

Can You Feel It? - a proposal for MEDITERRANEA 19 'School of Waters'

"Ferocious flirting with stereotypes and clichés, embracing the awkward and tender, the lush sensorial, the rich mess and slippery clarity. It is an open invitation, no tricks, serious and playful, never fixed."

- Sara Ruddock, Artist and choreographer, on Can You Feel It?

We propose to present our sixty minute stage-performance *Can You Feel It?* at MEDITERRANEA 19.

CYFI? sees two performers grapple with a series of emotional states on a seemingly-bare stage. The audiences witness childish tantrum, erotic sensuality and sudden tears. These sensorial commitments are variously introspective, loud, space-devouring, artificial, legible, convincing, sustained and / or brief.

CYFI?'s formalist approach to these elusive interior sensations echoes the optimism, comedy and futility of the School of Waters' action of 'writing in water'. Yet despite this self-conscious frame, there is undeniably true feeling here. As they struggle with these excesses of feeling, the two performers become avatars for the audience. The viewers recognize and vicariously exercise their own urgent need to thrash, wail, weep, touch, tremble and release. There is a flow between my feeling and yours, and between the cliché and the 'truly felt'. CYFI? reveals 'feeling' to be a complex system of interlocking waterways, impossible to cleanly border and separate.

What happens we cannot read another's feeling? Or when we reach out to feel, but nothing is there? What are we feeling, when we 'feel nothing'? And how is all this feeling framed, permitted, contested, policed and sold? *CYFI?* addresses the necessities, limits and economies of feeling (individual or shared) as it connects to wider oceans of climate crisis, political-military spectacle and our most intimate relationships. Playful and entertaining, the work is a sharp critique of the visual and gestural language of 'true feeling' in contemporary artistic practice and the socio-political world more broadly.

Isolated in the theatre and under the dry heat of stage lanterns, this performance will contribute to the biennial the question of how we can summon and work with the most elusive, flowing and urgent of materials – our interior sensation. Can we tap into the merest trickle in order to encourage a wild flood – and what might this achieve? What can be done when we are left in drought? Under the banner of this temporary school, *CYFI?* reveals the possibilities and pleasures of studying that which seeps, flows, fills and trickles out from us, even as we attempt to grasp it.

Rohanne Udall and Paul Hughes
Channing Tatum
Jan 2020

Full video documentation available at: <https://vimeo.com/377427250> (password: CYF1?). Tech specifications available on request.

Can You Feel It? was made in collaboration with lighting designer Alex Fernandes. It premiered at Rich Mix, London in October 2019; and was developed through PACT Zollverein Residency programme with additional support from DanceXchange and Rich Mix, and funding by Arts Council England.