We are eleven people who live in different parts of Europe. Our combined age is 394. We are not special, just a group of neoliberal jugglers: dancers and people who make dances.

For three days – 30 August - 1 September 2021 – at the La Mina de la Casa in Lyon we became Cellule d’Essai.

In the big mirrors directly above the main entrance to the theatre are big see-through portraits of famous choreographers. Some of them are dead, some of them are alive when they are shown in the mirror it means to be a choreographer, and with what it means to be able to sustain a choreography practice for a long time. We are sometimes relaxed, tense, joyful, uncertain and occasionally bullish. In short, we were people working together and making sense of our work.

One word that came up more than once was a ‘fearsome’; perhaps this was because each of us in different ways felt the need to build our lives, not just what we societally deemed. We recognised the power of the group and that we needed to sustain this kind of a ‘self’-process and in the process we could create the kind of a relationship that we were looking for. We were able to make sense of things that we were not able to make sense of when we were together. The group was a powerful tool in the process of understanding and finding a way forward.

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In some of the work we did we asked questions that are helpful to each other: “Who have we been today?” “How do we feel now?” “What do we want to achieve?” “How can we make this happen?”

One person on behalf of many. In truth I do not wish to speak for them and their experiences, and certainly not because I think I know what happened for each of us.

This writing is based on a lie. This lie has to do with the difficult of being an artist and how the experiences are formed, how the boundaries are drawn, and how the language is used. Perhaps this was because each of us in different ways felt the need to build our lives, not least because how does any group make sense of itself? That is, how do we make sense of ourselves and our experiences?

We resisted claims to authority and accreditation. That is, we attempted to avoid telling stories of biographies that are almost never without allusions. This is more than a problem of writing or even of writing anything. It is a problem of writing something that is written as a way to make sense of ourselves. We are not alone; we are not alone and we need each other. The question is: aren’t we all alone? What is the ethics of the self versus the ethics of the common good? This is the ethics and logic of the self versus the ethics of the common good.

We are a group of people who have a long history of working together. We have worked on projects that have been successful and projects that have not been successful. But for us, the difference is that we are the ones who are making sense of it. We are the ones who are shaping our own narratives.

Those are some words that seemed to define us in our work in the studio: research, production, identity, courage, dependence, story, and desire. Those are words that seem to shape our experiences.

In one conversation someone said how dance is like a box of clues designed to stimulate, wonder and challenge me to share some stories. I have to deal with doubt, new and sometimes fear. How do we deal with these things? How do we deal with this?

I wish to thank each and every person who was part of this process. I wish to thank each and every person who was part of this project. I wish to thank each and every person who was part of this experience. I wish to thank each and every person who was part of this project.