**Dear You -**

As you know these weeks (up to 23rd November) are set up for you to creating a devised piece with your group. This is still possible at a distance. Go through these activities , keep notes and work on your research, your monologues and your Supporting Evidence.#

Please email me if you are not sure

**TASK 1 – WAYS INTO VERBATIM**

Some informative ideas of how to generate text for your Verbatim piece.

Watch the YouTube clip and answer these questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u21hmi7O6xE>

1. What are the two stages to the way Alecky Blythe works?
2. Why do you think it is important to not just copy what people say but also to copy the way things are said?
3. How does Alecky Blythe captures “scenes” as well as face to face interviews?
4. What are your thoughts on the methods Alecky Blythe uses to create her theatre? Is it sustainable? How effective, easy and accessible do you think this kind of research is?

Watch this YouTube video on designing semi structure interviews. The kind of research you will want to do for your Verbatim Theatre piece will be from interviews with family members you live with or others who you can contact via FaceTime, Skype or other internet-based contact.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z8XV1S7548>

As you watch take notes on the top tips for creating an interview guide.

Write your list of questions for your interview using the 6 top tips from the video. The key is to keep the questions open and allow yourself to be able to ask follow up questions so that you can get all the information available. Ask questions that will help your interviewees to open up about what they are talking about. Ask them questions that will help them to retell the events, not just their own perspectives of events, but the perspectives of others. Also try to get them to talk about conversations they’ve had and the things that others have said.

Write a list of people who you want to and can interview for your piece of Verbatim Theatre

### Other opinions

1. So collate a range of real-life verbatim opinions around the theme of your piece. Interview friends and family (or get them to send voice notes) and record these answers. Select and edit extracts or statements that you make in order to support the aim of your piece. They often incorporate other people’s voices into the show to set the tone and spectrum around the political or social issue the show is exploring.

**TASK 2**

Review you’re the research that you have done so far.

Annotate the research you’ve done using the following labels:

* Useful to creating and telling a story.
* Useful to creating characters
* Useful to establishing backstory
* Useful to wider plot but not directly related to focus

Reflect on the research you’ve done so far. Try to condense each piece of meaningful research you’ve done by condensing it down into a 5- or 6-word summary of it. Write these summaries on different pieces of paper or post notes.

Spread these pieces of paper across the floor, your table or wherever you are working. Then find a way of drawing links between pieces of research. Look for the following:

* Where people are talking about the same thing
* Where people are the same age, gender or background
* Where people have similar viewpoints on an issue as others
* Where people disagree over issues
* Link in chronological order as well, earliest memory to most recent.
* Having reviews our research, answer these questions about it.

1. What are the key characters that have started to emerge?
2. What are the key themes that have started to emerge?
3. What story is starting to emerge? Is there are natural flow to the story you’ve got so far?
4. How do you think you’ll structure this story based on what you’ve got so far?
5. What more research do we need to do?

Show a range of diverse opinions, don’t be onesided with the content you choose.

*This example from the opening of their show ‘Broke’ demonstrates how they used other people’s opinions to set up the notion of money and debt at the start of a piece exploring poverty:*

***Multirole verbatim in ‘Broke’*** *(2 mins)*[***https://youtu.be/uoV0dsGT0N4***](https://youtu.be/uoV0dsGT0N4)

### TASK 3 Flowing sentences

In groups, participants are going to work together to write a script where we hear from each of the characters. Although the characters can be totally unconnected and in different locations at different times, the participants have to find ways to link the sentences between the characters; specifically, by leaving the end of their sentence open ended. For example:

***Old Lady****: It is terrible that in this day and age that there are homeless people, in my day we never had people sleeping /*

***Teenager****: In a doorway, but she looked like she was the same age as me, which is so mad because I can’t even imagine how she /*

***Charity worker:*** *started volunteering about 6 months ago. At first, I was just handing out sandwiches at nighttime, but the more I grew in confidence the more I /*

***Homeless boy****: can’t handle it anymore. It just gets too cold at this time of year.*

Once the group have worked on their script encourage them to learn the lines and practice saying these in order, making sure they pick up on each other’s sentences so the text flows nicely. Finally, give the groups time to stage the text. The staging can be simple and should help the audience know where to look as the focus is moving so quickly. An example of this might be that the group all face the back of the stage and turn around to face the audience each time their character is speaking.

1. Also put together a package ( this is going to be for someone else in your group – you are going to be put into groups with people interested in the same theme)

## TASK 4 From Me to You

This exercise is an exciting intro to the devising process. Choose things to inspire, excite, and ignite imaginations for the creative process ahead.

1. A piece of **costume** (scarf, glasses, necklace etc)
2. An **object** from around the house (something decorative, something with a function etc )
3. An **article** found in print media or printed from internet (could be present day or historic, must NOT be about CV-19! Try and find a ‘feature’ article rather than a news article – maybe an inspirational story etc)
4. A piece of **music** – Write down the name of the artist and song for the person who receives the package to look up on the internet.
5. **Immediately draw a spider gram** about each of the items starting with the largest. Eg: ITEM: FLIP FLOP: beach – holiday – summer – toes – comfort… so on.

1. In response to the whole package: **Write a 2 minute stream of consciousness** piece of writing; set a timer and don’t let yourself stop writing; there are no rules, it can be

prose,

in character as first person,

it can be a narrative,

it can be a list,

it can change course, you don’t have to remain tied to the objects. The aim is to let your mind wander and see where it takes you in response to the collective objects.

1. In response to the **artist and song**: Find the song online (YouTube/Spotify), now choreograph a sequence to this piece of music – this can be dance or gestural (we have given an example of both below) but try and steer away from the obvious, if it’s a pop song, how can the movement work against this?

**Dance example: Sia - Chandelier (Official Music Video)**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vjPBrBU-TM**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vjPBrBU-TM)

**Gestural example: Daft Punk- Harder, Faster, Better, Stronger (Daft Hands Video)** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2cYWfq--Nw**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2cYWfq--Nw)

1. In response to the **prop**: A piece of creative writing– use your original spider grams to help you formulate what and where this piece of writing is going to go. Is it descriptive, narration, first person, set somewhere specific?

1. In response to the **costume**: Write and deliver a monologue based on the item of costume. Film your monologue – no longer than 1 minute.

1. In response to the **article**: underline or highlight at least 10-15 of the adjectives – the descriptive words – in a section of the article. Next, find an action and a sound to replace that word. Once you have an action for each of the words, go back through and make them larger, more non-naturalistic, really push them so they are starting to become something else – extend the movements. Try not to simply mime the word you took out. Practice the extract of text with those 10 words removed and you delivering the action/sound in their place.

### TASK 5 Key dates

Do you think if there are any important moments or key dates within the story of character arc. Now ask each member of the group to write a piece of text that begins with or includes this date/s using one of the following formats:

* A news story
* A diary entry
* A voicemail
* A letter
* An email

Once these have been written, participants should share these different pieces of text with the rest of their group and put them together in an inventive way – they do not have to be chronological, they do not have to go one at a time, they can repeat, overlap, split their sections up so on…

### TASK 6 In and out of character

We are always pushing for the non-naturalistic and this exercise plays with performance and non-performance. This is a good exercise to push their material further if they’ve already made lots of scenes, but you think it needs that bit extra.

* Ask students to write a character profile for the main character they play, or a character that needs developing further.
* Then in a separate list, write their opinions about the character – do they think they are brave, are they selfish, are they inspiring? Include the reasons why.
* Next, compile a list of everything they have in common with the character, (the performer in real life), their similarities and differences.
* Choose some of their character’s text that already exists, a monologue or lines of theirs from a duologue etc, and use the lists you have made to add in ‘non-acting’ asides, breaks in the monologue where they comment as themselves.
* Formulate this into a script, and practice delivering; ‘multi-roling’ between themselves and the character.

*In this example, performer Shani Erez is introducing her character Nasim, delivering verbatim text. She breaks the action (and the fourth wall) to compare herself and her own personal experiences with Nasim.*

#### ***In and out of character in ‘Others’*** *(3 mins)*

[***https://youtu.be/HN-1WWvE7ss***](https://youtu.be/HN-1WWvE7ss)

When you watch these back try and find an easy performative convention to highlight when they are character/ and when they are performer.

An easy approach might be to try using a microphone – the Character’s lines delivered into the mic, the Actor’s, off mic (as an aside).

- After seeing a few versions, ask participants to try and stage their pieces performatively, how can they shift from acting to non acting, is it clear who is who? When is it interesting to hear from the actor?

Extra ideas

## Find a clip

We often show examples of other artists’ work to students that we are devising with. This ‘magpie’ approach is one used by many theatre-makers. Ask students to either find an incredible clip that they already know of, or to scour YouTube for performance clips that inspire them to share with the rest of their group. It’s a simple idea, but it’s a really nice research task that can get students to explore a range of styles of performance that they might not already be familiar with.

Here are a few of our favourites: **Spoken word: Neil Hilborn ‘OCD’** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnKZ4pdSU-s**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnKZ4pdSU-s) **Physical Theatre: Al Seed ‘The Red Room’**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-nq1MNsMGA**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-nq1MNsMGA) **Dance: Pina Bausch ‘Kontakthof’** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d\_N6\_-Yt28Y**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_N6_-Yt28Y)

### Motor-mouth

We use a lot of verbatim within our work. Find a speech online by someone that is somehow linked or relevant to your story or character (eg, if your topic or theme is climate change, you might pick Donald Trump denying climate change is a real issue, or an impassioned address by Greta Thunberg). You are now going to try to learn a section of this speech and mime along to it. Take on the physicality of the character too and let this physicality become larger and more defined.

Ask participants to play with how they present their speech – does the audio of the real speech filter in an out, what do we hear and what don’t we, are there any mute moments where we see the mouth moving and don’t hear the words?

*In this example from ‘In a Thousand Pieces’, two of the performers mime along to an edited audio track. They take on the physicality of the real people we interviewed on the topic of trafficking and a local brothel.*

*\*Please put full screen mode on as the camera is zoomed out*

***Miming verbatim in ‘In a Thousand Pieces’ (2 mins)*** [***https://youtu.be/NHu01tIlZgg***](https://youtu.be/NHu01tIlZgg)

#### A-Z

Individually, ask students to write all the letters of the alphabet out on a piece of paper. They must now go down the list and write a word that starts with each letter. This word can be ANYTHING that pops into their head: for example

1. Atlas
2. BBQ
3. Cautious
4. Dictaphone
5. Earring
6. Funny

When they finish this list, they must undertake a piece of creative writing where all of these things appear within the piece. They can be in any order and can have significance or not, the same word can be used more than once, but all words must be used.

#### Phone call from the past

As a follow on to the above, write a short scene in which the character takes a phone call from their past; as if characters from their history are on the end of the phone. Ask students to think about:

Who are the characters in their past?

What are the events in their past?

What do we need to know about the past, to help us understand the present?

* Choose one or more characters to appear in the phone call.
* You can interact with, respond to or question the characters as they appear.
* Once they have written their script, they should ask other members of their group to read/voice the characters from their past.

*In this clip, Caleb is surprised to hear the voices of his parents on the phone and how they spoke to him as a child.*

***Taking a call from the past in ‘Goldfish Bowl’*** *(1 min)*

[***https://youtu.be/Ug-b9AMj9MA***](https://youtu.be/Ug-b9AMj9MA)

## Scavenger Hunt

This is an in the moment, quick response task online. Ask students to be ready to go on a scavenger hunt around their bedroom/house. Ask them to find the following objects, one by one, giving them 30 seconds (or as quickly as they can) to find each one.

* Something purple
* Something round
* Something old
* Something soft
* Something borrowed
* Something weird
* Something beautiful

When they have collected all their objects ask them to create, film and edit together a short (up to 2 minute) video in which we meet a character and see some snapshots of a day in their life. All the objects must appear in the film somehow.

## Section 2- IMPROVISATION EXERCISES

### Creativity Cards

The Theatre Creativity Cards are a devising tool that we created to help people generate new ideas, characters, dialogue, and movement when they are devising. The Theatre Creativity Cards consist of 4 packs of cards; The Emotional, Thoughtful, Physical and Playful cards. On each card there is a word, underneath the word there is a tip (just a little extra information if you need it). The cards exist to make you think in new ways. We wanted to make something that, when creating theatre could help spark imagination. The words on the cards aim to do this.

Some examples:



The **Emotional (pink)** cards focus on the emotions or feelings of the character or performer.



The **Thoughtful (blue)** cards explore the thoughts or motivations of the character or performer.



The **Physical (orange)** cards explore the movement or physicality of the character or performer.



The **Playful (green)** cards are the most challenging pack but also, often the most rewarding. They explore the style, genre, format, and audience relationship.

Feel free to make sets of cards yourself, or generate a set of cards alongside your participants. Cut up some paper or card and try coming up with words in each of the categories or use the example cards given above to prompt you.

### 2.a) Movement and Monologue

Place a Thoughtful card and a Physical card in a space in the room for each student. They will begin by turning over their Thoughtful card and spending 2 minutes improvising text based on this card. They will then put this card down, pick up their Physical card and improvise 2 minutes of movement based on this card.

Now give participants 10 minutes to create a short performance where they combine ideas from both the movement and the text. They may have moments of silence and moments of stillness within their final performance.

Watch these individual performances and discuss what the movement adds to the story that is being told.

### 2.b) Making Changes

Ask participants to bring in a monologue or duologue. This can be from a piece of theatre, a film or a TV show, but they must already be familiar with it (not the first time they have ever read it).

Ask them to begin by staging it as the original author/ director intended- so as close to how they have seen it previously done. Now ask them to repeat the scene but with the influence of an Emotional (Pink) card.

Next repeat the scene but this time but with the influence of a Physical (Orange) card.

Finally ask them to re-create the scene with the influence of a Playful (Green) card. So, this time the scene can change quite dramatically.

Discuss which card made the scene the most interesting and why.

### 2.c) Backpack Improvisation

This is a task that we undertook in the devising phase for our show ‘In a Thousand Pieces’. Ideally this would happen in a studio with each student given their own space. It could, however, happen at home in their own bedroom with the assistance of a family member.

Ask each student to pack up a backpack with interesting props, costumes and pieces of text. They can gather these things from around their house but make sure they do not select anything:

* Breakable/ fragile
* That has worth/ sentimental value
* Dangerous or inappropriate.

The students then bring their backpack into class and this is given to another member of their group, and they in turn, receive a bag from someone else that they have not packed.

Students are then given a space in the room to undertake a 20-minute improvisation. In this improvisation they may open the bag that has been given to them and respond performatively; they may create and improvise characters, movement, they might sing, interact with a prop, improvise some text. Importantly, they must stay in performance mode for the whole 20 minutes. They can change character, ideas, move in and out of performance and non-performance, be abstract, be themselves… there are no rules aside from they commit to ‘performing’ for the full 20 minutes and they have to stay socially distanced from others in the room.

As the facilitator, you should play different pieces of music to keep the mood of the improvisation changing. You could also note down any interesting, funny or intriguing moments of performance that you witness and share these afterwards. Ask the students what moments where interesting for them; was there a character, visual, piece of text, within your improvisation that you would like to return to or to develop?

### Extra ideas

#### Audience and Emotion

Give each group one Emotional (Pink) card. Explain that this card, has the emotion that you want the audience to feel in one particular scene. In their groups they will have 20-30 minutes using props, music, costume, movement, character, text and anything else they think off to make a scene in where the audience feel that emotion.

When their time is up ask the groups to show each other their scenes one by one. After each performance, get the audience members to write down the emotion they felt whilst watching the scene.

Finally let the groups open up the paper slips and see if the audience felt the emotion that they were working towards.

## Before we move on…

### 2.d) Finding a Frame

Normally we encourage students to devise openly; to do lots of exercises (like the ones above) and see where these take them; NOT to plan a story, scenario, characters, etc at the start of their process. But, in this instance we totally understand that the students are going to have a whole new range of challenges and fears (on top of the normal ones they experience) when making a distanced devised show.

So in this instance we think it’s totally acceptable to have a skeleton idea or ‘frame’ early on in the process to ease their concerns. We ourselves have entered some projects where we know we have certain restrictions when devising, for example ‘MOBILE’ was in a caravan so was very limited in space.

They may well have found some lovely ideas, characters, visuals or fragments that they want to use. But if they are struggling, or need help placing these fragments into a show idea, to get participants thinking in different ways; ask them individually to come up with 3 specific ideas for each of the following frames:

* Name 3 ways that different characters could be trapped or restrained physically or mentally. (E.g. In a lift, in a marriage, in their head, in detention, in a body).

* Name 3 places that a play could be set where characters are physically/ literally separated or in hiding. (E.g. A prison, a concentration camp, a hospital, desks in an open plan office)

* Name 3 things that a range of characters who are in different places at different times could have in common (E.g. They all witnessed a certain event, they were all born on the same day, they are all suspects in a crime)

* Name 3 themes that could work for a conceptual ‘distanced’ piece in which there can be multiple locations/ characters/ performance styles. (E.g. Climate change, the true influence of influencers, Fake news).

Ask participants to share their answers with the rest of the group and to discuss which feel exciting and which feel challenging. Talk to them about these responses.

### In Conclusion

Because our work can be abstract and stylised, having 2 meters between the performers is not a problem, but rather just a consideration when making scenes. We would encourage the students to make the show that most excites them and not to feel like they HAVE to make a static, naturalistic show which consists of a number of monologues from different characters in different settings.

The exercises in the following sections will encourage students to make movement, text and visuals in the style of The Paper Birds: in a non-naturalistic, episodic, collaborative and inventive way.

The exercises have been written as if participants are now back within a socially distanced setting but are in the same room. Most of the exercises can be adapted for quarantine if students are not yet at this stage.

## Section 3- GENERATING TEXT

### 3.a) Other opinions

Ask members of the group to collate a range of real-life verbatim opinions around the theme of their piece. Interview friends and family (or get them to send voice notes) and record these answers. Select and edit extracts or statements that they make in order to support the aim of your piece. We often incorporate other people’s voices into the show to set the tone and spectrum around the political or social issue the show is exploring. Encourage them to show a range of diverse opinions, don’t be onesided with the content you choose.

*This example from the opening of our show ‘Broke’ demonstrates how we used other people’s opinions to set up the notion of money and debt at the start of a piece exploring poverty:*

***Multirole verbatim in ‘Broke’*** *(2 mins)*[***https://youtu.be/uoV0dsGT0N4***](https://youtu.be/uoV0dsGT0N4)

### 3.b) Key dates

Ask students to think if there are any important moments or key dates within the story of character arc. Now ask each member of the group to write a piece of text that begins with or includes this date/s using one of the following formats:

* A news story
* A diary entry
* A voicemail
* A letter
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Once these have been written, participants should share these different pieces of text with the rest of their group and put them together in an inventive way – they do not have to be chronological, they do not have to go one at a time, they can repeat, overlap, split their sections up so on…

### 3.c) Flowing sentences

In groups, participants are going to work together to write a script where we hear from each of the characters. Although the characters can be totally unconnected and in different locations at different times, the participants have to find ways to link the sentences between the characters; specifically, by leaving the end of their sentence open ended. For example:

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Once the group have worked on their script encourage them to learn the lines and practice saying these in order, making sure they pick up on each other’s sentences so the text flows nicely. Finally, give the groups time to stage the text. The staging can be simple and should help the audience know where to look as the focus is moving so quickly. An example of this might be that the group all face the back of the stage and turn around to face the audience each time their character is speaking.

### 3.d) In and out of character

We are always pushing for the non-naturalistic and this exercise plays with performance and non-performance. This is a good exercise to push their material further if they’ve already made lots of scenes, but you think it needs that bit extra.

* Ask students to write a character profile for the main character they play, or a character that needs developing further.
* Then in a separate list, write their opinions about the character – do they think they are brave, are they selfish, are they inspiring? Include the reasons why.
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* Formulate this into a script, and practice delivering; ‘multi-roling’ between themselves and the character.

*In this example, performer Shani Erez is introducing her character Nasim, delivering verbatim text. She breaks the action (and the fourth wall) to compare herself and her own personal experiences with Nasim.*

#### ***In and out of character in ‘Others’*** *(3 mins)*

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When you watch these back try and find an easy performative convention to highlight when they are character/ and when they are performer.

An easy approach might be to try using a microphone – the Character’s lines delivered into the mic, the Actor’s, off mic (as an aside).

- After seeing a few versions, ask participants to try and stage their pieces performatively, how can they shift from acting to non acting, is it clear who is who? When is it interesting to hear from the actor?

### Extra ideas

#### A-Z

Individually, ask students to write all the letters of the alphabet out on a piece of paper. They must now go down the list and write a word that starts with each letter. This word can be ANYTHING that pops into their head: for example

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When they finish this list, they must undertake a piece of creative writing where all of these things appear within the piece. They can be in any order and can have significance or not, the same word can be used more than once, but all words must be used.

#### Phone call from the past

As a follow on to the above, write a short scene in which the character takes a phone call from their past; as if characters from their history are on the end of the phone. Ask students to think about:

Who are the characters in their past?

What are the events in their past?

What do we need to know about the past, to help us understand the present?

* Choose one or more characters to appear in the phone call.
* You can interact with, respond to or question the characters as they appear.
* Once they have written their script, they should ask other members of their group to read/voice the characters from their past.

*In this clip, Caleb is surprised to hear the voices of his parents on the phone and how they spoke to him as a child.*

***Taking a call from the past in ‘Goldfish Bowl’*** *(1 min)*

[***https://youtu.be/Ug-b9AMj9MA***](https://youtu.be/Ug-b9AMj9MA)

## Section 4- PHYSICAL & VISUAL EXERCISES

### 4.a) Choreo-Cues

Choose one piece of text that already exists in the piece. Ask students to underline 10 words within that text where they are going to insert a choreographed move. The ‘move’ can be gestural, it could travel, or it could be dance. This is a simple but effective way of uniting the performers if they are in separate areas of the stage. Their moves can be the same or completely different, in sync, or in canon. Play, and find physical moves to accentuate the words they land on.

*This example in ‘Thirsty’ shows the two performers symbolising their friendship growing apart due to the physical distance between them.*

***In and out of sync in ‘Thirsty’*** *(1 min 30)*[***https://youtu.be/JwaQYT9bIvw***](https://youtu.be/JwaQYT9bIvw)

### 4.b) Props that surprise

This is a nice task to do at home which involves a bit of imagination. Over the years we have spent a fair bit of time within our rehearsals playing with the props, seeing how they can surprise or delight the audience. We refer to it as ‘theatre magic’ and whilst we do not have the budget of the Harry Potter stage show, the ideas can be fairly simple and therefore we have managed to come up with a few lovely visual moments. Some examples are:

* Apples that came out of books
* Cut up tissue paper and feathers that fall out umbrella when its opened.
* We made ‘ice-creams’ live in a show stage using squirty cream back stage.
* Using an LED battery light and remote-control car to make a box come to ‘life’

Ask your students to individually think about making or adapting a prop in order to surprise the audience or offer a lovely visual.

They can then each bring their prop in to show what it ‘does’. Encourage participants to look for opportunities to get any of the visuals into their show.

### 4.c) Memories and thoughts

We often find that one of the narrative conventions that students lean on, is the idea that the ensemble play the ‘thoughts’ or memories in a character’s head. This is a really solid idea and one that can create opportunity for them to feature more across the narrative arc, especially if they have ‘distanced’ and separate characters, monologues and narratives.

But! Instead of students responding to this idea with text and dialogue; challenge them to generate a non-verbal scene where we see other performers represent these thoughts or memories in one character’s head using only movement or physicality.

*In the example here, the two performers play the same character, before they split and fracture. As Kylie tosses and turns in bed worried about how she is going to pay the bills, Jemma symbolises her anxious thoughts.*

***Sleepless nights in ‘Broke’*** *(3 mins)*

[***https://youtu.be/KKgyMkTIhdw***](https://youtu.be/KKgyMkTIhdw)

### Extra Ideas

#### Picture Chorography

Ask participants to find 4 pictures of a single person in magazines, newspaper or printed off the internet. In the pictures the figures they choose should be in interesting physical positions.

Ask students to swap their pictures with another member of the group. They will each now have 4 pictures they have not seen before. They must now create some solo chorography in which they re-create each of the 4 images and work out a journey between each move, to create one sequence.

The participants should watch the sequences of each member of their group and then select two of their favourite moves in total, from all the pieces. Everyone in the group should now all add these moves to the beginning and end of their sequences. This will result in the group having some choreography that starts and ends the same, but is unique to them in the middle.

#### Make it bigger

This exercise comes from our show ‘Thirsty’ and can be done individually or with a number of people from the group. Ask students to think about the actions, gestures or movements of their character. Pick 3 of these to work with. Now perform these actions/movements in a small, naturalistic way, repeat them, one after another several times.

Now slowly, as you continue to repeat these actions, make them slightly bigger. Continue to do this until you have the biggest, most abstract or grotesque version of the movement.

Discuss what the journey of the movement becoming bigger communicates to the audience. How does it change or develop the meaning? Is it interesting or of relevance?

*In this example from ‘Thirsty’, the performers represent the effects of drinking alcohol through repetitious action. The more they drink, the larger their physicality and choreography becomes. \*This scene has loud club music*

##### Drunk choreography in ‘Thirsty’ (3 mins) <https://youtu.be/JmfRh5A0qr8>

Section 5: WHAT NEXT?

We always encourage the students we work with to hold off structuring and making the final decision on content, for as long as possible. For us, devising is about creating work in small fragments, and then finding the links that bind them. This means we can be fluid with the styles we work in, that we can sew different material and create a collage of performance modes. Working in the style of The Paper Birds is suited perfectly to creating work separately, at distance, or in isolation.

Finding the transitions between scenes, and how the fragments of a show come together, is often the very last thing we do in a process. But if students have compiled a list of all their ideas for potential frames for the show (pg. 8), then set them a task to begin exploring these and making their way through the suggestions. Are there any motifs that could sew scenes together? A movement or a style of writing that has come out of all the workshop tasks?

* Ask each member of the group to choose one suggestion from their list of frames. Within the group divide these evenly between naturalistic and more conceptual suggestions.
* Spend one lesson on each of these, adapting and shaping existing material; pieces of script, movement and ideas for group scenes; into each frame.

#### Non-naturalism

Often, using the term ‘non-naturalism’ with the students we work with doesn’t quite land – they might understand the premise of what it is, but until they see it in action, they can often struggle with how to implement it within their own work.

Before we wrap up, we wanted to give you some examples of the recurring nonnaturalistic traits we use regularly. These might work when they are at the stage of building transitions between scenes and ironing out the final structure of the piece. Also, if they have generated a piece that is naturalistic in its narrative and characterisation, these simple approaches can really change the style and feel of the material.

#### 5.a) Playing the same character

Ask the group to find a moment within the show where they can all play one character at the same time.

*In this example from Others, the performers ‘build’ and ‘try on’ the character of Sally, a prisoner serving a long-term sentence.*

***Building the same character in ‘Others’*** *(2 mins 30)*[***https://youtu.be/f0jGvfjht-w***](https://youtu.be/f0jGvfjht-w)

#### 5.b) Stage Hands

Ask the group to identify a moment in their show where some group members can act as ‘stage hands’ aiding another member’s scene or action, exposing the ‘trappings’ behind the performance.

*This scene from Ask Me Anything shows Georgie and Rosie directing, filming and creating special effects (snow!) for Kylie’s scene. It combines a live camera feed with the action on stage, as Kylie attempts to make a TV sitcom in front of the live audience.*

***Creating the scene around them in Ask Me Anything*** *(1 min 30)*[***https://youtu.be/YVHV-aT8zaI***](https://youtu.be/YVHV-aT8zaI)