

# RESIST, RESIST RELEASE

The following is a transcribed artist talk and documentation from Brian J Morrison and Emily Warner, discussing their work and working methods through out the project

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Emily : We're going to talk about the process in the lead up to this exhibition and the conversations prior to arriving in Norwich. At the end of last year Brian and I started having a conversation about the role of movement within the body during our making processes. We both became quite interested in this idea of choreography and materials and practice techniques for choreographic movements and how different movements would proceed different outcomes in terms of our work... So when we were invited to come and work within a new space we were really keen to use this as a testbed to try out our conversations and ideas. My proposition for the space was to start to think about some of the drawings - scores that I'd been devising on the back of doing dancing movement work. I was interested in trying to realise these in physical form. I'm not so much a maker. I don't work so much with materials and this is quite an exciting opportunity for me to start to realise some thinking in more of a physical form and to use that as a kind of provocational stimulus to then use the body further.

Brian: We had a kind of rough plan of what we wanted to create in the space, little ideas in our mind. What was fantastic for me, and as Emily has pointed out earlier on she's collaborated quite often with different people in different ways - I've never collaborated with anyone (including myself!) so I wasn't sure what was going to happen. I was super excited about how collaborative everything was to the point where it's really difficult for me to distinguish anything that's just mine or anything that's just yours. There's maybe a couple of bits that feel more like things that I would do, but generally speaking everything felt incredibly collaborative and I think that and I think it started probably from the moment when we decided to bring two things together that we'd been working on.

This is sort of an example where Emily's been making these clay objects that relate to the drawing that she made for the Skinner Release stuff, and then I had been making these sprayed latex canvases. We literally put some of these objects on top and then sprayed the whole lot.

If you turn around you'll see a black thing on the floor. This was a byproduct of us using two planks of wood which we have we put objects on top of and then sprayed over top. We did this also with one of the boards that you can see there. That was the beginning of a genuine collaborative process for me, responding to both the materiality of the things and the packages I'd been using but also the physical movements and ideas that Emily had been using.

E: Everything in the space was created during our time here. We came up on Tuesday and spent Wednesday, Thursday, Friday - two and half to three days making a toolbox or inventory of the selection of the materials that we wanted to test out. Things that we were willing to exchange I guess in the ways in which we work. I guess the main thing was to create these sites for experimentation so that the space would become this index for these ideas that Brian and I were exploring. Initially responding to the scale of the space we were thinking to create a presence of walls that had a sense of breaking out of this main central point, and then we started to explore the works around on the room.

B: Also thinking about how divisions within the space might dictate how the body might move. We spent a lot of time standing [near the entrance] thinking about how someone might enter the space and negotiate the space. The draped latex piece was quite a focal point so we started to think that it would sway this way and deciding what would go where we were walking together around the space thinking about how people might move.

H: Worth mentioning that it was all sprayed here. There was lots of plastic sheeting which was taken away afterwards.

B: We were quite interested in the idea of preparation and when does preparation stop. When is that point at which you are finished trying things out or practicing for something and then it becomes the thing? Sort of blurring these lines and not really \_\_\_\_\_ - it's just you stop and decide. So that's why we've got the traces of the spraying that we've done in the space because perhaps that is the thing that we would have removed but we decide to use it as a focal point for navigating the space.

E: There's this sense of more finalised and realised pieces underpinned by the process that we've formed through the development.

Another thing to mention is that on the opening evening I carried out a performance that explores this idea of preparation and practice - thinking about the rehearsal as the final piece. A sort of presentation or dissemination of work. I carried out a series of exercises around each of these sites and went on a trail around the space, and exercised and rehearsed ideas in conversation with the pieces of work. I carried out repeated actions that involved physically moving the work and imitating the movement involved with making the work. I was also thinking about this idea of waiting and suspending and what happens when you do nothing, and tried to embody this sense of having this sense of Brian and I having this conversation and dialogue in the space - this live discussion, ongoing consideration and contemplation.

B: We also had an audio piece in the stairwell, which is essentially an eight hour recording of us working in the space, so mostly it's very dull... but there is a bit of Brian Eno, a bit of Madonna, some Winehouse. But essentially this goes back to this idea of process and preparation and we thought that was a really nice way of having a little nod towards the fact that everything was produced here and everything that is finalised now was in this collaborative and creative process.

E: It reactivates the space. Whenever you hear sounds like the compressor you do really get a sense of things.

B: To put it in context, we were using a compressor which is very loud. The equipment allows us to spray but we were only using it very sporadically so every so often it would come on [in the audio].

Audience: Can I ask a question about reactivating. You've had a week away from the space. What were your initial feelings since you've been back and have you viewed anything differently? Do you have different ideas in any way?

B: I think this will take a while for us because lots of this stuff is super new. For me anyway the collaboration is super new and I'm still processing that. There's some literal changes that have been quite interesting. If you look at the black painting for example, just over the course of the week it has changed shape, and also on the grey piece where Emily placed the clay in the performance, the moisture has been sucked away so it's sucked the latex tighter. The relationship between the objects - this bonding almost has been super interesting. In terms of a broad reflection I haven't processed it yet but I can see where this might go.

E: The process of working with new materials is quite experimental in terms of the things we've put down and I was not quite sure how things were going to last or change in the space but I've been really surprised and delighted to come back and see things like the rings have left a bit of a mark on the floor and it's almost like this work is continuing to live and and breathe and form in it's own way.

B: It's nice to think about these things as having a life of their own, that in a quite literal sense they are creating or changing. That's something that I'm super interested in my works generally, that these finite objects that might last for ever and can go into a museum, that actually they might decay and breakdown.

Audience: Would you take the objects elsewhere?

B: There might be a couple of things that we might move and show again. I'm not that interested in that, I don't have a vested interest to do that. What I think is more likely is that some of the process or ideas... Personally as an individual artist there are definitely things that I will take away from it but in terms of the actual objects themselves, I'm not that precious about.

E: I am. I feel like I've created this family of objects that I want to take back and work with and I feel like it's an important departure to develop and incorporate some of this. As I'm not used to producing things and making as such this is quite exciting for me.

H: Do you think it's important for artists to be curating their own shows?

B: I think if you knew how you were curating this you'd be lucky as we didn't really know what was going to happen. I think in this situation you have to step away from it a little in terms of where things might go, but perhaps it would come with more finite things than the initial conversation we had. Just a soundboard to get feedback.

E: A lot of stuff that happened here was very of the moment and so being able to hold things back in terms of actually having to find a place...

H: You both mentioned how different you found each other's practices and ways of working...

B: When we first started to think about working together, one of the first things that became very apparent was how different we were as people in terms of how we work through our practice. I'm very \_\_\_\_\_ which I didn't realise until I started working with Emily... it's finite and I can explain every single millimetre, and that's been a criticism in the past.

E: I think it's about the point at which a decision is made. There's a different sense of urgency in the way that we work and calculate execute things. I was thinking earlier about what it means to collaborate. There are moments where I've been pulled out of my way of working into a space that's been uncomfortable and challenging but also that's when I've grown and developed and moved things forward.

B: Basically Emily allows me to flow a little and I reign her in...

Audience: What came out your your conversation with Jonathan?

B: We had some really deep conversations about collaboration. We talked quite a lot theoretically about the role of collaboration.

E: I think he really honed on this idea of rehearsal and I followed up after the conversation. I found a really interesting text that was about putting rehearsal to the test and exploring what that means. What happens when things only exist as a rehearsal with our a presentation. It was a useful avenue to go off and explore and collect some stuff.

K: The exhibition we have on at the moment is created by in independent curator called Vanessa Boni. When she first approached us she said "I'm not really interested in curating an exhibition that has objects. I want to work with people who are performers. I want to work with choreographers. And over time that's developed and some of the performers have brought objects into the space. Through the conversations she's had with them it's really been about how does movement and gesture connect through performance and how can we communicate \_\_\_\_\_... There's definitely lots of parallels between what you're thinking about and talking about at the minute and we're thinking more and more about artists practice in that way in the curriculum, like I mentioned before, we're thinking about things in slightly different ways so we can talk about these different practices and how things can happen... It's been really nice to hear you talk about how you've responded to each other and the space.

Audience: I think you've both mentioned apparatus and [Brian] you've mentioned boxers. I wondered about how that worked, how you're working with tension and and a human scale physicality. When you were talking about bodybuilding and then moving on to materials, I was thinking about how your body changes when you play with materials utilising the visuals. Have you considered bodybuilding in that you could manipulate things in a stronger way or in a more contrived "strengthy" way? Bodybuilders I guess don't actually use their physicality, they just build themselves up...

B: The thing with body builders that is interesting is that they're really good at doing [muscle flexes] but they're not actually very good at doing other things. The body doesn't function very well. So they need to be very physically active. They've decided on very singular actions designed to build one specific aspect of the body. How that might translate into an artistic medium I guess might be the gestures that go with that.

E: I guess I'm interested in what my body can do or how I can re-work what already exists and how I react against that ...I like to be able to switch and change and experience the space, so I guess it's the other way round.

B: ...endurance and performance and physicality of a thing. I talk about the works having unseen performances and for me that's about a nod towards the idea of how the works have been made, the physicality that they've had. I didn't really want to focus on me I guess.

H: There was a discussion about Brian doing a performance.

B: I wasn't advised the idea, I'd be interested maybe doing something in the future, we've talked about that, but on this occasion I didn't feel it was right.

E: A lot of the content for the performance was built on conversations or movements that we were engaged in in the gallery or the repetitive actions that were involved in making or constructing the space.

B: There was a part in the performance when Emily breathed on the canvas and that was entirely from when we took off the clay after spraying and there was some residue which felt like it was breathing. [Emily] breathed on it and it left a pattern. It was that idea of being physically responsible for it. It was that process that fed into it.

Audience: Now that you've spent time in Norwich with SAVORR, how do you see this conversation developing?

B: Seeing the Outpost studios - Birmingham don't have that single certain space - it was a hint of the excitement looking at different aspects like the city perhaps could be a really interesting dialogue. Alongside that, how you survive, how making work in difficult times, and not being in London. I do quite a lot of work in the north of England and there is a quite tight knit family of artists - I'd be curious as to whether that exists in East Anglia.

The thing about Norfolk is that it's so far from other places. Hubs don't really exist apart from in the city. What's our identity and how do we deal with it? Thinking about these developments that are happening in Norwich and Birmingham and mobility. It would be good to think about strength in numbers in terms of making a case. Thinking about the ecology if you don't provide studios then no-one gets up to anything.

With the work we do in NI we're constantly talking about how can artists survive. It's almost more important to have artist studios than artist spaces - they just don't have a job if not.



