



photo Lisa Roberts - Cape Conran Coastal Park

JANUARY

### **Walking text**

Where am I?

Where is this body? This pungent, porous mass of shifting particles, conflicting *humors*, hungers, favours, impressions ...

Where am I?

Where are we?

Where do we live, work, think, dance?

How does this body feel, taste, touch these deadened trees, this ashen dirt?

How do I dance, here, in this place?

How does this place dance me?

### **Standing still text**

In the 40 years I have been developing my dance practice, Australia has lost over half of its digging mammals, 80% of its wetlands and 95% of its pre-1788 forest. 23 bird species are extinct. Around 3 billion animals were burned to death last summer or perished from hunger. We have the world's highest rate of mammal extinction. Since the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act was introduced 21 years ago - to protect Australia's threatened species - 9 million hectares of threatened species habitat has been cleared. The recent Samuel review of this Act was scathing, exposing a continued and accelerating decline outstripping recovery, and successive governments failing in their duty to protect nature.

## What have we done?

I grew up next to damp, pristine, ancient forests. After dancing in Paris for 15 years, I returned home to East Gippsland to discover the majestic forests were all gone.

I wept.

I asked myself, *what the hell are you dancing for?*

I went to the hills, to dance among the ruin. What else to do?

I drew other artists (photographers, dancers, sound artists, writers ...) and ecologists together, to try to understand and respond to this unfolding tragedy. DIRT (Dance In Regional disaster zones) formed with myself, Vic McEwan, Andrew Morrish and Peter Fraser. We went out into the devastated places I had loved like family, to dance. What else to do? I wrote letters and submissions. We gave lectures and performances...

Then the fires came, tearing through the logging coupes. Young plantation trees high on eucalyptus oil burnt like fury. The fires ran 25 kms overnight. Fire fighters rushed to protect assets - only the native animals and plants were not classified as assets.

*January 25th*

*Backburning pursued with a vengeance. Burn out, blackened out, dead-edging, 'crews are now conducting burn out operations'. Every little green patch, a refuge for devastated species, is torched. They don't know what else to do, only know fire. People profess 'cultural burns' to be the answer. What is a cultural burn when the climate is 2 degrees hotter, the droughts are longer, there are 25 million more people here, logging has opened up the forests so the soil is even dryer.. and the lands that might have been burnt for tuber propagation are now covered in sheep and cows and roads and cars and housing estates. Zylstra tells us: 'fire follows fire', but out here, they aren't listening.*

After the evacuations were over, I went back out to dance... <https://vimeo.com/393902056>

Cape Conran was part of 10,000 hectares of fragile coastal heathland backburned by panicked fire fighters in January 2020. A large portion has never recovered. The fire burnt so hot, the entire seed bed in some sites was completely incinerated. East Gippsland was shrouded in smoke for months.

Only in dancing is my sadness and anger transformed. Only in dancing do feeling and thinking, join; sensation and cognition meet, not as separate entities but as intimate partners, fluid, entangled, never ending...

*The smell of burning flesh*

*First, Peoples,*

*Then the trees,*

*The animals,*

*A ghostline of charcoal figures*

*Will our soft, fleshy bodies heal this hard, bloody history?*



FEBRUARY



Pt Ricardo, Cape Conran Coastal Park, bulldozed by firefighters - photos Lisa Roberts



*February 22nd - There was no way to stop dancing today, because there is no resolution. no recovery. the bush has lost its resilience for a very long time.*

MARCH

**Open Studio performance** at Orbost Exhibition Centre, 7 March 2020

(this was to be the first in a series, but became the only large audience event due to COVID 19)

*Pt Ricardo dance* (one of 3 dances in the performance):

sand-bag body, limbs discombobulated, twisted, slanted, heavy stillness, barely audible breath, silent, disconnected habitat, bulldozer tracks made a wide-open scar in the fragile heathland

*fire risks*

houses

sheds

fences

electricity poles

dog kennels

gates

bridges

towns

telecommunication towers

cars

bulldozers

*assets requiring protection*

non-humans

insects

trees of all native types

greater gliders

soil dampness

rivers (clean)

air (breathable)

joy & hope in the future

anticipation of wonder

laughter

curiosity

bees

whole unfragmented ecosystems

rainbow bee-eaters

jumper ants

diary text read - *February 2nd, fourth escaped backburn. smoked out. packed ready for the knock on the door to evacuate. Sunday, bombed out. vasovagal-type hyperventilation. shortness of breath. fluttery heart in the throat. dance? walked. saw 1 rufous fantail, 1 golden whistler, a family of white-faced honey-eaters 2 feeding 1 young, and 2 pair of brown thornbills. Orbost hospital. Sam wonderful. laying there. want to leave this planet. white men have ruined everything. I could cry for weeks. 1000 sq kilometres of bandicoots, potoroos, lyrebirds all gone. destroyed by white men. Too sad for words.*

**When I first saw you dance** - a response to the performance by Coralene Hill, Orbost (extracts)

When I first saw you dance

I knew I got it,

But was speechless.

I had no language for it.

No preconceptions, no familiarity.

It was nothing I had seen before.

Afterwards...

I hung around in solitude in my garden

Contemplating the dance, the dancer

The inseparability of it all,

How I couldn't

Separate from it all.



APRIL - *artists in isolation*, published on-line

<https://www.eastgippslandartgallery.org.au/rosalind-crisp-artists-in-iso>

MAY - *DIRt* interview for French culture magazine *Ma Culture*, published on-line 28 July 2020

<https://www.maculture.fr/entretiens/dirt-rosalind-crisp/>

JUNE - solo practice at Orbost Exhibition Centre - <https://vimeo.com/514905039>



JULY - solo practice at Orbost Exhibition Centre - <https://vimeo.com/514907400>



July 20th  
We're here  
then there  
not here, not there, nowhere  
but here  
already  
here  
already under the skin  
already between the ankles  
already sliding...  
already busted by granny bearing broccoli

Everything is in flux

How did I get here?  
trailing attention, letting my body shift, then notice  
stick with it, thick enough, slow enough to acceullir the feedback from this, then this, then this..  
Not stopping and therefore not designing moves ahead of me. letting them slip from different parts of the  
body, from side, weight, end, breath, each time different  
'proprioception into dance', each next effect in the body becomes material for dwelling

Read the news  
Read the real estate new allotments carving up the bush  
flogging every last blade of grass

July 24th - fading away dance/erasure/wipe out/extinction

AUGUST

10



Have  
your  
Say

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2020 | SNOWYRIVERMAIL.COM.AU

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### Outraged

Dear Editor,- The Marlo forest miraculously survived the summer fires. But now, huge habitat trees are being cut down. Locals are outraged.

This magnificent circa 100-year-old saw banksia (pictured left), is one example of more than 20 large, solid, habitat trees locals found cut down in Marlo State Forest (once a Flora Reserve). Residents are calling for an urgent investigation.

'When I first came to Marlo over 40 years ago, the forest was teeming with wonga pigeons, bronze-winged pigeons, golden whistlers, bandicoots. You rarely even see the once common yellow robin now. Ruined. And ruined some more,' I heard from local resident.

Heavy producers of nectar, banksias are a vital part of the food chain in the Australian bush. They are an important food source for all sorts

of nectarivorous animals, including birds, bats, possums, native bees and a host of invertebrates. Despite their great value to us, these vital plants are under threat from us.

And after the environmental devastation of East Gippsland from the summer fires and post-fire cull, solid habitat trees like these ones are now rarer than ever. Shouldn't our environment services be protecting them? They cannot be replaced in under 100 years. They are vital assets.

Is this preparation for a planned burn, gone wrong?

Rather than threaten the few surviving native species struggling under our brutal land management regime, could our community and public environment services please take time for a rethink? We need to protect us and nature. We need nature.

Wouldn't it be amazing if our fire fighters stationed themselves around these irreplaceable and now rare, treasures and protected them.

Kept them hydrated on those terrible hot days, of which we are bound to see an increase due in large part to our senseless deforestation.

We urgently need to find respect for this land and work with it instead of treating trees as the enemy.

We cannot as Dr. Phil Zylstra says, "burn them into submission".

Yours etc., Rosalind Crisp, Marlo.



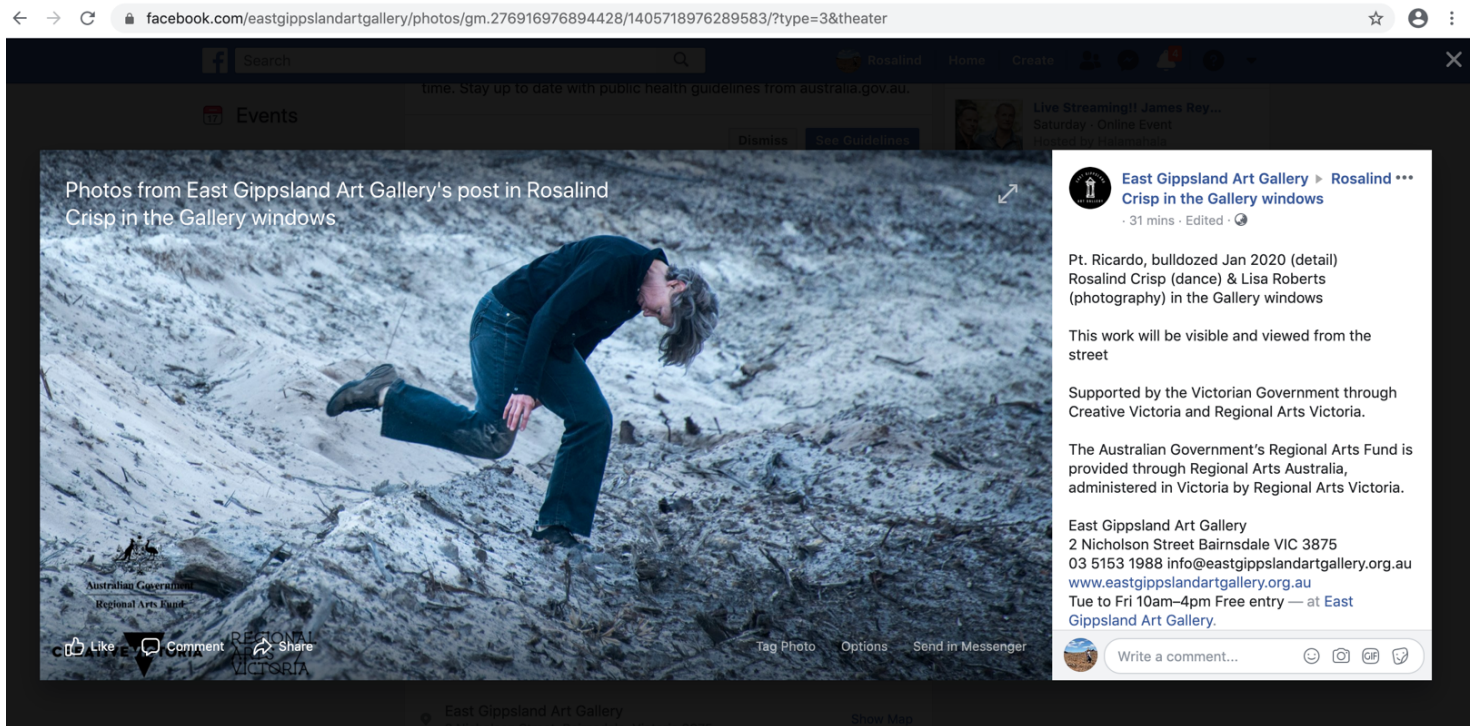
Australian Government

August 24th - dancing for the end of time



August - November

*Art on the Outside* <https://www.eastgippslandartgallery.org.au/rosalindcrisp-lisaroberts> Research for an external exhibition at East Gippsland Art Gallery, Bairnsdale with photographer Lisa Roberts. A series of blown-up dance photos from our Feb-April dance/photography practice at Pt Ricardo-Cape Conran Coastal Park - fragile coastal heathland bulldozed by panicked firefighters, Jan 2020.



photos Lisa Roberts



## SEPTEMBER

*Cape Conran burnout* - dance Rosalind Crisp / video Andrew Morrish

Extract of installation for the CARE (Concerned Artists Resisting Extinction) exhibition at East Gippsland Art Gallery, Bairnsdale. <https://vimeo.com/413845580>

**(covid-rescheduled to March 2021)**

This video dance work takes two sections of the same dance and loops them together to foreground their relationality. The 'duet' points to the interconnectedness of what we do, the echoes and traces we leave behind. Part of a three-month dance practice at West Cape - Cape Conran Coastal Park, severely burnt by a succession of backburns in January 2020.

*September 17th*

*I'm finding movements today by a delicious process of slowing down my attention to notice what is beginning to shift in one part of my body at a time. not snatching it, but delaying responding until my attention seats itself in behind the unfolding movement: a sensation of a crook in my arm or a feeling of a stretch in the right side of the body or a side of my face that I can slide around or a long strip of underneath flesh that I could plane out on or a fullness in a buttock that I could sink deeper into or a spreading in my chest as I breath that I could expand outward into movement*

*September 21st*

*began weekly on-line exchange with brilliant Irish dance-video expert Mary Wycherley*

## OCTOBER

*going nowhere* - a dance score against tourism, developed at Frenches Narrows on a boardwalk that dissects and disturbs fragile coastal habitat. <https://youtu.be/kZPTyJnMFlo>

*100 ways to pull your finger out* - a workshop online in partnership with Lucy Guerin Inc. Melbourne

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### **HOTBED WORKSHOP WITH ROSALIND CRISP — 100 WAYS TO PULL YOUR FINGER OUT**

100 ways to pull your finger out: A creative practice intensive with Rosalind Crisp exploring ways to guide your own dancing.

Embracing the challenge of working alone to engage with principles and practical tools from Crisp's methodology. The sessions will include led and self-directed exploration, as well as discussion.

Capacity is very limited so commitment to all three sessions is required. Please do not register if you are unable to join all sessions.

**Where:** Online via Zoom

**When:** Monday 5, Wednesday 7 and Friday 9 October 2020, 3-5 pm.

**Cost:** \$60 AUD

**Registrations open: 12noon, Friday 25 September**

**Register here.**

**Also in this month's e-news:**

- Dance Dialogues with Lee Serle and Maya Zbib
- LGI New Partnerships - Access and Inclusion

Image: Rosalind Crisp by Edita Sentić

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## NOVEMBER

*small movements of feeling* - extracts of spoken texts for a performance lecture commissioned by Latrobe Regional Gallery, Morwell in resonance with the exhibition, Great Movements of Feeling  
**(covid-rescheduled to February 2021)**

1.

Cognition might stifle movement  
Thank god for breath  
intercostals fan out  
breasts lift  
chin tilts  
saliva runs sideways  
bowl fills  
joy bubbles

Tail strikes out  
lashes the air behind her  
Knees agree to follow  
the fun  
of gathering limbs  
heading out  
to dance

2.

Could cognition be a soft trap  
to catch movements before they form  
and thence to let them longer longer in the half-light of their not yet shape  
delaying their birth  
so that three heads may appear instead of one,  
a hand become wise before its time  
Or a Grecian vase emerge momentarily from the mist.

Could cognition be a soft trap  
travelling behind  
lightly catching its prey  
feeding fresh textures and tones,  
fattening it with all sorts of permissions  
Basking in its aberrant beauty,  
then gently releasing it again.

3.

Cog nit ion  
I shone a nit in my cog  
poked a wit in my nig  
fig and dog met hog and wam  
bam and sham wooed pam  
One tick in the tock  
what is a cock  
how many mogs move you?  
egging on  
raking over  
spinning the dice  
pissing the wind  
words want what words want  
to take over take over take over take over take over take over ...

## DECEMBER

*Singing up my tools* - sound score research

April - December

Dancing research exchanges with colleagues in Castlemaine, New York, Berlin, Poland, Tathra, Bega, Brussels  
On-line

August - December

Solo coaching of 17 dance artists in Australia, USA, Europe  
On-line

## JANUARY 2021

A conversation with Rosalind Crisp & Lisa Nelson for the Polish dance festival Grand ReUnion, on-line  
<http://www.grandreunion.net/choreographing-attention/>

*January 30th*

*If you live in the bush bash burn exploit extraction zone that is regional Australia, you cannot delude yourself that we've been decolonising.*

déplier le corps  
couler le poids  
respire profondément

faire exister ce qu'est déjà là

Rosalind Crisp  
February 2021

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