

Re: Form

(an informal set-list of considerations)

1. The irony that I have been procrastinating writing this 'statement' because I have been stressing out over what form it should take.
2. As a formal non-monogamist, poly-formist, pan-curious, trans-sectional, formal adventurer, I have spent my career straddling disciplines and audiences, methodologies and communities.
3. Short forms were my first gateway to queer performance. Songs, poems, comedic, personal monologues: brief, condensed bullets of expressions through which I began to insert myself into performance spaces, began to articulate and assert my sexual / gender / identity / politics.
4. I obsess over my set lists. The order of the material, the narrative carved out by the chosen sequence. How one song, poem or story ties to the next, in theme, style, tempo, key. How songs together build a larger story when held up next to each other. How form is built from fragments.
5. I found curating the season akin to building a set list.
6. In my own artistic and queer formation - which were and remain deeply intertwined - formal exploration was foundational. Form is content, content is form.
7. Some days for me queer just means contrary. I tend to resist whatever I'm told to do, and look for the loophole to do something else instead.
8. Can something be "theatre" but not be "a play"?
9. Where are the lesbian playwrights, anyway? We've been asking for so long. Still, even now, where are they. Are lesbians just instinctively not really drawn to playwriting? Do we prefer cabarets, performance art, knitting and rock bands to "theatre"? Is this in any way linked to sexual preference? Social preference? How come?
10. Back in the '90's I wore a button on my grey and black plaid flannel jacket that said '**Silence=Death**', emblazoned on a pink triangle. I loved that button. It was of course about HIV/AIDS, but it was also so much more.
11. Ironically when I look back at it, my formative experiences inside queer spaces were quite silencing. I let myself be silenced by the definitive, apparently fully, confidently formed identities in conversation; unschooled, unformed myself, I didn't yet feel 'queer enough' to insert myself, my questions, my voice.
12. I started out making theatre that used poetry as primary text.
13. A poem is like a seed: a condensed form, full of potential.
14. It needs to meet another few mediums (say, water, and sunlight) to start to grow, to find its full form.
15. Does a queer seed necessarily grow a queer tree? As queer makers, is all our work necessarily queer by virtue of extension of the maker's identity? Even when it's not exploring an explicitly queer topic? Is it the 'what' that makes the queer or the 'who'? Or the 'how'?
16. In the same way as I believe queer identity is not fixed thing but rather a living, breathing, evolving, relational way of being, so theatre and theatrical form must be alive, responsive,

shifting, in a constant state of redefinition. Queer form/s must not and will never be singular, since queerness is relational, pluralistic, reactive, positional, intersectional, oppositional.

17. As a songwriter I built up a repertoire of material that reflected my evolving, shifting experience. As I would write new songs, older songs would get knocked off the set list; the material is in a constant state of flow, a constant conversation between old and new expressions, flexible and malleable to suit my own evolution, intuitive assessments of each audience and performance situation.
18. As a collaborative playwright, a play often takes so long that you are a whole new person by the time it's finished.
19. I have often struggled with the separation of form, the separation of my creative worlds, my formal ambiguity, multiplicity. The feeling that one should choose, focus, become exclusive. The fear that my poly-formal tendencies would diminish me.
20. But why should anyone ever feel they need to be only one thing? We are not one thing, we never will be one things and it's fucking complicated to hold space for the amount of diversity that we call "queer community". This is what I see the function of a place like Buddies to be: a container that can give form, shape to a community of voices. A space that allows itself to be dismantled, rearranged, unformed and re-formed.
21. I made a show called SPIN as an experiment in long form short form. I wanted to make a distinctive, thematically linked show out of short pieces, which, together, created a full-length show. I don't call the result a play, but for sure it's theatre. Why don't I call it a play?
22. What make a play a play anymore, anyway.
23. Then again, why does it matter what we call a thing.
24. Then again, naming a thing is powerful.
25. Some days I think the reason that I love running this queer theatre is exactly because of all the forms that co-exist inside it. The multiplicity that Buddies can hold. What I crave is always bigger and more than I can ever be. This place, this building, this institution has that capacity. I can stand inside of it and feel momentarily, vicariously filled.
26. Like fragments can actually add up to something real and substantial. Like every drop matters.
27. Sometimes you plant a seed and water it. Sometimes you sprout it. Sometimes you eat a pile of seeds in your salad.
28. Clearly there is no conclusion. Form is transitory. You have a body for a while, then you die and something else happens to your energy.
29. Endings are always the hardest part.

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