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DES 341 W21

2.22.22

## Earnest Emulations

*A Response to Play Profound – by Susan Rethorst*

How can I do satisfying work? This alignment demands recognition and yet is all too elusive. What does the process of attaining constitutionally aligning work look like when put in the context of craft? Discovery is attainable. It is achievable through trial and error, self-observation, and meaningful reflection. It is not a bestowment at the moment of birth.

In *Play Profound*, Susan Rethorst writes about ‘a dialogue with affect’. This practice is further discussed when Rethorst writes, “my desire to be “in conversation with” my dances; of my interest in affect – the dance's affect on me – as well as one part of the dance's affect on another part.” Affect is usually a verb meaning “to produce an effect upon, and in that way, I find this quite beautiful. To have a dialogue with a process, knowing that this process will change something.

I will likely spend years feeling my way through my process. Time spent not playing to my strengths and interests. The goal is to undertake projects in line with my authentic self, perhaps not always adjacent to lofty paychecks. Sometimes I fantasize about a journey to the authentic self free from effort and frustrations. Yet, the truth is, without such distinctive moments that challenge one's character, that asks one to inquire of the soul, it would not be a process that would in and of itself feel correctly authentic.

What does original work, authentic practice, authentic craft require of us? Stick to impossible budgets? Make urgent and decisive decisions that feel far from our art? Produce in fast-moving, somewhat chaotic environments? Arguably, joy could be found in all of the above. What makes work authentic? Rethorst writes, “I worked with certainty that everything I needed to make my work existed in the studio with me. That everything that I knew and believed was

present there. I also assumed that by working physically, directly, and intuitively, I would arrive at the dance's meaningfulness, that function and premise." Finding authenticity in one's work is a profoundly individual process, a dialogue with oneself that communes with the nature of our role and our aptitudes and sources of pleasure. To commit to a quest for original work is to stop looking outside of oneself, yearn for the tools we already possess, and open a dialogue with the self.

I connect so deeply to how Rethorst describes a disenchantment regarding working outside of authenticity, "I got stuck rather soon in this process, feeling tired of my inclinations, discouraged by the pressure of always needing something new." Work that connects to who we are changes our relationship to modern ideologies involving happiness. Rethorst continues, "I associated analysis with a danger." Perhaps the real danger is striving for refined and pretty while wading through earnest emulations and astute advice.