

Binary Opposition

Reckless Sleepers

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Context.

In the making of the performance project Negative Space in 2014 we decided to introduce a gesture of handing an object from one to another, but because one object was a flower and another a hammer, the same actions propose different meanings/ readings and consequences.

Through this very simple form - the same action presented many times with different objects, and people Binary Opposition was imagined.

A man holds a flower to a woman, a woman hold a hammer out to a man, a man holds a flower to another man, these simple actions simply illustrate binary opposites.

We've been dealing with these opposites in much of the work that we produce, on and off stage, performing and not performing, before the performance and after the performance, inside and out, black (Schrödinger) white (Negative space).

We've come across theoretical ideas that articulate (in part) what it is we have made, we've investigated ruins, tried to understand quantum physics, non-linear structures, theatres without performers, but consistently (over the past 30 years) finding ways and means of presenting visual languages within a theatrical context.

In Schrödinger's thought experiment the cat is dead and alive at the same time, these two binary opposites are blurred, we only know the state of the cat once we've opened the box and looked inside.

We liked this idea, we used this imagined scenario to generate more visual & physical responses its consequence became a project for theatres called Schrödinger

Absence.

Its been said that presence takes precedence over absence...

What Reckless Sleepers create gives priority to absence, absence allows a viewer to use their own imagination, presence dominates because it is actively visible.

If your watching two actions happen simultaneously, played by different people, then your eye may be drawn to one or the other, or both.

If you perform an action and stop it, it can be imagined moving forward in several directions, and what is often presented can be predicted, if you loose balance at the top of the stairs an inevitable next step is a fall...

We often subvert these predictions, we often subvert what we make. We talk about gaps, emptiness, nothing(ness) happening on stage, but in reality our performances are full. A Stage thats occupied with figures is full of positive forms and negative spaces.

Countless images, multiple scenarios, the gaps in spaces and actions allow a viewer an opportunity to imagine, rather than being a passive receiver they are active contributor to the figures and figurative(s) that are presented in front of them.

Binary Opposition

The title of the next Reckless Sleepers performance for theatres is an amalgamation, development, smashed up and pieced together version of two of its predecessor projects Schrödinger and Negative Space.

We didn't set out to make a trilogy or a series, its a response to conversations about our work and unfinished business.

Reckless Sleepers business is creating visual art in theatres. We make this project proposal because visual art is a dominant feature of our performance projects. We propose this proposal because there are so many ideas still left on the shelves of unfinished performative problems to solve, images that we still want to pick up, shake, smash and piece back together again.

What we've made before helps us move forward, what we've absorbed in the process of creating one project continues to feed the next. And we came to a conclusion one day that we should just make something new, that we should push even further the rules, logics, patterns, structures and visual identity out of what we've already created, that we should carry on our process of playing with visual languages, objects and physical materials, making each other laugh, attempt to articulate over complicated concepts to reveal the most simplistic of forms. We need to do this and we request your help because there are far too many questions that we'd posed each other in the creation and presentation of previous works that didn't get close to being answered yet.

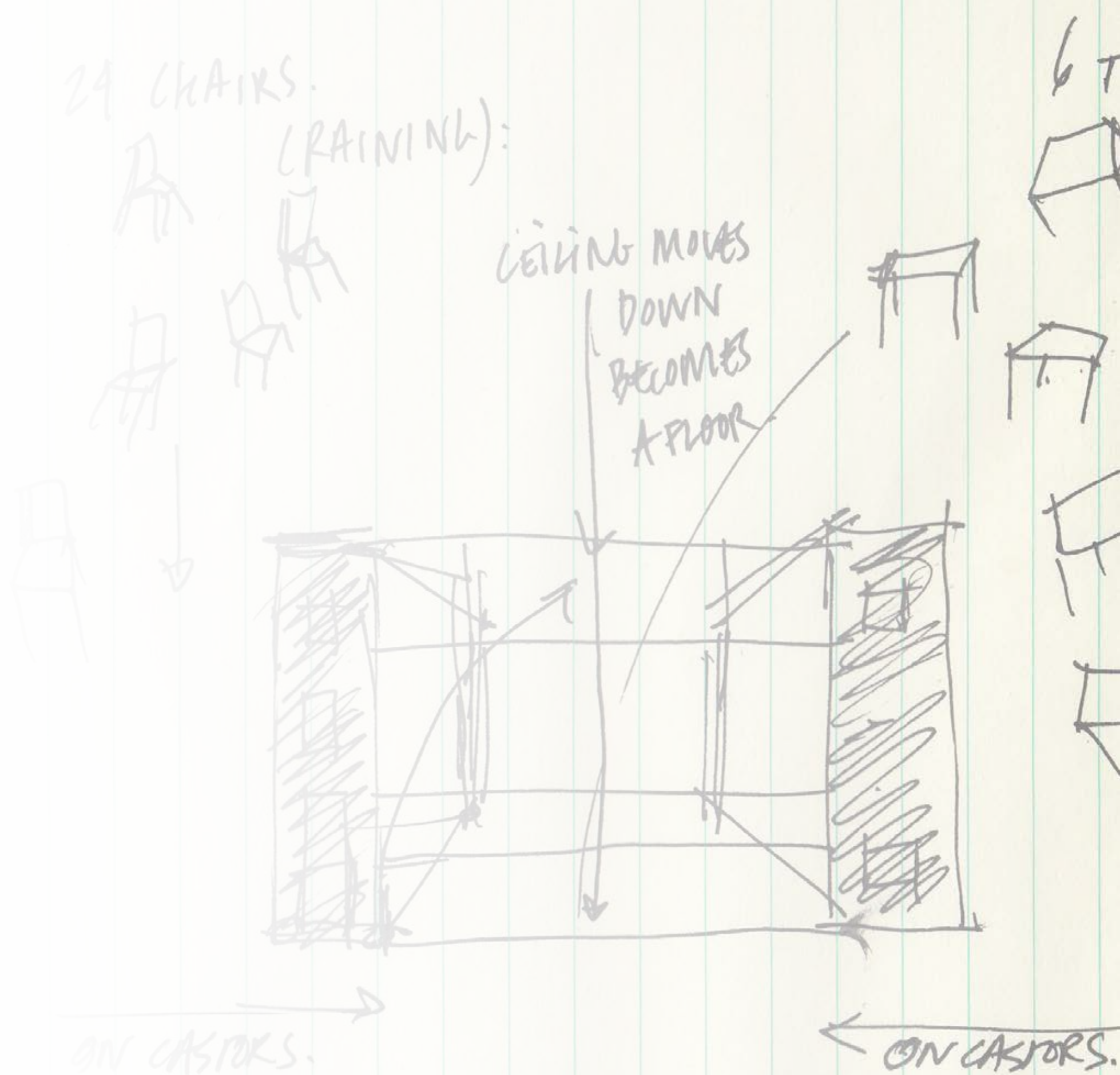
The scenery.

We know that we work best if we have a structure, a framework or a physical material to work with.

With Negative Space we set out to construct an upside down white version of Schrödinger, we used plasterboard as a cheap material to design at a 1:1 life size scale construction rather than a 1:25 model box to work out where doors or windows might be.

For Binary Opposition we started with two identical frames, to create two rooms 4.8m wide there are doors, windows, walls that we can climb through, a floor that becomes a ceiling...

Starting again, proposing a space thats framed with a solid, rigid, architectural form one that we can climb along push open, fall through, drink in, eat in, get lost in, try to replicate what someone else on the other side might be doing...drop in tables and chairs, hammers and apples, ideas about mathematics, ideas about movements and ultimately the combined embodied collective knowledge of over 100 years of performing live in front of an audience.



The process

Is simple, each time we set off on a journey we start with a blank page, we assess the work that we've made before, and from questions create a new focus of research.

We're determined that each new project proposes a different production routine and develops new processes and languages. For Binary Opposition we started with a series of drawings. A set of instructions out of which a performance was made. Sourced by the 100's of pages of sketches that have been produced over the past 16 years...

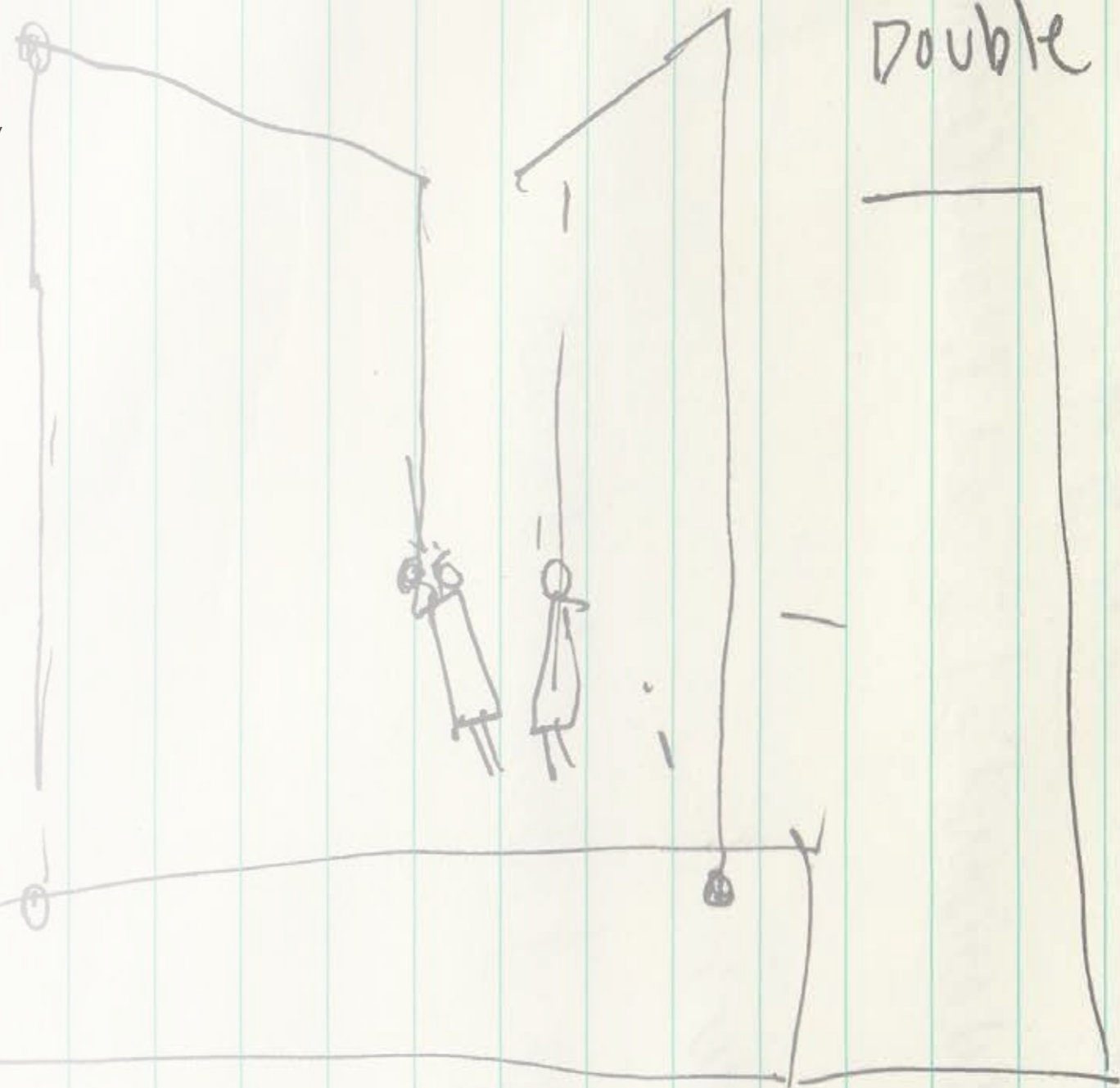
Unfinished scenarios, moments that have been captured in note form and still waiting to be animated. These notes are collated, formed into an order, structured into a book.

Early in 2020 a space in which these ideas are framed was designed, a scale model box created, a real size construction made. A company of performers met up, physical proposals were tested, tried, re-examined, new ideas were generated, new note books filled. Out of this process a new language emerged and new performance started to take shape.

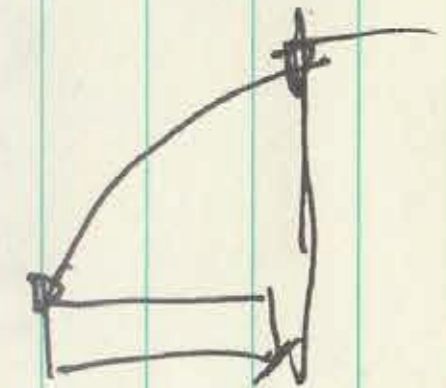
In 2023 & 2024 the project is created & the form tested together with groups of young people and children outside of our world, we present, we listen, we look again, we reimagine and start all over again.

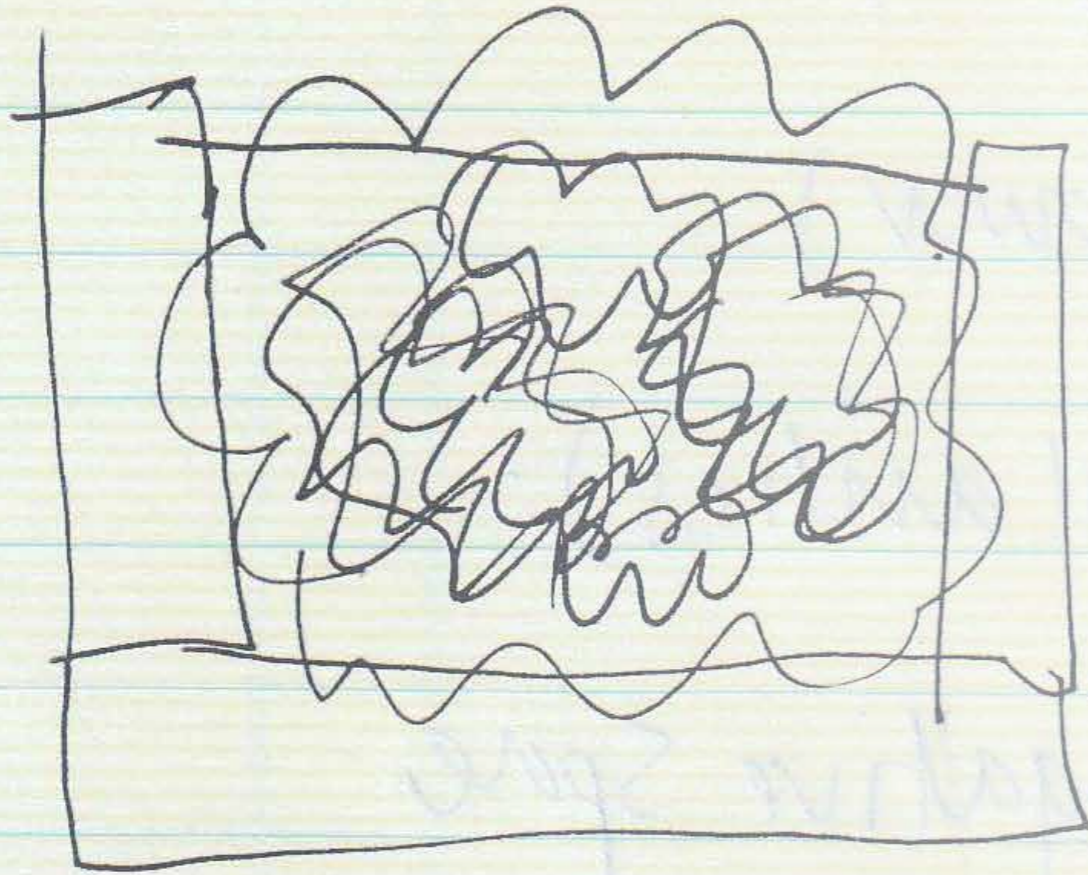
In March 2025 we premiere the project at the Lowry in Manchester, we find new places to present it, we develop a touring & residency network, we develop residency programme content, we create a new book...

The work is presented again and again and during this process a new project will emerge.



Double WINCH: *
Lifts up / Drops.
floor!





- WAS TABLE -

What we throw away.

Research is the driver for everything we've ever done in the past and everything that we will ever do in the future. It would be folly for me to say that our research questions are this or are that because I know from experience that we might as a group walk into a room with a specific research objective, but the end product or result will have moved away from that initial impulse.

That's how our research process works.

All of our projects have started with a question, often very simple like:
Can we make a negative version of the theatre project Schrödinger?
Can we design the scenery on a 1:1 scale?
Can we make something out of destroying a chair?

These initial questions formed the basis for Negative Space, and A String Section.

In attempting to create a 1:1 scale model for Negative Space a cheap building material (plasterboard) was brought into the research studio. Once the wooden frame had been clad we couldn't help but smash it up. And once we'd witnessed this first action we had to do it again and again. The creation of Negative Space was formed out of this unprepared action.

Binary Oppositions development was different, in 2020 without the possibilities of meeting as a group of artists the scenic construction for the project was built.

Then with a very small team of 5 performers and 1 child we started to play within this skeletal structure to find out what we could create in those two spaces that the scenery defined.

In 2023 we continue this process of investigation, buoyed by the inclusion of one of our children we found a number of organisations that would like us to continue to work out what we could make together with groups of young people.

This process of creating work with larger ensembles of 'untrained performers' continues throughout 2023 and 2024. In between these workshop residencies a company of artists that make up Reckless Sleepers will get together to develop their own material and further those scenarios created by the workshop groups.

In essence we tour the making of Binary Opposition and then tour the results of the making to those same places in the future.

In March 2025 Binary Opposition the performance will have its première performance at the Lowry in Salford Greater Manchester.

Company

Mole Wetherell

Is the Artistic Director of Reckless Sleepers, an idea that took shape 30 years ago. Mole is a visual artist, designer and theatre maker. As an independent Artists he has designed buildings for making work including his current studio, sound installations, publications and exhibitions. He has been the creative force in developing all of Reckless Sleepers performance projects.

Leen Dewilde

Is a dancer and visual artist, joining Reckless in 2006. In 2012 she presented a research idea with 4 other dancers, this project became A String Section a project that has been presented in Galleries, Theatres and larger-scale indoor and outdoor sites. around the world.

In 2021 Leen began creating a new project for galleries called "break up - break down".

Kevin Egan

Is a performer and academic lecturer in Contemporary Theatre in Manchester. He has designed lighting and sound projects for Reckless Sleepers since 2006, In 2016 he created/curated an exhibition making Negative Space - the results published in 2020. He is a performer in Schrödinger, Negative Space & "Its Hot its Not".

Rachel Rimmer-Piekarczyk

Is a dancer & lecturer a performer in A String Section, Negative Space & Its Hot Its Not. Currently researching a PHD. In 2018/19 Rachel will focus on developing RS residency programmes, as well as contributing to the creation of Binary Opposition.

Alex Covell

Joined the company in 2012 as a performer in Schrödinger he was a core contributor in the development of Negative Space and part of the team that created Its Hot its Not. Alex was a graduate of RS emergent artist programme called Club Reckless...

Leentje Van de Cruys

Is an independent theater artist based in Mechelen, as well as the work that she creates herself she regularly contributes to the creation of projects for Quarantine and developing larger-scale ensemble projects with Universities. In 2018 both Mole and Leentje were invited to create ensemble projects for the CTP course at MMU both projects presented in Portugal in 2019.

Timothy Ingram

Is the longest serving associate artist of Reckless Sleepers devising the original Schrödinger performance in 1998, Tim has collaborated and performed in almost all of the company projects. He was part of the original team that developed the Last Supper, he contributes as either a performer or dramaturg.

Rebecca Young

Joined the company in 2012 as a performer in Schrödinger she was a core contributor in the development of Negative Space and part of the team that presents Its Hot its Not...and Binary Opposition. Rebecca was a graduate of RS emergent artist programme called Club Reckless.

RUINS

(How to get on stage -) - text:

(Introduction of Flower)

(Rules logic & pol wishes):

Language of Negative Space

(Fragility) Beauty & Destruction)

What are thinking → + During the presentations
" " Making!

Social Activity →

Don't take ourselves seriously!