Thoughts of Sorts

Sebastian Oreamuno

Abstract
My multi-media daily practice of dancing, drawing, and writing is a generative space that does not buy into the idea and pressure of productivity. It has been over four years since I started this daily practice, which I began on June 21, 2017. I engage this practice to process. It is a practice for processing “things” such as texts, theories, daily situations, and our current time, informed by sensations and feelings. What has emerged for me in this practice is how every aspect of it — the dancing, drawing, writing, music, silence, camera, space, time, cats (yes! my cats sometimes dance with me), and life — plays a role. All of these things are in conversation with one another, and they inform who I am, my becoming. Lately, I have engaged this practice as a methodology. That is, I have used it to excavate and re-connect with the Chilean national dance, a danceform that I used to practice when I was a child in Chile. However, for me, this practice is much more than that. These writing and drawings are from me, about me, and extensions of me — my thoughts of sorts.* And, they are my gifts to you.

Keywords
reflections, refractions, traces, daily practice, art

* The title is inspired by, and taken from, Georges Perec’s book of the same name: a collection of essays that explores the everyday.
from the nebulous
the ether
emerges a phantom
a dream only now remembered
only now recognizable
and
that’s it
that’s the way forward
the path meant to be
taken
or perhaps it was only a déjá vu
nevertheless, the tingling comes
and you proceed

April 8, 2020
I’m reminded of the ocean
that salty liquid that leaves stars on your skin
and a stickiness that is both unbearable and
joyous because you know, I know, I got to swim,
dunk my head, relax, maybe ride a wave
the sun in my eye as I float
the sizzling of my skin as the sun touches me more and more
the smell of coconut – the sunscreen
away, so far away
I’m nostalgic for a time that is many times,
for a place that is no place
and all because I danced
in a basement

April 13, 2020
the days seem to disappear before
I can even register them
I am continuously faced with
a lived ephemerality
a lived evanescence
these daily traces are all
that remain
a reminder of what I’ve forgotten
April 22, 2020

doubling
involving in time
the timing couldn’t
be better
multiplying takes
time
double it by
folding in
half
then in half again
and again and
again and again
until you’re so
involved, so folded
in that you come out
the other side

doublings are creases
in time, not projections

April 25, 2020

there’s always a story to tell
in a kiss
in friction
in a meal
a story,
waiting and wanting
to be heard

May 2, 2020

a leafy monster emerges in time
the pencil crayons and paper have
a pedagogy of their own
a pedagogy of patience, layering and
allowing for spaces, gaps, in-betweens
the leafy monster emerges to teach me
about growth and decay, vibrance and rot,
cycles and transitions
it stares at me in silence
I hope I’ve learned the/my lesson
May 5, 2020

it was through imagination and sensation
that I was able to bear witness from afar
to be there from a distance
I cannot remove or discard what
has been incorporated, what I’ve read
and I don’t intend on claiming those
as my own
I’m just trying to contend with
the mine that’s not mine, or
the not mine that is now a part of me

May 9, 2020

echoes
ripples
affected
uncertainties lead to
moving
reverberations
choices
all to try and be free
to find the margin of
manoeuverability
but cracks lead to new
spaces/enclosures
follow the breadcrumbs?
feel the ripples
hear the echoes
sense the reverberations
then let them go
let yourself go
be affected and affect

May 14, 2020

the race was never there
the competition didn’t exist
I made it all up
we made it all up
perhaps now I can relax
and rest
May 17, 2020

abeyance…
…to dance the spell of my own creation

holding on to our practices of making time speed up
does not create more time, just momentum
towards a future we don’t understand
we believed progress was containable
we believed in progress
and now, we’re in a much-needed suspension

May 20, 2020

a changing landscape emerges
or rather a landscape that was already in
transition becomes apparent
when you tune your awareness to the movement
when you turn towards the movement
you can’t search for it
you can only sense it and try
to focus on it
don’t bother trying to grasp it
because it’s ungraspable
fleeting
evanescient
transient
it is and was and will be
always already out of (your) reach

May 31, 2020

suspended and lost
in trajectories
of thoughts unfolding faster
than I can process
a process
of traversing at the speed
of neurons firing
of connections and gaps being made
all I really know is
that I’m processing
and perhaps I don’t even know that
because my awareness is split
but I can feel the process of processing
I feel suspended and lost
June 12, 2020

the hunger, the hunger
to feed
and swallow
take it in
all of it
taste it and swallow
chew it
   or let your saliva
break it down into a
   paste
then swallow
   take it in
and digest
the hunger, the hunger
will come again
to feed
but you’ll know what
to do

June 16, 2020

finding a way forward
sometimes only requires
   remembering the paths
not taken
   a different orientation
leaning a different way

June 19, 2020

meet me in the fork in the road
so we can walk down the path together
meet me in the lair below
   so we can ride out the tempestuous weather
meet me where the fire-souls go
so we can drift through dreams like a feather
meet me somewhere no one will know
   the memory that has us tethered
June 21, 2020

I can’t find the words
they’re around me
buzzing
but I can’t seem to
focus on them
this is this moment
and the next might hold
something different
but for now I’ll have to sit
in the confusion
between numerous trains
of thought
and find my place
in the swirl
perhaps it wasn’t words
or a word I was looking for
but a feeling
tranquility

July 2, 2020

frames
the stories they tell
aren’t the stories they hold
stilling movement
framing scenarios
fantasizing containment
the illusion of the frame
a window
looking out to interpretation
things don’t stay so neatly
packed, packaged, framed
the frame breaks
and the stories spill

July 23, 2020

this interruption was necessary
we needed to do this to keep going
ruptures are openings
and if we open together
if we open up together
then we can go through
the rupture, the crack
we need to make things burst
not ourselves
we need to break things
and pick up the pieces
always create anew with what’s there
easier said than done
breaks are necessary
this interruption was necessary

July 24, 2020

succulent, delicious
change can be exquisite
an acquired taste
certainly!
because we seek certainty,
clarity,
stability
move!
explore with movement
experiment with it
taste it
taste movement with your body
you’re already doing it anyway
you’re just not aware you’re doing it
and see where the movement
takes you

August 3, 2020

el canto de la orilla
el cuento de la orilla
is of patience and
transformation
is of persistence and
negotiation
the edge/shore/border
is a song/story
unfolding and
unfinished
Author biography

Born in Santiago, Chile, Sebastian Oreamuno is a Toronto-based artist, educator, and researcher whose artistic and academic interests trace the connection between movement and memory, (im)migration and diaspora, the participatory body, popular culture, and multi-media practices. Sebastian holds a BA in Psychology from Simon Fraser University (Vancouver), an MA in Dance from York University (Toronto), and he is currently working on a PhD in Dance Studies at York. His Master’s project investigated the relationship between men and pointe work, a practice primarily associated with ballerinas. Sections of this project have been published in Contingent Horizons, Performance Matters, and Dance Collection Danse: The Magazine. His doctoral research explores how movement participates in the summoning of memories, particularly in the context of Chilean migrants in Canada. Sebastian is currently developing Fragmentos, a multi-media project that explores the fragmentation of self through the imposition of assimilation, with documentary filmmaker Juan Pablo Pinto. Sebastian is also a co-founder of Untitled 37, a multidisciplinary arts collective that engages “steeped” practices as a way to question “panic-production.”