

# **Eternal Re-Turning**

## **A workshop Experience with Choreographer Deborah Hay<sup>1</sup>**

I am sitting at my desk by the window. The green top branches of a tree right in front of it, ending directly under the window ledge so that the view can wander over each leaf and further into the park. I am engaged with the task of turning a workshop experience into writing. More concretely, as I have decided by now, a movement practice into a writing practice. Right now, I am wondering where to begin. How to begin. I wonder about entries – entry points – entering.

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<sup>1</sup> Deborah Hay (\*1941) was founding member of the experimental Judson Dance Theater and toured worldwide with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. In five decades at the vanguard of choreographic experimentation she has helped redefine the field of dance with her revolutionary work. Throughout her career, she continuously wrote and published while developing her own experimental methodology for dance practice and choreography, which she applied in her work with both amateurs and professional dancers.

*inhaling. preparing.*

One might think, there is no specific preparation needed for taking a workshop. In this case, probably connected to the embodied memory of the last workshop with Deborah Hay I attended in 2019, I felt the inner process of preparing myself coming up. Without planning to do so, it just emerged the weekend before. In 2019, Deborah Hay was in Berlin during her retrospective *RE-Perspective Deborah Hay* at the festival *Tanz im August*. The inner preparation, the conscious entering, it felt different this time. I wanted to enter the studio space with an intention: To move from a place of honesty and courage. To meet an inner edge.

An intention anew for the writing practice. I am *turning my fucking head* every now and then, observing and following the movement of the sparrows outside on the branch of the tree. *The whole universe is serving ...*

*pausing. exhaling. remembering.*

*...the practice?* I observe my hesitation to think and write *serving me?* Back in the space, when Deborah said it for the very first time, I felt such prodigious joy. A pleasure of finally understanding what it actually means to be served by the universe. To have all that space at my disposal, through which I can move. Being served by all the elements that nurture my vision and senses at once. I haven't felt such a moment of honest joy in a while. It was overwhelming.

And gone within a second.  
*Here and gone.*

It didn't feel like the honesty was my decision. It came with the moment. It came with the movement. Just by being in relation. Nothing I needed to do. And also, *no big deal.*

# Stream

Live Art Writing

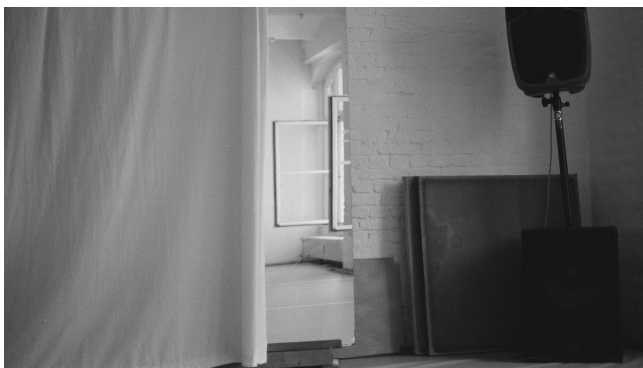
*pausing. pausing the breath in-between inhalation and exhalation.*

The beginning could be there in the in-between, here in my room, now. Where the universe serving me, the echo of a workshop experience, suddenly feels wrong. I am in relation, but also disconnected to the workshop space, the people. The movement practice within the writing practice suddenly feels selfish. Other emotions and creative insecurities feeding into a restless body. Deborah is whispering. *Sometimes it is hard to stay up.*

So, I am getting up.

Jumping into the first workshop day. Entering. Somewhere. I have been here already. We gathered in a group, back at this point we were mostly unknown to each other, and Deborah said: *Let's just start with dancing.*

*letting the breath flow.*



# Stream

Live Art Writing

I am up. Witnessing my arm lifting the same way it did already several times. Hesitating in between, shifting slightly, adjusting. *Turning my fucking head.* Seeing the clouds passing by and hearing the endless scream of a young child in the park nearby. I am watching and feeling my cactus grow, it has so many new little sprouts. *My whole body the teacher.*

*forgetting to breath.*

Sadness arising. Something made the desperation come back. Numbness in the body. How to access? The now and back then is forcing itself on me. Is paralysis a habit or a need to rest? I am allowing myself to relax into failing. *No big deal.*

I transport my body back, to the dancing. *My whole body at once.* The universe allows me to be here. The words dance over the pages. The finger tips run over the keyboard. Everyone has the agency to step up.

Step into the space that is surrounding all of us. Stepping up. Letting go of the attachments, just using the space, carrying on with the practice.





# Stream

Live Art Writing

»we have to manufacture our own meaning, our own coherence. This doesn't make it artificial, it makes it so more noble than just accepting the purpose that is handed to you.« (Brian Green)

Coherence is what we manufacture.

We are always already beyond the beginning. In the midst of it. Coming back and moving on, again and again. *Here and gone*. The desperation disperses, as I remember not having to know. It appears to me that the not-knowing is probably the most honest way. *My whole body the teacher*. Calmness, some of the tension has left, how to sense the difference between calmness and numbness?

*letting go. no controlling the breath any more.*

I have to let go of so much. Anxiety pops up now and then. *Here and gone*. It colors the presence, the past and the future. The body helps acknowledging it and like that it vanishes. Gets airy.

Gratitude.

The dance is already there. The text is already here. I don't know all of you, it changes all the time. But we allow each other to be. *Here and gone*. Performing the writing practice.

It is empowering to move through space, as bodies making use of it, shifting it, meeting, touching, leaving. It isn't about attachments.

There is so much I learned. From/With everyone.  
Through and with the practice.  
With(out) Deborah. In Presence. In Absence.  
Thank you.

*exhaling deeply. emptying out.*

# Stream

Live Art Writing

I remember all these resting bodies in space. Like heavy octopuses in the sand. A silent agreement. A subjective perspective thinking to witness a silent agreement. What does it matter? It comes back now, sitting here alone, although we might have lost it at some point. In this very moment I would enjoy being close to you, your bodies. Sharing the practice. I somehow sense it right now. A silent agreement to move on?

*We don't have to do anything to be in relation, we already are.*

I practice being here. I am not going anywhere. Not improvising. We are all still practicing. Strange. It is not about me, but I need to be here to write it. I am showing up.

Somehow, we felt the ending. We knew it was there and that intentions from here will disperse. Then somehow, we went towards something else.

*Here and gone.*

*Re-Fresh Yourself.*

*So, let's just start with dancing.*

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