



# SEASON TWO

16 Aug — 16 Sept 2023

**DANCEHOUSE DANCEHOUSE DANCEHOUSE**

# THE REAL TIME IT TAKES...

ROSALIND CRISP

8pm, Thu 31 August – Fri 8 September

3pm, Sat 9 September

Voilà! Rosalind Crisp brings us her version of the retrospective.

The 'Mick Jagger' of Australian dance, is back. Still looking 'wiry, scrappy and dangerously unpredictable', this demon of contemporary dance has never stopped. One of Australia's most rigorous and significant dance artists, celebrates 40 years of relentlessly undoing dance.

'..devastating, intelligent and profoundly embodied... Crisp, at the height of her powers, proves that the most exciting Australian dancers are not the young and athletic, but dancers with decades of knowledge and experience, who are still discovering why embodiment is so vital today'.\*\*

\*Deborah Jones The Australian 1/6/2007

\*\*Rennie McDougall The Monthly 02/2019

**Choreographer/Dancer:** Rosalind Crisp

**Collaborator/Operator Light & Sound:** Andrew Morrish

**Collaborator/Choreographic Video Artist:** Phoebe Robinson

**Historical Companion/Memory Expert:** Lizzie Thomson

**Video Operator:** Sam Mcgilp

**+ Special guest performer(s)**

**Production:** Omeo Dance Inc.

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## Lizzie Thomson reflects on *The real time it takes...* by Rosalind Crisp.

Let's start at the end. Rosalind Crisp is standing on a raised platform in the studio space upstairs at Dancehouse, Naarm/Melbourne. On the wall behind her is a video projection of credits rolling like the end of a film. Twenty-three years' worth of collaborators rolling past our eyes. This is a curtain call with no curtain but lots of calls. The audience has erupted into cheers, whistles, a standing ovation. Arms crossed, I squeeze my elbows to somehow help hold back tears. The last hour has been quite a journey. Without warning, Ros hops off the platform, takes a little light-footed run-up and flies through the central passage of the performance space in a miraculous acrobatic tumble. The action fills me up with joy and hurls me back into Omeo Dance Studio, Sydney, in the late 1990s, when Ros and dancer Alexandra Macdonald used to perform the occasional backflip before lunch. My memory then leaps forward to a moment in 2005 at the Atelier de Paris-Carolyn Carlson, a studio in Paris where Ros was associate artist. We are sitting on the floor in discussion during the development of Ros' project *d a n s e*. "There always needs to be a wildcard," Ros is reminding me, "like the possibility of doing a backflip in the corner". Yes, there was always the crazy potential for an actual backflip (for those as agile as Ros), but more importantly, also for a metaphorical backflip – a radical reorientation of our attention and imagination to ensure that we were never bound too tightly by the rules or tools of the practice. In some ways, the work of *d a n s e* was so intent on continual change that wildcards were being pulled out of pockets, ankles, and armpits every three seconds. Where are you now? Where to next? Staying awake to this practice of ceaselessly reorganising our dancing bodies and redirecting our attention to new possibilities produced an intensely fast-paced and future-facing *modus operandi*. There was no spare time to pause and reflect on the past or really on anything beyond the immediacy of the dancing. For me, practicing *d a n s e* felt a little like launching into a sprint down a very steep hill and hoping that my legs (and every other part of myself) could keep up. It was wild, urgent, and invigorating.

This intensity of the *d a n s e* project is palpable in some extraordinary footage of Ros performing *d a n s e* filmed by Eric Pellet at Le Fresnoy in Paris, 2005. Eighteen years on, as we sit, stand and move around Dancehouse experiencing *The real time it takes...* we can see this video of *d a n s e* playing at one end of the room. A few minutes into the video, Ros begins dancing live behind us at the opposite end of the performance space. It takes time for us to sense her presence and turn around. And yet while this shift in our view from one end of the room to the other takes a matter of seconds or minutes, it encompasses a huge temporal leap in Ros' artistic practice from 2005 to 2023. It is difficult to comprehend the slipperiness of time passing; how Ros is now almost 65 and how she still just keeps getting better. Her dancing in this moment burns with the same distinct intensity and intelligence that drove her earlier projects such as *d a n s e*, yet something is very different. The urgency doesn't need to be acted upon continuously with physical action anymore. There is more space-time to follow what's already there, to notice fine details, to linger with sensations, to fill up and fall away. Ineffable things emerge. Soft flourishes, fragile pointy bits, dull rounded nobs... sticks appear and hover mid-air and then fold back into themselves, and less describable image-sensations fill up the space around her body and then vanish as she makes direct eye contact with us. As I watch, I still recognise traces of the *d a n s e* project's continuous dismantling and reorganising of its own dancing self, but the relentless doing and going that was previously so evident has gone. Less preoccupied with its own doing and going, this newer dancing seems to let more of the world into itself.

And our world is not an easy place. Covid, the devastating bushfires and logging of forests, all have a sober presence in The real time it takes... The porous approach of letting the world into the dancing comes with vulnerability, it takes time (several decades) and opens itself up to intense scrutiny. It keeps valuing the body and the dancing at its heart, despite the uncomfortable tension that comes with this commitment. "What the fuck am I dancing for?", Ros asks herself in a video of her dancing amidst the shocking remains of a forest at Mount Delusion in East Gippsland. But she keeps going, and the dancing keeps opening up to the world in extraordinary ways and with a strong responsibility towards us – the audience. The real time it takes... is a generous and profoundly social performance experience, that not only offers us so many glimpses into the astonishing body of Ros' choreographic work, but it invites us all to reflect on where we are, where we were, how we are, and how to go on.

**Commissioned by Dancehouse.**

**Photos in order of appearance:**

'*Shh!*' (2022). Rosalind Crisp & Anja Füsti. Photo by Frank Post/Saalfrei Labor Festival Stuttgart'.

'*DIRt (Dance In Regional disaster zones)*' (2020). Rosalind Crisp. Photo by Lisa Roberts.

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