

Reflections on Stony Creek Collective

a collaborative project
exploring multi-artform responses,
in dance, photography and poetics,
to the destruction of the
South-east Australian foothill forests.

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Photographs by Lisa Roberts.



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I work in three local sites where rare flora and fauna are being destroyed: a logging field, a burnt forest and a road-widening construction. I walk the sites, investigate the exquisite remnant flora and document their destruction in notes and dances. I dance on site, sometimes for hours, often accompanied by Lisa. She photographs me. Or my partner Andrew comes and videos me.

The process is lumpy, the emergent dances are invariably unfixed. Three strands are emerging: a fade out dance of whiteness and oblivion, of erasure and extinction, where images arise from the dust as papery skin or a body full of sand, and where the body is comforted by its release to ground; a second strand is of perpetual horror, like *The Scream* of Edvard Munch, we are stretched to our limits, in permanent shock at the muscles, machinery and men; and there's an absurd strand, emerging in a playful dance I call, *going nowhere*, pathetic, hilarious, useless human striving.







Lisa moves in closer and closer, photographing me from behind, beside, underneath. A complicity develops, increasingly intimate. Tracked by her gives me an 'audience' to perform to. Unlike being held in place by a fixed camera, I am free to roam recklessly.

My dancing burns with our shared agony over the senseless, environmental destruction all around us, and yet holds itself lightly apart with a performative transparency. We are devastated at the result.

Back in the shed or studio I sink into the traces of materials gathered. In response, choreographic devices arise such as *prolonging* odd bits of movement, or *disturbance* to rupture the flow. These are not new choreographic processes for me but with a *body full of sand* they lead me to new dances. I notice images coalesce and imbue my body as I dance. I observe a palpable difference between holding a mental image with which to create a dance, and what I am enjoying here, which is creating the dance from *within* the image-sensation, where the devastated forest site is encountered within my dancing body. Perhaps this is to do with where the artist sits... The experience of dancing this way is almost without context other than the forest site itself. I'm not somewhere looking at it. This body is all there is.





