

ENCOUNTER Parramatta 2020 SCRIPT

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Commissioned by FORM Dance Projects

1. Opening

You are here. Here in this place where the eels lay down and the cars light up and The Macca's M is the biggest moon in the sky. Summertime. This early in the evening and the place is already on heat. People spend the longest, longest time getting ready to strut their stuff on Church Street. The boys plan their moves and the girls use their eyeliner pens to make their eyes pop out and everyone sits around in those restaurants eating stuff that tastes like all the neon lights of this place sliding down your throat. And the heat. And the cars. And the heat. And the cars. Everyone cruising. The mums in their Klugers and the tradies and their trucks and that guy with the Rolls Royce who parks at the bus stop just so he can watch the people watching him. Down by the river boom boxes play Mandarin love songs and men fish near the old housing commission and grandmothers pull at the fabric of their saris and wrap it around their shoulders again and kids pretend to be pirates and sleek bodies run in their Lorna Janes. And someone has put up a sign that says this is our home do not touch, in front of some sleeping bags and shopping trollies. And then you stop to remember that just yesterday, two hundred years ago, this place used to be a valley of weatherboard houses, before that all those early explorers got stuck at the point where the saltwater meets fresh and the boats could go no further and those men built jails and asylums and orphanages and locked people up on the river's edge and the Aboriginal warrior Pemulwuy and his crew of warriors with spears chased all those invaders and their boats down the river and back out towards the sea. And now here we are. Now we've got six dining options at the leagues club and tourists pack the ferries on weekends and a new stadium has just landed like an alien spaceship where the local pool used to be. Now we've got the sun smearing itself like golden slime across giant apartment blocks all pointing towards the sky. Here we are, where the future just keeps coming and coming and now, now it's time to dance.

2. Peacock Spider/ Feras' Story

I've got a 5950 cap sitting backwards on my head and neon orange high tops and a Chicago Bulls shirt and Adidas trackies and a Nike sweatband on my wrist and I'm not so sure how I'm meant to be standing there at Liverpool Station, whether I'm meant to put my hands in my pockets or sit or lean. Looking gangsta. Looking cool. Except that I'm not and then everyone else is there and all the guys are in tight jeans and bonds tops and I'm thinking in my country, you know, everyone would think you are gay but here we all are, in this country, ready to dance. Someone puts a boombox down on the concrete and I can't look up at anyone's faces. I'm stuck there looking at my orange orange shoes because I don't get it, don't know how to be here. The men in yellow vests and grey shorts climb up the stairs drinking from giant bottles of beer wrapped in brown paper bags and the women talk on their phones and push their hair behind their ears and I look ridiculous and I'm waiting for anyone of them to call me out at any second but they don't and I'm left staring at all that concrete until I see all those guys in their tight jeans popping their legs and their arms out, twisting at the same time and then one of them turns around and nods his head and gestures for me to come over and all those guys, they open up this space among all that concrete and I enter that space and I dance.

3. Versions of Ourselves/Beauty and the Beast

You're never quite good enough at anything. Not anything. But you try. You put your left foot down and then your right. Stand up. Stand a little higher. Be proud. These are the things you do to survive. Collapse. Turn inward. Have a little quiet time. Your outside self is so different from your inside self. It's exhausting, keeping up with all the different versions of you. Stand up. Sit down. Collapse. Try to be you but a different version of you who's more successful this time. Stand up. Sit down. Arms out. Breathe. Just be you. Or maybe a version of you. Just be. Breathe. 3

4. Dance Dance/Anaphoraloop

The next time, you see her coming at a distance, so you cross the alleyway, act like it's normal, pretend like there is something fascinating in the window of the shop that always sells the same thing. The next time you're avoiding the same shop because they fired your brother the time before he got fired from that other place. The next time you run into her three times in the same day. The next time, the last time, every time in the future the same conversation. The next time you're reminded how Parramatta is so big and so small at the same time - like a ten second video stuck on loop. The next time you're in a hurry so you walk the long way up through the square and the parking lot, down the alleyway, so you don't have to ask everyone how've you been, man? The next time you imagine you are in some other place and time. The next time, summertime. The next time hot, hot, hot, the heat sticky underneath your feet. The next time you worry about the last time. The next time you look up into the sky, watch those metal cranes dip their heads down and rise again in a new tomorrow. The next time, another hole in the ground, another building disappeared, right there, before your open eyes. The next time, where'd the pool go? The next time, you don't mind the same people as long as you're strutting your stuff. Westfield. The Albion. Riverside. The next time, you're on Church Street and it's the last bit of summer. The next time. The next time. The next time you climb into the passenger seat of that car and tell yourself that you're the king of this place, driving through, one arm out the window - dreaming! The next time, parking lots and blue lights and ducks floating on the river, those thin alleyways at night. The next time we'll start the story over again. The next time. The next time.

5. Xara's Story

My hands are big. You think I'm small. You could almost spin me into fairy floss, except for these hands. Knuckled. Heavy. Moving. Hard. Red. I have to cram myself into this body every day and it's getting crowded. Except for these hands. I've hoarded my stories here for months, weeks, days. People are always surprised. A girl has so much to say. That these hands, they ache and heat and want. This is the place where we meet, on the surface of my skin. All those girls I am and might have been and will become, stretching, swelling, cracking. A girl is a thing of moving parts. A half-formed thing until you hear her. Not small but big and heavy. Moving. Thumping. Lightening loud. Not small. But big. Big and becoming. Big and heavy like the weight of my hands and my voice and my story. Big.

6. Lawrencea's Story/Ridge dance

My father's country is the ocean. He sits on the balcony and looks out towards it and back fifty years in time to when he planted coconuts and spinach and mango trees and fished with his brothers and the women shook stories out of their bodies when they danced and I wasn't born and he hadn't died. But I sit there on that veranda and I know he's there too, watching the sun melt into the water and break across the flame trees. He's there watching the world extend down the mountain and over those fifteen islands and out towards the sea.

7. Closing

You are here. Here in this place where the eels lay down and the cars light up and The Macca's M is the biggest moon in the sky. Summertime. This early in the evening and the place is already on heat. And now it's time to dance. The next time dance, the next time you are here – dance dance DANCE!

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