

Trajal Harrell
in conversation with Allison Farrow

Allison Farrow: Start with 'it's such a beautiful community of people.'

[Laughs]

Trajal Harrell: It's such a beautiful community of people! Well, you know, part of the reason why I did *Showpony* is that, since I've been in New York, I have been profoundly amazed at the changes. Even just going to restaurants and superficially gauging who people are, what their lifestyles are like, how much money they make—just that kind of basic instinct you have about your own local culture—and feeling that what we have, to a certain degree, in the performance/dance world is probably one of the last vestiges of a kind of New York lifestyle where the economy is a lot more loose, flexible, unstable; but where that's part of the strength of it.

Allison: I would call it, in some ways, a gift-economy.

Trajal: Yes! Ok, a perfect word.

Allison: It isn't really that kind of economy, but it aspires to be, wants to be or once was more of a gift-economy.

Trajal: Yes. So, when I realized that, I felt like, 'wow!' It was becoming very profound for me. Also seeing how some of my friends and some of their lifestyles were changing, and how difficult it was to find housing. I feel like a lot of people were asking those questions: 'Is it going to be possible to keep living here, being an artist and make work?' It was becoming so hard, especially coming out of my last show; I had to really ask myself a similar set of questions. That's the thing: I think there's not one person that I talk to within this community who's not asking that question on some level. And we're all asking it in different ways, and we're all trying to figure out how to structure our lives, and adapt and create new structures within our lives. But we're all asking that question, I think. It is so affected by the kind of economic change that has happened in New York. It's just a different kind of place.

Allison: Also, even if some fairy godmother waved the wand and we all had what we needed in terms of resources, the climate of where we're working is no longer the same. That too is a kind of draining of a vitality that New York has had in waves.

Trajal: For sure. And I think that the visual arts community—and field, and industry, if you want to call it that—is benefiting from the kind of economic boom that New York is in and the money and the stock market and blah, blah, blah, because people who have a lot of money want things both for status and

investments. You can collect art, okay, but at least so far, it doesn't seem that the dance/performance world is benefiting so much. Maybe it will in a couple of years when the foundations feel a lot more secure. People say it's supposed to, you know?

Allison: It's a paradox because I think—at least for the past thirty or forty years—a lot of really interesting work has resisted consumption very consciously. So, to any hopes of dance and performance being rescued by the new money here, I would say that it doesn't necessarily strengthen what the work is about or what is possible for work. What's the whole point of making work that resists consumption? What are our choices for production that are not necessarily for the benefit of consolidating wealth? Most of the time, most of our cultural *stuff* is exactly for consolidating wealth. Luckily a lot of people have the opportunity to enjoy it in the meantime, and it provides a lot of great entertainment, catharsis and all kinds of good stuff, but at the end of the day what it's really about is getting somebody richer. That's not why we're making work. Ultimately, if rich people come and love it, who cares? Maybe some people are good at, then, cultivating some kind of a patronage relationship—and that's really wonderful—but in terms of the work itself, who sees it and why we even do it in the first place, um, that's a big issue for me.

When I see, even architecturally, the character of New York streets being transformed by the huge condos on the Lower East Side, I don't know how to talk to those people. I don't know anybody who would be able to—or even want to—live in one of those buildings. So, I have an experience of profound loss as places, one after another, are gentrifying so rapidly, and even physically changing in Brooklyn, you know? I live in Crown Heights, and the rate of gentrification is *so intense*. I think, oh, this is a bunch of strangers, because they're not who I... I don't know people like that.

Trajal: Well, it's interesting because, literally, my work wouldn't exist without certain rich people...

Allison: Right.

Trajal: ...giving money to it. It's a very complicated issue, because people support my work who have a lot more money than I have, and who are very supportive of dance as a field. They may collect art, too, but they are interested in dance as being *dance*. They know it's not something they're going to go home and put on their walls, right? So, they're really interested in the experience that they have of the work itself.

I do think that there is a huge new demographic of people who aren't necessarily coming to New York for those kinds of artistic experiences. And that may be regardless of how much money they have. They're coming here because it's the safe entertainment place. Whereas I think that even some people before, including some who were *massively wealthy*, were coming here because it was the unsafe place where you had these incredible, crazy, mad, transgressive,

radical, revolutionary, amazing kinds of experiences, and that's what they wanted to experience on the streets, in the theaters, in the clubs or wherever.

I don't know that that is why people come to New York anymore. I think people come to New York because it's full of a different kind of *glitz*. For myself as an artist, I am really interested in the viability and the sustainability of a dance community being able to exist. I mean, the dance will go on, the community of dance will go on, but it's definitely changing. And that's what was so profound for me, and what I want to hold on to. I want to hold on to something. We always feel time is slipping by, right? It is, it's constantly slipping by, but when I look back on my life, I'm always looking at how could I have held on to things more, just in memory. You know what I mean?

That's why I felt like. Even if I couldn't sustain it, I wanted to make a piece that I could look back on and feel very enchanted about this time, because when I look back on it, it was kind of an enchanting time, for me as an artist.

Allison: Mm...

Trajal: To be among—and to grow among—other artists within both the dance community in New York and the international community that I am a part of has been quite enchanting, and I don't think it's going to be the same. Nothing ever stays the same, right?

Allison: Probably the same kind of sense of this past that's slipping, if we were talking to people our age twenty years ago, they may have articulated the same thing, and twenty years from now.

Trajal: Right!

Allison: I try to keep that perspective, but I think there are some hard facts that are on the side of the experience that you're talking about. I felt like *Showpony* had that kind of preciousness of a micro-culture. You could really see the micro-culture—of the kind of a Nan Golden retrospective—in which you see that the still image is always about the past: this is what happened. It has a feeling of the passing of the species, or the passing of this time and this place. I felt like that particularity and vulnerability was really there in all of the vocabulary that was preparing for the big move that never happens or the isolated big move that's like the "one trick pony," so to speak. The only move that exists is kind of a flop or the accidentally/on-purpose exposure. All of that had the same kind of intimacy and poignancy as the issues that you're thinking about. There was this kind of resonance between the vocabulary and the thinking in the piece. And yet, structurally, you were working with what I saw to be a pretty rigorous formality. I really appreciated that mix.

I feel like I saw that same thing in a very different way in your last work, where what I was seeing was an interest in what you articulated as "cool"—and in my head I added the word "French" because I really saw it as an exploration of "French cool" and a kind of surface aesthetic, you know, using the fashion

vocabulary directly connected to that way of thinking—but structurally, it was also this rigorous minimalism. Both of the pieces were very different for me, and they had extremely different charges to them. The way in which the spaciousness was held by each piece, I felt, was very, very different. I felt that *Showpony* hit me in my heart in a way in which the previous work actually resisted—it was cool to cold, which I really liked about it—but *Showpony* was so heart-centered and yet so rigorously formal in the way you were working with minimalism. That was interesting to me, because I think often people think of pedestrian or minimalist work as resisting any thematic connection or purely conceptual. I feel *Showpony* is actually really emotional, and keeps this kind of space and formality.

Trajal: It's interesting because I really felt like I went to town on my craft in *Before Intermission*, which was the previous piece. I gave myself a really hard job. I wanted to make something really romantic in this old-fashioned way of romanticism, but I also wanted it to be super cool—two aesthetic ideas that don't necessarily go well together. So, for me, it was about craft, and how do you craft your aesthetic—the movement quality, the composition, the music overlays, film—and how to put all that stuff together. And for me, just on the level of craft, I felt I achieved something.

After that, I felt secure enough to trust my craft. Before *Showpony*, I think the architecture of my work was so, like, *graphic* in a way. And not that *Showpony* isn't—it's still very graphic and, as you say, there's a huge amount of structure and form—but within the structure, it's a lot more loose, the architecture is a lot more loose. I don't know what you can compare it to, but it's almost like when you've been doing live figure drawings preparing to paint, or something. You've just been trying to make things as real as possible and all of a sudden you're like, 'Okay, I'm just going to go in the studio and *paint*.' You know what I mean?

Allison: Yeah.

Trajal: There's some facility there because you had the discipline of doing this other thing. I'm not saying it's the same thing and, for sure, now I see the places where my craft can grow, but I think it was a certain level of confidence coming from *Before Intermission* that allowed me to free myself and to also feel that I now could get personal in a certain kind of way.

Allison: Which you had to resist before.

Trajal: Oh, yeah. Because you really feel like, or people will let you know clearly, that there's nothing worse than personal. I mean, that's not true, "personal" can be so many different things, of course, but there's the stereotype of the personal work that has no craft; people hate looking at it. I really felt like I had a piece coming from a personal place, and I wanted to take all of that—the craft, and the kind of research I had been doing— and ask 'what does it have to do with me?' and to allow that to come out in some kind of way. Then, this idea of community

became very clear to me because the voguing dance tradition and post-modern dance emerge out of real community contexts. Even though I've been dealing with these things on a very intense movement and research level, I never thought of it as, what does it have to do with me? Well, maybe it has to do with me in community—where am I in the community? So it was a lot of trusting that there was a foundation there.

Allison: And helpful if they have some context about New York, although not necessary.

Trajal: New York provided a major part of the inspiration, but the piece is more of a reflection on blurring the lines between audience, community and performers, and how the production and distribution of dance requires to some degree being a part of multiple communities. Certainly the slide show is from many different places—New York, Vienna, Brussels, Berlin, Montpellier, Paris, San Francisco—and the people in the pictures are from many different places. So, how this blurring can become operative in different settings with different audiences is purposeful and can only be determined or fulfilled through performance.

For example, I really came into this piece thinking that, first of all, the lap-thing would be completely offensive in New York. When we were working in Berlin, I was questioning this and people around me were like, 'No, no one is going to think this is offensive.' But I was thinking, in New York, because we're really protective of personal space, this is going to be immediately received as offensive to some people. And it just wasn't! People loved it and were so warmed by it! And that's very specific to how people perceive the rest of the piece, of course, because very specifically I want people to have to support my body as a part of the value of a show, since how value is established is a part of the mechanism of a show's support system.

Allison: Plus, we all got to be ponies.

Trajal: Yeah. You got it!

Allison: It was funny in that particular mix with such a small audience—because the ratio of presenters and critics to other audience members was high—being able to look at people, watching each and every person be that pony, for that moment.

Trajal: I'm so glad! You're the first person who has said that, you know? Of course some people see that it's a lap dance, and some people see it as just sitting on people's laps. But you're the first person to admit that it is also the pony, and that, of course, I'm also saying that everyone in the audience is a "show-pony." I'm always trying to set up those doubles of observation, where you're watching the audience, how they watch and how they dress, as much as you're watching us, and we're all a part of this whole thing.

Again, I've had to be very strict about it, because whether or not it would work, I didn't know. For example, I think this piece would not work in the same way if there were a second row of people who weren't in that primary observation place, and they never supported my body. It would really change the *impact*, the potentiality of the experience that we're having as group. It would weaken people's awareness of what was going on—the fact that there's another group of people watching and not participating. I wanted from the very beginning to bring a kind of intensity to the piece. I want everyone to be able to look and see everyone, to be able to watch together and watch each other as it happens—to have the same stake in it so to speak.

Allison: Because it's happening to all of us.

Trajal: It's happening to all of us. Someone just said to me last night that a very clear part of why people accepted it, she felt, was because I'm not there to screw with the audience. There's something about the way the piece happens that's not expecting you to respond in a certain way. It's very simply done, and you know that someone else is going to go through it too. It's not that I selected a few people and it then becomes a play between me and another audience member. It's really something that we all experience together as an audience and as a community.

Allison: While you're showing the show, on the one hand, on the other what's really going on is that we're having the experience of the value of spending our time that way, which comes down to people. *Why* would we want to be like that for an hour and a half, or why would we want to be in a studio for nine months? And that's something that, for me, was really great to see—that you were going for something that was focused in that way, so perfect, and doing it within this rigorous structure that really made a container for that kind of heart. I feel like I've already said this, but that was important for me to say, so I wanted to say it again.

Trajal: No, you should say it.

Allison: Um... I remember you saying that in *Before Intermission*, you felt like it was really possible to read it in a way that would have been kind of too easy, and that the first response could be, 'Oh, this is about race and sexuality.' And I think that, actually, your use of *American Gigolo* was not about race or sexuality; it was a structural device. Of course those things were there, but they were there the way that the costumes and music are there. In *Showpony*, I have my idea of what the "too easy read" would be, but for you, what is it?

Trajal: I'd be interested to hear what your "too-easy read" would be, but my easy read I heard from only one person, who was expecting, or thought of the piece as, an attempt at doing the SHOW, "the Great Show." And, in fact, *Showpony* is about never really giving you that show and giving you something else as an

alternative. We only do the conventional show in which we attempt to sell you all the conventions of what it is to do a show in the “Roxanne” dance, which is, of course, a song about prostitution. *Showpony* has elements of prostitution, it has elements of masturbation, it has elements of complete obsession, but it also has elements of athleticism, it has all different kinds of elements to it.

A really simplistic reading is that of trying to do the “Great Show,” because that’s what ponies do—they put on a great show. Whereas, in fact, I felt many of the things I was setting up were forcing people to have to question, where is the show? What do we perceive as the show? What is the value of this thing that is supposedly in the show but that I’m not sure is actually in it, like recognition, for example, within the slideshow? “Who do I recognize?” But it is also about “Who do I *not* recognize? Who do I *not* see?” Recognition and visibility are huge parts of the value system within the creation, production and distribution of art. The slide show and the *American Gigolo* are there to facilitate each viewer’s awareness of their own critical gaze and how they locate the performer in relationship to lifestyle, recognition, visibility and, of course, community and audience. Of course, if you are a dancer, critic, presenter or someone in the slide show—or someone who knows no one—it facilitates a different critical gaze. This is always the case with any performance. I am just trying to tease out an awareness of these “value” factors that often are submerged.

For me, the value is really in being with people: both the people in the process, the people in the audience that you’re with, the people that are around you in your life— that’s where the ultimate value of the show is, for me. And I hope that that’s what I am trying to say in the end, and that’s why it’s important that those slides are in the end, because, as you said, they *are* about the past, they *are* about the memory blurring back into the live performance, and they *are* about how we value what we see, what we don’t see, and what we want to see. They and the *American Gigolo* are as important a part of this live show as anything. They are choreographed; they are choreography for me. I wouldn’t say that they’re “dance,” but I would say that they are choreography, and I worked hard to re-score them and to look at how I am dealing with the image, the body, and the space within those parts. And time, of course. Time is a big one.

Allison: I would also say that even the second layer of ‘we’re deconstructing the show’ is also a too-easy read, because that’s a longer project that has been going on for quite some time that obviously you’re continuing. You’re working out of a tradition that we saw in Judson so, that kind of resistance to spectacle is not a new idea. But I think that resistance is already there in the way that you work formally. What I think is interesting is that in your previous work, you were, for example, using the vocabulary of fashion. So, on one hand, you’re working in a tradition and in a formal style that resists the easy show, but you’re also working with vocabulary that is taken from the extreme of *Showpony* culture. On the one hand, it was fashion, and here it was, um, you know, a different vocabulary.

Also, what I talked about before: the getting ready for the move that never happens, the endless preparation, the one big splashy move that fails, and the closeness of the body, the gorgeousness of the body at close range. All of those

things are in the vocabulary of the show. But for me, I wasn't so interested in, 'Oh he's deconstructing the performer-audience relationship, or the relationship of the choreographer to the work' or all of that stuff. For me, what was interesting was that you were honoring the process and the experience of this deeply conflicted—not compulsion, but...*activity*, and the weirdness of it. And everybody came to see it. And they're totally implicated in the weirdness of this thing, because we're all there.

So, more than a questioning or a deconstruction, to me, you used that history, craft, vocabulary, technique and conceptual richness—all of that! You used it really well, to deliver the real substance, you know. You did! It *did* deliver! It actually did, even though on one level the whole thing was about that frustration that it wasn't going to come through with a big move. But it did have the big splashy move, which was, 'I love this!' You know? It was like a big 'I Love You'—that's what it actually delivered, which I thought was very risky. I think it really showed that which I said earlier—that you can trust your craft. How else were you able to do that? To be able to pull that particular thing off was very interesting for me, and I feel that after doing that, you could work with any other issue even more easily.

Trajal: I don't know, I mean, I hope so! I think we—everyone who worked on it—all had very particular crafts in what we do, and I think what I do is very, very particular to my experience, my history and whatever of my relation to dance, theater, visual art, and blah, blah. But I do think I know what it is now. I know that there are many other things I want to be able to do, but I know how to do this thing. And for me, it all comes down to this way that I realized that I choreograph "liveness." I mean, many of us do, but for me that is the thing itself—the body is a vehicle for the "liveness." I think that for many choreographers, it's very different. They are really choreographing the body, and for me, I'm trying to choreograph the "liveness" in the room. And the body is one of the things that is helping to choreograph that.

Allison: As is the TV set [in *Before Intermission*].

Trajal: Right. The TV set and, in this case, the audience—everything becomes a part of that. And of course the way I use the body in time, in music, and the set, costumes, all of that is a part of it. Again, it becomes a reflection of this being together, because in the end, that's all it is. There's something very poignant about this being... I'm a sucker for it! That's what I got into, this experience of the theater and being with people. It's very different than being in a movie, I think. It's close, which is also an element of *Showpony*. We also borrowed stuff from sports, and dressage, and dog shows... Sports is close—in a certain kind of sporting event, there's this kind of communal thing that goes on...

Allison: But it never causes you to suspend your attention because someone is always going to win so, there's always something to be involved with and to grab onto. It never forces that... And not everybody wants this, which is why probably

not everybody goes for the same kind of work. For me personally, I look for that suspension, that kind of suspended moment, where my thinking doesn't really do me any good. I like to think when I go see work; I like to think about it long afterwards. And I particularly like it when, years later, that moment of suspension is still with me, you know? I feel that the time it takes to make it, or when the intensity of the making of it and the integrity of the making of it is really strong, then the kind of after-image of it can really stay with me for a long time. I've seen in my life maybe six or seven things that are my particular constellation of performance or dance. I personally could be inspired for *years* just because of those things. And when I go to see work, that is what I want to see. It's worth twenty things that I hate, for one thing that does just that. For me, it's about the suspension and having enough space that I can be taken by what is happening in that moment, or I can be fully participating in an active way with my attention. Sports can never give that.

Trajal: I know what you mean. I will never forget seeing Lucinda Child's *Dance Number One* at the Joyce and not being able to put it together. Even though it's so repetitive and visibly structural, I was having this moment of suspension. I guess this becomes a question of craft, and I think it's a real question for me now that I feel more self-aware about my craft and what it is that I do. Because I had a certain level of facility in my craft this time, I thought the piece would hold itself, but I didn't have an expectation of how people were going to react. And that's a question for me now. It's like: okay, now I see that as an artist, there is the potential there to bring that kind of... it's different things! That suspension is one thing, but there are other things that now I feel like I can do, as an artist.

Allison: What do you say they are?

Trajal: Again it goes back to the "liveness." This is the first time for me where it totally worked. No... it didn't *totally* work—there are people who probably hated the show—but the demographic of it: that I was an artist trying new things, trying to make a contemporary work in a particular milieu of dance, and that there are people who support that and watch that and feel that. But then when you see people who are outside of that and who have no relationship to that, and who are coming to it for the first time, who are maybe even modern dance people, for example, who I thought would *hate* my work, because I don't give them that thing that they want to get from dance—to see them really get this, and really go on the trip with me is like, 'Oh! Okay, so that specificity really *does* work!' When you unite the craft with the specificity and you stick to it, when you demand it of yourself, then people receive it.

Allison: It's like the more you can do that, and stick with it, and the further you can go with it—it's almost like there's more opportunities in the work of many different kinds. It's like what Shakespeare was the master of, right, that the people could access it in so many different ways all at the same time. I feel, even in new forms, that it's still a measure of development, when that can happen.

There are some people, whose work I admire and I feel I could take my grandma to, and she would really enjoy it. And that's important to me.

Trajal: Maybe it's that thing people call "generosity." People always say, 'Oh the work is so *generous*' and I kind of don't know what that means!

Allison: Well, when you say "generous work," what was your experience with Lucinda Childs? Was it generous work, or does anyone else come to mind?

Trajal: I don't use that word! It's not a word that I use, but people use it, and some people thought that *Showpony* was very generous. I don't know what that means!

Allison: To me, it relates back again to this quality... that there was *heart* in it.

Trajal: Yeah.

Allison: Like Alain Buffard—I would call that generous work. I felt that there was heart in it. It was really conceptual, it was really a lot of things, and it pulled that off with a lot of heart. And for me, that feels generous—it's one way to be generous.

Trajal: Well, it's very interesting that you mention Alain, because of course I worked with him this past year, and it was the first time I was naked onstage, and I think that must have had a profound impact on me. I've had a lot of personal experiences in relationship to my identity as an artist this past year or two. Like I was saying, it was scary to be personal for me. I think that I started out from a very expressionistic place as an artist and it became very clear to me when I was first starting to make stuff that I didn't have the chops to do the personal. I mean, you may get one time where it's like, 'Oh, it's sweet!' and people really love it, because it's so... to see someone just do that! But then, once you're aware of that and you try to do it again, it doesn't work! It's because—it's not instinctive anymore.

I think that on a personal level, again, I had to do it for me. That's another thing I had to stick to throughout the process and in the dramaturgical conversation: I had to be very clear that I needed to make this for me to survive—I needed something to hold onto.

I am happy that some people see it as generous, and it actually gives something. That's what I had to believe, that other people would relate to this endeavor. There are so many people out there: artists, non-artists, doctors, mothers, you know, plumbers—all kinds of people who know what it feels like to just have to deal with that thing that you need to survive, and when you have to really *focus* on that and make that *thing*. It's when we see that endeavor that it can express itself in different ways. It's like everyone's going crazy about Helen Mirren's performance in *The Queen*—it's like, pow! She's so specific and intense on that thing, and of course she's doing it because she wants to relate something

to all these people who are going to see this film, but you know that there's this intense thing in her that she needed to have to be in this role, *for her*.

I think that's a scary place. I mean, for me it was scary. I don't know about anybody else, but for me it was quite, kind of, scary.

Allison: I think that there's a real difference between... um... You made a work for that reason now, as opposed to you started out making work for that reason, and once you no longer had that need, what happens to the work? It so happened that right now you had that need, and maybe in the next thing you do you won't, but your work right now is not contingent on that part of you having a chance to be expressed. Do you know what I mean?

Trajal: Yeah.

Allison: That's not fueling you.

Trajal: No. Each thing is very different for sure. And the process is always different. And I just keep trying to stay true to that. I can't imagine that every process would be the same, but it's really wonderful when people go on that ride with you. And I don't want to get at all into the "like-thing"—that people have to like the work—but I do want to become better and better at... what's the word? I guess at leading the ride. You know? I can't get around it! If you make a work, you have to take responsibility—you're the bus driver. Even in this work, in which I'm not telling you where to focus for a huge part of the piece—and lighting it to support that—it's still a decision that I had to make, and to do that you have to take responsibility for it.

That's the work of an artist: you at once have to really want everyone possible to come along with you, and then you have to at once not care. And it's holding those two things simultaneously in your hand...

Allison: —and then having to do that when you can never see the work fresh, because you are only seeing it from the inside and from the repetition of seeing it from the inside.

Trajal: It's very interesting because this work is one of those where everyone has to be inside. The work supports me being on the inside because no one is on the outside. It's made for me to be able to see it. Of course in *Before Intermission*, one of the things that I came out with was that even when I'm offstage, I couldn't see the work. It was an interesting phenomenon—you're making work and, if you're in it, you can't even see it. You have this thing going on, where you hear the music, and... I was really intense about these things; I didn't want to miss a minute of this next show. I was like, no, if I'm going to do another show I *cannot* miss a second of it, I want to be onstage the whole time.

Even when I'm offstage, I'm still onstage; I can still see people. If you're sitting in certain places you can look and see me offstage and I can see you. I didn't want to miss it! And it's really staying... That's the thing I keep going back

to, this clear specificity and really demanding it of yourself in a certain kind of way that is really helpful.

I was in Vienna with Katy and Christina, the other dancers in the piece, at this choreographic research lab led by Mårten Spangberg, and I think that really recharged me in terms of that. We just worked from 9:45 in the morning until twelve at night basically for a month, with one day off. Not that we were always working on the same thing, but usually it is so easy to get burnt out on the process and demands of producing work. This really recharged me to know that, like, I can go there again. I can demand it of myself, you know?

And it's something that it's not about a show, it's something you can demand of yourself for two seconds of the day, it's something you can demand of yourself when you want to bring that level of attention to the situation, what are you going to bring to it? And that's the thing that as an artist now I feel I have control over, and I can do it again.

Allison: I think that's a really great way to put it, because in the previous conversation that we had that got erased, we were talking so much about resources, but we didn't really talk about that as being the prime resource in any given situation. And I think that is so important. When you think about all kinds of work that get made—I mean, people make work in very short windows of time, people make work that they research for many years at a time, you know, all of those different rhythms are there according to the practical situation, but what the quality of the attention is for any of those rhythms, that's something that outside resources don't necessarily have any bearing on.

My background is actually in music composition; I came to performance and dance after. I like how you say you choreograph for “liveness,” because I always think that I'm composing for “liveness,” that it's definitely an all-over, everything-in-the-space-is-subject-to compositional consideration. But I remember working telemarketing jobs, where I had maybe twenty minutes a day for creative practice—a long time ago—and I still remember it being one of the most intensely creative periods of time I've ever had because of those twenty minutes. I was also in my twenties, and I maybe had more... I don't know if it's energy. I don't know what the difference is between being 22 and 32. I don't grab my precious twenty minutes on a regular basis now. I don't do that, and I have a day job. But the decision to do that... what you're saying about having the experience of having a month and being refreshed and knowing that you can go there, and you can trust that, and you could also do it in smaller chunks of time—that feels so important. And I also experienced a trust for that. I know that the process is there and however I might decide to structure it, I can enter into a kind of contract with time and space, where you're saying, ‘Okay, you and me, here we are again.’ And then you see what it's going to be. But you could show up for that in so many different ways.

Trajal: You've gotten us back to where we ended the last conversation with the issue of production, because I think that's a much better place to talk about it, where it's like, okay, maybe I won't make anything for three years or two years or

one year or one month or whatever, but to know that when you make it, you're going to set it up in such a way that you have to bring that level of attention and specificity to it, because that's what you're sharing. And at the end of the day, we can't perceive to whom it will be satisfactory, or who will like it or dig it or love it or hate it or whatever.

But the thing I've always wanted from my work, or the thing I really go for, is that I want people to *respect it* in the sense that the relationship I have to the audience is one in which they can believe with integrity that I've gone into this discovery, and that I've come back with the exact truth of what I've found. And that therefore we build a level of respect that isn't predicated upon the taste-thing. You know what I mean? And so I think that's what it's all about—the production can be on so many different levels, and that's the true... That's the reward, you know?

Allison: That's the *giftpony* for me!

Trajal: Yes! And on that note...