

Lands of Honey

PT 1

Today I am going to do some dancing in a studio in the Mission district in San Francisco. Today will be the last day that I can rehearse at this studio. Today is move out day. The lady who rents the studio has been there for 23 years, but the building has been sold and the new rent will be impossible to afford...up by like 500% or so. This is what is going on in San Francisco right now. ...rents are skyrocketing because of the tech boom. People say this boom isn't actually a boom, but just a new normal. Business got smarter since the early 2000s.

I begin by making a square dance while the studio is disassembled around me – people in and out taking equipment to other theaters, new young neighbors coming in to check out the vintage lamps and weird little desks stashed in the office, long time friends come to say good bye. It is very loud here - the sound of a disassembling.

I call the square dance: square dance for technocracy. This is a kind of a heavy handed joke because of the name and also because of the form - this square dance is formless and inefficient and it's dedicated to technocracy. I let my body get in the way of the progressing disassembly all around me. I imagine many formlessly thrashing in space - no synchronicity.

People in the future will learn about the dances of the folks from the 20teens. Later, is it possible, that this formless chaos with yelling and bodies and things in constant flux-states will be as the dosy-doe is now? Is panic our pastime? It will carry an air of sweet folksyness – a nostalgia?

I suppose that this nostalgia is not possible though, unless I can popularize the moves I am doing. So, that will maybe be my next project: flash mobs filled with unconsolable bodies publicly unraveling. But for now I am just doing that alone to the sound of hammering, and packing, and a shuffling of all things. To the sound of a disassembling.

Google tells us that nostalgia is a “sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past, typically for a period or place with happy personal associations.” I am not sure that I agree with this though because for example, I do not have personal associations with the 1970s or 1960s, yet I am nostalgic over Californian communalism and back to the land escapists. Is nostalgia maybe instead of a personal thing a mass collective thing – a collective indicator for something that is missing contemporarily?

Facebook is the largest human community ever, in the history of people. Right now there are 1 Billion people in the community. I read recently that if Facebook were a society it would be classified as a technocracy based on how it is structured. Wikipedia tells us that a technocracy is “a government or a control of society by an elite group of technical experts.” In 3-dimensional space the technocratic society was an idea that lost steam during the great depression. People thought it a little harsh – too much privileging of efficiency was not very good for the humans fleshier and more ephemeral parts - like their souls, or spirits, or hearts, or desires, or knee caps, or core muscles, or the muscles around the eyes.

Now maybe its different, because we are so busy, too busy, we need for our friendships to be very efficient. How else would you really manage 1123 friendships? Or, is it that we are so very efficient, that we can take in everything all at once which leads to feelings of oppressive busy-ness. Which comes first? Either way our biggest human community is ruled by technocrats and although many of us give a shit and are critical it seems to just be biting the hand that feeds. I am there immersed in this community daily – often and for too long.

PT 2

I have planned to invite you all to a pop-up utopia – a re-enactment of sorts. Would you come if I arranged for everything? How many days of work could you miss? Who needs a tent or a sleeping bag? Is anyone agoraphobic? I used this word, agoraphobic, because I thought it meant fear of open spaces and we are going to an open space; a range of sand dunes on the Pacific ocean – a sprawling limitless void space. I looked it up to be sure I knew my shit. Google tells me that agoraphobic, actually, in addition to fear of open (public) spaces also means in latin - fear of the marketplace. I feel that latter fear would be useful to have – like if you suffered from fear of the marketplace (ie Capitalism) you might be more prone to come on my pop up utopia trip with me. Fearful-of-the-market-place-people, I welcome you.

This utopia practice will be based on a commune from Oceano, California that some ancestors of ours made during the Great Depression. A man named Gavin Arthur decided to drop out into the endless sprawling dunes along that part of the coast. He started a small colony, people came and built cabins. They started a countercultural newspaper. They were called the Dunites so the paper was called the *Dune Forum*. Their first article was entitled “Change as Flexibility Demands.” Each morning they had to dig themselves out of their cabin, shoveling the relentlessly shifting sand that would pile up around their doorsteps each night.

Gavin was pretty wealthy to begin with (something I suspect made his dropping out viable). The commune disbanded around the time his last crates of wine were used up. People went off to LA in search of cash flow and jobs. The ending is always kind of defeating but the beginning, yes let's study the beginning and try again?

PT 3:

Imaginary Itinerary:

Apr 10 2013

8:30am - Renée + 3 more pick up rental vans – (<http://www.cityrentacar.com/vansierra0137.html>)

9:30-10am – group pickup all at the 16th St. Bart station

10-1pm – drive south

1pm - stop for lunch in Gilroy

2-5pm – drive south

5pm arrive to the Oceano Dunes

Hike south on the beach for 3 miles then cut east into the dunes

We build temporary structures by unpacking a crate full of fabric, tarps, cardboard, wood and we begin to build. We have food – but there is too little, which is how I planned it. Does sharing happen or fights or subsistence claming in the sea? We'll survive off of clams, beer, rice, oranges, poppy salad.

Who will get the firewood and where will it come from? there are only sand hills all around for miles. Send a search party in search of a cypress grove off on the south eastern edge of the dunes. Watch for the mountain lions. Take the whistle. The camping stoves are set up and cooking of rice and clams happens. 3 people do this and 4 are getting wood and 5 are building a fire pit and no one is doing nothing on this night. Everyone is very cheerful.

Later after days or months or weeks or years - I wonder if people will become tired and will imagine that decisions can be made more easily in smaller numbers. They will break apart and live in smaller families with fences and walls and make nice paved walkways between one another's houses. Later they will miss one another and they will wonder how to bridge the divide. But whatever, try not to think of that yet. Thats the end and we're at the beginning still.

10pm eat dinner.
11pm sleep

PT 4

Next day - there is toast and peanut butter which everyone eats fast with some tea. It is foggy in the morning and cold. Eating happens while hopping from one foot to the next.

We take a hike and walk for several miles thru endless sand hills. It is fun to roll down them and to run down them fast. They are like soft arms if you fall. For the first mile there is a lot of exuberance and silliness and talking.

The horizon line is very calming and quiet. A turning point comes and we talk less. Wordless communications emerge in space.

1. the group is together, walking close
2. someone runs away wordlessly and soon others follow
because it was such a playful impulse
suddenly we are running in so many different directions
the solitude is exciting, everything is expanding, us and also the hills, nothing gets closer.
there is always more and more
3. we made a system of signals to each other from the top of our own separate hills
we were looking at rooftop piece by Yvonne Rainer before we left for the trip and feel a little postmodern

sometimes we roll down the steepest hills
our bodies fall away because they are not being used very much

4. we converge and we reassemble eventually because we feel weird floating so far from the others. The mountain lions? You'd never hear them coming on all this soft sand. It's too quiet and the sky matches the ground. If I were upside down, I am uncertain that I would know that.

We get back and have dinner.

We wake up and have breakfast coldly while hopping from one foot to the next.

We make circles in the sand and pair off facing one another. We practice reading each others thoughts.

We practice making eye contact for 30 seconds at a time, we practice hearing one another in complete silence, we practice fucking each other without attachment and for the purpose of heart opening, we practice making matrices of connection at every level.

We take a hike at 11am. Each day this cycle repeats and we are getting strong at it.

PT 5

For a few days now, during the dune hikes, the contract-expand pattern between us is being thought of as part of this huge, acres-large square dance. The space in between us expands all the time and it is so much that it makes for a really slow and abstract dance because we can't understand our relations to one another really, and always there is something new to wonder about..... in a way there is a sort of freedom in this space and the way it puts us in relation to one another.

But then lately we find ourselves trying to get more organized and to make the dance have all these greater patterns and forms. Patterns and forms that we cannot see ourselves but that some gods eye surely could. We are trying to make our spontaneous group movements meaningful and efficient and with geometry, we say that this is to communicate better.

Something about this turn makes me nervous, yet we lean toward this order anyway.

It feels very performative to try on all these structures together quickly...sometimes I think of a phrase... *sincerity practice* or *sincerity drag*. Can sincerity be a form of drag...ie/ an exaggeration of who we wish we were? A reclamation of a form that actually we are not in nature?

When I get back to the city I want to start a new organization that goes on these practice missions. We will call it P.U.U.P.P (pop-up utopia performance practice.) This organization will be good. We need reminders and reclamations.

The 5 day utopia is the perfect duration to lead us to believe that we can. Yes we can. If we can in a sand drift we can in an economy that landslides over us daily. We are resilient! We can dig our houses out every day and still be on top and be there with a smile, because we know better secrets about how we can utopia with the best of 'em. There is sand in my underwear and my eyelids. I think to myself how nice it will be nice to deal with that somewhere non-sandy tomorrow, when we're all home and with more privacy.

Pt 6

At night the fire is on a hill and everything is black except for that spot of warmth where everyone is congregated -- everyone outlined and gathered together. We meet here for a fire every night and we think about new ideas for mash-up folk dances.....

like for example if the Dunites met modern communities - what would we make together? Perhaps it would be like making some rituals for people that don't meet together in physical space very often

so far we've got 13 folk dances:

- * landslide dance
- * rolling down the mountain together
- * running directions divergent
- * daily dune drift house digging party
- * contract-expand/boom-collapse group dance
- * change as flexibility demands! riot score
- * square dance for technocracy
- * twitter-feed utopia(?) dance
- * everyone signaling from their own separate mountains
- * google earth dérive map dances
- * muscle map memory dances
- * looking right into your eyes
- * alone-together waltz for Missed Connections