

## ***Torvegade 32A***

I started my choreographic research as I had been moved by a record I made while recalling the year I spent in Copenhagen. I noticed that thinking about a particular situation in a specific place, helped me to remember much clearer feelings and emotions. Following that, I asked my friends that lived or spent a long time in an other city to share a parallel experience and record themselves. I found very curious that all the different records shared the same idea of memories closely related to specific places. Before digging into my choreographic practice, I initially read scientific papers about how the brain stores richer memories when they are clearly connected to places. Psychologists affirm that we store memories by linking them to a *where*. The association of mnemonic stimuli and geographic places helps us to remember particularly important events and experiences. This process has been named *episodic memory formation*: images and feelings profoundly linked to a specific place and time. Based on that, I started to experiment with idea of unpicking singular words from the different records and created a long written score. Using that as a starting point, I then shaped a movement vocabulary. After an initial tutorial and some personal reflections, I realised that the movements felt entirely impersonal and way too literal. I got myself trapped with the voices and the words of the records and I could not find any other interest in the movements that I produced. Thus, I understood that the score was predominant over the actual body language. Therefore, I chose to take some distance from the records and give more attention to the feelings and memories that personally connected me to the experience I had in Denmark.

Two important turning points have been, first of all, having the chance to visit once again Copenhagen and reunite with my friends. In that circumstance, I achieved that it was not necessary to create something, but it was rather more effective to shape and design in space the memories and feelings of

that experience. The second turning point has been watching the play *Copenhagen* by Michael Frayn. Suggested by my mother, the play did not inspire me by its content, but rather for the use of simple props on stage that allowed the performers to create different images just by moving them around.

Going back to the starting point of the research, I established that what I miss the most about Denmark are the people, especially my three housemates. I chose to “place” on stage with me four chairs as a representation of the four of us. From the overall collection of records, I picked the one that touched me the most and that I found was fullest of memories and images. On top of that, I mixed a couple of songs that were symbolising our friendship, to allow also my memories to emerge without the support of the voice speaking. I began to create different possible sound scores and play with the chairs in the space. I wrote down specific events and situations. Some were more personal and others were suggested by the record. At that point, I started to see the direction of the work. Following my second tutorial and sharing the work to some peers, I recognised that there was too much acting and there was not a real intention with my body language. It has been quite a challenge to drop the dancing aspect, but I eventually appreciated the change of perspective. I embraced the fact that even if I was not physicalizing or embodying anything specific, the chairs and the space were dancing for me. To dress the space, I decided to draw with the chairs on the floor the perimeter of the apartment where I lived in, passing through different aspects of my life in Denmark. The movements I choose became simple; I abstracted the essence of how I felt in each specific situation. I preferred to perform the last few rehearsals without the actual sounds score so that during the day of the performance, I could really stay curious and interested, as the audience, in what the voice was saying, and allowing myself to respond emotionally as a person before than as a performer.

The journey of creating this piece has been fascinating and challenging at the same time. Before starting the component, I systematically planned how the piece would have looked like, but on early stage of the process I changed my mind. As I was so sure that what I was thinking was the correct route to pursue, I did not allow myself to go elsewhere or try anything different. To drop and give up the component were the first and easiest options I looked up to for a long while. With the help of the people around me, and daring myself to take risks, I accepted the challenge and held on to my work. I learned that it is better to take risks, stick with the difficulties and try something different. By performing with the audience, I felt I fulfilled my work and I openly shared my experience and my feelings. Since the original record touched me at the point where I started to cry, observing other people living a similar experience after watching the piece, could not represent for me a better response.

We are, luckily or not, the travelling generation. During our life we live in different places, cities or countries other than the one we are from. We make judgements and evaluations either positive or negative. However, sooner or later, we will miss that specific place, along with all the experiences and the people we had met.

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