

Desktop Studio Visit Transcript:

Maëva Berthelot & Coby Sey in conversation with John Eng Kiet

Bloomfield

00:10

JOHN: Ok, so I'm a mixed-race man in his early thirties wearing dark glasses, with dark hair and I'm sitting in front of a virtual background that is an image of Maëva and Coby's workspace from their time at Wysing, so that's a desk covered in post-it notes

00:34

MAËVA: I am a mixed-race woman in her mid thirties, wearing a bun and a dark-brown patterned shirt sitting in front of a painting from Lucas Dupuy dealing with subject of dyslexia and green plants on my left hand side

01:24

COBY: I'm an early-thirties male, dark-skinned guy wearing a folded-up bucket hat with a greyish hoodie, sitting in a bedroom/studio taking part in an in-conversation with Maëva Berthelot and the team at Wysing Arts Centre discussing 'A Tender Ascent'

02:09

JOHN: Hello, everyone. Welcome to another episode of Desktop Studio Visits. My name is John Eng Kiet Bloomfield and I work at Wysing as Senior Curator of Programmes. For this episode, I am joined by Maëva Berthelot and Coby Sey. Maëva joins us from Paris and Coby from south London. This episode is a very special one as it celebrates Maëva and Coby's exhibition at Wysing, 'A Tender Ascent'. The physical exhibition closed last week, but the online version is live until the end of the month. You can find that on our Wysing Broadcasts site. We'll put the address in the chat. So before I introduce Maëva and Coby, I'll just quickly go over some housekeeping. This event is being subtitled. You should be able to see a StreamText link that gives options to change sizing and formatting. A link can be found in the chat on the host Wysing Broadcasts page. The format of today's event is that Maëva, Coby and I have chosen some artefacts, influences and inspiration from their time at Wysing. We're going to play, show or read them, and we're going to talk about them. It's as simple as that. After about 40 minutes or so, there will be time for questions from the audience. If you do have a question, just pop it in the chat and we'll try to ask it. If you want to revisit the event later on, we're planning to archive it as a video, podcast and transcript in the next week or so. We'll add audio descriptions of videos to the podcast. So I'll introduce Maëva and Coby before we play our first video. Maëva Berthelot is a choreographer, performer and teacher whose mode of working unfolds along the threshold between experimental, performative and collaborative approaches. Her work intends to instill a dialogue between material and immaterial realms, drawing attention to the tension between visible/invisible, conscious/unconscious and rehearsed/improvised. Whilst her research is rooted in a movement practice

which is an ongoing enquiry into the themes of consciousness, transformation, healing, death and rebirth, her interest lies in creating cathartic spaces in which the emotional and sensational states related to loss, grief and change can be explored, processed and assimilated into conscious experience. Coby Sey is a vocalist, musician and DJ, who, after years spent buzzing around the DIY artist circuitry of South East London, has developed a distinctive presence as a performer and producer offering a shifting, disorienting vision of club music. Coby's open-door approach to sharing and making music stretches to his work with London collective Curl, who release records and host events with a collaborative, improvisatory approach, as well as a regular slot on NTS which offers a portal into his appealingly murky musical world. Ok hi Maeva and Coby! You can turn your cameras on now. Hi Maëva. Hi Coby. How are you both doing?

05:19

COBY: Yeah, good good. Yeah. How about yourself?

05:23

JOHN: Yeah I'm good thanks, good to see you again, good to have you with us, we've been sort of working together on and off now for several years, so good to just check in again. Ok. We'll play the first video. Then we can start talking. So Chloe, please play the first video for us.

00:05:46

AD: Several people dance in a studio room

05:50

VIDEO: We will learn to give up old habits for better new ones. We will find connection between pleasure and effort. We will connect to our delicacy, speed, explosive power, the use of gravity, and the virtue of lightness.

06:26

JOHN: Okay, great. So we began with a clip of Ohad Naharin talking about a movement practice called Gaga. Maëva, can you tell us what Gaga is and how you came to the practice?

06:44

MAËVA: Gaga is a practice developed by Ohad Naharin following an injury, and he kind of used this dancer because he's got a company called Batsheva based in Tel-Aviv and he used his dancer as a guinea pig to develop over the years this technique it's a technique that's improvisation led and it's very explorative, it allows and gives space to the dancers to really delve into their sensation and emotion, with a series of tasks and images, that really allows you to discover part of yourself. For me it was key in my construction, I don't raise it as the great detail but it was definitely a big meeting and it shifted my approach because I come from a very traditional dance background. I was in the equivalent of the Opera

House doing ballet, contemporary, you know, like in uniforms. So that was for me the shift where suddenly someone just told me "Oh okay you can feel. You can connect to your sensation, to your emotion, to --" and this is my this is my tool, it's my body and I was taught until that point to numb almost my connection to it. So suddenly it made me blossom as a performer and as a person because I just developed a real deep connection to my mind and to my body. And I guess also it really inspired me to keep as a thread in my whole exploration, creative exploration, it really inspired me to keep improvisation as my main tool. It led improvisation. [laughs]

09:00

JOHN: Thank you, that's really fascinating, like seeing your work now, I don't know, to my untrained eye I wouldn't necessarily know that your training to begin with was so formal and classical, if you'd use that word, so it's interesting to know where that came from and what kind of led you down a different path. Could I ask why you kind of suggested we talk about Gaga? Why bring it into this conversation? Why are we talking about it now?

09:39

MAËVA: Because in an ideal world I would have actually shared a video of Coby and I doing Gaga together to warm up, [laughs] because it was I think, it was the way I was helping him to meet his own physicality and his body and to have the same kind of discovery and transformation and I remember Coby expressing

before we met this desire to explore physicality and movement, and I saw it was a nice way in, and to meet, but again, really to meet the body as a tool and as an emotional sensational tool.

10:31

JOHN: I understand why you wouldn't feel comfortable playing us that video but Coby how did you find it, you know, doing Gaga when it's not your -- that's not really part of your practice normally? How did you find that as an experiment?

10:50

COBY: It felt equally new and familiar because like it just felt like a way that I really needed to, you know, like express myself, especially being someone who works a lot in studio settings. I do do a lot of performances and live shows, and I know that I can be very animated during those shows, but yeah, like it's -- because I'm not formally trained and I don't you know, use my body so much as a performer or as a movement artist, I don't know, I've had this on-and-off urge for a while, and it just seemed like the perfect context to explore that more, and thankfully, you know, like to work with Maëva and have those warm-up sessions it just really really helped. Like prior to that, I was, yeah, I attempted to explore it in a show that I did with a few friends knowing that I'm in no way any sort of professional dancer, but then sometimes that's not really necessity, as it is to just be as open and as honest about it, and yeah, it's great, yeah. I was also -- I don't know, I think also perhaps doing tai'chi for several months a few years ago, not

only helped but also provided me some sort of language to sort of find ways to move around. Yeah, Maëva is incredible. I've learnt a lot in terms of using my body and understanding it more. Yeah.

12:51

JOHN: I just want to stress maybe why, sort of why these kind of exercises were so necessary, because one thing that may not be immediately apparent to anyone who's come to see your show at Wysing or seen one of the performances, or just I don't know even just stumbling across this conversation, is the background to the project was quite unusual for us. It was almost set up like a bit of a matchmaking thing, a bit of a blind date. So back during the first year of the pandemic, the most intense year, we, at Wysing we had plans for a music festival which was going to be curated by Anne Duffau who curates under A---Z. and then with the pandemic, we had to move it online, and as part of that, Anne invite you both to collaborate and you don't each other before, you hadn't sort of worked together, and it was amazing that you were just like approached it so kind of generously and so, just with open arms, really, just to be sort of like oh okay yeah, I'll throw my lot in with this stranger really. It's also worth saying that you hadn't worked with Wysing either so it was just a lot of unfamiliar kind of ground. I'm just really fascinated by those sort of -- that first meeting, those early weeks. So you came to Wysing for a short two-week residency, basically for two weeks you came together and you had to kind of develop a new performance work. So how did you start doing that? Coby, how did you start breaking the ice? How did that work?

14:43

COBY: Yeah, we met up a few weeks prior to the residency, and I think that helped in a huge way. We just decided to meet up because we both happened to be based in the same sort of borough in London, Lewisham. Met up, got some coffees, went to the studio, met up again afterwards at another studio, experimented with sounds, talked about ideas. Even before then we had a phone call, very very long phone call, just talking about, you know, ideas, ideas that, you know, Maëva's envisioned and also just personal stuff we've been going through. That all provided at least for me to be a huge icebreaker, and for me, like it helped me realise that okay, this is a person that I think I would really connect with, and hopefully vice versa, because we just -- I don't know, there was just something there. There was just something there. And that really helped in a huge way.

15:54

JOHN: Are you usually so open when you first meet or work with new people or was it just that you had to do that for this?

16:05

COBY: Um ... I don't know, sometimes I feel I am, sometimes I feel I'm not. But I don't know. With Maëva, I definitely, I don't know, there was just something there that I thought okay, yeah, Maëva is a great one, and she really cares about

her work, and there's a warmth there that I immediately felt connected to. And, yeah.

16:37

JOHN: Maëva what about when you got to the Farmhouse? Faced with a blank piece of paper, how do you start? What's the first thing that happens?

16:49

MAËVA: I mean as Coby mentioned, I think the collaboration started from the meeting, from those phone calls. I have a very fond memory of the first phone call because we stayed hours.

17:02

COBY: It was a while, maybe two or 3 hours or something. It was a very long phone call.

17:10

MAËVA: So right from the start, yeah, we felt that we could discuss and exchange and imagine things together. So I don't know it felt like a continuity, and I think right from the start something that was very clear is that Coby is a mover and I'm a musician. [laughs].

17:38

JOHN: And you're a musician.

17:39

MAËVA: Yeah, I mean I don't any more, but I played harp for eight years when I was young and I had to stop because of life, and other choices. But music is one of the things that makes me move. And I think right from the start we both had this kind of curiosity also towards the other person's practice, and a lot of respect. And yeah, I mean I'm a big fan of Coby's work too, so I think when you both respect each other, you both love each other's work, and you have easy conversations, it was very fluid. Thank God it was as, as you said, it was a blind date.

18:27

COBY: Yeah, yeah.

18:29

MAËVA: Then we arrive at Wysing, and suddenly, and you mentioned earlier it was during the pandemic. So no one was on site. We had the keys of the gallery space, and we could access the gallery 24 hours, and I think suddenly also that space became ours, and we felt safe and we felt unwatched, unobserved. So I

think free. Like it rarely happened to me in any residencies, I've never felt like I could experiment so much, because no one is watching. And it makes a big difference, I think. And we could experiment at night, because your brain waves are different.

19:21

COBY: Yeah.

19:22

MAËVA: So we were doing all-nighters.

19:25

COBY: For the first week or pretty much most of the first week it felt we were existing outside of time and I think for me, that definitely helps with work, because I find when I'm not thinking about time, I'm able to sort of, you know, work at my own sort of pace. Whether quickly or slowly, it depends. That definitely helped in terms of, you know, working with Maëva and familiarising ourselves, and, you know, realising the ideas, the concepts that later became 'A Tender Ascent'.

20:06

MAËVA: It wasn't about productivity it really was about, yeah --

20:13

COBY: Yeah. As clichéd as it might seem, it's the journey. You know, the journey, yeah.

20:21

JOHN: Thank you. The next item is an extract that's from the I Ching or the Book of Change, which is a Chinese divination text, some of which is really old, like over 3,000 years old. As I said it's a translation, there were lots and lots of different translations, this is just the one we that have now, which I believe is not even the one you had in your kind of research, but it's the one we have now. Maëva, could you read it for us?

20:58

MAËVA: With my French accent, apologies.

"Rising steely as a mountain in cloud with the beauty of cowrie shells, you rise all tender assent moving deep into the grain of things: and so, setting out toward a destination brings forth very little bounty."

21:23

JOHN: Thank you. Obviously, we can hear the title of the project 'A Tender Ascent' in that extract. Maëva, could you tell us a bit about how you've used that book, either previously or just also, you know, how it became useful for this project as well?

21:47

MAËVA: Previously I never really used it as a creative tool, it's more a text I fall back into, almost as a meditation to give space. But yeah, during the residency it really became almost like, I guess it does the same than pulling a tarot cards in the morning to give a sense of direction or a specific energy, it was almost like a vantage point for us to understand what the day was holding. Um ... and it was helping us, I guess -- we were picking texts, chapters, yeah. One was picking a number, the other one was just opening, reading, and it was really for us to have an energy or an imagery to meditate on in relationship also to the work and so it was more, you know, to help us find imagery and direction.

22:57

JOHN: Kind of set a tone for the day almost. Coby, I know that's you're somebody that's worked with lots of different people almost a kind of serial collaborator. But a lot of those people are musicians, so when you work with musicians, would you have to use similar tools to kind of get started and to find that common ground or would it just -- would there be another way? Would it just be from just in the

realm of music? I'm just trying to think about what might be different for this kind of collaboration where you -- although you've swapped roles, you each start with a different area. You've got to bridge that gap.

23:41

COBY: Yeah, yeah. Um, I find with the people that I consider -- god this is going to sound a bit favouritistic, but yeah, I guess my closest collaborators, I definitely, one thing I've noticed similarly is that we're all quite subdued, and we tend to prefer just communicating through -- and of course we'll talk and we'll discuss, but we often find that we're able to work so well from just doing and playing, and in a way, like that sort of -- it's almost like telepathically communicating to each other, and I find with those people, you know, like that's -- they're the ones who I feel a huge kinship with, whether it's with Tirzah or with Mica, Maëva as well, but yeah, in terms of having a set thing as to who I collaborate with, um, not -- I don't have one overtly but I am sure I have one subconsciously somehow, and it's mainly through seeing how it goes, like we'll arrange to meet up at a rehearsal space or a recording studio and just sort of take it from there, really. But yeah, um, I think -- I definitely think in the future I'm going to see if -- I'm going to see if I could sort of figure out what it is. Yeah.

25:31

JOHN: How about you Maëva, did you find an extra pressure to -- what's the word? Almost like you need to bridge a gap or there's like an act of translation or

is it just sort -- was there kind of an easy common language? I mean how would collaborating with Coby compare to other collaborations you'd have where the other practitioner is just shares a common background?

26:03

MAËVA: Somehow I think it wasn't about background it was about the person you meet, and the energy you find in the room. And equally, as we are both empathic, warm, beings, I felt like we had that common language, and we -- and then I feel like the voice is the same, whatever tool you use to express it. That's a body, that's an instrument, that's imagery, I really think like when you're creative you've got one voice and then you've got mediums, but I think our two voices understand each other so again it wasn't about the background or the medium; it was about just ... [laughs]

26:56

COBY: Yeah, yeah. I think as well, with what I found with pretty much all of the people that I've, you know, been lucky enough to work with, is that there's always like an establishment of a language specific to that collaboration. Maybe not so like much like literally put together, but just in terms of okay, so there's a certain preference, or way of working like this. Okay. And then we can work -- okay, so if that be the case I'll sort of keep that in mind, and adapt myself to work with this person in this sort of way, but still make sure that, you know, it's coming from a sincere place and it's not like compromising. So there's a mutual, you know, like

thing going on. There's an interaction and yeah, like respect. For sure. And yeah, no, to concur with Maëva, yeah, I've a huge amount of warmth and yeah, just, you know, warmth, connection, and yeah, empathy. Empathy with what we're doing, and respect as well, yeah, and patience. Yeah.

28:36

JOHN: You'd make a good curator, Coby. I feel like a good curator would have those qualities and just kind of almost like fill in and fit around what an artist is like, and every working relationship can be different in that way. Okay. Let's move on to the next item. So Chloe is going to play us a video from Ghana.

29:10

AD: Several people walk down a road with people drumming behind them

29:14

VIDEO: [fast, energetic drumming]

29:24

AD: There are two people dancing. The camera pans across to show people sitting down.

30:25

JOHN: Okay, thank you. Coby, could you tell us about this video?

30:34

COBY: Yeah, I don't know where to begin with this one. So this video, I recorded in mid-August, it was part of a, yeah, like a funeral/celebration of my maternal grandad's life, who passed away in December 2020. This took place at the time that it did because of Covid, which was in August 2021, last year, and so what we just saw was part of the ceremony which involves the usage of talking drums, as, they're most well known, and yeah, this video I shared with Maëva because similarly, we were both going through, you know, like a huge amount of grief, and we were also just talking about, you know, like how not only does it relate to what we're doing, what we explored with 'A Tender Ascent' but also in terms of where we want to go with it further on for, you know, the second iteration. But yeah, I'm sort of jumping ahead here. So with the talking drums, the big part of it is that it's called talking drums because that's literally what it is. It's, the way that the drums are being played is analogous to how people were talking. So those were actually messages being played, and whilst I turned my phone around, there was a particular person who was moving and, you know, using their body to move around in sync with the drums. So what's happening is they're actually telling a story, and in tandem with each other. And I felt like I don't know it just really struck a chord with me, especially to witness that in-person. It's almost like an affirmation as to how I approach music and how I feel we've approached things for 'A Tender Ascent' even though the first iteration of it during lockdown had no

usage of -- even the second iteration, there was no usage of live drums, and even though there's only like a specific moment of the piece in both different iterations that have drums, I feel like it's still just as important because we're using sound and frequencies to communicate certain emotions and feelings. And yeah, like it just -- yeah. I felt like that was a way of sort of, yeah, finding how similar all of those things are. I don't know, I'm a huge believer of how everything is connected in some way or another, and, you know, it was just such a powerful moment being there, and I thought in my own way, we're channeling those emotions through our piece, you know, through 'A Tender Ascent'.

34:17

JOHN: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. The drum section in the middle of the piece, it's sort of one of the most intense parts of the work, it's a part that you can see there's a, I don't know, at once to begin with, there's this huge sense of control from what, you know, just in terms of performing it,

34:45

COBY: Yeah.

34:46

JOHN: There's this just from seeing multiple rehearsals there's a bit that's I can tell is technically challenging, you really need to focus to beat match it and to

bring it in. And then for you I can see there's also this moment at the end of that where, from my eyes, you seem like the most free in the whole performance, so where you start, you sort of leave the instruments and you move into the middle of the room and you're kind of sort of dancing like with Maëva and there's this bit where to begin with you're almost being kind of instructed. So this, just to be clear, I'm talking about the live performance which some people may have seen. This isn't in the video, so in the live performance there's this bit where Maëva is almost directing you with an instrument mic and you're kind of just dancing to that, and then there's a bit where you're just like released and you go into the room and you're just kind of, yeah, you're just like free. And I don't know, that always seems like a climax in it, and very kind of cathartic, and I feel like what you've, like talking about the background of those drums makes a lot of sense. It's so, you know, like music's a kind of funny thing just in general because it's something that is -- instrumental music is often pretty abstract, but something that we can ascribe meaning and emotion to even when someone is not literally talking about an emotion or a concept or a thought but we kind of just feel it. But drums feel like the most abstract out of all of that. So to kind of turn it on its head with the idea of the talking drums is I, don't know, that's really kind of fascinating to me.

36:43

COBY: Yeah, yeah. It's almost like -- one thing that I learnt with the talking drums is that it can't exist without the people being there and the emotions that they're conveying through, you know, movements, but then it could be said the same

about, you know, the drums, you know, or the movement not being possible -- you know, not being possible, the people not being possible -- or them not being possible to move, you know, without the drums, like it's a symbiotic thing, and, you know, like I honestly think and feel that it's a similar case with how we approached 'A Tender Ascent', especially the second time around, during that particular scene where, you know, a lot of movement was used from myself and Maëva. Yeah.

37:44

JOHN: Maëva I'm wondering, because like this, you know, the video that Coby has shown us and the experience he's described comes from the middle of this whole kind of project, you sort of began it in September 2020, and were working on the performance or an iteration of the performance up until February 2022 I'm just wondering if the meaning of the work for you, or the meaning of this evolving body of work, has that changed for you over time? Has life got in the way or the work has just changed? Has it sort of -- or how you'd read it, or just, you know, very simply what it's about? Has that sort of changed for you?

38:38

MAËVA: It became maybe broader in -- because at the start, we really started focusing on this idea of frequencies and vibration and resonance. It was quite narrow in that sense, but somehow from, yeah, it kept on blossoming. I think it was like almost finding doors after doors, dimension after dimension, and it all

unravelling and it was all offering itself and realising that there was so much more threshold to be passed. And in a way -- I feel like maybe invisibly or unconsciously, all these things we developed in the first part were already in the space, and there in the black box even in the first, they were just in that invisible realm of that black box, they were kind of already just hovering overhead and we just kind of pulled them and maybe developed them but I feel like there were already a presence of all the other subjects we developed in the second part. For sure we talk about life and death, but I think right from the start we did.

40:11

COBY: We did, yeah, we did.

40:13

MAËVA: Maybe in a less conscious way.

40:18

JOHN: It's an interpretation of the title that I've only recently begun to think about, 'A Tender Ascent' like ascending to what, can you read it as like, yeah, in that way. Okay, let's move on to the next section. So Chloe is going to show us some images from Masuro Emoto's book, 'The Hidden Messages in Water'.

40:52

AD: Three close-up images of snowflakes in different patterns

41:06

JOHN: Thank you, Chloe. Maëva, this was one of your suggestions, could you tell us a bit about these images or even the book they're from?

41:19

MAËVA: It's from 'The Hidden Messages in Water' from Masuro Emoto, and that things, that thoughts, emotion, can have an effect on physical reality, so what we see is crystals that's been played different music or different words, but actually I first came across it via a scientific article that was discrediting it. And then I looked into it, and I read all the articles, the people that are believing, the people that don't, and I don't care. I don't care, actually, if it's true or not. But for me, it just became a beautiful poetic imagery to understand that, yeah, we are sensitive beings, reactive beings, and because we are obviously water beings, it right away just made me think about humans, and about how, um, yeah, our emotions are exchanged, our thoughts, our energy, are affecting us in a deeper way, and changing us and transforming us in the deepest way. So yeah, it's more for me, I don't know, it was really poetic to think that human consciousness could affect you on a molecular level, you know, [laughs]. Your molecular structure. So yeah, I don't care if it's real or not, but I like to use it as a poetic image.

43:16

JOHN: I think that's something you can definitely kind of do as an artist. You can sort of, in a way you can decide what terms you want to take an idea on. You can sort of -- it can be like a creative prompt it can be a poetic ideal that leads you to something else. You don't -- you know, you have a different -- like an artist asks questions but you're not, you don't have the job of a scientist, and you don't need to think about things in the same way. I mean how was it, was it a text that you drew on as part of 'A Tender Ascent', did it come into that kind of into the conversation with Coby?

44:03

MAËVA: Sorry?

44:04

JOHN: Was it a text you drew on for 'A Tender Ascent' and was it something that you came into the conversation --

44:12

MAËVA: I was mentioning this more because we're talking about limbic resonance, and that's something we believe on, we know scientifically it does exist. And I thought that this book was a nice poetic way to see that, a scientific process, which limbic resonance is the fact that the limbic system, which is the part of the brain that drives emotion, does react to emotions in the room. And

that when we share space, when we exchange with people, we enter in that, in an emotional resonance, which we can feel, you know, daily, I think, when we have specific type of exchanges at work or with partners. We can feel that we connected as humans. Physiologically and emotionally. So yeah, I think the crystals were more like again, an image to represent that scientific concept.

45:31

JOHN: As somebody who kind of thinks about ideas of limbic resonance, how did you find the experience of in the one hand developing performance that would be for an audience that you couldn't share space with? So this is a performance that we originally intended to live stream and then just for various reasons I won't go into, it was sort of recorded and played, but, you know, it was for an audience at their homes on their screens, a bit like now, really. You know, we can't tell whether people are yawning or leaning into the conversation. It's a bit abstract. How did you find working on something like that, compared to working on the later iteration when we knew there'd be a gallery full of people? Coby?

46:37

COBY: I mean I think it would have definitely felt different if, um, you know, I wasn't accompanied with Maëva to perform the piece, because I felt like even though we were aware that there are going to be people tuned in from wherever they are, and watching this, the fact that we were performing it together at least for me, I felt like we were performing it for each other as well, and of course for

the team at Wysing. So I think that definitely helped, for me, to draw in, you know, energy and hopefully vice versa. Well, I like to think vice versa as well. Yeah.

47:24

JOHN: I think definitely. Definitely. Yeah, your first time you came to Wysing, that was after several hard months of the pandemic and lots of other stuff and definitely resonated with the whole team and we all drew a lot out of seeing you work, and it was, yeah, it gave us life, to use a cliché. So on that I want to just move to the next of my -- I've got one last little question and then we'll open it up to questions from the audience and my next question is about Wysing. So Chloe has got some images, not just of Wysing, but some images to show us. If you wouldn't mind, Chloe.

48:10

AD: Three images: Coby reflected in a glass door with a field behind him; a selfie, with the top of John's head at the bottom, and Maëva and Coby in white hazmat suits walking behind him; a desk covered in post-it notes

48:27

JOHN: Okay, just a few, almost silly photos from your time at Wysing. Between 2020 and 2022 you must have spent maybe -- definitely over a month, maybe six

weeks in the end at Wysing coming and going. And so my question is, there's an artwork in the Farmhouse which is just on the book shelves and it's an artwork by Ruth Beale and Giles Round, and it's the artwork is a library, that invites artists who have spent time at Wysing to leave a book that's inspired them and to borrow books left by others and my final question for each of you is to ask if you could suggest a book or a record or a film or something that's inspired your time at Wysing that you'd like to leave for others. And we'll get it and we'll put it in the library for you. So ideally one that we've not mentioned so far. Maëva what would you leave at the library?

49:44

MAËVA: I would leave the book just by your right ear, actually. [laughs]. It's called 'Espaces Perdus', which means 'Lost Spaces' by Claude Regy, a theatre director a French theatre director that passed a few years ago. And it's one of the greatest source of inspiration for everything I do towards creation, he's known to have developed a very -- the theatre of the invisible, because he is developing a very slow pace process and shows where he dilates and expands time and even when it's not about the words it's about the space in between the words, and all the things that again we can't consciously perceive. So we only -- I think it relates with all the things we've been talking about, and yeah, and for people that don't know his work he's an absolute legend. [laughs]. So I would recommend to look into his work.

51:08

JOHN: Thank you. We'll find a copy for the Farmhouse. And Coby, what would you leave?

51:16

COBY: Yeah, it's a toss-up between one of these two. First one --

51:23

JOHN: You can leave two.

51:24

COBY: Okay, cool. So one of them is called a 'Trilogie de la Mort' by Éliane Radigue who I would like to say I was properly introduced to, or whose music I was properly introduced to by Maëva back in either August or September 2021, yeah. It's very minimal, very -- I mean it's -- the tracks on this release are like about an hour each, I think., if my memory serves me well. But it's something that, you know, like it's not background music and it's not wallpaper music at all. Like on the contrary, it's something that's straight like it's deep listening, like for me it's deep listening but it doesn't feel like I have to listen hard or listen, you know, with laser focus. Like it just somehow, it does something, you know, and it's meditative and it's -- I don't know, like there's something about it that opens me up to, you know, like feeling patient and feeling just like some kind of serene. And I don't know, I just feel like it really, I don't know, it feels like it makes sense, and it

resonates with what I like to think we've managed to convey with this work. As for the second album, the second release, it took me a while to think about but once I realised, I was like it's so obvious. Basically the other record I'm sure a lot of people already know this record, it's an album called 'Electric Ladyland' by Jimi Hendrix Experience. For me, especially the track '1983', like what Hendrix was talking about in the song, and just the sort of odyssey, you know, kind of journey and also the watery kind of imagery that I get from that record just really feels so pertinent to the work we've done together. And yeah, I feel it's one of those things that, you know, it feels much more better for me to show rather than say. So yeah.

54:26

JOHN: Thank you. All really really beautiful suggestions.

54:30

COBY: Thanks.

54:31

JOHN: Okay. Got a couple of questions from the audience. Just to end on. There's one here that is asking about different resonances of the title of 'A Tender Ascent' for you, so kind of I guess just like different meanings of the title for you. Like how

would you sort of understand that? Or speak to that? Or even what struck a chord with that original, with that title?

55:14

COBY: I think it was more just finding, for me, it was that title really resonated with me, and, you know, just with me as a person, more, you know, like definitely, you know, like it's finding strength in being open and, you know, knowing that there are people who may interpret that as being vulnerable, which I think that's - - I don't think that means to -- I don't think that means or equates to weakness. I think it equates to like a huge amount of openness and truth that, I don't know, can't really be denied. And, you know, so much as it could be felt. Yeah. That really -- yeah, I think that title seems, you know, Maëva came across it and it's like yeah, that's, I was like say no more. That's the title.

56:35

MAËVA: It was just very evident -- and about the meeting also, just the way in such a soft and loving and warm and compassionate way, there were also an exponential force growing from the softness, it was actually creating a blossom of some sort and a journey up, it felt like it was just going to constantly to climax but in such a gentle, beautiful way.

57:30

JOHN: That's really beautiful. Okay. So one final question from the audience. Do you have plans to work together again?

57:43

COBY: Yeah.

57:44

JOHN: Yes, that's a nod.

57:46

COBY: Yeah. November 2022. Yeah. We plan on providing, you know, another way to experience the -- and continue the work that we've begun.

58:09

JOHN: November 2022, okay.

58:12

COBY: Yeah, yeah. It's been announced I don't know why I'm being so cryptic.

58:16

MAËVA: [laughs]

58:17

COBY: There's a festival in Utrecht called 'Le Guess Who', and Maëva and I agreed that we'd be up for continuing 'A Tender Ascent' as part of the festival.

58:35

JOHN: Amazing, we'll see if we can do a little trip from Wysing, drive Wysing's van over to Utrecht.

58:43

COBY: Yeah, definitely definitely.

58:45

JOHN: Okay. All right. So yeah, that's it for today, but yeah, thank you both so much for that chat and thank you everybody for tuning in. Thank you Louise, Chloe and Rhiannon working behind the scenes, and yeah. That's it. Have a good evening, everyone.

59:09

MAËVA: Thank you guys

59:11

COBY: Thank you