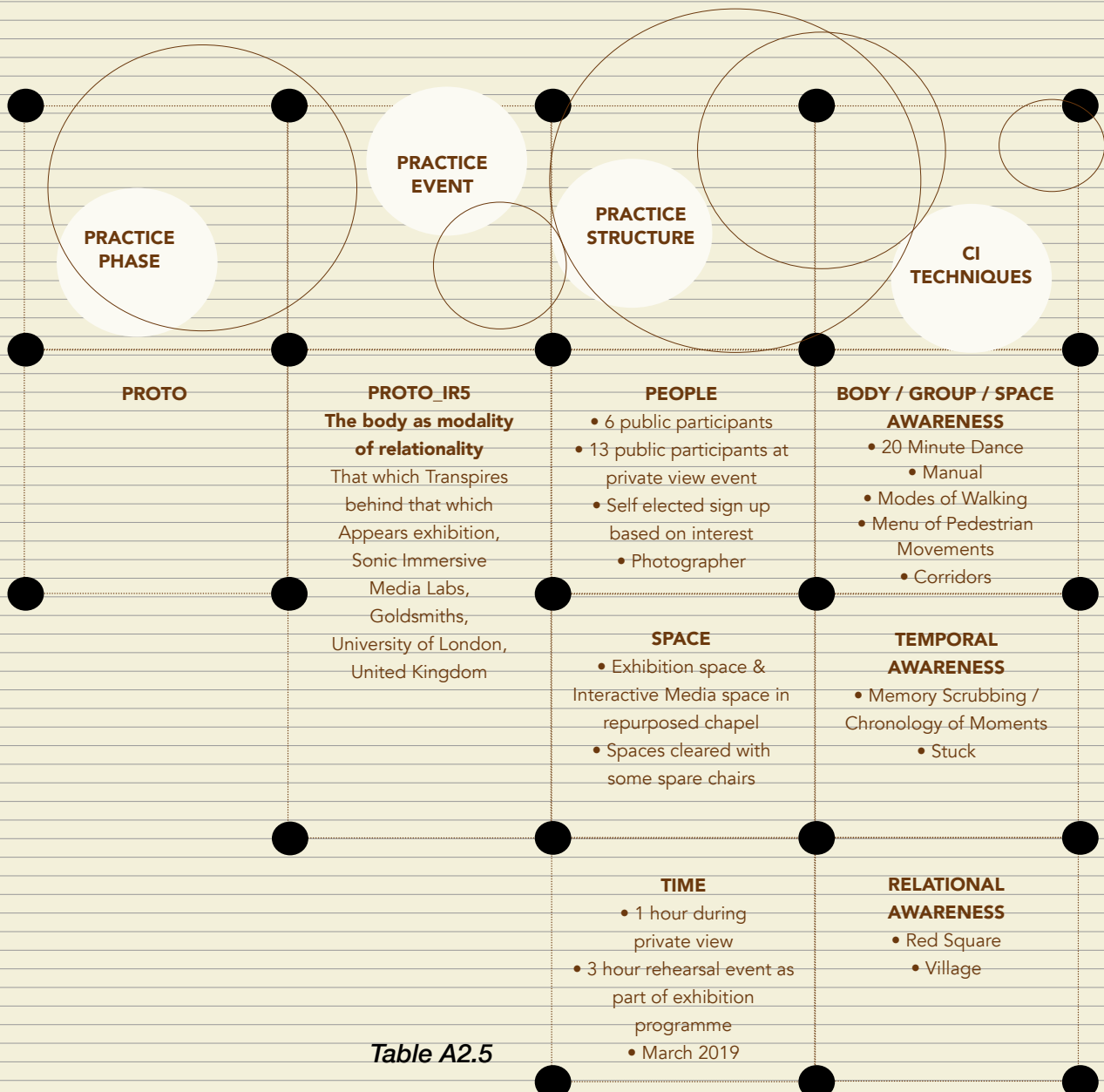
Figure A2.25

The group reflecting (left) with examples of drawn and written reflections of the Stuck technique (right).



PROTO_IR5

The body as modality of relationality



Event description

The final PROTO practice-event took place at the Sonic Immersive Media Lab, Goldsmiths, University of London (2019). It formed part of an exhibition curated by me and two colleagues,³¹ titled *That which Transpires behind that which Appears* (fig A2.26). The exhibition explored relationality between self and other, showcasing my research-in-progress (fig A2.27) alongside a series of cinematographic experiments by cinematographer Gerry McCulloch. I further hosted a public practice-event consisting of two experimental elements: a *pop-up rehearsal* hosted during the exhibition's private view, and a three-hour *dedicated rehearsal* as part of the exhibition program. A total of 19 people self-elected to participate across the two events, with participation coming from both public and academic contexts.

Rehearsing the techniques

The *pop-up rehearsal* during the exhibition private view experimented with two techniques, *Corridors* and *Red Square*, each followed by a short dialogue (fig A2.28). Exhibition visitors were informally invited to join. I selected techniques with minimal technical requirements, simple to explain and enact. The objective was to provide exhibition visitors with an impromptu experience of my practice-research and to experiment with hosting a rehearsal in a live context as I moved towards the situated practice-phase of my research.

Hosted on a separate day, the *dedicated rehearsal*³² explored techniques from all three operational qualities³³ to observe how a body-led relational learning trajectory might be organised. Dialogues were interspersed between technique groupings. After an introduction to the research, we opened with *20 Minute Dance*³⁴ and *Manual* (fig A2.29) to observe their parallels and accessibility with this

³¹ Cinematographer Gerry McCulloch (Goldsmiths, University of London) and Betsy McCall (Art Monastery Project) presented a cinematic installation, inspired by Gerry's 2014 experience of the *Party Game* technique at a Shambhala Art workshop that I presented.

³² This event required participant to sign-up prior to attendance.

³³ Body/Group/Space Awareness, Temporal Awareness, and Relational Awareness.

³⁴ As before, *20 Minute Dance* was not documented to allow for a less observed space.



Fig A2.26: Three of a series of ten exhibition posters for That which Transpires behind that which Appears exhibition.



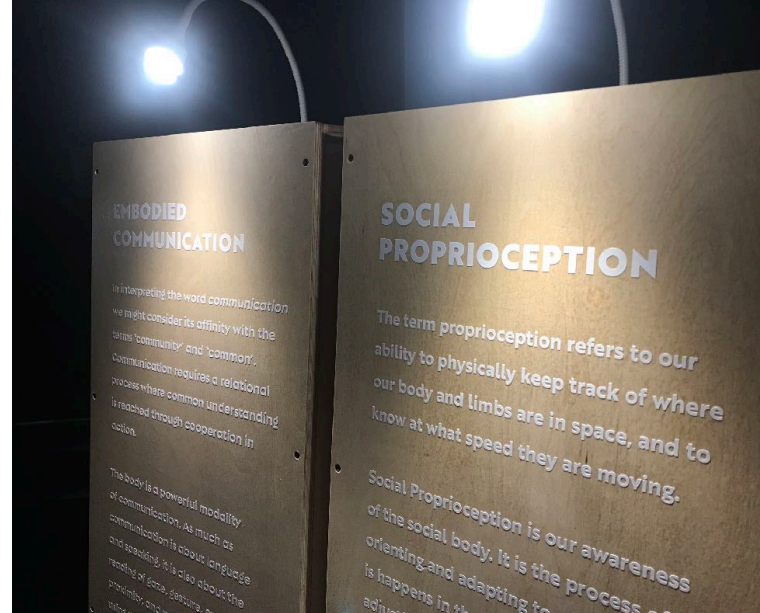


Fig A2.27: Installation showing my research-in-progress at the *That which Transpires behind that which Appears* exhibition.

new group. For *20 Minute Dance*, I offered more structured guidance to ease participants into free improvisation. Before moving on to more active techniques, we paused for a brief dialogue. This was followed by *Modes of Walking* (fig A2.30), incorporating *Menu of Pedestrian Movement* elements, such as *pace* and *levels* (low/mid/high), to continue our attunement to knowing through the body in motion and context with others. As in the previous practice-event, we explored *moments before* and *moments after*, leading on to individual explorations of *Memory Scrubbing / Chronology of Moments* (fig A2.31). We continued to the *Stuck* technique (fig A2.32), first individually and then in groups of three. We concluded the first part of the rehearsal with group dialogue. After a break, we rehearsed the *Village* technique (fig A2.33). To scaffold *Village*'s improvisation aspect, we further

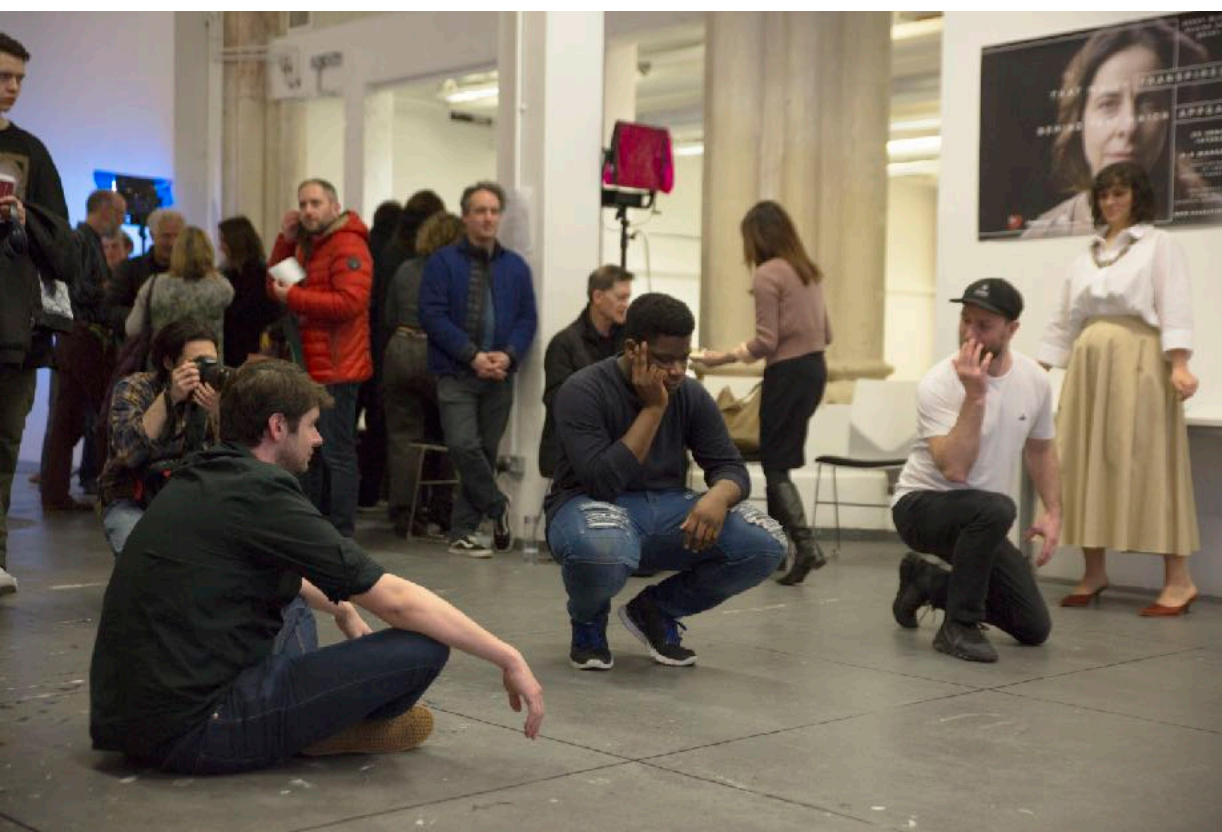


Figure A2.28: Exhibition visitors at the pop-up event, rehearsing Red Square (below left) and Corridors (below right).



Figure A2.28 (above): Dialogue with exhibition visitors after rehearsing the techniques.





Figure A2.29: (above) *Manual being rehearsed in pairs by participants.*

Figure A2.30: (across right) *Modes of Walking exploring pace.*

Figure A2.31: (bottom right) *Individual exploration of Memory Scrubbing.*

Figure A2.32: (next page) *The Stuck technique being explored as individual and group practice.*

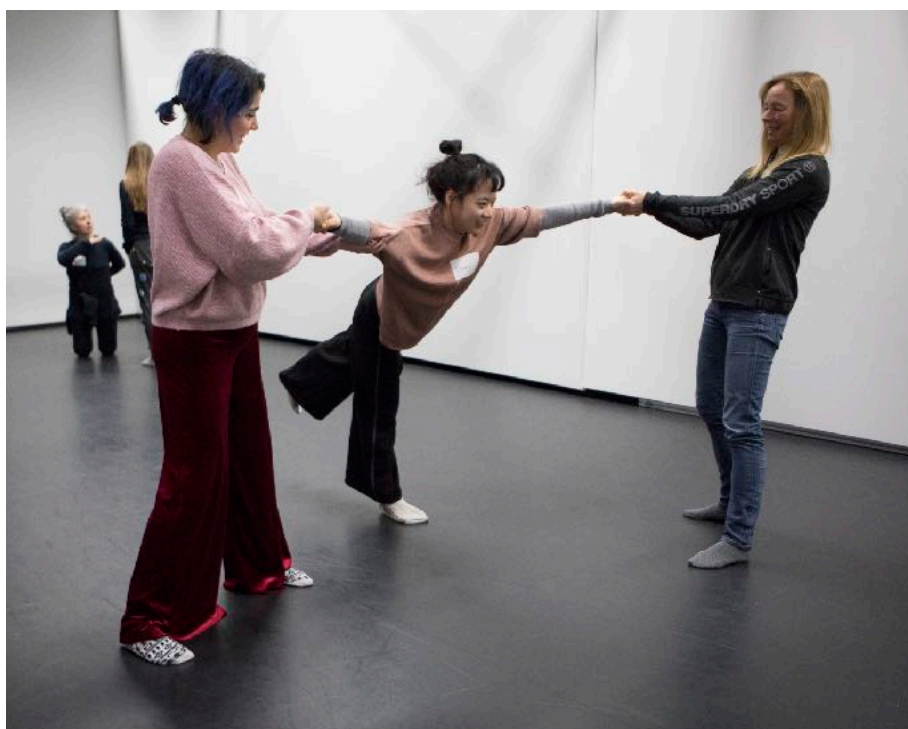
explored the *Menu of Pedestrian Movement*. As the event took place in the main exhibition space, the group made an impromptu decision to include McCulloch's cinematographic projection in the practice of *Village* — to enhance a sense of the *contextual body* and *larger present*, and even as a notion of 'ancestors' overlooking our 'village'. After rehearsing this technique, I introduced a more structured dialogue protocol to unpack *Village*.³⁵ Dialogue during this practice-event was very active throughout. Despite the three-hour timeframe, *4D Mapping* had to be excluded, indicating the considerable time required for these techniques and the learning processes to unfold at a pace suitable for the group.

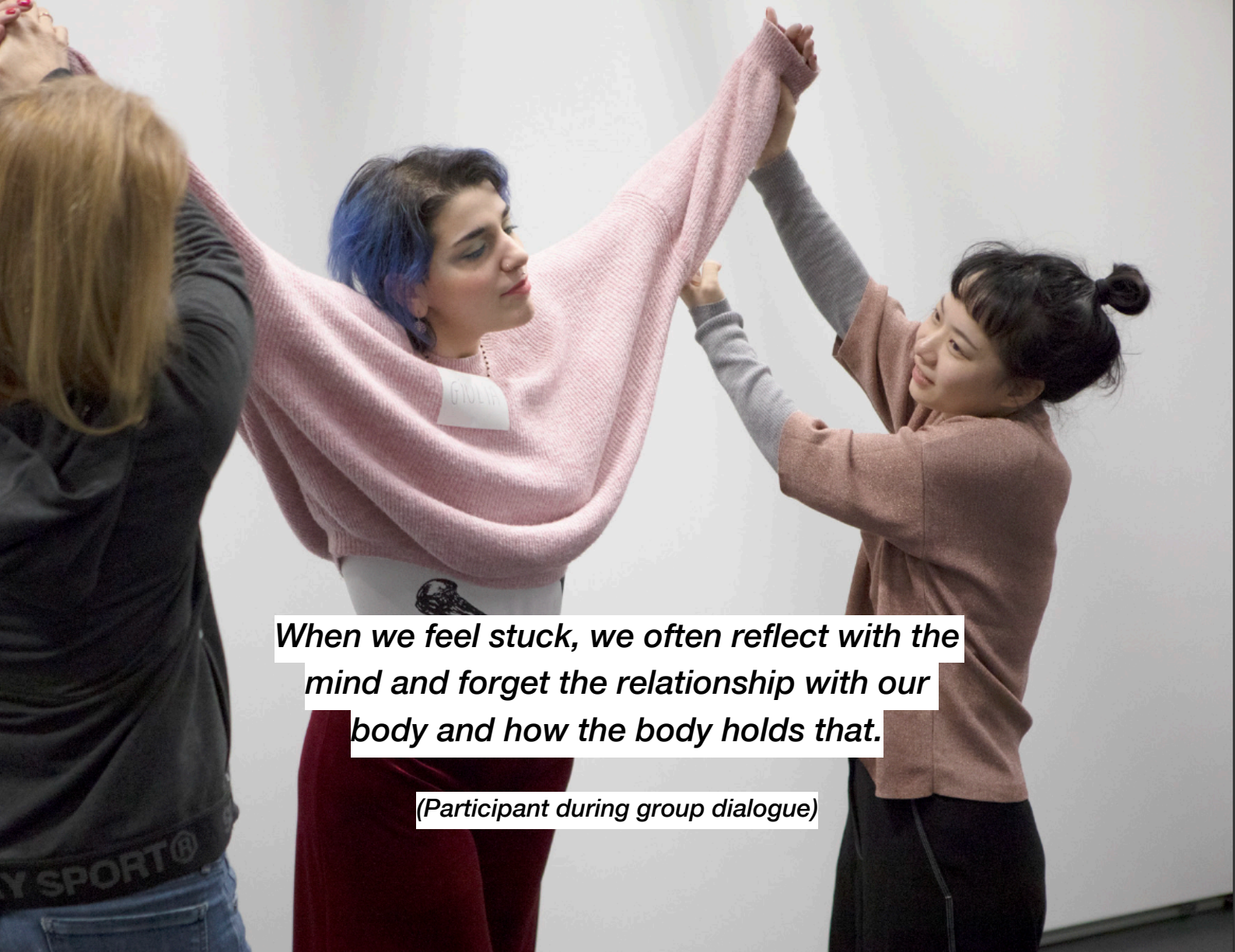
Summary of Insights & Observations: PROTO_IR5

The final PROTO practice-event consisted of two elements: a *pop-up rehearsal* and a *dedicated rehearsal*, the latter akin to the previous PROTO practice-events. The pop-up rehearsal provided insight into how body-led relational learning might

³⁵ See more on this protocol in *Practice Appendix 1: Technique Selections and Descriptors*.







*When we feel stuck, we often reflect with the
mind and forget the relationship with our
body and how the body holds that.*

(Participant during group dialogue)



be situated in public contexts where participants may have no prior interest in such practices. Informal use of body-led relational learning in public spaces³⁶ offers a potential avenue for further research. Observed by exhibition visitors, the pop-up rehearsal communicated fundamental aspects of my research³⁷ to participants and audience without becoming overtly performative. As with the other PROTO events, there is a risk that participation skews toward confident individuals; however, across the five events, many self-described shy or introverted participants reported feeling actively engaged. One limitation of the PROTO phase was the informality and variation of the cohorts across events, yet the divergence of enquiry prompted by the pop-up rehearsal indicated that the design-research program was ready to move from an enclosed studio cycle to a more situated enquiry.

Beyond preparing the physical space, the onto-epistemic and ethical conditions inherent in the practice-space (such as institutional expectations or the gaze of observers like a photographer) required careful negotiation. Spatz refers to this as an active emptying of space for practice³⁸ — a relational act of care essential if body-led relational learning is to engage with onto-epistemic infrastructuring. Such emptying is not a one-off action but an ongoing recognition of relational dynamism. In welcoming participants during this and earlier practice-events, I cultivated continuous acknowledgement of arising circumstances as inherent to the learning space. A core premise of body-led relational learning, then, is to actively cultivate attending to bodied and sensory observations because they can act as relational beacons that direct emergent learning.

20 Minute Dance was well received by this cohort, helping participants arrive more fully in the space and connect with their bodies. Clear bracketing of body memory at the start of *Memory Scrubbing* — allowing time to identify and re-

³⁶ For example, in local community-led processes or in the context of mass public demonstration.

³⁷ Primarily, that the body is a central modality in relational engagement.

³⁸ Here Spatz builds on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, who observes that 'the performance space is never empty ... It is always the site of physical, social, and psychic forces in society'. p14. Spatz, B. 2015. What a body can do: technique as knowledge, practice as research. Routledge, London; New York; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. 1997. Enactments of Power: The Politics of Performance Space. TDR 41.3: 11–30.

familiarise the core movement — supported more precise exploration and deeper insights. As seen in earlier events, *Stuck* enabled exploration of personal circumstances without requiring disclosure to the group. *Village*, unlike *4D Mapping*, has no pre-set topic, but nonetheless opened dialogue about community dynamics and orientations. Participants again felt they benefited from gradually developing scaffolds across the rehearsal (such as differentiating stillness and movement, occurring in *20 Minute Dance* and reappearing in later activities like *Village*). While each technique provided a scaffold, it was individual interpretation and movement choices that activated bodied understanding for participants. Shared experiences of in rehearsal became collective objects for dialogue, generating both individual and relational insights. For example, when exploring modes of participation during *Village*, participants offered contrasting perspectives:

*'I felt there was too much pressure to be an individual,
because there were stages when I was following others, and I was
enjoying it. I feel I should not need to instigate something new.'*

Participant 1

*'I struggled with the idea of following. And I think.. I feel I'm against that.
So if everybody is doing something, I would not do it.'*

Participant 2

*'...the way I see it is as a body: the whole group as a body. How you can interact,
create, and introduce movement, or stillness, or a way of being in the same space
— all that balances the space without necessarily having a leader or a follower.
It's that sense of what the space needs and how collectively we can make
decisions by the way we respond to being next to each other'.*

Participant 3

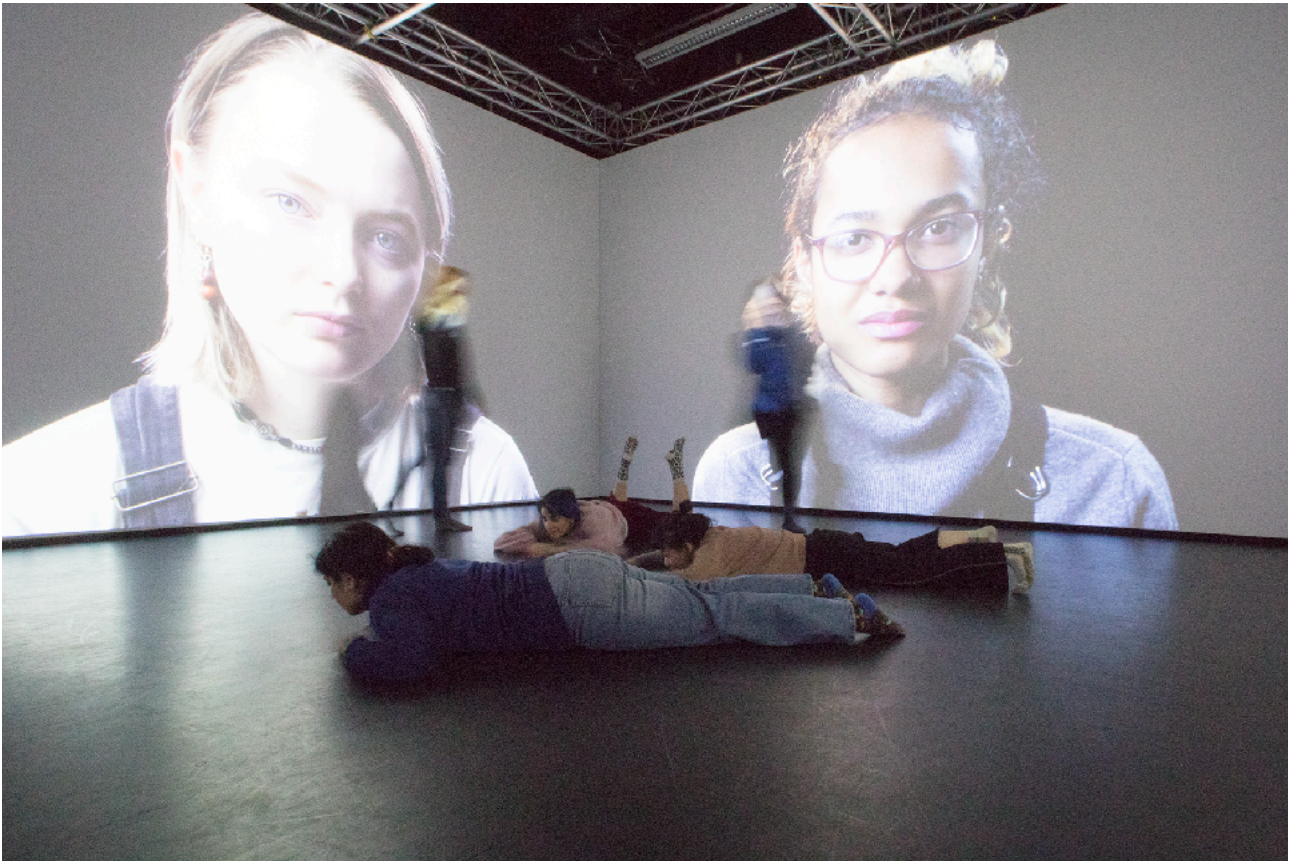


Figure A2.33: Different moments during the rehearsal of Village and dialogue.



Dialogue protocols for *Village* provided a structured means to explore such diversity, opening up learning about relational dynamics in the practice-space. Drawing on lived experiences, the dialogue extended to the onto-epistemic conditions of communities and societies beyond it.

The PROTO phase did not aim to evaluate the efficacy of the techniques, but to observe their inherent onto-epistemic processes and organisation. It sought to understand and cultivate conditions for body-led relational learning from which onto-epistemic infrastructuring possibilities might be considered.