

Mad About Learning, as a process of emergent intimacy

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Reflection on the Performance Lab, '*Reading beyond what is written*', facilitated by Joy Mariama Smith on Saturday, November 30, 2019.

Before reading this, please read: *To all those mad about studying* (see photos).

Both photos are of Joy Mariama Smith's *Study Manifesto*, 2018; part of *Trainings for the Not-Yet*, exhibition and trainings series, at BAK (basis voor actuele kunst), Utrecht. Photos taken October 12, 2019.

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Relationality reaches across time and space—like the rhizomatic mycelium network that travels under the sea—it brings us to places; **somewhere i/we don't go**, but never the less arrive at. We don't create in isolation; our lives guarantee intimacy, connectivity. It is there awaiting recognition.

In October, I visited BAK in Utrecht and took a picture of a text **composed collaboratively by raoni saleh & joy mariama smith** that had been blown up on the wall for *Trainings for the Not-Yet*. This was my first introduction to, *To all those mad about studying*.

Rage, passion, madness, **joy and pleasure reaches deep**

I felt I understood elements of this mad-ness. I had just moved to Rotterdam after spending six months sitting alone writing; my madness about studying becoming palpable in new ways. I was/am mad.

At the performance lab '*Reading beyond what is written*', after my late arrival the group gives a quick but generous catch up, and a call and response of names. Then Joy changes into shorts, puts on a playlist and leads us through a series of dance moves to get our blood pumping; to our brains to help us think they tell us.

Return to your old friend: the side step. Keep moving!

Chaka, Chaka, CHAKAKHAN!

Joy asks us to move and engage in ways that we can, whatever that means to us in the moment.

I attempt to move towards the shared space of knowledge making. Knowledge as moving, as movement, as feeling. Learning is always formed in relation and held within the body.

We turn towards the text. The emerging intimacy to the words and each other bring with it waves of energy, moments of pause, intimate conversations, requests for consent, deep listening, and play.

Slow Questioning. Reflective Thought.

What am I doing? Please tell me what you are doing? What are you refusing? Do you need help in your refusals? How can I support you to magnify the ripples of change? Can you help me in my refusal and can our shared refusal help us build solidarity across our differences?

Hold that emergent intimate learning.

Attention shifts when Joy begins typing sentences into a sound generator. <LINK>

Ooooh, wow!

New sensorial information is activated as the act of reading is stretched further. Mad-ness in flux. Can i/we embody its **becoming and unbecoming**?

The tight beginning of the day loosens as we move into the afternoon. That same energy is difficult to hold. The end is open. Like the manifesto we have spent the day **reading beyond**, resolutions are not a given.

For the final activity, my partner dances with her eyes closed as I ensure she doesn't bump into anyone/ thing else. When we are to switch, I refuse; naw I'm good.

The next day, I scan the text line by line into my computer. I accept the invitation: **Come and play with this text**. Re-turn. Keep turning away from divisionary tactics and towards the self and back again towards the other. Help each other keep that same critical energy.