Talking Plant De Quincey Co 9 November 2025 Clare Grant

The shock of first contact with Body Weather: Min Tanaka rolling down the steps of the Art Gallery of NSW in 1982. That became pivotal to my sense of what theatre could do for decades: the shock of a body rolling on the 'ground' was just the start of it. And the expansion of the sense of what a body can do in public to change the perceptual frameworks of the watchers in a major way. An old friend of mine used to sometimes sit on the footpath in a busy street to sort out things in her bag or make plans for the day and so on. That was shocking. This was shocking and frame-changing, inner life-changing, time changing, mind blowing, parameter-exploding -- albeit with something of the same edge of social shiver.

Later on, after a couple of years away, having re-met the form through watching Tess' performances at Performance Space, two of the practices came more directly into my own performance and teaching practice at UNSW, (first through Tess then via Nikki Heywood while working on *Burn Sonata* with her in 1996): namely bisoku and manipulations.

I would describe Bisoku as a walking practice in which the mover moves no more than a millimetre a second, completely exploding one's ways of inhabiting and navigating the body in time and space, thus offering a useful passageway between the traditional mostly Stanislavskian performance practices of the students I was coming across, and the contemporary, non-psychological performance practices I was trying to introduce. It did a lot of the work for me in body-work-based writing for performance classes as well as more overtly performance- based classes, and of course always with acknowledgement of the lineage I've just described.

Manipulations involves one or more people moving the limbs of one other. In the potentially litigious world of academia, I only ever worked with the arms, but it did the trick. The neck shoulders chest and breathing patterns of the subject are quite disrupted by having to follow conflicting threads of attention, or in fact to let all those threads actually go. A very complex and multi-layered flurry of energies is created, to the extent that in one class a young woman suddenly ran loudly sobbing from the room. Having set the rest of the group to continue, I followed her, only to find her in the bathroom still sobbing but somehow simultaneously laughing, with a big smile, saying she didn't know why she was crying. She wasn't unhappy at all. She bounded back to class, seemingly happy with my improvised explanation that it was just the muscles crying. And hopefully a little less invested in the 'authenticity' of emotion in performance. But that's another story.