

**This book is about Love and
Kisses, not Truth Be Truth to
Th' End of Reck'ning.**

**Truth Be Truth to Th' End of
Reck'ning was not about
Auschwitz, Measure for
Measure or Misfits; but it was
about our witnessing of those
things.**

**My understanding of this
experience is based on what I
have witnessed, I did not
witness these things as they
happened - only as I perceived
them.**

How to read this book

This book is a collection of photos, quotes and writings; each aiming to delve into my experience through the creation and performance of 'Truth Be Truth to Th' End of Reck'ning'. This book is titled Love and Kisses because to me everything that makes up our show can somehow link back to; the idea of loving oneself and others, and what it means to be able to kiss and love whoever you choose (including outcasts and misfits).

There are a plethora of photos throughout this book, and each is linked to love, friendship and misfits. All of the pictures included are linked to my experience, beginning with our trip to Poland. In the middle, however, are photos from Auschwitz. I ask that once you have seen them, you go back to the first page and continue, now thinking about those specific photos.

This book is to be read like any other - a page at a time. However, I urge you to take a moment with each photo, quote and piece of writing. As I did, look at everything carefully. Play it over in your mind as many times as you can...



Tanna (2019)

...because there are always more meanings to something than first **witnessed.**

I am an artist - this is my statement!

As a creative, I wish to make my audience feel something. That could be any range of emotions, including anger at how much they hated it - however preferably not. I have always felt that if there is no emotional connection between a piece and an audience, the piece hasn't fully reached it's potential - needing something more to elevate it further.

When performing I want to have a connection to what I am doing. Not a Brechtian connection, searching for a different situation in your own life that creates the same response. I like to look at the situation and begin to understand (to the best of my ability) what that is like. It's hard. Sometimes near impossible. But nothing worth the effort is ever easy.

In my opinion, it is easy to have an emotion; but if you can understand the reason for that emotion to the best of your ability, something more than a performance can be formed. A representation. A celebration.





To be clear, there will be a lot of times that I will go back on things that I say as an artist. In one instance I may think one way and then something will happen in another instance and my opinion will be altered. Things happen in life, and because of them my opinion on events is bound to change. I am fully aware of this phenomenon and embrace it to the best of my ability.

In theatre you need to think about the world and what it means to live in it. From a purely simple standpoint, the world is unpredictable and crazy. There is so much to think about and more to weigh up; and I feel as if I am able to do that maturely. As an artist it is imperative to understand and engage with both sides of an argument. Artists need to know where they stand, but they also need to know what it means to stand on the other side. It is not just about you being right, but also what if you are wrong.

The rules of my stage, my shows and my life:

Give respect to all in your company.

Always make sure you are doing something constructive.

Put all you have into everything you do.

Always turn up.

Be kind.

KISSING FEELS GOOD!

Kissing has always been a show of: love, affection, happiness, lust, and so many more emotions. The first instance of kissing in our piece was in one of the first images where three men, portraying young boys, watch as two women share a kiss. Later on in the sharing of ideas I and another male of our company played around with this concept of kissing. The action was added into another scene and the kisses became very important. They added another level to it, showing a different side to everything else we had put out.

During the second world war anyone who Hitler deemed to be the "other" or a threat were thrown into concentration camps and treated like animals. They were worked to exhaustion, stripped of all their humanity and were given absolutely no compassion.

When we visited Auschwitz we entered a room that celebrated life before the camps. It was beautiful. We were able to witness all these people happy, healthy and full of love.

For the rest of the trip, and into the creation of our images, all I could think about was where that beauty and love had gone.

The kisses, to me, represented that love. Everywhere in life there is love, and no matter the tragedy and downfall; we should always celebrate the love that was.

The importance of kissing someone of the same sex in our piece helped to convey the sense of an 'other'. We were baring testament to those who love without fear.



Tanna (2019)

All of us, too.

'The 'me too.' movement was founded in 2006 to help survivors of sexual violence, particularly Black women and girls, and other young women of color from low wealth communities, find pathways to healing. Our vision from the beginning was to address both the dearth in resources for survivors of sexual violence and to build a community of advocates, driven by survivors, who will be at the forefront of creating solutions to interrupt sexual violence in their communities.'

- (Me Too Movement Website)

This extract from the website of the MeToo movement shows the creation of this organisation, as well as its importance within society. With many years of verbal, physical and of course sexual abuse on women set into our minds, it is important that women around the world have places like this that they can go to. The MeToo movement is a way to give women a voice, allowing them to come forward about what they have been through. Whether they seek justice or not; it is important that women speak out against these terrible acts, in order to secure that women in the future never have to go through what they have.





A play that we used as a catalyst for our process was Shakespeare's Measure For Measure. It's story and messages truly do make it a play with a deep message of patriarchy, as women are traded to save the lives of men. We knew almost instantly that it was, without ever intending to be, a MeToo play.

"What a merit were it in death to take this poor maid from the world! What corruption in this life, that it will let this man live!" - (Isabella. 3, 1)

"I hold you as a thing" - (Lucio. I, 4)

"Better it were a brother died at once
Than that a sister, by redeeming him,
Should die forever." - (Isabella. 2, 4)

"You do blaspheme the good, in mocking me."
- (Isabella. 1,4)

The play was interesting to study in relation to Auschwitz, as we could not change any messages relating to the camp; and so, had to make Measure For Measure fit around the former. This idea of the MeToo movement then existed heavily within the piece, leading to scenes that involved the patriarchy and women fighting against it.





Some thoughts by smarter humans

'There have been two great crises when the means of living became too powerful for the purpose of living. Human beings had to understand themselves and live in a new way. Only drama can change human reality so radically. It did it in Athens and Jacobean London. The first created the classical world and in time Roman Christianity. The second led to the industrial revolution. That world no longer exists. We live in the third crisis. Our drama is full of the holes we fill with debris of Auschwitz. We do it more and more now. History sets no precedents but drama will still allow us to live and be human if we rid it of the debris and create a new drama. It will be severe but ample beyond what we can imagine before we create it. It will be Tragic. It will take us to the edge of reality where we and the soldier will recover our innocence.'

- (Bond. 2012)

There have been so many thoughtful quotes I have come across through this process. Here are just a few that I wanted to include as points of thinking.

'Performance art usually occurs in the suspension between the "real" physical matter of "the performing body" and the psychic experience of what it is to be em-bodied.' - (Phelan. 1993)

Thinking about these helped me to understand what this style of performance meant, and how best to go about it.

'During the Gulf War, I had an experience which changed the way I thought about writing plays. I was taking a shower in my health club after a swim when I smelled a terrible odour rising up in the steam off my own skin. It was the smell of burning flesh, a smell rancid with decay and death. I got out of the shower, turned on the walkman I had borrowed from my child because I had become addicted to news of a war which I also actively opposed, and I learned that a bunker in a Baghdad suburb where women, children, and civilian men were hiding had been bombed by our 'smart' bombs.' - (Malpede. 2000)

'In theatre of witness, a dramatic action takes from which reconnects self to deeper, previously hidden layers of self; connects self to other; and provides a renewed connection to the social world.'

- (Malpede. 2000)

Accept it, because it isn't you!

Any man would feel uncomfortable, no matter their past, standing in front of an audience having the SCUM manifesto recited to their face. Especially when it includes a group of women raising their pinkies high, to suggest they have a tiny penis.

As a performer I have played my share of bad characters, ranging from high school bullies to vengeful cousins. However, being in this SCUM manifesto scene was different. Fucked Up Families (as we titled the scene in question) was, to me, a representation of women fighting back against the patriarchy - more so in a negative way.

Because I was the only male in the scene, it meant that I was representing the patriarchy. The vile man that pushes women down to nothing. The 'walking dildo'.

'To be male is to be deficient, emotionally limited. Maleness is a deficiency disease and men are emotional cripples.

Every man deep down knows he's a worthless piece of shit. He has a negative midas touch, everything he touches turns to shit.

To call a man an animal is to flatter him. He is a machine. A walking dildo.'

- SCUM Manifesto

To be clear, the patriarchy is not man, and man is not the patriarchy. The patriarchy is 'A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.' - (Dictionary)
The difference being that patriarchy is about an imbalance of power. However, for the sake of this scene, I was the patriarchy in the form of "man".

In every previous performance I've done, my process has been to see what motivates the character. Even the "bad" ones have always been given some sort of a back story by myself to make their actions seem justified. It was the head space I wanted to be in, because I didn't want to be the bad guy.

However, there is no justification here. This wasn't a misunderstood character, this was the personification of thousands of years of injustice.

Within this experience we talked a lot about witnessing, and what it means to bare testimony to the things we have witnessed. The things that I have witnessed about patriarchy are completely different to every woman I was sharing the stage with at this time.

I have never experienced the patriarchy in the same way that a woman has, so I had to use my own

knowledge and what I had witnessed myself. I made the patriarchy take the form of a young boy acting without remorse to the feelings of someone else. This is something that, having just come out of teenage years, I have seen and know too well.

I was a point of being that the other members of my company could then use. They helped push forward what I was by the way they acted towards me. It was not me they were acting towards, but the idea that I represented.

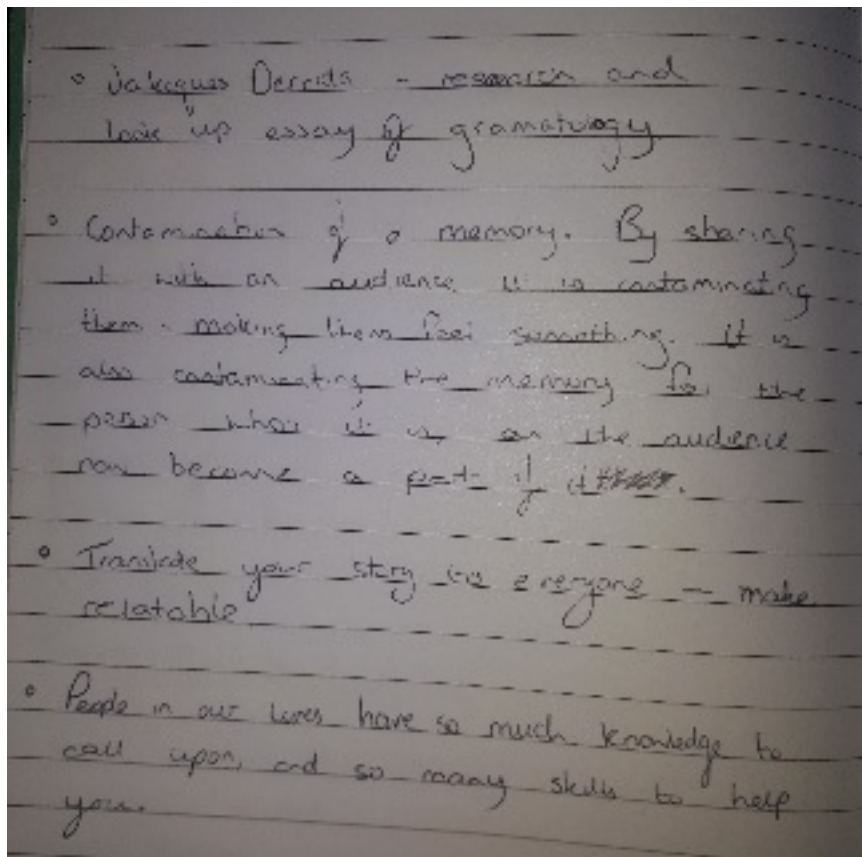


Tanna (2019)

Dear Diary,

Below and to the right are a few extracts from my notebook during our process. They follow from the beginning to the end, as my ideas and thoughts grew.

The experience taught me a lot about performance, creating and us as a society of people. I hope that my thoughts have reflected that.



for me, in this strange and mysterious world, people have ^{always} gotten to me. I find that ^{always} other's upsets, worries, problems and lives affect my own, ~~very~~ ~~so~~ ~~very~~ if ^{often in a very bad way} it's in my head. Like really deep up in there, it's because I have allowed myself to be ~~too~~ ~~much~~ ~~worry~~ too much about what other are doing. Well, at least in lecture settings anyway; in life there are a plethora of things that send me down that metaphorical rabbit hole. But that's an issue for another piece of writing. In the lectures we've had so far

What have I learnt?

Surface !
↓

- Being creative and bringing something to a piece is really important.
- It's hard to work in big numbers.
- I never thought of measure for measure as a radio play.
- There's more than just one way to make theatre.
- Turn up.

You can build upon each one to create work.

Write about what you've learnt in your course.

Their stories, through our eyes

We live in a post-holocaust world. Since the effects of the second world war, our society has been stuck in a state of remembrance of the events that took place in the German concentration camps. 'The last century is the century of darkness and the darkness is still in us.' - (Bond. 2012)

This state of remembrance that we live in has led drama into a state where everything we create relates (in some way) to Auschwitz and the other camps. The atrocities that lived within the walls of these camps have sent a shock that started when the camps were liberated. Today we live in an aftershock. Drama allows us to access that, and try to help us move on in a new way. However, we are still stuck in the metaphorical aftershock.

'We live in a world full of weapons of incalculable destructive forces, and somehow this fact is made even worse by the thought that use of relatively few of them can cause such quick destruction of empathy in a people who suddenly find themselves citizens of a nation which has gone to war.' - (Maldepe. 2000)

As a species we have always craved conflict. We have pushed the boundaries, going further and further until we reached Auschwitz. Concentration camps had already existed before, so had the concept and execution of a mass genocide; but this was something else.

We live today, still affected by what happened almost a hundred years ago. When those who lived it are gone how will we bare testimony to what happened there without witnessing it ourselves?

'If bearing testimony allows the individual to reclaim the self, the witnessing of such testimony also reclaims the victim's experience for society of which the individual, by virtue of being heard, can once again become a part.' - (Maldepe. 2000)

By visiting these camps and witnessing those who survived them, we are able to bare testimony through our own work - with our own thoughts and feelings. It becomes something else, it becomes contaminated through the history we add and the ideas and beliefs we bring in. That is what Truth Be Truth to 'Th' End of Reck'ning became. A bringing together of people from all different backgrounds and beliefs, having witnessed something.



Tanna (2019)



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