

CAROLINE PLUMMER FELLOWSHIP IN COMMUNITY DANCE

2023 FINAL REPORT by DAISY SANDERS

Introduction and consideration of Caroline Plummer's dance values

I gratefully conclude this Fellowship firstly in honour of Caroline Plummer herself. The opportunity for a different dance artist each year to pursue their passion project allows Caroline's powerful spirit and values to live on and contribute to community in diversely transformative ways. I deeply enjoyed meeting Tony and Bibby, I visited Greenwood Farmstay and Long Point, and throughout my time in Aotearoa have thought of Caroline often. In particular, I tried to make sure that there was a foundation of openness, creative flow, warmth and generosity in all my pursuits. There were activities that brought unexpected but rich inclusion of multidisciplinary exchange (eg. Primary/High School Education workshops at University of Otago) and poetry (eg. reading my poems for the Town Belt Walk in place of the Robert Burns Fellow). These were both particularly rewarding in terms of honouring Caroline's spirit. I am humbled and privileged to have had this focused 6 months to learn, develop myself as an artist and community leader and share my mahi in Caroline's name.

Community building model and report overview

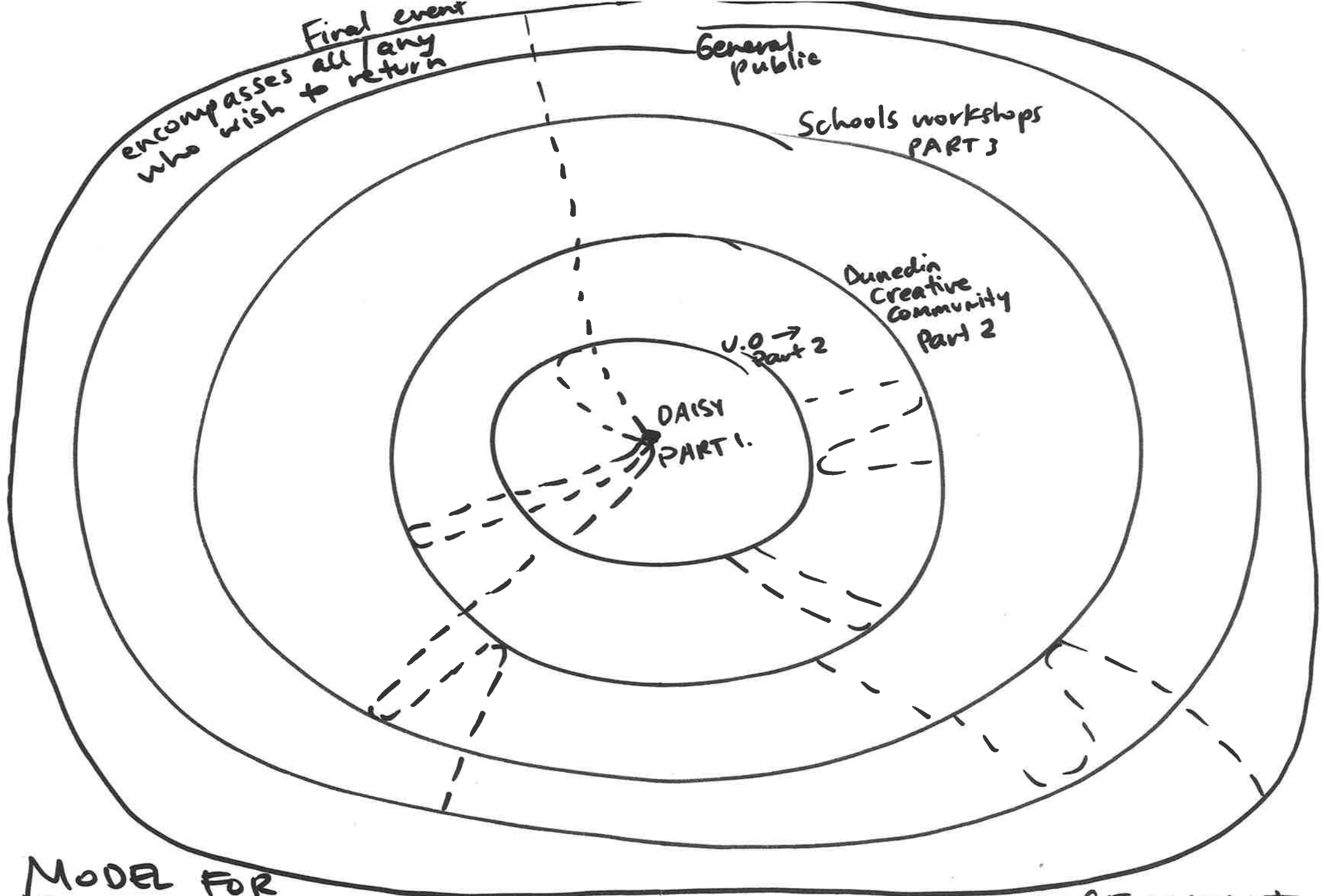
I was aware that previous Fellows have worked with specific focus groups (eg. Dance for Parkinsons) or specific dance styles (eg. Balfolk) but with my rest-focused dance method I embarked instead on a model of building community through circles that ripple gradually outwards from myself.

The dot in the centre represents me, then I offer generously to my immediate circle - in this case whoever I could meaningfully engage within University of Otago.

The next circles represent wider Ōtepoti creative community, general public and school focus groups. The largest outside circle represents a final, open doors public event - where all participants are encompassed and many can return to take part in the culmination of my Fellowship.

What I found is that this multi layered model allowed me to develop numerous connections across many different facets of my work, and the depth of sharing established quite quickly. There was also natural exchange of people moving through all different layers of the circular community building process.

There is a hand drawing below that visually describes my community building model. The following summary of my 4 part Fellowship project highlights the process of my approach, successful even across the relatively short period of 6 months. After the project summary there is a full record of all community engagement activities I offered as part of my 2023 Fellowship. I conclude by summarising the development of my practice, community benefits, key leanings and next steps.



MODEL FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING + MULTI LAYERED ENGAGEMENT

Project summary

Part 1: Practicing my healing dance methodology and writing about it (solo)

The first participant in this project was me, and I used my time as Fellow to refine my personal dance method. The Fellowship provided invaluable space and paid time for me to continue using dance to ensure my own health, and to clarify and record my enduring, unique improvisation practice.

What happened in Part 1...

- I spent many hours (average 3-9 per week across the 6 month Fellowship but more than 150 total) dancing solo, in various University of Otago studios and including hire of Karitane Hall. Walking, talking, everyday journaling and reflective conversations were also key to my ongoing solo research process.
- I undertook an experimental residency in late March; 36 hours in one empty room, leaving at minimal intervals for food and bathroom. The only permitted activities were writing (on papered walls, in journals) or resting (meditation, sleep and dancing with rest). Five local artists visited to share this 'rest or write' ritual with me.
- I undertook monthly online mentorship sessions with renowned Australian dance researcher, improviser and choreographer Ros Crisp. I undertook monthly online mentorship sessions with Dr. Jo Pollitt (Edith Cowan University, Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, 2022-3 Forest Fellow) towards a co-authored Q1 journal.
- In early August I toured to 4 experimental sound venues in Dunedin (YOURS), Christchurch (Lyttleton Coffee Co), Wellington (Pyramid Club), Auckland (Audio Foundation) and Queenstown (Te Atamira). Supported by a Division of Humanities Performing Arts grant, I performed an improvised duet with my Australian sound collaborator Josten Myburgh. This was an additional, unplanned activity but a chance to perform the solo dance approach I have worked so consistently on. It was rewarding to discover how my improvisation method results in abstract physical story telling which traverses various energies and feelings, and to see how powerfully this affects an audience. It was also a wonderful chance to extend my 5 year artistic collaboration with Josten.

Challenges and successes of Part 1

- Having an individual office was essential. The challenge of finding accommodation meant that I had to move house a few times. Settling in to the university environment and self-directing the Fellowship process took significant initiative and independent/self directed energy. My office was the only constant in 6 months of responding and adapting to people, tasks and spaces. It was a warm, quiet place where I could write, dance, rest, meditate and ground myself. It also connected me to the 4th floor Otago University performing arts staff - this meant that I had support or could be sent in the right direction whenever unsure. I simply couldn't have completed the Fellowship without my office and would highly recommend that all future Fellows have this resource ensured to them.

- Having free use of studios at the university was an utterly invaluable resource. When I work freelance in Western Australia (and around the world) the cost and logistics of studio hire is exceptionally difficult. Studio time allowed me to go deep into my solo research, learn new ways to work alone and envision/prepare all of my community workshops and offerings. I actively practiced separating administrative tasks from creative time by prioritising solo studio sessions.
- I found scheduling my studio bookings ahead and around University classes to be important. I also booked during long weekends and semester breaks wherever possible, as this meant I could have less disruption from university activity, work for longer hours (especially useful for artist research workshops) and leave work items in the room.
- There were some studio issues - such as the roof being damaged and the heating not working - that disrupted my research. At times it was unclear exactly who to talk to for assistance within the university system. The best thing for me was to have a number of studios I could choose from (G.02, Te Koro Koro 1.06, Mary Hopewell Drama Centre, Allen Hall rehearsal room) and I'm exceptionally grateful to the School of Performing Arts for granting me after-hours access to all of these. Hire of Karitane Community Hall (when living in the area) was low cost and generally a fantastic location for my work, but in June became too cold to use.
- As a dance artist this solo research time has significantly deepened physical skills and tools I can use. These now combine with and greatly enhance my imaginative and energetic strengths. I was also able to quantify and clarify the activities, directions and scores I use when leading community in various dance settings. Thus, my personal movement research became much more effectively integrated with the way I invite and lead other people into dance exploration.
- Poetic and personal writing flowed as part of my solo process, but I was not able to establish a consistent routine for academic writing. This was mostly due to office time being taken up with the sheer task of 'producing' or logistics - ie. emailing schools, organising practicalities of my many community engagement events. As a result, publications with Critical Path (artist journal) and Performing Lines WA (blog) are delayed, with the second likely to go ahead in late 2023.
- I was unsuccessful in my application to Performance Research Journal but look toward publication in a Q1 dance education journal under the mentorship of Dr. Jo Pollitt. I will advise University of Otago when this submission is published.

Summarising Part 1 as the essential foundation of my Fellowship

- This part 1 of my Project did not have an outward community engagement focus, but it laid the foundation for me to lead and offer generously. I consistently returned to solo practice between many community activities in order to reflect on how my engagement went and thus constantly improve my leadership.
- It is worth noting that one-on-one conversations with many people I met in Ōtepoti (and further around Aotearoa) promoted considerations of rest and mutual learning that will ripple locally in untraceable ways. I found incidental dialogue to be a huge part of my Fellowship - both in terms of developing my practice and building community connections.
- The 36 hour experimental research residency was an unexpected but deeply insightful process. See more information below. All five local artists who participated in this 'resting writing ritual' went on to engage and share valuable learning with me across the entire duration of my Fellowship.

Experimental research residency - 36 hours in one room, simply writing or resting.

“Early in the Fellowship I had the opportunity to inhabit an empty room of a house in North East Valley. This was made possible by Richard Miller lending his home and Leila East Giles assisting with food and practicalities. Working over long duration is a formative aspect of my research. I often dive deep in this way in order to ask the most important questions about rest through my body. I also love to experiment with different ways to share durational process with visitors. It is much less a performance as it is about setting up mutual space for self permission, awareness and revelation.

I was reminded how powerful it is to clear away all obligations and influences for a full 48 hours and just listen deeply to my body. The task is to stay in the room and simply rest, or write. Rest does include taking toilet breaks, eating briefly at the door and sleeping when needed to. Rest also includes dancing myself toward restoration very attentively and consciously. My deepest dance research emerges very clearly in these conditions. I found that poetic and productive writings emerged from this time. The recuperation in body, mind and soul was palpable.

I was also joined by 4 sensitive witnesses - new artist connections who have remained important collaborators throughout my time here. They wrote insightful reflections on the papered walls and embodied rest beside me in different ways. Everyone who entered the resting/writing room reported a total loss in sense of time, and stayed far longer with certain tasks or focal points than expected.

I intend to take this experimental way of working - including inviting audience to ‘join’ the resting ritual in silence with me - much further.

It is a powerful re-imagining of ‘performance’ and asks all those participating to genuinely meet their own need for rest, their moment to moment surrender or struggle with rest.”

Special thanks to Richard Miller and Leila East Giles.



Photos from Part 1 - walking, journaling, solo studio time, experimental rest/write residency

Part 2: Sharing dance and facilitating interdisciplinary arts practice

The next participants in my project were originally intended to be 1-7 artists aged 18 years and over. Indeed I connected to and activated a unique combination of Otago University performing arts students together with arts professionals from the wider Ōtepoti creative community. There were 7 core artists who worked closely and consistently with me, and a further 10-12 who participated in my workshops intermittently. I shared my health-focused dance methodology in various settings. I facilitated artistic practice and conversation across disciplines. I also ignited a series of unexpected opportunities for Otago staff and students across different subject areas to engage with my community dance approach. These were particularly exciting and fruitful in terms of highlighting dance as a powerful multidisciplinary tool for wellbeing.

What happened in Part 2...

- I contributed to the University of Otago Dance course by
 - leading warm up for 'Dance in Popular Culture'
 - attending a lecture to meet and converse with students
 - assessing the Semester 1 final performance
 - providing provocation, choreographic insights and feedback for solo assessments in Semester 2 'Contemporary' paper.
- I worked closely with dance student Brittany Checkley on her individual internship project. I met and mentored her across the entire first semester to support her research project combining psychology and dance. She took part in my April artist lab (see below) and Dancing With Rest public classes (see Part 3).
- I ran week-long artist labs in April and June, and a one-day artist retreat in May for deep research into my dance improvisation and choreography methods. I offered sensory, biological and poetic guidance that enabled participants to pay close attention and 'listen' deeply to their moving body.
- In May I ran a one-off performance makers workshop - delightful experience in activating playful practice and connected community spirit in a short time.
- I contributed to the University of Otago Theatre course by leading a one hour practical class for 3rd year Shakespeare students and having the Performance Devising class visit A RESTING MESS (see Part 4).
- After an incidental conversation with Andrea Robertson and Olivia Wheeler (University of Otago Primary Education staff), I led 'dance for well-being' workshops for the entire second year of Otago's Primary education students. I connected with Shannon McNatty and offered a similar opportunity for 14 Secondary education Masters students.
- I offered a seminar to School of Performing Arts staff to summarise my research and experience in the final month of my Fellowship. This included guided rest, images and creative reflections and a conversation/Q&A to conclude.

Challenges and successes of Part 2

- The timing of planning the Otago dance papers and my Fellowship did not align particularly well. I arrived in Ōtepoti at the end of February when the first semester's dance paper was already scheduled. Then, during May/June when I was planning my own Fellowship conclusion (events for July and August), the dance unit for Semester 2 was not quite ready to be scheduled with my offerings. This made it a little practically difficult to confirm my contributions to the dance course. My Fellowship research - with contemporary and somatic underpinnings - was better aligned with the second semester paper (Contemporary) rather than semester 1 (Dance in Popular Culture). Having said all this, my ongoing conversations with Sofia ensured that I met the Otago dance students and offered generously to their learning wherever possible. Overall it was a positive experience - with me learning to adapt my approach to the dance course context, and the students being exposed to a different kind of dance approach.
- My work with intern Brittany Checkley was the most successful part of sharing my Fellowship in the dance department. Brittany was receptive, inspired and enthusiastic, demonstrating a deep engagement and commitment in artist labs, classes and our weekly meetings. I got a very strong sense that my personal experience with illness, my dance research and my creative leadership inspired and informed her topic, and I look forward to seeing where she takes it in future. Conversely, Brittany's insights about passion, fatigue and other psychological impacts of dance experiences opened my eyes to new interpretations of my work.
- Special thanks to the local artists who engaged across the duration of my Fellowship: Anna Noonan, Marika Thomson, Liga Ubele, Leila East-Giles, Hahna Briggs, Miriam Marler and Hannah Rouse. The April and June research we shared was spacious, gradual and revealed new ways to dance deeply with rest. We noticed and developed new sensory self awareness, powerful ways to have conversations and detailed methods for dance improvisation.
- The 10 local artists and Otago students who attended my performance makers workshop (May) were noticeably generous and playful. They helped me to co-create a genuinely empowered, supportive space full of free and ranging emotions - expressed through voice, body and dialogue. I challenged myself to condense my research into a series of intense, fun activities and direct questions related to performance devising and presence. I saw how successfully my activities, questions and rest research can produce increased awareness and skill in using energy levels to shift the body, the creative process, and the group.
- I am grateful to Stuart Young and Clare Adams for being so receptive and welcoming in allowing me to share my methods for Otago's theatre and devising students. While my area is community dance, I notice that actors and creative devisors find physical and energetic insights of my work to be very useful to them.
- The Primary and High school education workshops were totally unexpected but rich and memorable. They required me to activate and develop my dance approach in an education / teacher's PD context. Observations and feedback from both staff and students revealed that the experience really enlightened and inspired these young future teachers. It was an interdisciplinary exchange that was mutually beneficial and although unplanned, brought significant insight and value to my Fellowship.
- Special thanks to Jo, Katherine and Marlene at School of Performing Arts and Antonia at Division of Humanities. These individuals were extremely helpful with advertising my artist labs and workshops within the university and helping me secure space. Anna Noonan of Dance Ōtepoti was utterly essential in spreading word of my work to Dunedin's wider creative community. I simply could not have achieved my intentions to share with local artists without this support.



Photos from Part 2 - artist research labs, workshops with Primary Education students

Part 3: Community workshops with focus groups

Key participants in my Fellowship project were school students. In August 2020 and 2022 I led a short version of *A Resting Mess* at All Saints College, Perth. This planted the seed to further my work in schools and inspire students about dance, health, community and environmental care. In Ōtepoti I partnered with 4 schools (1 primary, 1 intermediate, 2 secondary), with 4 others cancelled due to school strikes.

When I applied for the Fellowship I wondered if I might find appropriate local avenues to share with elderly, women or Pacifica communities. I had many wonderful exchanges - including learning Maori words and concepts, discussing the different ways First Nations wisdom is integrated into dance education in Australia and New Zealand and igniting early connections at the Puketeraki Marae in Karitane. However, the public groups I ended up working with turned out to be focused on people living with long covid/chronic illness, menstrual health, poetry and the wider Ōtepoti dance community - see below.

What happened in Part 3...

- 7 workshops at George Street Normal School with the entire cohort of 5/6 classes and one 4/5/6 class. We explored mindful and playful movement, self reflection and poetic writing - all woven together in exploration of 'rest' and 'mess'. Special thanks to Keith Mulholland and the senior school class teachers.
- 2 workshops with a focus group of 10 selected students in Year 7/8 at Dunedin North Intermediate. We grooved and moved to 'dial' energy up and down. Students found increased self awareness about rest and made musings on its role in a messy world. We undertook a week-long waste collection experiment and reflected on the state of the environment, sharing perspectives on how to engage with caring for the planet and being part of structural change.
- 1 workshop with Year 13 Drama students at John McGlashan / Columba College - discovering how rest and energy are useful tools for performance.
- 2 workshops with the entire cohort of Year 12 Health at St Hilda's Collegiate School. It included mapping rest and energy patterns in relation to the menstrual cycle, creative learning of biological information via playful dance and highlighting empowerment and self-care via body literacy and breaking down taboos.
- A series of 5 public classes called 'Dancing with Rest'. These were attended by dance/creative locals, a number of whom live with chronic illness or long covid.
- 1 public workshop called 'Cycles of Rest' which featured movement, mapping, deep conversation and a silent walk - to education each other about the nuance of the menstrual cycle and promote improved body listening / prioritising of restful or energetic activity according to different hormone levels in the body.
- I read my rest-focused poetry for the Town Belt Walk, a position usually inhabited by the Robert Burns Fellow but invited of me for 2023. About 40 local people stopped to sit with me in the park across the course of a sunny morning, and a number of them cried or were visibly moved by my poems and the exchange.
- I spoke on a panel for International Dance Day run by Dance Ōtepoti. This was a valuable chance to share reflections as the current Fellow, while also hearing from (and connecting with) Hahna Briggs who held the Fellowship 10 years before me. This was a key moment in Hahna becoming part of my Fellowship, which felt fortuitous and special. There are many synergies in our approach/sensibility and the things we care about as community dance artists.

Challenges and successes of Part 3

- I was unable to celebrate my connection to the Puketerai Marae and offer the planned month of dance classes for local, elderly residents in Karitane due to the temperature dropping to 0-3 degrees in early June and the community hall becoming too cold for comfortable levels of dancing with rest.
- Unfortunately in the last week of June 4 schools who were expecting me for 60-75min sessions with Year 9-13 dance students cancelled due to school strikes. This meant I didn't deliver my resting-research in succinct dance workshops (but working with artists and students in Part 2 and Part 4 allowed plenty of that).
- The 4 schools partnerships I did proceed with each had a specific focus as requested by the schools. I had a brilliant time adapting my research interests and creative leadership to have a dance and poetry focus (George Street), a social impact/environmental focus (DNI), a drama focus (McGlashon) and a health/wellbeing focus (St Hilda's). It was utterly invigorating to use similar prompts and practical activities across different subject areas, changing the form of creative learning for each group and really responding to the needs and interests of the students. I completed these 4 schools partnerships very confident that my passions are relevant across many age groups and subject areas. I witnessed learning and enthusiasm in students of all ages. There were numerous fascinating, joyful or moving moments of learning through the body. I heard many students offer inspiring revelations about their self-awareness, energy levels and choices in the world. I felt satisfied to have improved my receptivity and skill in leading creative learning for young people. I formed 4 distinct school's workshops to offer elsewhere in future - traversing dance, poetry, social conversation, craft, drama and health. Please see poems by George Street students attached in appendix.
- The OARsome radio show hosted me for 2 interviews across the course of my Fellowship and the Otago Daily Times did a feature article. These were both wonderful ways to articulate my project to the general public and capture the details and history of my work. Both are attached separately as appendix items.
- Partnerships with schools allowed me to successfully accumulate recycled junk materials to use in Part 4. This was an easy and useful model that I wanted to trial in Ōtepoti and can use again in future (i.e. schools workshops both deepen engagement then allow materials for the installation to be collected). Special thanks to Keith Mulholland, Heidi Hayward and to the children and families who contributed to my collection of 'mess' by donating items!
- It turned out to be too difficult to have school students visit my Fellowship project's final event (Part 4). A longer lead time is required to get permission for students and staff to come out on an excursion. It was much easier for me to visit the school and offer my mahi within their existing timetables. In future, undertaking the Fellowship for 12 months part time would be better in terms of achieving schools workshops followed up by excursions to visit the final project.
- A few months in to my Fellowship I realised I wanted to offer more opportunities for general public to engage with my work. 'Dancing With Rest' was very successful but I didn't get the chance to repeat it later in the year once news of my Fellowship had spread and more people had become aware of my offerings. I participated in 'People Feelin' Beats' at Port Chalmers twice and thoroughly enjoyed sharing my dancing spirit with kids and parents of all ages there. The menstrual health event was a wonderful June addition, reaching an intergenerational community of women and connecting me to a number of organisations who support menstrual health in embodied and innovative ways. See below for reflective journal excerpts from these 2 events, along with photographs from my workshops with George Street Normal School, Dunedin North Intermediate and St Hilda's.

In April and May I led DANCING WITH REST - a series of 5 evening classes open to all dance backgrounds/abilities...

“In particular, a few participants who experience fatigue, long covid or other health issues shared how much the experience supported them to dance at their own pace. We created a gentle room full of rest, reflection poetry and permission. I was delighted to grow the thinking and awareness about how my dance approach may offer healing to others with illness struggles.

This is an ongoing learning and conversation, particularly in how best to curate the dance environment to support a range of different energy levels and health needs in the same space. We agreed: *the room can hold it all and we hold it all together.*”

CYCLES OF REST - special thanks to event partners Hecate and Dunedin Fringe Festival.

“In my personal journey dancing with rest as a tool for healing from chronic fatigue, the symptoms of my endometriosis gradually disappeared. Menstrual health tracking and awareness is therefore a newly essential and growing aspect of my research, inspired also by my collaboration with Lucy Peach (Australian ‘period preacher’ / folk musician).

Not all women have periods and not everyone with a period is woman. The biological details of the menstrual cycle reveal powerful prompts for tuning in - more deeply and generously - to how hormones bring shifts of energy over the course of a cycle.

We can empower ourselves and each other...

- by celebrating the different qualities and ‘powers’ that come with different moments in the menstrual cycle
- by honouring the huge range in how we feel and what we can realistically do, without judgement.
- by figuring out what we need and the best use of our energy each day, as we inhabit various and constantly changing textures of emotion.

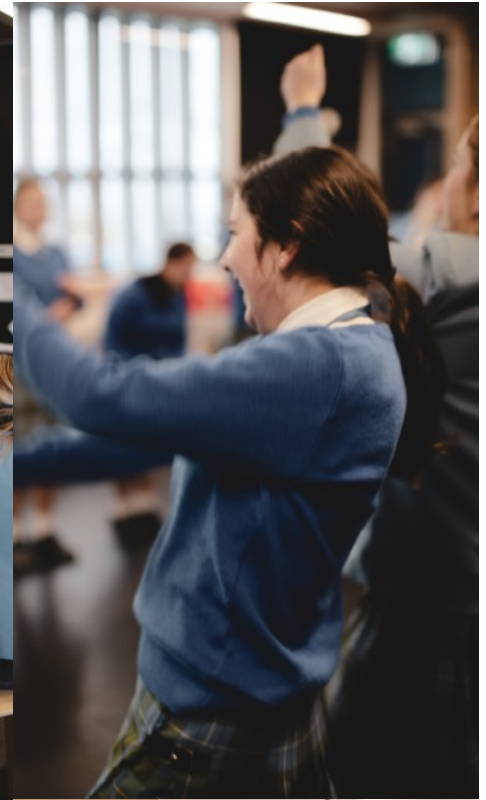
These are, in fact, very predictable the better we know and embody our own unique cycles. It is a powerful, radical act to embrace menstruation wholeheartedly. To know it, talk about it, own it and realise how incredible it is... to have inside the body an ability for life making and a pattern of power and creativity that must not be shamed, dismissed or underestimated. I am grateful to the group of 13 who attended this event, aged 15 to 55. The room was full of womb wisdom. Conversation opened up to a powerful, caring and insightful level of sharing that I have never experienced before. It concluded with heartfelt singing - together and songs for one another to say thank you, and included tears.”



Photos from Part 3 - 'rest + mess' dance poetry workshops, George St Normal School Yr 4/5/6



Photos from Part 3 - 'rest + mess' dance/environment focus group, Dunedin North Intermediate



Photos from Part 3 - 'cycles of rest + energy' dance learning with St Hilda's Year 12 health class

Part 4: Durational dance performance in an interactive, community installation

The culmination of my Fellowship was a free public event called *A Resting Mess*. It was open 29th July - 5th August in Moray Place. Partnerships with local organisations were key to making this event possible, along with support from 3 visiting Australian artist colleagues. My connections from Part 2 (Otago students/staff, local dance artists) together with members of the public became the performers, audience and active contributors to the installation. *A Resting Mess* was an interactive space that changed every day and hosted a number of different community engagement activities (see below). Healing through dance and community in a time of pressure is the key message of *A Resting Mess*, which asks: *How do we rest and take care of one another amidst the mess we are making of our world? How can dance help us become bodily present, 'arrest' the speed and distress we are collectively experiencing, and build healthy, sustainable communities?*

What happened...

Venue summary

A Resting Mess featured;

1. a 3 wall presentation of many photographs, reflections and handwritten notes accumulated across Part 1, 2 and 3 of the Fellowship. It was a visual record of my community offerings, research and a 'gallery of shared learning' that visitors could stroll through to get a detailed insight into all aspects of my work in Ōtepoti.
2. an installation performance space that was filled with 'mess'. Hand-me down clothes, second hand bedding and recyclable waste (paper, cartons, boxes etc.) were accumulated in big piles, all sourced via schools and charity shops. These were surrounded by papered walls filled with poetry. The mess became a landscape for dance artists to wade and wrestle through during performance, and the walls were a place to continue poetically musing on 'rest and mess'.
3. numerous beanbags and hot water bottles to promote rest.
4. fairy lights and warm tone lamps, heaters, recorded and live sound played meditatively - to create a warm, soothing and reflective environment.
5. a community writing wall and visitors book for community audience to share their experience of *A Resting Mess* and reflections on 'rest and mess'.

Partnerships

- Dunedin Dream Brokerage (supported by Dunedin City Council) partnered with me to source and hire an old gym on the 8th floor of Moray Place Wilson carpark.
- Dance Ōtepoti connected me up to local partners, supported all project producing tasks and marketed the events.
- Fi Clements of Res.Awesome was the event's 'Waste Warrior'. She advised in detail about ethical sourcing and disposing of 'mess' items. She led a community clean up at the conclusion of the event including karakia and sharing kai.

Colleagues

- The West Australian Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries provided a grant which enabled Ben Nelson (production manager), Josten Myburgh (live sound artist) and Alexa Peggie (dance theatre support artist) to join the project from Perth.

Local Artists

- Amanda Martin contributed to writing and dramaturgy
- Miriam Marler, Hahna Briggs, Hannah Rouse, Anna Noonan and Leila East Giles contributed to dance and theatre workshop / performances

Otago University Connections

- Performance 301 class came to observe sound/dance performance and take part in a discussion about devising, concluding with a song led by Clare Adams.
- A number of University of Otago staff from School of Performing Arts, School of Education and other faculties attended various events.

Public Community

- Nicole Bezemer and Steph White (support workers) brought their 10 SWITCH group (young adults with diverse abilities) to the 'collective nap' event.
- An estimate of 40 visitors came through to rest, write and observe during general public hours.
- All scheduled public events were attended by 10-25 people.

Events

- *Opening event* - featuring an artist talk, collective nap and community meal. A chance to hear about the Fellowship and explore the installation.
- *Public open hours* - Thursday, Friday and Saturdays for 3 weeks. Visitors could rest, reflect, write, explore, observe or join the artists researching via movement.
- *Dancing with Rest public class* (NOTE: cancelled due to cold evening temperatures in the venue).
- *Collective nap* - rest while listening to a live sound bath, 'nesting' into the mess (ie. building little pockets of comfort with beanbags, blankets, recyclables)... this event also became a 10 minute laughing party and dancing parade due to the good humour and enthusiasm of the SWITCH group.
- *Local artist workshop and performance* - a delightful Saturday afternoon learning movement and theatre scenes for *A Resting Mess* performance, sharing food and conversation about dance practice. (NOTE: 3 x evening sessions were cancelled due to cold).
- *Closing event* - performance of *A Resting Mess* including Daisy, Josten, Alexa and participation from 5 locals. The work included improvised and set choreography that cycled between states of energy and rest, combined with theatrical images of humans grappling with waste. The mess represented different things to different people. Audience shared their observations and feelings then the event finished with a shared meal and community clean up. Fi guided all hands to assist with ethical pack up of the 'mess' while teaching details about waste reduction and better care approaches for the environment.

Challenges and successes

- My final fellowship event simply would not have been possible without the venue partnership with Dunedin Dream Brokerage. Finding a local business happy to hire out a space - free of charge and for 3 weeks - proved difficult. The positives of the old 'Sky City gym' we used were that it offered a fantastic view over the city and harbour, we could have exclusive use for the full duration and a novelty factor (ie. great to get curious locals up to the top floor of the carpark!). Challenges were the temperature, accessibility and production support. It was too difficult to warm the space in the evenings and there wasn't enough budget for hiring an industrial heater. Being at the very top of a carpark made the project a little less visible than desired. Volunteers provided by Dunedin Dream Brokerage to stand at the door proved helpful.

- Dance Otepoti was indispensable in the administrative support and marketing of *A Resting Mess* events. Anna Noonan is a strong advocate and connector of dance in Dunedin and was invaluable in her ongoing support of my Fellowship. Her family were also essential in accommodating my Australian visitors.
- Fi Clements brought powerful Maori insight and environmental wisdom to the project. Activating audience for clean up for the project with her guidance was a rich addition to this project which on other occasions has proved to be a very tiring pack up. This time, pack up was a collective effort, a shared learning process and celebration.
- I was lucky to receive the WA government arts grant. Without Ben the production side of the project would have been impossible and without Josten's live sound the workshops, public event and performance aspects would have been greatly lacking. Without this money and support I probably would have concluded my Fellowship with a far more simple series of workshops and talks at the University.
- The connections I established with the local dance artist across the entire course of my fellowship were very rich. It was disappointing that our final workshops in the evening had to be cancelled, but the weekday and Saturday events were full of wonderful exchange and discovery.
- It was disappointing that more of the school and Otago university groups I engaged with did not visit in groups to A Resting Mess. I think realistically 12 months of community networking and connection building is required in order to achieve this. A number of individuals from different groups did visit and Performance 301's class visit was noticeably invigorating for all - opening up exciting questions about performance sensibility, poetry, politics and embodiment in devising.
- The SWITCH visit was an unexpected highlight of A Resting Mess. It combined my passions for resting methodology, contemporary dance, experimental practice, community leadership and responsively engaging with young people with diverse needs and abilities. It was a real collision of many different areas of passion and practice in my artistic path and I'm so grateful for their attendance. I witnessed real response, learning and delight in myself and all the participants.
- Overall I was very happy with the co-ordination of many moving parts. *A Resting Mess* was quite a big, multifaceted project to conclude my Fellowship.
- My observation is that people palpably felt the offering from A Resting Mess to pause, rest and reflect on the pace and chaos of our world. Public community members who returned multiple times got the most out of the installation. Visitors often stayed longer than expected and no 2 visits were ever the same. The space evolved in response to those who inhabited it and was a creative, restorative, collective haven secretly nestled high above the city. I've offered the project in other places and in other ways before but this version was very much unique to Ōtepoti - the place, the weather, the wonderful people, the connections and conversations I was able to share across 6 months and the good nature of all who contributed.
- *A Resting Mess's* unique combination of dance, scenography (messy set items) and shared writing on the walls generated a gathering place for community to rest and reflect together on the state of exhaustion in our bodies and our planet. Concepts of rest, activity and waste were seen in the dancing, shared text, the images created by the performance and the different choices that visitors made during their time in the space. The work used dance and community to rejuvenate energy and connectedness. It felt like a wonderful way to meet and share my mahi locally - warm hearted, gentle and powerful. The isolation and creative, immersive magic of the venue offered an essential 'safe-zone'. It was a subtle but radical offering to consider our urgent collective need to rest deeply, to face big issues, recover from the pandemic, undo problematic structures and grieve environmental destruction. I found Ōtepoti's local artists and public community to be noticeably open and receptive to the personal, poetic, playful and political aspects of *A Resting Mess*.



Photos from Part 4 - *A Resting Mess* artist workshop and performance



Photos from Part 4 - community resting space, clean up and meal

Full record of community engagement activities

Date / Time	Location	Event	Participants	Notes
7 March - 23 June ongoing	Tower Building, School of Education	INTERNSHIP	Brittany Checkley	
31 March - 2 April	371 North East Valley (empty house as pop-up artist residency)	Durational resting / writing research, sunset Friday to sunrise Sunday	Leila Giles Amanda Martin Anna Noonan Lisa Allan Miriam Marler	(4 recorded interviews as follow up)
11 - 14 April	G.02 college gym dance studio	Artist workshop A RESTING MESS	Anna Noona Marika Thomson Brittany Checkley Liga Ubele Abby Fleur / Saturnidae Ellen Murray Lokyee Szeto	
16 April	Prospect Park	Reading rest and environmental poetry	About 50 of 500 local people walking the Town Belt Traverse, age range 35-80.	Wild Dunedin festival, Dunedin Amenities Society
18, 25 April and 2, 9, 16 May	G.02 college gym dance studio	Public classes DANCING WITH REST	12 participants	Core artists included Brittany Checkley, Marika Thomson and Hannah Rouse
24 and 26 April	G.02 college gym dance studio	Guest session with Otago University Primary Education 'Dance' students	76 students	Incredible learnings, inspired vibes and wonderful feedback!
27 April		Fellows Welcome	40 participants (?)	Chance to summarise Fellowship intentions
29 April	Te Wahre o Rukutia	Artist Talk with Hahna Briggs, chaired by Hannah Molloy	15 participants	Chance to describe research and discover synergies
3 May	OARsome 105.4 FM	20 minute radio interview	Unknown - live public broadcast and podcast recording	
4 and 5 May	G.02 college gym dance studio	Guest session with Otago University students in 'Dance in Popular Culture'	25 students per class approximately	30 minute warm up and choreographic prompts
22 May	G.02 college gym dance studio	3rd year theatre students workshop Shakespeare	12 students	

Full record of community engagement activities

Date / Time	Location	Event	Participants	Notes
29 May	Tower Building, School of Education	Caroline Plummer 2024 panel	7 panel members (2024 assessment)	Chance to share reflections on Fellowship so far
29 May	Te Koro Koro 1.06	Performance Making Workshop	10 participants	Amazing mix of students and local artists, very fruitful!
3, 10, 17, 24 June	Karitane Community Hall	Dancing with Rest' classes for older community members	Cancelled	Too cold in community hall
5-9 June and 12-13 June	G.02 college gym Mary Hopewell Drama Centre Karitane Community Hall	Artist research	Liga Ubele Marika Thomson Anna Noonan Leila East-Giles Elisabeth Grant	Consolidating artist connections and research for <i>A Resting Mess</i>
11 June	Karitane Community Hall	Artist day retreat	Liga Ubele Marika Thomson Anna Noonan Leila East-Giles Hahna Briggs	Consolidating artist connections and research for <i>A Resting Mess</i>
18 June	Te Whare O Rukutia (hired via Dunedin Fringe)	Menstrual health event	12 participants aged 15-55	Core artists included Leila East Giles, Miriam Marler and Anna Noonan
16 June 2.25-3.15pm	McGlashon College	McGlashon College	10 students drama	Kimberley Fridd - contact
24 July AND 21 August 8.40-9.40am	St Hilda's Collegiate School	St Hilda's Collegiate School	30 students x 2 classes (Year 12 Health)	Cadyne Geary - contact
May 25th and 26th THEN June 15th return visit	George Street Normal School	George Street Normal School	4 classes of 30 year 5/6 students, 1 class of 30 year 4/5/6 THEN re-visited 2 of the 5/6 classes	150 students total, with 60 enjoying a return visit and consolidation Keith Mulholland - contact
Monday 19th June Friday 23rd June	Dunedin North Intermediate	Dunedin North Intermediate	10 Year 7/8 students - focus group	Heidi Hayward - contact
Week starting 27th June		Taieri College Mosgiel, Bayfield, Queens, Logan Park		4 schools cancelled due to strikes
Tuesday 18 July 1-3pm	G.02 college gym dance studio	Otago University Secondary Education HPE workshop	17 students	Shannon McNatty - contact

Full record of community engagement activities				
Date / Time	Location	Event	Participants	Notes
Tuesday 1 August 1-2pm	Zoom - Australia, New Zealand, Canada, USA	ECU The Ediths (online seminar) WEATHER READINGS	40 participants approximately	
Thursday 17 August 4-5pm	Tower Building, School of Education	Otago STAFF SEMINAR	6 participants	Celebration of research and activities across Fellowship
23 June and 18 August 3.15-4.30pm	Port Chalmers Pioneer Hall	People Feelin' Beats - guest artist for community kids disco	18 participants aged 3-45 years old	Family event, free dancing
21 July	OARsome 105.4 FM	20 minute radio interview	Unknown - live public broadcast and podcast recording	
Saturday 22 July 2-3.30pm	8th Floor, 54 Moray Place (top of Wilson car park, old 'Sky Fitness' room)	A RESTING MESS - opening	15 participants	
Friday 28 July 1-2pm	54 Moray Place	A RESTING MESS - nap event	15 participants	
Every Thurs/Fri/Sat 2-5pm, 20th July - 5th August (9 total)	54 Moray Place	A RESTING MESS - public hours	40 participants across 9 days (estimate)	
Saturday 29 July, Monday 31 July, Friday 4 August	54 Moray Place	A RESTING MESS - artist workshops	5 core participants	
Saturday 5 August 11am-1pm	54 Moray Place	A RESTING MESS - final performance, community clean up	5 core participants 25 public participants	
Sunday 6 August Monday 7 August Thursday 10 August Friday 11 and Saturday 12 August Monday 14 August	YOURS (Dunedin) Lyttleton Coffee Co (Christchurch) Pyramid Club (Wellington) Audio Foundation (Auckland) Te Atamira (Queenstown)	REST DUET performance	30 audience 8 audience 30 audience 40 audience and 10 audience 10 audience	Josten Myburgh improvised duet, played with 3 local artists on Saturday 11 at Audio Foundation

I was delighted to share my passion project *A Resting Mess* in Dunedin through such a variety of activities. This project has a really personal story, practice and grounding, a clear framework and a natural adaptability to change. Positioning it inside the Community Dance Fellowship together with numerous associated community engagements resonated well. It allowed me to share my existing skills while also extending my growth as a community dance artist. The project itself was transformed in response to the place, participants and events only possible in Ōtepoti. What resulted was an unforgettable learning / giving process and unique Aotearoa version of *A Resting Mess*.

Conclusion

Development of my practice

My dancing with rest practice has applications across a broad range of contexts. During the Fellowship I consolidated my skill and understanding in this. I refined my underpinning research process and offered my dance method to a diverse range of participants.

- 'Dancing with rest and mess' is an invaluable tool and multidisciplinary approach for well-being in young people and future educators.
- The way I lead is playful, warm and creative - making dance accessible, expressive and community building rather than being focused on shape, athleticism and competitiveness.
- Connection from my dance/rest research to menstrual empowerment, chronic illness and diverse needs/abilities is strong. All areas deserve further investigation.
- I find it easy and invigorating to connect and share insights with somatic dance practitioners whose work increases self-awareness, connectedness and embodiment for community.
- I'm inspired by the way my unique practice improves performance presence, theatre devising and a high-level of dance performance improvisation.
- I complete this Fellowship more perceptive and skilled as a creative community leader, with a firm belief in the personal depth, artistic application and community impact of my passions.
- I feel more prepared than ever to offer my mahi generously in both community and professional arts arenas.

Community benefits

It is difficult to trace in detail the benefits of a project like this and the impacts are likely to ripple in invisible and unexpected way beyond my departure. Below are a few suggestions of my Fellowship's community benefit and in some cases how this was articulated or made evident.

- Local Ōtepoti artists were exposed to new methods for somatic listening in the body, for prioritising community spirit in creative process and for dancing sustainably (revealed via verbal feedback and written reflections during artist workshops).
- Local creatives from different artistic fields had many conversations about the nature of rest and how to find it within different moments/actions. The dance method I offered allowed them to feel more skilled, vital and sustainable in moment-to-moment rhythms of dance and other artistic practice (eg. writing, crafting, playing music). It benefited participants by empowering embodied self-awareness, deepened quality of rest and creative spaciousness.
- Two artists in particular reflected they felt more capacity to be generous and nourish community with their art.
- Some local artists who attended my 'goodbye' gathering commented that new connections had been made within the creative community due to my presence.

- Otago University intern student Brittany Checkley processed her prior struggles with dance and re-established enjoyment of contemporary dance improvisation. She also connected this to her own research in psychology in a way that may carry her forward into further studies and beyond. She commented that my style of leadership challenges existing dance and choreographic pathologies, thus promoting dance as a safe space full of joy and permission. Other general public participants also experienced this freedom and empowerment (recorded via verbal interviews in April and June).
- Otago students in dance, theatre and education became aware of the Caroline Plummer Fellowship. All of them received and interpreted the key idea that energy is a 'dial' we can adjust in response to our personal needs and environmental challenges. Conversations about daily rest/restless habits, stress and 'energy landscapes' were fruitful, with big ideas planted through physical, playful and creative movement learning (ie. connecting to concepts always via the body). Most of this feedback was gathered live within the workshops I led. I would love to return and ask Otago students across all the departments I engaged about the longer term ripple effect my work may have had on their dancing, devising or teaching pursuits.

- Here is a written response from Andrea Robertson in the School of Education:

Dance and Wellbeing Workshop

"In semester one Daisy was able to facilitate a dance workshop with 76 students in their 2nd year of a primary teaching degree. Daisy's session included a warm up that sensitively acknowledged whenua (the land, our place). She taught us about warming up our bodies, listening to our bodies, group movement with a 'contagious groove' and impulse and energy changes. The session gave the students ideas for teaching, and more importantly it was a session that made them consider their own wellbeing and how dance can be used to communicate emotion, and check in on oneself. It gave us the tools to facilitate this with our future tamariki (students). The students all loved Daisy's warm and supportive manner. Her expertise and enthusiasm for dance shone through, and provided a great role model of how to lead a dance lesson."

- The students from University of Otago secondary education (masters) also wrote individual feedback about how the session had opened their confidence and awareness in leading dance and valuing it as an essential part of their Health/PE teaching skills. A few commented also on their own sustainability in studying.
- I represented and promoted the Caroline Plummer Fellowship in various wider public events, speaking highly of Caroline herself and the Fellowship opportunity afforded to me. This started conversations in people of all ages about dance as a powerful tool for generosity and community improvement.
- My guest workshops at 4 schools made it clear that dance can include clear connections to poetry, craft, health, drama and meaningful discussion about personal and social issues. Students aged 8-18 years old were obvious in their celebration of changing patterns/cycles of energy in the body. They learned to highlight how these relate to social and environmental struggles/systems.
- The most powerful thing was that through movement and poetic writing, students experienced in a visceral, physical way their own capacity to realise and feel energetic patterns in their thoughts, bodies and emotions. They became more aware of their choices both in rest and in action. The process encouraged greater self determination for students as they navigate challenges, growth and busy school lives. Students were able to identify patterns that do and do not help us to live in a fast paced world. Dance, poetry and critical dialogue were promoted to school students as rewarding, joyful and empowering experiences.
- My perception was that women in Ōtepoti are open to a conversation about menstrual health but it is still somewhat hidden and in some cases uncomfortable. My offerings in this area provided a seed of celebration, empowerment and creative framing that made explorations of the menstrual cycle more accessible. The

students at St Hilda's Collegiate school gave feedback to their teachers after my departure that the session had opened their eyes and started great, supportive conversations in their social circles. 3 participants from 'Cycles of Rest' followed up to share their realisations about menstrual health and wellbeing after the event, and they expressed their inspiration to continue building the conversation locally. I was particularly taken by the respect, generosity and kindness that people in Aotearoa seem to treat each other with - standing out from many other places I have visited.

- My 'Dancing with Rest' work was unexpectedly beneficial to participants with Chronic illness, with 2 participants in particular speaking/writing to me about how it had improved their awareness and self-care in challenging symptoms. Permission to rest, listening deeply to the body and warmth/safety in shared space were the key features of my work and both participants were becoming more aware where else in their creative lives they could find or create these conditions.
- A group of Ōtepoti locals with diverse needs and abilities experienced spontaneous joy, free movement and increased appreciation of many ways to rest (idleness, mediation, stretching etc.) They gave their feedback through verbose and expressive sharing at the end of the 'Collective Nap' event, wrote on the community wall and, in the days following, spoke to their support workers Nicole and Steph (who then wrote to me).
- In terms of community engagement, I came with an awareness that I wasn't attending to a specific group, but instead applied my process of orchestrating layers of community building. It became obvious very quickly that rest resonates across many ages and I celebrate the range who could engage:
 - School students aged 8-18 years (I also danced with children aged 3-14 years at Port Chalmers 'People Feelin' Beats' and their parents)
 - Otago students in Theatre, Dance and Education aged late teens and early 20s
 - Local artists - aged 20s, 30s, 40s and some older (eg. 60s/70s)
 - Public classes - 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s

Key learnings

- The beautiful landscape, natural and urban environment and the existing creative networks in and around Dunedin were all supportive to my process.
- 6 months to connect to / build community and orchestrate an engagement project is possible but difficult (ie. takes a lot of independence, gentle consistency and effort). I relied on the warmth, fast response and willingness of locals. I found people in Ōtepoti to be highly receptive to me and the area had a wonderful low-fi, generous and resourceful spirit that suited this project. I am grateful to a few key supporters without whom my project would not have been possible.
- I often heard myself say that "6 months is just when everything will be alive and well and cooking, then I'll leave". This was true - I had really 'arrived' in Ōtepoti socially and creatively in the month before I left.
- Completing the project across 12 months part time (where possible) may be a better way for some Fellows - ie. more time to build connections and less intensity of organising events quickly.
- Producing the various events in my project (emailing, collecting resources, arranging venues/times, marketing, communication with schools and many various participants etc.) AND attending to my goals in academic writing was not really possible for me. I did not have the energy and mental space to do both.

- I had to be self-directed in establishing my position within Otago University. There is not always a clear contact point of who to ask or seek support from so initiative and self sufficiency seem important qualities for the Fellow to have. In the end I felt positive about establishing clarity in how I would contribute to the dance department. I positioned myself with a balance - to ensure that the University Environment could receive and support my research but ultimately prioritised 'looking outward' ie. finding where in the wider community my mahi was best shared.
- My partnership Dunedin Dream Brokerage was excellent but the venue hire was confirmed very late so this (and a few other aspects) generate some pressure and questioning whether I would be able to complete the final Fellowship event I had set out to achieve.
- How might the University of Otago assist future Caroline Plummer Fellows a little more with producing/administrative tasks, integrating into the University and arranging venue for Fellowship events?
- I finished the Fellowship with many more tools and deeper skill in self care, my dance practice and my creative process.
- I also discovered more restfulness in both administration and leadership. My ability to juggle emails, conversation and planning was improved by my continual prioritising of rest. I practiced holding space and running events with real presence to my own body, noticing energy levels, sensations and mood in detail and constantly adapting tone/style of hosting space. I can thus now be more sustainable in my creative generosity. When I lead community from this restful, present state people seem to feel more effectively the meaning and intention of the work.
- The Maori concepts and practices I encountered felt aligned with my values and inspiring to my process. I hope to experience and understand more in future.
- I was very rejuvenated by the dance practice, community building and connection aspects of the Fellowship, but organising was tiring and I took time off after.
- There was a nuanced balance of trusting/sensing, arriving gradually and 'feeling my way' through the Fellowship, while also being communicative, passionate and proactive in order to deliver events in a time frame. I would like to share reflections with other Fellows as I have such a keen interest in artist sustainability.
- For me, the following notes are about the general timeline of my 6 month Fellowship:
 - The first chapter (about 4-6 weeks) is simply for arriving, taking it all in, adjusting, getting practicalities sorted. Allowing time for this is essential.
 - The second chapter (about the 2nd and 3rd month) there was a sense of compression, ie. trying to get the organising and scheduling done. I was making numerous connections, experimenting with resources, throwing many threads/possibilities wide then waiting to see which came back.
 - It was important to take a break after 3 months to reassess and rejuvenate before the second half of the Fellowship.
 - Doing most of my schools engagement in the 4th month, and running my final event in the 5th month was a wise decision.
 - The final month was for packing up, wrapping up threads and sharing many reflective conversations. It am glad that I allowed time for this rather than leaving immediately after my final event, although it did increase the feeling that I was 'just beginning' in time to depart...
- Philosophically returning to my rest practice was essential admits the practicalities of the Fellowship and allowed natural doors to open / trust of process.

- Keeping a clear and deep sense of **why** I'm working on this dance approach (heart, values, care of self and others) led me to engage new and unexpected groups.
- Rest is necessary for and wanted by everyone at this time! There was no shortage of spaces to share my creative mani. The real challenge was thus prioritising what I could do within my own energy and capacity.
- My plan for orchestrating and culminating community engagement is a useful method that I would like to try again in different ways. I will go into other experiences continuing to think in details about the **how** of creative community building.
- Rest is a river running through and around us, always available. Sometimes rest is hard fought and hard won. Resting in company and amidst the chaos of life is possible and powerful. A 'radical resistance' (Tricia Hersey). Rest and joyous dance are a deliberate act of intervention in a time of social pace and pressure.
- Everyone has their own version of mess, and their own ways of resting and wrestling with mess. It is good to witness and hear each other in this process to remember we are not alone.
- Dance can bring great positive change to individual people. It is the only way for me to maintain my health and meet the increasing challenges of our world.
- Dance is a most powerful way of connecting and building community. My life's passion is to constantly reimagine and re-design the ways we gather, talk, play and move together - in order to discover and offer the maximum transformative impact of dance.
- Community is sharing the load, dispersing the energy, listening to ourselves and others, giving when we can and not when we can't. Community is urgent and resisting isolation / individualism takes conscious work. Community is where we remember that we belong and we are more powerful working together.
- Caroline's legacy lives on in each Fellow, each participant in each project and the immeasurable ripple effects of each dance offering that has been made to community as part of this Fellowship. It was an honour to share my contribution to peace and healing through dance in her memory.

Next steps

- An article about *A Resting Mess* and my 2023 Fellowship experience will be published online by Performing Lines WA.
- A dance journal in Latvia will publish an article by core artist Liga Ubele - exploring her experience of my resting dance research.
- Dr. Jo Pollitt and I will be submitting a Q1 journal in both Dance Education and Performance Making papers in early 2024. This paper has been informed by a number of my Fellowship activities and by my online presentation to *The Ediths* for a responsive Roundtable titled 'Rethinking Environmental Education in a Climate Change Era: Weather Learning in Childhood.' (See information flyer and my poetic response attached in appendix items).
- I can promote the Caroline Plummer Fellowship to dance and community organisations in Australia in order to encourage more Australian artists to apply.

- I will continue my practices of writing (poetic, academic, other), solo improvisation as both research and performance, teaching dance, community leadership and performance making. These pursuits are always variously integrated or separate. I am taking some time to review my priorities and upcoming opportunities. The extended time, resources and values offered by this Fellowship were a perfect model for me to further my sustained, personal research into dance as a positive force for both health and community. I was able to synthesise inquiries I have explored over the last several years into a cohesive whole.
- I intend to possibly re-apply for the Fellowship in the near future, to celebrate the connections I have established in Ōtepoti and continue my resting dance research OR possibly consolidate a celebration of Caroline's legacy as a related but distinct community dance project.
- I hope to find ways to visit Aotearoa again and further engage with its unique sensibility - an evident kindness, resourcefulness and proud commitment to First Nations wisdom, learning and empowerment. These qualities feel deeply congruent with my approach as an artist and my desire to generously listen and better the global community through dance.

Thank you so very much for having me as the 2023 Caroline Plummer Fellow.

Warmest gratitude,
Daisy Sanders



Appendix - please see the following items attached separately

• **ITEM 1**

- George Street Normal School 'rest and mess' poetry collection, written by students in Years 4, 5 and 6

• **ITEM 2**

- OARsome radio show interviews (2 sound files)

• **ITEM 3**

- Otago Daily Times feature article

• **ITEM 4**

- The Edith's information flyer and my poem - shared as part of an international online responsive panel event

REST

Rest,rest,rest.

I often need to rest.

It often helps after a test.

I was born in Aussie West.

Messy isn't like a rest.

My nest is where I rest.

Rest,rest,rest.

MESS

Mess,mess,mess.

I don't like mess.

War is a big mess.

The earth is a big mess.

Mess,mess,mess.

By Grant

Rest

When I meditate I go to my room and sit down .

I cross my legs and in my head I say ' om' .

**When I say 'om' i think of birds are fly around me and I am in a beautiful park
With trees surrounding me, wind are coming in my hair.**

Mess

I feel mess when garbage is around earth.

In space around me and the polishen in the deep sea .

By Rihan

Rest/mess

Rest and mess is not the same while mess is
just like a game

And rest is like a sleeping game.

I go to sleep when I'm tired and then I have
a lot of fun once rest is done.

By Austin

Rest Rest gotta get rest
sitting on the sofa watching tv
just relaxing
playing with lego.
Playing on my phone
really really fun.

Riding my bike such a big hype
all of my thoughts just disappear

By Nixon

Rest/Mess

Even in the ocean
Rubbish is found
But we don't confess
It's a mess
It makes me want to scream
The fish are dying
Or ecosystems collapsing
Stop throwing your rubbish in the sea
Look after our ocean
We should contribute
Not throw away
Our ocean is a precious source of life
We can't destroy it
It feeds us
It needs us
But we don't care
We watch documentaries and movies
While the fish eat our plastic
Their homes are gone
We eat chips
They eat rubbish
They are gone

By Lydia

Rest Vs Mess

When you're angry so you can't rest, what do you do?
When I'm angry I try to calm myself down.

Siblings make me stressed, they mess up my room,
they mess up my stuff, they mess up everything!

When I'm angry I read.

I read fiction books and sometimes non-fiction.

When I'm angry I climb.

I climb strong walls and door frames, I also climb
fences.

Stuff that I enjoy usually calms me down.

By Xiaowen Li

Rest and Mess By Rosa.H

Sometimes I have to rest after being Mess
And sometimes a Mess can really be a pest.
I turn on some Music then I lie down on the
ground, but when I change the music' want to
spin around.

But when the music is nice and slow, I
never want to go!

And when the music is fast it seems like it will
hardly last!

Rest can be nice after a long, long day

Song name
rest

When I rest I feel slow
When I wake up I am low

When I am at the table I rise
When im at school I want to
talk

When it's noon I am messy

When it's the end of the day I
want to rest

And at night I am in my nest.

By Connor Toms

Rest & Mess Poem

By Melody 🍷🍄🌹🌻🌿

*I take a rest when I'm in a mess.
Like cleaning my room until it shines.
Picking up all the toys from the floors to the shelf.
I'll take a rest after all the mess.
Sleep on my bed to take a rest.
From all the mess of a long day!*

Rest

When I feel in a mess I go for a rest
When I wake up I feel the best
After you play a football game you will never feel the same
Because of the mess of people throwing themselves on the ground
To get a freekick or penalty
And is not the best sight to see
And should be paid a fee

By Zian Kruger



Rest It Up, Mess It Up

Filling out 100 club and completing an IKAN,
Rest comes in multiple forms, but sometimes rest must take a ban,
For there's an opposite to everything and rest is just the same,
Because mess also exists - the thing that makes us feel so much pain.

Mess in the forms of expectations, how good you should really be,
But the sad truth is that it is so far away from reality.

Mess in the forms of competitions, the awards you should have
Bombarding you with threats or else you'll have to feel their chaotic wrath.

Programming with an Otago professor, being called a little young star,
And if there is a negative, don't let those people choose who you really are.

Getting pressured, just overcome it, and let your spirit shine,
'Cause after they see your talent, they'll know it is your golden time.

Filling out 100 club and completing an IKAN,
Rest comes in multiple forms, but sometimes rest must take a ban,
For there's an opposite to everything and rest is just the same,
Because mess also exists - the thing that makes us feel so much pain.

By Tomide

Rest

You see,
I jump around a lot and often damage stuff
Sometimes hurt my siblings, but so nobody knows,
I get them not to make a fuss

I'm always hot and my heart is thumping

My Mum says I am way too loud
and I need to stop jumping

My Dad tells me to take some rest
I always start to play some chess

It's a big challenge
as I can feel my heart still pound

But after a while I turned down the dial
I realise it's good without sound.

By Artus

Rest and mess,

Rest is comforting and soft,
You relax and your butterflies flutter away.
Relaxation is a place to charge your soul.
Even just humming or dancing is resting,
Because you're re-charging.

Mess is a nightmare,
It takes over your brain and mind,
Your butterflies turn into vampire bats,
And bombard you with worries,
Such as the big wide world,
But for now, you don't want to do anything.
Because you simply,
Just want to rest.

By Zara

REST AND MESS

A worm baby cuddling a soft toy
Raped in soft worm blankets

A young child wondering
Why the Earth is being polluted

A teenager being bullied about
what she wants to wear

A young adult trying
to get human rights



When I rest I go for a walk listen to
Music and have a talk

When i'm messy I have heavy eyes
And i'm sloppy

By Eoghan



Rest mess poem

I rest then I mess I feel the best
But when you mess you have to rest.
So you rest then you mess
I feel the best.

By Henry



ARTS

Rolling in piles of paper, cardboard and soft furnishings people no longer want might sound like lots of fun, but for Caroline Plummer Fellow in Community Dance Daisy Sanders "A Resting Mess" came from a very serious beginning. She talks to **Rebecca Fox** about bridging the gap between dance and health.

Navigating challenges step by step

ONLY a few years ago, Daisy Sanders could not get out of bed.

Now she has moved country, developed a research programme and dances every day.

Five years ago, Sanders struggled to see a positive future. Not long after graduating from performing arts school in Perth, and embarking on a freelance career in dance and choreography she began to notice changes in herself.

"It was a big disruption. I couldn't get out of bed. I lost a lot of weight."

She was diagnosed with chronic fatigue and endometriosis — two illnesses where the publicity is "you never get better".

"In the first year, I couldn't really leave the house easily and the second year I couldn't really work. It was a long and very debilitating illness. There was a long period where I thought I'd never dance again and there was grief around that."

However, accepting that view was not on her agenda.

"I didn't want to accept that. I thought I could listen to my body and encourage a little bit of healing. It was like I was trying and find a way back to health so I could dance again — that was my motivation."

She began to research her illnesses, sought advice and support from different health professionals including natural health practitioners and Chinese medicine. And she had surgery.

"I had all sorts of health practitioners giving me their perspective. But right in the middle was me listening to my body and dancing with the tiny amount of energy I had."

In the end it changed from "in five years' time I will dance

again" to "dancing is the method, the tool every day to get stronger".

She looked for a positive dance environment and started going to classes again, realising she should not need to apologise for doing only what she could.

"I'd do a little bit and then lie down, maybe going home half way through. I certainly couldn't do a full dance class at first. It was very, very gradual."

Sanders had to adjust to the "balancing act" her life had become — to not sleep too much as the body deteriorates more and not exercise too much as it can have a kick-back effect. Good-quality sleep and the right amount of activity was the aim.

"One of the philosophies of chronic fatigue is pacing your activities in the day. That led me directly into making this project."

She began to create again, with the first version of "A Resting Mess" developed in an arts forum of multi-disciplinary artists.

"I basically did a durational experiment on myself. In the gallery, I would write on the walls, sleep and rest on the floor when I needed to and get up and dance when I could. I would change between write, rest, dance, listening to what my body asked for."

The biggest thing the "creative experiment" revealed was any performance work she makes crosses the edge between audience and performer.

"Rather than them watching me rest when they walked in, they felt they had permission to rest, creating a space for communal rest, slowing down, a more of a meditative shared state."

That led her to realise how much of a community artist she was.

"I'm working on something, I'm aware of my body, I'm making dance and choreography works, but I'm thinking all the time about how the community feels. Does it feel safe, supportive? That applies to the performance and if I've been teaching."

So when Sanders heard about the University of Otago's Caroline Plummer Fellow in Community Dance and the story behind it, she knew she had to apply. Plummer, a keen dancer, was a physio-turned-dance and education student at the University of Otago who died of a rare cancer aged 24.

"There was something about Caroline's story, this sense of who she was, that she was warm and generous and passionate about dance and making people's life better."

It appealed so much, Sanders applied three times for the fellowship before securing it this year. She packed up her life in Australia and headed for Dunedin earlier this year for six months, settling in Karitane.

"I've fallen in love with Dunedin. The landscape is beautiful and I feel there is this creative people energy and people are so supportive."

The temperature change is not too shocking for Sanders as she comes from a mountain town near Canberra, Ngannawal country, even though she now lives in Western Australia, Whadjuk Noongar country.

HER time in Dunedin is allowing her to further develop "A Resting Mess" and the culmination of her work will be an interactive performance she describes as a community performance installation.

"People will be able to come to have a chat, do some writing



Daisy Sanders leads a workshop at George Street Normal School.



PHOTOS: LOKYEE PHOTOGRAPHY



Daisy Sanders performs in a "Resting Mess".

PHOTOS: JOSH WELLS AND EMMA FISHWICK

on the wall, have a rest, there will be bean bags, a communal nest for reflecting and resting in."

From all the research she will create "interesting and dynamic" choreography for her and a couple of other artists.

"We'll be dancing and resting with the way energy changes in our bodies. And dancing through a room full of recycled junk materials. It creates images and questions about how we navigate all the mess in the world."

The junk is boxes, paper, soft plastics, pillows and blankets and old furniture.

"It might look like landfill, it might look like a messy bedroom, or somewhere between. It's supposed to be nostalgic and comforting, but also a bit disturbing as it represents any kind of mess in world that makes us feel restless — representing climate change, bureaucracy; people will read what the mess means."

Different activities happen at different times. Some events will be scheduled and open to the public.

"The work communicates through how it looks and how it feels. The music is a big part of that. It could be quiet and meditative or, at other times, the music will wind up and be more dynamic."

While she wondered who might be interested in her

research at the beginning, she need not have worried.

"It turns out everybody, post-pandemic. If anything, it has been 'how do I share this research and give what I can and do what I can that is sustainable for me'."

The move across countries has encouraged her to go deeper with her research.

"It has pushed me to do my research really well and take care of my body."

In a way it has become a study of creative flow.

"I have to follow the creative practice and let go of the things that are not working. It's the path of least resistance."

Playfulness is a big part of Sanders work. For her resting does not just mean slowing down and getting meditative.

"It kind of means listening to the body and being really present. How am I, how is my energy? How do I want to use that energy? That can mean it's very bubbly and focused or very quiet; it's about permission and presence, allowing the body to tell us what we need to do."

"It's a study of presence really and how we take care of ourselves by being authentic. The world is such a busy place and it asks us to go faster than we want to so much of the time."

She sees her work as a study of how people can get involved sustainably and passionately when they need to, but also

know when to go a bit slower or take time out.

"It's kind of like emotional and energetic intelligence in a way. It's dance for wellbeing."

SANDERS also uses her research in workshops with a range of groups and schools of all levels as well as at the university, not only dance but in education, too, talking about wellbeing for young children.

"I find people leave with a new sense of trust in themselves, a sense of permission, of allowing what is happening. It's recuperative, it's restorative."

As part of her project, she is bringing over a sound artist from Australia who she has worked with before. He suffers from neck and jaw pain as a result of playing instruments.

"When he works with me he finds his pain goes away. So some uncanny things happen to people when they are in my work environment."

Sanders also works with poetry a lot so incorporates that into some workshops. Others she targets at particular groups such as looking at the menstrual cycle and how energy and emotions change over a month for women.

"It's an important part of my research. It's a way we can respect energy changing in the body. Rest is in the middle but it can go in slightly different pockets."

It is an area of her research strongly influenced by an Australian collaborator Lucy Peach, a folk musician and former sex-education teacher, whom she worked with at a schools' residency last year.

"We did a menstrual cycle flash mob in a school playground."

Sanders' time in Dunedin is going too quickly and she appreciates that she has been able to make some great connections with people in the community.

"I feel like everything is going to come together and then I have to go."

Whatever happens, she believes her fellowship will be a success if her work has provoked reflection.

"I want them to reflect on rest, on burnout, on environmental crisis, and how we grapple with all these challenges in the world."

TO SEE

"A Resting Mess", 54 Moray Pl, 8th floor, public sessions July 20-22, 2pm-5pm; opening event July 22, 2pm; "Dancing with Rest" July 25 and August 1, 6pm-7.30pm; "Collective Rest", July 28, 1pm-2pm; final performance and community meal August 5, 4pm-6pm.

For further information, contact daisy.sanders@otage.ac.nz

The Ediths 2023 Responsive Roundtable Series: Weather as a Studio for Feminist Transdisciplinary Research



“Where does the weather start and stop? Edges, you notice, are beginning to change.” (Anne Carson, Jan 2023).

The Ediths 2023 Responsive Roundtable Series brings art-science-education collaborations into focus to think with reading, response, and studio (as both place and theoretical space), as concepts for grappling with the complexities of weather relations through place-based literacies in times of ecological crisis. This series is part of Jo Pollitt’s Forrest Creative Fellowship project titled: Weather Studios, and is presented by the **Centre for People, Place, and Planet’s** Program of Research: Place-based literacies for ecosocial justice. **Weather as a studio for feminist transdisciplinary research** makes space for science-scholars, artist-scholars, and educational-scholars to work together at and within their disciplinary edges to activate weather learning for unstable times.

Responsive Roundtable 1:

Tuesday, 6 June 2023, 9.00am-10.00am AWST

Reading groups as a collective and feminist research method for weathering the neoliberal university

Project panel: James Gardiner, Gender and Cultural Studies, The University of Sydney; Jennifer Hamilton, Department of Literatures, Languages, Linguistics and Cultures, University of New England, NSW; and Mindy Blaise, Centre for People, Place, & Planet, Edith Cowan University, WA.

Responsive Roundtable 2:

Tuesday, 20 June 2023, 9.00am-10.00am AWST

Weather as Medium: Toward a social meteorology

Project panel: Janine Randerson, School of Art and Design - Te Kura Toi a Hoahoa, Auckland University of Technology - Te Wānanga Aronui O Tāmaki Makau Rau, New Zealand.

Responsive Roundtable 3:

Tuesday, 4 July 2023, 9.00am-10.00am AWST

Word Weathers

Project panel: Julianna Preston, Toi Rauwharangi College of Creative Arts, Massey University, New Zealand with respondents from science and education.

More Information

Zoom link, details of panel respondents and reading material will be sent out a week prior to each Roundtable.

Contact The Ediths via: theediths@ecu.edu.au

Responsive Roundtable 4:

Tuesday, 18 July 2023, 9.00am-10.00am AWST

Open-weather ecologies: networks, fractals, fictions

Project panel: Sasha Engelmann, GeoHumanities, Royal Holloway University of London and Sophie Dyer, Independent designer, United Kingdom with respondents from science and education.

Responsive Roundtable 5:

Tuesday, 1 August 2023, TBC

Rethinking Environmental Education in a Climate Change Era: Weather Learning in Early Childhood

Project panel: Mindy Blaise, Centre for People, Place, & Planet, Edith Cowan University, WA and Tonya Rooney, Faculty of Education, Australian Catholic University, ACT with respondents from art and education.

Responsive Roundtable 6:

Tuesday, 15 August 2023, 9.00am-10.00am AWST

Weather Studios

Project panel: Jo Pollitt, Centre for People, Place, and Planet, Edith Cowan University, WA; Lilly Blue, Head of Learning and Creativity Research, Art Gallery of Western Australia; and Angeline Prasad, Meteorologist, WA Bureau of Meteorology with respondents from science and education.

DAISY'S RESPONSE

I'm Daisy, and I'm in Ōtepoti, Aotearoa
as Caroline Plummer Fellow at University of Otago.

I'm an artist.
I dance with rest and waltz with mess.
I've weathered a 7 year journey with chronic illness
by radically re-claiming and reimagining rest in every day momentums.
It is deep listening to my body and
decision making in movement.
It is asking how quieting and noticing can allow me to
act fast,
play fully
surrender better.
Wondering daily how crisis with clarity, urgency with calm can co-exist.

I am an improviser - I explore it, perform it, teach and share
in creative, education and community contexts.
Dance improvisation can in one-way be described as
purposefully creating unstable conditions
in order to practice responding.

Living as a dance artist in climate crisis
is inhabiting everything from the inside out.

The 'how', the 'doing of', the 'embodied', the 'sensing, sensory' my primary way of being.
I am warmed by the WEATHER LEARNING book and her reminders of
"learning with as a kind of lingering and listening to..." (pg 138)
The childhood trying to "work out what's happening
without necessarily seeking a singular or complete answer." (pg 131)

These approaches feel somewhat inevitable from my process and perspective.
So I celebrate the creative dancing world that has been my research mode for many years,
commend the book's prompt for "pedagogical shift" (pg. 137),
and respond by drawing key connection from this work to mine...
noting question clouds brewing on my horizon.

Weathering PACE,
weathering OUR PART
our DISCOMFORT IN LEARNING
and weathering EMOTIONS.

Weathering PACE...

Being every day concerned with the exhaustion of climate knowing and navigating,
I relished the walk in which "rhythm, pace and direction" were determined variously by "children,
hills, valleys, weathers and creatures (pg. 129)."
Speeding up, slowing down, changes of volume and pressure.
Reporting atmospheres we sense inside us (referring to pg. 8).
There is delight - and so much might - to explore in "weather bodies".
Children naturally shift and flow in their curiosity energy.
They change constantly.
No single-sunshine-morning-calendar logo can determine their pace for the day (referring to pg.
132).
Like an eternally incorrect weather report, they teach us.
To be present, pay attention.
Moment to moment.

To re-turn to our real rhythm.
To un-learn our rush or inhibition.

How can children learning amidst and as weather bring consciousness to the speed dial?

If you know your personal frequency forecast (and then experience the true reading with detailed attention), do you know better when to act swiftly like a storm or drizzle away?
To fade to darkness, warm slowly, shine bright and fierce and clear?

Could a deep knowing of weather as the changing pace and possibility inside us be invited in early childhood?

How might this deep knowing enable us to better care, choose and meet challenges ahead?

About weathering OUR PART and our DISCOMFORT IN LEARNING...

“Widening the aesthetic, political and ethical questions posed within early years” (pg. xii).
Engagement with climate climate is learning with but also questioning our position in relation to.
The requirement is noted that we “acknowledge and respond to our own part in this tragedy” (pg. 3).

Have you ever asked a group of children to move around and MAKE the wind?
To gather too close together and feel the temperature rise?
What are cheeky, embodied learning doings that gesture toward the vast, imminently irreparable impact humans have on weather?
How might these compliment the wandering walking ‘learning-with’ so diligently delicate detailed in the book?

How soon is too soon for the climate tragedy to be worded and woven in to childhood?

Have you ever seen the 3 year old on YouTube who learns that eating chicken is eating a chicken an immediately weeps to declare vegetarianism?

How might we hold space for similar climate revelations?

The book promotes “palpable proximity to every day weather and wider climate change” (pg. 4).
It will, it does already, simply get too hot,
to walk learning with weather, and then, what?
Yes to cultivating care and belonging in worlds we are intimately part of
but what are the realities and implications of our disconnecting...
retreating from increasing extreme weather waves for necessary safety and comfort.

I asked a group of upper Primary to collect ALL of the rubbish they touched in a week.
(Less about climate and more about waves of ocean waste.)
‘It’s yukky, funny, silly, weird - why are we doing this?’
It doesn’t have to be pleasant, it’s a noticing process.
We made a pile, then imagined the whole school’s pile, the whole year’s pile.
Weathered the discomfort together.
Opening self, tactile and world noticing.

And weathering EMOTIONS...

It is written that “climate change is too difficult so often ignored in the day-to-day education of young children” (pg. 3)
Is this from a hope to protect them from pain?
No simple enough way to tell what has happened, is happening, rapid?
I find myself winding along a river of thinking.
How to describe climate crisis in clear unloaded language for a 3, 4, 5 year old?
And then, sensing comprehension, could the changing weather of feelings be a way to frame and support them to weather their response?