

Luciana Achugar
in conversation with Beth Gill

Beth Gill: That was interesting that you said you're more excited about this piece than about your last piece *A Super Natural Return to Love*.

Luciana Achugar: Yeah, I'm excited about the relationship between the ideas that I had for this piece and what I imagined, and the choices I've made in the process. I constantly changed methods by listening to the process, and then I realized that the ideas are about the dancers, so I should listen to what's happening between the dancers and me. It became much more real. The whole piece is about that, about my relationship to making work and the dancers; the other piece was about the dancers, the working class. All those ideas are also in this piece, but in this piece I feel like they are more abstract, yet they're more real. They're more there because they came out of the process of listening to, "Oh, the worker is the dancer." I had to listen to that relationship. In the first piece I wanted to rebel against the idea of being the choreographer, because I don't feel comfortable in that role. I don't feel comfortable directing. I am controlling, but more aesthetically or when it comes to the vision, or when I look at it and I want it to be what I want it to be; but I'm not controlling as a personality, with people, telling people what to do, "That's not right," or "Let's do it like this and like this." I hate that position. In my first piece that's why I made us be all together, because I didn't want...

Beth: To have to direct individually...

Luciana: Because of that and also I wanted to make a piece that was like a manifesto, that was not about individuality. It's about community. It's about the collective. It's about us. It's about these women, the dancers. To me, many ideas are there. Particularly, it's about re-imagining an identity, and I feel like that was my goal with the last piece, to reinvent a female dancer identity, or a feminine identity that was coming from this very embodied woman; or a very embodied body.

Beth: I'm really interested in the way that you think about these two pieces, because I feel like you already actually started to talk about that, and they're already... I feel, from the outside, and I don't have a long experience of watching your work, but I feel like I can see you working through ideas, through your career and through work. I just wanted to hear you talk about it because I have ideas for myself about the way that...

Luciana: ...you go from one piece...'okay, I made that piece,' and so, now, what is it to make a different piece?

Beth: Yeah, and I'm not sure if I'm always even aware of the way that different works or projects relate to each other, or are continuations, until later on. Or, in

retrospect, I'm looking and I realize the connection. But, I feel like there's actually an intention or attention with you to connect them.

Luciana: I started making work in collaboration with Levi [Gonzalez]. We started making work together because of what you were talking about—your experience being a dancer and how conflicted that is when you're thinking of making work. I didn't even have the intention of being a choreographer when I moved to New York. I came here to be a dancer.

Beth: Can I interject for just a second, because I feel like I don't know a lot about your personal history? I know that you and Levi met in California. Where were you guys in school?

Luciana: At CalArts, where Maria [Hassabi] went too. Maria was one year ahead of me, and Levi was two years behind me. He was in my work in school and I was in his work, and with Maria as well. Levi stayed in school when I moved here. That was a long time ago, in '95. Maria moved a year before me. We weren't really... We were just taking classes at Movement Research all the time, studying Alexander and Klein technique. Maria and I both danced with Jeremy Nelson and Luis Lara, and auditioned for Petronio.

Beth: And you wanted to dance?

Luciana: Yeah. Yeah, we totally came here to audition... Maria did a lot of Cunningham. We were always taking the same classes. It was the whole '90s thing and I just was fascinated with the Judson Church, and this whole post-Judson thing that was New York.

Beth: That will continue on forever. [laughs]

Luciana: Exactly. I was really fascinated with it. I don't know if it was a time, or if I wasn't thinking of myself as a choreographer, but I was fascinated with the exploration of the use of the body; of the getting rid of this affectation of *dancer*, this modern dancer, classical dance technique, and this neutral body that has more choices. The whole Alexander idea of, "you don't judge yourself, but you learn to have more and more choices by being in this neutral place," which is very much a '60s idea. I dreamt that I was going to join Trisha Brown, forever. I just love the experience of dancing; I just love the act of doing that. Then, after being in work like that a lot, you start to realize... I remember there was a key moment for me that I was dancing in a piece, and I was working my ass off dancing, and I was really into it, but I remember watching the audience and having this realization that the audience is so disconnected from our experience; that there's something in this piece that we're not able to relate, to them, the experience we're having. So, I think there was this whole '90s thing in New York, where it became really insular. It's just about us doing this movement. I feel like someone like Neil Greenberg really took it somewhere else. Not only him, but I

think he is very formal and it's about the experience of doing the movement; but he makes the work be about that so much that you enter into the experience of the dancers. He's pretty brilliant in that way. I think more and more and more, from seeing work, and seeing work, and reading about dance, and also getting to the point where I was sick of leading the life of a dancer and wanting to quit. I just came to this realization that I'm interested in dance for other reasons, not just for the doing of it. I'm not interested in just doing whatever. I'm interested in dance because of the philosophical implications of dance. I feel like I clearly got to a place where I had danced with the only choreographers that I liked, and the only other ones that I was into—that I would want to dance for—already had their company. I was sick of everything else. Then I was like, "Fuck it, I'm quitting dance. Fuck this."

Beth: This is really fascinating to me because I entered into the dance world in a really different time.

Luciana: I know. So different. It's better now in many ways, much more evolved. I went to couples therapy once with my ex-boyfriend, and the woman told me that, in every relationship, what you do in your generation is you work out the problems of the generation before. That's not to say that the world gets better and better, but mainly there's a learning. The '60s had a naïveté to it that now doesn't exist. That first piece that I did, *A Super Natural Return to Love*, was about my relationship to this naïve, ideological thing that I lived, that is my personal history with my parents.

Beth: I heard that somewhere.

Luciana: I said that in an interview, actually. At DTW they did this special PR thing with Ellen Jacobs, so they interviewed me, but they never told me that they were going to put that in the press release.

Beth: I thought it was a really specific thing to put in a press release.

Luciana: I didn't want that in the press release. It said that my piece was about my exiled parents. It's true how much my parents' life inspired me... Because, I was, what they call in South America, "children of exile." It's a generational thing. My generation of South Americans are the kids...

Beth: It was part of their experience.

Luciana: Experience, yeah, having left their country because their parents had to go into exile. It really frames you in many ways. You grow up in exile.

Beth: And that got turned into something that made the work sound autobiographical in a way that I felt was not right—that I didn't get from watching it.

Luciana: I think they tried to write the press release to get more audience to go.

Beth: I want to get back to talking about the two pieces and they're relationship to each other. I think there's a really clear relationship with each other.

Luciana: Absolutely. It's a sequel.

Beth: It is a sequel?

Luciana: Actually, I made a very clear decision, because, when I knew I had to make another piece, after I talked to Laurie [Uprichard], and she said I could have a show... I had invested so much in this idea—that other piece—I had so many fantasies about it, and I invested so much in the ideas of that first piece. And, now, I have to think of another piece—what ideas, where do I get inspiration? I was searching for it, and I realized—no, I'm not done with that. That was just my first attempt at doing those ideas, and, now looking back, that was a very naïve attempt. That was an attempt that when I look back at it, I'm dissatisfied with, in many ways. I feel like it's the best I could do from what I knew of how to work with dancers. Then I realized another thing is that I hate the fact that in New York, as choreographers, you can get into this gig-to-gig thing. It kind of works against a body of work, and you and your work, and where you are in your process. It's like a packaging. 'Okay, next piece!'

Beth: I feel very much in New York that there's a pressure to keep producing; that, actually, that's how you prove or validate your relationship to the community, or that you are, is by continuing to produce work and put things out.

Luciana: And there's the grants situation, which I didn't understand until now. I started to apply for grants, and if there's too much time that goes by where you haven't produced, in a way...

Beth: You're a lesser applicant?

Luciana: Everyone talks about how we have to change the model, and I feel like one way to change the model (not that I think I can, or we can, very easily) is to push towards having people see your work more. For example, the model I look at, that I admire—even though there is a lot of fucked up shit about the visual art world—the visual art world, to me, is a model that I prefer. When you think of an artist, you think about their body of work. You don't think, "That piece sucked, and this piece..." They allow themselves to do a piece sometimes that, if seen on its own, wouldn't be successful, but they rarely are seen without the context of their whole work. For example, you think of Cindy Sherman, she always keeps doing Cindy Sherman, and you expect her to do Cindy Sherman, and she goes deeper and deeper into that.

Beth: There's the restriction of that we're making...

Luciana: That we're making a time-based thing? Or...

Beth: I'm trying to follow the metaphor that you laid out, but part of seeing... what they produce... Are you talking about pieces that have been made over the course of a long period of time, but are being shown together in the same space?

Luciana: Like a retrospective? No, I was thinking if someone has a show in a gallery ...

It's not like I'm an expert on how people look at artists in the visual art world, but I think that there is more of a sense of respect for artists in the visual art world than choreographers, overall. I think that for choreographers, or in our community at least, there's a judgment or a criticism that goes from piece to piece, "Was this one successful or not? Was it a good one or not?" I think, "So what?" I feel a sense of rebellion that comes over me. Sometimes I see a piece that I love and maybe it's too long. Maybe it wasn't successful, but I'm so curious and interested with what it's proposing, with something that it's proposing, some ideas, some aesthetics, some way that it dealt with time. I think that's more interesting than how entertaining, how not entertaining, how innovative...

Beth: I think you can change the frame in which things are judged or critiqued, but to try to eliminate that is impossible. I already feel like as a community, the dance world already has a much more open frame in which they're willing to look at things than other communities.

Luciana: Yeah, that's true.

Beth: Maybe that's actually a product of needing to support each other as we're participating inside of the community.

Luciana: I don't mean the dance world should be like the visual art world at all. I was just responding to the thing that you were saying, "how come you think of your work as these two pieces that were joined like that?" I think it's because I came to that realization that I put so much pressure on myself to do a good piece, to do a good piece next. "That one wasn't good enough. I need to do a good one." That feeling of, "I must succeed!" I felt like I needed to take that pressure away from myself in that way. I feel like that pressure is put on partly because of this gig-to-gig thing. If I do a good one, then I get another gig. Then maybe I get a grant, and then I can continue and do my next gig, and my next gig. Of course, like everyone, I want to succeed in continuing to make work or feel more satisfied with what I make, but I feel like what I wanted to do was remove myself as much as I could from that pressure, so that I could actually have a process, and actually learn to make work, and learn what I am interested in, really. Why am I really doing this? Why did I make that piece, and why would I want to make another one?

Then, I thought, "I'm going to think of a body of work," and I just made that decision—we'll just keep the same uniforms. We're in the same costumes. We're

the same piece; it's just the next chapter. That's what process is. You worked on these ideas, but now you... It's like, you're still asking yourself, "What is dance?" or "What is this relationship?" You know, all the questions that make you make dance, you're still asking them. It's just the second time you do it.

Beth: The two spaces are very, very different: DTW and St. Mark's. Just having watched rehearsal, I can already see how that becomes a huge difference in trying to reexamine the work. I was really curious about the way that you are thinking about the architecture of the church, because it's very clear to me that you are.

Luciana: Yeah. I had asked Laurie for a full evening three years ago, before I did my piece at DTW.

Beth: So you had already had that space in your brain for a long time.

Luciana: Yeah, maybe that's also why they're related. These are the same women in a different situation because my original idea was that it was a manifesto, like members of a certain cult or group in this church. I always feel like I love that church. I've been going for years to watch dance in that church, and I feel that—it's a church after all; it's not a theater. But, we've been making dances and we go and pretend that we're in a theater when we're in the church. Not that that's bad. It's a beautiful thing. You enter and you sit down, and you watch a dance. But, I feel like there's a relationship there that, on the one hand this church opened up to the community and allowed dance to come in (which I think happened in the '60s or '70s when a lot of churches started to do that). For me there is this ritual of going to the theater and church, and I'm interested in the relationship of the ritual of dance, or the ritual of making theater, and how this church has acted as a theater, yet, how amazing the space is, how non-theater-like it is. How amazing the risers are on the sides; I've danced so much in that church in other people's work, and whenever I would get ready for a dance, I would just want to go up and down the risers. The altar is so religious and so symbolic, it's impossible to ignore it. To put the audience on one side feels a little contrived to me in that space. I feel like that space is so grand that you have to inhabit that, as it is. Not that I'm criticizing anyone who used the space in any other way, but I mean that that's my sense of it.

Beth: I think that's really clear inside of the work. I feel like there are places within the work that use the specific architecture of the space to comment on the interplay that you're talking about between a theater space and a sacred space, and I love that.

Luciana: I'm interested in religion, actually. It has those cheesy moments, but I find it... not that I'm interested in the institution of religion; but in dance, the body and dance are always present in rituals. Have you ever seen when they set up for a mass there in that space? It's beautiful. It's simple, but it's so gorgeous.

Beth: It's really satisfying to hear you talk about these things because I feel like these ideas are really present in what you're making. The idea of an ecstatic state, and also the visual image of looking at the body in a sacred space was really interesting and changed throughout the course of the work. It made me realize how satisfying it was for me to revisit this piece in this space.

Luciana: You mean you could remember the other piece?

Beth: Oh yeah.

Luciana: Oh good, because I was hoping that I would have this thing where those who experienced my other piece would have this reference, but those who have no idea, it's just this thing that you're seeing now. If you have a history of the other one, then there's this history...

Beth: The visual images in *A Super Natural Return to Love* were so strong that I feel them imprinted, but in a really different way than my experience of this work, and maybe a lot of it has to do with the space of it. Because, when I think about the first piece, I think about the flatness of it. There is that set design that lays out this horizontal space a little bit, and also the number of women and the uniforms, creating a uniformity. There's something really flat. I don't mean that as a criticism, I mean like its form was relating to...

Luciana: Frontal.

Beth: Yeah, and maybe like a visual... this work really blows itself apart in that way.

Luciana: Well, I wanted to rebel from that because when I saw the video of that piece, I thought, "Oh my God, it's so designed..." I look at it, and I think, "Oh, it's so simple." There's a certain naïveté that came out of the idea that I wanted to make this manifesto piece—these women saying, "We believe in this and this and this". Within it, a manifesto has a certain naïveté.

Beth: I think that's really beautiful. I think to allow for the declaration of ideas inside of work and all that that means, that ideas can be presented with insecurity, potentially. Conceptually, that's a really beautiful idea to me. I am not sure if all venues or formats support that. I think that certain venues support that more, and I also think different audiences are more receptive to a more open viewing of something. This goes back to what we were talking about. How do we gauge the success of something, the success of work? How do you gauge the success of an idea? Sometimes I feel like the presence of an idea is its success.

Luciana: Sometimes, that's what you're interested in. When you're so invested in an idea, that you're willing to just do *that*. How interested are you in an idea when you're willing to forego going deeper or going into more layers or other

ways in which you want to express yourself to push the performance in a certain way? For example, to be more specific, when we were doing this part that we just end up where we lost all the spirit or will of going anywhere...

Beth: This is in the last piece?

Luciana: In this piece, in this process, with the dancers in rehearsal, we were getting so sleepy because we weren't doing anything, we were just lying there. They were getting really sleepy, and I said, "Oh my God, I'm putting you to sleep." Then it came out, I don't know who said it first, but it came out, "What if we fall asleep?" Then we were like, "Oh my God, that would be the most brilliant performance! If people would come and we would just fall asleep."

Beth: It would be beautiful.

Luciana: But then we realized we couldn't fall asleep if we were performing. I don't know if we could, but it would be beautiful. I thought maybe that's what we should do. It would be the most brilliant thing. If we're really like workers—we're the working class, the dancers. To me it represents the body. Within the self, the body is lowest on the totem pole; it's the one that does the work. When I get up at seven in the morning to go teach my Pilates class, and I have to go up all those stairs on the JMZ, and I'm fucking tired, going up those stairs, it's like, "Ugh." It's my body that has to do this grunt work. For me, it goes back to class, because I'm really obsessed with class (obviously, that's why I put us in those working costumes) but, I feel like making dance has that working class feeling, that blue collar feeling—because we have to work our asses off. To me, it's about that, ultimately... and that's what the last piece was about. And that's what this one is about, I feel, more clearly than the other one.

Beth: I don't even know if I've talked to her about the ideas surrounding this, but it makes me think about Isabel [Lewis], and the formation of The Labor Union.

Luciana: I know, when I saw that name, I thought, "Oh, that's what I'm interested in." It goes back to that thing that you were talking about: innovation, because I didn't know Isabel. She's younger than me. I think I'm working in my way on very similar ideas to what she's working on. When I saw that she named her company The Labor Union I thought, "Wait, that's my idea." That's when you realize there's a collective thing going on. There's something in these times, our times, that needs these ideas. I really feel that.

Beth: How does gender come into play? I think there's something about referencing Isabel and thinking about this...

Luciana: I got to the gender thing from thinking about dancers. I know from a long time of being a female dancer that so many amazing female dancers don't get jobs.

Beth: They get overlooked.

Luciana: They get overlooked because there are so few male dancers. They get so many opportunities, and I've experienced it firsthand how male dancers around me would just get much better careers and opportunities than I would, when I felt like I was in the same level, or higher level as a performer, so I felt like I didn't want to do the same thing to other female performers. Really what I'm interested in, and the kind of work that I would really love to make is more like the ideas of the body...more of a philosophical thing; the female body is always reminding us... If you think of Cartesian thought—"I think, therefore I am." I feel like still we're plagued by that kind of thinking in Western society.

Beth: Explain more, because I'm not following.

Luciana: I feel like I want to rebel against this western, colonialist... One of the issues in our society, which is a lot of the problem, is this kind of thinking that is still not letting go of this, "I think therefore I am," from Cartesian times—this separation of the mind and the body. And, when he wrote about it, he would put examples of women and children—what reminds us of the state before reason is a kid, or women because they get their period, because they get to emotional, because they go through labor, because a woman's body always reminds you of *body*. You can't forget the body. That's not necessarily true, but I feel like when I read...

Beth: ...and when we look at a male body, we would more naturally associate it with the brain and with reason?

Luciana: Yeah. I think that, if you look at dance, it's not like a male body can't be non-rational, or if you look at a man naked, of course you're going to think of the body. But, in our society in general, there's more value put on intellectual, rational, something that's not so embodied...like the way of speaking—you have to be clear, linear, rational. That's what gets you forward and up the ladder. It sounds like a simplification, but I feel that, in a way, women are more a representation of the visceral body and pain... Blood is a reminder of pain. Whenever you see someone get cut, "ooh, there's blood!" It's the vulnerable body, the painful body. I feel that women never forget that. Not that men don't experience that—we all are that—but in our society, in our experience, women represent the Mother Earth, the one that has the babies, the one that gets more emotional. So, the woman is the more body-body, ultra-body, the embodied body. I felt like it worked from there, from that place.

Beth: It's interesting because the way you're describing it, it feels like the experience of a female is to feel the burden to experience that.

Luciana: Without necessarily meaning to, I go to this suffering, "Oh, women suffering." I'm trying hard to make the work not only say that: "Oh, poor women."

Beth: I don't think it does that, but I think gender and power are very strongly represented inside of the work.

Luciana: That's a good point; it's about power, also.

Beth: It's interesting because you talk about the desire to produce work like manifestos, but I feel like there is a real dialogue in your work, that you juxtapose opposing ideas or images, or there's something inside the internal structure; like things act as filters for each other, so that we are going back and forth through ideas. And, I feel that way with gender, and I feel that way with power, as well. Those two things, going into this interview, I was thinking about whether you perceive yourself as having a relationship to politics in your work or not. Then I started thinking about myself too, and I'm not sure. In some ways, I think it's really difficult to escape being political inside of work, and yet I think that you can really gauge what work prioritizes that and what doesn't.

Luciana: I feel like the contemporary dance community that we're a part of in New York and other communities in other places that are making contemporary dance (and I'm not saying that it's exclusive to contemporary dance), but I specifically feel like we're making work that is trying to reinvent itself. Contemporary work is political, is what I'm saying. I think that it's political in and of itself. The work I saw of yours is... "Political" is a word that bothers me in terms of... We were talking about the press release already framing me... I feel like I could easily be framed as "political" work, but the word political, just like spiritual—are words that get misused.

Beth: Yeah, I'm kind of curious about what it does mean. Were you about to say that the work I showed at the Kitchen was political?

Luciana: Yes, it was political.

Beth: Maybe there's a difference...

Luciana: In an abstract way, but that's a stronger way in many ways. Being political, not necessarily as a manifesto, but that's the place of art, that's what's most political about artwork is when it shifts and allows us to see. Artists have that responsibility and the capacity to make people shift perception and open us up to other ways of seeing things.

Beth: And that is what you mean when you say "political?"

Luciana: Yeah. The fact that you didn't feel that it had so much time and space, and it was about these people. I can't say what your work is about, but I saw a clear choice in its use of time, that you're manipulating time, so you're changing your experience of time, and in the most obvious, simplistic way, that's already a huge act to do. When everything on TV, etc., is about entertainment, information,

and you stuck with one thing and you did that, and you didn't need to entertain us, and you didn't need to put all these ideas and things in there. The ideas were there just because you were making a commitment.

Beth: As you were talking I was trying to really pull this apart for myself because there's something about whether politics comes into play with the intention of the artist, whether it feeds the ideas. There's also this thing about whether the artist inside of the community cares about politics and cares about the politics of the community because I don't feel like I allow for politics to come into my process or my intention, and yet I do care a lot about politics.

Luciana: "Political work" tends to be kind of uninteresting. I'm coming from South America where there was a dictatorship and people were tortured and everything. After the dictatorship, when I moved back with my parents, the work was really bad because it needed to be about that. So few things were still good, because you had to make it about that, and how horrible that was. It's so obvious, so not deep, so not personal. It can be so hit-you-over-the-head.

Beth: That sounds like a large community needing to purge something.

Luciana: Yeah, and that happens. Juliette [Mapp] did that piece where it was like "How can I do anything but do something about the war?" It's really hard. I guess you can take that step. I feel like I'm really interested more in this abstract version of structures within society, power structures that make for... that's the more political thing to me. It's still about class. It's still about power, and it's within the household—the power within that household. There's a dictatorship and authoritarian thing right there going on—an abusive thing. Abuse of power happens in all sorts of relationships daily. This is just larger. To me, that's how I am political. I grew up with politics all my life. I feel like I don't have that separation of political or non-political, except I don't want to make work that's like "Fuck Bush; no war." I don't want to make work like that, that's the problem.

Beth: Well, you don't make work like that. My experience today was that the way ideas were being presented and the way it was raising self-awareness for me. I think that is part of what we're talking about in having an experience of something being political. You enter into the thing and the thing moves back at you in some way.

Luciana: I love it if that happens. I felt like that when I watched your piece too, I felt like there was an "Oh, wow, I didn't consider this before. Wow." It's not because, "Oh, look how original that is." It's not about that either.

Beth: I have plenty of feelings about dance as a medium, but one of the things that I love about dance (now that we've sort of worked to define this a little bit) is that it has the potential to be political and affect you in ways that are not happening on a conscious level; to really enter your subconscious and to cause

what feels sometimes almost like minor shifts, but it has this reverberation in your life.

Luciana: I have to say, to go back to some of your work, that what I just saw, your Brooklyn Adult Recorder Choir...

Beth: Oh!

Luciana: It totally shifted my expectation too. I felt like that was a transformative thing. I entered the space, and I thought, “Okay, this is going to be a sound installation, and I’m going to sit here for a while until I get bored. It happens for three hours, so I’m just going to check it out and see what it is and leave.” That’s a very New York thing too. “I’ve got to check this out, and check this out, and check this out, what’s happening, what’s happening.” It’s very much a thing of our time with so much information and access to information and consumer culture, but I felt like I was surprised that I wanted to stay with it and stay with it. And it shifted my perception of it, where I just wanted to stay and have this experience with it. And then it kept changing and I just wanted to see the structure of how it was changing. And then I started to enter the structure of the improvisation. And then I started to go to the downstairs room a lot. And then I was curious what was going to happen, and that is almost a revolutionary thing, to put in another taboo word, or some kind of weird word like “political.” But, it is very pushing things in terms of that unconscious place. You think you know what it’s going to be like, and there’s this compartmentalization in dance and performance, and it shifts that a little bit. It asks you and tells you. It’s not so “all parts.” It’s all connected a little bit. I teach Pilates all the time, and the only thing I keep telling people is that it’s all connected. Some people wanna know: “What muscle am I working here?” I say: “I don’t know. It doesn’t really matter. It’s how the whole system works; the intention.” To me it goes back to the whole body/mind connection. That’s making it a little simplistic, it’s not just about body/mind connection. More like you were saying, it’s more like this before-consciousness place. Asking that is asking a lot. That is not part of how we exist and that place is not valued: before-consciousness.

Beth: I feel like there are some places, or some moments that I’ve experienced in pieces that have had that effect or pieces that I cannot figure out why they are sticking—they feel stuck to me for a period of time. This is a really good example, I think. Did you see Trajal [Harrell]’s last piece at the Kitchen?

Luciana: Yes.

Beth: That was a really long time ago and I’m still referencing it. I was thinking about that piece for a very long period of time after I saw it because, at least for him, I felt like where he was working inside the work was not on this superficial level. He was dealing with form and structure inside of the medium in these really subtle ways that would be completely discredited by 95% of the audience that

would not be able to see it or understand it. At times, I felt like I could almost not really understand what was going on. He was confusing my synaptic connections that I normally would follow inside of the structures of a work—so much so that I couldn't orient myself.

Luciana: How to see that work?

Beth: How to see it.

Luciana: I know. He does that.

Beth: How to create context for myself...

Luciana: It's interesting how we choose... We're like, "Okay, this is how I'm supposed to see this work."

Beth: Yeah, yeah. That literally at times felt like it was keeping me awake after I saw it. Because by working in that way, I felt like I was being forced to reconcile certain ideas. I don't think I have preconception about structure, but by having to sort through that work—really work my way through that performance, and even afterwards work my way through my experience of the performance—I'm not even sure if it has reached a conscious level. I don't know what I did learn from it, or what I did bring from it.

Luciana: ...or how you feel about it.

Beth: But, I know that there's something there. The experience is definitely there. I'm trying to think of other people too that that's happened with.

Luciana: That's great. I think he's very specific and very individual about how he's making work. I always think that I get a lot from it and I'm super interested, but it always has this mysteriousness to it. It's so specific how he frames it, the structure. He's always using the runway form. I'm interested to see what he's going to do next.

Beth: Anyway.

Luciana: Did we talk enough?

Beth: I don't know. I feel like I did a really bad job as an interviewer. We didn't focus enough.

Luciana: No, it can be really distracting.

Beth: Yeah, we followed it.

Luciana: I feel like I have a tendency to go off on tangents.

Beth: Maybe I have a tendency to follow tangents because that's what we did. Do you think we talked long enough?

Luciana: It depends if there's anything else that you want to...

Beth: We've talked for an hour, so we should stop.