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# LOOKING BOXES

## A SUMMARY OF THE DESIGN AND APPLICATION OF 'LOOKING BOXES' IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF SCREENDANCE MAKING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### THE BOXES

Looking Boxes are a simple device designed for Higher Education student learning in screendance making. Their application supports awareness of composition and framing the body in practical explorations.

The Boxes are designed to approximately replicate the experience of viewing images through a camera viewfinder (as opposed to an LCD camera screen). The design allows the user to view a limited area without any peripheral visual information. Importantly, They assist the removal of visual texts that may be represented by the wider dancer's environment (i.e. architecture, landscape, other dancers, studio space, clutter, etc) supporting the viewer to isolate the dancing body, or parts of the dancing body, in a visual environment similar to that of a viewfinder.

Many cameras have an LCD screen but no viewfinder. This results in a different 'camera looking' experience as the viewfinder is positioned in a wider field of vision that brings with it the texts of the environment beyond the frame. Cameras that have the viewfinder option tend to be more expensive, making them less easily resourced for the classroom. They are also heavier and may tend to be used with caution owing to their value and the possibility of knocking against other dancers in close proximity work. An advantage of the Looking Boxes is that they are very easy to manipulate, enabling the student to move around freely, using different viewing angles, levels, and positions. They are low cost, easily replaceable, and easily transportable. The design covers both eyes and the side of the face, completely isolating the viewed images.



Looking Box being used at Mills College, California.

The Looking Boxes, as constructed by the author, are made from lightweight black cardboard fastened with black dance floor tape. They represent a box without a lid (fig 5). The side-walls of the box measure 5 cm high and the base, or face, of the box measures 25 cm x 12cm (fig 4). The long sides of the box are cut with a curve in order for them to fit the face (fig 1). Two apertures are cut into the face of the box, each roughly in line with one of the eyes of the user (fig 4). The apertures measure approximately 10mm x 5.5mm landscape and 4mm x 2mm landscape. When looking through the apertures these represent roughly a 100mm and 35mm camera lens respectively. The boxes are designed to fold flat (fig 3). 15 boxes fit into a cardboard holder measuring 28 cm x 12.5cm x 5.5cm, approximately the size of a single typical DSLR camera body, without lens (fig 6). The boxes are reusable and have, at the time of writing, been used for 5 workshops without significant damage.



Fig 1. Template

Fig 2. Side

Fig 3. Folded, back view

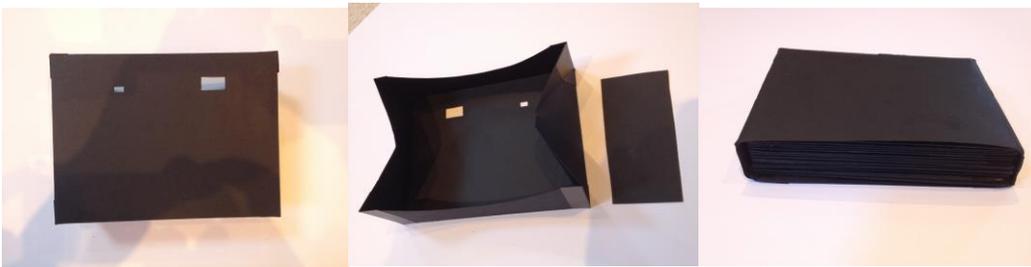


Fig 4. Front view

Fig 5. Unfolded with blanking card

Fig 6. Pack of 15 boxes

The user places the box over their face and opens one eye of the other depending on which aperture he or she wishes to look through. The boxes also come with a small piece of black 'blanking' card. As an alternative means of looking through one hole or the other, the card can be held by a finger pressed to the front of the box and used in the style of a car windscreen wiper to block one aperture or the other.

## WORKSHOPS

The Looking Boxes are a central element of a workshop entitled ' A Different way of looking'. At the time of writing documented workshops have been run four times.

**Workshop 1.** 21/10/13. Roger Williams University, Rhode Island USA. Duration 2 hours.

Participants: 30 undergraduate dancers, mixed year groups. Space: dance studio.

**Workshop 2.** 23/10/13. University of Wisconsin, USA. Duration 1 hour and 40 minutes.

Participants 28 mixed year undergraduate and graduate dancers. Space: dance studio.

**Workshop 3.** 25/10/13. Mills College, California. Duration 2 hours 25 minutes.

participants 4 post graduate dancers, one dance professional, and 1 undergraduate dancer. Space: dance studio.

**Workshop 4.** 2/11/13. Bath Spa University, England. Duration 2 hours. Participants: 14 graduates and undergraduates from Bath Spa University and Roger Williams University. Space: dance studio.

**Workshop objectives:** To encourage dancers to explore alternative ways of viewing the moving body, beyond the usual sitting or standing eye level position, and to encourage a 'different way of looking'. Viewing space is restricted as a means of creating an altered relationship between the body, the viewer, and the environment in which it is viewed. Specifically, to use the restriction of a frame to: increase the ratio of the body against its environment, lessen the amount of visual information surrounding the body, and to re-specify the relationship of the body to the environment by restricting the environmental imagery. In addition, to support consideration of composition within a frame, particularly the notion that the edge of the frame is a zone that may be used to enhance awareness of what the viewer cannot see, and give visual credence to the remaining space, whatever that may be. Detail of the workshop design can be found in appendix 1.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

The Looking Boxes derive from my research, *The Dancer and the Looking Glass*. The Boxes emerged out of findings from 'Lab 1', a series of production experiments which originated from the proposition that, within the broad range of practice used in the filming of dance improvisation, the relationship between lens, camera operator/director and dancer is one in which production control predominately favours the camera operator/director. Findings from 'Lab 1' led to an exploration of the edges of the frame in the viewing of the dancing body on screen. The workshop, 'A Different Way of Looking', supports students to explore these edges in a contained visual world that excludes peripheral visual information.



A Different Way of Looking. Workshop. Mills College, Oakland, California.

More stills with workshop music can be found at: <http://youtu.be/u-yi6F6XYsM>

The area of 'blackness' surrounding the viewing aperture of a camera viewfinder will vary depending on the camera. It will however represent a significant proportion of the field of vision and as such what might be, but cannot be seen.

American photographer Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) created a series of images of clouds. Four of these early photographs, currently hanging in The Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco, are mounted behind a wide border (appendix 1). The pictures demand close scrutiny and give a sense of their being a glimpse only of a wider skyscape that the mounting denies the viewer. The Looking Boxes create the same effect as the presentation of these early photos, encouraging scrutiny of a small area by denying the viewer the wider picture, but hinting at a bigger picture. Dancers move into, and then back out of, the frame, their dancing whereabouts then unknown until they return into view. The surprise entry into the screen of a shoulder or limb lets the viewer

know that the remains of the body is there but unseen, and perhaps even the identity of the dancer is unknown.

There are a number of differences between the Looking Boxes and a camera LCD screen or viewfinder. One is that the edges of the viewing frame in the boxes are blurred to the eye. This is a consequence of the aperture being so close to the eye and could be perceived as a negative aspect of the looking experience as it did not replicate the frame of a viewfinder or screen. No negative comments however were made regarding this in workshop feedback. The 'effect' of the viewed images having a soft edge was commented on by users from University of Wisconsin Madison. In a discussion at UWM on 23rd October 2013, Postgraduate student Henry Holmes commented on how the blurred edges in some way reflected the act of 'unfettered' viewing. He suggested that the blurring off at the edges of the frame reflected the way our attention is less concentrated on imagery in our peripheral vision. Professor Douglas Rosenberg, in the same discussion, noted that the effect replicated the Victorian photographic tradition of softening the peripheries of a photographic image, especially portraits. This tradition endures through 'effects' available on digital photography software such as i photo.

A crucial difference between a camera and a Looking Box is weight and texture. Where a camera is hard and heavy, and could injure a dancer who might collide with it, the looking boxes are light and soft.

*'I felt that having something that wasn't fragile allowed us a new perspective and angles to kind of work with the camera it's so fragile I feel that it's really inhibiting of movement or possible angles. The Looking Box kind of allowed me to get into new angles and places that I wouldn't usually get into'. Heather Stockton, Mills College California*

Dancer feedback on using the boxes reveals that the boxes do indeed promote a 'different way of looking'. A number of dancers revealed how using the boxes was a learning experience and supported them to view the dancing body in a new way.

*'It really compelled a certain honesty in the way that we watch dance. We often trick ourselves into thinking we can see everything that is happening but really you can only experience that frame that is within your actual internal focus and*

*narrow perspective, and you actually have to look at it and there's nowhere else to see and I thought that was really compelling because it taught me something about the way I look at dance without a sort of frame in front of it. And it also, sort of, I had to reconsider my values because I realised that what I wanted to see was actually a little bit more like this than the way I usually watch dance and that taught me something about how I look at the dancer.'* Post grad student Henry Holmes from University of Wisconsin Madison.

*'In terms of like movement vocabulary it was very interesting because things that might have not necessarily translated as well on a stage per say or what ever, depending on what stage was, it just, it looked much different inside the little box.'* Ashlyanne Brown from Roger Williams University

*'Obviously dance is usually viewed as a large perception of a big space, whether you are in a classroom or on stage where there are multiple dancers or a solo dancer and you can see everything they are doing. But it segmented it and made the details very particular.'* Kristin Giddings from Roger Williams University.

*'And it was exciting to see the architecture in a whole new way..... taking out the choice of what's on the periphery and really defining what you're looking at'.* Heather Stockton. Mills College California.

A number of students commented on how framing the dancer through the looking boxes became a significant part of the experience of using them. Whilst the same might be the case whilst viewing through a camera viewfinder, the boxes hold no possibility of actually recording what is seen. The absence of this agenda may support looking as the primary activity, with no concerns as to when and how often to press the record button, and whether the camera is 'set up' correctly for recording. Typically, in the workshops run, a dancer may spend 20 minutes with looking as the sole activity.

*'Of course I really enjoyed putting Heather, my subject, in different parts of the frame but then once I started incorporating elements of the actual architecture of the room and the light that was just naturally hitting some of these brown wood window frames. That sort of created frames within frames and complimented the movement of her body very nicely'.* Megan Meyer, Mills College California.

*'So there were things like that. Compositional things that I didn't expect, I just thought 'I'm getting closer' but then suddenly there was a whole series of tugs going this way and horizontal reinforcement in the frame that was going on and I thought wow, that's very nice. And I think that the other thing that was especially pleasing, just playing the game of anticipating where she's going to go, and look, she's going in that direction and I'll set the frame up before she gets there and then let her enter the frame and exit'.* Shinichi Lova-Koga, Mills College California.

*'...and it was really interesting to watch and also her body sliding down that way and I was basically moving up her body without actually having to move, she was sliding into the frame so I would see her legs and then her hips and then finally her face came into the frame and it gave like, these, like, just like her feet and her body gave it all of a sudden person to attest it to, it personified all that movement and I saw her face come into the frame'.* Rebecca Johnstone. University of Wisconsin Madison.

*'I really appreciated how it was able to focus my attention and I really could say ok I want to see what looks like seeing Shannon through this series of the metal fixtures along the bar and setting up those lines and really being able to focus and not have some of this extra clutter interfering with that so I could really see the movement coming in and out'.* Warren Barnes, Mills College, California.

*'...she's like in and out of the frame too and I was like, even some of the pictures that were the most interesting were when there wasn't even a dancer on the stage'.* Joyce Gafni. University of Wisconsin Madison.

*'There would be a lot of times where she would be out of my view and I could just see her in the mirror and I would always kinda get that anticipation feeling like, when is she going to come back?'* Kayleigh Kiso. University of Wisconsin Madison.

*'I think they were helpful, the boxes helped me focus on what parts we were focussing on. And sort of how, drawing in the focus changes what the dances meaning to the viewer'.* Grace Dean. University of Wisconsin Madison.

The 'Different Way Of Looking' workshops lead to the making of short videos by the dancers. A variety of video recorders were used ranging from mobile phones to DSLR cameras with video facilities. The videos were posted on the Face Book page 'Dance and the Looking Glass' during October and November 2013. Links to a sample of nine of the videos are given here. The videos are characterised by largely steady camera work, mid to close up shots of the dancing body, Considered framing of dancers in environment, and, in some, the use of the sideways camera. The single most common attribute might be the isolation of sections of the dancing body within the frame. It is not possible to know the degree to which the use of the Looking Boxes might be attributed to this but it would seem a reasonable correlation to make, particularly in the light of student feedback.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=patfAjDnSdk#t=12>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWZJjGO9EGQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ru7DG6HmFek>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y66b-lzpXvI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90ygPUeQozI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2vAtG5hD8w>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlh7zrOcovs>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10151666812616230&set=o.526058064110558&type=2&theater>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10151756245734930&set=o.526058064110558&type=2&theater>

## APPENDIX 1



Alfred Steiglitz. Gelatin silver prints. 1927. Contemporary Jewish Museum. San Francisco.

## APPENDIX 2

### Transcriptions

#### Transcription of feedback after the Looking Box exercise at University of Wisconsin. 23/10/13

Hi I'm Kelsey Larnho (unclear last name), and er, something I really liked when I was looking through the, looking boxes, that was there were two dancers and they suddenly were in sync but neither of them were looking at each other and they were doing the same movement. That was kind of cool so I figured that they probably saw someone across the room and they were taking that person's movement (*a reference to the improvisation structure that allows dancers to take each other's movement material*) but it was really weird because they were like (unclear) in common and they were doing this like exact same movement but neither were facing each other so it was kind of weird like. That happened.

CL-S. D. Do you think that you might not have noticed that if you were not using a looking box?

Kelsey. Um, I don't know, I think it made it more interesting to me because it was as if they were just, they were just on the same wavelength almost. And because I couldn't see if they were following someone else which I was assuming that was what was happening. But, it like pulled my eye and it stood out to me really strong because there was something there that was happening.

I'm Grace Dean. Things I found that was most interesting and sort of I think they were helpful, the boxes helped me focus on what parts we were focussing on. And sort of how, drawing in the focus changes what the dances meaning to the viewer. Like at one point I was watching the feet and then your hands came down to the ground and then it became this dance about, for me your nail polish because it contrasted so much to the floor (unclear) lime green. Anyway it sort of made,

that that's what I wanted to follow and it sort of added a narrative because of what I was looking at. And then sort of separate from then it became less about you dancing and less about the experience of watching and more about what was going on in your movement and what parts of your body. A new way to look at it.

I'm Jamie Agana (unclear last name). One thing I thought was interesting was the camera angles that I chose that had the mirror in the background. So, I was looking through the really small hole but (unclear name) was out there and she was dancing. I would lose her a lot of the time but I would see her full movement in the background and then she would come in and I could, use my eyes could focus in on her up close and get (unclear) what she was really doing but in the back I could actually see the whole (something) that was a contrast.

I'm Sarah (unclear) And I think one of the most interesting moments for me was, I was using the very small lens I was watching my dancer, just a part of her leg, and sometimes an arm came through and a narrative started happening with just arms and legs, just a (unclear) contrast ... (Unclear ending. To be revisited. )

I'm Henry Holmes, I thought it really compelled a certain honesty in the way that we watch dance. We often trick ourselves into thinking we can see everything that is happening but really you can only experience that frame that is within your actual internal focus and narrow perspective, and you actually have to look at it and there's nowhere else to see and I thought that was really compelling because it taught me something about the way I look at dance without a sort of frame in front of it. And it also, sort of, I had to reconsider my values because I realised that what I wanted to see was actually a little bit more like this than the way I usually watch dance and that taught me something about how I look at the dancer.'

Hi I'm Kate Jordan what I found, was like, the thing that stood out the most for me using this was just like watching dance, is that, it seemed more intimate. It did seem like I was watching a movie, like when ever you watch dance movies or documentaries it's a really intimate feeling because they do that because they look at just their leg, and so it was cool to be doing that in like, live time. And it makes me wonder like if this could be a thing that people would do at performances or you know, something like that. It would be really cool.

CL-S. Perhaps I could sell them!

Kate. I think it would be cool. It might take people a lot of time to accept it. You're have to explain what you were trying to do because they would say 'what are you talking about?'

CL-S. There is a parallel in opera glasses.

Hi I'm Joyce Gafni. I think the thing that stood out most for me was, I feel that for all my life dance is about creating pictures. But what we just did, those pictures were so just atypical to what pictures of dance that I have always been accustomed to and what I believed is a picture so it was really cool that I was able to make it more like photography where I was like, ok here's Kate's hand and here's like wherever! Rebecca, she's like in and out of the frame too and I was like, even some of the pictures that were the most interesting were when there wasn't even a dancer on the stage, I guess there's like nothing, was cool.

I'm Rebecca Johnstone. Um I was going to say like my favourite part was kind of similar to what Sarah was talking about was like the emergence of the dancer almost like the only thing that I could see for a second was just Grace's feet, pointing and flexing and it was really interesting to watch and also her body sliding down that way and I was basically moving up her body without actually having to move, she was sliding into the frame so I would see her legs and then her hips and then finally her face came into the frame and it gave like, these, like, just like her feet and her body gave it all of a sudden person to attest it to, it personified all that movement and I saw her face come into the frame. It was just so cool to be able to put all these different parts together. It was really cool to see her whole body emerge into the frame. It brought it all together really nicely.

I'm Kayleigh Kiso and I did something similar to what Jamie did I was watching Courtney through the mirrors and I would only see part of her body but I could see her entire body dancing through the mirror. It made it really interesting and exciting to have such a narrow viewpoint and there would be a lot of times where she would be out of my view and I could just see her in the mirror and I would always kinda get that anticipation feeling like, when is she going to come back? And at one point she was out of my view and I could only see her in the mirror and Melissa rolled right in front of me and her face was right in front of my eye and it was almost jolting like, and it scared me a little bit and it was really exciting to see that because normally when you can just sit and pan and look at everyone you don't, you don't get those feelings of excitement because you can kind of see it's not as much of a surprise, so! It's really cool.

CL-S. Thank very much for that. It's really interesting feedback.

**Transcription of feedback after the Looking Box exercise at Mills College, Oakland California. 25/10/13. 6 dancers. Dance studio.**

I'm Sofia Colminares, I found myself trying to discover when to move with the dance, like what kind of movements would work best with that and then when to let the body come in and out of the frame. And it, and how like the orientation could dissect the body in some way. Yeah, I experimented with rolling on the floor, like 360. I enjoyed things coming in and out of the frame. Especially like extremities.

I'm Megan Meyer. Of course I really enjoyed putting Heather, my subject, in different parts of the frame but then once I started incorporating elements of the actual architecture of the room and the light that was just naturally hitting some of these brown wood window frames. That sort of created frames within frames and complimented the movement of her body very nicely and then of course these mirrors here there was this nice sort of dance moment because you were doubled, and all of your movement was hyper-symmetrical because everything was perfectly reflected in the mirror. That was a fun thing to explore.

Shinichi Lova-Koga. I felt there was a lot of lucky happens dance from the camera point of view. Things I just didn't expect but they were there. And I think, er, I think that one step was recognising that something lucky had happened. And then the second one was staying with the lucky thing and going -ok- at first it was luck and now I'm staying with it and enjoying how this luck plays out. So, I had a moment at the very beginning, like that, where I was up against the wall and one of the little chord was like just coming in and out and then I just let my own eye be like a camera lens and focus on the dancer or focus on this little chord and it was interesting that, why would this little box on my eye really does that in a more camera like way than in an eye like way. So that was really fun just to play with that. I had a little moment of thinking, wow, I wish I could get a camera to switch back and forth so accurately and quickly. So there were things like that.

Compositional things that I didn't expect, I just thought 'I'm getting closer but then suddenly there was a whole series of tugs going this way and horizontal reinforcement in the frame that was going on and I thought wow, that's very nice. And I think that the other thing that was especially pleasing, just playing the game of anticipating where she's going to go, and look, she's going in that direction and I'll set the frame up before she gets there and then let her enter the frame and exit. That was more like a game. But it was also really, still startling every time. To have nothing and then to see something come in, something come in very large, like in here, or whatever. Now. That's it.

My name is Shannon Stubblefield. I find this was like a good exercise for finding the right facing you know how you would want to pick up dancer images I ended up going back to the same spot five times which was this really strong diagonal behind Lauren and it was like so beautiful I like played with that. Down. And none of the other spots really compared to that one. So it was a really good way to find exactly where I would set up the camera . Yeah. I defiantly second what Megan said about framing and something she said about a camera nearby. Really nice, really beautiful.

I'm Warren Barnes. Yeah, I want to reiterate, but a lot of it I really appreciated how it was able to focus my attention and I really could say ok I want to see what looks like seeing Shannon through this series of the metal fixtures along the bar and setting up those lines and really being able to focus and not have some of this extra clutter interfering with that so I could really see the movement coming in and out and kind of, I was at the very end so you became this kind of a blur and I could just see kind of your clothing move and it was this organic thing at the end of this very structured tunnel. One thing was that I wanted it to keep going because I would find a position that I liked and then I wouldn't want to leave but then it would be like, well, ok, I want to see something else so I guess I'll run over here, um, so, yeah, it was just not wanting to leave certain angles. And happy accidents, it was something I was getting closer when you were in the light and I happened to get, I think I switched to the smaller frame, right as you did something with your hand to the ground near your foot, and it just captured that, yeah, so it was interesting playing with those moments, and I started doing a little bit of the open closed with myself, so not just blocking one side, but then with whatever I was viewing going in and out to see how I could shock my own perception knowing that you were, like I was stationary, but yeah.

CL-S. Can I just ask one question? Which is that when you look through the Looking Boxes the apertures are blurry round the edges. Unlike an LCD screen. Did that trouble anyone, or was it something interesting, I just wonder if that was something that even bothers you?

My names Heather Stockton. And I only noticed the blurred edge on the smaller frame so it's interesting to go back and forth and see the more sharp focused bigger lens and then going back to the smaller frame. I felt that compositionally it was an interesting filter to look through and just kind of pinging back off from the last discussion, um, kind of similar to what we were talking about earlier. I felt that having something that wasn't fragile allowed us a new perspective and angles to kind of work with the camera it's so fragile I feel that it's really inhibiting of movement or possible angles. The Looking Box kind of allowed me to get into new angles and places that I wouldn't usually get into. And it was exciting to see the architecture in a whole new way like Megan was saying and taking out the choice of what's on the periphery and really defining what you're looking at. And then the moving in and out of the frame was really exciting.

CL-S. Generally speaking, I wonder if you were aware if you used the smaller aperture of the bigger aperture most. A show of hands for the smaller aperture.  
No overall preference came from this question.

**Transcription of feedback after the Looking Box exercise at Bath Spa University. 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2013. The workshop included 15 undergraduates and graduates from Bath Spa and Roger Williams Universities.**

My name is Paul, Paul Davies. Um, I think it was ally interesting because it really did give you an aspect of how the camera would have taken that information that you were seeing and I felt that it really gave you a different insight on how to use a camera for me, because I have never been really good with cameras. So I felt that it created a kind of portrait, it just came in, for me when I was focussing in on the dancers I was with, it really created a more focus on the centre, depending on which one you went with but I preferred the smaller square because for me it created a more personal insight into what they were doing. And I think that's me.

Annabelle Pettitt. Um, there was a moment when I was on the floor I was looking up and the two girls that I was looking, the two girls were separated out, and I closed one eye and I could see just your like upper body and arms in that frame then when I closed that eye I could see um, because it was higher up, I could see everything. Um, you know, further away. So it was really nice I was flicking between the two. And then, well, there was a moment when you both just left the space and there was Paul in the background, like shaking and bouncing, and it was really nice even though he wasn't one of my dancers. It was still really nice that they had just gone and you could see like an arm but then Paul was just like left in the middle. That was really cool. And then one other moment as well I was looking through the little tiny one and it was just your arms and you were just playing and it was just two hands playing, a bit like in Marini's when we do that. It was just really really nice. So yeah, good.

Leanne Oddy. I found it really interesting when there was nothing in the space because I felt like you could pick, you could like, from what you saw before nothing, then what came into the nothing you sort of made it up in your head what was going on out of the space, with the blank space there. And sometimes it was like simple like it was just walking up the body and you'd miss out the bottom bit and then you'd come back up so you kind of knew, and sometimes it would be that they were like jumped in and then perform like, finding out, and then you'd make up what gone on out of the frame at that point.

Ashleyanne Brown. I thought in terms of like movement vocabulary it was very interesting because things that might have not necessarily translated as well on a stage per say or what ever, depending on what stage was, it just, it looked much different inside the little box and, I don't know, things that like, things that after I watched, oh I watched could have moved differently after seeing you guys do it because it went last and just to see it after to see what really translates through the little box thing in comparison to like what I think is like cool dance moves. And also I thought it was interesting, our lovely friend who was walking round taking pictures, I was always like, every time your like feet were just standing still somewhere I was just like, oh man, she's here right now because you were like were standing there and I could see your feet and I really liked, it was just like a random person doing nothing.

I'm Chelsea Esher. And I enjoyed using the looking boxes because I'm very curious about focussing like if your looking at somebody but not having them centre so I enjoyed being able to position myself from the beginning um, Annabel and Louise off centre so when they would move around it might be just an arm or a foot that would come into the frame and given that we are just in the studio right now made me really curious as to when they weren't in the frame, like obviously the background was the studio but, compared to outside or like another space. I think it would be really interesting to have them not be there and they might be like a tree, and like, there comes a hand, there comes a foot, so it made me curious about what else could be done. In aspect of

framing the environment and the set where they were dancing.

Kristin Giddings. What I felt was really interesting was, I felt as if it changed dancing. Cos obviously dance is usually viewed as a large perception of a big space, whether you are in a classroom or on stage where there are multiple dancers or a solo dancer and you can see everything they are doing. But it segmented it and made the details very particular and very interesting so if you were just looking at a hand or something you could see the movement of fingers, or just the feet you could see what each foot and stuff was doing or what ever part you segmented was your sole focus whereas if your whole body is moving you are watching as a whole so it was interesting to see how it changed how you view dance.

Tony Di Maria. Um, when I was looking through like the small one in particular, I could, I was focussing more on detail, whereas when you are just watching it now, you just don't really take in and notice the details that are there. And then what you are focussed on you start, you like, are able to see like bones and muscles and stuff moving, because it's focussed on that area so you are taking in more from the actual um, what you're seeing rather than just looking at it, taking it in, and not using any detail. Also it just highlights like really nice moments as well that are very spontaneous as well.

My name is Louise Benkelman. I think one of my, I started thinking about, when I was over here, I could see light and shadows and stuff. One of my favourite moments was, I was down really low and I kind of got, um, only a little bit of their actual bodies in and a lot of the floor and like all their shadows. And if you were laying there you couldn't see as much because it was blocking the light but then if they got up it would just be like two hands interacting and you could see like all the shadows and that was really cool. And I think it was interesting to see like more dynamic changes, I feel, because if you are watching the whole body you can see maybe like different dynamics in your port de bras in your legs but if you are just looking at someone's hands you just see just like every little tiny motion.

CL-S. Do you think that looking through the looking boxes it made you more aware of those things that you might not have been aware of if you in the wide world of your own vision?

Louise Benkelman. Yeah. But then I think it also made me kind of wonder like what the other parts of their body were doing. If I just saw their hands I was wondering, like, what everything was like.

Note, UWM recorded an almost even use of the large and the small aperture. Slightly more used the large. Mills recoded the opposite.

### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **WORKSHOP DESIGN**

1. Warm up activity to prepare dancers to move and to create a working focus.
2. An improvisation exercise that generates movement material and provides students with a framework in which they are able to maintain improvisation for the exercises 3, 4, and 5, without overly repeating movement vocabulary that emerges and may become fixed.
3. Exercise 1. An exercise designed by dance artist Kirsty Simpson and film maker Katrina

McPherson (used with their permission). Working in threes, participants choose a role each, that of dancer, camera operator, or camera. While the dancer dances, camera operator leads the camera, who's eyes are closed, into a number of positions in the room from which he or she has sight line with the dancer. The camera operator instructs the camera to open and close their eyes using the words 'open' and 'closed'. Camera operator leads camera into a number of viewing positions of which the camera is unaware until instructed to look. A short feedback session between individual groups precedes a change of roles. This is repeated once again allowing all group members to experience each role in the exercise.

4. Exercise 2. In pairs, one dancer uses a Looking Box to observe the other. Dancers are encouraged to view from a variety of distances, levels, and places. Once the box is pointing in the correct direction, viewers are recommended to remain static for a period allowing the dance to happen within the frame, or not, without attempting to track it. For this exercise the dancer chooses the environment in which he or she performs. This may be anywhere in the workshop space, and may be outside of it if practical and safe. After a given period each pair changes roles and the process is repeated. On conclusion of the exercise there follows group feedback session in the round.

5. Exercise 3. The Looking Boxes are replaced with cameras and the same exercise is repeated, informed by findings from the Looking Box experience. Cameras may be anything from cell phones to high end devices. For the exercise, cameras must be as locked off as possible. This may be done with a tripod, or with the camera braced against the wall or similar, or placed on the floor. Ways of holding small devices are demonstrated to students if their desired viewing positions have no bracing option. Participants are encouraged to take short takes from a variety of angles. Feedback follows.

6. Screening of a short edited video that demonstrates how students might edit the work if they wish although they are free to manipulate the captured video in any way they want. It is acknowledged that not all students have access to, or the skills to use, editing software. All students from the 4 workshops have accomplished this last stage and posted their videos on a Face Book page, Dance and the Looking Glass, which exists to support this workshop and other screendance making activity.

CHRIS LEWIS-SMITH DECEMBER 2013