

MY HOUSE. YOUR HOME

creating dance together with **NOCTURN**

part of Corn Exchange's 'Contactless Creativity'

Our Director **John Darvell** has created a set of challenges which uses the objects and technology we have around us in our homes to inspire us to create movement. It's all about playing with our senses and just taking a breath to see what is around us.

We've been working in community participation for over a decade now. We find the most rewarding aspect of our work is taking people on creative learning journeys.

Yes, this one will be very different and totally new to us. It's a fun challenge for us to give you only written, audible and sensory provocations which are in your bag to guide you along. So, it's thrilling to think we are all on the same journey of discovery. *Are you ready?*

Over the coming days you will create a collage of movements to develop a dance for yourself. We've given you some of the objects that that John has found in his home but feel free to add your own to.

This is all about seeing what is around you, being inspired by being in the moment, and most importantly having fun. We can't stress the '*have fun*' mantra enough! As adults we get so wrapped up and constricted by our negative thoughts around making movement. Please, put those to one side, and just enjoy moving your body in new ways for you.

About John

Who is John and what's his story? We've put a doodle made by the very talented artist Rebecca Hinton from Into Doodles as a visual guide to his journey.

John is a choreographer, dance educationalist, community practitioner, mentor and innovator in participatory digital art.

He is a gay man originally from a working-class background in the North East. Throughout childhood he endured the harshness of school bullying and, despite his potential, scraped through education.

Escaping to London in 1987, he started a career path that led him not into the Arts but the civil service and spent much of his early career conforming rather than pursuing his passion to dance and make art.

John's professional journey into dance began in his late 30's after taking the courageous risk at 37 to retrain in contemporary dance, leaving the security of day-to-day office work.

Now based in Berkshire he has spent the last 12 years forging a remarkable approach to creating and choreographing work, bringing a strong aesthetic from his years as a visual designer.

After graduating from **Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance** in 2007 and founding **NOCTURN** he has focused on creating accessible digital dance work and immersive online events, utilising social media to engage audiences.

Social commentary is John's thing. He explores themes around our consumption of technology and the effect it has on us, the importance of positive mental health, LGBT+ issues, and one which is very close to John's own experiences, advocacy for adult dance.

If you want to see some examples of the types of work he makes jump online and have a look at www.nocturndance.co.uk.

He is also very up for chatting with you so drop him a message at help@nocturndance.co.uk

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www.nocturndance.co.uk

instagram.com/nocturn_dance
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MONDAY

CHALLENGE #1 – Is it really 5.30 am?

Today from your bag...

- Notebook
- Highlighter pen
- Carpet square
- Soap

Wake up. Pause. What does your body do and feel first thing?

For John it can be a mixed bag of emotions and sensations when first waking up. The temptation is to just whizz by this moment on autopilot. And, even worse, a trap for John to pick up his mobile and being sucked straight into our online world. So, let's just say 'no' to that today.

Your first challenge is to put your mind into what we call our *let's really look mode*. Power up the mind and take the time to notice your senses – touch, see, feel and hear - plus what happens with your body as you get your day underway.

Step 1

Start your day as you would but be really aware of what you are doing. What you feel? What you hear and see? What you can smell? And, what movements your body makes as you wake up and get going?

Step 2

When you get past that part of early morning autopilot mode which for John is usually around 7am. Grab your new little notebook and take a bit of time to reflect on what's just happened.

Step 3

While it's fresh in your mind write, doodle, draw things, or any way that you can express what you've observed. John always has a notebook or more often these days his mobile to jot ideas down. They come when you least expect them so it's good to have a way to capture them there and then. Be as descriptive as you can.

John is going to guide you through his Monday experience as an example...

I'm laying down and all crunched up constricted.

My heart pumps faster than normal. It's been a night of disrupted sleep.

My hands are clasping tight around a pillow.

My muscles feel clenched and exhausted from tension.

I stretch myself out long. Pushing energy into the body. And releasing back in again.

*My body is heavy and reluctant. I feel weighted by my body.
I crash my legs around to touch the floor.
I squeeze my toes and rub my feet in the woollen carpet.
I feel the harsh firm edge of the bedside table as I put weight into my hands.
Disjointed and without grace I slowly and awkwardly rise.
Half walking half shuffling my way to the bathroom.
The soap in my hands sends a shockwave of sharp smells.
My mind snaps more awake.
I rub my hands from around the base of my neck, to the back of my head, to my temples and then rub back and forth.
I let out one big sigh of breath.
For the first time I hear the ticking clock downstairs. My mind is awake!*

Step 4

Clues to movement are around us all the time. We just need to look for them.

Take your highlighter pen and look over your notes. Highlight anything that relates to a body part or a movement idea. For example:

*I'm **laying down** and all **crunched up constricted**.
My **heart pumps faster** than normal. It's been a night of **disrupted** sleep.
My **hands are clasping tight around** a pillow.*

Step 5

Now let's get moving. Firstly, do your Warm Up.

Next, pick some of these words and as many as you like. Make movement inspired by the words you've highlighted.

Stay away from literal movements and choose different body parts to use for your movement.

Order them together and to make yourself a motif.

Great work for your first day. Feel proud of what you've made.

Now remember to do your Cool Down.

TUESDAY

CHALLENGE #2 – Hidden in plain sight

Today from your bag...

- The piece of brown card

Step 1

Cut out the centre of the card to make a viewfinder.

Wander around your home and look at interesting places. Those spots that you've not really looked at for a long while. Or challenge yourself to look at places in your home in a new way i.e. from underneath.

Use the viewfinder as a way to focus on what you see within it. What is the architecture in your viewfinder? Lines? Circles? Dots? etc.

Now scribble in your notebook using words, pictures, doodles etc. on what you see in your viewfinder. This is about making what you see become abstract.

Then move on to some other places in your home and do the same again.

Step 2

Take each piece of paper you've drawn on and fold them into half and then half again to make quarters. Cut them out. You should now have something that looks even more abstract.

Put them in your bag. Shake them around and take them out randomly one at a time.

Step 3

Warm yourself up.

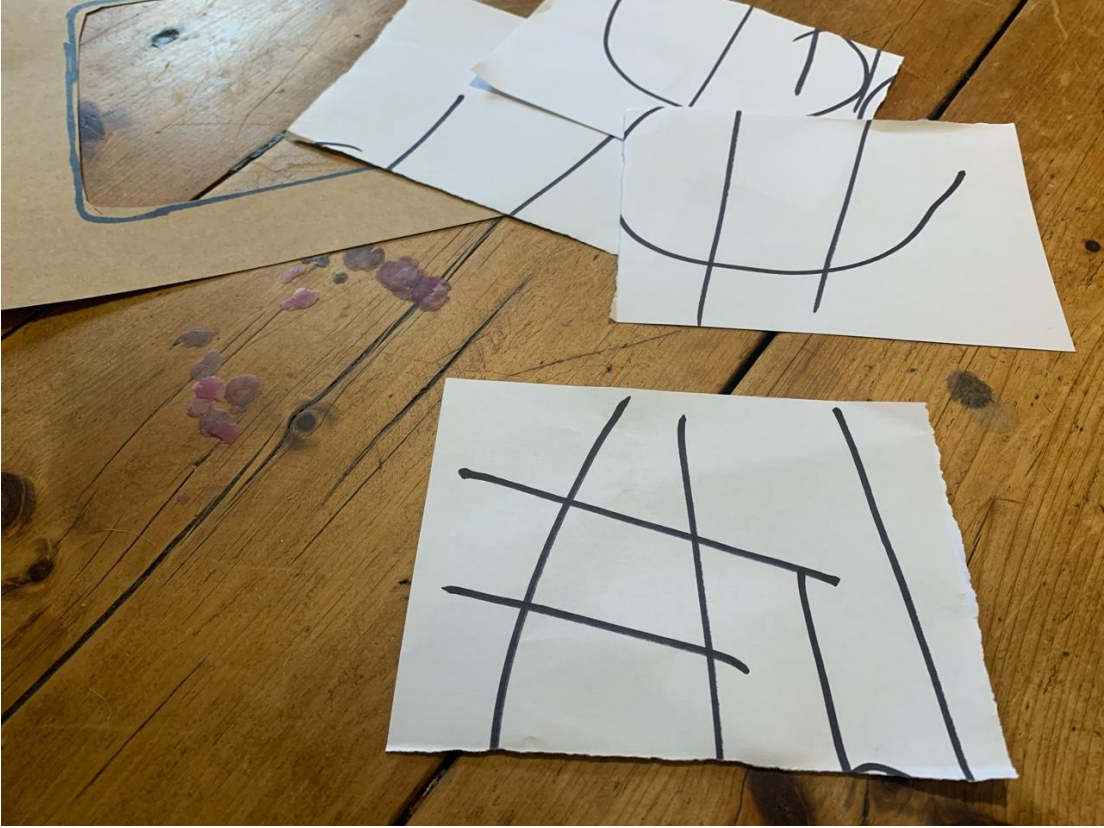
Use your body to draw what you see in each piece of paper. You use your body to make a pathway from the drawing you've made.

Your body or a body part should shift in the space. For example, John has lines which go side-to-side and forward and backwards so he moved his body and a body part in that way.

Now do the same for as many bits of paper as you like.

Great job. Don't forget these wonderful movements you're making.

Now Cool Down.



WEDNESDAY

CHALLENGE #3 – All about cooking

Today from your bag...

- Rice inside the tinfoil
- Your phone with voice memo

Step 1

Make yourself a shaker by putting the rice into some kind of container.

Step 2

We want you to make yourself a meal and while doing so record the sounds you are making. Capture you opening draws and picking up pots and pans etc.

Step 3

Replay what has been recorded. Using the shaker, tap out the beat. So, when you hear some kind of noise that you've made, shake. For example, if you hear yourself cutting vegetables then tap the shaker to the beat of your chopping.

Keep going over this until you have a rhythmic pattern for yourself. You want to be able to remember the rhythm without the use of your phone.

Step 4

Time to Warm Up

Thinking of that rhythm you've made come up with some movement that can fit the rhythm. It can be your whole body or just body parts. Today is about using that rhythm as the blueprint for making the movement.

Another great day.

Now go Cool Down.

THURSDAY

CHALLENGE #4 – All in a picture

Step 1

Let's use your phones to find some pictures you've taken. Or open up your photo album. Or reach for a magazine. We are looking for any pictures which have **action** in them.

Find yourself 5 great pictures.

Step 2

Warm yourself up.

Look at the first photo. Copy a pose that someone in that picture is making.

Then do the same for the other 4 pictures.

You then want to practice each pose so you can remember them in order. Get it so that you can easily go from one to the next without looking at the picture.

Step 3

Brilliant. Now find exciting and novel ways that you can transition from one pose to the other. So, you are making movement that fills the gaps as you transition.

Don't just choose the first thing you come up with. Try different ways until you find something that really interests you or makes you think 'wow'.

Now practice it so it becomes a fluid motif from each still moment.

You are doing an amazing job.

Don't forget to now Cool Down.



FRIDAY

CHALLENGE #5 – Feel the RAGE!

Today from your bag...

- Bubble wrap
- Brown envelope or paper bag
- A pillow (not included)

Step 1

Warm yourself up.

The word to inspire you today is **RAGE**. Find ways that you can kick, punch, throw etc. that cushion.

WARNING, please be safe and don't go to mad.

After playing with the cushion for a while. Start to try and remember the movements that you really enjoyed making.

Step 2

Take away the cushion and try to recreate the movements you've made, without coming into contact with anything.

Make yourself a motif from the movements that you've done.

Step 3

Take the bubble wrap and now use your hand and fingers to pop it. Have fun and play with it.

Like Step 2 you now want to recreate the movement but without the bubble wrap. These should be micro movements in your fingers and hands. Now link the movements you've made from Step 1 and 2 together. You should have big movements into small.

Step 4

Grab the paper bag/envelope. Blow it up. Stretch it out big in your arms. And then smash it so you can make it pop.

Remember that movement and add it to your other sets of movement.

Great, cool yourself down.

Saturday & Sunday

CHALLENGE #6 – Create your own MASTERPIECE

Today from your bag...

- Post-it Notes
- Dice (sorry not in your bag)

Step 1

Draw, write or doodle what movements you liked making from each day of this week onto as many post-it notes as you need. The more the better.

Step 2

Put the post-it's in some kind of order. Your own order. The way in which you'd like to do the movement.

Step 3

Warm Up.

Now go through the order you've made of your post-it's doing the movement for each of them in turn. If you don't like the order, then change it. If you want to add anything, do so. Or if you don't like something then simply take it out. You're in control.

Step 4

Grab yourself a dice. Roll it. And put the number on the first post-it. Or choose a number randomly. Then do the same again for the next post-it, until you have done them all.

Then that number means how many times you need to do for that part of your dance.

Of course, if you don't like, you change it 😊

Now go perform it!

Great, go cool yourself down.