the accident did not take place
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was first performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2019 at
The Pleasance Courtyard

it is a YESYESNONO production

it was devised and performed by Emma Clark, Jon Hawkins
and Tilda O'Grady

the lead artist was Sam Ward
it was produced by Rhian Davies
the lighting designer was Lucy Adams
the sound designer was SHAR
the associate director was Hannah Calascione

it was made with the support of HOME, Camden People’s
Theatre, ARC Centre, Arts Council England and The Pleasance

this book was designed by Sam Ward
the illustrations on pages 17-20 were by Matt Mullins

we would also like to thank these people:

Ned Cooper, Jay Olpin, Olivia Ouwehand,
Al Orange, Grace Ng-Ralph, ARC Centre staff, CPT
staff, Claire Hill, Ross Carey, Riz Moritz, PJ Stanley,
Lucy Hilton-Jones, William J Holstead, Robin
Lyons, Hal Coase, Jude Christian, Kevin Jamieson,
Dave Moutrey, Chris Thorpe, Mia Georgis,
Jake Walton
foreword
by Chris Thorpe

In August 2019 I went into a room and some of this book happened. To be fair, looking through it now, very little of the specifics of this book happened. But something happened that was entirely in the spirit of this book.

Over the course of the next hour or so, I was a guest performer/willing participant (I think you could say the same for most of the audience) in a series of repetitions, rehearsals for and representations of disaster, exercises in and failures of autobiography, documentation and reconstruction of the complex systems we all live within. The systems that outside that room we're forced to navigate, leave traces of ourselves smeared across – the traces that will, in the right or wrong circumstances, outlive our physical bodies and our self-consciousness. I had a fucking great time. I hope some of the other people in the room did too. Although some of it was disorienting. I think I cried, I felt like a dick once or twice, and at one point my face was covered in (my own) spit.

Over the course of the last few years, yesyesnono have continued to develop their ways of making us complicit in the above. Of inviting our personal into their personal. Of freezing, for a time, and trying to break open the assault on the senses and the kick to the psyche that come from our attempt to move through the many worlds we're forced to live in. Of finding the cracks in our dependence on our own digital avatars, to be targets of marketing and carriers of it too, and still, gently pulling us on stage to remind us we have bodies and minds that share space. Reminding us that we breathe. We're real. And that entering the space with them, if you're up for it, is agreeing to be as basic-human as possible for the time we spend with each other.
I realise I've not really attempted to describe the content of *the accident did not take place*. Although, having read it, neither does this book. It's got some of the text I remember in it, sure. But even that's a suggestion, an atmosphere rather than an order. And as just one of a whole series of guest performers that have, and will, inhabit this show, maybe detailing my own individual experience wouldn't be helpful anyway. The show was made to be experienced, and constructed from the people in the room on the day, I think, more than it was to be recalled in print, or replicated. Or even published. But the spirit of the show exists independent of all those things and maybe, if you want to do something with that spirit, the important parts of that are in here.

So here it is. An attempt to capture something that both did and did not happen. Or only happened once. Or happened many times, and will continue to happen, but with each instance unrepeatable, and each new version overwriting and destroying the one that came before.

Now I write that down, I see how impossible it is. But nevertheless, it's here in your hand or on your screen. A record of something that will always only happen once. A book of instructions, so you can create, or imagine creating, a period of time. Not the one they created. Not the one I lived through in that room. But your own.

Worth trying. You're a great show.

Chris Thorpe
Manchester/some other places
February 2020