

***WALKING OUT OF THE BODY AND INTO THE MOUNTAIN:
DANCING, MOUNTAINEERING AND EMBODIED WAYS OF KNOWING.***

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I confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

ABSTRACT

‘Walking out of the body and into the mountain: dancing, mountaineering and embodied ways of knowing’ is a Practice Research study that investigates embodiment, performance making and outdoor leadership in relation to mountainous environments. This study draws upon mountaineering, performance and dance training and how these are shared and experienced by others, to further our relational understanding of mountain-place. Through acknowledging that perceptions of place are culturally and somatically experienced and expressed through our bodies, this research critically examines gendered, dancing and mountaineering bodies in relation to the dynamics of a mountain ecology.

The title for this research refers to Nan Shepherd’s explorations of the Scottish Cairngorm Mountain range in her prose, *The Living Mountain* (1977, 2011, p.106). Her writing presents her embodied experiences as a hillwalker and leads towards notions of permeabilities between the human body and mountain ecology. This thesis takes this key text as invitation and guide to further explore notions of intra-connectedness of subjective bodily experiences with place and, more specifically, those of women’s experiences overlooked through historic mountain culture narratives.

Embodiment practices invoke the human body as a vessel for sense-data that is derived from the world around, just as the body is socially constructed (Csordas, 1990). Thus, the body as the ‘existential ground for culture’ (p.5) makes it possible to understand the embodied relationship between the body and the mountains by first examining the moving body at a localized, human scale. This research will consider these felt intersubjective and interconnected experiences of place through exploring Shepherd’s prose along with the researcher’s artistic engagements in the geographical environment of the Cairngorms mountains.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This Practice Research thesis aims to investigate themes and practices of embodiment when walking, training and performing in relation to mountainous terrains. It will address the question of what role an environment, such as mountainous terrain, has on human perception of it, and how this perception is experienced and expressed through the body. Critically, this research will examine the dancing and mountaineering body in relation to, and in the ‘thingness’ of, the mountain, through a Practice Research approach drawing on mountaineering, walking and dance practices.

The title for this research refers to Nan Shepherd’s explorations of the Scottish Cairngorm Mountain range in her book *The Living Mountain* (1977, 2011). Her writing presents her sensory and embodied experiences as a mountaineer and suggests that the boundaries of body and mountain and the links between them are permeable, when she writes, ‘I have walked out of the body and into the mountain’ (2011, p.106). This study will explore the complex and uncertain boundary between materiality and transcendence implied by Shepherd’s statement, exploring porosity in subjectivity and materiality through a deep and porous dramaturgy that invites, ‘an attention to the relationship between inside and outside. The possibility of reciprocal movement or resistance’ that actively ‘embraces’ (Turner, 2014, p.199) the unforeseen discoveries within a creative process of *place-relational performance* making.

This research considers the subjective experience of mountain-place: through considering Shepherd’s account of journeys and the researcher’s engagement in dance and walking arts practices in the very same sites, this research many years later will attempt to uncover what Massey terms ‘place as process’ (2005). Embodiment practices invoke the human body as a vessel for sense-data that is derived from the world around, just as the body is socially constructed (Csordas, 1990). Thus, the body as the ‘existential ground for culture’ (p.5) makes it possible to understand the embodied relationship between the body and the mountains by first examining the moving body at a localized, human scale.

The research will further explore the possibilities afforded by such a shifting of the perceptions of the embodied dancer and woman walker in the mountains, for discourses around ecological dance and bodily practices and *mountain-place-relational performance* making.

Aims and research questions

This Practice Research thesis aims to investigate, through a multimodal approach, the processes and practice-based methods for creating *mountain-place-relational performance*, evolving through a combination of mountaineering, walking and dance practices.

Through solo field trips, facilitated group expeditions and the creation of new studio-based and *mountain-place-relational performance* works, this study brings together embodied movement practices from dance into mountaineering and research methodologies from situated, embodied knowledges and performance theory.

In doing so, this research will expand upon the idea that embodied knowledge can bring about new modes of experiencing and critically engaging with mountain-place. It will inform new methods of creating *place-relational performance*, critically challenge and develop future perspectives on mountaineering and embodied learning as an innovative approach to performance-making.

This thesis reflects on two main Practice Research projects: PR1: a studio performance entitled *Into the Mountain (solo)*, and PR2: an outdoor mountain place relational performance entitled *Into the Mountain (group)*. The two projects focus on concerns within the main research questions, going into further detail through the reflective process as each project develops in turn. Audio-visual documentation of the live performances, sound recording and accompanying visual evidence of the work's development are included in the supporting document files and external project website links for both Practice Research projects.

Research Questions

A central question leading the research design, approaches and finding of new insights asks:

1. To what extent do *place-relational performance* practices provide new insights into experiencing outdoor mountainous environments?

Through this main enquiry I will ask the following subsidiary questions:

2. How do environmentally relational movement practices and performance-making contribute to new ways of experiencing the interconnection of humans and mountains?
3. Considering Shepherd's embodied understanding of mountains expressed in *The Living Mountain* (2011), how can contemporary artistic dialogues about the same environment bring new insight to women's experience of place?

These subsidiary questions will be explored in further detail through specific Practice Research project enquiries.

A brief history of preparatory practice

This doctoral research draws on over twenty years of artistic practice in walking art, dance and performance making, arts facilitation and Practice Research. Themes developing for this thesis lead on from a variety of projects and commissions including the 270-mile walking and choreographic project, *The Pennine Way: the legs that make us* (Ashley and Kenyon, 2007), a walking arts project commissioned by Deveron Arts entitled, *Following in the footsteps of Nan Shepherd* as part of *The Hielan Ways* project (2013) and most notably the independent research, *Cairngorms Women* during 2015. Funded by Creative Scotland, *Cairngorms Women* researched embodied experiences of women in the Cairngorm Mountains. I conducted interviews with almost sixty women (mostly in the United Kingdom but some from the United States and Europe) to understand how they expressed their experiences of walking in

the Cairngorms Mountains. Through questionnaires, informal chats, telephone interviews, emails and walks, I attempted to glean how others articulated their embodied knowledge of the mountains. To generalise from these accounts, the bodily memories of mountaineering experiences were often associated with specific emotional memories, particular events and detailed moments in the place with people and the ecology itself. These informal conversations highlighted the challenges of articulating the qualitative nature of embodied experiences. There was no definitive way with words to directly express the value of embodied learning, but there were commonalities in the use of words that expressed feelings of flow, freedom, joy and personal self-development. The data from these interviews is not submissible as part of this thesis, but the key aim of exploring shared and common experience of our relationship to mountains did inform and provide reason to deepen this enquiry through this Practice Research PhD project.

Methodologies

The primary methodological proposition for this Practice Research (PR) thesis involves enquiry-based approaches through the process, techniques, and creation of original performance events. The function of Practice Research in this instance is to further understand how mountain-relational performance work can bring about new understanding in the ways humans find interconnection with mountain-place.

Practice Research is now widely recognised and understood within the field of Performance Studies and Arts and Humanities more generally. Robin Nelson's support for intradisciplinary methods (2022) including his Practice Research model (2013) is a pertinent example within the breadth of Practice Research approaches relevant to this thesis. He considers the need for 'a multi-mode, dialogical, dynamic approach' (p.37) and offers a useful methodological framework with which to situate this research. This updated approach from his previous (2006) *know-how; know-what and know-that* model considers, 'how the presentation in interrelationship of different kinds of evidence might add up to 'substantial

new insight' or 'new knowledge' (2013, p.38). The fluidity within this approach where 'knowledge is not fixed and absolute' (ibid., p.39) affords a flexibility to accommodate new or unfolding research elements that occur in such intradisciplinary projects as this one. Nelson acknowledges the value of 'doing-knowing' (p.40) often at the heart of embodied methodologies; in this case, it is demonstrated through the contexts of dance and mountaineering practices within the Practice Research approaches. Nelson's model encompasses multimodal approaches, but for this Practice Research the acknowledgement of environmental and geographical considerations central to this research project also need to be included.

A multimodal approach is necessary for this research to incorporate intradisciplinary material and enables distinct conversations and resonances to emerge between arts practices, mountaineering activities, outdoor contexts, and associated means of analysis.

The two Practice Research projects expand upon elements of working with the themes of human-mountain relationship and include:

- 1) PR1: *Into the Mountain (ITM) (solo)*. A studio-based solo performance for a public audience.
- 2) PR2: *Into the Mountain (ITM) (group)*. An outdoor, mountain-relational performance event for a public audience in the Cairngorm National Park, Scotland.

PR1: *ITM (solo)* and PR2: *ITM (group)* investigated through various performance, dance, and somatic practices, walking arts methods and mountaineering skills. These included engaging in current mountaineering training praxis, and gathering embodied experiences developed via established forms of mountaineering techniques across all four seasons. It involved situated walking practices and physically experiencing places and routes described in Shepherd's accounts within *The Living Mountain* (2011).

Firstly, working with my own lived experience as walker, mountaineer and dance practitioner allowed for my subjective experience to initiate the research. Practice Research scholars

Parker-Starbuck and Mock (2011) articulate the importance of body-based research relevant to this research because, “what begins to distinguish body-centred research is the very notion of ‘body’ as interpretable and flexible, yet materially and culturally specific” (p.211).

Working with embodied research methodologies across both individual and collective embodied experiences was central to this Practice Research because as John Freeman explains, ‘putting ones own body and experience forward within a live (arts) space the artist/ participant becomes both object and subject within the frame of the work and, as a consequence, this situation allows the artist to interrogate and articulate this relationship’ (2010, p.177). This approach developed and furthered the design of participatory approaches in PR2: *ITM (group)* specifically.

This thesis is concerned with feminist ways of being in the world, including exploring women’s lived experiences of mountains and how this is expressed through performance research contexts. Feminist research methodologies often employ mixed methods including critical analysis, participatory, embodied, artistic and practice-led approaches.

Feminist researchers have critiqued traditional scientific research methods for objectifying research subjects and distancing the researcher and have developed alternative methodologies to challenge these approaches. These include the consideration of wider perspectives, such as embodied and *situated knowledges* — a term coined by feminist theorist Donna Haraway (2013), to describe alternative ways of offering ‘better accounts of the world’ (p.590).

Developing situated knowledges and employing embodied methodologies are central to this Practice Research, which is informed and directed by dance and somatic movement approaches in relation to mountain ecologies.

In the introduction to *Feminism as Method — Navigating Theory and Practice* (Dupuis, Harcourt, Gaybor and van den Berg, 2022), the authors discuss how feminist research applies experiential and embodied approaches that ‘entail a recognition of how knowledge is inscribed in the body, sense of self and community’ (p.4). This Practice Research engages with all these themes, including individual and community wide perspectives.

As such this Practice Research employs a mixed-method approach and engages with feminist methodologies and practices. Reflexive methods are used as a way of responding to the unfolding nature of the research and are embedded throughout this thesis. This allows for a multiplicity of voices to be included, ensuring that the research is informed by collaborators, participants and their diverse perspectives.

Methods of reflexivity are included through this thesis in several ways, including peer to peer reflections for PR1: *ITM (solo)* through a similar practice to that of *colleague-criticism* (Dolan, Bonin-Rodriguez and Pryor, 2009). This approach was developed by artist-researchers as a dialogical process to 'encourage, a new kind of performance archive' (p.24). The reflexive practice within colleague-criticism goes beyond the subjective experience of performers within the project, allowing for further perspectives from audience members. This method is valuable because it acknowledges the work is a process and provides opportunities for artist-peers to show our 'commitment is to each other as artists/cultural workers, rather than only to the text/show in question' (p.25). This provided an additional way to include multi-voiced forms of reflexivity in a continuation of dialogue with peers, widening perspectives of the performance and how it was experienced.

To include further dialogical practice within the research, I created opportunities for reflections of the process with the choir, dancers and creative team. Post-performance reflections from choir members and dancers informed and contributed directly to new learning of the PR2: *ITM (group)* through a multiple perspectives approach and allowing for anecdotal experiences to be expressed through conversation. Jane Gallop's, *Anecdotal theory* (2002) states 'the anecdotal is very much about the moment' (p.14). This points to the value of including the conversational and reflective material that encourages a reflexive learning, from a variety of experiences within the creative process and this Practice Research project more widely. Gallop state that her method aims 'to bring this mode of intimate and intersubjective knowledge production into the academic realm of formal thinking and legitimated knowledge'. (Gallop, 2002, p.20). Including these voices throughout this thesis is part of the feminist methodology that underpins the research.

Feminist Interview methods were used in this research, particularly via the *Aiming Off* chapters with collaborators, which make use of woman-to-woman interviewing approaches. Qualitative feminist interviewing methods have continued to evolve over the past forty years with recent researchers such as Brigitte Herron (2023) arguing for methods that ‘cultivate feminist ecosystems of care’ (p.659). Unlike more traditional and formal interview techniques, feminist interview methods allow for conversational, reciprocal and participatory exchange between people. Ann Oakley’s (1981) feminist work on interview methods advocates for relational approaches with interviewees that shift the power dynamics of the researcher and flatten hierarchies of knowledge. This counters the traditional scientific and sociological interviewing approach of the detached researcher mentioned earlier. According to DeVault and Gross (2012) interviews can offer ways of ‘talking with people, learning about their perspectives and giving them voice’ (p.206). Giving voice to participants is part of the feminist ethic of this Practice Research. DeVault and Gross acknowledge It is a complex process and highlight the importance of layered meaning embedded in ‘nuances of speech, gesture and expressions’ (p.206). In a separate article, De Vault (1999) argues for the additional skills of attentiveness required where, ‘researchers must develop methods for listening around and beyond words’ (p.66).

To address these notions of care and attention when in dialogue with other people and environments, creative methodologies for this research included the practice of *Deep Listening*, developed by musician Pauline Oliveros (2005). *Deep Listening* is a method of focusing attention, and in her essay *Quantum Listening* (2002), Oliveros defined it as ‘listening in every possible way to everything possible to hear, no matter what you are doing. Such intense listening includes the sounds of daily life, of nature, of one’s own thoughts, as well as musical sounds’ (p.27). In this research, Oliveros’s ecological approach to listening was used to develop attention to human experience, environmental details and more-than-human perspectives of place. This connects to wider feminist practices that situate human experience in relation to the more-than-human and centre on applying practices of care (Brannelly and Barnes, 2022). The method of *Deep Listening* has been explored by numerous artists, including Claire Hind (Hind and Wilsmore, 2025) and is drawn on in this Practice

Research project, notably in the choir work with artist and collaborator, Hanna Tuulikki, as well as across the choreographic, somatic, and walking-based elements of working in relation to the mountain-place itself.

Walking based methodologies when working outdoors are central to this Practice Research project. Walking art approaches are inherently relational, particularly as a method for interviewing. Walking conversations enable situated and embodied exchanges and include the environment in what Diedre Heddon and Cathy Turner (2010) describe as the “*toponarrative*” (p.15). Walking interviews as a feminist methodology are explored extensively through their work and they go on to explain that ‘we chose to allow our interviews to be informed by this improvisatory and embodied experience, so that the walk might prompt diversions, tangents, circuits and uncertainties missed in the linear authority of the merely spoken account’ (p.15).

I chose to apply walking interview methods in this research for the opportunities to work with non-linear frameworks Heddon and Turner mention — to invite tangents, uncertainties, the unfixed nature of place and to create space for improvisatory, embodied and emotional experiences into the research process. Walking interviews took place with Margaret Kerr for her *Aiming Off* interview, and with the dancers as a group in reflective conversation during the research process and following the performance event. On this occasion, the conversation shifted fluidly between various constellations of people, a dynamic orchestrated by the physical shape of the mountain path and the open spaces where we paused to be still and speak together. Walking arts methodologies lend themselves well to this research context because they acknowledge the multitudinous, entangled contexts in which walking occurs. Heddon and Cathy Turner (2012) explain:

“This vision of the walk as part of a web, rather than as a single trajectory, suits a walking philosophy that values the familiar, local, temporal and socio-cultural, as well as the unknown, immediate, solitary, wild – and indeed, finds them entangled with one another” (p.233).

Approaching these entanglements through walking enables multiple ways of working and thinking in place, offering space for situated and responsive research processes to unfold.

To summarise, the methodologies that build this Practice Research include multimodal approaches to performance making in both studio theatre and *mountain-place-relational* contexts.

Methods employed as part of this Practice Research include:

- o Undertaking a variety of trainings in mountaineering techniques, praxis, and leadership.
- o Expanding existing dance and choreographic methods by exploring the relationship between mountaineering encounter and new movement languages emerging from mountaineering skills training.
- o Engaging extensively in hill walking as a form of situated knowledge, embodied cartography, and tacit knowledge of mountainous environments.
- o Engaging in a deeper reading and response to Shepherd's *The Living Mountain* (2011) through Practice Research methods.
- o Undertaking a significant literature review across the intersecting areas of study, which I have called *The Lay of the Land*.
- o Exploring the intersections via the lead researcher's embodied experiences in PR1: *ITM (solo)*.
- o Developing improvisational and choreographic methods from the embodied memories of mountain experiences.
- o Qualitative data collection using various methods including invited written peer responses from audience members for PR1: *ITM (solo)* and conducting interviews with 'creative companions' involved in PR2: *ITM (group)*. These were obtained

through a variety of methods, including the group walking interview with the five dancers involved in the project and written reflections with select choir members.

- o Developing eco-social-somatic and participatory methods and environmental performance development (in PR2: *ITM (group)*) in direct relationship with the Cairngorm Mountains and the prose of Nan Shepherd's *The Living Mountain* (2011).
- o Creating visual documentation and evidence of the performance making process for both Practice Research projects.
- o The filming and documentation of both Practice Research projects.

CHAPTER 2

THE LAY OF THE LAND: A CONTEXTUAL MAPPING

This contextual outline maps the various aspects and themes explored throughout this Practice Research thesis. This entails coming to know the *lay of the land*, defined as the ‘arrangement of the different parts in an area... where things are located in a place’ (Merriam-Webster, 2024). This thematic framing brings together artistic practice, art works, conceptual and theoretical interconnections that will define the relational fields of this thesis exploring *place-relational performance* practice.

These dedicated sections provide the structuring principles to the Practice Research projects. These include site-specific art to *mountain-place-relational performance* making; environmental and ecological dance practices; embodiment and somatic practices; Body Weather dance training and philosophy; walking arts; feminist research; mountains, mountaineering cultures and women and Nan Shepherd and *The Living Mountain* (2011). All these sections have a particular focus on women practitioners, feminist and choreographic practices within these fields.

Each of these sections acts as a guiding structure of this chapter. They include situated and experienced vantage points, including that of the authors experience and encountering of artists’ work, trainings, and practices. These form part of a creative lineage that influences developing pedagogies and creative processes. Artistic practice is foregrounded and pays particular focus to women practitioners with relevant theoretical, academic, and historical contexts as a way of orientating the reader. They also traverse alongside the adjoining field of mountaineering culture, with a specific focus on gendered experiences of women within historical mountaineering narratives. From international elite high-altitude mountaineering to the local engagement of the UK hillwalking enthusiast, these narratives have influenced the western understanding and relationship to mountains.

This is followed by a closer exploration of Nan Shepherd's embodied approach to nature writing in *The Living Mountain* (2011). Through paying closer attention to the details of Shepherd's writing, an opening is formed in which to frame, develop and examine further the research of this thesis as a pathway that connects fields of dance making and mountaineering cultures into new relational fields.

**From site-specific art, performance and dance to
mountain-place-relational performance.**

To introduce and contextualize what I am terming *place-relational performance* and more specifically *mountain-place-relational performance*, a journey through the relational fields and lineage of site-specific art, performance and dance research is relevant in establishing the context of this thesis and the rationale for arriving at this term of *mountain-place-relational performance*.

Nick Kaye asserts that site-specific art is understood through a myriad of symbols including, "the location, in reading, of an image, object, or event, its positioning in relation to political, aesthetic, geographical, institutional, or other discourses, all inform what 'it' can be said to be" (2013, p.1). Site-specific art when examined through critical urban theory can become, according to Miwon Kwon, 'a spatio-political problematic' (2002, p.2) that is relevant to the context of this Practice Research. Kwon provides a useful genealogy and historical backdrop of site-specific art that emerged predominantly from the visual arts of the 1960s and 70s. The development of Land and Environmental Art (Wallis and Kastner, 1998) included artists now synonymous with this movement including exploring the material nature of environments, such as Robert Smithson (1996) and Andy Goldsworthy's (1990) sculptural works.

Performance artists began to explore the cultural and gendered relationships to place and society in the 1960s, for example, Mierle Laderman Ukeles's feminist work on domestic and civic *maintenance* (1969) which 'conceived the site not only in physical and spatial terms but as a cultural framework defined by the institutions of art' and their 'critique insisted on the

social matrix of class, race, gender, and sexuality of the viewing subject' (Kwon. 2002, p.13). The work of Cuban American artist, Ana Mendieta from the 1970s onwards explored body-oriented practices (Mendieta, Viso, Brett, Herzberg, Iles and Roulet, 2004) in relation to nature and performing gender (Best, 2007).

How artists have explored cultural and political frameworks through their site-specific art works is significant to this research. I will return to this idea of cultural frameworks determined by societies, institutions, and geographies later in relation to mountaineering culture and examining of its dominant narratives.

Site-specific performance

Research in this field has extensively defined what constitutes a site-specific performance work. In her much-quoted landmark essay, Fiona Wilkie (2002) recognised the array of UK site-related works across theatre, dance and performance practices. Wilkie outlined four distinct categories that describe the possible format and approaches as 1) outside 2) site-sympathetic 3) site-generic and 4) site-specific.

Outside and site-sympathetic performance are generally called existing works, often text-based theatre placed in outdoor contexts, rather than directly relating to the sites. Site-specific work, according to Wilkie, needs to reveal the site and can incorporate reference to 'historical documentation, personal association, found texts and objects...and site morphology' (2002, p.150).

Acclaimed site-specific theatre practitioner Mike Pearson (2010), with his collaborator, archaeologist, Michael Shanks (2001), approached the creation of site-specific work and methodologies as an 'articulation of space, body and action in bounded contexts' (2001.p.xi). Their approach has been influential on my practice more widely and in this Practice Research as it acknowledges the need to work with the complex and interwoven conditions one finds in a place.

Site-Specific Dance

Site-specific dance has developed through both practice and academic research regarding the effect and feeling created through site-dance work (Barbour and Hitchmough, 2014). In recent years a *(Re)Positioning of Site Dance* (Barbour, Hunter and Kloetzel, 2019) has developed a sense of identity and purpose beyond the historical visual and theatre tropes already mentioned. Victoria Hunter's *Moving Sites* (2015) frames how experiencing and engaging with site becomes interdisciplinary in nature and *Site, Dance and Body* (2021) addresses theoretical dialogues and interconnections between dance, environmentalism and the agency of matter and the more-than-human through new materialism in Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter* (2010). These scholars frame Practice Research as a mode of enquiry that can offer both analytical and practical approaches to exploring the body, environment, and the more-than-human, which this Practice Research thesis seeks to explore and expand upon.

Kloetzel and Pavlik (2011) map out the territory of US dance artists from the 1960s onward that have worked with site specificity in their performance. Kloetzel and Pavlik relate the term *site-specific* to the critique and influence of land and environmental arts and scholars, including Lucy Lippard's seminal work *Lure of the Local* (1997) which defines site and place specific as a means of including historical and social contexts into artistic process. In their interview with artist Ann Carlson, she explains that her work approaches the 'body as the first site of creation' (Kloetzel and Pavlik, p.18). Carlson's approach resonates with the process of PR1: *ITM (solo)* in this research project and Shepherd's text that considers how we first attend to our bodies as a site for understanding place through embodied experience.

Artist duo Eiko and Komos' articulation of 'becoming' as a concept in relation to environments (Kloetzel and Pavlik, 2011, p.180) is also expressed in other forms of dance such as Japanese Butoh (Fraleigh, 2010), (Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988) and the Body Weather practice of Min Tanaka who once stated, 'I do not dance in a place... I dance the place' (Marshall, 2006, p.56).

Key artists working in making site-specific performances span the broad spectrum of methodologies, aesthetics and intentions. Artists working in the UK context include the choreographer, Rosemary Lee. Her works take on many forms of site specificity, from a solo child's imaginative play on the beach in the film *Boy* (1995), to working with the scale of the old Fort Dunlop tyre factory in *Ascending Fields* (1992). She often works with large casts of professional and 'non-professional' dancers for works including *Common Dances* (2009), working within communities and their local trees in *Under the Vaulted Sky* (2014) and *Calling Tree* (2014) in collaboration with movement artist, Simon Whitehead. Her more recent performances for outdoor environments bring focus to human and earth time in *Circadian* (2019) and *Threaded Fine* (2022) and the tidal rhythms on the Cornish coastline in *Passage for Par* (2018)¹. The process and development of this work was said to have generated women's 'resilience and... solidarity in landscape' (Lee and Pethybridge, 2019, p.471). The development of individual resilience and group solidarity through the creation process, points towards the potential for transformational experiences when creating dance works relating to place and people that this practice research is exploring.

Because of her extensive experience in creating site-related works, Rosemary Lee was invited to contribute to PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)* through the role of choreographic mentor. Rosemary's rich experience was invaluable to my individual choreographic process and formed part of an approach to work with creative 'elders' in the development of the practice.

¹ Rosemary Lee's archive of work cited here available at:

www.artsadmin.co.uk/profiles/rosemary-lee

[Accessed: 15.08.24].

Mountain-place-relational performance

I introduce the term *place-relational performance* and more specifically for this thesis *mountain-place-relational performance*, rather than *site-specific* or *site-related*, to best articulate my sense of the ongoing understandings of place within more-than-human and feminist geographies that encompasses the wider complexities of an environment.

I have arrived at this term via three concepts; firstly, Lucy Lippard argues that ‘if space is where culture is lived, then place is the result of their union’ (1997, p.10). This led her to use the terms *place-specific* and *place-based* art. She defines the approaches taken by artists within these terms as ‘necessarily interdisciplinary’ and that they ‘consider shared experience’ within the ‘realm of the multicentered’ (p.278).

Secondly Doreen Massey’s assertion that place is a form of process, ongoing, unfolding, and unfixed, lent itself to the experience of working with place and site through an artistic context where, “identities/entities, the relations ‘between’ them, and the spatiality, which is part of them, are all co-constitutive” (2005, p.10). The work considered these emergent and unfolding strategies when working in relationality that is continually shifting.

Thirdly, the more recent and essential connection was recognised through conversations with Jonathan Pitches and his timely publication of *Performing Mountains* (2020) in which he first introduces the term, ‘mountain-site-related’ performance (p.137). This is in reference to Kwon (2004) and the lineage of scholars continuing to explore the expanded terms of site-related and site-specific within performance and dance research. Pitches’ development from Kwon’s shift to *related*, rather than *specific*, brings me to a convenient juncture with which to relate this research and practice as part of this continuum.

Taking a step further on from the use of *related* as in the past tense, to instead use relational usefully implies the ongoing and present nature of those continually unfolding interconnections as a positioning of the Practice Research outlined in this thesis. Nan Shepherd articulates an open-ended nature of relating when she writes, ‘knowing another is endless... the thing to be known grows with the knowing’ (2011, p.108). This active

relationality and continual learning in place are closely aligned to the processes and attitude taken when considering the development of Practice Research methodologies.

Within the context of this Practice Research, the Cairngorm Mountains are named as a Site of Scientific Special Interest (SSSI). The word *site* is commonly used across scientific, digital and online contexts. The association with the word site that frames and contains place within a particular lens does not align with the felt sense of the aims of this research; that of holding a multitude of perspectives and contexts to understanding place.

Themes from site-specific performance provide conceptual and methodological foundations for developing *mountain-place-relational performance*. These contexts shape a lineage of creative practices that emerge from embodied engagements with place, offering a critical framework for the unfolding research relevant to this thesis.

Environmental and ecological dance practices

Positioning place, environment and ecological thinking as central to movement and dance practices has evolved as a widening field of research. Nigel Stewart (2010) articulates *Environmental Dance* as an ‘umbrella term’ to include the wide array of dance and somatic practices that explore embodied human and more-than-human relationships. He outlines three categories in which work falls into: 1) site specific dance created outdoors; 2) staged work that brings in elements of place indoors; 3) somatic based practices and education that primarily takes place outdoors. Stewart stresses that the third element is ‘not just of deepening appreciation of the natural world but of generating new ecological knowledge and of exploring environmental values’ (p.32). Stewart’s three categories will be useful to return to later, as this Practice Research explores all three categories outlined through both Practice Research projects.

Sandra Reeve’s *Ecological body* (2008) and *Move into Life* (2024) pedagogies form a somatic, movement-based performance practice that ‘incorporates the site into the performance and

its audience' (Hunter, 2015, p.310). Reeve acknowledges this as performance process research also incorporates the various roles of teacher, facilitator, artist, director, and therapist. This is pertinent to this thesis when considering the multi-faceted approach to *mountain-place-performance* making. Its creation often involves facilitation, developing a unique pedagogy alongside the key skills needed for individual and collective artistic creations. This notion of the ecological body supports and extends the practice of Body Weather and mountaineering, and links to Shepherd's texts as a way forward that centres physical and tacit knowledge to develop our embodied vocabularies and understanding about 'being in/of/with place.' It also challenges the adaptability and porosity of boundaries between body and environment, offering a way to expand upon the notion of *porous* (Turner, 2014) and *expanded dramaturgies* (Turner, 2016). Expanded dramaturgies move beyond the bounds of the more traditional text-led approaches in theatre. Instead, they acknowledge interdisciplinary practices that centre creative process, social and cultural dimensions and audiences' engagement with environments (Turner and Behrndt, 2017). This research project works with Shepherd's text as a central component within an expanded dramaturgical approach; one that accommodates a responsive and embodied way of working *in relation to*, rather than as a *representation* of the text.

Phenomenology and eco-phenomenology as both theory and methodology have been widely explored through place and environment related dance research. This includes Nigel Stewart's reflective eco-phenomenological descriptions (2015), Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's body of research on dance (2015), the lived body's spatio-temporal presence (2020) and how this also relates to performance and technologies (Kozel, 2007). Although I do not frame this research project through a phenomenological lens, I acknowledge the significance of its influence in embodied research and dance practice.

How the concepts of nature and art have developed over the past century is further explored in *Performing Nature* (Giannachi and Stewart, 2005) and the 'relation of the world of human culture to the wider natural world' (p.19). Nature and wildlife choreographies such as the navigational dance project *Bird Brain* by dance artist Jennifer Monson tracks the

migration patterns of birds and whales over years (2000–2006) and across hemispheres. This project is connected directly with conservation work and ‘illuminating the importance of sustaining and preserving habitat for migratory species’ and the ‘overlap between nature and culture’ (Monson, 2000) in dance work that focuses on our relationships with the more-than-human.

Performance artist Hanna Tuulikki’s interdisciplinary project, *Away with the Birds* (2010–2015) also exemplifies these time and place related artworks that deepen our understanding of nature/culture/place relationships through interpreting archive, exploring traditional Gaelic songs that imitate bird song, women’s vocal ensemble and performance ‘emerging from and responding to landscape’ (Tuulikki, 2015). This project developed a deeper understanding of Scottish Gaelic language and its relationship to bird song, local environments and how indigenous cultures have a deep connection to and articulation of the human-nature relationship.

The interdisciplinary nature of both Monson and Tuulikki’s work acknowledges that human culture, bird habitats and nature are intrinsically intertwined in our understanding of the world. Both projects highlight that the time-based nature of making environmental performance can be a slower process when creating art products. The process-driven application that is guided by or in dialogue with animals and environments challenges the rhythms of usual working habits and conventions of art productivity.

The scenographer and artist Louise Anne Wilson’s collection of works that explore sites of transformation (2022) includes relevant approaches relating to this research project. In 2014, the seminal ‘site-specific walking-performance’ *The Gathering/Yr Helfa* explored this human, animal, environment relations through ‘revealing the day-to-day and seasonal workings of Hafod y Llan, a sheep farm located on the foot-hills of Snowdon’ (Wilson, 2014). This work also successfully integrated the guiding of two-hundred participants on a six-mile journey through the farmland and hilly terrain and is an exemplar of work relating to the ambitions and research of this Practice Research.

Working with environments and their inhabitants that are in constant change and flux can challenge the artist around the parameters of performance making. It is this commitment to time and the physical land-based nature of making performance in these works that connects to the nature of this research project's methods and approaches.

Environmental and ecological dance practices provide a framework for exploring more-than-human relationships, which is central to this research. The works of key artists and pedagogies mentioned, such as Sandra Reeve and Nigel Stewart, inform and shape the development of *mountain-place-relational* performance by emphasising embodied experience, ecological perspectives and site-responsive practices.

Embodied knowledge and somatic practices

This Practice Research thesis emphasizes embodied knowledge of the lived body understood in the sense that 'animate forms of life are basically tactile-kinesthetic bodies' (Sheets-Johnstone, 2020, p.2). This research emphasizes embodied knowledge to examine mountain experiences that are not easily articulated in words, or where linear, quantifiable data does not fully capture the essence of felt, human experience and our interconnecting relationality to the more-than-human world.

Embodiment can be defined as the experiencing, sensing and practicing of bringing awareness to bodily sensation, cognition and emotional experiences. Embodied knowledge is the complex work of our nervous system, kinesthetic experience, tacit knowledge and the proprioception of our inside and outside perspectives (Sheets-Johnstone, 2016). As humans we predominantly learn through movement and develop proprioception through tactile interactions with ourselves, others and the world around us. This learning begins in utero, in the environment of a womb, through development stages of early childhood and across our whole lifetime.

Embodied knowledge is a complex interplay between our conscious awareness and subconscious activity. This knowledge is not just what we consciously surmise within a present experience. Often our bodies can tell us of other psychological connections before we even mentally acknowledge them. This is part of embodied knowledge of our autonomous nervous system which includes our sympathetic, parasympathetic, and enteric systems.

Our bodily systems also include our emotional responses to these felt experiences, including fear, joy and all our emotional spectrum between. Our bodies can detect injury and communicate through pain signals of varying degrees, apart from those with the rare condition of congenital analgesia where they have no experience of pain.

Our lived existence, then, is fully embodied, but the contexts in which we find ourselves also contribute to our evolving and accumulative experiences as we go through our life cycle. Dan Zahavi suggests that embodiment is not just our felt sense alone, when discussing theories of phenomenology, but that it, 'entails birth and death...to be situated in both nature and culture [...] to find oneself in a historical and sociological context that one did not establish' (2018, p.87).

This supports the idea that our embodied experience is not immune to or functions in and of itself but is also affected by outside stimuli and cultural behaviors. This is an important point in relation to this Practice Research project, when considering how our bodily and gendered experiences of mountain environments are created through the intertwining of culture and concepts of nature. These contexts manifest or shape experiences, including exclusion for some people, regarding mountaineering and accessing rural places within a UK context.

The theory of phenomenology and its approach to notions of embodiment was developed in the twentieth century to study and describe phenomena within subjective rather than objective experiences. The work was pioneered by philosopher Edmund Husserl (1913/1983) to explore transcendental and reflexive ways to engage with consciousness (Husserl, 1999), through the lived body and our perceptions (Merleau-Ponty, 2002) and ontological

understandings of being-in the-world (Heidegger, 1962) and how our awareness can instigate action within social contexts and relations (Schutz, 1972).

Phenomenological methodologies have offered validity to research, particularly within the arts and performance, into how one expresses and makes sense of first-person, lived experience and consciousness. Phenomenological enquiry has been widely explored through somatic research and embodied enquiries into our human relationship to the world, including the work of Fraleigh (2018), Sheets-Johnstone (2015) and practice-as-research in performance (Grant, McNeilly-Renaudie and Wagner, 2019).

This thesis does not engage theoretically through a phenomenological lens or methodologies specifically, but the mixed methodological approach within this thesis must acknowledge the underlying presence of phenomenological reflexivity within the wider research context, particularly within performance studies, cultural geographies and beyond. The research practices draw upon ideas of environmental interconnectedness and gendered experiences of mountaineering through the practice; mainly to explore and deepen relational bodily encounters with mountain ecologies.

Somatic Practices

Embodiment and somatic education have become strong components in western, postmodern dance training as the focus is on internal sensations, rather than the external aesthetics of modern dance and choreographic techniques. A brief history of the breadth of work in this field and in relation to dance has been explored in numerous articles including Eddy (2009). The wider term of Somatic used within dance practices and research approaches needs to be outlined as it has greatly informed the development of US and European modern dance studies and has informed my own understanding of dance and movement within a western dance training including Practice Research (Midgelow, Bacon, Kramer and Hilton, 2019; Olsen, 2014).

The term *Somatic* was first introduced by philosopher Thomas Hanna (1970, 1976) to distinguish the interior, bodily experience from the first-person perspective. Derived from the Greek word, *Soma* to mean *body*, Hanna expands the practice of somatic to include, 'the inter-relational process between awareness, biological function and environment, all three factors understood as a synergistic whole' (Hanna, 1983, p.1, in Fortin, 2017, p.146). This approach moved away from the well-established Western, scientific view of the Cartesian body/mind dichotomy and instead foregrounded the relationships between our internal experience and our wider environments.

What is considered somatic work was already evident from the late nineteenth century, though a widening field of approaches and pedagogies is now taught extensively. The earlier practices developed alongside one another from the 1940s onward include the myofascial manipulations and structural alignment work in the Rolfing technique (Rolf, 1989), posture and injury prevention in Alexander Technique (Gelb, 2013; Alexander, 2018) and the functional integration in the Feldenkrais Method (Feldenkrais, 2011) and his later development of the self-image (2002). The Feldenkrais method, in which I am a qualified practitioner, does have some influence within the somatic methodologies of this Practice Research such as bringing an *awareness through movement* (Feldenkrais, 1972) and the bodily experiences of activity, but is not named as a specific methodology within this Practice Research process.

This area of bodywork became synonymous with wider movements relating to self-improvement. Both Ida Rolf and Moshe Feldenkrais facilitated teachings at the Esalen Institute, based within the mountains of the coastal area of Big Sur, California, United States. This centre focused on civil rights, environmental awareness, alternative education and self-development (Wood, 2012) in the 1960s. The centre today states that it is a holistic education centre with a vision to support the 'transformation of humankind, working with individuals and institutions to integrate body, mind, heart, spirit, and community in a nurturing relationship with the environment' (Esalen Institute, 2024). This vision still aligns with aspects of the Human Potential Movement developed at the centre in its infancy (Shapiro, 1998).

Based on the principle of the human potential coming from humanistic psychology (Frisk, 2016), this approach included body-based trauma therapies, working with touch (Howard, 1970) and movement awareness methods for developing self-actualization and transformations (Leonard, 1972) that would extend to the greater good of society more widely.

Later work and somatic approaches that focused on experiential learning and intuiting bodily knowledge include Body Mind Centering (BMC) developed from 1973 in the United States by Bonnie Bainbridge-Cohen (Wright Miller, Ethridge, and Tarlow Morgan, 2011). This extensive practice is an experiential movement approach developed from our felt sense (Bainbridge-Cohen, Nelson, and Smith, 2012) of anatomy, developmental and neuro-cellular patterns (2018) to explore body-stories (Olsen and McHose, 2004) and the 'experiential journey into the alive and changing territory of the body', (Bainbridge-Cohen, 2020, p.1). This work has been disseminated widely through the European movement education sector, through students of Bainbridge-Cohen including Hartley (1995). This work focuses on engaging through the individual's felt sense, both imagined and sensed through physical enquiry, which also includes touch-based approaches. BMC has a distinct quality and approach to working with scientific knowledge available, whilst respecting the intelligence of experiential doing, thinking, moving and learning through action. This work also extended to the wider understanding of eco-somatic with practitioners such as Andrea Olsen (2018, 2020) exploring environmental connection through experiential learning.

Although the original idea of somatics professed to connect to our environments, the development of eco-somatics brings a further focus to our contemporary relationships and highlights the complexities and implications of somatic approaches (Nuding, 2021).

The activity of our somatic sensory systems shapes our kinesthetic knowledge and experiences throughout our entire lives, including our spatio-temporal awareness and sense of emplacement (Ingold, 2000, 2007, 2008), through sporting and performing bodies (Pink, 2011), or as a form of sensory ethnography (Pink, 2015) and our embodied 'intersensoriality' proposed by Professor David Howes, where 'emplacement suggests the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment' (2005, p.7).

Fortin (2017) highlights the tensions and problems in somatic work when it ‘begins and ends with the self’ (p.146). To counter this, somatic practitioners since the 1990s (Eddy, 2009), (Green, 2015), including Fortin, began to pursue the expanded theory of *Social Somatics*. This approach acknowledges that bodily experiences are also ‘socially and culturally constructed’ and ‘penetrate the complex intermeshing of our sensing, feeling, moving and thinking’ (Fortin, 2017, p.146). In this context, Practice Research is attempting to investigate further how individual and collective social and eco-somatic engagements can be developed to encompass these wider cultural and environmental factors as a form of *eco-social-somatics*.

This research draws on embodied knowledge and somatic practices to explore how lived, sensory experience informs our relationship with mountain environments. Somatic methods offer tools for developing eco-social understanding, supporting a relational and situated practice that is central to the aims of this Practice Research.

This is explored and tested through somatic knowledge development during collective group experiences and in relation to the literature of Nan Shepherd to encompass first-person and collective embodied perspectives of being-in-place. The concept of eco-social-somatics allows for cultural contexts, including gender experiences and ecological relations to be included as part of this process. In doing so, it creates an intersectional approach for somatic and bodily based knowledge to be explored. PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)* approaches this cultivation of collective experience as one element of engaging with our embodied and more-than-human relations. From this framing, the research explores how we cultivate a capacity to extend the idea of self and individualism into our expansive ecologies, environments and somatic social contexts.

Body Weather: history, philosophy and training

Body Weather is a movement training and dance practice developed by Japanese dancer Min Tanaka. Along with members of his performance company, Maijuku, Tanaka set up the Body Weather Farm, situated in Hakushu, a small town a few hours east of Tokyo. Between 1986 and 2010, Tanaka facilitated yearly summer workshops that explored the principles of this practice. International participants would engage in daily farming duties, producing a range of organic crops whilst integrating dance training that took place both outdoors and in a studio setting. Each part of the working day was an opportunity for participants to observe and develop an attentiveness to the movements afforded through various tasks. The activity and personal accounts of the work taking place on the farm have been covered in numerous articles including Fuller (2014) and Snow (1993).

Body Weather considers our bodies as a constantly shifting environment, entwined within our larger environment that is 'multiple, permeable, receptive, and subject to ceaseless change' (Snow, 1993, cited in Fuller, 2014, p.198). This recognition of our bodies that are in states of process, not dissimilar to Massey's ideas of place and our interconnectedness with the more-than-human world, develops a context for dance, one of dialogue and in relation to environments and our wider ecology. It is a training which, some practitioners may argue, actively seeks to undo hierarchical models through the de-centering of the dominant positioning of human perspectives. According to practitioner and academic Zack Fuller, who spent many years engaging with Tanaka's work at the farm, the practice is, 'grounded in the ideology of *Shintai Kisho* (Body Weather), which conceives of the body as a force of nature: omni-centered, anti- hierarchic, and acutely sensitive to external stimuli' (2014, p.197). This principal endeavour of deepening bodily attentiveness to the world through a process of de-centering the human could be conceived from ecological perspectives; those existing across eastern philosophies and the emergent environmental movements that developed in the West from the late 1970s. Fuller purports that Body Weather does not follow traditional dance methods where learning from a 'master', through physical demonstration, dynamics and aesthetics takes precedence, but rather a conscious move

towards the unravelling of leadership, including the following of one's own self desires, within the community and in environments. Fuller goes on to explain that Tanaka considered 'the establishment of any repeatable, reproducible form as a collusion with the various power structures that limit human agency by controlling the body' (p.197). As a dance method it is best considered a radical form of training that disrupts traditional dance pedagogies and the development of a singular movement language. It has instead developed into a rich improvisational methodology that acknowledges the wider ecological communities and their effect upon the practice. This approach could be considered, then, as a form of social activism that steers towards expanding notions of dancing within everyday life and actively resisting codification and structural control on a wider political scale. The propositions mentioned regarding the de-hierarchisation in terms of leadership and the de-centering of human experience within Body Weather training are of significant interest within this research process.

Body Weather's approach to refining an awareness of one's senses, widening perception, relationality and how these manifest through improvisatory scores and methodologies, is a key component and practice of this research. This is precisely because the 'doing' of body weather is the conscious 'undoing' of the existing structure we often move in, through the dancing, social and cultural body. The attempts, failures and insights that come through this dance training encourage space for experimentation, but also for the continual questioning of how we are relating to one another, to ourselves and our wider ecologies and cultures. From the work emerges a practice of working with the idea of a multiplicity of perspectives that are not just imagined but also felt and embodied.

Working with Body Weather practices through this research and choreographic enquiry with place are central to the practice because, whilst it is part of the process of creating movement-based material for performance, it is also for example questioning of the lived sense and experience when navigating hierarchies and inherent ideas of leadership models presented through mountain leadership, on which I will explore in more detail further into this chapter.

I am writing through a position and understanding of Body Weather from the perspective of a Western woman, practicing in a European context and specifically from a UK perspective. I am engaged directly with the work and teachings of Body Weather Amsterdam, founded by Katerina Bakatsaki and Frank van de Ven, Japanese/US based artist Oguri, whose practice of ‘dancing the desert environment’ (Candelario, R., 2018. p.50) is documented in the film *Height of Sky* (Steinberg, 2004) and French artist, Christine Quoiraud, who uses the term walker-dancer to describe her nomadic practice that offers ‘sense-making experiences’ (Boucrist L. 2014. p.100) within public places.

All original members of Tanaka’s Maijuku dance company offer insights within their respective practices and the development of the form, through their direct lineage and contribution to the practice’s creation. Learning also extends beyond this first generation and to the wider Body Weather community, a geographically dispersed group of artists engaging on various levels with the training. This communal learning begins to expand a wider spectrum for the practice, working with notions of multiplicity, the diversity of knowledge and development of improvisatory approaches. Rather than focusing on the production of fixed choreographic material, the practice and its pedagogical value, approaches and exploration of the felt and imagined, notions of inside/outside, space and scale directly feed into the research process of this project.

I have engaged predominantly with Frank van de Ven and his Body/Landscape workshops that occur in numerous mountainous environments, including notably his ongoing collaboration, since 1997 with Czech visual artist Milos Šejn, who integrates drawing and visual art practices into the work of their *Bohemiae Rosa* projects. The workshops I have attended have played a pivotal role in my longer-term creative development in relation to this Practice Research project. They include the week-long expeditions on the Icelandic Landmannalaugar to Thórsmörk trail (2008)² and in the Krokonoše Mountains in the Czech Republic. These workshops developed by Šejn and van de Ven have often focused on

² Workshop details available from: www.bohemiaerosa.org/brosa/2008_Iceland.pdf

[Accessed: 18 August 2024].

mountain ecologies where, 'the vertical and horizontal layering of the landscape invites us to reflect upon our own layers and connections of self and imagination' (2008)³.

Alongside these two examples and the many workshops experienced in the UK, the methodology of exploring Body Weather practice in various places and locations brings an accumulation and collating of embodied experience with several surfaces, terrains, atmospheres and encounters. This palimpsest quality to this embodied learning is included in the methodologies of this work, when designing and creating performances where the process of experience, not just in the initial devising experiences but throughout with performers and collaborators, is fundamental.

The repeated explorations of *Bag of Bones*, for example, through these various landscapes became a key area of interest within my own practice and developing methodologies as mentioned earlier. These elements chime with the walking practice of Nan Shepherd and her methods of writing about the Cairngorms through repeated visits and paying close attention to details. This dance practice alongside Shepherd's writing has led me further into walking practices and mountaineering training, as a means of embodied place learning and venturing further into the mountain.

Body Weather Training

The structure and elements of Body Weather training I will focus on is divided into five parts or methods. These include 1) *M.B.*, 2) the *Manipulations Series*, 3) *Bag of Bones*, 4) *Laboratory work* and 5) observation/witnessing talking/listening. Here I offer a concise introduction to each of the methods I will go into further detail within the Performance Research chapter and specifically in Practice Research projects: 1 and 2.

³ Citation from workshop information online.

Available from: http://www.bohemiaerosa.org/brosa/2008_Iceland.pdf

[Accessed: 18 August 2024].

1. *'M.B'* is shorthand for Mind/Body and Muscle/Bone and reflects the qualities, intentions and focus of the movement training. Whilst it may appear to continue a binary thinking about the body, these splits only act as a reminder of just how intertwined our mind/body/place interconnections are during the physical training. Often the initial start to the training within a studio, M.B involves moving in line formations, travelling up and down a studio space. These lines offer the opportunity for clear directionality and continuous movement, following the person in front of you and sensing people around you. The dramaturgy or structure of the sessions can often develop into a high intensity and cardiovascular training that often feels and looks like a physical puzzle, coordinating and moving different parts of your body in multiple directions, rhythms and patterns simultaneously.

2. *The Manipulations Series* is a touch-based body work that follows the M.B. Often, but not exclusively practiced in pairs, this work focuses around 7 'series' of stretches to encourage a softening and release of muscles following the cardiovascular work of the M.B.

My knowledge of Body Weather comes through the numerous open workshops and more focused meetings organised by Quoiraud and van de Ven over several years. These meetings allowed for a deeper engagement with the series. Practitioners in the meetings began to bring other somatic knowledge and training within the group which included (but not exclusively) Body-Mind Centering (BMC) and Feldenkrais perspectives.

The series is often practiced as a non-verbal, bodily conversation between people through conscious touch. The person being moved is not passive in this relationship but rather is actively working to find ways to release and be moved by their partner. This touch is a great source of information and part of gaining embodied and tacit knowledge from others and how you both receive and offer touch. Through working with many people over time, the practice reveals, acknowledges and embraces the complexities of working with touch as a form of communication.

The series are often imaginatively explored in various ways that can create a new focus or enquiry with the series. By closing one's eyes, for example, or only using one's hand, working with suggested timings and emphasis on qualities of touch can bring new dimensions to your understanding of someone's body and how to meet through these varying ways of touching them.

Academic Peter Snow's (2002) account of his experiences of the manipulation series is a useful reference for more detailed descriptions and a historical account of this element of the training whilst participating at the Body Weather farm. Dance practitioner Joa Hug's research has further developed how the manipulations series has also been part of his extended writing practice that comes from within the experience of the body work itself (2016).

3. *Bag of Bones* is the name for the touch-based practice, usually starting the work in pairs and often accumulating to working in larger groups that work with one person/body at a time. This practice may stand in for the *manipulation series* after an M.B. with a group that has no experience of manipulation into touch-based exploration. With respect and deep listening, there is an approach to moving someone's body as a heavy bag of bones to explore function and qualities, whilst offering the receiver new information about how their body can be moved by external forces. The person receiving the touch is not passive but actively works to observe internally and relax in the position they are being moved to. The work asks for those receiving it to recognise what elements feel uncomfortable and what can be felt in less familiar or sometimes uncomfortable physical situations.

The practice is an ongoing enquiry that can be understood in new ways and details through offering new contexts for the same task: the changing of environments (this is practiced in indoor spaces and outside in a variety of locations and environments), people/group and approaches, quality and instructions of the movement offered all bring new insight into the experience. I will explore in more detail this work within the research in PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)* chapter.

4. *Laboratory work* refers to the explorations and scores for improvisation, an open place where you can see the development of individual Body Weather practitioners and they can explore their own creative interests. Often working with the imagination and developed interests from individual practitioners, this work brings into focus a space for exploring qualities of movement, working with multiple images and improvisational score development. The chapter on PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)* will go into further detail about individual approaches and methods I have focused on when developing material in relation to this research project. This includes *Bisoku* (slow moving) scores, image, sensory work and touch-based approaches including the work called ‘Bag of Bones’ when applied to moving in relation to the mountain environment and with a group context.

5. *Observation, Witness and Feedback* is an overarching element of the practice that is perhaps not so apparent or that is overlooked as an integral part of the practice: the approaches and frames for verbally feeding back and active listening within the work. There is often a lot of discussion that happens in the various elements of the training. This observation can be approached through various forms of witnessing one another’s work and the practice encourages communicating honestly and clearly with peers about what you are seeing from others, whilst also listening and taking on board their observations of your work. This can be challenging at times for numerous reasons including language, cultural differences and approaches to feeding back. The endeavor of feeding back and observing is an integral part of the practice when exploring on various levels, the ideas of holding multiple perceptions of exterior/interior understandings of yourself and how you engage with the practice.

The fieldwork approach that incorporates all these practices mentioned will be illustrated further within this research through the Practice Research chapters, PR1: *ITM (solo)* and PR2: *ITM (group)*.

This Practice Research draws upon Body Weather as both a methodological and philosophical foundation for engaging with place through movement as a relational practice. Body Weather’s relevance within this research is through its dialogical approach between bodies and environment, positioning the body as unfixed, porous, and responsive to place.

The methods emphasis on challenging hierarchies, expanding sensory awareness, and working with ideas of multiplicity and ecological thinking is particularly significant to the Practice Research. These principles inform how I choreograph, collaborate, reflect, and create dance work with environments explore across this Practice Research project.

Walking Arts

Walking Arts as a genre has been developing since the emergence of action art in the 1960s across the US and UK. The work is often multidisciplinary in nature and traverses numerous academic and artistic frames. I will briefly acknowledge some key contexts regarding the development of walking arts more widely and how they relate to ideas concerning walking as a choreographic practice relevant to this thesis.

From the spiritual Buddhist walking meditation practices (Hanh, 2003) and health benefits of the religious pilgrimage (Harris, 2019), to the ancient Greeks and Aristotle's Peripatetic school, philosophers and scientists took to walking about (Liddell and Scott, 1901) to engage with embodied ways of thinking.

The British scientist Charles Darwin developed his own private garden with a circular 'sand walk' from 1845, to allow him to obtain 'a state-of-mind promoted by pursuits that require physical exertion but little thought or concentration' (Young, 2015). Brazilian artist Marcela Levi revisited the Darwin's gardens in 2012, for her work, *(Sand) Walk With Me* (Levi, 2012.) as part of the *Rio Occupation London* (Buarque de Holanda and Heritage, 2013). Levi experienced the cultural differences of the quintessential Englishness of Darwin's strolls, in contrast with her embodied memories of Copacabana beach walks in Brazil. From this process Levi developed a participatory work accessed in gallery and sites in London where people could wear specially designed flip-flops filled with sand to recreate the sensorial experience of a barefoot beach walk, transposed to the cityscape (Levi. 2013).⁴ This example

⁴ I worked with Levi as her Producer for this project and experienced first-hand the development of this project.

illustrates how artists referencing past processes of others can be instrumental in developing contemporary art through using walking as a central element to the work. This approach is pertinent to this research project as it incorporates the experiences of Shepherd's writing and ways into the mountains within the core of the research activity.

Walking developed as a means of meditation and contemplation for writers within western literary history from the late eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century. Romantic poets such as William and Dorothy Wordsworth (1858), nature writers like Henry Thoreau's *Walking* (1861, 2006) and the work of John Muir (1979) contributed to the consequent creation of US National Parks through his wandering, passion and advocacy to preserve 'wild' places.

Literature's relationship to walking is the most prominent choice of form historically when articulating experiences of exploring place through peripatetic actions. From the aesthetics of landscape (Schama, 1995) to the romantic poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1912) and John Keats (2010), walking through majestic landscapes provide points of reference for human embodied connection and concepts of nature and landscapes.

Contemporary writers and academics reflecting on walking and its relationship to literary history and beyond include Frédéric Gros' (2014) attention to key literary figures such as poet Rimbaud's 'walking as flight' (p.52) and philosopher Nietzsche's solitary and long-distance wanderings. Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (2001) and Joseph Amato (2004) offer historical overviews of walking in relation to urban and rural politics and early nature writers. Geoff Nicholson (2008) contributes to this growing anthology of walking through history and the arts.

The ever-growing number of writers who engage with walking and the human relation to nature, wildness and culture include Rebecca Solnit's *A field guide to getting lost* (2006) and Scottish writers and poets, Kathleen Jamie (2012) and Linda Cracknell (2014). These writers often interweave personal, ecological and historical and cultural landscapes that could be found in Nan Shepherd's prose.

The prolific array of writing from Robert Macfarlane includes his introduction to the re-edition of Shepherd's *The Living Mountain* (2011) and the history of mountaineering as a cultural fascination (2009), relevant to this research and the subsequent section on mountaineering history. Macfarlane's other works and his approaches to writing about nature through autobiographical account bound with factual and historical detail of place include *Landmarks* (2015) and retracing walking routes of *The Old Ways* (2012).

The development of Walking Arts is often referred to in relation to the Parisian city-sauntering's of the late nineteenth century *flâneur*, established through the poetry of Charles Baudelaire and in particular in his essay first published in 1863, *The Painter of Modern Life* (2010), in which he asserts the position, according to Keith Tester that, 'the poet is the "man" (and Baudelaire is quite explicit about the gender identity of the poet; much, if not indeed all, of Baudelaire's work presupposes a masculine narrator or observer)[...] for whom metropolitan spaces are the landscape of art and existence' (1994, p.2). This gendered, detached approach to Baudelaire's *flânerie* could be considered an extension within the already existent colonialist attitudes of the time, being played out in the art landscapes of the urban artist elite. Baudelaire's work is followed by Walter Benjamin's (Arendt, 1999) detached observation when walking within a city.

Will Self has established himself in recent years as a writer 'obsessed with walking' (Jones, 2010) and referencing the significant influence of W. G. Sebald's journeying through sites, memory and history in his seminal book, *The Rings of Saturn* (1998). According to Self, 'walking is political' (2012) but he was not the first to proclaim so. The movement of Psychogeography originated from the *dérive* (to drift) and radical actions of artists' group *Situationist International* (SI) from the 1950s in France and further across Europe. There has been an ongoing critique and development around this movement (Plant, 2002; Self and Steadman, 2007; Hemmens and Zacarias, 2020). Coverley (2018) offers a concise and in-depth look at how the group and its key member Guy Debord (1994) established the ways in which 'psychogeography became a tool in an attempt to transform urban life, first for aesthetic purposes but later for increasingly political ends' (Coverley, 2018, p.10).

It is worth noting here that any discussion about gender in relation to the movement has been minimal. Ruth Baumeister (2020) approaches this directly, pointing out that the group, ‘consisted of 72 members, of whom less than 10 per cent were women [...] from 1967 onward, there were only men. In the reception of the SI, these numbers often lead to the presentation of the movement as a boys’ club and, in so doing, the gender politics of the group’s work have been overlooked’ (p.118).

I would argue, in relation to this research, that this is not too dissimilar to traits found in the *flâneur* mentioned earlier and mountaineering cultures, where both mountaineering and art forms, including SI, do not exist in a cultural vacuum. Baumeister does go on to say that the SI group’s ‘fight for a revolution was based on unconditional solidarity among the individual members, regardless of gender. This does not mean, however, that Situationist theory and practice were indifferent or blind to the gender politics of their time’ (p.122). This blindness to gender politics, then, is something this thesis is actively seeking to turn towards and make visible, exploring through these visibilities the possibilities to question and propose alternative approaches to power structures that cultural values are developed from and in relation to.

Gaston Bachelard’s tour of domestic spaces (1958, 1994) brought poetry to our everyday embodied relationship to space and architecture. Michel de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988) expanded upon the developing politics emerging from urban architecture and street design, highlighting the flow of designed pedestrian pathways and desire lines that disrupt this proposed flow of pedestrian traffic and individual autonomy. Tina Richardson provides further exploration and research into the British urban walking practices of psychogeography (2015). Offering further development and inclusion of contemporary writers since Coverley’s publication, she cites literary and artistic works, including Shoard, (2002) Ian Sinclair (2003), and Farley and Roberts (2012).

A resurgence of approaches derived from these historical movements can be seen in many artists and academics working today. Notably the work of collective Wrights & Sites (Persighetti, Hodge, Turner and Smith, 2006) and artist-scholar Phil Smith, including his development of Mythogeographies (2010) and envisioning apocalyptic zombie walks (2015).

For artists working within visual and environmental arts from the 1960s onward, walking became an action for art making in and of itself or as a physical act that helped frame their conceptual ideas. Most synonymous with walking as a visual and sculptural arts practice is the work of UK artists Richard Long and Hamish Fulton. Long's seminal, 1967 work, *A Line Made by Walking* is often referenced regarding the turn to action-based arts of the time as the 'piece demonstrates how Long had already found a visual language for his lifelong concerns with impermanence, motion and relativity' (Tate, 2007). For Long, walking was part of the process in making 'Art about mobility, lightness and freedom. Simple creative acts of walking and marking about place, locality, time, distance and measurement. Works using raw materials and my human scale in the reality of landscapes' (Long, 2016).

The mobility, freedom, time-based, embodied actions of these works are only encountered in the viewer's imagination of the artist's experience of place. The works were exhibited as photo documentation and description-based titles as a means of archiving the event and action that had physically taken place. Similarly, Hamish Fulton's work manifests itself in text and photography and often derives from lengthy expeditions or trips to remote areas including his work and walks in the Cairngorms, Scotland (Fulton, 2010). Visual artworks manifest themselves from the bodily immersion and moving through place. These included text and photographic based work, part documenting the event and offering specific structures and ways of collecting and documenting experience through lists or map grid references. With both artists' work, the audience experiences the evidence of the event or experience itself, with the activity being left to one's own imagination. Here the visual representation of physical endurance takes precedence over the witnessing of any live event, or the physical body or event documented to be shared. The body is rendered invisible within these works and instead, the focus is given to the effect of the activity on the environment.

The recounting, retracing and re-imagined walking journey is an approach to creative practice across all art forms, whether literary, visual or performance including Lone Twin's 1997 work, *On Everest* (Whelan, 2018) or acts of remembrance such as Carl Lavery's writing (Lavery in Mock, 2009).

Artists have physically traced and followed earthly features, including Alison Lloyd (2019), *contouring* land features and Tim Knowles (2013) following water courses and *paths of least resistance*. Movement artist Simon Whitehead walks with objects and other animals and *Walking to Work* (2006) as creative process.

The 'Audio Walk' has developed to facilitate individual and group sonic experiences that fall into a wide array of works, including the work of Janet Cardiff (Schaub, 2015) and Duncan Speakman's audio and choreographic walks (2016), Callaghan and Kenyon's audio guide to the French town of *Caromb* (2013) to dance maker Charlotte Spencer's individual and group choreographed experience, *Walking Stories* (2013).

Artists working with innovative technologies and downloadable applications that create access to remote places and distant performance events include Jen Southern and Chris Speed's collaborative mapping project with iPhone application, *Comob* (2009), to digitally connect audiences to the performative event from multiple sites. The use of GPS mapping devices includes the work of Sophia New and Dan Belasco Rogers (2010) and *The Drawings of our Lives* (2003). The live broadcasting for audiences to experience walking projects remotely including the work of artist group, Field Broadcast⁵ and Louise Anne Wilson's live broadcast of her site-specific work, *The Gathering* (2014).

There are and have been a plethora of walking festivals and organisations within the UK and Europe curating Walking Arts within place-situated contexts. These include the Sideways Festival, Belgium, the Still Walking Festival, Birmingham, Wandering Arts Biennale (WAB) Berlin. The Walking Artists Network (WAN)⁶ connects the international community of Walking Arts through its forum and hosts a growing bibliography of publications about walking and a broad range of artists' work fitting within the broad and interdisciplinary spectrum of Walking Arts.

⁵ See their work more widely. Available from: www.fieldbroadcast.org/index.html

[Accessed 18 August 2024].

⁶ Further information about the network can be found on their WAN website.

Available from: www.walkingartistsnetwork.org

[Accessed: 18 August 2024].

The 2013 exhibition *WALK ON* presents works from artists working with walking since the 1960s. Artist's work included the performance actions of Bruce Nauman's 1967–68 film work *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square* and the 1989 work of Abramovic and Ulay's walk along the Great Wall of China.⁷

Group walking and collective experience including Dee Heddson and Misha Myer's *Walking Library* (2012) allows for participation, reflection and connecting to literature and fellow walkers through curated walks bringing elements of psychogeography, readings and conversation. *Night walks* by WALK WALK WALK (2010) offered a collective opportunity of safety in numbers to walk the London streets.

In his book on walking arts, Phil Smith dedicates a chapter to women walking artists (2014). It may seem reductive to separate the gender of walking artists, but it has become an essential way to make visible the women artists working across this context. Dee Heddson and Cathy Turner's published interviews with women who walk, brought attention to women artists working in the field (Heddson and Turner, 2012). *The Walking Artist Network* co-founder Clare Qualmann and artist Amy Sharrocks curated two symposium events, *Women Walking* (2017), in London and Edinburgh⁸. Artist talks included several practitioners, including Louise Anne Wilson, Claire Hind's presentation about scrambling with her daughter, Hilary Ramsden's work of loitering with intent (2014), artist and environmental activist Jess Allen's *tractivism* (2019) and Rosana Cade's one-to-one performance *Walking: Holding* that invited 'very different people together to walk hand in hand in public' (Cade, 2016).

Dance and choreographic practices that have expanded ideas of the pedestrian and walking within postmodern performance practices include work coming out of the United States in the 60s and 70s such as Judson Church Dance (Burt, 2006), choreographers Steve Paxton

⁷ For full exhibition programme available from: www.walk.uk.net/portfolio/walk-on
[Accessed: 18 August 2024].

⁸ Information about the events and contributors is online and available from:
www.walkingartistsnetwork.org/walking-women/
[Accessed: 18 August 2024]

(Bigé, 2019) and Trisha Brown's performance work in cityscapes such as, *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970). More recent dancer makers and choreographers exploring the physical, durational and performative relationship to environment and walking including the movement artists Simon Whitehead, Vanessa Grasse's exploration of mapping, walking and drawing (2014) and Body Weather dance artists mentioned and explored in the earlier Body Weather section.

Academics in geography and anthropology research embodied encounters of space (both physical and cultural) as a way of positioning the embodied relationship to environmental enquiry. Geography scholars including Hayden Lorimer and his use of walking as a space for study (2011) and navigating mountains (Lorimer and Lund, 2003), mobility and space (Cresswell and Merriman, 2011) and place within the human experience (Ingold, 2000, 2016; Casey, 2013) all support and enrich the arts-related approaches mentioned above. It is through this cross-disciplinary approach adopted by academics and artists that this research project is brought into being. There is considerable acknowledgement of the interdisciplinary learning to be garnered from such projects. Walking Arts and theoretical elements that unite this project will allow this research to position itself across disciplines.

Central to this study, Walking Arts functions as both a methodology and creative tool, offering an interdisciplinary framework that integrates choreographic practice and embodied exploration of place. This approach draws upon the literary history, political contexts and critique of colonialist and gendered traditions such as the flâneur as well as contemporary walking arts practices. This research uses walking as a central practice to engage with and reflect upon mountainous environments, exploring sensory, social, and place-relational connections as key elements of the creative process.

Feminist Research

The broader history of feminism is intertwined with political, intellectual, and social justice activism against gender-based oppression (Holton, 2002; Joannou and Purvis, 1998). Feminism thought (Tong and Botts, 2024) and feminist research (Hesse-Biber 2012) has evolved significantly since the Suffrage movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, referred to as First Wave Feminism, which focused on women's legal, political and educational rights through the work of figures such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) and Charlotte Perkins Gilman (Gilman and Schwartz, 1989), who challenged women's economic dependence in patriarchal society (Moynagh and Forestell, 2012; Catt and Shuler, 2020; Crawford, 2003).

Second Wave Feminism, spanning the 1960s to the 1980s, further critiqued traditional gender roles, notably through Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949/2009) and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), advocating for reproductive rights, workplace equality and the recognition that gender is a 'product of specific social arrangements' (Sprague, 2016, p.vii cited in Leavy and Harris. 2019. p.17). This period saw the emergence of feminist research methodologies that critically questioned patriarchal power structures (Evans, 1995; Lerner, 1986; Millett, 2016), challenged dominant epistemologies and reshaped knowledge production (Harding, 1986).

Feminist researchers argued that traditional approaches of Western scientific, detached observation and quantitative knowledge production serve to uphold the wider power dynamics across societies, politics, and international relations (Peterson, 1992; Tickner, 1997). To counter these hegemonic systems, feminist researchers developed approaches to include women's voices, values subjectivity, lived and embodied experience, inclusivity, and multiple perspectives. Feminist methodologies have been defined as a broad 'set of practices and perspectives that affirms differences among women interests, health, and safety, locally and abroad' (DeVault and Gross. 2012. p.207).

Feminist scholars went on to criticize early feminist research for its failure to address the influence of race, sexuality, identity, and class on women's lived experience (Davis, 2011; hooks, 1981). Third Wave Feminism, emerging in the 1990s and into the 2000s, responded by emphasising the inclusion of more diverse voices beyond the dominant white, middle-class perspective. Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality challenged earlier research that isolated gender from other elements of oppression and argued this isolation is misleading when considering the lived experiences of Black women (1989). Her work called for research that acknowledges and includes the multidimensional nature of oppression in women's lives.

Further criticism of Western feminists' representation of women from the Global South (Mohanty, 1984 and 2003) is due to the field's relationship with the pervasive structures of colonialism still existing within knowledge production (Quijano, 2007). Feminist research from the 2000s to present has expanded decolonial perspectives and practices to address these problematics. Decolonial feminism (Lugones, M., 2010; Vergès and Bohrer, 2021) includes Majority World scholars and Indigenous research that challenges Western and Eurocentric epistemologies (de Sousa Santos, 2018; Smith, 2021).

Alongside decolonial feminisms examination of these Eurocentric frameworks, queer feminism emerged in the 1990s in response to further challenge the established normative ideas of gender, identity, and sexuality. Early queer feminist thinkers including, Teresa de Lauretis (1991), Eve Sedgwick (1990) and Judith Butler (1990) developed interdisciplinary approaches to exploring the complexities of the field. Butler's ground-breaking work on gender theory and their concept of gender performativity challenged the normative gender binaries, asserting that gender is unfixed, socially constructed, and performed.

This is particularly pertinent to this research when considering women's experiences of engaging in the highly performative space of hegemonic mountaineering culture, as acknowledged and explored through this Practice Research project. Taking inspiration from feminist scholars such as Sarah Ahmed, and her concept of the feminist killjoy (2020; 2023), this research draws on creative approaches that gently disrupt and challenge normative structures, particularly found within mountaineering.

The shared concern with how gender is enacted through social and spatial politics and how this affects women's relationship to place, is further examined through feminist geographies. The leading feminist geographers most relevant to my work include Doreen Massey and Linda MacDowell. Massey's approach to human geography was to understand the complex relations of identity, culture, globalization, and spatial politics. She explores this in *Global Sense of Place* (2008), *Space, place, and gender* (2013) and *For Space* (2005). Massey argues that space is not a static entity but rather a dynamic element within these relations. She relates this to gendered thinking about approaches to space and place. A masculine ideology and thinking she argues, conceives of space and place as objective, neutral and abstract. In bringing a feminist lens to space and place, she works on the inclusion of embodied, emotional, and everyday experiences. This makes for a more subjective, pluralistic, and diverse approach to thinking about place and our relation to it.

Massey's concept of place as process, place as a dynamic sphere of action and changeability is most relevant to my work. Her work gives a feminist conceptual grounding for this research. Massey's concept of place relates to the philosophy of Body Weather in this regard (see Body Weather section in this chapter). I apply her concept together with the Body Weather approach, which sees the world and body as constantly changing, so one exists in a dynamic relationship with place. This gives the approach more theoretical grounding and relevance within feminist thinking about women's bodies in relationship to place.

Linda McDowell's approach emphasises women's embodied experience of place, advocating feminist research methods and practices that are qualitative, reflexive, empathic, participatory, and attend to the emotional landscapes of experience (2016). McDowell's research pays particular attention to labour and work (2011), including women in the workplace, which leads to valuable analysis of how gender is performed in various places. McDowell recognises that gender is fluid, relational and is negotiated and performed in spatial contexts (1999). This builds upon the broader feminist ideas of gender performativity mentioned earlier. This fluid concept, developed by these leading feminist thinkers, posits gender identity as dynamic and shaped by changing context. McDowell's concept of gender

as a performance shaped by context is particularly pertinent for this research exploring gendered experiences of mountain environments and mountaineering as a social environment, both as a workplace and site of physical and cultural performance.

Emerging from these interconnecting feminist discourses, the field of ecofeminism developed to further examine the relationship between the oppression of women and environmental destruction (Shiva and Mies, 2014). Drawing upon environmentalism, postcolonial perspectives and feminist theories, ecofeminism includes the environment as the 'fourth category... of an extended feminist theory which employs a race, class and gender analysis' (Plumwood, 2022, p.2). Carolyn Merchant (1980) asserts that Western scientific and industrial revolutions created the conditions for patriarchal control over both women and the environment. Central to ecofeminist thought is the critique of how these interconnected systems of power, including capitalism and globalisation (Shiva, 1998) have exploited and devalued both nature and women through binary thinking that Val Plumwood describes as the 'logic of domination' (2002, p.194). Scholars including Plumwood and Janet Biehl (1991), critically reflect on the problem of ecofeminism reinforcing essentialist assumptions that women are inherently connected to nature. Biba Agarwal (1992) argues that ecofeminism universalizes women's experiences, and that attention should be paid to the intersectionality of women's relationship with nature, including labour and material factors.

More recent feminist thinkers have gone on to challenge notions of objectifying nature and women which have contributed to our separation from the more-than-human world. Feminist scholars have developed approaches that engage with the complexity of interconnections with a multispecies world. Donna Haraway has furthered ecofeminist thought by proposing non-hierarchical ways of engaging with the world and other beings. Haraway's concepts of companion species (2003), which explores our interdependence and entanglement with other species, and becoming-with (2023), as an ongoing process of interspecies learning, offer relational ways of being that resonate directly with this Practice Research when working with mountain-places and their complex ecological systems.

Building on Haraway, Anna Tsing further explores interspecies companionship (2012), collaboration (2015) and sociality as an ‘entangling relations with significant others’ (2013, p.27). These ideas of interspecies relations and becoming-with are deepened through the work of feminist theorist and quantum physicist Karen Barad who proposes material agency of all matter through the theory of agential realism (2007). Barad coined the term *intra-action* (Barad, 2003; Barad and Kleinman, 2012) to describe the dynamic and relational process emergent between material beings.

Further connecting Barad’s ideas of material agency to the human body, Stacy Alaimo coined the term trans-corporeality to articulate the embodied interconnection and material exchanges between human and more-than-human (Alaimo, 2008; 2010). This concept resonates with Body Weather dance philosophy, which explores the body’s relational permeability with the rest of nature, and which is explored extensively as a methodology through this Practice Research.

This Practice Research thesis builds on contemporary thinking about gender explored in this chapter and acknowledges the influence of approaches arising from intersectionality, queer theory, post-colonialism, and ecofeminist knowledge. In doing so, it offers a unique contribution to fields of performance and dance by exploring these interdisciplinary frameworks across artistic and mountaineering contexts. The hegemonic and colonial attitudes that shaped early mountaineering narratives of conquest are themes examined in more detail in the mountains, mountaineering cultures, and women section of this chapter. Building upon these feminist critiques, this thesis explores how dance and performance-making methodologies can challenge these historical norms, behaviours and attitudes of mountaineering cultures in novel ways.

Mountains, mountaineering cultures and Women

Mountains

How mountains or altitudinal places are defined by humans is ever changing and culturally dependent. Roderick Peattie's 1936 definition of mountain geography stated that mountains 'should be impressive; they should enter into the imagination of the people who live in their shadows...[and] individuality' (2013, p.2). Attempting to map the diverse scope of definitions under the umbrella of Mountain studies leaves some academics perplexed and critical including geographer David Smethurst who exclaims that:

Scholars have studied the mountain world for better than two centuries, yet no agreed-upon body of mountain literature has emerged. Instead, there is a vast array of scattered publications dealing with high places that are defined by those who study them (2000, p.35).

More recent aspects of Mountain studies however, do consider the complex interrelationships of knowledge that form our understanding of mountain ecologies to include: the geological, physical, human geographies, social features, climate change and sustainable practices within these ecologies. The physical and human dimensions (Price, 2013) are now considered an integral part of *geo ecology* developed by Carl Troll (Holtmeier, 2015) and sustainable mountain development (Woolvin, Bryce and Price, 2016). The cultural significance of mountains is contributing to more qualitative data included alongside scientific quantitative methods within Mountain studies.

Mountaineering Cultures

Mountaineering includes many activities including multi-pitch climbing, winter climbing, scrambling, skiing, and alpine climbing. According to Mountaineering Scotland, it is defined as 'the ascent of hills and mountains where the use of technical equipment is essential for either hands or feet' (2024).

To access mountainous terrains in all weathers some element of rehearsal, practice and skill is needed. Literature on technical skills development for hill walking and mountaineering is wide ranging. *Mountain craft* (Young, 1920) has developed in popularity, with more resources relating to skills and mountain leadership training (Langmuir, 1984). They often cover the multitude of subjects and themes needed for safe mountaineering and leading groups in such environments. These range from seasonal differences in movement techniques such as in winter mountaineering (Cunningham and Fyffe, 2007) to more theoretical and scientific aspects such as learning weather forecasting and navigation skills (Forte, 2012). These contemporary definitions of mountaineering have developed over centuries of Western exploration and attitudes towards mountainous places. Globally, mountains have held a fascination for humans throughout history and diverse cultures. They represent and materially embody that which is ‘most permanent... that transcends human temporariness’ (Della Dora, 2016, p.7). The fascination in experiencing the sublime awe and fear of these ‘wilder’ environments developed in the late 18th century (Burke, 1998) as the rise of outdoor pursuits acted as a reminder of one’s own mortality and connection to religious ideals.

Mountaineering narratives from the British Victorian era onward describe an upper class, global pursuit that supported notions of masculinity, imperial ideologies (Bayers, 2003), colonial identities (Purtschert, 2020) and developing the ‘new mountaineer’ (McNee, 2016) within a wider and visible cultural context. The 19th Century further developed a new wave of romanticism for high places and the heroic narratives of enduring extreme conditions as a show of fitness and strength of body, mind, and spirit. For traumatised soldiers returning home across both WW1 and WW2, it is said that ‘mountaineering offered a site for redemption of vitality and heroic masculinity, perhaps even a site in which inter-war culture could turn its back on the all too obvious vulnerability of men’s bodies and minds’ (Bayers, 2003 in Kenyon and Kerr, 2023, p.212). Women’s role in society across these wars also shifted, particularly in the 1930s where women’s contributions, given an absent male workforce questioned the traditional roles of women, their physical and mental capabilities to thrive in jobs originally assigned to male workers.

This shift from mountaineering as an elite, middle class pursuit in Britain also happened through the rise of industrialisation during the 1930s when the working classes headed to the hills for pleasure and wellbeing, albeit with the similar masculine tropes mentioned. Nick Hayes explains that ‘every weekend, thousands of men and women would stream from the blackened, industrialized cities... freed from the beat of the working week, they sought scenery and self-determination’ (2020, p.1).

Although it is not conclusive how many women took to the hills at this time (apart from those who were part of recognised mountaineering clubs), the evolution of the everyday working woman finding their embodied agency in the outdoors was a cultural shift. Nan Shepherd would be included in such women, escaping the confines of the working week to explore the rural outdoors. As one of Shepherd’s characters expresses in her novel, *The Quarry Wood*, ‘it’s a grand thing, to get “leave to live”’ (1987, p.210) and outdoor pursuits offered this leisure time for more women and men. This new class of ‘amateur’ hillwalker eventually gave rise to public questioning of the lack of access to privatised land and they ‘challenged the power of ownership right at its narrative source’ (Hayes, 2020, p.21). This new desire to access rural, privatised land led to public protests including the famous *mass trespass of Kinder Scout* plateau in the Derbyshire Peak District in 1932. The *Rights of Way Act in England and Wales* was created in the same year and the Ramblers Association was set up in 1935. They lobbied for public rights and pathways which also led to the *National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act* of 1949. The Ramblers Association later campaigned for the development of the 1967 Countryside Commission for Scotland and the National Parks (Scotland) Act in 2000, in which the Cairngorms National Park was established and where ‘general public right of access’ commonly referred to as a ‘right to roam’ is an ‘ancient custom that allows anyone to wander in open countryside’ (Right to Roam, 2024).

Mountaineering activities grew in popularity in the UK and in Scotland this included the act of ‘Munro bagging’ (Dempster, 2021). Named after Hugh Munro, who in 1891 published an article in Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal of all the 282 Scottish mountains over 3000ft (about 914.4 m). The first person to summit the entire Munro collection is captured

in the 1974 publication of Hamish Brown's, *Hamish's Mountain Walk* (2010). This is said to have influenced the popularity of bagging Munros in more recent times. For some critics, 'munro-bagging' epitomizes the early competitive, hegemonic attitudes that still run the risk of perpetuating the colonial 'objectification of mountains... to be classified and collected' (Galanis, 2019, p.83).

Mountaineering Women

Women's mountaineering stories have been published since Victorian times but continued to support ideas of masculinity and imperial ideology (Bayers, 2003) mentioned earlier. Women's feats in adventure sports were captured in this period (Miller, 2000; Mazel, 1994; Birkett and Peascod, 1990) as mountaineering continued to develop as a 'hypermasculine' activity (Frohlick, 2000) and where women's perspectives and experiences of mountaineering often sat in the shadows of their male counterparts.

Accounts of women's mountaineering adventures have often focused on the tragic (Rose and Douglas, 2000), personal circumstances and leaving children behind (Frohlick, 2006) including the case of British climber, Alison Hargreaves's death on K2 in 1995. There is the growing collection of literature that does give voice to women's adventure; including high altitude pursuits (Blum, 2007), climbing (Da Silva, 1992) and the historic chronicles of female clubs including the British Pinnacle Club (Angell and Club, 1988) and the Ladies Scottish Climbing Club, 'the oldest all-women's mountaineering club still in existence' (L.S.C.C. 2017), which are being shared more publicly and with a more celebratory and feminist perspective to these historical archives of women's experiences.

There has been significant material written on gender in relation to adventure tourism and the gender bias (Pomfret and Doran, 2015) and contemporary dialogues continue to develop around gender, politics and change in mountaineering (Doran and Hall, 2020; Hall, Boocock and Avner, 2023) including defining new ways of relating to mountains. The Practice Research projects within this PhD research have sought to develop ways of creating

frames for exchange via performance-making and dance within these relational fields (Kenyon and Kerr, 2023).

Cultural understandings of gender assigned to the masculine or feminine still dominate how mountaineering tourism has developed (Pomfret and Doran, 2015). The gap is narrowing in terms of performance between sexes but as Pomfret and Doran point out is, 'not reflected in high-altitude mountaineering' (ibid, p.138). Western perspectives are reflected through the hegemonic mountaineering narratives that have come to dominate cultural discourses; we have reached what Professor Julie Rack claims as a 'false summit' (2021) of inclusivity and freedom for all projected into the mainstream outdoor culture. However, mountain narratives depicted in most mountaineering literature and embedded in the culture do not welcome everyone to participate.

Doreen Massey's introduction to space, place, and gender (2013) and my resulting understanding of our *place in the world* (Massey and Jess, 1995) supported the developing strands within this research project with regards to positioning gender in relation to place and social identities (McDowell, 1999) and developing approaches within the research of 'doing' gender (McDowell, 2016).

The historical development of mountain studies, human geography and mountaineering narratives are firmly established through patriarchal positions as mentioned previously. Understanding the wider global, national, and localised context of mountaineering culture and how gendered experiences with mountains are represented is an essential element to this research project.

There is a significant amount of work that could still be developed regarding the wider representation of people engaged in mountaineering beyond the masculine/feminine binary, ableist and elitist positions that have dominated mountaineering culture historically. The historical development of mountain studies, mountaineering and geography are firmly established through colonial positions and from this, the patriarchal structures mentioned previously. Crucial to this study then, is to develop a new positioning and understanding of the mountain experience and gendered landscapes through feminist geography perspectives.

Whilst there is a growing amount of research written on gender in relation to adventure tourism and the gender bias evidenced, this research seeks to approach ways of connecting and developing women's experiences that are both represented and experienced through arts platforms. Approaches through feminist perspectives in relation to these topics will be considered and influence the design, collection and dissemination of both qualitative and quantitative data collected through the PR1: *Into the Mountain (solo)* and PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)*.

In the short film *Operation Moffat* (Carter & Randall, 2015), writer and climber Claire Carter follows in the footsteps of the first UK female mountain leader Gwen Moffat, through her written autobiography (1961) and interviews. Through visiting sites, climbs and invitations for adventure mentioned by Moffat, this adventure film has the spirit of embodied learning through the recounting of existing women mountaineers as a source of inspiration. This study has a similar approach; through following in the footsteps and words of Shepherd, to bring historical and contemporary experiences of women mountaineers and hill walkers to light, through walking and mountaineering together, and through the making of live performance.

The contexts of mountains, mountaineering cultures and women establishes the significance of examining mountaineering cultures and spaces through a gendered and feminist lens. By questioning historical and dominant narratives inherent in mountaineering culture and by focusing on the embodied experiences of women with mountainous environments, this Practice Research considers how and who participates in mountain cultures. This is relevant to this research as it adds further critical dimensions to creative and performative practices by expanding how we relate to and understand mountain places and the people who walk in them.

Nan Shepherd and The Living Mountain

Anna (Nan) Shepherd (1893–1981) was a writer and teacher based in Aberdeenshire. She was the editor of the University Aberdeen Review and worked as a lecturer in English at Aberdeen College of Higher Education until her retirement in 1956.

She produced three novels within five years, *The Quarry Wood* (1928/1987), *The Weatherhouse* (1930/1988), *A Pass in the Grampians* (1933) and a book of poetry, *In the Cairngorms* (1934/2020). The first novel has been considered as a work ‘heavily autobiographical’ and the latter two novels were ‘drawn from her experience’ (Peacock, 2017, p.11).

It is through this writing from experience and Shepherd’s life-long passion for walking in her local, Cairngorm Mountains range, that she went on to publish *The Living Mountain* in 1977. She did not publish any other works over her lifetime.

Shepherd’s writing is well rooted within modern Scottish literary renaissance (Watson, 2009). Her peers within the early twentieth-century Scottish writing field included George Douglas Brown, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, Hugh MacDiarmid and Neil Gunn. Shepherd shared correspondence with Gunn over many years whose work, like hers, worked with ‘their intuitive feelings of being ‘at home’ in wild landscapes with a phenomenological viewpoint which relates on close, reverent attention to the physical aspects of the world around them’ (Gairn, 2008, p.124).

Shepherd shared her initial draft of *The Living Mountain* with Gunn, who advised upon reflection that under ‘the circumstances of the time a publisher would be hard to find’ (Shepherd, 2011. p.xliii) and so she kept the manuscript filed away for decades. It was only until, as Shepherd herself explains, ‘tidying out my possessions and reading it again I realise that the tale of my traffic with a mountain is as valid today as it was then’ (p.xliii). The work was finally published by Aberdeen University Press in 1977.

The renewed interest in her work more recently could be attributed to her featuring on the Royal Bank of Scotland five-pound note in 2016 (MacFarlane, 2016) and the republication

of *The Living Mountain* in 2011. This included a new introduction by writer Robert MacFarlane where he declares that 'along with J.A Baker's, *The Peregrine* (1967)... it is one of the two most remarkable twentieth-century British studies of landscape that I know' (Macfarlane in Shepherd. 2011, p.xiii).

The Living Mountain is a short book of prose (108 pages) formed of twelve chapters and includes a short glossary of the Doric language of Northeast Scotland, present within the writing. The chapter titles suggest specific attention is given to the elementals that make up her experience of the mountains. These include the geography and geology (1: The Plateau, 2: The Recesses, 3: The Group), the elements between earth and sky across all seasons (4: Water, 5: Frost and Snow, 6: Air and Light), the living inhabitants including flora and fauna (7: Life: The Plants), the animal inhabitants (8: Life: Bird, Animals, Insects) and the human, social and political interaction with place (9: Life: Man) and her embodied experiences and philosophical thought (10: Sleep, 11: The Senses, 12: Being).

The book suggests a slow accumulation of knowledge is built up over time and many years of experiential learning to offer an exploration of Shepherd's 'deeply felt certainty that both humans and mountains are and can share meaning with and in each other' (Andrews, 2020. p.180). Shepherd takes an interdisciplinary approach to develop a wider understanding through connecting science and factual based knowledge, with reflexive and lived, physical experience that is often difficult to quantify.

The writing interweaves a non-hierarchical placing of scientific knowledge, nature studies, phenomenological and auto ethnographical accounts of Shepherd's relation to the environment through these varying perspectives. This interweaving of the scientific, ecological, philosophical, and social interaction, along with Shepherd's sensory and sensual experience of the place, provide a collaging of knowledge and the potential for making new connections and meaning for the reader.

Shepherd's account of her experiences in the hills may not be a high-altitude mountaineering memoir, but it was, until recently, a rare book written by a woman, that offered an alternative

lens to existing mountaineering narratives. Written in the later years of WWII, *The Living Mountain* could be considered a historical text today, yet her approach to writing was progressive in the face of the existing tropes of male-dominated narratives of quest and conquer in the mountaineering culture and of modern nature writing tropes. According to academic Gillian Carter, Shepherd's work furthers nature writing through the ways she, 'uncovers the hidden ideological nature of the dominant discourses — of science, history, romanticism and landscape aesthetics — which have come to define the Scottish landscape' (2001. p.25).

Academic Carla Sassi (2008) argues that Shepherd's approach is more widely relational and could be considered as a form of "Geo poetics" that moves beyond the 'Romantic' or 'Realistic' modes of representation of (Scottish) land and landscape" (2008, p.70). Sassi asserts that Shepherd's work and specifically *The Living Mountain*, offers a radically different approach that is not bound to a national identity found in other Scottish nature writing, but rather shifts the focus through the, "fostering of a logic of 'natural' over 'national' boundaries...to think locally and globally at the same time" and where ideas of national identity within the book, 'remain in the background' (p.77). Sassi states that Shepherd 'questions traditional conceptions of the nation,' through focusing on the Cairngorms massif as a "self-contained... 'bio region'...uniquely defined by its 'local' geography" (p.78) alongside global perspectives and the materiality of mountains to form wider 'planetary dimensions' (p.77) undefined by geopolitical borders.

In the forward written by Robert Macfarlane for the republished work of poetry about the same mountains, *In the Cairngorms* (Shepherd, 2020) he articulates how Shepherd engaged with knowledge bases and 'developed a participatory model of perception, in which the sense-data of the material world animated into knowledge... the body was vital to apprehension' (p.xiv). The experiential and embodied nature of Shepherd's writing is part of the uniqueness of her approach when presenting environmental perspectives to her readers and as such an instrumental element and reference through this research project.

In early post-war Britain Merleau-Ponty was developing the emergent field of phenomenology and philosophies of perception (2013) but it is uncertain whether this work

was directly part of Shepherd's 'intellectual climate' (Walton, 2020, p.167). Shepherd's writing, however, as Macfarlane points out, could be considered a phenomenological account of her outings, and pays attention to Shepherd's embodied thinking as a philosophical enquiry he deems progressive.

In the opening paragraph of *The Living Mountain*, Shepherd states that to learn and develop any understanding of place can only come through participation. This physical interaction and embodied connection with place are the conduit for developing 'knowledge that is a process of living' (2011. p.1). Her writing promotes this slow accumulation of knowledge through many years of experiential learning. She illustrates through her walking practice that interconnectivity must be developed and experienced through the body, it cannot be grasped on an intellectual level alone.

Shepherd attains the time and duration it takes to immerse or turn oneself to the feeling or qualities of a place. For Shepherd this is done through the act of walking, through being in movement and consciously engaging with all her sensory capabilities. Shepherd walks away from the Cartesian assertion that we can think ourselves into being. Her experience goes beyond the notion of the body as merely a vehicle for our thinking brains, but a bodily intelligence fully interconnected with the world we inhabit.

This relationship to physical attunement is also referenced in approaches towards spiritual growth mentioned in the book. Notions of the 'essential' body and sense of self are influenced by Zen Buddhist practices and beliefs that Shepherd was certainly aware of at the time, through Neil Gunn's explorations of Zen Buddhism through his writing (1991). Shepherd refers to the experience of finding a 'still centre of being' (2011, p.106) connecting to practices of yoga, breathing exercises and meditation. This gives some indication that her curiosity and knowledge of eastern movement practices is present in her contemplations and wider research interests.

The Living Mountain certainly draws upon metaphysical, mystical, and spiritual themes. In the (1996) collection of Shepherd's writing entitled, *The Grampian Quartet*, writer and poet,

Roderick Watson highlights in his introduction, the spiritual nature and enlightenment of Shepherd's Cairngorm experiences as 'balanced between the mysterious realms of organic and inorganic matter' (Shepherd, 1996, p.vii). Gillian Carter considers the potential of further study in 'aligning Shepherd's vision with Neil Gunn's metaphysical insights into the nature of being' (2001, p.26). Shepherd's writing on her experiences of 'being' draws on philosophical enquiries attained through her embodied attunement to the environment. Shepherd (2011) describes that:

Walking thus, hour after hour, the senses keyed, one walks the flesh transparent.
But no metaphor, transparent, or light or air, is adequate. The body is not negligible, but paramount. Flesh is not annihilated but fulfilled. One is not bodiless, but essential body (p.106).

She concludes in the last chapter that her sense of transcendence or becoming with the mountain is fully embodied when she writes:

When the body is keyed to its highest potential and controlled to a profound harmony deepening into something that resembles a trance, I discover most nearly what it is to be. I have walked out of the body and into the mountain. I am a manifestation of its total life, as is the starry saxifrage or the white-winged ptarmigan (p.106).

These closing thoughts epitomize how the work intertwines the bodily, localised, worldly, and planetary dimensions mentioned earlier. Carla Sassi's assertion that the authors, "pluralistic and relational approach to environment promotes an idea of place and 'placedness'... alternative and complementary to that fostered by traditional national geographical symbolism" (2008, p.78). This sense of 'placedness' relates to earlier reference of the geo poetic approaches developed by writer Kenneth White (2003), and particularly its development of thought in Scotland in recent decades (Bissell, 2024). The Scottish Centre for Geopoetics states on their website that aspects of geo poetics include 'developing a heightened awareness of the Earth' through 'using all our senses and knowledge in approaching it' (2024).

The geopoetics evident in Shepherd's work is further explored by academic, Samantha Walton, through the culmination of her research, *The Living World* (2020). Walton's writing has been instrumental to the deepening of current ideas and conversations about Shepherd's position as a place writer, working with ecological thought. Her timely research supports areas across this research project, when considering the positionality of artistic and ecological praxis to wider contributions of knowledge. Walton explores Shepherd's work in relation to the ecological 'turn' (Mabey, 2015) synonymous with eco philosophy (Morton, 2010) that has furthered arguments for why nature writing should continue to move away from the pastoral and idyllic landscapes of the late Romantics. Shepherd's work is considered ahead of its time and has contributed to the development of ecological theory and ecocritical traditions (Gairn, 2008). As contemporary authors foster approaches akin to Shepherd's in a time of climate catastrophe, Walton asserts that, *The Living Mountain* is a work 'that is not so much predictive of the future but has been unwillingly written for it' (2020, p.108).

Walton explores *The Living Mountain* (2011) through a collection of interconnecting key themes she prioritizes from the book. Elements relevant to this Practice Research include nature and place writing, theosophy and Buddhism, eco-criticism, ecological thought, and environmental ethics. Walton further explores these main topics and approaches connected with Shepherd's text through perspectives of deep time, geology and feminist geo poetics, vitalism to new materialism, ways of being, selfhood and worldly connection. I will explore these interconnecting themes through the practice itself and explained in subsequent chapters.

The Living Mountain (2011) then, is a timely and radical piece of work that encompasses knowledge from many fields. It could be considered an exemplar of work and methodological approach, in which the multiple perspectives of a place, including subjective experience, scientific and philosophical enquiry are brought together. *The Living Mountain* (2011) emphasizes through the style and structure of the writing the interconnectedness of Shepherd's experience and knowledge formed from tacit and academic knowledge, as skilled

writer and as a passionate hill walker. In the final pages of *The Living Mountain*, Shepherd concludes that 'the thing to be known grows with the knowing' (p.108) and her work approaches learning as an expansive, emergent, and open-ended process.

Shepherd's exploration of her sensory and sensual emplacement supports the idea that the 'human being is always human-being-in-place' (Seamon, 2015. p.41) and significantly for this research, the act of making women's 'pleasure visible' (de Alegría Puig, 2022. p.170) through her embodied human-being-in-place and writing.

Gillian Carter's (2001) reading of *The Living Mountain* focuses on these lived experiences of the 'native dweller' that form 'domestic geographies as a pathway which reads embodied experience and discursive practice as inseparable' (p.35). She outlines how Shepherd forms thematic schemes where, 'the narrative embraces the poetic, the practical and the descriptive, and the narrative voice conveys both intimacy and detachment. It moves between the general, the particular and the personal' (p.26). Carter states that this complexity 'invites a larger range of responses' (p.26) to the work, which is fitting to the interdisciplinary nature of this research which seeks to further consider Shepherd's multi-lensed approach to her relational knowledge with the Cairngorms through her mountaineering and writing practice.

Shepherd's philosophy and approaches to learning about place offers parallels with methodologies and approaches used in relation to *place-relational performance* making. Shepherd's writing has an unfolding nature of interwoven themes of micro/macro lenses, the factual and self-reflexive frameworks.

The Practice Research conducted for this thesis both as solo and group projects relate and refer to the possibilities afforded by such a shifting of the perceptions that Shepherd describes. The sentiments and approaches within *The Living Mountain* (2011) are a principal component to this Practice Research and with which to position and consider, the embodied dancer and woman mountain walker in a contemporary context. The text forms a key and consistent component across all the strands of this research and activity exploring place, somatic and bodily practices and how *mountain-place-relational performance* making creates

unique relational perspectives to understanding kinship with environments that could be considered a feminist geo poetic practice.

Nan Shepherd's *The Living Mountain* (2011) offers a unique, embodied way of knowing mountain place that is central to the concerns of this Practice Research. Her writing presents alternative perspectives on embodied engagement with mountains, illustrating a relational and sensorial knowledge that challenges dominant masculine narratives in nature and mountaineering literature. It also presents an expansive and interdisciplinary approach to knowledge-making by integrating scientific, philosophical, and sensory enquiry through her prose.

The Living Mountain (2011) acts as a key contextual and conceptual framework for exploring the intersections of gender, place, and mountaineering within this Practice Research. Building on Shepherd's ecological and interdisciplinary approach, this research extends her ideas through a feminist lens — focusing on how *mountain-place-relational* performance making, shaped by the experiences of women mountain walkers, dancers, performers, and participants, can offer critical, dialogical, and transformative perspectives on environmental engagement and kinship with mountain-place.

This Practice Research makes an original contribution to a significant gap in gender, performance and place-relational dance scholarship. As outlined in this chapter, it occupies a unique space by uncovering the nuanced experiences of women in mountain-place through an original synthesis of mountaineering and ecological dance practices. Unlike other performance-based work, the movement practices are embodied by practitioners, participants and audiences alike within the place. The research fosters new pedagogies for being in mountainous environments — grounded in deep embodied listening, place-relational sensitivity, dialogue and exchange, and non-hierarchical approaches to mountain topography. These pedagogies embrace intersectional, multi-voiced, and multi-species perspectives.

CHAPTER 3

PRACTICE RESEARCH PROJECT 1: *INTO THE MOUNTAIN (SOLO)*

*What more there is lies within the mountain. Something moves between it and me.
Place and a mind may interpenetrate till the nature of both is altered. I cannot tell
what this movement is except by recounting it.*

(Shepherd, 2011. p.8)

This chapter reflects on the first Practice Research project RP1: *Into the Mountain (solo)* (PR1: *ITM (solo)*). This performance *expedition* explored ways to unearth movement from the memories of being in the Cairngorm Mountains for a studio performance. Informed by Shepherd's *The Living Mountain* (2011) and her approach of coming to know place through sensory, physical and remembered encounter; this new work formed part of the ongoing exploration into the relationship between walking, mountaineering and dancing in the very same mountains.

The main propositions for PR1: *ITM (solo)* was to explore through practice, how mountain-relational performance can bring about new imaginings and understandings of the human-mountain relationship and new perspectives and responses to Shepherd's text. Initiating the creative process through exploring the descriptions of places and experiences expressed through Nan Shepherd's relations with the Cairngorm mountains; this project aimed to bring into conversation the historical experience of Shepherd, in relation to, and in conversation with, the contemporary and physical experience of the mountains by the researcher in the present time. Through this interaction with text-based material, mountain-relational encounters and movement material developed through this practice, the work considered and expanded upon the convergences between the historical text of Shepherd and the researcher's subjective, embodied experience of the Cairngorm Mountains.

Shepherd's assertion in the opening quote above regards the process of recounting her experiences as a necessary means to understanding her movements and embodiment within the place. This formed a central approach to this research project 1: *ITM (solo)* where the medium for recounting memories of being in and with place, is through performative means rather than Shepherd's literary approach. PR1: *ITM (solo)* was an exploration of what happens when outdoor experiences are brought indoors, through performative approaches of recounting and remembering with a live audience.

Through the unfolding and transitory nature of many aspects to this Practice Research including walking, mountaineering and movement improvisational approaches; a sense of place is brought about in which to explore what remains in one's own body, through being both *in* place and *out* of it and the perceived boundaries between body, environment and time. The research framed the positionality, perception and subjective, embodied experiences of the mountains by the lead researcher and performer. Anthropologist, Thomas Csordas argues that embodied and sensory information gathered within the body is an 'existential ground of culture' (1990, p.5) and this performance sought to explore how mountaineering culture is expressed in the performing body and how it influences movement and choreographic development.

Research methods and questions

The work addressed the three main research questions through exploring and asking how possible it is to reveal, through live performance, a sense of the mountainous environment, mountain cultures and cultured body, through the embodiment of mountain-relational experiences to a studio audience.

Through a multimodal approach including embodied, situated research methods of walking and mountaineering across all seasons were employed to accumulate and layer these situated knowledges along with dance and performance approaches. Research activities included solo walking 'field trips', facilitated mountaineering group trainings, mountain expeditions, indoor climbing training methods, an environmental dance residency with artist Rosemary Lee and studio-based research. This practice brought together elements of embodied movement practices from dance and somatic movement methodologies in relation to mountaineering practices and vice versa. In a 2019 article for *Performance Research*, I explain that the work:

Draws upon the parallels between the nature of uncertainty in both dance and mountaineering performance. We negotiate the fine line of risk, prepare for the potential of multiple outcomes, and rehearse for the unimaginable in both situations. We work with performance anxiety and fear, when climbing a snow-filled gully or when the audience begins to pile into a studio (Kenyon. p.33).

Working with dance improvisational methods was an approach to working with movement memory and gathered situated knowledges wherein, 'different kinds of uncertainty lie possibilities for other strategies... and for other kinds of reflexivity' (Rose, 1997, p.318).

The performance was created via the situated knowledges of the individual researcher's positionality, subjectivity and reflexivity of being in the mountains. Elements relating to these knowledges and present in the work, included the emotional and embodiment of mountain experiences, whilst working with the betweenness of performing memory of mountain encounter within an indoor studio space.

Through the approaches outlined, finding new insights relating to the central research questions to this study regarding how embodied practices and mountain-relational performance making provide new insights into experiencing mountainous contexts, this enquiry explored the research questions:

1.) How can embodied practices and place-relational performances generate new ways of experiencing outdoor contexts, with specific attention to mountainous environments?

and

2.) Considering Shepherd's embodied understanding of mountains expressed in *The Living Mountain* (2011), how can contemporary artistic dialogues about the same environment bring new insight to women's experience of place?

Production

PR1: *Into the Mountain (solo)* was made for studio theatre and a seated audience. A small team of collaborators were involved to realise the production including Jenni Pystynen (Lighting and atmosphere design), Yas Clarke (sound design) and Laura Dannequin (movement and outside-perspective). The performance was developed within a professional context and was funded by Arts Council of England and commissioned by The Tramway in Glasgow. It was premiered as part of *Dance International Glasgow* (DIG) in May 2017, with a work-in-progress performance at The Baltic, for *Gateshead International Festival* (GIFT) in April 2017. These two platforms offered the opportunity to share the performance work with live audiences within professional and festival contexts. Through presenting the work in these settings I was able to obtain feedback on the work, in the public realm and invite written responses from colleagues familiar with my work and practice, which I discuss later in this chapter.

Extensive field research happened over many months and five weeks of studio development time took place at Stage @Leeds studios, Yorkshire Dance and the rural studio of Scottish

Sculpture Workshop. The performance worked with physical materials of the Cairngorms, such as stones⁹ whilst bringing in the ephemeral qualities of encounter and atmosphere from the mountain experiences through the staging, design and performance of the work.

Supporting documentation for PR1: *ITM (solo)*

Two video files of the live performance are available to watch. These files are:

PR1: ITM solo full length performance video documentation (50 mins)

PR1: ITM solo short trailer performance documentation (4 mins)

Additional supporting photographic documentation for PR1: *ITM (solo)* is included in the Appendices:

Appendix 1. PR1: *ITM (solo)* training and research documentation.

Appendix 2. PR1: *ITM (solo)* performance, select photo documentation.

⁹ Stones taken from the place were returned post-performance. A *Leave no Trace* approach was adopted in relation to activity and working with mountain materials. See *leave no trace [Online]*. Available from: www.wildernessscotland.com/sustainability/leave-no-trace/ [Accessed 25 July 2024].

Training, process and development

Training

Training and skills development for PR1: *ITM (solo)* included both outdoor and performance-based training and research including:

- o Walking a variety of routes in the Cairngorms mentioned in, *The Living Mountain* (2011) both solo and with others across all seasons.
- o Technical development of indoor climbing (with ropes) and bouldering (without ropes) to develop psychological confidence and movement techniques relating to working vertically.
- o Ongoing winter mountaineering training courses in the Cairngorm Mountains, including a five-day intensive winter mountaineering training course at Glenmore Lodge outdoor centre. This course included technical and movement skills training, use of crampons, ice axes and ropes for challenging terrain, navigation, route planning and avalanche awareness. These new embodied technical movement languages featured as a significant movement memory when developing choreographic work inspired by the rhythmical aspects of moving over distances and ascending in winter.
- o *Wild Site* Dance residency with Rosemary Lee: a Three-day workshop on the Dorset coast organized by Activate Performing Arts for professional practitioners. The guidance, discussions and creative practice led by artist Rosemary Lee were invaluable and timely in this process. Creative tasks explored during this residency offered a useful early reminder in this research phases, that improvisational approaches are a key aspect to my place-relational dance practice.¹⁰

¹⁰ Connecting with Rosemary through this residency, eventually led to her acting as choreographic mentor on PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)*.

Process and Development

Alongside these different activities mentioned, I spent a significant amount of time on studio-based research for the performance development. Working with embodied memories of walking, mountaineering and skills training, I developed movement material through lengthy explorations of recalling those experiences and developing improvisational scores.

Working with improvisation as a framework allowed me to firstly remember and find movements, sensations, emotional memories of place and what qualities they generated and secondly, to observe choreographically, what movement material and languages emerged and kept returning. I took the approach of developing movement material through these structured improvisational scores rather than working towards fixed choreographic material.

There is a correlation and relationship to mountaineering that connects with dance improvisation. Both activities are often creating structures (e.g., walking routes and open scores) whilst embracing the idea that unknown and surprise elements are what shape the outcome of the event or experience. In mountaineering and walking one plans the routes, considering the conditions, situations and the possibility for unexpected changes. Depending on the season, you must consider several options and alternative exit points to get off mountains. In both scenarios of performing and mountaineering, one is working with elements of risks and with the conditions of those different landscapes. Improvisation, in the case of this performance, created a similar experience in that you consider the loose structure, provide a route and a set of intentions to pursue the performance material. The sense of finding and journeying through improvisation was a key approach relatable to the unfolding nature of mountaineering. Decision making in both mountaineering and improvisatory performance is developed as a recognised skill of reading and responding to what is needed in the situated moments. The final performance consisted of a series of structured improvisational scores that allowed for a sense of searching for material and memory within the performance, which brought about new understandings of the performance material each time it was performed.

When developing movement for the 'traversing wall' in the Tramway theatre, several wooden panels were installed to a wall, with hand and foot holds for a bouldering route. When designing this route, I had to incorporate the architecture of the space within the parameters of the route. This includes alcoves, radiators, scaffolding and plug sockets as potential places to position my feet or hands. The route developed in complexity as it developed along the wall.

The rehearsal of this traversing of the wall was kept to a minimum, to keep the sense of exploration as new as possible for each performance. The searching for the route, finding new ways each time to tackle distinct aspects of the wall was intentional as part of the overall score. I was interested in the audience experiencing the sense of risk-taking in the action of climbing, so the conscious under-rehearsal of this section was important to keep an 'unfixed' quality in the performance.

In Jonathan Pitches *Performing Mountains* (2020) he explores this element of the performance, in relation to the artistry of 'route setting'¹¹ of the training wall, movement design, landscape translation and embodied transmission. He makes the relational connection between the discursive practice of *pairing up*, within Body Weather practice and that of the belayer or bouldering partner that offers an outside eye on the climbing route (p.201). He highlights the ways in which collective thinking were present in the performance process; through my calling on the creative team (who had climbing experience) to also climb the route, so I could consider movement 'provoked by the wall from an outside eye' (p.205).

The spatial arrangement of the performance space was created by the conditions of using this wall to traverse and explore a sense of verticality before transitioning onto the floor to travel via the contact of stones that had been previously skimmed across the floor, to map out the hills in the Cairngorms region, as a process of orienting myself and the audience to the imagined version of the geography indoors (see drawing detail in fig.1 opposite).

¹¹ Route setting is the act of creating an interesting climbing route on the wall. In Pitches (2020) he views the University of Leeds wall route setter, Don Robinson as someone who brought a '*climbing intelligence*' (p.201) into his approach to route setting.



(Fig.1) *Detail of Stone map drawing and visual collage* (Kenyon, 2019, p.34)

The work introduced and moved across both micro and macro scales throughout the performance. I considered how to bring this shifting of scales and sense of space to the audience's experience. There were intricate details of hand movements and balancing on rocks, an elevated position on the climbing wall to survey the larger mapping of the stones, ropes that delineated and stood in for rivers that eventually returned to their intended use for abseiling down an imagined hillside later in the performance. I worked with these limited and essential objects to explore their materiality, transform their purpose and translate scale. Working with limited objects also had the practical purpose and ethos of efficiency practiced when out in the hills, into the production itself.

Alongside the movement development, explorations of working with Shepherd's text, sound, lighting, and atmosphere design were developed with invited collaborators to bring expertise, voices and perspectives into the work. I will briefly introduce the main aspects of these three elements.

Lighting and Atmospheric design

With Jenni, we experimented in the studio with a collection of atmospheres and moods we wanted to try to convey through the studio performance parameters. These included diverse types of fog, mist, inverted cloud, dappled forest light, bright white light of summer skies and winter ‘white outs’ to name a few. This collection of atmospheres was garnered through both embodied mountain experiences and the many passages of prose Shepherd writes in relation to weather, air and seasons. Examples of the lighting and atmosphere design can be seen in the supporting training and process documentation file.

Sound design

Sound designer, Yas Clarke and I worked together at different periods across the research phases and keeping in dialogue through email exchange between meetings. We worked together in the studio: improvised with sound scores, exploring in detail various individual sounds that we related to the movements, atmospheres and place. We made field recordings during an overnight camping trip in the Cairngorms National Park and this activity provided shared experience of the place, as well as gathering environmentally situated sound recordings. We had wider discussions about experiencing sound when being outdoors, which resonated and carried through into Practice Research Project 2: *ITM (group)*.

The final sound score encapsulated the simplicity of working with a small palette of field recordings, whilst exploring the complexities of generating algorithms. These algorithms developed repetitive rhythms that were constantly evolving subtly in some sections of the work. Yas explains his approach to making the composition:

The sound is generated from individual samples-some of them natural sounds captured in the Cairngorms, some of them instrumental and melodic. Each bank of sounds-the rustling grass, the clicking stones has its own probabilistic algorithm whereby the player controls the density of sounds. At minimal density,

the instrument is silent, and the density will move from generating sporadic sounds to a full cacophony. In addition to this, the player is also controlling a feedback loop around 2 seconds long, so that as the sounds are generated, some of them are captured and loop forever, creating a sense of rhythm and repetition, whilst at the same time forcing a continual, gradual crescendo of noise. The 6 sound textures used are stones; rustling grass; running water; wind in trees; kalimba (thumb piano); and conch horn.¹²

Clarke's way of working explored the materiality of sound that felt glacial and geological in its approach to time, repetition, accumulation and erosion of sounds throughout the composition. In one section of the performance there is no sound at all, bringing the silence of the room and the presence of myself and the audience into the foreground. This silence was chosen to accompany the moment in the work when a fire was lit, and the flames were allowed to burn out over approximately three minutes. We discussed this moment in relation to John Cage's 1961 lecture on *silence* (2011) and took courage from his commitment to the idea of the moment being lively within the structure of the performance.¹³

Use of recorded text in the performance

When listening to a BBC, Radio 4 podcast *The Living Mountain*¹⁴ presented by writer Robert Macfarlane, I was interested in their use of sound bite recordings of a woman reading extracts from *The Living Mountain* (2011), which offered moments of poetic reflection within the structure of the radio programme.

¹² Extract from email exchange between myself and Yas in July 2017.

¹³ The consideration of working with silence and environmental sounds was taken further in PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)* explored in Chapter 4.

¹⁴ Available from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03mfndd>

[Accessed 25 July 2024].

Midway through the Practice Research process, I was still considering how to include Shepherd's text in the live performance. As explained, I had been mostly working with the images conjured through the text or my own experiences connecting with Shepherd's prose in place.

I invited *Scots Radio* producer and presenter, Frieda Morrison to record sections of the prose, to experiment with bringing the voice of Shepherd into the live work¹⁵. The process of selecting, recording and listening to Shepherd's text, read aloud, in a Northeast Scottish accent was an insightful avenue to explore. Through this in-depth experimentation I realised that bringing the fictional voice of Shepherd into the work was too much of a theatrical conceit. In relation to the material and dramaturgical threads I had been developing, it became clear that if any sense of storytelling were to exist in the work, it needed to be primarily through the movement, action and physical experiences.

Much of the text in *The Living Mountain* (2011) is descriptive and this changed the dynamic of the performance material, in that it became a representation for the text itself. This was not the intention or interest within the process, so proved to be a pivotal insight regarding how embodied material was the central focus to the work. Movement material needed to be in relation to Shepherd's text through a form of dialoguing, rather than representing. This insight was taken into the research process for PR:2 *ITM (group)*, particularly because the movement was also placed in direct dialogue and relation to the performativity of the mountains themselves.

For the work-in-progress performance at The Baltic, in Gateshead, the sound designer experimented with using small sections or words from this recorded text. Yas explored the rhythmical qualities of the words and through repetition, created rhythms for the movement. For example, the line 'I cannot tell what this is except by recounting it' was repeated as the

¹⁵ A separate radio conversation with Frieda about the performance work at the Tramway and Nan Shepherd can be accessed on the Scots Radio archive. [Online].

Available from: www.scotsradio.com/podcast/episode-41/

[Accessed: 25 July 2024].

storm sounds developed in intensity and I worked my way through a structured improvisational score. But again, this text proved to be too dominant and generated potentially fixed narratives and emotional positioning of the movement scores that were not supportive creatively. The recordings of Frieda and myself reading Shepherd's text were used in the final performance at the Tramway, as a preamble soundtrack when the audience were entering the theatre. This subtle pointing to Shepherd as a pretext to the performance was deemed an appropriate choice when positioned alongside the performance work.

Post-performance invited reflections.

Invited peer responses to the performance have offered invaluable perspectives on the audience experience and translation of the performance material. Four invited responses from artists and scholars include: Neil Callaghan, Sarah Hopfinger, Margaret Kerr and Luke Pell. Each comes to the task with a deep knowledge of performance making in relation to ecology and the environment. These reflective writings can be viewed in full via the *Into the Mountain* project website.¹⁶

Regarding the research questions addressed by this first Practice Research project, these peer reviews allowed me to see beyond my own subjective experience. They all support the performance's success, that in some ways it brought a sense of mountain environment through the human, embodied experience within a studio performance.

Although not officially recorded, I did speak with other audience members post-performance who found connection with the work because of their knowledge and love of mountains. Not dissimilar to the poetic account from Margaret Kerr, the performance became a space for these individuals to reflect upon their own relationship to such places (not exclusively the Cairngorms, but mountains generally). The work generated a space for conversation in which

¹⁶ All the written reflections (2017) for *Into the Mountain* (solo) are compiled in full and can be read online via: <https://www.intothemountain.co.uk/into-the-mountain-solo/>

[Accessed: 15 August 2024].

they could reflect upon their perceived similarities and associations. This was an invaluable step towards considering the potential for audiences' kinaesthetic empathy and embodied resonances with material and images from the performance.

Salient themes that came through across the four reflections include 1) Body, memory and imagination; 2) Being *with* place as opposed to being *about* place and 3) Offering (kaleidoscopic) perspectives. The first theme of body, memory and imagination features across all four responses, including the idea of the body as archive, as Neil Callaghan articulates:

Like an alternative cartographer Kenyon gives us a map of the Cairngorms that does not necessarily impart a navigable geography of place, but it does give us something else, a sensual account of the place as experienced through her body, memory and imagination.

Expressions of this embodied memory and physical connection also extends to that of the audience experience. Margaret Kerr expresses this throughout her response and describes where she begins, 'to let go to this wild mysterious place and let it move into me'. The materiality of the objects in the performance space transports her to her own physical and tacit memories of the Cairngorms when she writes, 'the stones give me comfort in this flatland. I know where they come from. I see the river. I can feel them in my body. I can feel the river.'

This shared understanding regarding embodied memory of mountain place and specifically, the Cairngorm Mountains seem vital, in this instance of Margaret's relation to the performance. This does raise the question as to how shared mountain experiences can be an important aspect in finding common ground when developing mountain-relational performances.

The second theme of 'being *with* place opposed to being about place' was articulated by Sarah Hopfinger in that the work offered an alternative way of being with a place that is not romanticized and 'othered' as a separate entity of nature. The performance research had

considered these established attitudes and humans' cultured perceptions of mountains and considered how we can relate to them in more nuanced ways. This sense of being with place extends further the idea of transforming with and from place and Luke Pell writes about this and references David Abram's, *Becoming Animal* (2011):

Because the body is itself a kind of place-not a solid object but a terrain through which things pass, and in which they sometimes settle and sediment. The body is a portable place wandering through the larger valleys and plains of the earth, open to the same currents, the same waters and winds that cascade across those wider spaces. It is hardly a closed and determinate entity, but rather a sensitive threshold through which the world experiences itself, a travelling doorway through which sundry aspects of the earth are always flowing. Sometimes the world's textures move across this threshold unchanged. Sometimes they are transformed by the passage. And sometimes they reshape the doorway itself. (p.229)

Abram's text reiterates the idea of the body as a porous terrain as well as the shapeshifting nature often expressed in the dance and somatic practices explored in this research and experiences expressed in Shepherd's prose.

Thirdly, offering unique perspectives through multiple ways of seeing and where, as Luke Pell suggests, the performance 'journeys bring about a unique sense of perspectives and proportionality' that can offer a performative space that 'moves us from the macro to the micro, from the epic to the intimate.' Approaches to working with scale, both felt and imagined are common within for example, Body Weather dance practices that have been instrumental in this Practice Research. It is valuable to read from these reflections, that this can translate back into the audience's experience of the work. These invited responses to the work are also an example of the dialogic nature present in Body Weather practice, as mentioned previously in this chapter. Collective responses bring new learning to the work through incorporating the outside eye perspectives and the multiplicity of those perspectives. This relates to how Shepherd approaches learning about the mountains too; through the myriads of ways she integrates and interweaves perspectives and languages (scientific, embodied, social etc.).

From the unfolding practices in my own research and evident in Shepherd's approach to writing, I coin the term, *Kaleidoscopic perspectives and becomings* to articulate the inclusion and accumulation of gathered perspectives, as a method contained within this research frame. The image of the kaleidoscope, where one interacts by turning and seeing fragments continually re-configuring themselves anew, has been a useful idea developed within this research process. It suggests the many ways of seeing the material (meaning, thoughts, ideas, responses, people, voices, conversation, movement, mountain, place, ecology, contexts etc.) all accumulate and relate, to give new shape to the work. It also suggests the constantly shifting nature of the process and indeed the work itself whilst in keeping with the ethos of Body Weather's notion of dancing with the constantly changing and evolving nature of both body and environment.

As is already explained, this thesis draws on other practitioners' embodied knowledge and these responses traverse an ethos that chimes with Shepherd's ethos of the plateau; one that does not simplify the landscape through uniformity but rather embraces the complex entanglements of what makes up the mountains.

Conclusion

This performance work considered and explored approaches to making new mountain-relational performance practices. The creation of an indoor studio performance offered the framework in which to address the value of working directly with place and bringing together assemblages of these *mountain-place-relational*, embodied experiences into a theatre space for an audience.

This performance research considered both research questions 2. and 3. throughout the inquiry. Research question 2 asked: *How can embodied practices and place-relational performances generate new ways of experiencing outdoor contexts, with specific attention to mountainous environments?*

Through this project, sensory engagement with place and embodied practices were central to the knowledge production and bringing embodied memories into the studio performance design to be experienced by an audience. Through working reflexively with somatic practices, mountaineering training and collaborative making processes, the research generated a methodology that considers mountain-place as an active collaborator.

This inquiry into *mountain-place-relational* performance within a studio theatre context suggests that embodied experiences of the mountainous environment are still critical to bringing the outside-in and that nuanced, embodied ecological sensitivity and relational modes of being can still be conveyed, to a certain degree, within a studio theatre space.

Turning to research question 3, *Considering Shepherd's embodied understanding of mountains expressed in The Living Mountain (2011), how can contemporary artistic dialogues about the same environment bring new insight to women's experience of place?*

This performance worked in dialogue with Shepherd's, *The Living Mountain* (2011) in multiple ways, framing and extending her ethos of embodied, relational engagement with the mountain through a contemporary artistic practice. The performance offered a mode for shared, embodied, and culturally situated encounters with the Cairngorms environment in relation to Shepherd's text directly.

In doing so, the work illuminated how contemporary artistic practices can build upon Shepherd's imagery and ideas to create further feminist frameworks and choreographic approaches for understanding and creating performance work about women's experiences of mountain-place.

Having addressed these key research questions through the framework of embodied studio performance, it is useful to reflect further on the creative and practical challenges that arose when attempting to recreate mountain environment experiences indoors.

Attempting to bring the atmospheres and weather of the Cairngorms into a black box studio presented significant creative challenges. The studio performance could never reflect the lively

dynamics and uniqueness of the mountain, but it was an interesting creative problem to explore. It did bring about some interesting design work and fruitful collaborative relationships, but ultimately the scale of a place is always more encompassing in the mountain-place itself.

Engaging in a self-reflexive process alone and with others allowed for new knowledge and significant insights to be collected for the purposes of this research. The project's accumulated research findings through experimenting with cross-disciplinary approaches brought about distinct conversations and resonances through the practice. Through doing so, this research expanded the idea that embodied knowledge can bring about new modes of experiencing and critically engaging with place. This studio work informed new methods of creating mountain-relational performance, challenged future perspectives of mountaineering and embodied learning as an innovative approach to performance making. PR1: *Into the Mountain (solo)* offered a platform to explore whether performance could bring a sense of place and embodied experience to an audience. However, further consideration through in-depth approaches that investigate the ecological nature of movement and mountain-place relational practices is needed through other frameworks.

The short online review written by Mary Brennan states that: 'too much is telescoped into an hour'¹⁷ with the reviewer clearly wanting to experience time and a sense of journey in a more expansive way. On reflection I agree, the studio performance time and structure does not allow for the spaciousness and extended sense of time for both performer and audience alike. Brennan's response confirmed my own belief: to develop a durational performance work. The inclusion and experiencing of place, its scale and tacit interactions became a significant aim for the Practice Research development of PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)*. Practice Research

¹⁷ See full review. Available from:

www.heraldsotland.com/life_style/arts_ents/15284966.dance-international-glasgow-review-joan-cleville-dance-north-simone-kenyon-mountain-tramway-glasgow

[Accessed 25 July 2024].

that explores the more-than-human relations and felt experiences of an audience relating to the environment itself, had now to be an integral part of the development within the next Practice Research project.

Looking forward in preparations for PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)*, aspects of the combined mountaineering training, somatic and dance practices (including Body Weather) were explored further to develop mountain-relational-performance methods and practice and included the social and culturally embodied experiences of working with a larger team of collaborators and participants.

Ecological dance practitioner Sandra Reeve encourages exploring what she terms, ‘*being among*’ and ‘*interbeing*’ (2011) within her dance practice. The facilitating of other’s experiences of ‘being among’ and approaches developed in this PR1: *ITM (solo)* were considered and carried into the second Practice Research project, PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)*. The insights gained from PR1: *ITM (solo)* allowed for the idea of transmission and transition from mountains on stage, into PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)*, which further explored being with mountains and focusing on collective relational and embodied interconnection with place.

Aiming Off: Rationale

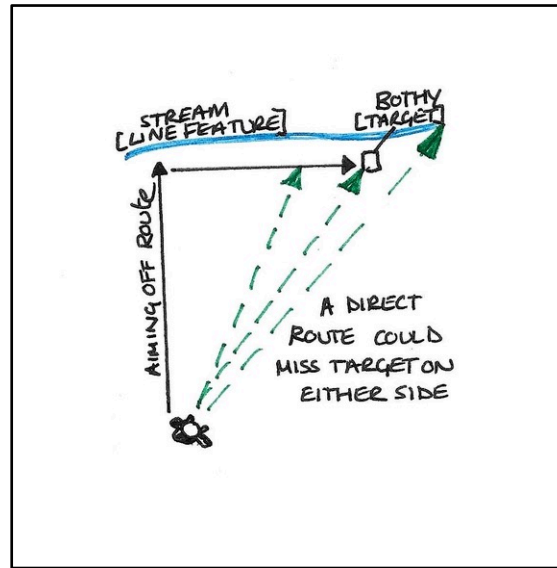


Fig.2 *Aiming Off* drawing. Simone Kenyon

When walking on a bearing in poor visibility it's highly likely...you'll end up to one side or the other of the target... "Aiming Off" describes the technique of purposefully taking a bearing to one side and is commonly used when the objective is a linear feature such as a stream, path, wall or ridge. (BMC, 2024)

I introduce the navigational term of *Aiming Off* in the thesis as an approach and concept running through the rest of this Practice Research project chapter. *Aiming Off* sections form part of the thesis structure, in which to bring other 'features' that are often on the periphery of the written component; including those people intrinsic in the very landscape of the research projects discussed. This collection of framed *Aiming Off* texts provides space to incorporate other voices and the tangential, or unseen learning that occurs during a Practice Research project. There are four *Aiming Off* sections spread mostly throughout chapter PR2: *ITM (group)*. Each one is an edited, reflective conversation from semi-structured interviews with an invited 'collaborative companion'.¹⁸

¹⁸ The extended versions of all the edited *Aiming Off* interviews can be accessed via the project website: <https://www.intothemountain.co.uk/aiming-off-interviews/>

[Accessed 6 March 2025].

Each person was selected to show the broad range of experience of the people involved in the creative development of PR2: *ITM (group)*. These *Aiming Off* sections offer a strategy to intertwine these collaborative journeys with the intention to look beyond the clear linear path of the research destination. The intention for these *Aimings Offs* is as follows:

To include first-person testimonies to highlight examples of conversational methodologies and walking interviews used throughout this Practice Research as mentioned in the Methodologies section of this thesis.

To foreground women's voices and insights when working on PR2: *ITM (group)* project to be present within this thesis. Practice Research is inherently collaborative, but often these voices get lost within the singular reflection of the written thesis. These sections are a means towards acknowledging and horizontalising these creative relationships. The aim of including these nuanced, first-person perspectives is to highlight the unique distinctions of collaborative practice, approaches and methodologies developed through PR2: *ITM (group)*. The overarching aim of doing feminist Practice Research is through the insistence of their inclusion within this written thesis component.

These conversations meander through the circumstances and meta-narratives interwoven within the PR2: *ITM (group)* process. Conversations took place in several ways: online, in-person (inside) and as a situated walking interview.

Key collaborators have been selected that influenced the PR2: *ITM (group)* project's journey and outcomes. These people, their specialist experience, our shared interests and creative approaches were integral to the development of the wider *ITM (group)* project. These people are:

Sam Trotman, Artistic Director of Scottish Sculpture Workshop foregrounds the background work and organisational aspects integral to the producing, curatorial, artistic process, community engagement and audience development of PR2: *ITM (group)*.

Anna Fleming discusses her involvement in the development of the *ITM (group)* educational programme. This working relationship then developed into her writing contributions to the project. She also touches on the relationship to her work afterwards and her becoming a published writer on her own creative journey.

Hanna Tuulikki is the sound composer and represents here just one of the creative and collaborative journeys within this project. She also presents how our ongoing collaborative relationship has continued to develop since *PR2: ITM (group)* and how trust and respect for fellow practitioners influences the development of creative work.

Margaret Kerr highlights our ongoing collaboration through our multifaceted working relationship and friendship, our relationships to mountaineering and to our shared interest in embodied, ecological thinking and practice.

In Shepherd's writing of *The Living Mountain* (2011) she draws on the dynamics of companionship when walking with others and finds it in relation to the mountains. These *Aiming Offs* are a deliberate move to make space for anecdotal, personal accounts and their interrelationships with wider historical perspectives that cannot be fully explored through the size of this thesis.

Aiming Off: Sam Trotman

My working relationship with Sam Trotman, current Artistic Director of Scottish Sculpture Workshop, spans over 10 years. I have worked with Sam through a variety of contexts as both arts producer and artist-maker.

Sam's insights and support for PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)* and its interdisciplinary nature was a vital collaborative relationship. Sam's interest in expanding the field of sculptural practice and supporting artists to work within maternity, caring experiences and early parenthood was profound. Her approach allowed these needs to be centred and woven into the work and was a necessary underpinning to the successful development and delivery of the project. The interview below moves through a variety of themes and notably touches on elements that developed the methodology and conceptual development of this project more generally. These include: 1) the sense and understanding of time when making work with environments; 2) the emphasis on process and collaboration; 3) the gendered attitude and attributes to making; 4) trust and our working relationship and specific support from organisations.

Creative Companion conversation: Sam Trotman (ST)

January. 2024. Online Lumsden + Edinburgh. Scotland

ST: I am the director at Scottish Sculpture Workshop in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Our vision is to expand the possibilities of what sculpture can be, always pushing towards social and environmental positive change.

SK: Could you lay out briefly the context of how you became involved in working on *Into the Mountain (group)*.

ST: I was the education producer at Arts Admin in London. I had heard of these amazing call outs that you'd been doing to walk with women in the mountains and hearing

what was happening. We've both done (the) Natural Change facilitation program as well up in Knoydart¹⁹

SK: Yes

ST: Doing that and being very aware of this idea of how you might collaborate with a landscape. When I got the job up here (at SSW), knowing your way of working was very much about collaboration and how you work across both human and non-human in your practice. I was interested in trying to expand the possibilities of what sculpture can be, if we rethink about material and we rethink about material's effect on our bodies.

The year we produced the performance was in SSW's 40th year. A place that historically had been about making monumental, large-scale, sculptural work in a natural environment, that was quite human-centric. It felt very bold to centre a different approach to think about our relationships to each other and the environment that we're in.

It took us two and a half years of working together to make the project happen. That could only really happen because I'd also known it was a long process.

There was the resources that we were able to provide in terms of our staff team, our location, our connection to a local community, but you brought a lot of those connections to us — because you'd been working here more long term. That brought a diversity of people to our space from you, that maybe didn't think they would be able to enter into a sculpture workshop before.

¹⁹ *Natural Change* leadership training was a 5-day retreat on the remote coast of Knoydart, Scotland. At the time when Sam and I attended on separate occasions, around 2012–13. It was co-led at that time, by David Key and Margaret Kerr (who I have continued to work with since and features in one of the interviews within this thesis). There is limited information about this phase of their work, except for (Key and Kerr, 2018.)

I now reflect on the audaciousness of the project. We worked across 16 different kinds of ranger services and institutions to find that space to do it in, which is a huge undertaking. Navigating these kinds of systems but also these landscapes we were traversing- so it was both bureaucratic and geographical. It was very physical.

In the periods in our lives, I'd had a one-year-old and moved up here (to Lumsden), meeting in the evenings to talk. Then you had a child, then that changed the rhythm. So, there was something there around a reflexiveness and a flexibility.

SK: The timeline allowed the project and the people involved to expand with it. It couldn't have happened with a very specific timeline on it.

ST: It was also because we knew that was part of the work. You made it very clear that we weren't working with human time frames. We were working with deep time, with different time spans, glacial. It never felt like that was wrong, that was always very implicit in the work.

Whether it's the kids' workshops, conversations you had with women, they're hugely political in saying that artwork is not just an outcome, we can't package artist practice into this thing at the end.

SK: That way of working has to be enabled by the producer or the organisation. There is something about trusting a process in that way that a lot of organisations don't do.

ST: Often, it's hard for organisations to be able to bring learnings from artist practice into the organisation itself. Because we're an organisation that is about process — we were learning about a different sort of process. But it's still kind of mapped the same; like, (bronze) casting is the most ridiculous process and time consuming. If you actually just wanted an outcome, you wouldn't go about it that way. There was also something of that commitment to process.

To see the kind of ambitions you had for this work and the tenacity you had to make them happen was really contagious. You carried that throughout the whole process

and brought that to all of the collaborators. A lot of that is based on building that trust.

SK: Your trust, experience and tenacity working as a producer made me feel like it was possible. Collaborative relationships can invigorate and create this momentum.

ST: There's something about a recognition of mutual expertise, because there was so much that I didn't know; about mountain leading, about the ecology of the place, the weather. Planning a workshop or performance between your mutual children's naps, between when the midges are born and when the snow comes, all of these practical things dictated the work beyond any artistic call. We had expertise in working with those limitations.

Something about ancestral knowledge as women — (it) had to fit in with everyday life. As well as working hard to create the spaces and logistics that weren't like hiring a black box space. That was only possible because of our mutual expertise and the wider expertise of people like the mountain leaders.

In most cases, the structures can be the most difficult things to navigate. We knew the process was dictated by so many things. What I could bring to the process was trying to create a structure that was (asking) what are the different containers we can make to hold this?

You want to be able to diversify who gets to be a mountain leader, how can we create a container for that? How do we create a container for young people? How do we create a container for time and space for being in the hills, on your own or with a collaborative team.

But that all came from your want for the work, that was all the work to you. Often you can get projects that are multifaceted, but they come from this idea that you just want to make this end piece. That in order to get the money you might have to do some workshops, deliver this, but for you it was all the work at once, it all fed into one thing.

SK: The symposium felt like one of those containers — your curatorial knowledge came into how we shaped that together. In that way it was bringing people from different areas of sculpture, visual arts, bio arts and academia together.

ST: You're such a Polymath, you have an insatiable thirst for learning but also change and it's quite an infectious thing and that's how you get people involved in your projects. Because it's genuine, you're not only doing this project because you want to make a dance performance, you want to change mountaineering, it's a pushing against these silos of what we're expected to do in them.

Into the Mountain was a way for you to explode all of those things. The symposium, you become co-curator, not just artist or choreographer. You work in a responsive way, responding to the people you're working with.

You were like — oh, we could work, shape this together. I also really want to push the field I'm working in. It's dance, its literature, its bio arts, it's all of these things. We really got to redefine your sector for yourself, in your terms.

You wouldn't realise this thing was so rooted in those kinds of practicalities. We (the SSW team) could hold some of that practicality in order to give you some space to figure out the artwork.

SK: I didn't have that sort of capacity anymore to manage what I might have done in the past.

It meant I could relax, because I knew you were managing and caretaking all the different people involved,

ST: That also comes to a real trust in people's expertise. You knew you could trust Hanna (Tuulikki) to come up with a composition. Hanna knew she could trust Lucy (Duncombe) to deliver those workshops. It was that collaboration that needed all of those different parts.

You could trust, when I spoke to rangers, that I wasn't going to be dismissive of their work, all of these things could only be done because of trust and reverence for each other's practices.

SK: Reflecting back about leaning into process, about finding ways for people to collaborate and connect, that's what this did through that process.

ST: There was a lot of learning involved in the process, that became more acute afterwards. We became more aware of society shifting around gender binaries and how we navigated that — and how sometimes we did that okay and sometimes less okay. Doing that again, we might have a different approach. But at the time, it was all coming up as we were doing it.

SK: Even during that year, the changes in language and terms we were using outdated quite quickly. Getting advice from (Gendered Intelligence)²⁰ to write inclusively.

ST: Yes, I think then- to now, (Pammy Johal, who runs the outdoor charity) Backbone²¹. Now Black Girls Hike and grassroots movements, of people thinking about access that even in 2019, wasn't happening in the same way. It is really interesting to reflect on those shifts.

SK: A lot has happened in that time certainly across the UK.

ST: That's a really positive thing. Obviously, there's loads, more to do. But to see that visible shift is a really great thing.

ST: When you talk about Shepherd's text, as a resource through the process of work, it was a really good resource in that guiding way.

²⁰ More information about this organisation available from: <https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>

[Accessed: 18 August 2024]

²¹ More information about Backbone is available from: <https://www.backbone.uk.net/>

[Accessed 10 August 2024].

SK: Like the oracle

ST: Its totally like the oracle, you could just flick to a page and read something, and it would be perfect.

SK: Find the answer.

ST: Yeah, there was something of that prescience that was always really important. There was something of that matriarchal lineage, that provided a comfort to the project or a kind of rationale for doing it.

SK: Maybe a non-linear relationship to it is quite in keeping with engaging with the text.

ST: Yes, it was a really good thing for the poetics for you as well. To have that poetic response to it was a really good invitation.

I often work with all women teams, but it was working with teams out-with the arts that was the most important in this project. A lot of the landowners or managers of the land were split in gendered terms, there weren't many people who were women navigating these spaces through their jobs. Also understanding the tie of those things to economy. It wasn't easy. It would have been easier to get a three-peaks run to happen, than a very slow performance for 50 people. Because that's a sort of scale and understanding and economic redistribution that could be understood.

SK: You're talking about the challenges or approaches to working interdisciplinary and across sector. It comes back to this reflexive, flexible ways of working.

ST: Also, it wasn't like, you'd come as a choreographer who wanted to do this piece, you'd done Mountain Leadership, and you'd cultivated long-term relationships. I wouldn't have had those contacts in the arts, those keys in.

Again, that tenacity of just not backing down. When I think of all the places it could have been, and actually how awful it would have been doing them there; the places like a mile from a car park, and the fact that we were having to think about, what's

the most accessible route? What can someone walk in? What are these three different routes in, where is there access? The fact that originally, we wanted to do it, and we spent so long, it was such a blow to wanting to do it where the funicular ran to. That would have meant a totally different piece of work. Through the different ways of working, we then ended up with the right thing in the end.

SK: Is there anything you feel we haven't discussed?

ST: These interests I have around the materiality, extraction, the effect of working with material on the body, we haven't done that practically in terms of you coming and blacksmithing, but you have come back into SSW as a board member. And actually, that is about shaping policy, shaping vision, bringing that embodied understanding of working. Reflecting back, it feels phenomenal that this was able to exist and did exist in such a way. I remember submitting the funding, the Creative Scotland application, was it four days after (your son) was born? The way this melded around our lives, we lived this project. It was like, you've birthed this project and now you've birthed your baby. It was so visceral the whole way through. To reflect on the positive changes that have happened in terms of access, how we define gender. It literally hadn't been done, that's what we were told. I just think that's quite amazing to be in 2019 and to be making a piece of work that had, you'd been told, had not been done. It's quite an amazing feat.

CHAPTER 4

PRACTICE RESEARCH PROJECT 2: *INTO THE MOUNTAIN (GROUP)*

This chapter examines and expands upon the Practice Research projects methods, process, and findings within the making of the *mountain-place-relational performance* PR2: *ITM (group)*.

This work consisted of three guided walking routes that converged to experience a performance deep within Glen Feshie area of the Cairngorms National Park. Performed over four days in late May, early June 2019, by the five dancers and a newly established women's choir, led by vocalist Lucy Duncombe with vocal composition created by artist Hanna Tuulikki.

The performance research further explored through interdisciplinary approaches, women's relationships and the interconnections of historical, present, and future narratives with mountains. If, as writer and feminist, Sarah Ahmed reminds us that, 'gendering operates in how bodies take up space' (2017, p.25) then this project was a multi-faceted approach that invited women to come together and quite literally make space for themselves to embody and explore their relationships with mountains in new, nuanced and meaningful ways. The work aimed to bring validity to women's experiences through the creation of events and spaces in which to consider, witness and engage with how women connect with the specific environment of the Cairngorm Mountains.

The project continued to be framed and informed by the prose of *The Living Mountain* (2011) with the intention of championing Shepherd's significance as an environmental writer. The title of this chapter *ITM (group)* is a direct reference to chapter three of, *The Living Mountain* (2011) entitled, *The Group* (p.16), in which she explores the plateau from wider, macro perspectives and the grouping of individual mountains 'seen as peaks piled on peaks, a majestic culmination' (p.20). It is this idea of the culmination of individual and group identities of mountains that relates to the human creative process developed through PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)* also.

This chapter begins with acknowledging the overall project's partnerships, cross sector collaborations and the plethora of engagement and activity that informed the performance development. The wider project's activity significantly contributed to the development of the performance research process and so is included in the general synopsis within this chapter. The framing, curating, and facilitating of the varied activities formed part of the multifocal and multivocal approach central to this Practice Research project. The project worked with a core team of 35 women featured in the performance and engaged with over 450 participants and audiences in-person, across the activities and thousands more across online platforms. This interrelating programme of work was developed and delivered over 18 months and included the live *mountain-place-relational* performances that this chapter will focus on primarily.

The research process and outcomes of the mountain-relational-performance creation consists of four core elements: 1) movement and choreographic process, 2) walking routes: design and facilitation, 3) vocal-sound composition, 4) synthesis and convergence of the above elements for live performance.

The performance: a brief description

In this place, a choir of women are already present and grouped together, also sitting on the uneven ground, a mixture of moss and heather. A trio of singers come to stand and face the hills and begin to call out; a bird like call that travels towards the hills. A response call can be heard coming from the hillside. This is then repeated five times around the slopes of the hills. This call is the first way the performers reveal themselves, still invisible in the far distance. Then through covering themselves in gold survival blankets, they reveal themselves visually, which in turn reveals the scale of the mountain side with them in relation to it. These gold boulder-type shapes are dotted across the slopes and are revealed through the light reflecting on them from the sky above. Now with the blankets safely stored away, the performers individually make their way down the hill sides; running like rivulets, jumping, falling and disappearing into the undulating ground and reappearing to eventually converge together in the middle distance to the audience. When they meet, they swirl around one another like watery eddies until now, in this middle distance, they fall into a rhythm with one another through their steps and eventually falling into a loose cluster. As they move closer to the foreground (where the audience are sitting), they become more human-like, through the choreographed pedestrian, rhythmical, synchronised and stylised movements.

Surrounded by the audience and the choir the performers explore a series of improvisational scores that move through exploring place through a variety of approaches and perspectives. Hill-lines are followed and tracked through various vantage points of body parts (e.g., elbow, nose, knee, belly button), shoes and socks are removed, hands and feet exploring the macro details and sensations. This movement then accumulates and grows into the final movements of continual falling, rolling into the ground and back to standing. The dancers have been accompanied by the collective voice of the choir and the existing soundscape of the place.

The performance ends through a quietening, an opening out of attention, back to the place and to the people sat around. Quiet conversations mark the move into a more social space, groups regather, and all three walking groups begin the return walk, along the (short) route, back to the start point of the day. The choir and dancers eventually follow behind on the route. Groups and performers are taken back to the cafe where soup and bread is served. The

experience ends through this social space again in which to converse and exchange experiences from the day's events.

How the earth must see itself: documentation

The decision was made to not film the live performances to maintain the embodied, live experience only. Instead, a short film was commissioned as a 'companion piece' to the performance work entitled *How the Earth Must See Itself* (2019) made in collaboration with artist Lucy Cash, funded and produced by the National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) and (SSW). The shorter 7 minute version of the film can be viewed now as an introduction to the work via the link in the footnote.²² This film work shows some of the qualities and atmospheres of the place, performers, movement material and a short extract of the vocal work performed. The film does not capture the relationship of the walking group experiences, nor the sense of structure to the performance itself. Instead, as a way of evidencing the research, a series of photographs, a sound recording of the vocal composition and video of movement material were made to document the work for the purpose of this thesis. The supporting documents accompany this written thesis include:

1. A short, edited film of the dancers revisiting the movement and choreographic material some months later after the performances, file name: *PR2 ITM group movement score.mp4* (11.31 mins).
2. A sound recording of the entire vocal composition, file name: *PR2 ITM group Vocal Full All four part.wav*. Please note, this was recorded inside the local community hall. Please take this into account when listening to the quality of the recording. (This could be listened to whilst viewing the photo journey presentation or separately).

²² The film, *How The Earth Must See Itself*, is available to watch from:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tty8pAPD8HY

[Accessed: 30 July 2024]. (There is a 12 min. version available on request).

3. A photographic journey of the final performance event can be found in Appendix 3.
PR2: *ITM (group)* Performance event: a photographic journey (documentation).
4. Supporting documentation for other aspects of the project, found in the appendices are indicated throughout the chapter.

All these documents can be viewed now or in relation to various sections that unfold throughout this chapter.

Working in partnership

To acknowledge the scope of the creative production and to highlight the diverse range of partners and organisations involved in making the project possible are included here.

Into The Mountain (2019) was publicly funded by Creative Scotland, produced and commissioned by Scottish Sculpture Workshop (SSW) and co-commissioned by Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), City Moves Dance Agency (based in Aberdeen), Dance North (based in Moray, Scotland) and Tramway/Take Me Somewhere Festival (Glasgow/central belt of Scotland). The project was further supported by Mountaineering Scotland, Aberdeenshire Council, Wildlands Ltd and Scottish National Heritage (SNH). Clothing and equipment were supported by Zamberlan, Darn Tough, Regatta, Hilltrek and Glenmore Lodge.

It is relevant to acknowledge here that the project endeavoured to be informed, created and delivered by women. This aim brought into closer focus the practical challenges of working across the arts and outdoor sectors and the availability of women working within them. The film creation was the exception to this rule due to the collaboration, production practicalities and the availability of the technical and production team.

It is also important to acknowledge, keeping within the ethos of the project, the necessary but unseen work, when making mid-scale performance projects. This includes the support

and work of colleagues, co-parents, and the presence of children. This project was developed in a time for the lead researcher in new and unfamiliar territories of parenthood, which challenged some existing ways of creative decision making. As a new mother, sleep deprived and bound to a breastfeeding rhythm, I learned to schedule and design research, delegate, and work differently. This informed the development of what I would consider feminist and collaborative approaches, born out of the necessity of the situation. Embracing these new and unfamiliar structures, inviting and entrusting others in the creation processes became a vital development, for both the research and personally as the project developed.

From as early as 2017, Sam Trotman and I had various conversations with landowners in the southern parts of the Cairngorms, near Braemar (where Nan Shepherd would frequent regularly on her visits) and the area of the *northern corries* and Cairngorm Mountain summit, closer to Aviemore. Neither of these relationships and discussions with landowners brought about permissions or further collaboration but certainly formed part of the expanded choreographic practice when making mountain-relational performance.²³

Months were then spent negotiating with two landowners (Wildland Ltd and SNH) in the Glen Feshie area, where we were finally given permission to lead walking groups and situate the performance. During this time, I went alone and with others to develop the components of the work and to spend time in specific places, to consider where to situate the performance event in Glen Feshie. The planning of the three walking routes during this time, with the expert guidance of Heather Morning, the Health and Safety officer for Mountaineering Scotland also played a significant factor in finding a place for the performance. It was determined by the convergence of these routes in one particular place, just off a burn crossing, at the foothills of Sgòr Gaoith (the windy peak).

²³ I discuss the precarity of these negotiations as being part of the expanded choreographic practice in more detail, in the forthcoming (2025) *Routledge Companion to Site-Specific Performance* edited by Victoria Hunter and Cathy Turner.

Engagement activities and context

As mentioned earlier, PR2: *ITM (group)* included a variety of activities that informed and developed the creative process along the way. These and the timeline are outlined via the infographic found in Appendix 4 PR2: *ITM (group) Activity Timeline*. Using the combined hill line of the long and mid walking routes have been used here as a visual line in which to map the various activities. The design is not concerned with a 'summit centric' approach of mountaineering as the pinnacle of achievement per se, but rather a visual illustration of when the events happened across time and the undulating nature, dynamics and accumulating activity that make up the whole creative journey that is more in keeping with the unfolding nature of Shepherd's and my own approach.

Due to the size and intention of this thesis, I will not go into detail about the considerable value each of these components brought to the project but rather highlight a few key aspects. The events can be explored individually and in further detail through the project's website events page.²⁴ Only activities that took place within the active project's timeline and funding capabilities are included in this thesis. However, activity post the funded project continued through formats of talks and presentations (with a numerous online talk during the pandemic period), exhibition, written academic publications and workshop delivery exploring place-relational research methods explored within this Practice Research. These varied platforms offered contexts in which to continually articulate the project's aims and concepts and to engage in further discussions with other practitioners, audiences and wider contexts.

The symposium event I wish to highlight is *The Meet* in November 2018 (See Appendix 5. *ITM (group) A Meet* Programme information). This event was an opportunity to synthesise elements and concerns within the project and to create a platform in which to bring artists, specialists, academic research and creative workshops together for a public audience. It allowed numerous women's ideas and work to be shared as part of a kaleidoscopic approach

²⁴ Activities on project website. Available from: www.intothemountain.co.uk/activities

[Accessed: 15 August 2024].

to understanding mountains from multiple perspectives. It placed the project into wider contexts and developed audience engagement with the work, outside the rural research areas prior to the performances. The event sold out and was attended by a deeply engaged audience, guest speakers and facilitators.

The school's programme in collaboration with Cairngorms National Park Authority formed the education strand to the project. The workshops were an opportunity to explore creative material with a variety of ages and develop approaches to group facilitation. The process was invaluable to the development and adaption of how explorative tasks were developed for the walking activities for the final performance.

Over eight sessions myself and dancer Jo Hellier developed and delivered workshops with a range of primary and secondary school pupils across Aberdeenshire. We worked closely with Cairngorms National Park's (CNP) Education and Inclusion Officer Anna Fleming²⁵ to design workshops that focused on introducing Nan Shepherd's work within the context of mountaineering and nature literature. Through this introductory lens, pupils went on to work with numerous collaborative exercises that encouraged sensory exploration of outdoor spaces. We incorporated exercises and tasks from Body Weather training and other outdoor education approaches designed specifically for children. These workshops then informed the basis for the *Into the Mountain* resource postcards for schools, parents and children to encourage embodied knowledge and sensory approaches to learning about their natural environments (see Appendix 6. PR2: *ITM (group)* Education resource pack).

Professional residential dance workshops gave an opportunity to explore material and tasks for the walking route experiences and choreographic approaches with other professional dancers. These workshops took place in the Cairngorms and allowed me to share ideas, develop articulation and test out approaches. The guest workshop with experienced writer, Linda Cracknell also provided a creative framework for participants (me included) to explore approaches to nature writing within the context of the project.

²⁵ This work is discussed further in the later chapter, *Aiming Off*: Anna Fleming.

Finally, working in collaboration with Mountaineering Scotland, we offered two women funded mountain leader traineeships. This also offered an opportunity to work with Mountaineering Scotland, to explore some of the barriers facing women in mountain training and to offer a way in which we began to support a change in the industry.²⁶

²⁶ Announcement text. Available from:

www.mountaineering.scot/news/new-mountaineering-traineeships-for-women-announced

[Accessed: 12 August 2024].

Aiming Off: Anna Fleming

Anna Fleming is a writer, climber and mountaineer. She also worked for the Cairngorms National Park as the Educational Inclusion Officer, and this is how we began working together within the core activities of PR2: *ITM (group)*. We had met previously at other events at both Leeds University and at Creative Carbon Scotland events, which brought familiarity and ease to begin working together. Anna also took part in professional CPD workshops I led for the Outdoor Woodland Learning Scotland (OWLS) as part of the *ITM (group)* events. From Anna's embodied experience of this workshop, she developed writing that would later be included in the performance programme brochure (See: Appendix 7. PR2: *ITM (group)*: Performance event programme). Since the *ITM (group)* project, she went on to publish her first book *Time On Rock* (2022).

The interview focuses on aspects of our work together: we discuss the processes and details of working in rural places and of working together on the school's programme for PR2: *ITM (group)* and her work with young people and supporting ecological thinking and practice into creative educational practices.

Other themes from the project are ignited through our conversation and our own individual work as artist and writer. These include the wider women and mountaineering experiences, developing collaborative relationships and iterations of work across the project, future generational activity in relation to climate change and sustainability of mountaineering and the outdoor sector in climate crises.

Creative Companion conversation: Anna Fleming (AF)

August 2023. In-Person. Edinburgh.

SK: Can you explain more about your role working for the Cairngorms National Park.

AF: My role was about looking into ways to help more people from a wider range of backgrounds engage with, visit, enjoy, use the National Park and a big part of that was young people. My job would be making education resources to help teachers and visitors find ways into the National Park.

SK: We talked about Nan Shepherd, looking at the Cairngorms as a National Park region, but (can you expand on why you were working with) these specific schools?

AF: Part of the remit with the job was to build relationships between the National Park Authority and the schools. Part of that would be going out, doing engagement and delivery. Doing these *(ITM)* workshops felt like a lovely way to offer that to some of those schools in more remote areas. These small schools are ideally located to do a lot of outdoor learning and have really good connection with nature, but not necessarily have a lot of resources because they're fairly isolated.

SK: A lot of processes happened, whether it was finding permission from landowners or working in a national park, it was totally reliant on the goodwill or the openness of individuals like yourself or your boss. So even though you're working with quite a big organisation, it's this very human interaction that either determines whether something happens or not.

AF: Yeah, I mean that's how a lot of things work in the Highlands, it's just really person based. If there's a good person in that role, who you can work with, who does great things, amazing things will happen, and they'll drive things really forwards. If they're not, it won't happen.

SK: Can you talk through some of the processes that you worked on? Were you happy with it?

AF: I thought it was really good. It gave people really different learning experiences. It was really interdisciplinary. Nan Shepherd — so there's English Lit, it's outdoor learning, it's art, it's movement, it's dance, you could even bring in elements of geography. Scottish education is a lot about interdisciplinary and outdoor learning. It's quite an innovative way of approaching education, so it was good to be experimenting with something that would do it through different ways.

SK: In the writing, *Becoming Boulder*,²⁷ there's one exercise that you talk about. You wrote specifically about one of the perception tasks of looking or turning?

AF: That's the one I remember most. That is the one that shaped *Becoming Boulder*; where it was just moving really, really slowly, turning on a point and focusing on nothing. And that felt quite transformative.

SK: In what way?

AF: Well, I suppose, that was where I reached that point of feeling like what it might be like, to be like a boulder. Which is very different to normal human perception and especially like perception in the mountains. I think where you're often looking for the good view and the really pleasing thing, or the way you're going, or the path or where your buddy is, or what the compass bearing is saying. It's a lot of looking with a

²⁷ This refers to a piece written by Anna in response to her experience in a CPD workshop led by Simone for the *Outdoor and Woodland Learning Scotland*. Information about the organisation available from: www.owlsotland.org [Accessed: 18.08.24]

The written piece entitled '*New routes into the mountain*' was published by Caught by the River. Available at: www.caughtbytheriver.net/2018/11/new-routes-into-the-mountain [Accessed: 10 August 2024].

A reworked version entitled; *Becoming Boulder* was commissioned for *Into the Mountain's* printed programme for the performance event (See: Appendix 7).

specific purpose to either extract information or extract pleasure. Where it is that much more of soft rounded focus without really looking at anything but it's trying to see everything.

SK: I'm interested in how that has an effect on the whole body. Does that proliferate and soften other ways of receiving or perceiving through your whole body? Or even that reminder for people who are predominantly visual...

AF: Yes, they are so dominant.

SK: Can you say something about the elements of Nan Shepherd's writing that is striking to you and how to respond to the text, when thinking back to the project but also now?

AF: There's the sensory journey that's so strong in her writing that really came out through *Into the Mountain*. I think that's such a good, important guiding principle for new ways of approaching the mountains and ways of approaching mountains in an ecologically sensitive way.

SK: Since you did those workshops within your role, have you witnessed any differences in framing these kinds of sensory journeys or ecological ways of being in mountains?

AF: I think it's changing. A big part of the *Climate Camp*²⁸ that we were doing was about reframing adventure, which is how so many young people get into the outdoors. It's often their first taste and it's often framed as personal challenge and achievement and triumph over fear. We set them the task of reframing it in terms of thinking about it as a journey, a way of accessing place and experiencing place and the day as a journey rather than achievements.

²⁸ Climate Camp is a programme in the CNP Action Youth group of which Anna was working on in her role as CNPA's Education & Inclusion Officer. Available at:

www.cairngorms.co.uk/caring-future/education/youth-action

[Accessed: 16 July 2024].

I noticed it also in Chamonix, where they've got this book where they're talking about adaptations. The *Compagnie des Guides* in their 200-year anniversary publication is all about climate change and adaptation.²⁹ Part of it is about changing the culture of what people look to get from their mountain days. So rather than a conquest, triumph and an achievement, to think of it as journeys. That's the movement they're moving towards. It's just across the board, everyone's moving towards that.

SK: Can you explain a little about the work that you're doing now, five years after making *Into the Mountain (group)*, what is happening in the context of your job now?

AF: The Climate Camp, getting together with young people, thinking about connection to nature, about nature and climate crisis and what we can do and thinking about journeys into the landscape, so definitely echoes of *Into the Mountain* were there. I was reading Nan Shepherd out on the mountain with young people, had them up on Meall a' Bhuachaille and was saying who's heard of Nan Shepard? An Italian boy reached into his rucksack and pulled out the *Living Mountain* in Italian and I just love that journey, that she'd written it, finally got published, then it travels all the way to Italy, someone translates it into Italian, he and his father buy it in Italian and then he travels to the Cairngorms, with the book and carries it up the mountain. It's so amazing. The hilarious thing with that though, is that they've put the Dolomites on the front cover because that's what an Italian mountain looks like.

I think those echoes of sensory practice and ways of being in the outdoors and respecting place and ecology and exploring it through your senses and through close attention. I think that's just always going to be part of practice now in the Cairngorms.

SK: That's exciting to hear.

²⁹ Further information. Available from: <https://www.chamonix-guides.com/en/our-commitments/environnement/guides-and-climate-change>

[Accessed 20 January 2024].

AF: It's just such a good grounding for doing anything. I led a creative reflective session at the end of the camp, which was either writing or drawing. I was getting people to think about what they've seen through five senses, but also just being out and meditating on things.

I (also) work with the Youth Action Team, they have a fund that they run, and they set the criteria for the sorts of projects that they fund and within that, connection to Cairngorms, projects that support connection to nature and biodiversity. One of the criteria, health, happiness, well-being is another bit. But also, arts and creativity and culture is something that they're really keen to support.

When drawing up the terms of the fund, we identified that art was a common thread between us and was something that we didn't see enough of, or they didn't see enough of happening within the national parks. So, providing an opportunity to fund those sorts of projects was important. So in the first round of funding, they commissioned their own youth artist in residence. Their second round of funding, they chose another youth artist to do it, same model. In the third round, one of the applicants was a young artist who wanted money for paints and camping kit. Her plan was to go and walk in the Cairngorms for four weeks with no particular direction; to draw and observe and then come back to her studio in Kingussie and paint. They loved this application so much because they were like, it's a young Nan Shepherd. She came at the climate camp, we had the celebration event for the fund, and she came and presented her work and told everyone about her journey. She'd realised that four weeks was way too much and changed it to two weeks. She lost her map, her map blew away at some point, so she was just roaming the Cairngorms, very directionless because she had no map. Then a friend walked in and met her and brought a map and she showed us the art, it was brilliant. She was just saying how good it was to have that time of no particular direction and getting to know the place and roaming.

SK: There's a question about (how) Nan Shepard's writing influenced your writing as well because, we're talking about the role of your job, but I was thinking about your journey as a writer over the time that I've known you.

AF: Yeah, the book I wrote is all about rock climbing as a way into nature and experience in the natural world and Nan Shepherd was definitely very important and thinking about that. I read, *The Living Mountain* and saw this amazing way into the mountains through body and sensory perception and I was like, well I know that through my climbing, I get that in a very very intense way through my climbing and into a huge range of different landscapes and habitats than just the Cairngorms. And no one has written about that. No one has described what all that is. And so that was kind of the investigation I wanted to do really, was to see what you find and how you experience a landscape through climbing as a sensory, physical embodiment practice.

SK: Also, I should state the obvious, in terms of a woman writing about your physical experience of climbing in various environments, in a very particular way, that stands aside from the usual trope of climbing memoirs.

AF: Yeah, I guess motivated by a bit of a lit review, of just looking at the field and like, where are all the women? Why is it, why aren't there enough women writing about this? We just need more stories by women.

SK: Totally.

AF: Reclaim the mountains.

SK: We are talking about a project that is five years old now. There's the legacy of something that is in the past, but also thinking about the future of how the research of this work continues into other manifestations. Is there anything from those experiences of being part of *Into the Mountain*, that stuck somehow? What did you learn from that experience?

AF: I think it's one of those projects that's so far reaching, it would be so hard to pin down what it's done and that's kind of the strength of the great project. Like the climate camp-I'm not going to know what that camp has done for those young people, that could be a life-changing experience for a number of them, I don't know, and yours obviously reached a lot more people. You had that symposium the day in Glasgow at Tramway, you had the performances, you had the dancers, the education workshops, you know, the legacy is massive. It's like that mycelium network, you don't know where it's going but it's big. I mean we've talked about it- like that sensory thing coming into outdoor education and learning, I think that will become more a feature. I think it's part of that movement towards holistic wellbeing awareness and knowing that wellbeing is tied into not pushing people too hard and respecting nature and connecting to nature. And in terms of learning, young people's education, learning in the outdoors. I think it's there.

Mountain-relational-performance: methods and process

Research and development periods with the company of dancers took place over a time frame of 12 months of activity. These included:

- Phase 1: August and September 2018 for two weeks research and development.
- Phase 2: April 2019 one week with dancer, Petra Söör.
- Phase 3: May 2019. Four weeks with the five dancers. This included: two weeks of final devising and refining movement scores and working within the place of the performance; a week of filming outdoors for the short film, *How the Earth Must See Itself*; the production week that consisted of rehearsals with the choir and invited audience; and finally, four public performances.

During the time between these group research periods and developing the other elements of the wider programme, time was spent consolidating ideas and *being with* and *amongst* the place in Glen Feshie, both solo and with invited companions. Workshops and events were delivered during the intervals of time between meeting the *ITM* company and fed into the emergent process and overall thinking of the unique context for this performance event.³⁰ Choir rehearsal activity was also taking place regularly both online and in person in both Aviemore and Braemar.

³⁰ Including costume design with knitwear designer, Jeni Allison: www.jeniallison.co.uk/about [Accessed: 05 August 2024].

Trousers were designed for the needs of performing in the mountains and using organic materials to reduce use of plastics and noise of the garments. Made by Hilltrek an Aberdeenshire based outdoor clothing company. This unique design is now included in their collection, with credit given to the collaboration. Available from: www.hilltrek.co.uk/clothing/trousers/morrone-sv-trousers-ladies/ [Accessed: 05 August 2024].

It could be considered a relatively short creation process with the *ITM* dancers, but the opportunity to work in differing seasons and conditions across that time-frame was invaluable to their understating and relationship with the mountain place. Because of the range of mountain experience in the group, the decision not to work in winter conditions were deemed more appropriate and productive to the choreographic research and development periods. Instead, I brought my experiences of winter training and from making the studio performance of PR1: *Into the Mountain (solo)* into the research as a reference and starting point (See Appendix 8: *PR2 ITM (group) process documentation for select images* offering insight to this field research).

Movement and choreographic development process

In the creation process with the *ITM* dancers we had lengthy discussions about our sensory experiences, physical observations and interactions with place. The dancers were employed to spend time here to work and bring their specialisms, interest, feelings and perspectives of place through their own bodily experiences.

We went in search of experiences; framing ways in which to be in place and time, within the Cairngorms ecology. There was a desire to create a sense of spaciousness within the process. We developed shared practices, languages and scores that emerged between us for example: walk and talk for a while in the mornings, agree to silent walking time, often falling into a line that might shift around if someone decides to stop, to ponder on something for longer, or fall back to be more invisible to the others. Our collective presence was always felt because of working outside; a group moving together or in relation to one another and mountain place. Sometimes the group would shift and change, people absent or extra people attending, but the sense of collective and social experience was integral to the process of making this work.

As with many group performance methods, you must build a sense of connectedness and trust with performers and collaborators. This can take time in the studio, let alone within the

complex surrounding of a mountainous environment and the variety of mountaineering and hiking experience within the group.

The dynamics and variety of experience in the group also played a part in the development of the process. Between the five dancers, the experience of mountaineering ranged from very experienced to not much experience at all. One dancer had very little experience of working outside or of hillwalking and the most experienced of the group were both the youngest (20s) and oldest (60s) members of the company. The two performers based outside of Scotland, had a shared interest and practice of Body Weather training and hill walking. Their experience of Body Weather training was important as they were effectively a bridge in developing approaches and devising methods with the rest of the group through the process. Because funded time was limited, regarding the creative process, it was vital to have dancers who have a shared movement language that could offer a sensibility to the work I was wanting to explore through the research process.

Phase 1, the first two weeks was as an introduction to the project and the existing processes discovered thus far. Through workshopping and designing structured experiences and scores for the dancers, I shared places and experiences I had in the Cairngorms for the past five years. This introduction was an imparting of my own knowledge and experiences that had led me to make PR1: *Into the Mountain (solo)* as a springboard to finding ways of working together as a group. Working with dancers who had spent time in the Cairngorms, outside of this project timeline, and in different seasons also offered invaluable additional perspectives to the group's collective experience.

The first few days of the research weeks began with facilitated days led by Margaret Kerr (eco-psychologist and mountain leader) and Jean Langhorne (ecologist, writer and 'retired' dancer). These days offered myself a chance to settle into the process whilst feeling the exhaustion of motherhood, a chance to observe the group without having to lead the creative content and give me a sense of spaciousness for planning and responding to how the rest of the week should unfold. These guest facilitators had played a significant part in my individual process over the years as we developed our 'creative companionships' through shared interest

and exchanges about Shepherd's writing and love for mountaineering. I invited them into the process of the performance making because of their lived experience, specialist knowledges and enthusiasm for the work's motivation.

Through this process there was an awareness of the collective and social thinking needed to create this work. The voices and presence of other women with differing experiences, to fold into the narrative and embodied experiences for the dancers and then ultimately the audience members.

The approach to making performance, that practically tries to explore how we can work with a multitude of people to eventually create the deeper meaning and meta narratives underpin this performance work. It is these experiences of everyone that form the meta narratives that create the substance, detail and depth to the work; the invisible but felt underpinnings. This embodied knowledge is multi-faceted and creates a thick atmosphere; a term I use playfully in relation to Clifford Geertz (1973) ethnographic approach of thick description when how the interweaving of culture 'was an ongoing construction of meaning as people continually reflected upon the significance of their lives' (Oakes and Price, 2008, p.29) and in relation to the mountains. The performances contained the knowledge of these women, of places, plants, textures of weather, cycles and time. There is a trust that this deep and wide research space creates and embeds itself within the movement creation and performance; where these social and wider relational experiences are expressed and embodied within each of the performers and choir.

Whilst working with somatic methods and Body Weather approaches predominantly within the development of the movement material, I have organised them into three themes that also follow a process of going deeper into an environmental dance or mountain-relational dance process more specifically. The three themes are:

1. **Interior-exterior:** pertaining to ways of understanding the felt sense of the body and the mountains interiority.

2. **Porous boundaries:** dancing through a place of awareness regarding the interconnectivity of body and mountains.
3. **Kaleidoscopic becomings:** the idea of learning to hold and embody multiple perspectives of the mountains.

These three themes are not the entire picture of the detailed creative process undertaken with the company but are rather extracts that offer windows into the emergent processes we explored together. Working with all our human bodily senses was an integral method of engaging across all these themes, as well as working with our imagination to access ideas both inside and beyond our sensory capabilities.

Interior-exterior

In chapter three of *The Living Mountain* (2011) Shepherd expresses her realisation, through her experience of walking that, 'a mountain has an inside' (p.16). Shepherd's idea of the mountains interiority coupled and relating to her ongoing exploration of her own interiority and sensorialities was a key theme carried through this practice research process.

The idea of interiority of the mountains suggested by Shepherd's insights, acts as a method that counterflows the 'summit centric' notion of ascending the heights and edges of high places. The process instead brings attention to the interiority of the body through sensory and somatic awareness activities, to connect to this sense mountain interiority of the mountain and any interrelations between the two.

The idea lends itself well to connecting with somatic dance work, tasks and scores within the mountain environment. These scores were then often related back to Shepherd's text, of which I will illustrate through the following examples of how we worked with both text, body and mountain. Shepherd asserts that walking in the hills is one approach to attaining this expansive and essential bodily awareness. She writes:

Walking thus, hour after hour, the senses keyed, one walks the flesh transparent. But no metaphor, transparent, or light as air, is adequate. The body is not made negligible, but paramount. Flesh is not annihilated but fulfilled. One is not bodiless, but essential body (p.106).

This idea of connecting to these 'essential' bodily experiences through walking and hiking was explored in depth throughout the process, with a view to cultivating more detailed embodied awareness of self and place. This included group and individual ways of working in silence, with stillness, following the journey of the breath and body scanning for sensations through action and in resting. Body Weather approaches to moving slowly (Bisoku) were also introduced to slow down and to highlight and challenge individual habitual rhythms and speeds of moving.

This developing awareness was valuable to how we responded and generated movement material overall and to the events performance qualities, making this somatic and environmental awareness a core element of the process and work. Explorations were repeated and explored many times in various places and would inform the choices of scores and invitations given to participants in the performance event (see: group somatic facilitators score discussed later in this chapter).

Porous boundaries

Through our senses we continually explored ways to meet the mountain place. Touch, smells, sound, taste, sights, Shepherd would remind us through prompts in the text, that 'each of the senses is a way into what the mountain has to give' (2011, p.97). Working with this idea of dissolving the boundaries between body and mountain is present in both Shepherd's writing and Body Weather practices notions of dancing with place.

We explored in depth through our skin organ, because 'touch is the most intimate sense of all. The whole sensitive skin is played upon' (p.102). We found, exploring through taste, (often an overlooked sense when working outdoors) in an immediate way. Shepherd writes:

‘The palate can taste the wild berries, blaeberry, “wild free-born cranberry” and, the most subtle of all, the avern or cloudberry, a name like a dream’ (p.97). The group learnt what was possible to taste and to lose some fear around tasting and bringing things into the mouth to explore the boundaries of body and place.

The experience of sleeping on the mountain was an important element to engaging with the mountains and to extend a bodily immersion for feeling into and between notions of what artist Hamish Fulton (2010) calls mountain time and human time.³¹ We considered Cathy Turners idea of *porous dramaturgies* (2014) whilst working in the mountains and Body Weather’s assertions of bodies being a continually shifting part of the earth’s continuum. Direction came again from Shepherd’s writing about her experiences of sleeping outside:

No one knows the mountain completely who has not slept on it. As one slips over into sleep, the mind grows limpid; the body melts; perception alone remains...There is nothing between me and the earth and sky (2011, p.90).

Overnight expeditions were organized for the company to experience this sense of mountain interiority, rhythms and darkness and ‘to learn the nature of the mountain’ including how to feel its ‘quiescence’ (p.90). The dancers camped on the edge of Loch Avon, beneath the summits of Cairngorm and Ben Mac Dhui. Here they explored the area Shepherd refers to when discussing the mountain as having an inside. In the daylight they explored the geology of the ‘Shelter Stones’ and Loch Etchachan above their camp. At night, they explored the edges of the vast Loch Avon and its atmosphere as they slept. The following day they immersed themselves in the water of Loch Avon, curious to experience the porous possibilities of cold swims described by Shepherd:

The whole skin has this delightful sensitivity... This plunge into the cold water of a mountain pool seems for a brief moment to disintegrate the very self; it is not to be borne: one is lost: stricken: annihilated. Then Life pours back in (p.104).

³¹ *Mountain Time – Human Time* is the title of a book by Fulton in which he documents a 21 day trip in the Cairngorms amongst other expeditions.

This process of undoing or ‘a shedding’ as Keren, one of the dancers described³² is a common sensation described throughout *The Living Mountain* (2011) and within discussion between the company during our experiences of extended days and weeks out in the mountains.

Kaleidoscopic perspectives and becomings

One of the clearest physical invitations in the book that was used many times in workshops and walks over the years of this project was the example of shifting perspectives through looking. Shepherd explains and makes the invitation to:

Lay the head down, or better still, face away from what you look at, and bend with straddles legs till you see your world upside down. How new it has become! From the close-by sprigs of heather to the most distant fold of the land, each detail stands erect in its own validity (p.11).

The invitation to try detaching oneself from a human-centric perspective to consider ‘how the earth must see itself’ (Shepherd. 2011, p.11) is a profound learning on Shepherd’s journeys. The ability to develop attentiveness from somatic inquiry, which then extends into an empathic sensing of the earth’s perspective, is the embodiment of ecological thinking. This *mountain-place-relational* approach was to continue this awareness and garner the abilities as a performer or a participant to shift one’s positionality towards the mountain.

Shepherd also points to the illusionary nature of our subjective embodied experiences, particularly when it comes to sight and ways of seeing:

Half closing the eyes can also change the value of what I look upon... Such illusions, depending on how the eye is placed and used, drive home the truth that

³² Keren articulates this shedding and interconnection in the groups walking conversation on the project’s website. Available from:

www.intothemountain.co.uk/into-the-mountain-group-reflection-a-return-walk/

[Accessed: 10 August 2024].

our habitual vision of things is not necessarily right: it is only one of an infinite number, and to glimpse an unfamiliar one, even for a moment, unmakes us, but steadies us again. Its queer but invigorating. It will take a long time to get to the end of a world that behaves like this if I do no more than turn round on my side or my back (p.101).

Through the process we embraced a healthy mistrust of 'truth' through looking and instead felt into the invigorating experiences of being with the mountains with a lightness and curiosity. The holding of multiple ideas and sensorial inputs from place and people developed as we went further into spending time with the mountains. This is also a practice in Body Weather when working with multiple stimuli simultaneously in improvisations and moving with place.

Through this process, the term and approach of *Kaleidoscopic perspectives and becomings* best articulates the sensation of listening and moving from multiple stimuli. I later ascribed this to the wider project's approach of being a container for the multitudinous and complexities of creating environmentally focused or *mountain-place-relational performance* making.³³

Swoon score

Swoon, meaning, 'to be overcome with admiration, adoration or other strong emotions'³⁴ was a movement exploration that connected, falling through and in love with place expressed in both Shepherd's text, the company's experience and, as an approach to relate to place differently. It begins with another instruction from Shepherd herself, 'I let my eyes travel over the surface, slowly, from shore to shore, beginning at my feet and ending against the precipice' (2011, p.35).

³³ It is only recently, I found a singular reference to 'kaleidoscopic dance rituals' in (Castillo, 2016, p.69) that I later refer to in the Future Research section.

³⁴ Google-Oxford Languages definition search [online]. [Accessed 25 July 2021].

The movement of the swoon within the choreography was also a response to the idea of *feyness* that Shepherd describes in her accounts of time spent in the hills; that is a sensation, emotion and movement of 'joyous release' arising from the place (2011. p.31).

The enacting of this movement to explore and direct it away from any romantic notions of swooning- and instead physically *lean into* these actions from a word, laden with emotional and gendered association. It also explored what it is to bring about a sense of swooning connected to an environment, rather than human to human relationships usually associated with the emotions.

The movement notes for this exploration, its instructions and choreographers' notes found in Appendix 9. PR2: *ITM (group) Swoon Score and notes*, offer an insight into the ideas and process of this one movement sequence, at the very end of the performance. This choreography was collectively referred to as *the swoons*.

This act of swooning or exploring feyness as an embodied and ecstatic way of being connects the movement back to the internal and emotional experiences. How do the feelings, through this sense of falling backwards, express the sensations of awe and admiration? To be overtaken momentarily, by the intertwining relationship of gravity, sensation, emotion, movement from within the place. How do these sensations form part of our understanding of mountains? Where the risk of falling in mountains is, for good reason, something to be feared and avoided, how can we create conditions to explore sensations of falling in a safe way?

Practising this movement as a collective ritual also brought about further exploration of shared and collectively driven ecstatic states and experiences. As we explored this movement, we considered how it was to witness one woman doing this, then collectively as a group, undulating and rising to repeat the motions, this falling and re-surfing, re surfacing, re-emerging to try out a different pathway, face other directions, restate themselves along another line of focus. Reading the place through this fine line of a focus. This instruction invites a direction for looking that is open to what you encounter along the way of the movement. This instruction was for the individual to find for themselves; to explore, search,

become aware of the details. It is repeated as a way of refining the experiences: each attempt met anew, as though meeting a new path each time, knowing this encounter will not be the same as the last. This movement sequence is the manifestation of our attempting to embody the ethos of Shepherd's approach in its entirety.

Vocal composition process

Hanna Tuulikki's invitation for the project was to focus on developing the compositional score for a newly formed choir that consisted of singers of all ages and abilities. Hanna's interdisciplinary approach to music composition was vital when developing our collaborative relationship and finding creative common ground, through our interest in ecologically focused art making.

Two 'taster' workshops were organised in February 2019 in Aviemore and Braemar community centres for prospective singers to be introduced to the project and the vocal arrangements. These workshops were, to our surprise, oversubscribed and we met with over 70 women through the two events. Due to the larger than expected interest, we discussed how to accommodate a larger group and so Hanna's long-time trusted collaborator, singer Lucy Duncombe was also brought in to work with the choir of 24 women. They worked in two distinct rehearsal groups, due to the additional challenges of the geographical spread of the singers across the Cairngorms. The choir groups met in person for monthly rehearsals (in Aviemore and Braemar) and embraced monthly online rehearsals to bring the groups together (long before the covid pandemic brought a normalcy to online working in this way). This rehearsal gave both time for learning the composition, building confidence and creating a social space over many months for participants to get to know one another. Hanna's musical scores and rehearsal notes for the choir can be found in Appendix 10: PR2: *ITM (group) Vocal rehearsal notes and score*.

For each of the performances in Glen Feshie, there was approximately 16 vocalists (from a total choir group of 24), led by Hanna and Lucy. Together as a group they would walk into

Glen Feshie, for the performances. The group supported one another in the varying needs emerging from the experience.

The details of the creative process of the voice work are further explained through the next *Aiming Off* (edited) conversation with Hanna and myself.

The intention is that these anecdotal explanations are a more accurate and first-hand account of Hanna's' experience of working with the group. This *Aiming Off*, again, offers the tangential journeying that happened through the creative process, with insight into the emergent themes, practicalities and development of the music's relationship to the environment and performance.

Aiming Off: Hanna Tuulikki

Developing and working with a community choir, Hanna Tuulikki's role as composer in the project does not quite give justice to the complexity of her approach to making interdisciplinary work.

This interview gives some deeper insights into Hanna's creative processes and themes we discussed and explored when developing the sound scores for this project. The conversation also gives space to understand Hanna's practice more widely and the confluences of our practices that brought her into PR2: *ITM (group)* performance project.

The main themes and topics covered through this interview give some insight into why Hanna was invited into project and how we synthesised our methods through collaborative approaches. The main themes evident through this conversation are 1) Hanna's artistic responses and approaches to the project, 2) our shared ecological approaches and bringing methods of mimeses into the vocal work and 3) Hanna's experience and shared approaches to creating the community choir for PR2: *ITM (group)*.

Creative Companion: Hanna Tuulikki (HT)

July. 2023. In-Person. Glasgow

SK: Briefly explain how you became involved in the project Into the Mountain (group) and specialisms you brought to the project?

HT: I am an artist, composer and performer, I work predominantly with voice and increasingly with movement to explore spaces, often beyond or before words, to tell stories, loosely around re-worlding, in times of bio spheric crisis.

I brought my experience of site-specific work, most of my work is place responsive. I'm interested in this relationship of entanglements of ecology, of the different species within that ecology, then our cultural perceptions, interpretations and practices that relate to those ecologies. I often talk about this as being mnemonic topographies, the land encoded in the song, the lore embedded in the land and this symbiotic thing of culture and ecology and unearthing some of those relationships.

Exploring that in relation to the ecologies of Glen Feshie felt exciting. Also looking through a historical and contemporary lens, so understanding Nan Shepherd's relationship, alternative ways of becoming with the mountain that aren't through the male conquering to succeed, but to find an intimacy.

I'm interested in mimesis as a way to nurture empathy and Nan Shepherd's writings and your approach really resonated in that way.

SK: Can you talk through some of the process you worked with (for) the *Into the Mountain* score?

HT: I was really struck by her (Shepherd's) writing around senses. I think she even says, 'each of the senses is a way into what the mountain has to give' (2011, p.97) and that felt like a doorway into an approach. I decided to focus on how she writes about sound, so on the ear, on listening, on tuning in, but also on accidental hearing, these different forms of things going through your ears.

It comes out of Pauline Oliveros' (2005) *Deep Listening* where she talks about the nuanced differences between hearing and listening. I think Nan Shepherd's writing covers these different ways of using your ears.

I'm interested in this idea of silence as well and what that meant to Nan Shepherd because often actually it's about presence.

SK: There's not often much silence in the mountains.

HT: The lovely thing about making acoustic vocal sound in a place, is that you can do this thing with dynamics, you can start really quietly, build something that becomes the most present sound in the space, then by pulling back down, there's a thing that happens to the listener, this tuning into the other sounds of the place. Or having a really quiet tone, you have to almost reach with your ears further to hear it, so then you're also tuning into everything else that's happening as music. It's also multi-sense as well, isn't it? The ears are a way into other senses.

SK: Yeah, moving towards things, also not the visual sense so much. (Shepherd) does talk a lot about the visual aspect, but if we don't rely on the visual sense, where does it allow us to go?

HT: (quoting Shepherd) 'The senses must be used. For the ear, the most vital thing that can be listened to here is silence... To bend the ear to silence is to discover how seldom it is there. Always something moves. When the air is quite still there is always running water... But now and then comes an hour when the silence is all but absolute, and listening to it, one slips out of time. Such a silence is not a mere negation of sound, it is like a new element, and if water is still sounding with a low, far-off murmur, it is no more than the last edge of an element we are leaving, as the last edge of land hangs on the mariner's horizon'. (p.96)

That paragraph for me probably was the core invitation as a score, this sense of tuning into being in that place and a score that can help that tuning in, both for the performers and the audience. This baseline, not in a musical sense, always going back to this sense of water. Even as you say, when the music disappears, there's always that water sound there.

HT: We talked a lot about Shepherd's movement between the micro and the macro.

One quote that felt important was, 'when the body is keyed to its highest potential and controlled to a profound harmony, deepening into something that resembles trance, that I discover most nearly what it is to be'. (p.106) What does that mean sonically, was a really interesting provocation.

There's something interesting about the history of trance as opposed to meditation, in that trancing is about a community activity, whereas historically meditation is something that's very much solo.

SK: Yes, social trances, which she's (Shepherd) coming into through that solo experience, through a Zen Buddhist interest she was aware of.

HT: But then it's all relational, because she says, 'I have walked out of the body and into the mountain, I am a manifestation of its total life, as the saxifrage or the white winged ptarmigan' (p.106). So even in that solo experience, it's still in relation to everything.

Going out with you and Jo (Hellier), I'm thinking about the rhythms of the body walking, that was also a direction when I was thinking about something that had a bit more rhythm. Something that could create a different feeling to the more spacious bits.

Most of what I wrote is wordless, so it's drawing on these themes but it's mimetic so emulating those things either sonically or in a kind of synaesthesia way.

(For example) the first, 'Ooo's', could be wind, it's almost setting the place and then it starts with this 'yo- do-dod-odda' which was so much about the rain and weather. The second section was about birds and the walking, then the third section was very much playing with this idea of water on earth or stone and this babbling or the flowing of the water, the murmur she (Shepherd) talks about. So, it's using the 'Mmm' sound and 'mmmnnnnnooo' and also playing with this idea of mountains (mmmou-mow) literally 'mouth' and 'mountain', so drawing some poetics, pre-language and then these harmonies that glide over the top.

(In the performance) We're all sitting facing the glen and Lucy Duncombe and I stand up and we call to the mountain. We began with 'Ooos' in a three-part harmony. Working with long held notes on an OOooo in A, G sharp and F sharp and also

improvising with a yodel of an octave on the F sharp. The choir are given the agency to improvise with these fragments.

We became louder and then it brings in these 'yod-oo-dod-oo' on the f sharp, the E and C-sharp. Again, keeping some of these 'Ooo's', a sort of body, out of which these 'yod-oo-dod-oo's' flow or fall onto, and that swells. There was a sense of drawing attention, connecting with the elements of the site.

SK: I remember the extended amount of time it took for the performers to move down the mountain was always longer than we'd expected and them (the choir) vocally having to maintain that.

HT: Or having it shift and move enough to not just lock into one place. It was very organic but also quite structured.

SK: Yes, that relationship between the movement and musical score needing to be flexible because of the space.

HT: Yes, looking at this performance score, we ended up not working in a linear way at all. I mean, there are some numbers, so we were bringing people in, but we were being quite responsive.

It's quite synesthetic, or multimodal in terms of the sensory and also that it's semi-improvised, giving agency to the women who perform the piece.

Because it's improvised, either consciously or unconsciously, there is no choice but to be responsive. So, if the vocalists are a little bit chilly, that's going to be in the music somehow. Or if they're feeling the mist on the hair — I remember these little droplets of water. Everything is going to be carried.

This last section is different to everything else in that it's from a different source material. I worked with a traditional song from Aberdeenshire known as 'Queen of the Heather' or 'Up a wide and lonely glen' and it's from this version from Jeannie

Robertson, who is from the traveller tradition.³⁵ I was really struck by how it captured a sense of this open glen with very simple, accessible language, but also through the intervals, it's almost like creating a sound image of a mountain.

I worked on creating a loose structure that suggested snippets from this song, to build something much more fluid; working with the harmonies of the song, the intervals, to build harmonies. Working with one phrase is just, 'up' (wide glen) and 'lofty' and 'wide up mountain', 'a wide and lonely glen... that was for its up shade a lofty wide shade mountain, fare you well, fare you well glen, you well, to your heather hill, fare you well, fare you well wide green up wide green'.

More than deconstructing, it's almost working on a sort of dream level of the song.

SK: It's interesting how the song sonically builds these images of the rising of hills or the shape of glens and the spaciousness of that with multiple voices.

HT: One thing to note is this song being carried by tradition bearers. It would have been sung by farming communities in that area. So, it's of the vernacular, which felt important, to root it in something there, felt a respectful thing.

SK: Yes, that sense of vernacular, localised detail — not putting a song into a landscape that doesn't fit. Working with indigenous knowledge, that comes from the land.

HT: It goes back to mnemonic topographies (mentioned earlier)

SK: Can you reflect on your experiences of working with the choir. You had a hard job working (across) vast geographic separation.

HT: I like to work with untrained singers and to make something that is inclusive and accessible. The first (we) did was think about how to have these taster sessions (in Aviemore and Braemar)

³⁵ A recording of Jeannie Robertson singing the original version is available to listen at:

www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/25382?l=en [Accessed: 20 August 2024]

Logistically it presented a few challenges because so many people wanted to do it! People were in different places. My close collaborator, Lucy Duncombe also stepped into the process. We've worked together so much, she knows how I facilitate the learning, and she took that on over a course of two months. I sent demos, so they would listen to the demos and Lucy would do a movement, per session.

Working with those women, they were so inspiring, so sensitive, strong, so funny, and with quite diverse experiences. We went on a journey together... The connections that were made, a community of folk coming together, the creative team, collaborators, choir, performers, producers and mountain leaders and the audience as well.

HT: The choir would walk in and out of the mountain together. That felt like a beautiful part of the journey, part of this thing of trancing together. It's like an hour and a half walk. For some folk it was challenging, but the commitment that you need to do that it's quite a powerful thing. It was a really moving experience.

I can't remember beginnings, endings and trajectories of what happened. What I do remember is almost like these collages of sensations. Now you're talking about the kaleidoscopic, for me it sort of exists in that space.

SK: I have similar experiences of recalling things back. What you were saying earlier — about everything that's imbued by the mountain, like the way that we remember, this dismantling of non-linear ways of processing, might be part of that way of remembering. I wonder how much of that goes back to the 'undoing' that Shepherd talks about — undoing ways of knowing.

HT: Also thinking about the duration of a process. Where does the performance actually start? Any work that has site specificity, you can't have a curtain that goes up. I think that was so beautifully framed with *Into the Mountain*.

Walking Routes: development and facilitation

During the research time, I went alone and with others to develop the components of the work and to spend time in specific areas, feeling for possible places to situate the performance event. We eventually decided upon the connecting three walking routes, on existing paths within the Glen Feshie area. See Appendix 11. *PR2: ITM (group) Three Route Maps* for further details.

The three walking routes we finally decided upon were based on various reasoning including the options of circular routes, the varying lengths and intensities and importantly, options to change, adapt or exit the routes if needed on the days of the performance.

I worked closely and in consultation with Heather Morning (Health and Safety officer) at Mountaineering Scotland. As a local, well-respected mountaineer, Heather's support and input into the planning were integral to the success of the project. Alongside Heather, we worked with mountain leaders, Kathy Grindrod and Sue Savage to lead the three separate group routes and paired them each with their somatic facilitator.

Within mountain leadership training, approaches to managing people's expectation is often highlighted as part of the 'soft' skills needed. The idea is to give people confidence in your capabilities as leader and make them feel empowered through giving them a sense of agency; in what lies ahead and often making decisions with them as a group. Through explaining what participants might come to experience for instance; what the weather is doing over the day, what terrain they will encounter, the time it will take, showing them the route on the map, is all part of preparing participants for the journey that will unfold; not just under foot but also mentally, physically and emotionally. These soft skills of leadership develop on the job rather than in the training, but are key ways of working with people outdoors that this project wanted to connect to, not just the technical abilities of mountaineering. All three mountain leaders came with their life and work experiences to offer a rich and deep knowledge of mountain place and how to work with people in such environments. These attributes to group mountain leadership have certain parallels with somatic and movement

awareness-based approaches, such as the Feldenkrais Method which also engages with the approach of ‘future imagining’. Through inviting participants to imagine movement patterns first, connections are being made neurologically and muscularly through the act of working with embodied imagination that is exploratory rather than performative (Paparo, 2022).

This management of expectation to support individuals and groups was relevant within both the choreographic process and with the walking groups. It could be considered they need and are similar dramaturgical skills for shaping participant experience. I would go further by saying these approaches influenced the choreographic methodologies through the process of this performance project.

Walking groups: Somatic facilitators

Working with somatic facilitators, Margaret Kerr, Jean Langhorne and Saffy Setohy, I designed a walking ‘score’ for the facilitation of the walking groups. These scores had specific activities and directions for starting and ending the walks, as well as themes and things to focus on that directly related to elements of the performance material (such as responding from Shepherd quotes or encouraging qualities of listening and touching)

The rest of the walk was left open for each facilitator to guide in response to each group and approaches they felt most confident leading. Because I had developed working relationships with each of these facilitators in a variety of contexts, each conversation was bespoke to them and their ways of working, whilst bringing the common ground of shared language through the ‘somatic facilitators walking scores’ document we shared (see Appendix 12. PR2: *ITM (group) Walking Facilitation Notes*)

Shepherd’s prose offered a framework in which to encourage sharp observation, felt sensations and emotional connection to the environment whilst on the walks. Engaging audiences to attune their sensitivity, towards themselves and the place, I would argue, allowed for a new way for participants to then also experience the performance work, in relation to

themselves and their experiences of the hills. The approaches to these facilitated routes were developed through the belief that audiences needed to have been made familiar with the language and sentiments of the performed choreography they would witness within the hills.

Aiming Off: Margaret Kerr

The following *Aiming Off* conversation with Margaret Kerr is again intended to offer first person insight into the experience of the somatic facilitator's role, how they engaged with the material of Shepherd, their own specialism they brought and how they worked with the mountain leaders.

Margaret Kerr is an eco-psychologist, mindfulness teacher and artist whom I have worked with for almost 10 years. Margaret moved between mentor and creative companion as our working relationship developed over that time. Her knowledge and experience of ecological thinking and therapeutic practices combined with being a qualified mountain leader brings a rich landscape of experiences that relates to and informs the process of the PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)* in particular.

Although her relationship to the project is more wide ranging in terms of our ongoing conversations about our generated experiences of mountaineering and mutual interest in embodied and ecological praxis, her role in PR2: *ITM (group)* performance event was that of a somatic facilitator on one of the three walking routes, referred to as the 'middle route'. Although her extensive knowledge and experience as a mountain leader was woven into the development of her approach to leading the walk, it is her experience as a mindfulness teacher and ecologically focused facilitation that informed how she shaped the walking group's experiences. Margaret was paired with well-respected avalanche forecaster and mountain leader, Kathy Grindrod.

For this interview, we walked the middle and shorter routes as a circular walk together in Glen Feshie in early summer of 2023. We then camped overnight in the area, leaving the

following morning. This situated practice of embodied recollection allowed us both to respond to and be reminded of details within the place itself, rather than relying on memory alone.

In this edited interview, the details of the weather and incidental events that occur in the place have been omitted but are included in the full-length edited version available on the *Into the Mountain* projects website.³⁶

The interview took place during a mid-morning break after a few hours of walking and reaching the first hilltop after an hour's ascent. The day was sunny and surprisingly still, so we took the opportunity to sit down (in the crisp-dry lichen covered hill) and reflect en-route.

³⁶ Available at: <https://www.intothemountain.co.uk/aiming-off-interviews/>

[Accessed: 28 January 2025].

June 2023. In Person. Glen Feshie Hills. Cairngorms

SK: We often refer to the walk that you facilitated with Kathy (Grindrod) as the ‘middle walk’, which is the second longest walk (of the three routes). What approaches did you bring to the project and when designing the walks (and) how did your individual practice feed into that?

MK: It's been a combination really of my mountain leader training and also teaching mindfulness and working outdoors in that experiential way that I did on Natural Change³⁷ and other outdoor mindfulness retreats. But it's not just to use the landscape as a venue, like you might do a meditation hall or something like that. But really, to find what fits best with the places I'm in, to be informed by the places and the shapes of the land about what will be the best practice to fit in where. That often seems to fall quite naturally into place. When I was doing a recce for the route, there seem to be the parts of Nan Shepherd's (2011) texts that I felt really fitted well, obviously, because it was written up here, they fitted well with certain places on the route. Then they would trigger an experiential exercise that illustrated the kind of thing that Shepherd was writing about. So, when she was writing about water, to do some sensory exercises, mindfulness, practice, listening to the water, and also practices that come from other traditions of sharpening our awareness, deepening awareness of how the water interfaces with air and the rocks. That was something that we did in preparatory workshops with the dancers as well. That's from a shamanic tradition of the four elements from Tibetan *Bön* tradition.

³⁷ As mentioned in Sam Trotman's interview, *Natural Change* was a programme and training courses led by Dave Key and Margaret Kerr. Information in its current form is available at:

<https://naturalchange.org/>

[Accessed: 22 August 2024].

My reading about meditative practices from different parts of the world, and different practices came in quite naturally with places, because they suggested themselves, when I was in the place.

There was a long, open stretch of moorland where it would be easy to slowly fall into silence and slow the walking down. Then there was a dip in the land that felt like a bowl, like a crucible that we could all just rest and be held, while we're attending to the five senses. That prepared us for going up a really steep heathery bank for about best part of an hour or maybe 45 minutes. But rather than that just being a trudge, because we've done the meditative exercises beforehand, I was able to frame that as, how do you notice your body responding to the climb? And what thoughts do you notice going through your mind? What emotions are there, is there a frustration for example, or thoughts of, 'I'll never get up here', that kind of thing, just coming back to the senses. When these things come up, it's probably easier if you've done it when you're not going up a steep hill beforehand.

So, I think there was a gradual unfolding of one practice into the next, so the practice before prepared us for the one that was following, and that's very much like sequencing, in that experiential outdoor education that I first practised in Natural Change.

But it's also born of going up the hills for the last 30 years or so and just noticing what was going on and what helps and what's interesting and how our body feels and responds to place.

SK: I am interested in how you're articulating or talking about the choices you make are also sometimes informed in the moment of what the land is doing or how the group is feeling.

MK: That's the primary thing and I've got a lot of faith that, If I go out with an open mind and an open heart to the place I'm working on my own. The place is helping. It's co-creating what happens.

I would even say, that's what I would take my lead from. Obviously, there's something to be balanced with that, which is about timing and about getting down to the performance site on time. The looking after people's physical needs, making sure people have got time to have a break, and something to eat, go to the toilet, and that kind of thing. And if somebody's not so well or struggling, that we can, we can allow that in as well.

But that seems to just naturally fit into place, somehow there's a real grace about that, if I can respond to the place itself, and the place suggests routes, that will be helpful and appropriate for that group.

And there's also a synchronicity sometimes happens that [you] could never expect, you know, which are really helpful. When that happens, it feels like there's some kind of state of flow where it suggests that everything's on the right track.

SK: There's something about graciousness or finding the grace, which I feel is also present in Nan Shepherd's writing, when she talks about quiescence or the slowing down.

Do you want to say briefly, anything about these interests have taken you and how specifically relates to your understanding of Scottish mountain environments?

MK: Some kinds of working in wilderness therapy, sort of feeling that can be a pitfall, where people go out to do work with people who have suffered trauma, for example. And everything in the environment becomes a therapeutic tool. I think the idea of the landscape as something that's used was very much part of the colonial insult to the highlands. In the 18th and 19th century there was always an element of use, and that people grew food there and kept cattle there, but the coming of industrial capitalism, that really heightened the sense of the landscape being used for certain things used for sheep rearing, used for generating revenue from deer hunting. And also, the people got used for military service and then in the Highland regiments.

It's not that the clan chiefs didn't use people for their raids and campaigns before that, but I think it just feels like that it was a kinship society had something more relational about it. A lot of Gaelic poetry has a really strong relational and animist element to it, where people did write about themselves as part of something much bigger than themselves, which is the land. Something about use versus relationship.

SK: Could you articulate how you understand the idea of embodied knowledge and how this relates to you, and your wider environments, and in particular, when we are in mountain-scapes?

MK: Attending to that subtle level, feels like the way that I can feel it is through my body. One text that really helped me has been Shigenori Nagatomo's (1992) book, *'Attunement through the body'*...where bodies act like a resonator that can start to attune to environment, then the environment starts to tune to the body, a sort of bilateral attunement. Nagatomo calls a felt inter-resonance.

I think being in the mountains allows enough time for the stillness to come that allows opening out into a less dualistic way of apprehending the world, and the world apprehending us. Things become more interconnected... Shepherd had maybe experienced some of these things also. She had studied Buddhism, Zen, as far as I know. Something from that tradition that's been really helpful to me.

SK: How was it to work with *The Living Mountain* (2011) as a resource through the process of the work?

MK: It felt absolutely natural. I remember one of my friends telling me about Shepherd's book about 20 years ago. I was really looking for something like that then, because I was going on courses that were about technical instruction of how to be outdoors. I really longed for the spiritual, experiential, embodied side of it, and there seemed to be not much around... W.H Murray's (2020) book, *Evidence of Things Unseen* kind of alluded to it.

SK: Can you give us some insight on your experience working alongside mountain leader, Kathy Grindrod?

MK: Yeah, it's just lovely. It's really friendly and easy. I think because I'm a mountain leader as well, we can speak the same language about that. We both studied the flora and fauna of the area in our mountain leader training, so we're kind of drawing from the same lexicon of knowledge, words, ways of describing things, ways of perceiving things that we needed to about the pragmatic side of the group. So, it felt very harmonious.

SK: I'm thinking about the dynamic of you two working together, two women, but also, how was it to relinquish the responsibility of the mountain leader element?

MK: I have done both in certain settings. I mean, it's sort of slightly different states of consciousness. but then, when you get really in tune with the place, it all seems to come in together. I think it was helpful that we both had definite roles. I think when I'm out on my own or I'm out with other artists, I don't really think, oh, now I've got to navigate, now I've got to make work, now I've got, you know, it does all slot into place, but I think with the group it was just an awful lot to keep an eye on. I felt really happy that somebody else was making those decisions and it would have been fine if it was the other way around. If I had been the ML and someone else had been doing the experiential exercises, I would have been happy with that because I really like doing both, but I don't have to do them both at once. That would be an interesting thing. It wasn't in *Into the Mountain*, but that's certainly something, if we were to facilitate something together, to be able to flip between the two modes.

SK: Can you tell us about the walk that yourself and Kathy facilitated on this route?

MK: To really make a relationship with that route, rather than just crashing in and expecting to use it as a backdrop for what I was going to do, it was because of that collaborative way of working, I really had to have gone up there, I did walk the route before and worked out where I was going to do everything.

I think the first route, the first time, was maybe a bit more playful because it was a rehearsal and there were some friends of mine on it. The second time we did the middle route, there were probably different preferences. A couple of people in the group were much more interested in the kind of athletic physicality and went ahead quite a lot with Kathy. I ended up being further behind with the rest of the group, but something really interesting happened; where the people who were not so interested in the athletic aspects, really slowed down and ended up all lying down and more or less doing their own meditation practice. It slowed down the pace so that people couldn't surge ahead so much, in order for the group to be held together. It was some kind of collective experience of stillness at that one particular part of the walk.

SK: Are there any elements of the research that are particularly important to you and why?

MK: The part that's involved with Zen and with other ways of knowing and the decolonizing potential for this kind of work.

SK: What do you think are the main challenges of the project's aims of working interdisciplinary across the sectors?

MK: I think Miranda Fricker (2007) talks about in her book about epistemic injustice about a kind of goodwill that can really help everybody to get a fair say. If everybody's got that goodwill to try and understand each other's worldview and a way of knowing. And I think that can happen through being in the landscape together. At the moment, we're both sitting next to each other looking at the same view. And I think that kind of perspective can help us find common values. It is something between the structural but then the very personal.

SK: The human thread of it is very present, even if you want to work with land or with mountains, there's always the human thread of decision making that's really holding some of that, not this sense of freedom.

MK: Something about power and custodianship. there's a kind of spectrum with how much we're able to have a relationship with the land that we are in, that can be disrupted in wars, ecological damage, that happens through big structural processes that have heartbreaking effects on individuals' relationships with nature.

SK: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

MK: Coming back up here again and reflecting on this. We're looking over at the performance site now and talking about what it's brought and everything that fed into it, like the streams that are feeding into that glen itself. Thinking of drinking that water and, you know, it is becoming incorporated into our cells and how the work has incorporated into my cells.

Convergence of the three main elements (dance, voice, walk)

The performance event finally brought the three creative elements of the walking routes, choreographic research and the choir together with the fourth element, the mountain-place. Returning to Stewart's (2010) three *Environmental Dance* categories, this project aimed to synthesise and explore two of the categories (category 1. having been explored already in PR1: *ITM (solo)*: of 2. creating dance work outdoors and 3. working with somatic-based practices outdoors to generate and explore new ecological knowledge and environmental values (p.32). Through this project, I propose some additional categories for the Environmental Dance umbrella to include two further categories: 4. the embodied and lived experiences within other specialisms (such as mountain leaders and indigenous knowledges in relation to place) and 5. the geopolitical landscape and context of specific environments.

Reflections

Since the performance event I undertook several interviews to reflect on the process with the people involved in its creation. This section is a chance to include the voices and perspectives of the people involved in the work's performance elements and to reflect on their experiences as part of the learning in this research project.

Reflective testimonies gathered from the choir offered an insight into some of the experiences of individuals involved.³⁸ Exploring these participant's texts, stand out themes that run through the group's overriding experiences include, social aspects and developing new relationships with people in a supportive group context, being present and feeling connected to nature and mountain-place, through being with place and learning the vocal composition. Some singers articulated how the experience was healing or built their confidence and at pertinent times of life challenges, transition and trauma experiences that offered new perspectives. One singer explains that 'every day brought new discoveries on a personal, physical and a deeper spiritual level'.³⁹

One stand-out observation about the performance itself conjures the sensibility of the work very well; 'the embodied nature of Nan Shepherd's writing infiltrated the music and movement with authenticity and a kind of confident plainness'.⁴⁰

³⁸ This collection of writings from numerous company members can be found in the Common Place Book section of the project website: <https://www.intothemountain.co.uk/commonplacebook> [Accessed: 10 August 2024]

³⁹ Read Julie's reflection. Available from: www.intothemountain.co.uk/looking-back-julie-lawson [Accessed: 10 August 2024]

⁴⁰ Hanna's full reflection available from: www.intothemountain.co.uk/looking-back-hannah-may/ [Accessed: 10 August 2024].

This 'confident plainness' is a testament to the grounded work of this performance project, where the focus of working with people and mountains and developing our embodied awareness and relationality to mountains created the aesthetics and tone of the work rather than a reliance on theatrical conventions.

In September 2019 (a few months after the performances), the dancers and I met and stayed for the weekend in the Scottish Ladies Climbing Club hut in Kincaig, as our base. I conducted a group walking conversation as we walked back to the place of the performance, along the short route (as we had done every day in May). The dancers then revisited the performance material together and reflected again through recorded conversations on our way back via the same path. These situated conversations and revisiting of the performance material allowed for the place to also be present when reflecting on the work. The edited transcription of these discussions can be found on the project website and offers an insight not only into each dancer's experiences but also the ways in which they converse between one another after so much time working together. The transcription of this document is too long to include within the body of this thesis⁴¹, but I would like to draw out some key themes from the dancers' reflections about their experience of the project to begin reflecting on and concluding this project chapter.

All the dancers articulated in numerous ways that the process allowed for an embodied understanding of developing porous boundaries between body and mountain. One dancer Keren, describes the process as 'a sort of a shedding' and her ability to easily return to this state when being with the mountains is mentioned when she states, 'I've sunk into it again like I'm just with it, rather than exploring it.'

This porosity with mountain-place also extended to the other performers bodies too. Jo explains her experience of having 'a feeling like, everyone is my limbs' whilst Keren points towards this sense of the kaleidoscopic experience when she states, 'being all of you, showing

⁴¹ The edited transcription of the group's discussion is available to read in full at:

www.intothemountain.co.uk/into-the-mountain-group-reflection-a-return-walk/

[Accessed: 10 August 2024].

me different things, has made me know it even more, more than I would have done on my own.' This collective learning could be considered an example of eco-social-somatic in practice as the group developed more complex relationships with the place and each other.

The emotional connection to these somatic experiences was also expressed by everyone including Nussatari when they explained, 'we had gone through different ways in... I see, what was the rock, the rock inside me. But there's also what felt... a lot of joy in... what felt really natural, for me.' As a group our focus on being curious and finding joy in the process was important and relates to some sense of authenticity of the process also. This felt sense of joy also developed into a heartfelt appreciation of mountain place with some expressing 'I think I feel in love with them' (Jo) and the 'feeling of love and... a sense of gratitude' (Petra).

These emotional states connect to a developing respect and connection to the mountain place, not as a separate entity but as deeply felt embodied interconnection. The success of this creative process, of moving with the place, could be summarised through this short exchange between two dancers on the return walk back, 'Dance is a funny word for it really isn't it (Caroline)... its conversational nature. (Petra)... a movement dialogue (Caroline)... A *being* dialogue' (Petra).

Conclusion

The intention of this chapter was to illustrate how *mountain-place-relational performance* practices can create new frameworks for dialoguing with a mountain ecology across outdoor and arts sectors to connect to a wider audience. The chapter outlined the complexities of working within the specific mountainous environment of the Cairngorms and expanded upon how this informed the development of culturally and geographically engaged performance practices.

This Practice Research further explored the creation of performance work that implicitly interweaved gendered experiences of mountains, and in doing so, acted as a valuable frame with which to make visible women's relationship to place in a culturally specific context. This

Practice Research project argued that performance making within mountainous areas had to embrace ideas of multitudinous approaches and methods, including collaborative making, in relation to people and the land.

The process took instruction from the mountain place itself, Shepherd's prose and embodied inquiry to guide audience-participant's experiences of the place. The intention was to explore the possibilities of connecting peoples felt sense of the interiority of both body and mountains and to a wider connection with the more-than human dimensions of the Cairngorm Mountain ecologies.

Through this approach, the wider creative team explored our relational being and the potential of porous boundaries between self, body and place, in which to frame multiple perspectives of this mountainous environment. The performance communicated across microscopic and expansive ecologies and the sometimes-otherworldly sense of being with a place, as described by Shepherd and experienced through the creative process. This Practice Research project exemplifies how working with an expansive group of contributors brings a richness to a creative process and became a key approach to the work that evolved through the multiple elements and perspectives.

In relation to Research Questions 2 and 3, this Practice Research project revealed how embodied practices and place-relational performances can generate new ways of experiencing mountainous environments. The work engaged with Shepherd's embodied understanding of the mountain through a variety of methods and platforms, offering new insights into how contemporary artistic dialogues around the same environment can bring visibility to women's lived experiences of place. The collaborative, embodied, sensory methods employed in this project revealed new ways to understanding the intersection of mountaineering, gender, ecology, and mountain-place and in doing so, expanded the scope of place-relational performance practice.

Acknowledging the diversity of individuals, voices, positionalities, life experiences, indigenous knowledges, folklore and commonalities within their experiences. The

approaches and methodologies embraced the accumulative and fractal nature as a method of working that I came to consider as an embodied *kaleidoscopic* approach to performance making. This chapter argues that the multifocal and collaborative experiences of working within the project were a key aim and approach to creating *mountain-place-relational* performance. This approach allowed for a moving beyond the deeply engrained heroic-solo-male narratives of mountaineering culture of past and present, and instead, positioning the collective and eco-social somatic practice as an approach to consider more expansive ways in which to go into the mountain.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This Practice Research explored three main research questions to ask how embodied movement practices and the making of *mountain-place-relational performance* could provide new insights and innovative approaches towards experiencing outdoor mountainous contexts.

The first question asked: *To what extent do place-relational performance practices provide new insights into experiencing outdoor mountainous environment?*

This Practice Research found exceptional ways of gaining new insights to a mountainous environment through the design and delivering of a diverse set of activities and approaches. Embodied movement practice was central to these activities and consistently considered and incorporated the social, cultural and physical dimensions to working with place and people. The extent and breadth of activity in this Practice Research was wide ranging to address the complexities of the projects aims and questions. The various methods, including conversation, interviews and collaboration through approaches drawn from mountaineering, eco-social somatic practices, Body Weather dance and walking arts, offered diverse ways for people to engage with place and the performance-making process.

The project established unique conditions and creative frameworks, such as creative workshops, public events, talks, educational packages and the main performance events. These enabled people to access and engage with mountainous environments in ways that diverge from the historically summit-centric attitudes in mountaineering, as outlined in this thesis. These represent valuable new insights emerging from this Practice Research.

The main research question — *to what extent do place-relational performance practices provide new insights into experiencing outdoor mountainous environments?* implies a form of quantitative measure, which was not possible through this research process. On reflection, the research question primarily aligns with the qualitative nature of the Practice Research,

which limits the ability to measure insights through quantitative methods. As the research process progressed, the limitations of the question became increasingly apparent, and it could therefore only be partially answered.

The second question asked: *How do environmentally relational movement practices and performance-making contribute to new ways of experiencing the interconnection of humans and mountains?*

New ways of experiencing the interconnection of humans and mountains have been found throughout this Practice Research. The environmentally relational movement practices and performance-making creates participatory ways of exploring embodiment in the mountains. This enables a unique new way of experiencing the multiplicity of mountain ecologies that includes human and more-than-human perspectives. The movement practices and performance making creates social, collective and collaborative ways of experiencing mountainous place. This eco-conscious dance and performance practice enables participants to experience place in Massey's feminist sense, as dynamic and relational. The nature of the practices and performance-making done within this Practice Research brings a unique focus on embodiment that is always in relation to environment and our shifting, continuous relationship with the world.

The dancers reported new ways of seeing that could be considered a deepening awareness of kaleidoscopic, multiple perspectives. This awareness emerged through their individual and collective abilities to perceive one another and the more-than-human through heightened sensitivity developed in the embodied research process.

Through Deep Listening, walking, and specific dance practices that cultivate attentiveness and immersion, the dancers deepened their understanding of the complex relationships with mountain-place and each another. Similarly, the choir members highlighted the new social and emotional connections they formed from working with fellow participants and the place itself.

This approach to eco-social-somatic dance practices facilitates and generate embodied social learning. As the lead researcher, I gained valuable insights into how to cultivate a feminist

practice that centres embodied movement practice, collaboration, Deep Listening and multiple forms of dialogue through diverse approaches.

Finally, the third question asked: *Considering Shepherd embodied understanding of mountains expressed in The Living Mountain (2011) how can contemporary artistic dialogues about the same environment bring new insight to women's experience of place?*

At the heart of this research project were multiple methods for creating space for artistic dialogue between women in relation to the Cairngorms mountainous environment. These methods included walking, choreographic, somatic and embodied participation, written reflection, interviews and conversation.

Dialogue was central to the practice as a way of incorporating multiple perspectives. DeVault and Gross (2012) emphasise the need for 'giving voice' in feminist approaches to place. This project has applied a feminist approach, drawing on skills of attentiveness and Deep Listening (Oliveros, 2005) to facilitate a rich and complex dialogue between women and mountains. The Cairngorm environment is not fixed to one identity; it is ever-changing, reflecting the insights gained, which capture the fluid multiplicity of women's experiences of place. These dialogues bring a feminist lens to place and people, giving voice to embodied and emotional experiences. This enables more subjective, pluralistic and diverse approaches to thinking about mountain-place, one that reflects the plurality of women's experience of mountain-place.

The first Practice Research component PR1: *ITM (solo)* investigated the research questions through a solo, studio performance-based enquiry and considered the effectiveness of sharing these embodied languages and experiences through a studio performance context. The studio work illustrated how performance work can encompass and develop a variety of methods, including the use of visual representation of scale and working with sound and light design to explore the dynamic qualities of place and our human relations and engagement with them. Significantly this research focused on developing improvisational frameworks as part of the research methods. This strategy allowed for movement material to unfold in real time

within the performance structure, creating a relationship with the unfolding nature of time-based experiences within the mountain-place. It tested the idea that methods of recounting and performing embodied recollection of place can offer some sense of place and mountain encounter that are meaningful to an audience.

The invited peer responses included in PR1: *ITM (solo)* offered valuable indications as to how audience members experienced and articulated their engagement with the studio-based performance. These testimonies, as well as my own reflections on the creation and performing process, showed that utilising movement and embodied practice can offer a sense of place that could be shared and felt by the audience.

PR1: *ITM (solo)* illustrated however, that the representation of environments within this theatrical construct lacked the obvious interconnectivity, agency, and presence of the place itself for the audience. Identifying the need to work with mountain-place as part of the performance context, the audience's embodied experiences and connecting this experience to the choreographic material came about through the stated outcomes reflected upon from PR1: *ITM (solo)*. These then informed the consequent design, approach, and methodologies for the Practice Research PR2: *ITM (group)*.

The findings from PR2: *ITM (group)* were wide-ranging in relation to the first research question. Firstly, the poetics of Shepherd's text was explored in multiple ways through this performance design. Secondly, to frame somatic practices with audiences that allowed for the exploration of the porous boundaries between the felt sense of interiority and exteriority. The research argued that these movement and performance practices can offer innovative and empathic ways of connecting to mountain ecologies, alongside, and in collaboration with existing tropes of mountain leadership that focus on the more technical and safety elements of facilitating group experiences.

The research in PR2: *ITM (group)* explored and demonstrated creative approaches to facilitating individual and collective somatic movement experiences. A new understanding unfolded through this research process, in which the role of the performers and

choreographic material acted as a conduit that synthesised and expanded these embodied knowledges of attention. The performance work introduced audiences to further developed movement, choreographic and vocal motifs that were connected to their own embodied explorations before encountering the performance.

Through focusing on embodiment, a shift towards the realms of geo and eco-poetic practices articulated through the central example of Nan Shepherd's writing in *The Living Mountain* (2011) and the subsequent practice projects designed and developed for this Practice Research was a strategy in which to move away from tropes of engagement within mountaineering culture that focus on technical skills and goal orientated approaches. Shepherd's embodied understanding is part of her oeuvre of knowing the mountains. Importantly, she does not hierarchise one knowledge system over another; bringing embodied and lived experience in line with scientific knowledge as a form of feminist practice. The relationship between Shepherd's approach to writing and the non-hierarchical approaches of Body Weather dance practices was a successful synthesis of working with a shared ethos across artistic practices. This was just one element to the layers of relational approaches employed through the Practice Research.

Performance making is an act of synthesising the learning, to include the multiplicity of understanding that occurs (embodied, socially engaged, place relational, ecological, theoretical). The approach of layering perspectives and accumulative learning was an integral part to understanding and relating to mountain-place. The research needed to embrace a multiplicity of perspectives, both artistically and across sectors to work successfully.

Through this research, the notion of *kaleidoscopic perspectives and becomings* was coined as a novel way in which to articulate the agency of shifting elements within the wider process. On this basis, the research argues that *mountain-place-relational* practices can be a feminist practice; one that allows the process to consciously remains flexible, open to deep listening and understanding different points of view.

Contemporary artistic practice can create containers for new conversations about Shepherd's writing and the cultural conditions and experiences that women find themselves in recent times. This framework has allowed for reflection on the similarities and differences for women, during the time between Shepherd's and today's contemporary experience. This includes attitudes towards accessing mountains, time restraints of women with caring responsibilities and how these differ over various stages of life and age.

Creating performance work with a team of women in the Cairngorms mountains has allowed for experimentation and implementation of doing things differently regarding work force employment and the realities of making this commitment happen (i.e., it was difficult to find technical managers in Scotland for example and even producers in Scotland with experience of making work in this specific outdoor context). This attempt highlighted challenges still faced by women in accessing mountain-places and the barriers including diversity and social status, caring responsibilities, physical access, as well as the emotional landscapes and confidence needed to access and navigate within these environments.

Performance work has the potential to question and reframe dominant mountaineering approaches that emphasise technical skill and conquest over ecological connection. In contrast, the artistic practices explored in this Practice Research offer a more flexible and situated perspectives that both challenges and coexists with traditional mountaineering cultures.

Framing embodied experiences through creative or performative events offers another context for people to engage with mountain-place in more diverse ways. Audiences can be motivated to see a performance and have the mountain encounter under that premise or vice versa. Performance making engages with bringing people into those places through multiple strategies centred around care rather than competition associated with early mountaineering attitudes. These creative frameworks and approaches are inherently responsive, shaped through their engagement with complex, intersectional, and collaborative ways of working.

Performance makers and live work have a unique ability to bring new audiences and forms of engagement of environments to organisations which do not prioritise diverse approaches to public engagement in their work or policies. Whether in *mountain-place-relational* or other place-based contexts, artists working with embodied practices can offer innovative creative approaches to public engagement that organisations may not have considered.

Practically, the creative sector has potential leverage in bringing additional funding and resources to the outdoor sectors, as is the case with PR2: *ITM (group)*. When organisations are motivated by differing needs such as private landowners, conservation led national parks and charities such as Mountaineering Scotland, the autonomy of having creative sector funding offers a different kind of positionality for artists. There is much potential for performance makers to approach and work with organisations and individuals through socially and place-relationally engaged performance practices that can challenge existing attitudes of mountaineering through to creative and participatory engagement.

Mountain-place-relational performance making offers unique perspectives of mountains through embracing the multiple perspectives and attitudes of care and curiosity through playful creative methods. Embodying these approaches and perspectives act as a counter to dominant narratives, behaviours, and attitudes of prevailing mountaineering culture.

New ways of thinking and being with the mountains came about through the embodied and participatory nature of this Practice Research. New ways of articulating and conceptualising these deeper eco-social understandings came about through this research process. The term *Kaleidoscopic becomings and perspectives* emerged as terminological innovation through the practice. Collaborators and participants further contributed new insights through their novel articulations of the performance work. The choir members conceptualising the work as possessing a *confident plainness* articulates a fundamental sensibility of the performance making that is grounded in a deep listening on many levels. The idea or notion of *shedding* as both a physical and conceptual approach, articulated by the dancers is again a valuable and novel insight gained through the development of movement research in practice.

In summary, this research revealed that by facilitating somatic and embodied relations to environments through hill walking and performative experiences, participants can engage with mountain-place in new, nuanced, and meaningful ways. This engagement fosters attentiveness, curiosity, and deep listening, which in turn cultivates attitudes of care and deeper ecological connection. The research suggests that embodied approaches and tacit knowledge gained through individual and collective experiences, can offer new perspectives and depth to mountain-relational encounters through these innovative performance-making frameworks that respectfully acknowledges both people and place.

Research impact and implications

As outlined, both practice components were shared with public audiences and artistic and academic contexts. The impact of the research for PR1: *ITM (solo)* was its ability to connect to a wide audience visiting an International Dance Festival (DIG) from across the UK and internationally. This was invaluable to the consequent development of PR2: *ITM (group)*, particularly considering the strategies for audience engagement in the second Practice Research component. PR2: *ITM (group)* was impactful through the sharing of the work with regional, national, and international audiences. This was achieved partly through the various streams of activity leading up to the performances and programming the work in the Take Me Somewhere Festival based at Tramway, Glasgow. Creating work for more remote locations requires working with existing infrastructures such as transport. When these were not sufficient, we responded by putting in place other ways to engage in the work. This strategy was developed to support audiences from the central belt of Scotland and the UK, to access the work through providing bus transport as part of the festival ticket sales.

Other activity within the PR2: *ITM (group)* programme supported and shaped the performance research including the symposium event (The Meet) as an approach to widening the research contexts. By bringing together leading academics and artists in their respective fields, transdisciplinary conversations informed the engagement and furthered the research

aims and questions through engaging with wider audiences. This was achieved, in part by making the event accessible to audiences from the central belt of Scotland. It should also be noted that audiences coming to these events did then attend PR2: *ITM (group)* performance the following year, with some also engaging in the choir workshops.

Pedagogical implications for *mountain-place-relational* performance

Mountain-relational-performance practices can expand and deepen ecological enquiry through longer term approaches and creative engagement with environments and localised infrastructures and organizations. This research has found that these approaches and methodologies needed to integrate cross-sectoral and collaborative working with various organisations. This approach has contributed to new methods and understanding in defining frameworks for performance making; ones that can only evolve through specific relationships and that are shaped by the wider contexts.

Considering policies and codes of behaviour in places can vary across different organisations, private companies and landowners that include the individual backgrounds, moral and ethical views of people and company. An important finding within this Practice Research is to not make assumptions, but to be led, from the ground up and horizontally across sectoral contexts. The research discovered and experienced the reality that performance makers will often be at the behest of policies, individual attitudes and organisational vision and aims deemed valuable to specific places you are working in. This research revealed that balancing the want for fluidity when developing creative projects needs to meet at the juncture of establishing clear intentions to be shared with other parties. The creative intent needs to be expressed through a variety of ways and as concisely as possible, depending on who you are speaking to or working with. This may be considered as a simple form of translation, but this research argues that this form of 'porous dramaturgies' (Turner, 2014) is a crucial component to an expanded choreographic practice that is *kaleidoscopic* in approach. Performance work can only develop through considering the varying degrees of contexts, perspectives and ways

of communicating about place and performance. This reiterates the idea of working with Doreen Massey's notion of place as process, in that performance practices need to interweave these intersectional and intradisciplinary ways of working.

This research illustrated there is an interest from audiences to engage with mountain-places through more embodied and collective forms of experiencing mountain-places. It also raises the question of how this can happen across sectors and to share embodied approaches as a common language. This is where the idea and promotion of eco-social-somatic practices could be given more visibility and brought into the engagement strategies of sectors working with mountain-places, including tourism, conservation and private land management.

This research aimed to contribute to a deeper understanding of how dance, somatics and the nascent field of eco-social somatics can address and inform approaches used within the designing of mountain-place relational activities. These approaches and practices consistently emphasise the importance of embodied knowledge, not only in performance-making but also across broader outdoor and adventure learning contexts.

Performance experiences can allow for further and expanded conversations beyond the live performative experience time frame. Wider discussions can and have continued through various modes such as presentations, film screenings, exhibitions, group panel discussions and publications, for example. This extends the work's impact and legacy beyond the geographically and emplaced experience of live performance. This continual sharing and presenting of the work across a variety of contexts has contributed to the legacy and impact this Practice Research has achieved.

Pedagogical implications for mountain training

Conventional mountain leadership approaches have been developed through mountaineering history and cultures as discussed in this thesis. For sound reasons, the practice of mountaineering has a predominant focus on safety, technical learning, including how to understand weather, forecasting, navigation principles and skills-based techniques. Although all of them rely on embodied learning, this is a secondary focus to the technical skills and methods emergent from these fields of knowledge.

Additional enrichment from these main approaches is often factual based layering of historic and scientific knowledges including topography, geology, flora and fauna to animate the landscape as part of the mountain experience. This form of ‘enrichment’ for mountain and walking leaders is becoming increasingly expected when offering group experiences but is considered as optional continual professional development for mountain leaders. This research has explored and argued through creative practice, how additional emphasis on exploring environments sensorially, haptically, creatively and collectively could be integrated further into professional outdoor contexts. This research argues that sharing and foregrounding embodied experiences is a valuable component to shaping deeper ecological and relational positions of coming to know mountain-places for individual participants and groups. Moreover, this research has directly contributed to the ongoing discussion about women’s access and engagement in Mountain Leadership training in the UK. PR2: *Into the Mountain (group)* had the financial means to make the bold approach of inviting Mountaineering Scotland to match fund and offer two training bursaries for women. This was taken up enthusiastically by Mountaineering Scotland and a sense of learning how to do things differently through this collaboration and was achieved relatively simply and successfully. This collaborative approach to create training opportunities was unique at the time of making this project. It was discussed and advertised through the Mountaineering Scotland newsletters and arts platforms, connecting to networks of both sectors more widely. The pooling of resources both financially and sharing information across a broad creative and outdoor network, opened new opportunities for the arts sector to be seen to challenge,

support and lead on change in the outdoor sector as a public demonstration of transdisciplinary practice. Women of BIPOC were encouraged to apply and we received approximately thirty applications. Training was delivered by Mountaineering Scotland and peer mentoring conversations offered with the lead artist-researcher.

There is anecdotal evidence (via a conversation with someone who attended the Mountaineering Scotland AGM) but unfortunately it is not included in the minutes of the AGM in 2019, that the performance of *ITM (group)* and this training opportunity was deemed a successful element of Mountaineering Scotland's' diversity and inclusion development that year. They have not repeated the opportunity since however, suggesting that match funding and administration was a factor in this opportunity becoming a reality.

This training element was successful in providing specific opportunities, but longer-term support for the two trainees was not financially viable from this project's perspective. In hindsight, there is a case for longer term mentoring with mountaineering professionals and for trainees to be embedded at the start of a creative process, as part of any future funding package. The timeline of the PR2: *ITM (group)* performances meant trainees were not integrated into the performance of *Into the Mountain (group)* as originally hoped. Looking forward, I would plan and implement this approach, should I repeat the performances again.

Since these traineeships, more inclusive and women focused outdoor training has arisen, including Outward Bounds, Women outdoor leadership training.⁴² This training is accessible to those who can commit to a 10-week residential programme and have existing experience in some outdoor training. Whilst it is a valuable step in investing in women outdoor leaders, one could argue that this programme still limits access to a more diverse scope of women due to the shape of the intensive program itself.

⁴² See Outward Bound UK website for further information. Available from:

www.outwardbound.org.uk/womens-outdoor-instructor-development-programme

[Accessed: 18 August 2024]

Future Research

In relation to mountain training pedagogies, the burgeoning practices within the broader Outdoor and Adventure Therapy approaches could be considered a useful context in which to explore *mountain-place-relational performance* practice further. Whilst this field still supports the need for practical skills training, it acknowledges and critiques existing outdoor education models. Recent theoretical developments in Outdoor and Adventure Therapy Studies advocates for interdisciplinary working, acknowledging there are multiplicities of knowledge, geopolitical perspectives and environmental justice (Humberstone, Prince and Henderson, 2016), Indigenous practices (Mullins, Lowan-Trudeau and Fox, 2015) and place-responsive pedagogies (Stewart, 2020) that need to be central to the advancement of the field. Further research that decolonises the theoretical underpinnings informing any future *mountain-place-relational performance* practice is needed. The concept of *pluriversality* was developed by William James in 1909 (Ferguson, 2007) that incorporates diverse knowledge systems, not bound by Western universality. This has already been explored further in design principles of ‘radical interdependence’ (Escobar, 2018), indigenous dance practices (Castillo, 2016), current dance research ⁴³ and would be an appropriate continuum for this Practice Research. Decolonial theorist Walter Dignolo explains how pluriversality can approach knowledge making where, ‘Western cosmology would be one of many cosmologies, no longer the one that subsumes and regulates all the others’ (in Reiter, 2018, p.x).

The *kaleidoscopic* approaches explored in this Practice Research project could be further developed through the cosmologies of pluriversality and the emergent positionalities within Outdoor and Adventure Therapy studies. Together they would create an ideal context and framework for any future mountain-relational-performance research.

⁴³ See the AHRC funded Dancing Otherwise Network website for more information.

Available from: <https://dancingotherwise.com/people/>

[Accessed: 15 August 2025].

Dancing and mountaineering within the pluriverse reiterate approaches adopted and embodied by Nan Shepherd that do not filter out the magnitude, depth, and cosmology of our entanglements with mountain places, nor the cultures humans have bestowed upon and interwoven into the diverse and unique mountain environments of the planet.

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APPENDIX 1

PR1: *ITM (SOLO)* TRAINING AND RESEARCH DOCUMENTATION

Jan, 2017. Winter Mountaineering course covers several factors and topics both practical and theory based, needed for safe winter mountaineering. Over 5 days, the course explored through practical mountain days and evening lectures, all the aspects of knowledge and practice needed to introduce you to basic winter mountaineering.

Having previously undertaken two winter skills courses, this training was a continuation of developing and furthering my skills and knowledge. My intention was to build embodied skills knowledge and confidence when working in more challenging conditions.

(All training images by Jonny Brigg)



The main topics to be covered in the training

- Re-visiting core winter movement skills using axe and crampons in ascent and descent.
- Movement over grade I/II winter snow and 'scrambling' type terrain.
- Constructing and using snow anchors (such as buried axe, snow bollard and Deadman)
- Selecting and using natural rock anchors
- Abseiling using snow anchors
- Avalanche awareness and risk assessment and its implications for safe route choice.
- Winter navigation
- Develop an in-depth practical knowledge of all the skills required to tackle winter 'scrambling' type terrain, up to grade I/II, on Britain's mountains.





Avalanche awareness and risk assessment and its implications for safe route choice.

Avalanche awareness on the course included lectures, continual conversation about all the methods in place for reading and preparing to avoid avalanche risks.

The first day we practiced avalanche procedure and searching for a party member/s if an avalanche occurred. Kit needed when out walking and in hazardous condition include your digital searcher, fold up probing stick and a snow shovel. These are considered an essential part of any day kit when out in winter with high avalanche risk.





Re-visiting core winter movement skills using axe and crampons in ascent and descent

Even though I have done winter skills training in the past, the general challenge with these skills is getting enough practice during the winter months and then remembering them the following year.

On the first day we went over some of the techniques of walking with ice crampons and ice axes and general movement skills. This then extended into more scrambling experience of walking with crampons onto rock and snow, the mixed terrain synonymous with the Scottish Highlands mountaineering. To be able to walk confidently on snow slopes as well as climb and balance on crampons when scrambling up rocks are needed in Scotland. It was really helpful to experience more of the dry rock crampon use and the interchangeable skills needed for moving between snow/ice and rock.

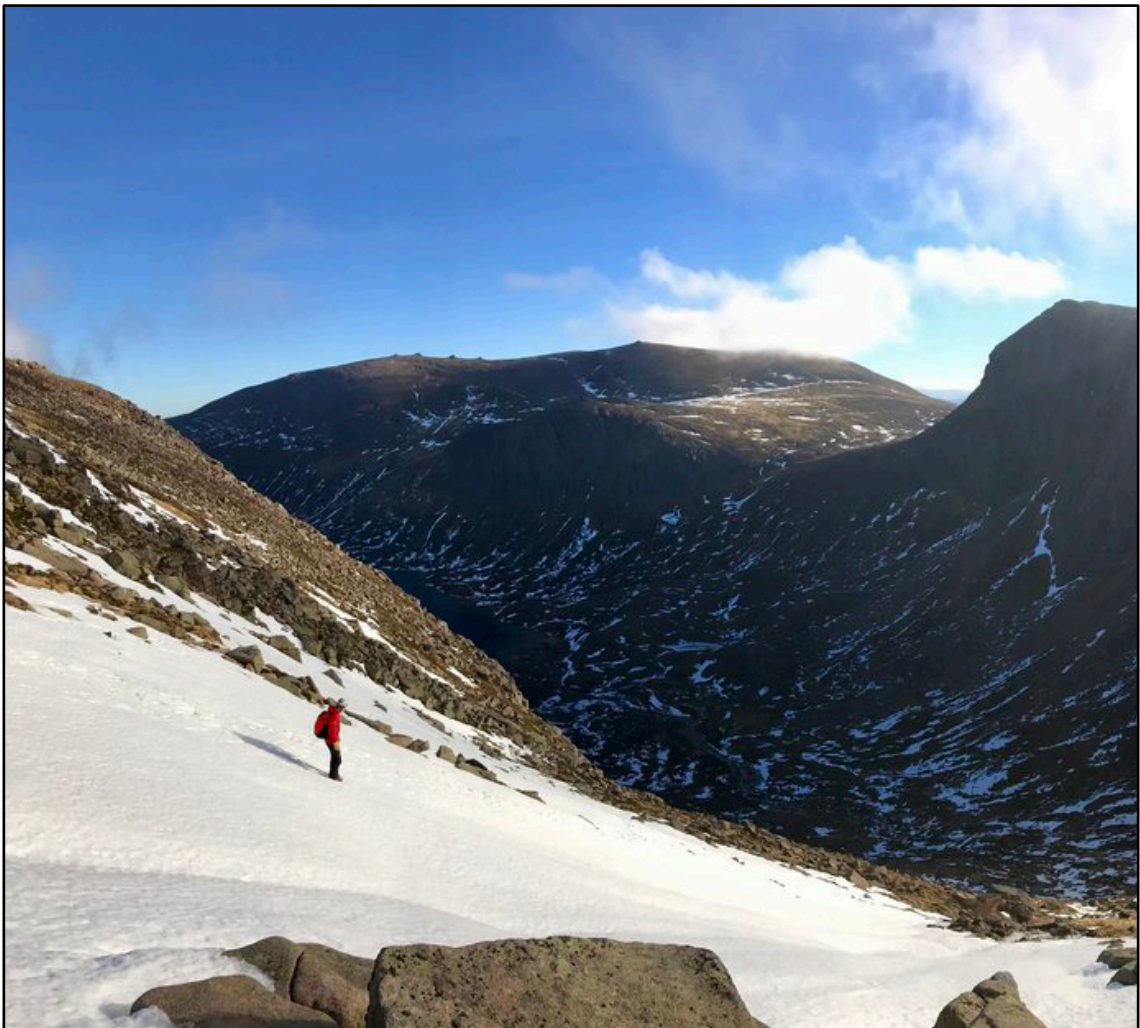




Movement over grade I/II winter snow and ‘scrambling’ type terrain.

This aspect of the course was the most challenging and interesting part of the training. The course brings into focus more about movement technique, which is my main interest as a movement practitioner. I was interested to not only learn the movement skills taught but also to consider how these skills were being taught and how much importance movement is considered on such training events.

Scrambling demands a multitude of approaches, considerations, thought processes and physical experiences including; how your body relates to the space, your perception of slopes, confidence and ‘finding grace’ in the movements across the rocks, listening to the surface of the rocks through your feet, understanding and feeling when you are in balance, sensing your own weight on fragile and moveable rocky surfaces and external forces such as winds, cold temperatures and slippery surfaces effect your performance and concentration.



FIELD TRIPS ACROSS THE CAIRNGORMS MOUNTAINS

Select Images of macro and micro details of the mountains.

Images by Simone Kenyon









STUDIO DEVELOPMENT

Images by Simone Kenyon. 2017.

NAN SHEPHERD 1977

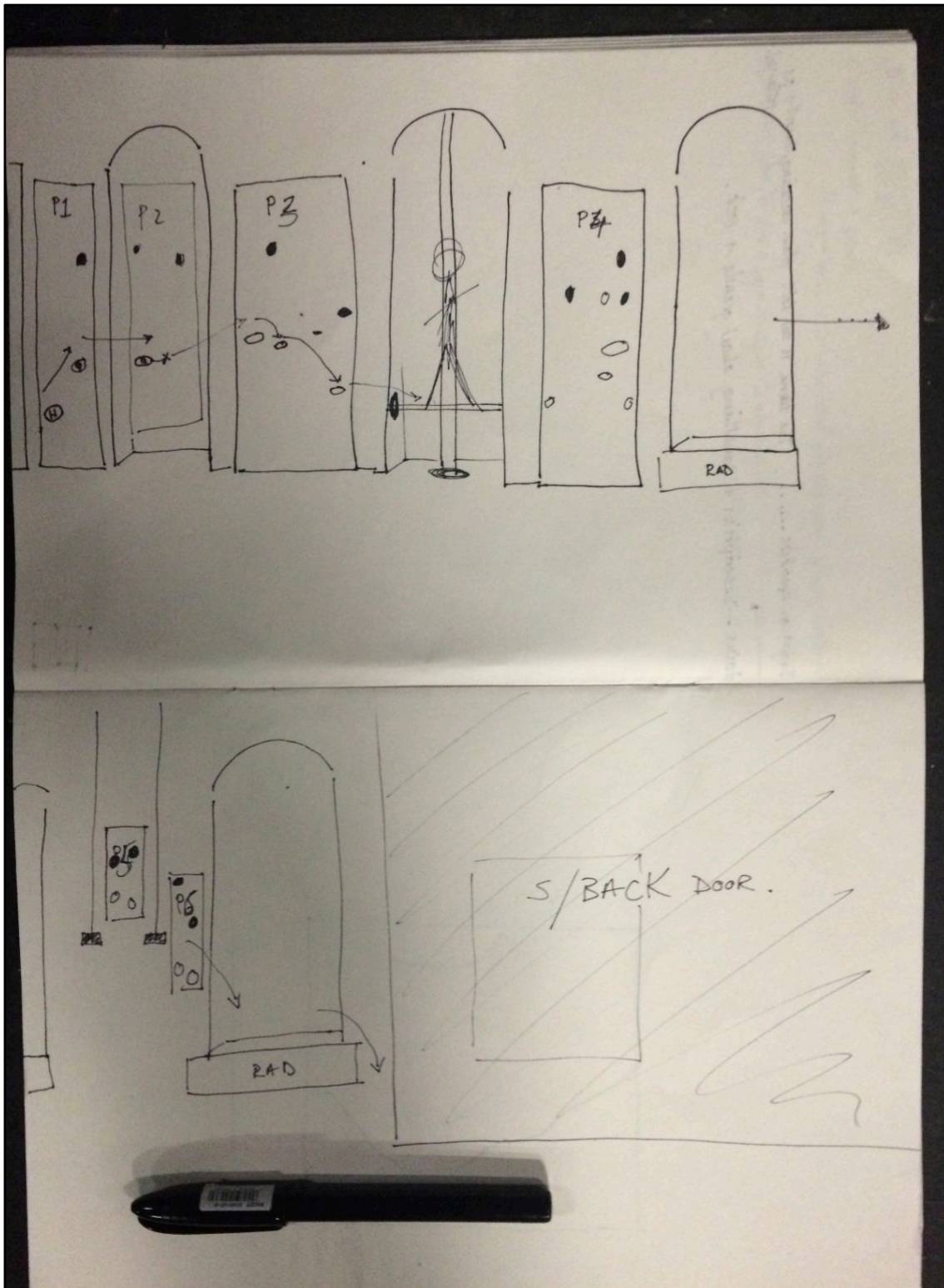
and less self-sufficient, I began to discover the mountain in itself. Everything became good to me, its contours, its colours, its waters and rock, flowers and birds. This process has taken many years, and is not yet complete. Knowing another is endless. And I have discovered that ^{wo}man's experience of them enlarges rock, flower and bird. The thing to be known grows with the knowing.

I believe that I now understand in some small measure why the Buddhist goes on pilgrimage to a mountain. The journey is itself part of the technique by which the ^{DANCE} ~~self~~ is sought. It is a journey into Being; for as I penetrate more deeply into the mountain's life, I penetrate also into my own. For an hour I am beyond desire. It is not ecstasy, that leap out of the self that makes ^{DANCE'S} ^{wo} ^e man like a ~~man~~. I am not out of myself, but in myself. I am. To know Being, this is the final grace accorded from the mountain.

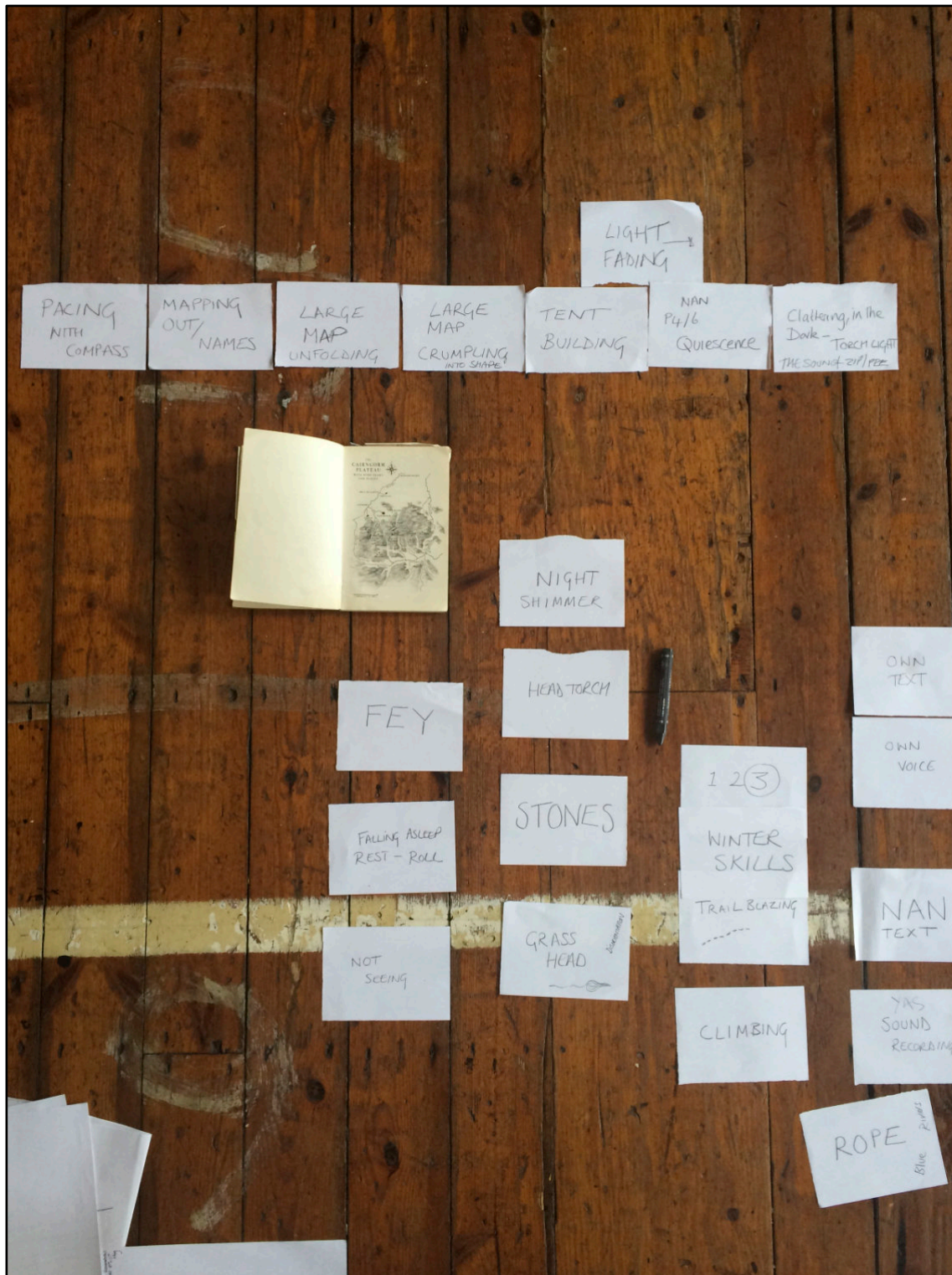
DANCE

SIMONE KENYON 2017

BOULDERING WALL DESIGN SKETCH









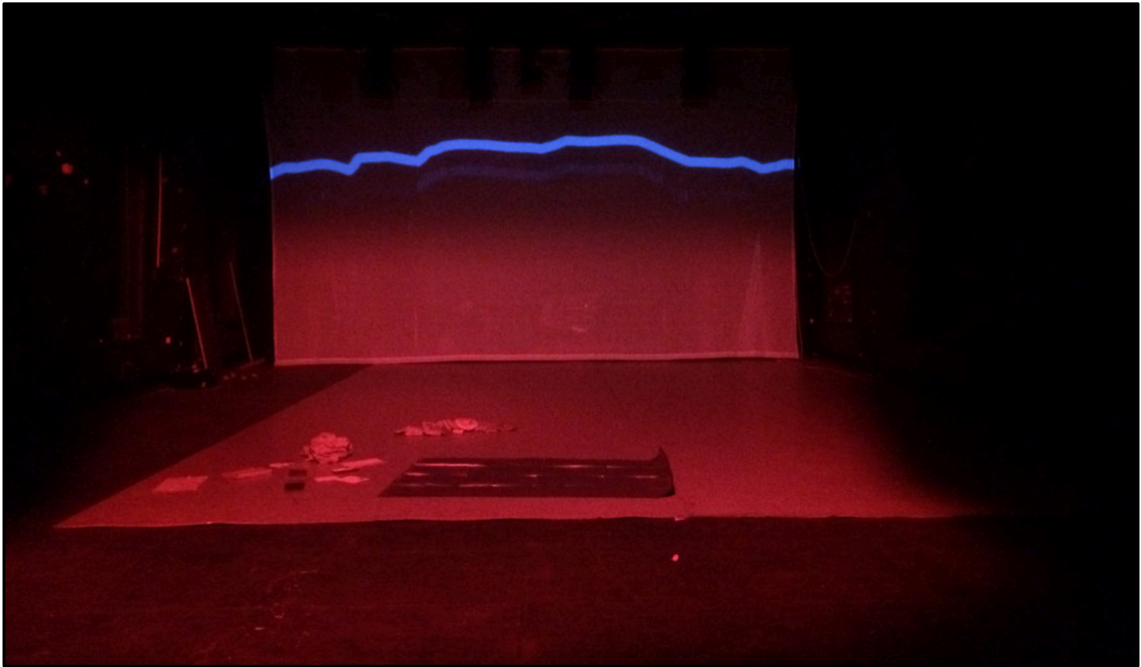
Images by Hev Forknell, 2017.

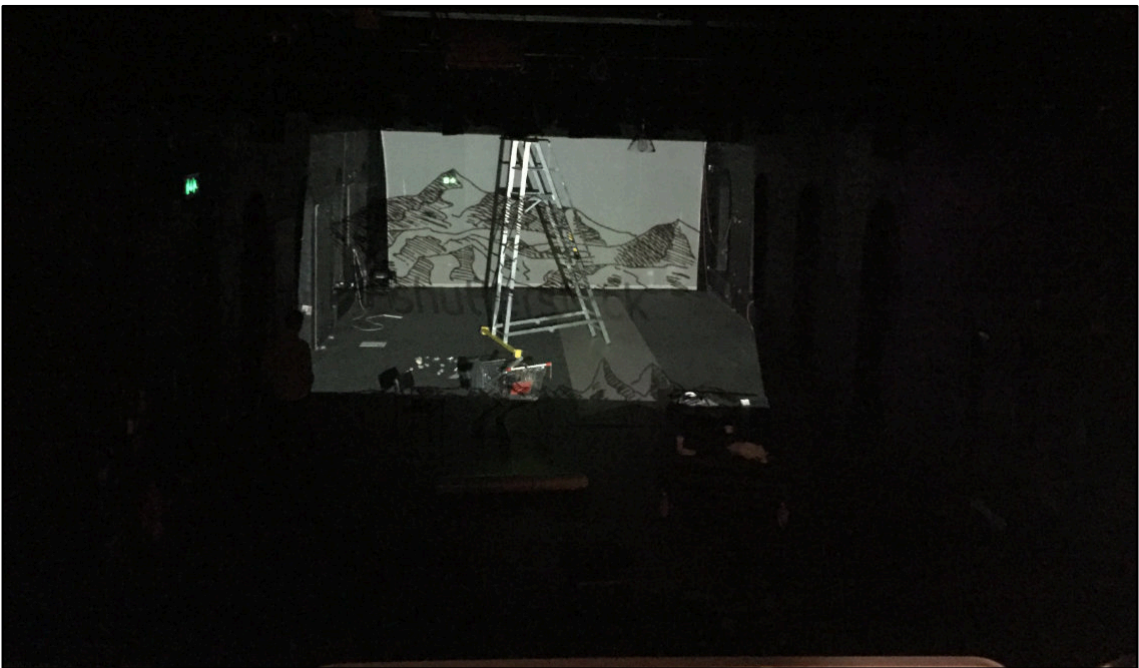


LIGHTING AND ATMOSPHERE DESIGN EXPERIMENTATION

Images: Jenni Pystynen. 2017.







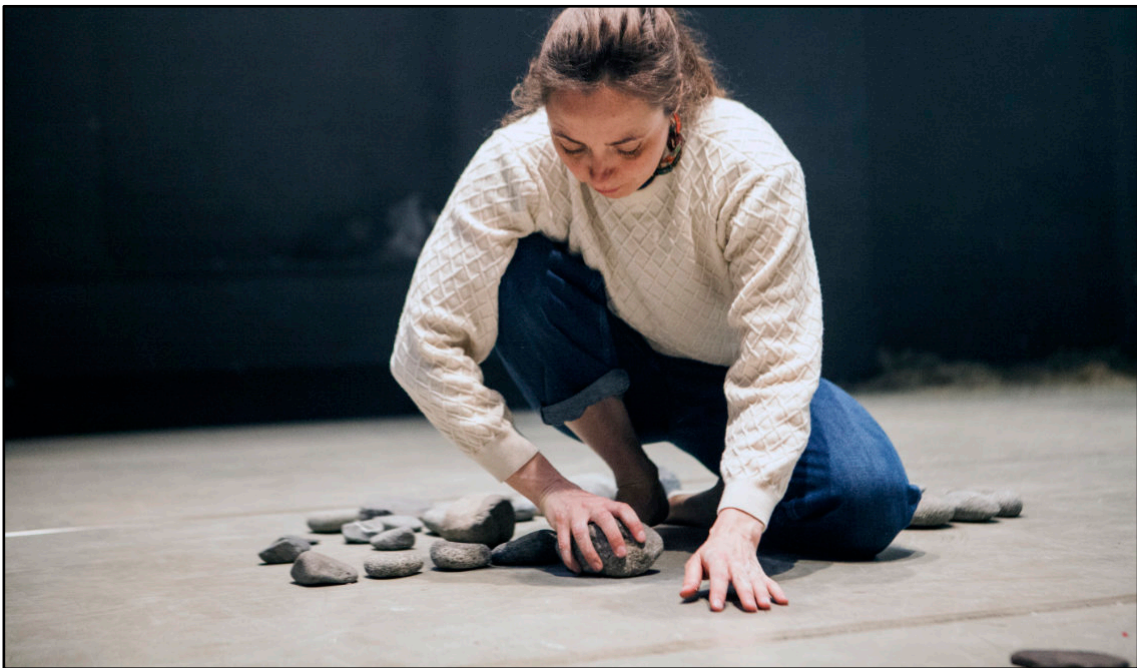


APPENDIX 2

PR1: *ITM (SOLO)* PERFORMANCE, SELECT PHOTO DOCUMENTATION

Image credit: Hev Forknell. 2017





















APPENDIX 3

INTO THE MOUNTAIN (GROUP) PERFORMANCE EVENT:
A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY (DOCUMENTATION)

Performance Photographic Journey May 2019

This photographic journey is comprised of images from two documented rehearsals with and without audiences. The images are organised chronologically. The photographer only followed one walking group experiencing the short route.

The weather is decidedly different on both occasions and the clothing of the choir is also markable different. This presentation has the intention to give the viewer a sense of all the performance material, audience experience and sense of place and weather through the collection of images.

All images by Felicity Crawshaw.















































































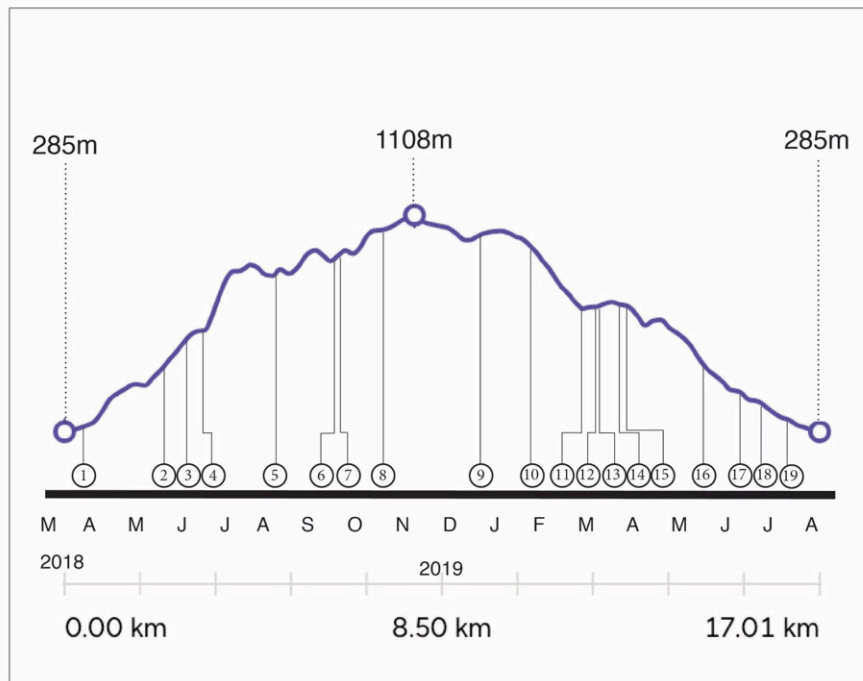








APPENDIX 4

PR2: *ITM (GROUP)* ACTIVITY TIMELINE

- ① 22 - 24 March 2018 - *Performing Mountains Conference* (presentation), University of Leeds.
- ② June 2018 - Schools workshops across Cairngorms National Park
- ③ 15 June 2018 - *Women in the Mountains* Talk. Moray Walking Festival, Forres.
- ④ 28 June 2018 - *Something Moves Between*. Artist talk at SSW
- ⑤ 11 September 2018 - Guest Speaker: Erlend Clouston talk at SSW
- ⑥ 20 October 2018 - *Embodied Environments* workshop Moray, OWL Group, Professional Development Workshop. Organised by Moray Outdoor and Woodland Learning (OWL)
- ⑦ 20 - 21 October 2018 - *Moving Between : sensing body and environment*. Professional Dance Workshop - Glen Feshie, Cairngorms.
- ⑧ 24 November 2018 - *Into The Mountain - A Meet*. Tramway, Glasgow.
- ⑨ 16 - 17 February 2019 - First choir taster workshops Aviemore and Braemar
- ⑩ 23-24 March 2019 - *Words in the Landscape*. Writing workshop with Linda Cracknell, SSW.
- ⑪ 28 April 2019 - Artist Talk at the Centre of Stewardship, Falkland.
- ⑫ 1-3 May 2019 - *Between Body and Mountain*. Professional Dance Workshop organised with Dance North. Cairngorms National Park.
- ⑬ May 2019 - *Into The Mountain Traineeships* call out with training and mentoring running until March 2020
- ⑭ 24 May 2019 - Filming for *How The Earth Must See Itself*. Glen Feshie, Cairngorms.
- ⑮ 30 May - 2 June 2019 - *Into The Mountain Performances*. Glen Feshie, Cairngorms.
- ⑯ August - September 2019 - Editing and Production for *How The Earth Must See Itself (A Thirling)* and shorter version
- ⑰ 19 September 2019 - *How The Earth Must See Itself* (7min short version) becomes available online
- ⑱ 6 October 2019 - *How The Earth Must See Itself (A Thirling)*, 12 min. short film special screening at SSW as part of Live Life Aberdeenshire's *Across The Grain Festival*, celebrating local culture and language.

APPENDIX 5

PR2: *ITM (GROUP)* A MEET PROGRAMME INFORMATION

Into The Mountain— A Meet Saturday 24 November Tramway, Glasgow

10.00am – 10.15am

Refreshments

Please make yourself comfortable. There are chairs and beanbags available, a children's corner and refreshments. If you haven't signed up for afternoon sessions please do this now to ensure you can attend a session of your choice.

10.15am – 10.20am

Welcome

A warm welcome to Into The Mountain – A Meet from Sam Trotman, Director of the Scottish Sculpture Workshop (SSW).

10.20am – 11.00am

Introduction to Into The Mountain

Simone Kenyon, artist and choreographer, will introduce Into The Mountain and the framework for the day's activity. Simone will share her motivations and experiences developed over the past 6 years of walking and working in the Cairngorms and the research that has led to this project.

11.00am – 12.10pm

Session 1: Women⁺ in the Mountains

Taking Nan Shepherd's writing and her embodied relationships with the Cairngorms as a point of departure, this session introduces the multiplicity of women's⁺ experience in the mountains. The panel is chaired by Professor Deirdre Heddon.

Dr Samantha Walton will hone in on two excerpts from *The Living Mountain*, to explore the philosophy, art, geography and science underpinning Shepherd's writing of the mountain. It will also question the value of reading *The Living Mountain* in the context of our current ecological crisis.

Pammy Johal will draw from personal experience of supporting and enabling marginalised communities to physically and psychologically explore mountain environments, in particular BAME women through her role as the founder of Backbone CIC. She will outline the barriers that exist for marginalised communities in building a relationship with mountainous environments.

Dr Louise Ann Wilson will present – 'Dorothy Wordsworth's Legacy: A feminine 'material' sublime approach to the creation of Applied Scenography in mountainous landscapes'. This presentation argues that a uniquely 'feminine' (material) sublime approach to mountains exists and has for generations but remains under recognised and on the fringes of mainstream dialogues.

12.10pm – 1.00pm

Discussion

Drawing on the panel's presentations, Deirdre will open the discussion to the floor.

Into The Mountain – A Meet brings together practitioners and enthusiasts interested in the intersections and conversations between the arts, dance, mountain and hill walking cultures. Together it will critically explore through talks, discussions and sessions, how women⁺ encounter and engage with mountainous environments, considering both historical and current perspectives of gender in relationship to landscapes.

All sessions are in Tramway T4 unless otherwise mentioned.

1.45pm – 4pm

Session 2: Re-imagining human-mountain collaboration

The afternoon acts as a space to re-imagining our human-mountain interactions and connections by paying attention and bringing awareness to the multiple ways in which collaborations can occur with its more-than-human life. The group will split into three simultaneous sessions which participants will have signed up for in advance.

THE MOUNTAIN INSIDE — Ilana Haperin

Geologic Intimacy. Physical Geology. Ilana will share a core sample of field notes assembled over twenty years, while working on active, quiet and sleeping mountains. She will situate her work within discrete legacies of feminist land art practice, built on intuitive approaches to engaging with landscape and wider natural phenomena through corporeal understanding. Remote field work, gestural performance, newly imagined personal geologic vocabularies.

Non-human navigators — Heather Barnett

Heather will start the session with a short presentation that focuses her recent involvement in *Field Notes – Ecology of Senses*, an art & science field laboratory organized by the Bioart Society at the Kilpisjärvi Biological Station in Lapland/Finland. She will highlight the 'reciprocal sensing' approach the group developed through collectively exploring the terrain of the Saana hills. She will follow this with a group urban herding experiment.

This session will take place in the Studio.

Movement workshop with Laura Bradshaw

A slow movement session drawing upon Body Weather and somatic practices, aiming to tune our sensory, embodied focus through touch-based and imagination-led improvisation. This refining of gentle attentiveness to human and non-human connectivity will frame movement exercises indoors and in the Hidden Garden.

This workshop is in The Boiler House.

4.00pm – 5.00pm

Closing Discussions

The day will end with a group conversation chaired by Professor Deirdre Heddon, with time for smaller group and individual conversations.

Throughout the day

The Walking Library, an ongoing creative research project created by Deirdre Heddon and Misha Myers that seeks to bring together walking and books, is on display in T4.

The Herd: Reciprocal Sensing (2018), a film by Heather Barnett with others, and *Women of the Hill* (2015), documentation of a performance by Hanna Tuulikki, are screening in the foyer of Tramway.



Heather Barnett is an artist, researcher and educator working with natural phenomena complex systems and biological design, often in collaboration with scientists, artists, participants and organisms. Using diverse media including printmaking, photography, animation, video, installation and participatory experimentation, and working with living materials and imaging technologies, her work explores how we observe, represent and understand the world around us. Current work includes *The Physarum Experiments*, an ongoing 'collaboration' with an intelligent slime mould; *Animal Collectives* Leverhulme Artist in Residence with Swansea University; and *Nodes and Networks*, a series of collective interdisciplinary biosocial experiments. @HeatherABarnett

Laura Bradshaw is an artist, lecturer and somatic movement practitioner based in Glasgow. She currently lectures in Contemporary Performance at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and has recently written and developed a new strand of the programme entitled *Embodiment and Wellbeing*. With a particular interest in memory and the body, Laura's research and practice includes explorations of ancestry, movement in landscape and practices of invitation and response. As a performance maker, Laura makes work under the name *Scrimshaw Projects*. Laura has joined Simone in various stages of research that has led to the *Into the Mountain* project, including a supported summer residency at Cove Park.

Ilana Halperin is an artist, originally from New York, based in Glasgow. Her work explores the relationship between geology and daily life. She combines fieldwork in diverse locations – on volcanoes in Hawaii, caves in France, geothermal springs in Japan – and in museums, archives and laboratories, with an active studio-based practice. Her work has featured in solo exhibitions worldwide including *Berliner Medizinhistorisches Museum der Charité*, *Artists Space* in New York and the *Manchester Museum*. She was the *Inaugural Artist Fellow* at *National Museums Scotland* and *Artist-Curator of Geology* for *Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery*. Ilana shares her birthday with the *Eldfell* volcano in Iceland. @geologicnotes

Professor Deirdre Heddon holds the James Arnott Chair at the University of Glasgow. She has written extensively about walking and art, with a particular focus on women artists. Her ongoing art project, a collaboration with Misha Myers, is called *The Walking Library*. This brings together books, reading and walking to explore the interrelations between them. Each library is filled with book suggested to carry on a specific walk. *The Walking Library's* most recent editions are *The Walking Library for Women Walking* and *The Walking Library for a Wild City*. Dee's research featured recently on *BBC R4's The Art of Now: Women Who Walk*. @DeirdreHeddon

Pammy Johal is an educator, training consultant, and founder of *Backbone CIC*. She holds a BA in *Recreational Studies* specialising in *Outdoor Education* and *Community Development*. With over 25 years' experience in facilitating environmental leadership projects, she is regarded as an expert in her field for engaging marginalised communities, particularly *Black and Ethnic Minority women* in the environmental sector. Her work has featured on national television, radio and in environmental magazines, including *BBC's Countryfile*, *Ramblings* and *Outdoor programme*. She has a passion for wild open spaces taking her on numerous expeditions worldwide.

Simone Kenyon is an Edinburgh-based artist, choreographer, dancer and academic. Working for the past 20 years across dance and interdisciplinary arts, she creates work that encompasses movement practices, ecology and place, walking arts and participatory events for both urban and rural contexts. Her solo work considers walking as a choreographic practice and sensory perception of environments in relation to place and performance. @SimoneRKenyon

Dr Samantha Walton is a poet, publisher and Reader in Modern Literature at Bath Spa University. She's the author of the first full monograph on *Nan Shepherd: The Living World: Nan Shepherd and Environmental Thought* (forthcoming 2019). Her poetry collection *Self Heal* was published by *Boiler House Press (UEA)* in November 2018. She co-edits *Sad Press*, a small publisher dedicated to experimental poetry, and *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*, the journal for the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment. @samlwalton

Dr Louise Ann Wilson is an artist, scenographer and researcher who creates site-specific walking-performances in mountainous and rural landscapes that give-voice to 'missing' or marginal life-events – with transformative and therapeutic outcomes. Her work has addressed terminal illness, bereavement, infertility and involuntary childlessness, the effects of aging and the impact of change. @lawilson

Into The Mountain is a place sensitive performance project by artist and choreographer Simone Kenyon. Inspired and informed by the lyrical and embodied prose of *Nan Shepherd's* 1974 book, *The Living Mountain*, the project explores and celebrates women's* relationships with mountainous places.

The project culminates in a place specific performance journey presented within the *Cairngorm mountain range* in 2019 for a live audience and an audio trail made accessible via this project website. Through working directly within the unique environment of the *Cairngorms plateau* and with women* living within the communities of the *National Park*, *Into The Mountain* celebrates woman's* encounters with mountainous environments, addressing both historical and current perspectives of gender and access in relationship to the *Scottish landscape*. All aspects of the project are informed, created and delivered by women*.

Upcoming in 2019

Open call: Choirs and singers in the *Cairngorms*

We are looking for singers and choirs based in the *Cairngorm region*, who are interested in working with the project team to perform a new vocal composition by artist *Hanna Tuulikki* as part of the *Into The Mountain* performances in 2019. If you identify as woman* and are interested in getting involved, please get in touch with us on info@intothemountain.co.uk.

Saturday 24 – Sunday 25 March 2019
Winter Writing Weekender

A two day workshop led by writer and walker, *Linda Cracknell*, for women* interested in nature writing and capturing women's* experiences of the mountains and nature. Formed by walking and creative writing explorations within and around the *Scottish Sculpture Workshop* at the foot of the *Grampian Hills* in *Aberdeenshire*, this workshop is open to novices and professionals who wish to make space for a writing practice in a supportive and relaxing environment.

Tickets available via intothemountain.co.uk.

APPENDIX 6

PR2: *ITM (GROUP)* EDUCATION RESOURCE PACK.

INTRODUCTION

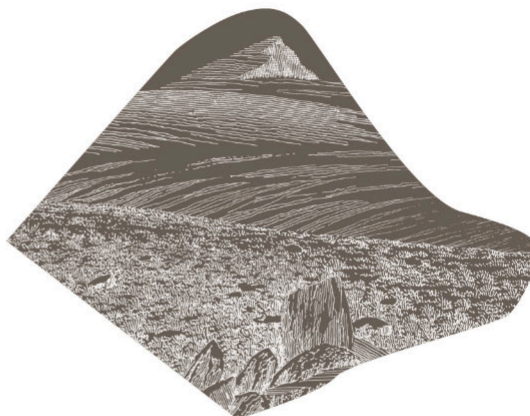
'I have walked out of my body
and into the mountain'

— Nan Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*

Welcome to the Into The Mountain education resource pack, a collection of fun and active exercises to support sensory exploration of outdoor spaces for groups, schools, parents and children.

The following exercises were developed through a series of workshops with schools across the Cairngorms region, facilitated by artists Simone Kenyon and Jo Hellier through collaboration with Anna Fleming, Cairngorms National Park Authority Access and Education Inclusion Officer.

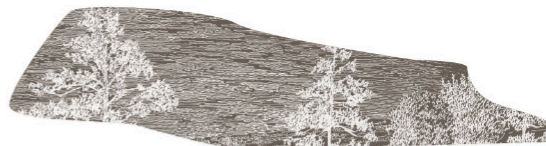
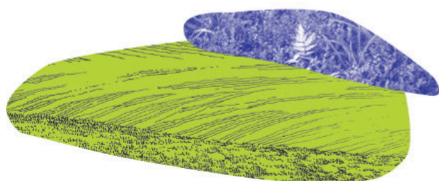
Forming part of Into The Mountain, a performance project created by Simone Kenyon over six years, the exercises draw from the lyrical and embodied prose of Nan Shepherd's *The Living Mountain* (1977), to suggest the possibility for transformation through coming to know the mountains with all of our senses.



INTO THE MOUNTAIN

Into The Mountain is a project created by artist and choreographer Simone Kenyon. Informed by the ecologies and environments of the Cairngorms and Nan Shepherd's prose in *The Living Mountain* (1977), the project explores and celebrates women's relationships with Scotland's mountains.

Over six years, Simone walked in the mountains following in the footsteps of Nan Shepherd and meeting with women from the Cairngorms area. She spent extended periods with the mountains and also trained as a mountain leader. In 2019, the project culminated in a series of guided walks and performances in Glen Feshie. Taking instruction from the site, the performances were an invitation towards the possibilities for transformation and the 'more-than-human' connections to be made within the Cairngorm mountains.



WHO WAS NAN SHEPHERD?

In the 1940s Nan Shepherd wrote a remarkable book, *The Living Mountain*, describing her physical and sensuous relationship with Cairngorm mountains. Shepherd did not see the mountains as summits to be conquered. An early pioneer of Zen philosophy, she sought to be with the mountains, getting to know the 'total mountain'. The work remained unpublished until 1977 and is becoming increasingly popular. Nan now appears on the Scottish £5 note.

Anna Shepherd (known as Nan) was born in 1893 and died in 1981. She lived in the same house for her whole life, in the village of West Cults. She went to Aberdeen High School for Girls, and graduated from Aberdeen University in 1915. She wrote three novels set in small, fictional communities in the North of Scotland, and also published an anthology of poetry.

Nan Shepherd was a passionate hill walker and her writing expresses a deep kinship with nature. She particularly loved the Cairngorms, which she explored extensively with friends and by herself. In *The Living Mountain*, Nan writes eloquently about how she experiences the Cairngorms environment with all of her senses. She walked 'merely to be with the mountain as one visits a friend, with no intention but to be with him'.

Find out more: intothemountain.co.uk

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

Have a go at exploring the environment with the exercises detailed in each of the six activity cards. The cards are designed to be used outdoors - on hills, woods, fields, at the beach or in your playground.

Each exercise can be seen as a complete activity in itself, or used to inform a wider project. For example, learners might use observations made during the exercises to inform a science project, an artwork or to develop a new piece of creative writing.

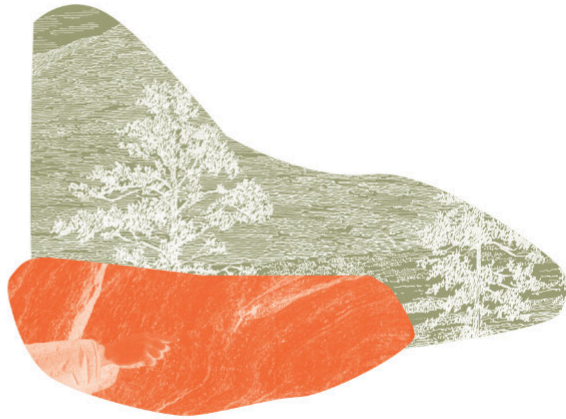
The activities complement a range of curriculum areas, including Outdoor Learning, Expressive Arts, Health and Wellbeing, Languages, Religious and Moral Education, Sciences, and Social Studies.

Credit:

Into The Mountain was produced and commissioned by Scottish Sculpture Workshop (SSW) and co-commissioned by Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), City Moves Dance Agency, Dance North and Tramway. The project is supported by Mountaineering Scotland, Aberdeenshire Council and Creative Scotland.

This resource has been written by Anna Fleming and co-devised by Simone Kenyon, Jo Hellier and Anna Fleming. It has been produced by the Scottish Sculpture Workshop and Cairngorms National Park Authority.

No part of this resource may be reproduced without express permission from Simone Kenyon and Scottish Sculpture Workshop.



NAN SAYS

'By so simple a matter as altering the position of one's head, a different kind of world may be made to appear. Lay the head down, or better "ill, face away from what you look at, and bend with "raddled legs till you see your world upsidedown. How new it has become!'

— The Living Mountain pp.10-11



In The Living Mountain, Nan gives lots of instructions for observing the environment through physical contact. She puts her body into unusual positions and notices how things look from different angles. She had fun exploring the world through her body! Have a go yourself with this game – a Nan Shepherd twist on 'Simon Says'.

- Assemble in an outdoor place.
- Choose a group leader who will be 'Nan'
- The leader will give instructions, starting with the phrase "Nan says..."
- The leader then names a thing in that place which people must touch with a particular body part:
e.g. "Nan says touch a birch tree with your elbow"
- At the instruction, the group runs to touch the place with that body part
- The leader will make sure the group is listening closely by including freeze moments when they don't say 'Nan'
e.g. Touch a stone with your little finger.

Discussion point:

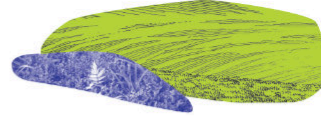
- Assemble as a group. Ask everyone to share something surprising, new or different that they noticed in the exercise.

LOOKING / LYING MICRO / MACRO

'I put my fingers in the water and found it cold. I listened to the waterfall until I no longer heard it. I let my eyes travel from shore to shore very slowly and was amazed at the width of the water... And a second time I let my eyes travel over the surface, slowly, from shore to shore, beginning at my feet and ending at the precipice. There is no way like that for savouring the extent of a water surface.'

— The Living Mountain, p. 10

Nan pays close attention to different scales in the mountains. She zooms in to study lichen, moss and heather up close – then zooms out to look at sky, mountain and landscape. While she looks, Nan also observes how her body notices different scales, things that are close to her (micro) and far away (macro). She thinks about how her eye muscles adjust and how her body feels these things too.



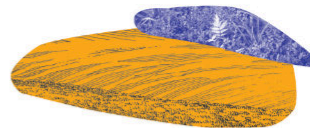
- Lay down on your front.
- Relax your eyes. Without looking at anything in particular, take in the ground, vegetation and surfaces in front of your face. [3 minutes]
- Feel your bodily contact with the ground.
- Observe gravity: how is your body pulled to the ground?
- Close your eyes and roll onto your back.
- Open your eyes. Notice how your eye muscles adjust to the macro scale.
- Keeping your head still and your eyes relaxed, observe the world above and around you. What can you see? [3 minutes]
- Can you map the ground under your body without looking at it?
- Discussion point:
Afterwards, write or discuss your experience [5 minutes]
What did you notice?
What information did your body feel from the ground?

MEET A TREE

'Walking in the dark can reveal new knowledge about a familiar place. In a moonless week, with overcast skies and wartime blackout, I walked night after night from Whitewell to Upper Tollochgrue [...] it amazed me to find how unfamiliar I was with that path. I had followed it times without number, yet now, when my eyes were in my feet, I did not know its bumps and holes, nor where the trickles of water crossed it, nor where it rose and fell. It astonished me that my memory was so much in the eye and so little in the feet'

— The Living Mountain, p. 46

Nan explores the environment through her senses. When we are outside we often rely on our eyesight to know a place, but here she talks about having eyes in her feet. How can you see through your feet? What do we learn about places when we have to use other senses? What can you see in the dark?



- Divide into pairs. Blindfold your partner.
- Choose a tree and carefully lead your partner there in silence.
- Take care of your partner. Make sure they feel safe.
- Place their hands on the tree and direct them around it.
- Help them to explore the tree. Let them feel the texture. How wide is the trunk? Where does the tree meet the ground?
- Bring your partner back to the centre point and take the blindfold off.
- Ask your partner to point out their tree and see if they can guess.
- Swap over.
- Discussion point:
Afterwards, assemble as a group and discuss:
What was it like with eyes in your feet?
How did the tree feel?
Was it easy to find your tree?
What name would you give your tree?

FINGER JOURNEY

'Touch is the most intimate sense of all. The whole sensitive skin is played upon, the whole body, crabbled, resistant, poised, relaxed, answers to the thrust of forces incomparably stronger than itself...After rain I run my hand through juniper or birches for the joy of wet drop strickling over the palm, or walk through long heather to feel its wetness on my naked legs.'

— The Living Mountain, p. 102

For Nan, touch is an essential way to explore nature. She writes about how different things feel against her skin, noticing how they affect her body. Skin is the largest organ in the human body. What can our skin tell us about the environment around us? What do we notice when we close our eyes and explore with our fingers?



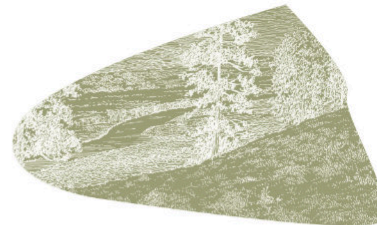
- Divide into pairs. Blindfold your partner.
- Place your right hand on your partner's right shoulder.
- Use your left hand to guide one of your partner's fingers.
- In silence, slowly lead their fingers on a journey.
- Take their fingers to different surfaces and textures. Explore grass, bark, stones, trees, moss.
- Help your partner to notice how different things feel.
- Can they guess what they are touching?
- Swap over.
- Discussion point:
Afterwards assemble as a group and discuss:
How did it feel?
What did you notice?
- Draw a diagram or map of your journey from memory. Show what you felt.

SILENT WALK

'[O]ften the mountain gives itself most completely when I have no destination, when I reach nowhere in particular, but have gone out merely to be with the mountain, as one visits a friend with no intention but to be with him.'

— The Living Mountain, p. 15

Nan approached the mountains like they were friends. Instead of trying to climb the summits, she wanted to listen and notice the environment. She tried to be present without expectation. This meant falling quiet, allowing her whole mind and body to switch on and observe the environment. In this open and receptive state, you may notice new and unexpected things.



- You are going to take a silent walk. This might be a walk to a place, or a circular route. Agree your route in advance.
- Before you start the walk, think about where you are going. Write a list of all the things that you expect to notice on the walk. [3 minutes]
- Take your walk. [10-15 minutes]
- Using all of your senses, notice as much as you can.
- Write a list of everything you noticed. [3 minutes]
- Discussion point:
Assemble as a group to discuss: [5 minutes]
What did it feel like to do the walk in silence?
What are the differences between your two lists?
What happened to your attention on the walk outside?

LISTENING ORCHESTRA

'The sound of moving water is as integral to the mountain as pollen to the flower. One hears it without listening as one breathes without thinking. But to a listening ear the sound disintegrates into many different notes – the slow slap of a loch, the high clear trill of a rivulet, the roar of spate. On one short stretch of burn the ear may distinguish a dozen different notes at once.'

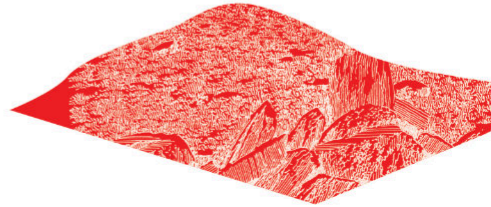
— The Living Mountain, p. 26

- Close your eyes. Stand listening. [5 minutes]
- Whenever you notice a sound, silently point to what you can hear.
- Write a list of everything that you heard. [3 minutes]

Discussion Point:

- Assemble as a group and discuss: [5 minutes]
Did you hear anything interesting?
What human sounds did you hear?
What non-human sounds did you hear?
Were there any sounds you couldn't identify?

Nan writes about the importance of listening to the environment. As she listens, she notices more sounds and distinguishes different notes. She hears plants, animals, water and weather. What sounds do you notice when you close your eyes? Can you detect where the sounds come from?



APPENDIX 8

PR2: *ITM (GROUP)* PROCESS DOCUMENTATION.

Image credit: Simone Kenyon





















SSW STUDIO RESEARCH

















PHASE 3: MAY 2019









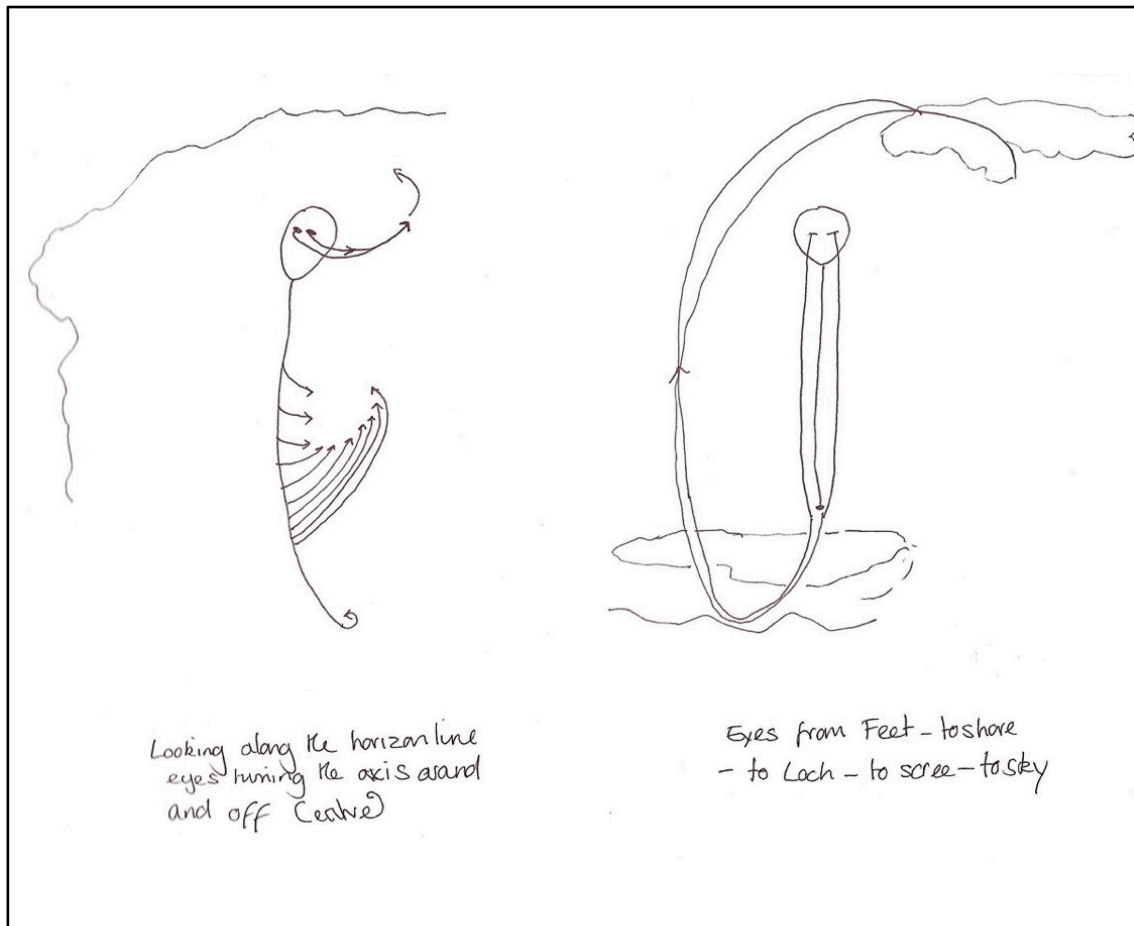


Image by Felicity Crawshaw

APPENDIX 9

PR2: ITM (GROUP) SWOON SCORE AND NOTES

Drawing – Simone Kenyon. 2019.



*I let my eyes travel over the surface, slowly, from shore to shore, beginning at my feet
and ending against the precipice.*

(Shepherd, 2011. p.35)

Swoon Score description

Standing with weight in both feet, in parallel to one another, or one foot slightly ahead, a step forward. Feel your preference as you go, as this will surely shift and change as you adapt and explore on differing terrains. The eyes take the head down to look at the toes or your boots, look at the details.

From here, slowly draw a line of vision as smooth and continuous as you can. Start with the sense of moving 1cm per second (bisoku). From your feet follow your visual line through the terrain textures and the details directly in front of you. Follow this line, observing what is within its sight, a slither of a window in which to capture the details of the place you are standing. The eyes take you from fore to middle ground, track what you see: grass, mosses, small rock, scree rock, mountain foot, up up, flush of moss green, rock, land end, horizon line, air and ground place of meeting, air, sky, colour, cloud textures, movement of atmosphere.

Follow the curve of the planet and your eyes as they follow up and over and back.

Where is the moment the eyes are looking directly above, perhaps no land in sight now, just sky. Where is the moment when they tip beyond this point into the feeling into falling backwards? Can you allow the line of sight to continue as smooth as possible. What is happening in your whole self to allow this ride of the eyes in this circular journey?

How is your neck and the chest opening to allow the curve to linger, in this falling, and bridging beyond and behind yourself?

Can your spine-arch allow the journey to continue into the back place and to see it momentarily upended?

Has the feeling of drawing with the eyes allowed for a curved smooth ride or does the line divert around, searching for other things beyond this slice of visual input as you go?

Choreographers Observation notes: They draw a line with their visual sensory organs, the eyes, from toes, all the way out, along and up up up up up around and back back back, over, falling, gravity.

The eyes/spine/head decides which way to turn, in that moment- to roll and collapse, down into the pelvis, to reach the ground as softly as you can.

Each body has its own way of responding to these last moments of the journey depending on how individual bodies feel. One body maintains the arch and falls through bending of knees- others spirals to the right, just before the final moment of landing- hands and arms out absorbing the weight.

The sensation of bones, in direct conversation with gravity takes over, to find a way to fall and rest into the ground.

Each performer has their own signature way of exploring this movement journey based on their own preferences, feeling safe and saving themselves from injury. Its smoothness and soft approach can be deceptive to a viewer. It is more challenging than it looks and to repeat it brings new challenges every time it is encountered by the performers.

Do you see or feel the micro movements of leaning up and into the sternum, shoulder blades falling back and into towards the spine?

Questions for dancers: This playing with the possibilities in the falling and maintaining an opening to the sky as the head leads you to the ground. A full arching backwards of your body with or without hesitation, creates an opening, of sorts. This is a significant momentary act of abandonment; one that hovers between resisting and hesitating towards a fall and the point of letting go to gravity.

And what of that moment where you first touch the ground do you notice? What part of you touches first? What of the sensations from the textures you come to meet? How is your weight falling, where is it distributed? How long do you like to lay there before coming back to standing? How do you choose to get to standing again? What are your eyes doing when you have reached the ground? How does it feel to come back up to the vertical again? How do the internal sensations relate to your external surroundings?

APPENDIX 10

PR2: *ITM (GROUP)* VOCAL REHEARSAL NOTES WRITTEN SCORE

INTO THE MOUNTAIN
LINKS TO FRAGMENTS AND NOTES

ITTM HOMEWORK

WHEN YOU HAVE THE CHANCE, SING ALONG TO YOUR SOUNDCLLOUD LINKS AND ASSIGNED FRAGMENTS FOR **SECTION A, B & C**. FINE TUNE THOSE SOUNDS & PITCHES, AND THINK ABOUT PLAYING WITH VOLUME, SILENCE, AND RESONANCE.

IN ADVANCE OF OUR THIRD SESSION, HAVE A LISTEN TO THIS TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH FOLK SONG, '**UP A WIDE AND LONELY GLEN**' AND THE OUTRO OF THE FULL DEMO, AT 7m30s ONWARDS.

LINKS WILL BE DOWNLOADABLE ASAP!

FOR THIRD SESSION

FULL DEMO - <https://soundcloud.com/hanna-tuulikki/itm-full-shape-demo-take-1/s-71C8h>

SECTION E — UP A WIDE... SONG - <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/25382/4>

PREVIOUS SECTIONS

SECTION A - YO-DO/OOHS - <https://soundcloud.com/hanna-tuulikki/itm-section-a/s-KPsGK>

SECTION B - WHO-DA/HE-WE-HU... - <https://soundcloud.com/hanna-tuulikki/itm-section-b/s-40jTO>

SECTION B - FRAGMENTS - <https://soundcloud.com/hanna-tuulikki/sets/fragments-section-b/s-Vqh23>

SECTION C - MMM-MINN-NNN-NI-N - <https://soundcloud.com/hanna-tuulikki/itm-section-c/s-hlQmq>

<p>BRAEMAR AND AVIEMORE - ASSIGNED FRAGMENTS</p> <p>SECTION A</p> <p>Yo Do Do - LOW PART - Rebecca, Hannah, Ailsa, Anna F, Beatrice, Julia, Victoria C, Victoria W, Hunter, Caroline? [F⁺, E, C⁺]</p> <p>Ooo - HIGH PART - Sandy, Margaret, Lisa, Anna, Alison?, Angela, Catherine, Julia L, Sarah, Sheila [A, G⁺, F⁺]</p>	<p>SECTION B</p> <p>Hu Hew - HIGH PART - [joins who dah later] - 2 - Not yet assigned</p> <p>He-u-we-ho - HIGH PART - Catherine, Angela, Margaret M, Sandy [A, G⁺, A, F⁺]</p> <p>Ahhh - HIGH PART - Sarah H, Lisa L [F⁺, G⁺, E, F⁺]</p> <p>Ahhh - LOW PART - Anna F, Caroline G, Angela P [C⁺, D⁺, B, C⁺]</p> <p>Ho-u-wo-ho - LOW PART - Ailsa W, Victoria C, Beatrice, Alison B [E, D⁺, E, C⁺]</p> <p>Who-Dah-Who-Dah-ho-dah-ho-dah - HIGH PART - Sheila P, Julia R, Julie L [B, C⁺, B⁺, C⁺, B, C⁺, B⁺, C⁺]</p> <p>Ho-dah-ho-dah-who-dah-who-dah - LOW PART [joins ahhs] - Rebecca L, Victoria W, Hunter and unphotographed vocalist [F⁺, G⁺, F⁺, G⁺, F⁺, G⁺, F⁺, G⁺]</p> <p>Ho-dah, Hu-e-we-ho, and Ho-wo-ho will join ahh along with 'ahh' ending</p> <p>OUTRO - Ahhs - LOW - Norma, Beatrice, Alison B, Caroline, Victoria W</p> <p>OUTRO - Ahhs - HIGH - Angela, Catherine etc</p>	<p>ITTM - SECOND SESSION</p> <p>IN THE SECOND SESSION WE RECAPPED THE 1ST AND 2ND SECTION OF THE PIECE AND BEGAN TO LEARN SECTION C OF THE SCORE, REALLY FOCUSING IN ON DIFFERENT WAYS OF IMPROVISING WITH MINN/MENNN/MAO/NO-NO/NI-NI/MMM/</p> <p>SECTION C</p> <p>SECTION B Ahhs into Ooohs [F⁺, C⁺ - END NOTE OF AHHS], transitions into the opening for SECTION C</p> <p>And mmmmmm-mnni-ni-ni-mnni-ni-no, mmmmm-ma-ma-ma-ma - [D, C⁺, B]</p> <p>Faahs - HIGH</p> <p>Faahs - LOW</p>
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SECTION A (p1)

1	A ooooooooooooooooooooooooooh	A ooooooooooooooooooooooooooh (continue into section B)
2	G# ooooooooooooooh	G# ooooooooooooooooooooooh
3	F# oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooh	
4	(improvise yodel 8ve !) F# oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooh	F# oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooh
5		F# yo-do-do-do-do-do
6		F# yo-do-do-do-do-do
7	E yo-do-do-do-do-do	E yo-do-do-do-do-do
8	E yo-do-do-do-do-do	E yo-do-do-do-do-do
9	C# yo-do-do-do-do-do	
10	C# yo-do-do-do-do-do	
11		
12		

SECTION B (p1)

1	$B \quad C\# \quad B \quad C\#$ hu-hew hu-hew x2	$B \quad C\# \quad B \quad C\#$ hu-hew hu-hew x2
2	$B \quad C\# \quad B \quad C\#$ hu-hew hu-hew x2	$B \quad C\# \quad B \quad C\#$ hu-hew hu-hew x2
3		
4		
5	$A \quad G\# \quad A \quad F\# \quad A \quad G\# \quad A \quad F\#$ he-u-we-ho he-u-we-ho... 1 - 2 - 3 (relationship of 123 can change)	
6	$A \quad G\# \quad A \quad F\# \quad A \quad G\# \quad A \quad F\#$ he-u-we-ho he-u-we-ho... 1 - 2 - 3 (relationship of 123 can change)	
7		$E \quad D\# \quad E \quad C\# \quad E \quad D\# \quad E \quad C\#$ ho-u-wo-ho ho-u-wo-ho... 1 - 2 - 3 (relationship of 123 can change)
8		$E \quad D\# \quad E \quad C\# \quad E \quad D\# \quad E \quad C\#$ ho-u-wo-ho ho-u-wo-ho... 1 - 2 - 3 (relationship of 123 can change)
9	$F\# - G\# - E - F\#$ ahhhhhhhhhhhhh 123456 - 7 - 8 - 1234567 8	
10	$C\# - D\# - B - C\#$ ahhhhhhhhhhhhh 123456 - 7 - 8 - 1234567 8	

SECTION B (p2)

1	$B \quad C\# \quad B \quad C\# \quad B \quad C\# \quad B \quad C\#$ who-dah-who-dah ho-dah-ho-dah 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 5 6 - 7	
2	$B \quad C\# \quad B \quad C\# \quad B \quad C\# \quad B \quad C\#$ who-dah-who-dah ho-dah-ho-dah 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 5 6 - 7	
3		$F\# \quad G\# \quad F\# \quad G\# \quad F\# \quad G\# \quad F\# \quad G\#$ ho-dah-ho-dah who-dah-who-dah
4		$F\# \quad G\# \quad F\# \quad G\# \quad F\# \quad G\# \quad F\# \quad G\#$ ho-dah-ho-dah who-dah-who-dah
5	$A \quad G\# \quad A \quad F\# \quad A \quad G\# \quad A \quad F\#$ he-u-we-ho he-u-we-ho... 1 - 2 - 3 (relationship of 123 can change)	end
6	$A \quad G\# \quad A \quad F\# \quad A \quad G\# \quad A \quad F\#$ he-u-we-ho he-u-we-ho... 1 - 2 - 3 (relationship of 123 can change)	end
7		$E \quad D\# \quad E \quad C\# \quad E \quad D\# \quad E \quad C\#$ ho-u-wo-ho ho-u-wo-ho... 1 - 2 - 3 (relationship of 123 can change)
8		$E \quad D\# \quad E \quad C\# \quad E \quad D\# \quad E \quad C\#$ ho-u-wo-ho ho-u-wo-ho... 1 - 2 - 3 (relationship of 123 can change)
9	$F\# - G\# - E - F\#$ ahhhhhhhhhhhhh 123456 - 7 - 8 - 1234567 8	
10	$C\# - D\# - B - C\#$ ahhhhhhhhhhhhh 123456 - 7 - 8 - 1234567 8	

SECTION B (p3)

1	<i>B</i> <i>C#</i> <i>B</i> <i>C#</i> <i>B</i> <i>C#</i> <i>B</i> <i>C#</i> who-dah-who-dah ho-dah-ho-dah <small>1 - 2 - 3 - 4 5 6 - 7</small>	end
2	<i>B</i> <i>C#</i> <i>B</i> <i>C#</i> <i>B</i> <i>C#</i> <i>B</i> <i>C#</i> who-dah-who-dah ho-dah-ho-dah <small>1 - 2 - 3 - 4 5 6 - 7</small>	end
3	<i>F# - G# - E - F#</i> <i>A - G# - E</i> <i>C#-A-C#-F#-</i> <i>A - G# - E</i> <i>C#-A-C#-F#-----</i> ahhhhhhhhhhh x2 ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh <small>123456 - 7 - 8 - 1234567 8</small>	
4	<i>C# - D# - B - C#</i> <i>F# - E - C#</i> <i>A-F#-A-C#--</i> <i>F# - E - C#</i> <i>A-F#-A-C#-----</i> ahhhhhhhhhhh x2 ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh <small>123456 - 7 - 8 - 1234567 8</small>	
5		
6		
7		
8		
9	<i>F# - G# - E - F#</i> <i>A - G# - E</i> <i>C#-A-C#-F#-</i> <i>A - G# - E</i> <i>C#-A-C#-F#-----</i> ahhhhhhhhhhh x2 ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh <small>123456 - 7 - 8 - 1234567 8</small>	
10	<i>C# - D# - B - C#</i> <i>F# - E - C#</i> <i>A-F#-A-C#--</i> <i>F# - E - C#</i> <i>A-F#-A-C#-----</i> ahhhhhhhhhhh x2 ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh <small>123456 - 7 - 8 - 1234567 8</small>	

SECTION C (p1)

1		
2		
3		
4		<i>C#---(B)---</i> mmmmmm-mnni-ni-ni-
5		<i>B-----</i> mmmmmm-mnni-ni-ni-moni-ni-ni-no-no
6		<i>B-----</i> mmmmmmmmmm-ma-ma-ma-mo-ma-
7	<i>F#-(G)-----</i> ohh (↑) -----	<i>F#-(G)-----</i> ohh (↑) -----
8	<i>C#-(D)-----</i> ohh (↑) -----	<i>C#-(D)-----</i> ohh (↑) -----
9	<i>A - G# - E</i> <i>C#-A-C#-F#-</i> <i>F#-(G)-----</i> ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh ohh (↑) -----	
10	<i>F# - E - C#</i> <i>A-F#-A-C#--</i> <i>C#-(D)-----</i> ahhhhhhh ahhhhhhh ohh (↑) -----	
11		
12		

SECTION C (p2)

1	
2	
3	D----- mmm-moun-mou-mou-moun-ni-no-mmm moun-mo-mou-moun-ni-no-mmm- mnni-ni-ni-moni-ni-ni-no-no
4	C#---(B)----- mmmmmm-mnni-ni-ni- moun-mou-mou-moun-ni-no-mmmmmmmmmmm- mnni-ni-ni-moni-ni-ni-no-no
5	B---(A)----- mmmmmm-mnni-ni-ni-moni-ni-ni-no-no- moun-mou-mou-moun-ni-no-mmm- mnni-ni-ni-moni-ni-ni-no-
6	B---(A)----- mmmmmmmmmm-ma-ma-ma-mo-ma mmmmmmm-nn-mm-nn-mm-moun-mou-mou-moun-ni-no-mmm
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	

SECTION C (p3)

1				
2				
3	D----- mmm-moun-mou-mou-moun-ni-no-mmm moun-mo-mou-moun-ni-no-mmm- mnni-ni-ni-moni-ni-ni-no-no			
4	C#---(B)----- mmmmmm-mnni-ni-ni- moun-mou-mou-moun-ni-no-mmmmmmmmmmm- mnni-ni-ni-moni-ni-ni-no-no			
5	B---(A)----- mmmmmm-mnni-ni-ni-moni-ni-ni-no-no- moun-mou-mou-moun-ni-no-mmm- mnni-ni-ni-moni-ni-ni-no-			
6	B---(A)----- mmmmmmmmmm-ma-ma-ma-mo-ma mmmmmmm-nn-mm-nn-mm-moun-mou-mou-moun-ni-no-mmm			
7				
8	A---G#---F#----- faahhhhhhhh	G#---E---F#----- x2 faahhhhhhhh	A---G#---F#----- faahhhhhhhh	G#---E---F#----- faahhhhhhhh
9	A---G#---F#----- faahhhhhhhh	G#---E---F#----- x2 faahhhhhhhh	A---G#---F#----- faahhhhhhhh	G#---E---F#----- faahhhhhhhh
10			C#---B---A----- faahhhhhhhh	B---G#---A----- faahhhhhhhh
11			C#---B---A----- faahhhhhhhh	B---G#---A----- faahhhhhhhh
12				

SECTION D (p1)

1 F#-B F#----B F#-B F#-B F#----

oo-who oooo-who o-who oo-who ooo

2 E-G# E-----G# E-G# E-G# E----- E-G# E-----G# E-G# E-G# E-----

oo-who oooo-who o-who oo-who ooooo oo-who oooo-who o-who oo-who ooooo

3 D-----

mmm-mnni-ni-ni-mmm

4 C#---(B)-----

mmmmmm

5 B---(A)-----

mmmmmm-mnni-ni-moni-ni-ni-no-no-mmmmmmmmm

6 B---(A)-----

mmmmmmmmmm-ma-ma-ma-mo-ma mm-nn-mm-nn-mm

7 E------(F#)------(F#)----- \ D------(E)------(E)-----

ooooooooooooo(F#)ooooo(e)oooo \ ooooooo(e)ooooo(e)oooo

8 E------(F#)------(F#)----- \ D----- D------(E)------(E)----- / E------(F#)------(F#)-----

ooooooooooooo(e)ooooo(e)oooo \ oooo oooo(e)oooo(e)oooo / oooooo(e)ooooo(e)oooo

9 B------(C#)------(C#)------(C#)-----

ooooooooooooooooooooo(e)ooooo(e)ooooooooooooooooooooo(e)oooo

10 B------(C#)------(C#)------(C#)-----

ooooooooooooo(e)ooooo(e)ooooooooooooooooooooo(e)oooo

11

12

[illegible]

ITTM - SECOND SESSION

1ST HALF OF WORKSHOP

At the beginning of the workshop, we warmed up with 'Section C's' minn-mou-mnn, focusing in on the different mouth sounds - e.g. open, closed, nasal and pulsing

We then set these sounds at their notated pitches and eventually adding 'fahs'. I encourage you all to play with silence, and relationality to the environment and other singers.

We then recapped the various parts of 'Section B' again, which included 'he-we-ho', 'who da', 'aahhs',

We then start working to piece together the fragments as is written in the score - playing with looping and extending sections of the piece.

Note - time signatures interlocking, 1-2, and 1-2-3 of he-we-ho, and metronomic pulse.

QUICK BREAK

2ND HALF OF WORKSHOP

We revisited the opening section, focusing in on yo-do-do enunciation and playing with 'yo-lo', closed mouth sounds. (15m)

ITTM - THIRD SESSION

1ST HALF OF WORKSHOP

At the beginning of the workshop, we will play the traditional song,

UP A WIDE AND LONELY GLEN - <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/25382/4>

- and begin to assign SECTION E parts - with multiple voices taking each part. (10m)
- I will ask that the singers group together in their 'fragments' and consolidate their part with their group. I will go around the group assisting with the vocal sound and timing. (5-10m)
- We will then sing the piece as is written in on the score

SECTION C - Recap section C and add oohs and
ooo-weh - 1hr

QUICK BREAK

Recap SECTION A and B

ITTM - FOURTH SESSION - SITE REHEARSAL

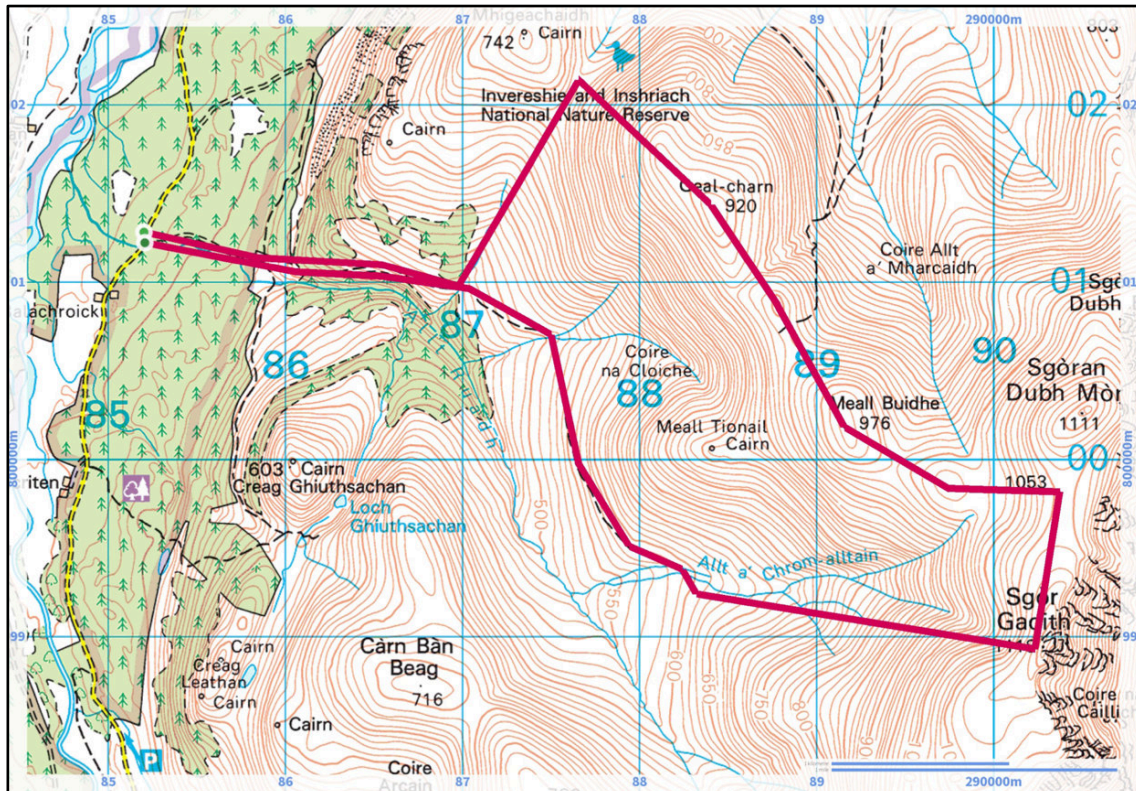
SECTION D (p3)

[illegible]

APPENDIX 11

PR2: ITM (GROUP) THREE ROUTE MAPS

LONG ROUTE



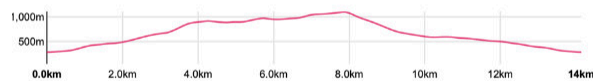
Route Information

Route Name ITM: 1. LONG Round route
full return route

Route Summary

Total Distance	13.9km (8.6mi)	Walk	4h 18min
Elevation	285m at lowest point	Run	1h 15min
	1100m at highest point	Cycle	43min
Total Ascent	919m		

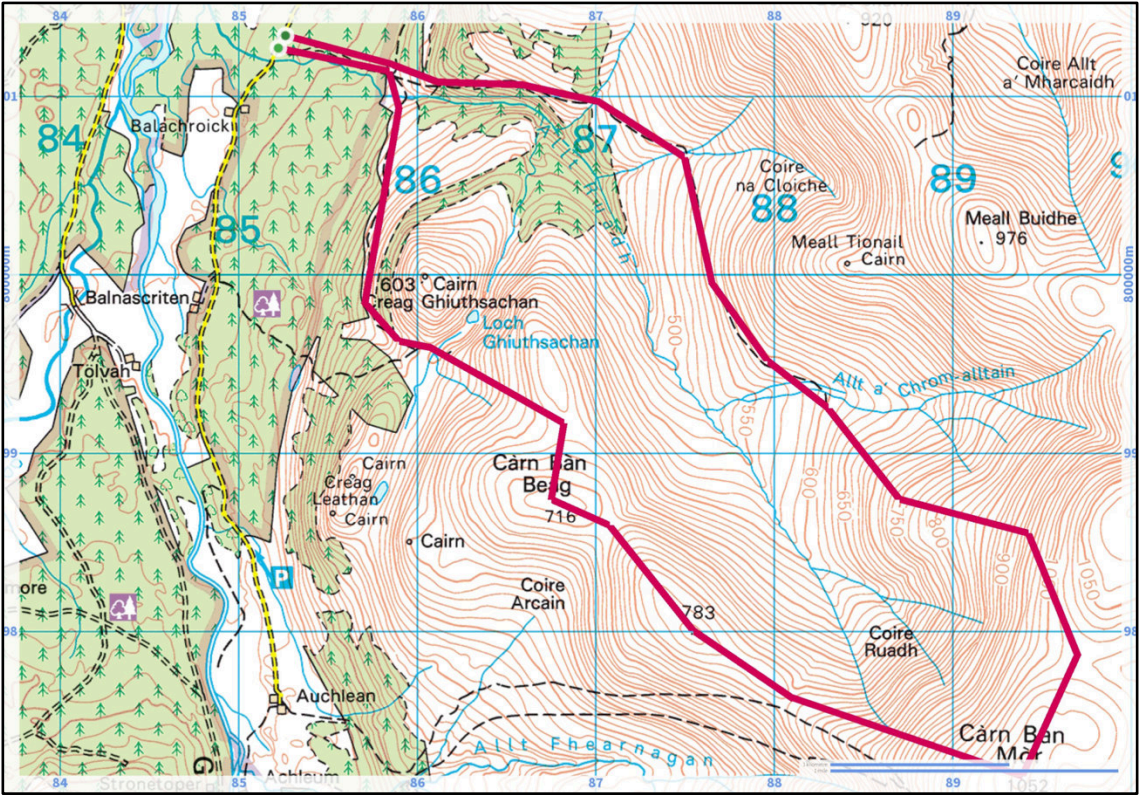
Elevation Profile



Route Card

#	OS Grid Ref	Dist from start	Latitude	Longitude	Elevation
1	NH 852 012	0.00km	57° 5' 17" N	3° 53' 45" W	285m
Dist to next: 13.91km, Bearing to next: 175°, Ascent to next: 919m					
2	NH 852 012	13.91km	57° 5' 15" N	3° 53' 44" W	286m

MID ROUTE



Route Information

Route Name ITM: 2: Mid Route round

Route Summary

Total Distance	13.8km (8.6mi)	Walk	4h 8min
Elevation	285m at lowest point	Run	1h 15min
	1049m at highest point	Cycle	43min
Total Ascent	833m		

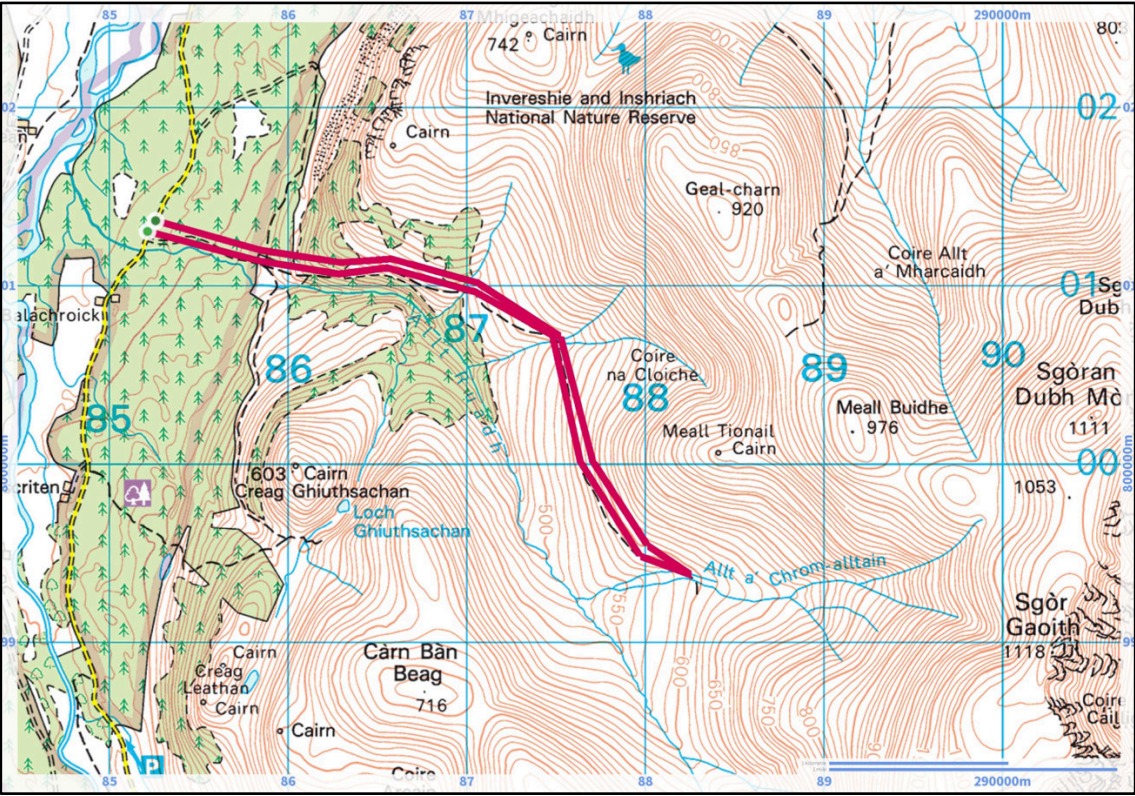
Elevation Profile



Route Card

#	OS Grid Ref	Dist from start	Latitude	Longitude	Elevation
1	NH 852 012	0.00km	57° 5' 17" N	3° 53' 44" W	285m
		Dist to next: 13.76km, Bearing to next: 30°, Ascent to next: 833m			
2	NH 852 013	13.76km	57° 5' 19" N	3° 53' 41" W	286m

SHORT ROUTE



Route Information

Route NameITM: Short R0ute round trip

Route Summary

Total Distance

8.0km (5.0mi)

Elevation

285m at lowest point

620m at highest point

Total Ascent

356m

Walk

2h 11min

Run

43min

Cycle

25min

Elevation Profile

Route Card

#	OS Grid Ref	Dist from start	Latitude	Longitude	Elevation
1	NH 852 013	0.00km	57° 5' 18" N	3° 53' 44" W	285m
Dist to next: 7.99km, Bearing to next: 37°, Ascent to next: 356m					
2	NH 852 013	7.99km	57° 5' 20" N	3° 53' 42" W	285m



APPENDIX 12

PR2: *INTO THE MOUNTAIN (GROUP)* WALKING FACILITATION NOTES

Scores, texts, and activity for group walks: experiential-somatic leaders

May/June 2019

Saffy Setohy: Short route

Margaret Kerr: Mid route

Jean Langhorne: Long route

Things to take with you:

- A copy of Nan Shepherds, *The Living Mountain* (2014)
- Micro Lenses x 3 per group
- Anything you think is relevant and that can support your experiential role.

Mountain Leaders (ML) leading your groups are responsible for keeping time for them to meet at the performance site. Please adhere to their advice and time notices. You may have to adapt your plan to keep within the timeframe.

MLs are responsible for the health and safety of your group as you walk, and you are responsible for enriching their experience!

Please use common sense regarding what you are inviting the group to do along the way. If in doubt of any safety aspects of your invitation, please check with your ML before proceeding. Perhaps asking participants to peer over a precipice for example may be going too far!

Performance week

We will check-in each day with how each walk went, what needs adapting, anything new you discovered or would prefer to include, can all be discussed after each event.

Wet Weather and cold conditions that feel challenging may need some adaptation of your plans depending on your routes. It may be that if it's cold then more tuning exercises happen within the forest area of the first section of the walk and then reading sections that seem fitting in relation to the weather or your situation on the hill might also be good to read out.

Let us continue discussions each evening for the following day.

Ways of grouping people for readings or activities, talking or sitting:

- **standing shoulder-to-shoulder** in a circle (the penguin huddle often used by ML)
- **Sitting in emergency bivi tent.** Some people find these tents quite claustrophobic, so ask and anyone can leave at any time, unless it's an actual emergency use of the shelter. They are great when it's cold and wet and they are also great at getting warm, making people sit down together and they change the way you experience sound and atmosphere when you leave them again!

For the performance they will need to sit down in their groups. Please help coordinate this as gently as you can. It will be better coming from you than someone from the production team who they have not been walking with.

Scores and Explorations

Sensory/embodiment activities [in Orange](#)

Reading page no. [in Blue](#)

Introductions at the Car park (start of each walk)

- Let the MLs do the introductions, H+S briefing, medical and expectations of the day.
(This should happen on the bus now so you can go straight into greeting and introducing them to the walk when they get off the bus)

Note: when introducing the day use words connected to embodiment and sensory exploration, relationship to place etc., modes of attention and ways of noticing or seeing collectively and as individuals.

I know we all come with different experiences and have different ways of using terms and language for the variety of exercises we have all taught in our work. We should not presume that everyone in the audience has previous experience of these practices. Let's keep language focused on embodied knowledge and exploration than specific practices, or if you do, explain and give more detail.

OUTWARD JOURNEY

Starting in Car park — Briefly

- You introduce yourself, your role and welcome them to the day. (you can elaborate whilst walking- especially if you're on the mid/long route)
- Introduce Shepherd book, physically showing the copy you have.
- Read out an introductory passage from the book.

Read p.1.

‘Summer on the high plateau can be as delectable as honey; it can also be a roaring scourge. To those who love the place, both are good, since both are part of its essential nature. And it is to know it’s essential nature that I am seeking here, to know that is, with the knowledge that is a process of living. This is not done easily nor in an hour. It is a tale too slow for the impatience of our age.’

Read p.2.

The Cairngorm Mountains are a mass of granite thrust up through the schists and gneiss that form the lower surrounding hills, planed down by the ice cap, and split, shattered and scooped by frost, glaciers and the strength of running water. Their physiognomy is in the geography books- so many square miles of area, so many lochs, so many summits of over 4000 feet- but this is a phallid simulacrum of their reality, which, like every reality that matters ultimately to human beings, is the reality of the mind. (Note aside- and arguably body!)

- Let’s get everyone out of the car park and into walking!

Begin your walking route**First leg – through forest point out:**

- Anthill on the left
- Lichen circle on the stone on right.
- Any other knowledge you may want to share.

Junction of paths before going up or to the bridge (on mid route)

- You can point out the stone there with lines/grooves in – Someone said it could have been a stone that soldiers sharpened their bayonets on before heading off.

Read p.13.

‘Eye and foot acquire in rough walking the coordination that makes one distinctly aware of where the next step is to fall, even while watching the sky and land. This watching, it is true, is of a general nature only; for attentive observation the body must be still’.

Activity: Clock feet Find a moment there to bring people’s attention to their standing and feet. In standing you could use the idea of a clock or compass and have them slowly lean into the front/back/sides of feet – feeling the edges of where they want to fall. Then have them go around the clock/ edges of their feet clockwise and anticlockwise. Finally, finding their centre in the middle of the clock and having a moment to sense their standing again. Preparing them for the fact that they are about to walk up hill if on short/long route.

Silent Walk I’m suggesting here to start with a silent walk so they can focus on getting up hill with their awareness in their attuned feet, paying attention to where they are stepping and taking up a rhythm that does not take them out of breath.

long/short routes:

When you level out and get to the junction where the paths splits (before short crosses stream to mother tree and the long heads up)

Mid R. As you come around and just before leaving the trees to get up on the heather land before the ascent.

Reading about forest/Trees/light: There may be passages that you really like so please include them.

Activity: Merging between (eyes- breath- touch- relational- thresholds- water- temp)

For a burn or place of water close by.

10mins

- Focus your eyes on the place where water meets rock.
- Look at this meeting place with soft focus.
- Often coming back to your own body, your position and breath as you watch
- Bring attention to the space between the place you are watching and your bodily relationship.
- Try to imagine the sensation of the water/rock connection with your own body.
- Try now or later: A time where you place your fingers in the water and sense the movement that the water was making in relation to your own hand rather than the rock/material it was in relation to.

Read p.104.

'In fording a swollen stream ones strongest sensation is of the pouring strength of water against ones limbs... (continue whole paragraph) Then life pours in.'

Activity to go with p.11.

Looking through legs or laying down- take her instruction from the text!

Read p.11

'I put my fingers in the water and found it cold. I listened to the waterfall until I know longer heard it...I let my eyes travel across the surface, slowly from shore to shore, beginning at my feet and ending at the precipice.

This changing of focus in the eye, moving the eye itself when looking at things that do not move, deepens one's sense of outer reality. Then static things may be caught in the act of becoming.

By so simple a matter, too, as altering the position of one's head, a different kind of world may be made to appear. Lay the head down, or better still, face away from what you look at, and bend with straddles legs till you see your world upside down. How new it has become! ... the focal point is everywhere. Nothing has reference to me, the looker. This is how the earth must see itself.'

Read p.46

'Walking in the dark, oddly enough can reveal new knowledge about a familiar place.... It amazed me to find how unfamiliar I was with that path. I had followed it times without yet now, when my eyes were in my feet, I did not know its bumps or holes, nor where the trickles of water crossed it, nor where it rose and fell. It astonished me that my memory was so much in the eye and so little in the feet.'

Activity: In Pairs: Leading with Eyes closed 5 mins each (non-visual- touch-partnering-meeting another person in the group, encouraging listening and articulating experiences)

In pairs, let each person take their partner by the elbow and shoulder and guide them slowly with eyes closed across the terrain in silence. Then swap over. Afterwards walk and talk to each other about their experiences.

And/ Or

Activity: In Pairs- Take each other with eyes closed on a small journey while holding the fingertip of your partner. Try to give them information and a variety of sensations that give them an impression of the micro landscapes around them.

Read p.102

‘Touch is the most intimate sense of all... (continue reading paragraph till) or walk through heather to feel its wetness on my naked leg.’

Walking barefoot If anyone wants to – at least suggest it from the text!

Read p.103

‘actually walking barefoot upon Heather is not so grim as it sounds...(continue) by pressing the sprays down, one can walk easily enough... (p.104 included) and the flowers caught in the toes is a small enchantment.’

Activity: Day/Sky dream. In a resting moment set this task to wakefully rest and read out the quote. Give 5 mins of silence for individuals.

Read p.90.

‘No one knows the mountain completely who has not slept on it. As one slips over into sleep, the mind grows limpid: the body melts: perception alone remains. One neither thinks nor desires, nor remembers, but dwells in the intimacy with the tangible world...I am emptied of preoccupation, there is nothing between me and the earth and sky.’

And/or

p.98

‘But eye and touch have the greatest potency for me...while still the gale above my head drives the monstrous cumuli on...I perceive, is the mountains own doing, for its own atmosphere alters light.’

p. 90

‘Well, I have discovered my mountain- its weathers, its airs and lights, its singing burns, its haunted dells, its pinnacles and tarns, its birds and flowers, its snow, its long blue distances. Year by year, I have grown in familiarity with them all. But if the whole truth of them is to be told as I have found it, I too am involved. I have been an instrument of my own discovering: and to govern the stops of the instrument needs learning too. Thus the senses must be trained and disciplined, the eye to look, the ear to listen, the body must be trained to move with the right harmonies. I can teach my body many skills by which to learn the nature of the mountain. One of the most compelling is quiescence.’

Activity: Listening Score. (referencing Pauline Oliveros' listening scores)

Sit or stand.

Take a moment to listen to sounds around you.

Then in your own time- with eyes closed- try to point and locate the sound when you hear it.

Read p.96

‘To bend an ear to silence is to discover how seldom it is there. Always something moves...but now and then comes an hour when the silence is all but absolute and listening to it one slips out of time.’

Arriving Performance Site:

Please read this text out on arrival of the site before you sit down or just after you settle with your groups.

Sitting down in the performance space

p. 51

‘Just as one walks on a hot day surrounded by one’s own aura of flies, so one walks surrounded by own aura of heather scent...To one who loves the hills at every season, the blossoming is not the best of the heather. The best of it is simply its being there- is the feel of it under the feet. To feel heather under the feet after long abstinence is one of the dearest joys I know.’

This is the final text spoken before the performance begins:

'Walking thus hour after hour, the sense keyed, one walks the flesh transparent. But no metaphor, transparent, or light or air is adequate...(cont.) one is not bodiless, but essential body...(cont.)'

After the performance:

- Explain that the groups will be staggered with a few minutes in between. Someone from the production team will let you know when it is time to go. The groups may be in the order of 1st Long/ 2nd Mid/ 3rd short group (Tbc each day).
- Please invite your group to walk the first 20 mins of the return route in silence. This is to just cut out any chatter about the work immediately after the performance element and allow for the performativity of the place to be witnessed and experienced. They will also be in a lengthy line of walkers on a small track which will be performative the further back you are.
- The return route can be much more drifting, you cannot stop to read as it is more about the line keeping together and getting back.
- Encourage and bring attention to things you see: the amazing view into the glen, clouds moving overhead, light changing, the movement of the line of people ahead, bodily feelings etc. which is more light touch and less directive.

Final ending texts

When you reach the carpark, find a time to bring your group together in a circle, thank them for the day and their engagement etc. Finish with this closing text from the book.

Read p.107

So my journey into an experience began. It was a journey always for fun...
(continue into p.108) The thing to be known grows with the knowing...It is a
journey into Being...to know being is the final grace accorded from the mountain.'

END

(Note: Extra quotes and notes were included for facilitators but have been omitted due to the size of the thesis).

APPENDIX 13

ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR STUDY

The Secretariat
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT Tel: 0113 343 4873
Email: ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Simone Kenyon
School of Performance and Cultural Industries
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT

**Arts, Humanities and Cultures Faculty Research Ethics Committee
University of Leeds**

12 August 2024

Dear Simone,

Title of study: Walking out of the body and into the mountain: dancing, mountaineering and embodied ways of knowing
Ethics reference: LTSPCI-054
Grant reference: AH/N010124/1

I am pleased to inform you that the above application for proportionate (light touch) ethical review has been reviewed by a representative of the Arts, Humanities and Cultures Faculty Research Ethics Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
LTSPCI-054 LightTouchEthicsForm_SKENYON_PCI.docx	1	13/09/2019
LTSPCI-054 Participant information and consent form_ITMConversations.doc	1	13/09/2019

The committee made the following comments:

- The committee was not persuaded that the applicant means anonymised, perhaps they cannot really deliver on the promise – the sample size is too small surely, and the community too small for this to be true. Please refer to the guidance at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ConfidentialityAnonymisation> and update your information sheet accordingly.
- Also you promise to allow participants to “withdraw at any time”. The application form contradicts this, saying they can withdraw before the project ends. Neither is quite right. It would be clearer to specify a date after which withdrawal will not be possible.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted at date of this approval, including changes to recruitment methodology. All changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment>.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as other documents relating to the study. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited, there is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits>.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Blaikie
Senior Research Ethics Administrator, the Secretariat
On behalf of Prof Robert Jones, Chair, [AHC-FREC](#)

CC: Professor Jonathan Pitches

RE: LTSPCI-080 - Proportionate Ethics Review application - Favourable outcome

Daksha Chavda <d.chavda@adm.leeds.ac.uk>
on behalf of
AHC Research Ethics <AHCResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk>

Tue 02/05/2023 11:42

To: Simone Kenyon <pcsrk@leeds.ac.uk>
Cc: Jonathan Pitches <J.Pitches@leeds.ac.uk>

Dear Simone,

LTSPCI-080 – Walking out of the body and into the Mountain': dancing, mountaineering and embodied ways of knowing.

NB: All approvals/comments are subject to compliance with current University of Leeds and UK Government advice regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am pleased to inform you that your proportionate touch research ethics application has been reviewed by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures Research Ethics Committee (AHC) and I can confirm this has received a favourable ethical opinion based on the documentation received at date of this email.

Please retain this email as evidence of approval in your study file.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted and approved to date. This includes recruitment methodology; all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. Please see <https://ris.leeds.ac.uk/research-ethics-and-integrity/applying-for-an-amendment/> or contact the Research Ethics Administrator for further information (ahcresearchethics@leeds.ac.uk) if required.

Ethics approval does not infer you have the right of access to any member of staff or student or documents and the premises of the University of Leeds. Nor does it imply any right of access to the premises of any other organisation, including clinical areas. The committee takes no responsibility for you gaining access to staff, students and/or premises prior to, during or following your research activities.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, risk assessments and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

It is our policy to remind everyone that it is your responsibility to comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection and any other legal and/or professional guidelines there may be.

I hope the study goes well.

Yours sincerely,

Daksha

On behalf of Professor Matthew Treherne (AHC REC Interim Chair)

The Secretariat
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University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT
Tel: 0113 343 4873
Email: ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk



Simone Kenyon, PhD Candidate
PCI
Arts, Humanities and Cultures
Stage@Leeds Building
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT

**Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures Research Ethics Committee
University of Leeds**

25 July 2017

Dear Simone

Title of study Practice Led Performance: Into The Mountain
Ethics reference LTSPCI-039
Grant reference AH/N010124/1

I am pleased to inform you that the above research application has been reviewed by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures Research Ethics Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
LTSPCI-039 Simone_Kenyon_LightEthicsForm	1.0	13/06/2017

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the information in your ethics application as submitted at date of this approval as all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment>.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation and other documents relating to the study, including any risk assessments. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits>.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rachel E de Souza".

Rachel E de Souza, Research Ethics & Governance Administrator
On behalf of Dr Kevin Macnish, Chair, [PVAR FREC](#)

CC: Student's supervisor