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Vertical. Nature. Base.

A collaborative project by Echo Echo's Steve Batts and artist Dan Shipsides. Based at a Donegal coastal climbing location and a city exhibition base, V.N.B. is a residential experimental climbing / art / dance project that investigates the contrasting and comparable notions of climbing as sport and climbing as creative engagement. Interested people can join the camp in September (details tba) for various activities and camping. This blog is an insight into V.N.B.'s creative development.

Monday, 1 June 2009

TOPOPHILIA AND TOPOPHOBIA - JUNE 2009

12th June 2009

Climbing / dance

Hi Steve,

It's been a while but I'm only just coming up for air...

Just wanted to send a short email and few thoughts - abstract as they are.

I was thinking about some aspects of what we talked about - and;

The idea of movement (in dance and esp. climbing) holding more than the physical, spatial, gymnastic phrase - but that it kind of acts as a window or frame to life experiences - or a social human and topographic sphere.

In this short span between my fingertips and the smooth edge and these tense feet cramped to a crystal ledge, I hold the life of a man. - Geoffrey Winthrop Young

I like the idea of the specific move (like in bouldering and maybe in some ways dance) but also the wider "life"-ness of the activity. How we connect to the place, activity and people. Kind of a "whole life in a move".

In climbing that move maybe repeated and repeated (esp bouldering and training - but also in terms of the social history of routes - where the "move" almost become legend.. (That move on the Sloth or the move on Valkyrie etc.) and repeated by thousands.

Yi Fu Tuan's Topophilia / topophobia interests me greatly also in terms of climbing.

It was great to meet you - and lets continue correspondance and see what happens.

Update Aug 2011

VNB project flyer

Background info

Background info

Blog Archive

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Further Links & Funders

Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company

Dan Shipsides

Legacy Trust UK

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Dan's related projects

Elastic Frontiers

Radical Architecture

Rochers a Fontainebleau

Touchstone Testpiece

T5 field cinema

Shipsides and Beggs Projects

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Dan

6 Aug 2009

Hi Dan,

I want you to teach me to climb. I mean, I would like to put myself into your hands to hear your description of what this activity is, to share my responses. To begin at the beginning... which is where I am anyway. To feel what the details of my movement perception, and my affective responses are in this activity. To be guided to a higher level of perception and skill. To be able to watch you climb and to note my responses, emotional and physical. I'm interested in the "technical" aspects and climbing indoors, but also in the issues about environment and nature of touching the natural rock forms. I'd like to look at the details in bouldering as well as the different attention in longer pitches. I'm terrified of the idea of a climb with more than one pitch! Ahhhhhhhghgh!

I want to feel safe enough to not be distracted from the detail of the practice but endangered enough to heighten my attention to detail. (My adrenal response is very high... so I don't need much danger to set of an elevated level of perception!) Basically I am scared all the time which has been one of the motivating drives in developing attention disciplines.... Being an Alexander Technique Teacher, Aikido, meditation, Yoga etc.

I'd like to go in the dance studio together and to introduce some of my ideas about space and phrasing, resonance and tonus to you.

Perhaps we can record any discussions on audio or video. Maybe we can photograph/video from the beginning.

I'd like to get started with things so that seeds planted will have time to grow and to lead us in their own way.

Some ideas:

Interviewing you (and/or other climbers) about what relation to sport climbing has. About fear. About beauty. About challenge competition. About sensual pleasure. About pain. Taking the answers as a sort of "score" for dancing. Maybe a soundtrack.

Learning a climb and practicing it as a sort of dance. With an expressive or affective process. What are the shapes and tones of the torso and if they appeared while dancing not climbing what would they signify or describe in the state of the dancer.

To climb and to record a monologue of feelings and sensations as I go. To use this as a score for dancing.

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Twitter Updates

- Lots of Sunday Session photos on our fb profile- thanks Audrey and Rory! <https://t.co/Ki83wDgM> <http://t.co/77mWNKIL> about 17 hours ago
- Lots of exciting things happening this year to keep up to date through our monthly e-newsletters. Free to sign up... <http://t.co/c13bCFbR> 4 days ago
- Would like to pass a viral 'hey!' to everyone on our social networks :) Feel free to pass it on... 6 days ago
- Thanks ML x @marielouisemuir @FriendsBalletNI @MaidenVoyageDance @dqdancetheatre 6 days ago

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To do two routes alongside each other as a duet. Like a counter-melodic composition. Controlling the timing and the moment of and effort in each move. Perhaps with a music score?

To attempt to model or echo in the dancing body the forms of the rock on a particular route.

..... and many more.....

Enough for now,
I hope you are doing well with new fatherhood. I'm sure it is very demanding and exciting!
Hope to hear from you soon.
Steve

Posted by Dan at 21:00 

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