

Satelliser Conversations

Episode 1: Rosemary Lee and Amaara Raheem

On crafting, choreography and lineage

Intro music

Janine:

Hi and welcome to Satelliser Conversations, an audio series that seeds encounters and conversations between people coming at topics from different perspectives and orientations, many of whom have never met before. The conversations are based on the lockdown online discursive rehearsal process of Satelliser: a dance for the gallery, a durational performance in which artists cooperate to maintain conversations whilst dancing over the course of a day - as co-workers. These conversations reflect intimacies across distances that many of us have experienced through the whole of the project.

I'm Janine Harrington a UK-based artist and leader of the Satelliser project across live shows, the podcast series and an online publication satellising.com. You can find more information about me by following [@inside.eye](https://www.instagram.com/inside.eye) on instagram or at www.janineharrington.com.

Satelliser Conversations are recorded and edited by Rohanne Udall at Siobhan Davies Studios with music composed by Jamie Forth and graphics created by John Philip Sage. The Satelliser project is produced by Zarina Rossheart and Janine Harrington.

Music

Janine:

This episode hosts a conversation between Amaara Raheem and Rosemary Lee, coworkers in 2020.

Amaara is a Sri Lankan born Australian grown dance-artist currently engaged in co-making a residential hub for reparative and speculative practices. Rosemary is a choreographer, director and performer based in London whose work is characterised by an interest in creating a moving portraiture of individuals and communities in site-specific performance works.

In this conversation they pick up on themes of crafting, making and movement across generations, countries and in choreographic practice; how different registers of meaning shift perspectives of value over time. As they speak they are each also busy making and mending, which is a kind of stand-in for the dancing in Satelliser. Whilst being in conversation over the year, many of us have occupied ourselves in similar ways as a way to ground our attention, whether through drawing, embroidery or basket-making.

Amaara and Rosie speak from opposite sides of the world, at opposite ends of the day, the beginning of autumn and the beginning of spring.

Music

[00:02:41]

Rosie:

So I'm Rosemary Lee. I'm a choreographer and filmmaker, and I'm based in Britain.

Amaara:

I'm Amaara Raheem. And I am dialling in from Djab wurrung country, which is three and a half hours west of Melbourne, Australia. Djab wurrung is the indigenous name of the traditional custodians of this land and I just would like to acknowledge that I am on unceded land.

[00:03:13]

Sovereignty was never ceded in Australia. This always was and always will be Aboriginal land. I'm also a choreographer and I'm a performer, a writer, and a researcher. And I'm so honoured to be in conversation with Rosemary Lee.

Rosie:

Me too. It goes both ways. And it's lovely to think of our voices, so to speak, sort of spinning round the globe to each other.

[00:03:43]

Amaara:

I know.

Rosie:

That's really rather amazing, isn't it?

Amaara:

Yeah. It really is. We're really on opposite sides of the world. Opposite seasons. Opposite time.

Rosie:

Your sky is full of stars and mine is just beginning the day. Incredible. Incredible. So we were going to stitch together, weren't we, Amaara? And I can hear that lovely rustle. Why don't you tell us what you're doing?

[00:04:13]

Amaara:

We were. Shall I tell you? I wanted to tell you that I went to an exhibition yesterday at a local gallery. And the exhibition was called *The Thread of Life* and it was Japanese textiles. And it was particularly investigating or exploring this technique called "boro". I hope I've said that right. I think it's "boro boro" but it's called "boro" for short.

[00:04:43]

And it is pre-19th century. Because materials, there was a time in history when fabric was really rare. And you saved it. Now we are facing a global kind of -- I don't know what -- six million tonnes a year of clothes are in landfill or whatever that astronomical figure is in terms of how much we consume of fabric.

[00:05:16]

But it was so precious pre-19th century that it was saved. And this is a technique of darning, but it has become, sort of, abstract art. They're so beautiful. They're mostly indigo kind of colours and the stitches are pure Japanese aesthetic. They're just so, kind of, perfect and beautiful and all hand-done.

[00:05:46]

But because there's so many different patches and it's darned, it becomes this kind of... I guess it's just the aesthetic of the rag. It was so beautiful, so beautiful, Rosie.

Rosie:

"The aesthetic of the rag". I love that! Now, there is a book, isn't there, called *The Thread of Life*, which is looking at threads and looking at fabric, just as you say, of what a commodity it was.

[00:06:12]

Because, I think, I can't remember the first thing that would have been, the first material that would have been an extraordinary item because there was leather, obviously, and wool and flax, I guess, and hemp. I think rope-making materials were incredibly important. And then linen, I think, linen and then silk, of course, became the luxury.

[00:06:37]

And, of course, cotton and all its history of cultivation it was just -- when you think about, as you say, what a commodity and how crucial it's been to our evolution. It is extraordinary. And the fact that that's a darning, boro, is a, the art of darning, that's exactly what I'm trying to do today with what I'm stitching and your basketmaking. We'll come back to you.

Amaara:

Yes, tell me. What are you darning?

Rosie:

Yeah. I have this beautiful blue linen shirt.

[00:07:10]

And I -- this cobalt blue, I love it. It's in the bathroom and I collect blue and white plates, so I'm very into royal blue, if you like. And I realise I also have a cardigan that my granny made. So that I wear, particularly if I need support. So it's sort of like a mascot almost. It's like, if I still did auditions, I would go to the audition wearing that cardigan.

[00:07:39]

It's that kind of cardigan. I lost it for a year and I was distraught, but I got it back. But it's probably 70 years old. Because she -- I remember her wearing it, and she knitted it. And it's still going. And I've darned it, so that colour blue is important. And this is a shirt that is the same colour. And I did wear it a lot, but I didn't like the neckline; it kind of gaped and I was going to sell it on eBay because it's actually quite a nice thing.

[00:08:09]

Or give it away to a friend. And then I thought, God, I can't part with this colour, because it's -- so I'm darning it. I'm trying to mend it and alter the neckline. But as I got ready for this podcast this morning, Amaara, and I woke up and I rushed to go and decide what I was going to stitch with you, and I went and I found this garment and looked for some thread.

[00:08:35]

And as I was looking for thread that would match this particular blue, first of all I found my own collection of threads, then my mother's, then my grandmother's. And in my grandmother's basket, (which is made in the same way that you make baskets, exactly the same, with a little lid) when I lifted the lid, I realised that some of the sylkos, as we call them there, were so old that they were a different shape and size.

[00:09:04]

The wooden spool was different. I'm going to show you. I know our listeners can't -- but I think that the very squat, little, fat spool is probably my great-grandmother's. So I have a feeling I have a sylko and a button collection that's spans at least one, two, three, four generations, if not more. And we've saved, each woman, through my mother's line, has saved the threads.

[00:06:58]

Amaara:

Amazing.

Rosie:

Isn't it amazing? And it reminds me of whenever I sewed with my mum how long we would take selecting the thread colour. And I'd go into town again to try and get a better match. We spent ages getting a match and holding it out in the daylight and now you wouldn't bother, would you? But then, it was -- yeah.

[00:10:00]

So it made me think of this long, how a thread -- what a thread symbolises and the threads through my - the ancestors of women in my family who have done exactly what I'm doing this morning.

Amaara:

So did you learn to sew from your mum?

Rosie:

Yes.

Amaara:

Did she sort of teach you? Or was it just...

Rosie:

No. She wasn't -- I wouldn't describe her as a teacher. But I was a young dancer and, well we all were. I'm one of three girls, and there were pantomimes and displays.

[00:10:33]

And she made all the tutus with whalebone. She did them properly. They're proper. Proper. So I would watch her doing that late in the night, with my dad, grumpy, snoring beside us because she used to fit and sew in her bedroom. I don't quite know why we were doing it? Because it was warm, because there was a fire there. So I'd stand in front of the fire being fitted into this tutu and she would be making 11 costumes for me just before Christmas.

[00:11:05]

I don't know how she did it. I really don't. So I think -- and my sister's a much better sewer than me. I'm just sporadic now. But, yes, I guess I picked it up. I picked it up from her, but we didn't sit and have sessions. How about you? Did you learn anything from your mother?

Amaara:

Not sewing. I think we were -- it was very much an aspiring middle-class sort of family that I came from.

[00:11:36]

Where things like sewing -- in Sri Lanka, it's tailors. It's so cheap to get a tailor to make your clothes, really. And that generally, interestingly -- well, the tailors that I, sort of, encountered through my mother were men. It's a male -- it's not that they are the ones who are necessarily doing all the stitching, although they know how to. There's a lot of women working for them in their workrooms.

[00:12:06]

But the person that you dealt with, the person that you -- the tailor was often a man. And. Yeah. So I didn't learn how to stitch because I think we were -- the things that I do now, like stitching or growing my own food or, I don't know, basket weaving.

[00:12:34]

My mother's just like, "We just worked so hard to bring you to Australia and give you this great education so that you can learn how to make baskets." Like, she -- I know. It's very hard for her to understand why I would, it's like, "Why don't you just buy them? Why don't you, why don't you -- And the ones that you buy look so much better than the ones that you make anyway."

[00:13:03]

Why don't you just -- it's hard for her to -- I've gone back to this kind of -- I don't want to eat food that comes out of packets. And I want to make everything, like my own kombucha and my own kimchi. And she's just like -- they worked so hard for the opposite. They worked so hard to afford to buy things. And to outsource so that she didn't have to sew.

[00:13:32]

And she didn't have to cook. We had servants to do it. And this was a achievement. So it's interesting.

Rosie:

Yes. It's really interesting. And I imagine, yes... I don't know. Gosh, it's really very thought-provoking, isn't it? How we're, as middle-class people, we desiring to back to making and to repair. This definitely --

[00:14:02]

Yeah. I guess I grew up with the wartime mentality from my mother, who was a child in the war and obviously her mother would have experienced both wars. So I think that that definitely had an effect. So that's, yeah, that had a huge effect. And so people had allotments and grew their own food because they kind of had to, because they rationed. So I think maybe I've come from a background of that as well.

[00:14:32]

But, yes. I'm enjoying the putting it out there to stitch together because I'm kind of fascinated how it can, you can have communities of people stitching. There's something about stitching that does relate to community. And I know we thought we might talk about community, but first of all we should hear about what you're doing.

[00:15:02]

I can hear, every so often, I hear a beautiful, sort of, rush-like gorgeous sound.

Amaara:

Well, it's interesting that you're working with blue because I am -- I don't know if you can see that in this light -- but it's tomato red, or cherry kind of red. And I'm making -- it's like a coaster, I suppose, is what it will become. Just to sit the teapot on. And I'm making it for my partner's mother whose birthday it is tomorrow.

[00:15:32]

And we're going to put it in the post and send it to Eris who's in Perth, because we can't go there in lockdown. But we wouldn't anyway: it's quite a distance. And, hopefully, she'll have something to place down her mug or hot saucepan or something like this. And what I've been stitching, or weaving, quite recently is I've been really getting into weaving circles. They end up being kind of coasters.

[00:16:03]

But, also, I think of them when I'm making them, Rosie -- I'm just trying to find one for you -- that's sort of done. Here's an example.

Rosie:

Nice. Lovely. Yeah.

Amaara:

I sort of think of them as mandalas. And, I don't know, I've just been really enjoying circles, I suppose. Yeah. So that's what I'm stitching. And one of the interesting things about weaving is learning about colour.

[00:16:33]

It was fascinating to me hearing you say that you spent so much time finding the right coloured thread and the exact match. And then seeing -- one of the things I noticed with the boro exhibition was all the threads are white and on a blue -- that kind of blue-white thing --

Rosie:

-- yes, blue-white. I love it. Yeah.

Amaara:

-- that happens in many countries but also Japanese. So the threads are all white.

[00:17:02]

And, yeah, I've been really learning about, not in a systematic way, but it's funny how you just absorb colour when you're working with threads and raffia, which is the material I'm working with. It's a plant-based material. Yeah.

Rosie:

Yeah. No, I was thinking the same this morning as I just -- sorry if you're hearing a ping listeners, I can't seem to switch it off.

[00:17:33]

Yeah. I emptied the basket of sylkos all over the floor. And I thought about what those colours might represent. Did they represent clothes that my grandmother wore and colours she loved all her life? And they were greens and teals and blues and colours that I adore. But also, just the range. The fact that I still didn't get a blue that matches. I'm not happy with my thread this morning.

[00:18:04]

And I had about six to choose from. And the range of colour in the world. And I realised that, for my mood, colour is massively important. So I'll go out for a walk in order to see the colours of flowers or, or the different kinds of greens. And, as you said, that in many cultures there's a blue and a white. I thought, now, that's interesting.

[00:18:32]

That's clouds and sky, isn't it? Or sea and sky. Or water and sky. There may be a reason why there's so much blue and white in other cultures. It's just fascinating. And blue, of course, is the that colour we see

-- well, I don't know. I'm not a colour theorist but there aren't many flowers that are blue. There are very few vegetables. There are no leaves.

[00:19:03]

And we see it as the colour of water, but, of course, water is colourless. We see it as the colour of the sky, but I don't know where the blue comes from there. And lapis lazuli was massively rare. So the pigment blue in painting and things was always hugely expensive. So the medieval Madonnas, for example, those blues in her robe, maybe it's a sign of affluence or rarity. I don't know.

[00:19:32]

So blue -- so maybe that's another reason for so much indigo or...Yeah. I don't know. I have no idea. Maybe I shouldn't be pontificating in public because I'm not knowledgeable on this. But colour feels, yeah, I feel, I feel like it really enriches my experience, my living, colour does. It's massively important to me.

[00:20:01]

Amaara:

And do you think about colour when you are choreographing performance?

Rosie:

Yes, but in terms of the costume and I think about that a lot. So I do think about the colour of the costume and I'll obviously talk to the designer about. But I'll have very clear ideas about the colour that people are wearing. But not, I don't use it as a -- what's that thing where you can see things in colours? Like numbers have colours or letters?

[00:20:33]

I've forgotten the name of that. But I don't have that. So, no, I don't have a -- when I'm making something, when I'm choreographing and I don't have colours in mind within the, sort of, mood of the dance, it's more the light and the costume. How about you?

Amaara:

Mm. Yeah. I suppose I don't think about it in as straightforward or as obvious a way as when I'm dealing with raffia, when I'm dealing with colour.

[00:21:03]

I do think about it. And it is important, especially the costume, like you say. But the costume is not just by itself. It's in relation to everything else. It's in relation to the space that I'm in. It's in relationship to something that I'm trying to communicate about because I perform in a lot of my own work. So it's something that I'm -- but in some ways I take on a kind of persona or -- it's not a character but...

[00:21:33]

Yeah. It communicates something or it has a history or it has a memory or...

Rosie:

Yes. And also maybe -- do you find it's something to do with making it -- how can I put this? I suppose there are certain colours, for instance, that would seem very contemporary.

[00:22:01]

So if there's a colour in season or something like that. I actually avoid being too contemporary so that it has a slightly more timeless quality to it. So there would be colours I avoided or intensities of colour that you can't see shadow in. So the colours have got to be -- not grab the eye so that you just see a mass of colour because I want the body to be seen through the colour of the costumes.

[00:22:29]

So if you can't see the variety of light and shade in the colour easily, if that makes sense, in the fold of the fabric as the body moves, and I wouldn't choose that. And equally it would be, I'd be really picky about the weight of the fabric. So is it going to -- if it looks flimsy, is that too, does that look too froufrou or too twee or something, for the context? And I'm often working outside.

[00:22:59]

So often we'll like a colour or we'll like a shape to be in the design, but we'll just go, "No, no, no, no. That looks like it's more evening. It's not the weight of the time of this performance." Yeah. It's fascinating. Or it's too blocky and doesn't show flow enough. I'm never interested in costumes that are too tight to the body because I actually I'm interested in motion.

[00:23:28]

And I find that if it's like a unitard or something you see shape more clearly, but you don't necessarily see motion more clearly. Whereas if you've got something with a bit of movement, you're being reminded of the motion of moving through space. I don't know.

Amaara:

And have you ever choreographed a work where nudity is the costume, where people are naked?

Rosie:

I haven't. No, I haven't.

[00:23:56]

Amaara:

Have you thought that -- has that come to you? This work needs to be that and you've decided no? Or it's never come up for you?

Rosie:

I'm trying to think back. I think it probably did come up at some point and I'm afraid I can't put my finger on it. But you saying that makes me think it has come up. Maybe in the times when I worked more in theatres. Because so much of my work now is outdoors.

[00:24:26]

So possibly when I was making work for theatre where you could control the lights so well and in such a detailed way. I think I might have considered it then. But I think because I work a lot with professionals and non-professionals and different ages and outdoors, it's certainly gone out of my head.

Amaara:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It's probably not even -- yeah, you're probably not even, sort of, able to, in a way.

[00:24:56]

Rosie:

No. I don't think I am. But it is -- yeah, that's a really interesting point. Yeah.

Amaara:

Because, I suppose I brought it up because I worked with -- I did a project with Xavier Le Roy. Do you know Xavier?

Rosie:

I don't know him, but, yes, I know his work very well. Yeah.

Amaara:

And he -- we were -- there were 17 of us in the project, *Temporary Title*. And we were all naked. And we were told at the -- I went to an audition, that's how I got in.

[00:25:26]

But we were told at the audition the work is going to require this of you. So we totally understand if you don't want to or can't for whatever reason. But just to know that if you stay in the audition and get accepted into the work then that's a requirement of the project. And, yeah. It was -- it's a very strong thing. It has a long history: the nude in visual art.

[00:25:26]

It has such a long history. But it's quite an extraordinary experience, to work naked in a gallery for six hours in a public setting. And, yeah. I was just thinking about what you said about costumes and when Xavier was asked, "Why are the dancers nude?"

[00:26:26]

He would say, "Because nudity is the best costume." But I think he meant for that particular work, not per se.

Rosie:

That's so interesting, isn't it? Especially after my comment about motion. It's -- yeah. I don't know if I have anything to add. I love clothes, I suppose. And I love the way they are moved by the body. But I love bodies too, of course.

[00:26:57]

But -- yeah. But I think it is because I'm choosing the way I'm working in the community in a sense. To me it wouldn't be appropriate or just doesn't fit my aesthetic. But that is so interesting and very brave of you, because I'm not sure I could've done that. In fact, I know I couldn't have done that.

Amaara:

Well, it just, I think I was able to do it because it made absolute sense for the context of the work.

[00:27:24]

We were taking from -- we were sourcing movement vocabulary from lions. So in some ways we were, sort of, becoming -- the work was all very low to the ground. We never stood up. We never became human like the biped. We always stayed very low on all fours or lying. And we took a lot of -- we weren't pretending to be lions, but all the vocabulary movement came from things that we sort of sourced and understood.

[00:27:57]

And also from plants. That was another -- and from machines. And so in many ways -- and also because there was so much proximity between us, it was very...

Rosie:

Sounds wonderful.

Amaara:

I think -- yeah, it was a gorgeous piece of work. What Xavier would say about that when we were rehearsing was that he was trying to create a landscape, like an ever-shifting landscape.

[00:28:27]

So, and because there were 17 of you, you work also with huge numbers of people, but there's something about a mass of bodies, isn't there? As opposed to one or two or three bodies, where the individual maybe is more present. But when there's a whole group, and 17 maybe is quite a small number for you, but it was, in these days, it's one of the biggest casts I've ever been in. Because who can afford to make -- yeah, how does it, how does it happen?

[00:28:57]

Yeah. So when you see 17 bodies crawling across the floor, what you see, almost, is a wave of something. And, with nudity, you see the sameness and the difference in each body so clearly.

Rosie:

Yeah. Yes. Yeah. I'm sure. It sounds wonderful. I wouldn't mind being a lion, that's for sure.

Amaara:

It's a very nice thing to be.

Rosie:

Yes. I can imagine.

[00:29:27]

We were -- we planned to talk about community, hadn't we? Or what it meant to us. And I had all these thoughts about it and they're just flying away from me in the heat of the moment, so to speak. But the stitching theme -- to come back, from lions to stitching -- that's a big leap. I can't make any connection there. It'll come to me.

[00:29:57]

That I was really aware when I made the piece *Passage for Par*, which has 30 women in it of all ages -- well, from 18 up into 60s -- that it was performed across a tidal beach. Huge beach: Par sands in Cornwall as part of Groundwork which was a international visual festival.

[00:30:27]

And the work was placed all over Cornwall. And so this was the only movement piece. And the 30 women moved for about an hour across the sand, very -- quite slowly although they were pelting along at times. But to the viewer's eye who is sitting on the dunes quite far from them as they go towards the water. They're really a long way away. They're tiny dots so you see them inching across the sand.

[00:30:57]

And they virtually never let go of their hands. And so they're sort of woven together themselves. They're stitched together by what their -- by their steps and by their connection through their fingers and their elbows and their hands. And it's taken from Breton dancing where you link little finger. And you do a unison movement with a circling of the arm and a little tiny stepping of the foot.

[00:31:28]

And a little bounce in the body so the bounce of your body, this tiny bounce, goes right through the line. You can feel that sort of pulse. No music though. So they had to stay together just through feeling. And as we worked on that piece and as the community of those women deepened and really developed into that amazing thing that you get with theatre and performing arts, this incredible depth of intimacy in the community.

[00:32:02]

We were also aware that we were in Cornwall where there was a tradition of knitting. And the tradition of stitching. And when I found out what ganseys, I think they're called there, and guernseys and Arans and fair isles: all the different kinds of, types of knitting where they come from. Some of the patterns are actually linked to tides and to fishing and to nets, which of course are sewn as well.

[00:32:32]

And so suddenly I felt like the women were stitching the land to the sky with their bodies. They were stitching each other together. And they were wearing jumpers that had cables and purls and plain

knitting. All the different knitting stitches -- they wore those on their bodies as well. And they were all in deep indigo. They were all in midnight blue. So trousers, actually fitted costumes.

[00:33:03]

There was no flapping around of those costumes, so there you go. I wanted silhouettes of bodies, so I'm, yeah, that was an exception. And it made me sort of feel the connection between stitching and communities. And I know you talked about the men as tailors. But certainly in the history of, sort of, female communities, stitching and embroidery and darning and mending is a sort of -- can be a communal activity. And one shared by women.

[00:33:35]

And, yeah. I was suddenly very moved by how folk dances and dance is also a kind of stitching. I just, yeah. That's what I thought about when you provoke -- that nice provocation that we would stitch together while we talked. It feels incredibly, incredibly lovely to be sitting and doing something and talking in the space where we're sort of choreographers.

[00:34:05]

Amaara:

Yeah. It's sort of similar to me of when I'm walking and talking with someone. When there's another -- I know we're facing each other, but there are times when you're absorbed in your work or...

[00:34:36]

I like the fact that there's another thing happening. And we're not stitching the same thing because we're not in the same place, but there's a parallel "doing". And that's how I really enjoy walking with friends or cooking together. That's another thing that I really love doing with people. Or gardening, when you're weeding under the apple tree.

[00:35:06]

Sometimes you have quite different conversations as well. I just wanted to say, Rosie, that I think that stitching and weaving is really in the domain of women. I think in Sri Lanka and parts of India, as far as I know, the tailor -- it's something else.

[00:35:32]

I think a lot of the kinds of stitching that you're talking about -- the making of costumes, or the making of the clothes in the homes or -- I think tailoring is a different...It's an industry. It's not that kind of incidental labour that is the kind of stitching that your mother was doing and your grandmother was doing and your great-grandmother was doing.

[00:36:03]

It was -- which is part of the work of the home or part of... Also I assume in their education that they would've had sewing classes and knitting classes. And the men of that generation would not have had that. I don't know how the tailors of south Asia developed. I don't know how men came into -- because they can sew. They can sew incredibly well.

[00:36:33]

Rosie:

Yes. It's a different thing. Yes, it's true. I agree with you. I can hear chopping. Is that chopping? Chopping vegetables.

Amaara:

Yeah. Mick's, Mick's making dinner.

Rosie:

Chop. Chop. How lovely.

Amaara:

It's almost -- it's dinnertime soon.

Rosie:

Yeah. What was I going to say about that? Walking. The thing you said about walking, now they're saying, aren't they, that therapeutic practices are starting to look into walking.

[00:37:4]

So walking with a counsellor or a therapist is proving better for some people. And I remember my friend and colleague Graeme Miller, he's got -- I think he has a term for it, and I'm afraid I'm going to forget it. But it's about the third place between two people. The third state or the third -- and if you think about, I remember so as a child in a car, and I'd be often in the back because I'd be trying to put on my ballet leotard or something, while we rushed from school to class.

[00:37:38]

And my mum would be in the front or I'd be sitting next to her putting my hair up and, with hair clips, that was my precious time with my mum. And it was a) because she was caught in the driving, in a car, she couldn't go off and doing something. But mostly because we didn't need to look at each other. We could look forwards to the wind screen, which is, if you like, the third thing with the wipers --

[00:38:08]

And talk about things that we needed to talk about without the embarrassment or awkwardness of looking at each other. And I think that walking is stitching, in a way, each step is like a stitch, somehow, isn't it? And walking together, and you're covering ground together, and you're rhythmically connected together as you walk. But you also, as you say, you're not looking at each other.

[00:38:32]

And this sideways relationship is really critical, I think, to human understanding and communication and behaviour. And critical to community as well. So if you think about a circle, that we began with, to form a circle with people, you are side by side. And you're looking across but you are side by side.

[00:39:01]

And you feel the circle through the sides of you. Do you know what I mean? So, I think this side by side, going alongside someone, being with someone is, yeah, it's really moving. And the women often were side by side as they travelled across the beach, but they didn't make -- if I could've done what I really wanted to do, they would've never gone forwards. They would've always gone sideways along. Shoulder to shoulder, if you see what I mean.

[00:39:32]

But we just couldn't cover ground quick enough. But I think there's something in that when you said walking and talking and doing together. And that third thing that is happening in the space between you can allow for things to be said in a easier way. Or things to come up and be broached.

[00:40:01]

Amaara:

Yeah. Exactly. And it makes me think also about performance and what you said about the women that you were working with. It was all women, was it, on *Par*?

Rosie:

Yeah. It was. Yes.

Amaara:

And, just, regardless of gender, just the bonding that happens in making performance and the community that's built up. That's the other thing I think about -- this happens in a number of projects that I'm in -- some more than others.

[00:40:32]

But one of the things that really also -- that when you're sometimes with a group, and you're doing a performance together, and you're going through a process and then you become family somehow. And even if you don't see them for a long time, you'll never forget them or that. And being naked with people.

[00:41:01]

And going through that process together of being really close to other people's bodies, skin to skin. We had to become plants all together, all intertwined, all woven. We had this whole root system and then we would become plants, and our limbs. You couldn't tell where one body ended and another body began. We were all, yeah. It's kind of so hard to imagine in Covid times.

[00:41:31]

Yeah. It really connected us. And it's a very special group. I've been a -- I think that's one of the best things about being a performing artist is that I've just had such amazing group experiences.

Rosie:

Absolutely. That's why I do it.

[00:41:55]

I think it absolutely is why I do it, more than anything, is to do with creating communities for people. So they can have that kind of intimate connection that isn't family, with the baggage of family. That isn't sexual. But that is unbelievably, in the right -- if it's done right, is unbelievably generous, supportive and loving in the best possible way.

[00:42:23]

And it feels like -- I think that is why I absolutely make work. That is the prime reason because I think I felt it as a child when I was part of a group. I wanted people to have that experience. And I think that some people don't get that so much. They'll find other ways to do it, but I think sometimes it's not so readily available in their lives as -- yeah. I agree. I feel so fortunate.

[00:42:53]

Sometimes it feels like it can't be in real life, but what's real? To me, what you described, that's the thing that's real. Maybe that's where we -- no. I don't know. What do you think is at the end?

Amaara:

I think, well it feels so short. I feel like we've -- I know. Anyway. I just wanted to just quickly say, what a gift, Rosie.

[00:43:28]

Because I've been thinking a lot about objects recently, in a process that I've been involved in. And also in the act of weaving and making these baskets or these circles or these coasters. The practicality -- what I like about stitching and weaving is that it becomes practical somehow. Although I'm very interested in making more sculptural objects or where the practicality is less clear.

[00:43:58]

But when you just said that -- because I think my experience is, because I've worked as a performer, and as a choreographer, I've made work on myself, my experience as a performer is where I've had the group experiences rather than the holder or the initiator of that space.

[00:44:28]

My work has been to come into a group and then somehow dissolve into that group, or assimilate, or follow, as well as have agency and individuality and authorship. Yeah.

[00:44:56]

So it's -- I just want to say, I really recognise that the creation of that circle that you have been doing as a choreographer in that way is an object. And that it's such a -- I know that it takes every person in that group to make the weave. You're not the only weaver in the group. But somehow, you're -- I don't know how... So in basket-making, there's always the starter circle.

[00:45:25]

So you have to always -- it always has to have a point of beginning, I suppose. And that starter circle then just disappears into the bigger thing so that you can't see it. But the starter circle, to get that right, is very important.

Rosie:

Yeah. I agree. And it's lovely. Yes. It does feel like a gift. It feels like giving people a gift of that experience. But when you said that the starter circle and then the thing grows from there and then it disappears -- yeah.

[00:45:57]

We will finish in a moment. But it made me think that, yeah, when I'm making a big work that's about to be performed, there's this moment or day or two days where I'm kind of feeling like I've created, I've helped create this kind of ship and now it's got to go and sail. It's got to go away from me. And it has to take off in its own right. And I remember thinking: I can't get it down the slipway.

[0:46:26]

It's almost there. I've got to push. It's almost there. And it's not me doing it. I'm kind of waiting for the moment that it's going to float. And that's usually when the audience comes in. But I've got to know it will float just before they come in. And that moment of when it takes off and it's left you and it's got all its own agency and it's a living thing, God I love that. I love it when it just floats away from me and I can see it.

[0:46:55]

I'm not attached. It's become theirs. It's all theirs. I love that. Yeah. Still, that's probably where we should finish. Although I'd like to go on all day.

Amaara:

Yeah. Maybe we can just stop as Janine says, you don't finish. The weave continues, but we'll just pause, I guess.

Rosie:

Thanks for talking to me.

Amaara:

It was such a pleasure.

Music

Janine:

The Satelliser project is realised using funds from the National Lottery through Arts Council England, Bonnie Bird Choreography Fund and John Ellerman Foundation through the CONTINUOUS Network. CONTINUOUS is a partnership between Siobhan Davies Studios and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art. Find out more by visiting www.continuousdance.com.