



Jean Cameron: I was talking this morning with the Programme Director of Amnesty International and I will come back to that in a minute.

I am Jean Cameron and I am the producer for GI, the Glasgow International Festival of Visual Arts which takes place next April in Glasgow and I am also the producer for The Arts Practice which is an ad hoc project that I run without any institutional support. The concerns that I address are really grounded in social and political issues and work across live art, performance, discursive events, and dance. Rather than specifically address one particular project, I just want to talk about the role of the producer a bit because that is what I do. I think it has a very specific relevance in terms of engaging both the policy makers and with the public sphere.

The producer is the person that is the bridge between the world and the work – the art work. The producer is always there when the artist and the audience meet. Basically, the producer's role is about cultivating temporary communities and by that I mean the groups of people that one needs to realise a project: the officials, the funders, the partner venues, the artists, the artistic directors, the publicity people – but also the constituencies that gather round an event and give it its sense of meaning, impact and purpose. So, a producer, if you like, is cultivating temporary constituent communities and, I like to think, produce events as a networker. As a networker, I am managing a series of relational threads. These threads run between people – the artist is one point in the network, and other people are other points. Each of these threads has characteristics. For instance there are threads between artists and other people that need to be trusting; have a sense of credibility about the project. There are threads that are critical connecting people who are going to enable the artists to make their projects happen. The producer directs these relational threads around knots and into vibrant clusters of activity. The producer is that person who has the big picture of where these relational threads are being directed and making sure the tension is right around the particular clusters of activity. Sometimes that tension can be ever so tight, and it is the producer's role to come in and convince people to stay on board; to love a project (that they did not necessarily think they had to fall in love with); and loosen tensions or create other relational threads around particular knots.

So, let's go back to Amnesty International and my Silver Shoes. This is my sales pitch: this is a project that has not happened yet. It is a project called 'Vote with your Feet' and it is happening in Dance Space, the National Centre for Dance. It is a choreographic residency looking at how we walk or talk, happening the week of the 8th to the 12th of October and Janice Parker, a colleague from this workshop series, is working with me as a mentor. We are offering a dance class to non-dancers, to activists, to policy thinkers, to people who want to vote with their feet and be experts in their body beyond the privacy of their bedroom where they are dancing around and playing air guitar; to feel a sense of confidence in a public setting. I am looking at how people walk their talk.

I am really interested in two things: I am interested in the role of the body in terms of the 21st century, and voting with your feet in the context of e-petitions; ethically motivated consumerism; online text message, votes, etcetera. What is the role of the body in the 21st century creative, mass, civic, demonstrations?

I think it really relates to dance because I am also asking those question around the tensions between, how we behave in an individual sense – that dancing in the bedroom, and nobody seeing you, and then actually having the confidence to vote with your feet in a collective setting. I think there is, for me (I'm looking at Mr Ian Spink here, who also works in the area of dance). There is some sort of similarity here.

I want to leave you with the same questions that I am asking during my residency. Are our motivations and our attitudes different when we engage as individuals, or collectively? When do we feel more liberated to vote with our feet – is it as individuals or as collectives? At the beginning I referred to talking this morning with the Programme Director at Amnesty. He invited me to work with him on Edinburgh Festival's 'Feet of Expression' campaign that Amnesty runs every year in return for him helping me think about activism for this particular project. So, I just want to take the final thirty seconds in here to invite us all to take a moment to think about freedom of expression, about Amnesty's campaign, and about that very simple, but very effective, action in Burma that we are seeing – the monks lead in a very physical way a campaign of everyone joining hands and marching. I want us to think that we are in the seat of power in our country and we have got that freedom to express, and just to leave. That is my parting thought.

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