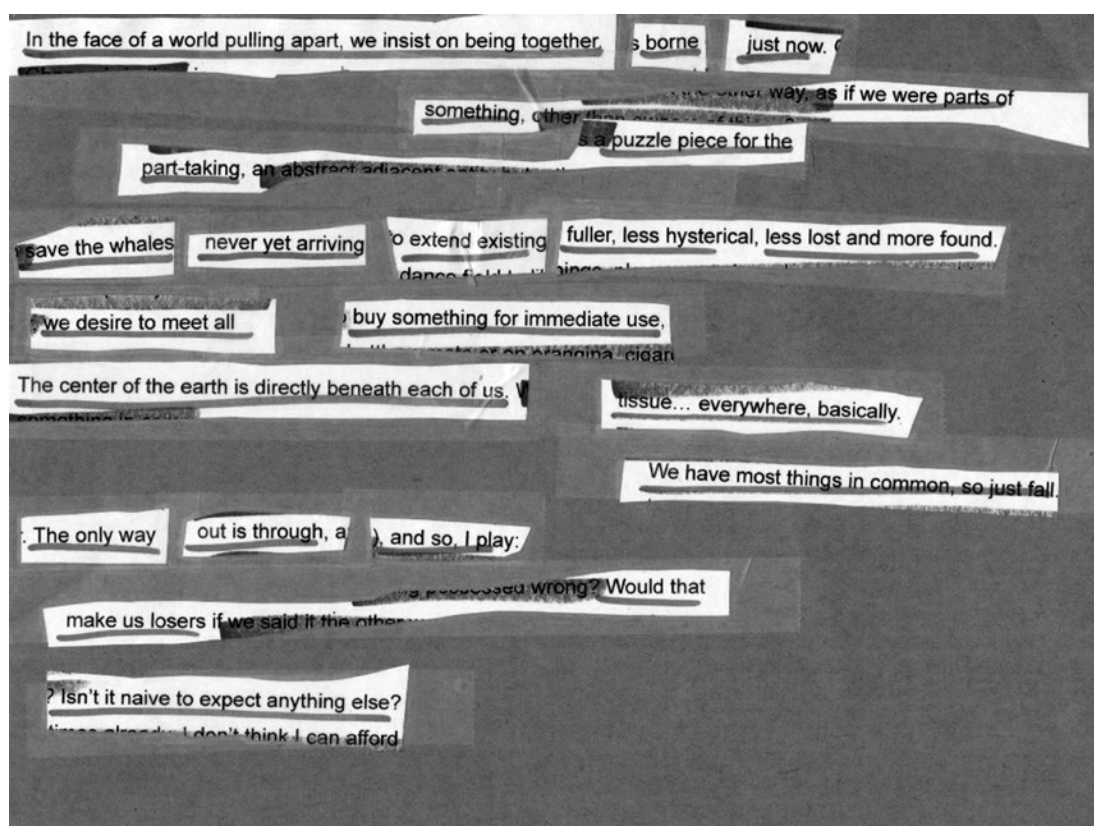


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OF THE PEOPLE:
ON GRAND RE UNION

Julie Phelps



Hannah Ayasse, *DECEMBER REWRITE*, 2020, scanned brown paper with many taped-on strips of black text underlined in red on white paper.



JANUARY REWRITE, 2020, a screenshot of a Zoom meeting, in gallery mode, featuring 22 participants, and a caption that reads, "And improvisation. Can be part of a bigger. Movement." Most screens are occupied by objects rather than people, including: houseplants, an abacus, a drawing of a potato on blue paper, a collection of eggs, the galaxy, an Alvin Wooden human mannequin, and other unidentifiable items. Poems by project instigators with Zoom tableau by members of the public.

PROBLEM POEM

Change is in the air.

Post-Systems.
Post-Disciplines.
Post-Hierarchies.

Is change in the air?

Undoing, unstitching, unmaking.

in between and around
over and under
spreading, blurring, opening the binaries
making space.
spirals and figure eights
expanding loops
different colors

The center of the earth is always
directly beneath each of us.
We have something in common.

Calling in solidarity.
Witnessing the migration crisis.
Caring about violent intolerance.

Trying to try to be together.

Choreographing a change.
Dancing our resistance.
Collaborating on plurality.

QUESTION ABSTRACT

Can we write manifestos anymore? Can we be positional enough to say we want to change? Is it possible to act collectively? Can we be supple enough to form a we? The superimposing of each other's ideas in an infinite menagerie of internet parcels forever downloadable. Can the splintered factions of attention and shredded geographies we're left with be stitched together to create a whole? If you know there's always more missing, always a shadow cast, can we ever be together? Can we exist and not exist at once? Can we have everything and nothing in common? Can we just be and not be we? Are we consuming more than we can consider? Living more than we can remember? Is there anyone in this we with me? Are our mistakes now only that which we neglect to do? Are we inert? Is tension a static thing or a moving thing or both? What's anchoring the center of our universe? What sets our rules of engagement? What meaning structures do we have to shelve our content? The future is the story we tell ourselves about our now. What are we building?

METHODOLOGY

Grand re Union is a year-long international and intergenerational project that addresses how choreographic and dance practices can be part of reducing harm in the world and building a more just future for everyone. Instigated in January 2020, the project intended to gather participants in person. Unable to do so, a project statement was written as a homing beacon. Each month since October 2020, the project statement is re-written and re-choreographed by project participants. Each rewriting leaves a trace of what came before, while also forming anew. Co-creation is a necessary dimension of a more complicated we. The emerging palimpsest asks: How are we synthesizing and adding to the collectively generated ideas of our time? This project will not have a conclusion. It is the ongoing life work of those involved. Visit: www.grandreunion.net

Julie Phelps is a choreographer, curator, and creative producer. She intentionally translates herself across multiple disciplinary roles because she values hybridity as a dimension of resilience. Phelps consistently engages the economy (as structure, system, notion) and queerness (as tactic, aesthetic, question) as lenses for perception, communication, and action. She is the artistic and executive director of CounterPulse, a transdisciplinary arthouse seated on unceded Ramaytush Ohlone land now known as San Francisco.