Can Visual Documentation Support The Emerging Dancer to Self-reflect?

Teaching Graduate Employability

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Experience of directing graduate research project, Degrees North, funded by Arts Council England in partnership with Edge Hill University.

A focus upon graduate retention as individuals were sponsored as emerging dance artists within the Greater North.

Reconnecting with our own artistries through creative approaches with imagery and film.

Challenging my teaching through delivering employability strand of the Dance programme.
Tosey (2006) states, “we may not need to create ‘creativity’ so much as generate the conditions in which it can flourish” (29). I decided to invite Helen along to photograph the group to document a process and to provide possible images for dancer portfolios.

Our collision was accidental and working with mixed media opened a new landscape which gathered reality questioning dancer perception.

“New strategies must constantly be fabricated to re-present ‘things as they are’” (Nichols, 1983: 17).

Reconnecting with Artistry
Auslander states, ‘It is not the initial presence of an audience that makes an event a work of performance art: it is its framing as performance through the performative act of documentary it as such’ (2006: 10).

The process began at the Lowry Theatre in Salford as Helen captured images of the dancers working in class, rehearsal and performance.

The concept of ‘utility’ present in my thoughts as there were moments when Helen focused on the dancer at rest or in discussion.

Capturing Utility
Documentation as information: Sontag, Flusser

An absence of information as to what to document

The disjunct between conditions of capture and expectation

Throwing away the rules of selection.

The Brief
Framing in camera…

… out of camera

Selections based on: the ones the choreographer wants;

The ones the set designer wants;

The ones the performers want;

The marketer, who is marketing a course, a company, a production;

In the end, I selected.
• Permits a shift in the gaze

• *Live dance* = a series of moments - diachronic watching

• A *photography* = one moment - synchronic looking

• Annette Kuhn

*Looking and Watching*
Exteriority and Embodied Cognition.
Wadsworth Hervey: “A creative process in one that does not follow a prescribed methods but evolves from a consciousness changed by emerging information” (2000: 60).

Thinking of the notion of conscious, I decided to capture on film the graduates responding to seeing images of themselves for the first time.

Consciousness
Real perception that is capable of seeing something new and unfamiliar requires that one be attentive, alert, aware, and sensitive. In this frame of mind, one does something (perhaps only to move or handle an object) and then one notes the difference between what actually happens and what is inferred from previous knowledge. From this difference, one is led to a new perception or new idea that accounts for the difference.

(Bohm, 2004: 5).
A process of bringing graduates closer to becoming artists who can perceive themselves and frame their work for a range of audiences.

Anna Craft: "Creativity is critical for surviving and thriving" (2006: 9).


