

Are we here yet? by Damaged Goods, Meg Stuart

First of all I would like to say a very big thank you to Independent Dance and the Gill Clarke Resources Fund for granting me my wish and helping me acquire a copy of Meg Stuart's *Are we here yet?*

As an admirer of Meg's work and narrowly missing out on taking part in Meg Stuart's WinLab workshop last year, I was hoping the book would provide me with a way in, a glimpse behind the scene, a connection to start to understand the different working methods and thought processes behind Damaged Goods' many incredibly engaging works.

What struck me most was how diverse and wide ranging the book is—there are many contributions from Meg's collaborators and dancers over the years—and just like the live performances and videos I had seen, I was surprised how thoroughly captivating, entertaining and thought provoking a read this is! In many ways I believe this book is just like the creative process itself—many influences from near and afar coming together to create a wonderful connected whole.

As I'm currently studying for an MA, my reading is such that I'm constantly searching for material that fits in with my research. However, with *Are we here yet?*, this search-reading became quite impossible as most articles, texts and pictures seemed to be directly and indirectly connected to my investigation as well as the whole making for a far too enjoyable and exciting read. So yes, the book did end up full of post-it stickers and notes to mark out passages and quotes to cite, but most of all reading became the pleasure again that it is supposed to be!!

Are we here yet? also made an unexpected but very welcome appearance in my final MA performance piece. My research is revolving around perception and what connections we make, how everything is inextricably interlinked and has the ability to influence and affect. During two sections of the piece two performers vocalised and played with reading and spelling out two different passages of the book, cut up and interwoven with each other and with the other sound textures in the space. I was very excited when I opened the book to 'read' out and play with the following:

After dancing for years with a ghost partner, in this cut-up text piece, I answer questions posed by a ghost interviewer. Slicing story fragments together, I start a sentence with one memory, confession or piece of gossip and end it with another. In this monologue of fiction and non-fiction, the text itself was not nearly as important as the way the words and the currency of different stories met and twisted into one another.

(M. Stuart, p.122)

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