

ON EXORCISM

A text in relation to the project *The Exorcism of Megan Clune and Angela Goh*

Exorcism as a Process

This exorcism is a process on many levels. It is a process 'to go through', (See 'Exorcism as Catharsis'), it is a process to produce something, or reproduce something, (See 'Exorcism as a Mode of Production') and it is also a process to find out what an exorcism even means in this context.

Exorcism as a Retrospective

To be able to enter into an idea of self exorcism, we must also enter into our own history. The exorcism itself is a kind of immaterial documentary of ourselves as students, performers, or people who have lived most of their lives in an association between themselves and dance or music respectively. The exorcism is like the immaterial performative version of a detailed curriculum vitae, or like that bit of the program notes that says 'special thanks to..', where we ourselves are the performance, and special thanks goes to all our teachers, peers, influential friends, heroes, people who bored us to death but left an impact, stars we've watched on youtube, dead masters who continue to hang around, or our past selves. Everyone who has shaped us no matter if we wanted them to or not, and not because we love them, although sometimes we do, but simply because they made us who we are. And sometimes it is sincere thanks, sometimes it's thanks for nothing.

Exorcism as Prospective

To exorcise also means to make way for the future. We don't know what that might be, but we know it is available. The exorcism makes a crack in linear time, and creates a moment where we are nothing but our own history and at the same time have the opportunity to make our own future. This is not to say that we are 'emptying' ourselves and therefore finding some sort of authenticity, because empty is perhaps no more authentic than full, and empty is kind of a lie anyway (as is authenticity), but exorcism allows us to arrive at a place completely exhausted, with nowhere to go but everywhere or anywhere.

Exorcism as a Mode of Production

While the term exorcism implies that we destroy something, in this case it also works to produce something. By performing the things we are exorcising it also reinstates them. It makes them visible and audible again, in a way we bring these ghosts back to life by giving them another opportunity to use us as their avatar. In the process of exorcism though, we change their form, which is also to say we produce something else. At the same time as showing us what we can produce from our own history as a starting point, this exorcism also reveals us as product, formed by our own history. (See 'Exorcism as Revealing' and 'Exorcism as Biography')

Exorcism as Self Intervention

The exorcism provides us with a way to say 'Hey, stop just a second, what is going on here?' It is an opportunity to make an intervention into life and art, and life as an artist. It is a way to disrupt ourselves from business as usual, disrupt 'practice', disrupt 'expectation', disrupt 'flow', and make a rupture in what we think we are and what an audience expects that we are.

Exorcism as a Tribute/Homage

This exorcism acknowledges our lineages. In this way it inherently pays it's respects even when we are not necessarily that grateful. This exorcism is also not selective, it's about identifying *everything* which we are a product of. It's not about getting rid of anything, it is more about revealing (See 'Exorcism as Revealing'), as such it also reveals people and events who have been inspirational to us. Our heroes. They shine in this sort of process because those are the things/people we actually want to remember. Heroes are a joy to exorcise.

Exorcism as Work

It's hard work. Self exorcism requires a certain amount of masochism, but luckily we have derived some of these necessary qualities from many years of disciplined practicing. Sometimes hard work feels good. (see also 'Exorcism as Catharsis'). But don't worry, we also take a break when we need it, or when we don't need it, but just want to, because self exorcism also means

that we run the show, and there's no one else to please except ourselves.

Exorcism as a Revealing

This is not so much an exorcism which drives out demons. We don't think we really have demons, but we do think that a lot of outside influences have taken up residence in our insides. We are more interested in revealing these 'ghosts', revealing ourselves as a mere product of our own history. More generally, this exorcism also reveals the work of the performer, or the performer as labourer, as we reveal all the work and practice which goes into putting these ghosts into us, and the work of getting them out. It's never ending work for us, and this is also an exorcism which reveals not only ghosts, but also *work*. (See 'Exorcism as Work.')

Exorcism as Catharsis

This exorcism idea is on the one hand pretty futile. But it's a process which takes a while and is hard work, so even just getting through it is a relief, which is also a little bit transformative. But our approach is not dramatic, it's just the release and the relief, without the drama, no spilling of emotions or anything, just a process of work which is quietly transforming.

Exorcism as Biography

Self exorcism as autobiography. The exorcism is also a way to unravel our lives so far, kind of like an immaterial documentary of ourselves viewed through our experiences of dance and music respectively. It forms a picture of us as performers, as students, as people. We examine our history by annihilating it, we tell a story by making it disappear. It's magic at its darkest. (See also 'Exorcism as Retrospective')