

Four Hundred and Twenty-nine Significant Moments

Documenting an
Artist's Research
and Processes

Lisa Watts

The Work of the Work
and When the Work Works

Emma Cocker

Imagine the scene: a gallery space, a collection of objects, materials and other things.¹ They are familiar, mostly domestic. Many are recognisable through their form and function, used to sustain or maintain the order and cleanliness of the body or the home. For now, they can be easily categorised, named: (1) those things used for holding and containing, especially for transportation — plastic bags, bin liners, a laundry basket; (2) absorbent things used for soaking up or wiping away other things — cotton-wool balls, scouring pads, tea towels, kitchen roll (with and without pattern), a couple of mops, a small sponge; (3) things for reinforcing and supporting, or for holding up other things — a length of garden trellis, wooden dowel rods, an assortment of cushions; (4) things that soften other things — emollient creams, petroleum jelly, baby oil; (5) things for dissolving the dirt on other things — surfactant cleaning compounds, liquid detergent, soap; (6) things for determining the length of or the distance between other things — a retractable tape measure (metal, large); (7) things for tying or binding — string, tape; (8) things for lining or wrapping — baking parchment (greaseproof paper), tinfoil, the fibre shell of a hanging basket; (9) things for cutting or killing other things — a pair of scissors, a fly-swat (blue); (10) things used for unblocking or unsticking — a single sink plunger; (11) things for channelling or directing — plastic funnels, multi-coloured drinking straws; (12) things that can be ingested by other things — seed mix, assorted sweets; (13) innumerable things that might belong to one of the previous categories but are more commonly known by their brand name or trademark — Sellotape, Vaseline, E45 cream, Post-its (mainly yellow and green), Rowntree's Randoms, a box of Trill; (14) things that create other things — artist, inventor, mother.²

Some things are named according to the specific task, role or function that they are usually identified to perform. Here, naming defines the parameters of expectation and convention, pronouncing and privileging a single designated identity or activity to the exclusion or marginalisation of all others. Definition thus involves the cut of decision, settling the boundaries and limits through which things are both known and knowable. Now, imagine the task or challenge — this could be conceived as an instruction or score, a spell or incantation. Let things be released from their habitual duties and designations; let them become free of name, *more than* language ordinarily allows. Ritual emancipation, re-wilding the domestic — liberated, let everyday things surprise in their potential. Repurpose without purpose: let things enter unexpected relationships, initiate new alliances and confederations — edges between dissolve as nascent action-assemblages emerge. Yet what to call this practice of transformation through material play: artistic? (is this sculptural or performance?) or alchemical?

¹ This text is a creative-critical response to a series of encounters with Lisa Watts' work and her Studio Activity Sheets approach over a period of five years, including witnessing the project/exhibition *Skittish* (Lisa Watts and David Kefford) at Vane, Newcastle (31 October – 14 December 2013) and *Skittish* (Lisa Watts and Samara Scott) at The Tetley, Leeds (21 March – 4 May 2014), as well as iterations of Watts' exhibition *Not a Decorator...* at Sheffield Institute of Arts, Sheffield (10 February – 5 March 2017) and Castlefield Gallery, Manchester (21 September – 4 November 2017), alongside *Hairbrained*, *Studio Activity Sheets + 32 Significant Moments: An Artist's Practice as Research*, a practice-based contribution by Watts to *Care + Attend*, a symposium event curated by Emma Cocker and Joanne Lee, as part of *Unconditional Love*, the Society of Artistic Research Spring conference, Chelsea College of Arts/University of the Arts London (30 April – 1 May 2015).

² These objects and materials were observed while encountering Lisa's work. With reference to the "Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge", a fictitious taxonomy of animals described by Jorge Luis Borges in his 1942 essay "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins", cited by Michel Foucault in his preface to *The Order of Things* (1977).

(is this the science of invention, speculative philosophy or magic?). The categories of naming are already becoming protean, porous; disciplinary demarcations begin to collapse or blur. Find ways for notating and sharing this process of slippery transformation — yet be wary, for words can easily fix and stabilise that which is in motion, mutable or inconstant. Attend to the moments of decision-making, of minor revelation and deviation, of epiphany and failure. And take care, for in privileging one decision or observation a myriad other options fall away inescapably, forever forgotten or forgone. Engage language lightly, for it too suffers the strictures of its own systems of definition and denomination, yet has the potential, too, for liberation, for also running wild. Still, be patient, since transformation will not be hurried, does not often come with haste. Transformation's arc has many phases — witness as preparation tilts gently towards play, experiment edges towards invention. First — setting up the conditions: towards letting go, loosening the bonds of recognition and utility. Pre-formance — notice the doing that precedes doing, what must be done before play is begun.

Beginning might require more than a blank page or empty stage: start from what is there, which is not to say work with an idea already conceived in advance. Open exploration might necessitate the setting of a frame: what is in; what is out. Field of focus — protected yet still porous. This boundary line can change. Selection of materials: enough to work with, yet not so many as to become lost. Here, the restriction of a working palette can allow for a greater scope of exploration: limitation as the paradoxical precondition for opening things up or out. Things will get messy and unpredictable over time; periodically, it will feel necessary to reset, rest, to begin again. Rhythmic, elliptical — practices for setting up and for unsettling, for getting ready and for clearing away. Some things will change in-and-through action, while others' original function will remain intact. The line of separation that determines where the work of art starts and ends is not always clearly defined; this applies to both the artefact of art and to the process of its production. Which actions are the work of art and which the work of utility: those activities that support the working of art to happen? Performance practices can amplify this ambiguity, for the artist operates both as the performing-body (making, creating) and as a functional operative engaged in other practicalities related to the work but not the work itself. Moreover, performance has long since troubled the privileging of artistic virtuosity, absorbing a whole lexicon of pedestrian actions and ordinary gestures, blurring the line between art and life. The difference between the perfunctory and the performative is thus not always easy to discern. The operation of sweeping or wiping clean can shift suddenly to become an aesthetic (even political) act. Backstage activities flip to front; preparatory acts become both the means and the end. So, prepare one's attention well: cultivate the capacity for noticing these fragile nuances in action, those moments of opportunity where a categorical line begins to bend or morph. For, if everyday actions can become artistic, so can artistic actions become routine, prosaic or formulaic.

Notice the different registers of working and of work; the *not* working that is rest and the *not* working that is play; the work that is playful, and the play that is work. Attend to the thresholds where one becomes the other, and to the intricate relations and dependencies between. The working of the work: that often hidden or private process of artistic labour and endeavour, which shapes and is absorbed by the work itself. To work: to prepare or perform, do or make, construct or produce, to strive after, to set in motion. To work: to create — manipulation of physical substances into a new state or form. Work up: to generate excitation, agitation of emotion, to arrive at something through preparation. Work against: to attempt to subvert. Work into

something: to become more deeply involved, over time. Work through: to progress through complexity. Working as a warming, a making malleable or pliable. Work it. Work on. Work in. Work out. Work of sustenance: a means of living and of livelihood, that which supports and nourishes from below. Sustain rather than endure — for, while endurance holds out *against* external pressures and pains unyielding, sustenance involves reciprocity, the provision of resources for nurturing the necessary energies for life. Sustain: to bear or withstand, but with a duty also of care. Work of maintenance: the hard work of handwork or of handiwork — from the Latin *manu tenere*, to hold in the hand — or else to practice habitually, persevere continually. Performed with the hands, a mode of labour based on dexterity and the tactility of touch, the haptic interaction of forces and vibrations, surfaces and skins. Against the efficiency of machinic labour, its economy of maximum productivity with minimum wasted effort or expense. Against utility, if this means acting according to a predetermined function or purpose, operating only in the proper way. Towards a non-utilitarian efficiency: efficiency as spontaneity, the play of least effort. Effortless action does not mean taking the easiest option (often based on old habits or untested conventions); rather, attunement to the different flows and forces at play. Here, action unfolds not through imposition of will but through a cooperate capacity for keeping things aleatory, alive.

The artist's work paradoxically involves the discipline of play. For play is not activity undertaken lightly; it requires commitment, the capacity for sticking at something beyond all sense of purpose, reason or utility. Not-yet-performance: a process of per-forming, the preposition (*per-*) indicating *through*, a forward-through movement, forming and deforming. Doing and undoing. Turning things over. Over and over, yet not the Sisyphean labour of exhaustive repetition, relentless and unceasing. Meaningless work, yes: yet not absurd, not futile. Play exhausts things as a method for inviting in something new. Its emptying-out of sense or meaning is hopeful; it makes a clearing for the unexpected to arise. Making material acquaintance: a getting-to-know things so as to not-know, familiarity for rendering strange. Yet play is inherently wasteful: its expenditure of effort and energy does not require anything back in return.³ Play has intention without expectation or goal; it is *autotelic* — from *autos*, “self”, and *telos*, “goal” — for it has no end or purpose other than itself. Play resists coercion, for its meaning is intrinsic to it — emerging through it — where worth or value is not determined by external measure. It is a risky business, too, for play is always uncertain, never sure of how things will turn out — balanced precariously at the precipice between boredom and enchantment, the known and unknown. Indeed, beginning something without fully knowing what is being begun requires heightened concentration and conviction, for it can be tempting to (re)turn to the ease of familiarity or habit, else lose one's way, fall prey to doubt. Actively do nothing before doing something, forestalling the passive paralysis of a doing nothing borne only of restless procrastination and distraction. Play provides a space of radical and restorative openness if it is allowed. Capture the workings of this stage with care and caution, for the act of notation or reflection risks pulling the player out of play, rupturing her field of absorption or immersion. Playing a field of possibilities not yet fully actualised, it is hard to know what to record when the focus of enquiry is not yet clear or named, when a direction has still to be defined.

³ For Roger Caillois, “Play is an occasion of pure waste: waste of time, energy, ingenuity, skill, and often money” (Caillois 1958: 5–6).

Out of play, towards experiment: from *ex*, “out of”, and *peritus*, “experienced”; *experiri*, “to try, test”, or else from *esperment*, “practical knowledge, cunning, a magic spell”. Experiential know-how based on the risk of living and the felt event, borne of trial and error, the testing of innumerable versions, iterations and attempts. To get to grips with: an enquiry into material affordances and inclinations, a material’s tolerance and resistance. To get a handle on: handle — to hold in the hands, to feel or deal with. Quality of a material perceived by touch of texture, surface friction and flexibility, density and weight. Experiment along the threshold between a material’s capacity (what it can receive or hold, perform or withstand) and its capability (its undeveloped potential or power). What does it do — what are its habits and tendencies? How could it become *more* — how does the material *want* to evolve? Understand the properties of materials but less towards prediction, anticipating how a given material will behave in advance of interaction. Towards the unpredictable: knowing what something can do — its range of expectation — in order then to be surprised. Twist of heuristics away from practical problem-solving to problematising the assumption made on the basis of what has come before. Feeling the way, blindly. What if? What else? Working *against*: using the material’s constraints and limitations as leverage. Working *with*: harnessing its qualities, seeing how far it can be pushed. Mutual modification: adapting one’s behaviour in correspondence with each material encounter. What kind of treatment does a given material invite, what kind of meeting is required? Materials-in-relation: combining and recombining. How do material properties change through the proximity and intervention of other things? This and that, that with this, this and this and this: the proliferation of possibilities. Or pare things back: there can be efficacy in keeping things simple. Recall how the magic of close-up convinces through its economy of means. Experiments should be repeated, but less for the validation or verification of a result; rather, for building the confidence to improvise, to modify the rules as the experiment unfolds.⁴ Note the variables but do not count on constants, for in every encounter everything is changed.

The process of experimentation does not lead in itself to the new or unexpected. A breakthrough can come unbidden, arising unforeseen. Discovery is not something that can be willed into existence, brought about through the brute force of effort or intent. Too tight a frame or focus can serve to suffocate and stifle. The revelation of epiphany can show up unannounced, suddenly come into view. Be vigilant, then, but keep the eyes wide, as discovery often happens at the periphery of action or attention or in the very instant when focus eases, becomes relaxed or is turned away. Be wary of looking too hard or in the wrong places, for what emerges might not be what was anticipated or even sought. Be willing for something to happen (inclined, receptive) rather than wilful (stubborn, too eager or else headstrong). Gently, quieten the will — for if something happens it is not by one’s own doing alone. The concept of invention privileges the agency of inventor as the originator of the new, by merit of her skill and ingenuity. Invention: from *venire* meaning “to come”, or else *invenire*, “to encounter”.

⁴ German philosopher Dieter Mersch differentiates between the role of the experiment within art and science thus: “The scientific system is the medium *through* which experiments are first constituted... In the arts, this relation is turned around; it is the *experiri* of the *experimentum* that is the medium *through* which artistic research takes place” (Mersch 2015: 52). See also Brunner and Schiesser 2012; Pickering and Slager 2016; Alves and Slager 2014.

Indeed, many an invention is *come upon* rather than created or concocted, arrived at and not simply thought into being or made up. The inventive breakthrough can emerge from error, accident or chance. It can come as a flash like lightning, or else slow burn in its arrival, not coming for days, decades. So, wait. Wait. Sharpen one’s curiosity like a poacher’s knife, the angler’s hook. Wait. Steadiness, in readiness, for the auspicious moment of *kairos* — the opportune time — comes without warning, is fleeting and all too easily missed.⁵ Bide one’s time yet be swift to act when called. Invention emerges from in the midst: the artist’s role is medial, navigating a sea of forces as the tiller steers a course through — or rather *with* — the water and the wind.⁶ Here, the artist does not so much work her given medium — material or technique — as become a medium herself. Artist as intermediary: intervening agency in a field of other agencies. Artist as conductor: with its dual sense of directing and carrying, leading and serving, a conduit or channel through which other energies might pass.

Extended field of operations, of movements and actions of relation. Domain of doing, terrain of verbs: to aerate; to align; to anchor; to attach; to balance; to bind; to chew; to choose; to clear; to collect; to compress; to conceal; to cover; to crease; to crumple; to curve; to cut; to discard; to droop; to elongate; to extend; to fall; to flatten; to fold; to hang; to hold; to inflate; to insert; to kneel; to lean; to lick; to lift; to open; to organise; to place; to plump; to press; to pressure; to prop; to push; to reach; to release; to remove; to revolve; to roll; to sag; to scallop; to scatter; to smooth; to smother; to spin; to spit; to squash; to squeeze; to stack; to stand; to stick; to support; to tether; to tidy; to tilt; to trap; to turn; to unfold; to unroll, to untwist; to wet; to wipe; to wrap. Verb: an expression of action or of being.⁷ The artist’s notebook might well be full of verbs: recollection of doings done, of operations still to be commenced. Yet verbs are rarely neutral, since they determine the power relation between subject and object, between a doer and a done-to, a knower and a known. Sentence structure can privilege the position of the speaking subject, making her the agent of action. Verbal — concern for words, or pressured further, someone who deals with words not things. Words or things — a choice made; a decision of allegiance. Yet words can be activated experimentally, modifying and shaping the relations between things. Shifts in word placement can change the power play between object and subject. Experiment between active and passive voice. Change the valency or transitivity of the verb. Disrupt the relationship between cause and effect: subject no longer *agent* of action but rather its *patient*, acted upon or affected by rather than affecting. Be careful with nouns, for names can often tether the named to a predetermined role or identity. What to call things then once their original function falls away? New names are tested through acts of invocation: contingent naming — a poetic naming based on fleeting tendencies, vitalities and relationships, rather than on fixed function or form.⁸

⁵ In the Ancient Greek rhetorical conceptualisation, *kairos* is often taken to mean “timing” or the “right time”, a decisive critical moment the fleeting opportunity of which must be grasped before it passes. For Eric Charles White, *kairos* involves “adaption to an always mutating situation. Understood as a principle of invention... *kairos* counsels thought to act always, as it were, on the spur of the moment” (White 1987: 13).

⁶ Debra Hawhee conceptualises the medial position of “invention-in-the-middle” as a *kairotic* movement involving “simultaneous extending outwards and folding back”; it is a “space-time that marks the emergence of a pro-visional ‘subject’, one that works on — and is worked on by — the situation” (Hawhee 2002: 18).

⁷ These are verbs noted while encountering Lisa’s work. With reference also to Richard Serra’s *Verblist* (1967–68).

Linguistic articulation of a material practice foregrounds a challenge therein, for the speaking *I* can only tell things from her own side. Her account is filtered through the prism of her individual experiences and senses, her memories and desires. No matter the duration of relationship with a given material, the encounter is unavoidably mediated by human eye and hand. The situation from the material's side can only be guessed at, never truly known. Certain descriptions emphasise the performativity of such a practice, privileging the agency of the performing body. Objects and materials are conceived as either a prop or trace, apprehended through a sense of expectancy (objects waiting to be handled, to be activated) or as the residue of a performance passed (the material remainder of what has been). So, too, epistemological accounts of artistic enquiry often cite the tacit knowledge or embodied *know-how* involved in creative production, the personal possession of a knowing (or *not* knowing) not easily transmitted or shared. While challenging the hegemony of rational thought, these other ways of knowing maintain the hierarchy of the human as the holder of knowledge. Yet what does each material know or store; what does it remember or forget? Beyond the anthropocentric: towards new languages for reflecting practice in its co-emergence.⁸ Towards solidarity: a mutuality borne of *being-with*, densification of the relationships between human and non-human. Begin by dampening the ego of *I* to become more attuned to the reverberations of other agencies. Operation: capable of having an effect, to be active, to cause. Operator: the facilitator of action, of making something happen. Yet the cause of change or transformation is irreducible to one. Complex causality: beyond a linear sense of single cause, single effect. Notice the effects of one's actions and the points where one's role is secondary to the actions of other things. Recognise the illusory nature of this distinction, since every action sets up conditions for future actions, and, in turn, is shaped by what has come before. At times, the operator-artist is moved or acts according to what the material needs or wants. Eventually, the recognisable body of the artist disappears, leaving her only as a force among other forces. Beyond the play of human and non-human, notice the intermediary forces and energies: of gravity, of air, of time. Consider the making of bread: the effort of the baker wasted if dough is not given enough time to rest and rise.

Material exploration involves the navigation and negotiation of various elemental and empathetic phases: the arc from preparation through play towards experiment and transformation, from recognising one's own capacity to affect towards understanding the affect of other forces.¹⁰ Between effort and ease, control and letting go.

⁸ Lisa names the different episodes within her work thus: "Black Cloud", "Holey Bridge", "Dizzy Plunger", "Feeding Dial", "Popcorn", "Trip", "Sudstones", "Fledglings", "White Coil" and "Flower Power".

⁹ This "turn" from the anthropocentric can be located within a wider theoretical context of new materialism, vital materialism and Bruno Latour's "actor-network theory". For example, in *Vibrant Matter*, Jane Bennett explores the "capacity of things... not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own" (2010: viii). Karen Barad argues for relational co-constitutive "intra-actions" between humans and non-humans, stating that "On an agential realist account, agency is cut loose from its traditional humanist orbit. Agency is not aligned with human intentionality or subjectivity... Agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has. Agency cannot be designated as an attribute of 'subjects' or 'objects' (as they do not preexist as such). Agency is not an attribute whatsoever — it is 'doing'/'being' in its intra-activity. Agency is the enactment of iterative changes to particular practices through the dynamics of intra-activity" (2003: 826–827). See also Barad 2007. Alternatively, referring to our current epoch as the Chthulucene rather than the Anthropocene — an epoch in which the human and non-human are inextricably linked in tentacular practices — Donna J. Haraway (2016) argues that what is required is the conceptualisation of *sym-poiesis*, or making-with, rather than *auto-poiesis*, or self-making. See also Coole and Frost 2010.

¹⁰ This notion of "elemental" and "empathetic" phases within practice was developed within the frame of *Choreo-graphic Figures*, an artistic research collaboration between Emma Cocker, Nikolaus Gansterer and Mariella Greil (funded by PEEK, 2014–17; Cocker *et al.* 2017).

¹¹ Often conceived as synonymous with "being in the zone", flow describes a hyper-focused state of "optimal experience" conceptualised by Hungarian-American psychologist Mihály Csikszentmihályi as a state of "total involvement" in the process of an activity, where the individual stops "being aware of themselves as separate from the actions they are performing" (Csikszentmihályi 2002: 53).

¹² Reflecting on the artistic journey into the "unforeseen" or "unforeseeable", Sarat Maharaj (2012) differentiates between innovation (conceived as the "improvement and incremental adding to what is already there") and a species of creativity that is "about discontinuity, about rupture, about production and emergence, and the spasmodic appearance of something entirely unexpected and new".

All this practised in hopeful anticipation of a transition from the working of the work to the work *working*; that moment of conversion where the labour (the working out, working through) somehow *becomes* the work itself. How to account for this qualitative transformation? Within the process itself, the moments of the work working can be when it feels least like work, those flow states of absorption or immersion where action and awareness merge, edges between subject and object blur.¹¹ This process is not for the half-hearted — not a going-with-the-flow, a form of passivity unwilling to accept responsibility or make decisions. Flow is a precarious condition easily lost to drifting thought, self-consciousness or self-congratulation. It is an experience reported only in retrospect, for even the smallest breaks in rhythm risk disruption. Alternatively, in utilitarian terms, working is often a matter of how effectively or efficiently something does its job, fulfils the function for which it was designed. The measure of success is in relation to an expectation known.¹² When or how the work of art works is not so easy to pin down, for its success rests in part on bringing about the rupture of the unexpected. Something recognisably unrecognisable: a coming-together that produces *more than*, the shimmering of things at their most vibrant or alive. Vivid: from *vivere*, "to live", a measure of intensity. Emergent autonomy: the materialisation or manifestation of new life. Be watchful, remain alert, since the unrecognisable is easily missed or mistaken. The line between the work working and not working can be painfully thin. Not working can result from both excessive risk and over-cautiousness, too much and not enough. For some practices, the moment when the work works signals time to stop, the point at which it is finished and complete. Hold it, step back — do not overdo. For time-based practices, the work working is often fleeting, since it is not captured in a stable material form. It must be found again, again; moreover, it might not work next time.

How, then, to develop that initial alchemy of the work working — those brief moments of revelation or epiphany — into something that can be repeated or shared? Can the magic of discovery be re-found, re-enacted? The not-yet-working can soon become no longer. What worked before cannot be taken for granted, is not guaranteed. How to repeat without repeating; how to avoid things becoming formulaic or stale? There is the risk of not re-finding and also of finding again yet things still falling flat. It is not simply a matter of technique or repertoire, the procedural recollection of actions as with a recipe dutifully followed. There is always something *extra*, something un-nameable. Repetition works in mysterious ways — like the repeated telling of a joke that becomes stranger through exhaustion. The familiarity cultivated through doing and undoing can defamiliarise eventually if sustained over time. Rehearsal can involve the polishing and perfection of a practice, or else nurture a confidence willing to allow for deviation and digression. An iterative practice attends to emerging differences rather than striving to

keep things the same. The challenge is one of keeping the enquiry alive, maintaining a sense of its vitality. A work's liveness or liveliness can correspond to the potential for failure therein. Not to eradicate this risk, then: forget a little to re-find, let go in order to re-capture. Repetition is never repetition, for every new situation presents different conditions within which to work. Changes to the conditions can be accepted begrudgingly, or responded to affirmatively as an active element for inviting the possibility of further transformation. Consider the presence of others – the effects of their energy and attention. How a work works in the privacy of the studio is invariably not the same once there are witnesses to the act. The sustained attention of a receptive onlooker can thicken the air, creating a shared field of action and awareness. Breath becomes synchronised in moments of tension or concentration. Audience as collaborator – notice the change in atmosphere depending on their presence of engagement, whether with focus or gaze distracted. The findings of one's experiments might well be sharable, capable of being repeated by others. Yet avoid mimicry – the repetition of form in the absence of force or feeling. *Being-with* materials takes time, for each action or encounter emerges against the context of previous experimentation. Recognise the particularity of the work's working, the critical resistance of a knowing that refuses the economy of transmission or exchange, transfer or commodification.

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Emma Cocker is a writer-artist and Associate Professor in Fine Art at Nottingham Trent University. Operating under the title *Not Yet There*, her ongoing enquiry explores practices that are alert or attentive to the live circumstances of their own processional production: the *kairos* of decision-making, the moments of knowing and of not-knowing, the navigation of competing forces, of working with and through obstacles or of figuring something out. Cocker's recent writing has been published in *Failure*, 2010; *Stillness in a Mobile World*, 2010; *Drawing a Hypothesis: Figures of Thought*, 2011; *Hyperdrawing: Beyond the Lines of Contemporary Art*, 2012; *Reading/Feeling*, 2013; *On Not Knowing: How Artists Think*, 2013; *Choreo-graphic Figures: Deviations from the Line*, 2017; *The Creative Critic: Writing as/about Practice*, 2018, and as a solo collection entitled *The Yes of the No*, 2016. She is working on a forthcoming publication, *Being in the Midst: Per-forming Thinking-in-Action*.

“an artist with the courage to present simple yet powerful images and whose every gesture carries conviction”
Performance Magazine (1991)

“(she) continues to explore issues of perception and reality, as well as, aspects of individual physicality under pressure”
The Herald (2000)

“As ironic and wryly amusing as this is, Watts stages and performs her pieces with a sensitive and professional control that imbues them with depth. Uncertainties of emotional and bodily self-image are worked to form rituals of self-confidence”
Guardian (2001)

Lisa Watts is an English artist who has an eclectic practice that pivots around performance, sculpture, video, photography and she has toured the UK and internationally, winning awards and commissions from organisations such as the BBC, Saatchi & Saatchi, with shows in countries such as: India, Canada, Spain, France, Germany, Austria, Ireland, and Bulgaria. In the UK she has shown on Channel 4, and at the Serpentine, London, Tramway, Glasgow. Her two previous tours funded by ACE: Funny Feelings (2001) and Skittish (2013–14) have taken her art to Leeds City Art Gallery, Leeds, Colchester Arts Centre, Colchester, Spacex Gallery, Exeter, Vane. Newcastle and The Tetley, Leeds. ACE has funded two of her books: 32 Significant Moments: An Artist's Practice as Research (2014) and 461 Significant Moments: Documenting an Artist's Thinking, Research and Processes (2018).

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