

LAB NOTES

from the **teachers meeting**
of the **contactfestival freiburg**

16

EDITION 2017 (24.07.17)
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Freiburg im Breisgau/Germany

LAB NOTES

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summary of verious discussions, labs and research

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PREFACE

The contactfestival freiburg exists since 2000. It was initiated and co-organized by Barbara Stahlberger, Benno Enderlein and Eckhard Müller. As committed CI practitioners, teachers and organizers, and following the synergy of the encounters, interests and experiences, the three founders met and imagined a new International CI event in Freiburg, as a gathering of the teachers and the international CI community to exchange about their practice. 2013 we decided to include Daniela Schwartz into the organizers team. 2015 After 16 years of collaboration Benno leaves the festival team in mutual agreement.

Each of them merged their experiences to co-create the contactfestival freiburg. Their great investment, energy and passion have created the first international CI festival in Europe, influencing the CI community worldwide. Many other CI festivals with a similar structure have followed it. The Festival runs Intensives, Classes, Labs, Performances and Jams and is an annual weeklong event.

The teachers meeting happens just before the Festival for current and former teachers of the Festival to get details for teaching, facilitating and exchanging during the event. Some topics are about the contactfestival freiburg, but a big part is to share and exchange about Contact Improvisation itself. The themes and topics, brought up from the teachers, were discussed, tried, taught and researched by bigger and smaller groups of teachers during the meetings through the years.

The notes can be a source of inspiration for organizing, teaching and dancing. They may show solutions for some topics, but are meant only as informative material to build up the process of knowledge. The following notes are written from various teachers who were taking part in the teachers meetings of the contactfestival freiburg.

Please remark that the most of the notes are not written in perfect English or edited correctly. They are still raw. Some more, some less.

Barbara Stahlberger brought these notes together in this collection with a great help of Mary Pearson.

The photos are taken by Patrick Beelaert, Mary Pearson, Barbara Stahlberger
Drawings from Yuenjie Maru...



REPORTS

Report from Dani to CQ

Hola Dear Nancy and Lisa,

the Festival is over since Wednesday. But for us it hasn't really finished yet. We are still busy wrapping it up.

It became a part of my closing to write you a short report, as a way to get a global image of what has happened, and of course to enjoy the pleasure of sharing it with you, and of making you part of it.

This year the image is big, it includes a multiplicity! I've been thinking of writing you but took me few days to find the energy and the words for it. This year the report won't be short...

This year Festival, is the first year of Barbara, Ecki and myself as co-organizers Benno being out of the team after the Festival 2015. And it has ended with a sweet, tender, and calm feeling, which followed us from the very begging of the teachers meeting and kept going throughout the whole Festival.

I still look at both events from various perspectives trying to understand what made them so easy and tender from the very first moment. And really, i have many ideas, but any that could explain the sensation of maturity and sweetness that we have experience (it's interesting that it is a general feeling!) so I'm comfortable writing we.

For this 17th edition we have opened the door a bit more, having invited Eva Karczag and Joao Fiadeiro as Intensive teachers, knowing that they were for the 1st time in a CI Festival, but taking into consideration that, in a different way, they have been engaged with CI for a long time.

I haven't met Eva before, and I personally invited Joao because his works fascinates me since I encountered him 7 years ago. They were both so easily integrating them selves, with such a respect and interest for the work and the CI community. And both so happy to be with us.

Joao was so moved by being in a CI Jam after 18 years, and observing his body behavior informing him, and all the hidden physicality coming back after so long time, and this time into a mature adult body.

I still have the many dances i had with Eva whispering to me, as they resonate in my body.

We have danced 3 times, the cycle of our time together, and if i think of them, i could easily cry. Such a vulnerability, openness, strength, intimacy, that i carry still in the treasure box of this Festival.

The work of Joao, is confronting the habit of flow responses, it is about inhibiting, observing reflexes and habits, and positioning oneself in relationship inside his system, which allows the emergence of the unimaginable, from inside the collective. His work is more analytical than what dancers are used to, but so many times it reminds me of the Tuning Scores. They seem to be in the extremes in their starting points, the Tuning relaying on the „in-visible“ and the perceptual body and the Real Time Composition relaying on looking from an analytical bodymind. But both allow the emergence of a magic unplanned composition. Which Joao will turn into position-com-position...

Lisa; I was talking to him about you, he has met you so long time ago. I will be so curious to be sitting with you both and participate of your exchange... Oh well, this is another project.

Back to the Festival, it was so interesting to notice that CI/ Improvisers were ready to test and try Joao's work. And keep

questioning it, participating, wondering, practicing it. (Jurij and Bryce were part also of his intensive, so I'm sure you will get to hear more about it). Also that so many people were so interested in Eva's work, which was focusing in touch, from her very personal perspective. Andrew was teaching a CI intensive about Suspension and TIm O' Donnell offered CI skills classes and Christine Mauch was building a deep and personal explorative territory focusing on CI.

This year we gather a group of 65 teachers for the teachers meeting, is the biggest group we ever had. We were labing every day, and so committed to the exchange and collaboration. It was a rich time!

We had Romain Bigé again sharing the 5 min of philosophy after the physical warm up every morning during the teachers meeting. I love it that's why we invited him again. And is something I will wish personally to keep. To create a space where body and mind mindbody bodymind can be, with out exclusion. Where dance and words, subtle experience and articulated experience can inform one another.

We followed Laura Hicks and Otto Akkanen's wish form 2015 to bring to the Festival a Feedback structure. And it was introduced during the teachers meeting and took place after the intensives and the classes for those teachers that were interested in receiving feedback from colleagues and participants. It worked so beautifully, and we will keep it for the future.

We did also invited Jurij Konjar to curate/ propose a Score for 1h Performance. I was collaborating closely with him to clarify the proposal and select the participants for his project onsite. We were 22 people onstage. Dancing and Talking. It was a satysfying process and outcome, and also it was interesting to see that most of

all of those „chosen participants“ were happy to commit to a parallel activity in the afternoons and to perform. So there is more risk to be taken next year!

I invited Jurij yesterday to write about his process (before-during-after) as we already keep talking about it, we will see what comes out, and if it is to be shared with CQ.

We had Romain Bigé and Mandoline Whittlesey as researchers and their researches were in dialogue with one other during the teachers meeting and the Festival.

Romain will write about his research inside the frame of the Festival 2015 & 2016 for what he his planning with Lisa, inside the CI & Philosophy.

We had a 1h TALK, and invited Eva, Joao and Andrew without giving them a topic and invited Romain and Alice Godfroy to facilitate the process and the Talk.

We recorded it and I invited also yesterday Romain and Alice to transcribe it, and to add questions if they feel like with the possibility to create an article. The title that Romain created for it is „Suspending CI“ which was their meeting point.

Yes, yesterday was my writing day, it's been the activity of the day. Writing invitations to write....

I'm curious of what I will finally gather, but is clear to me that my motivation for this invitations is not only to have the material on the Festival archive but to share it with a larger public, and to support, nourish and collaborate with CQ.

Best and loves
dani

Report from Daniela Schwartz to CQ,
26. Aug. 2016

CQ Newsletter Report from Bryce

Just a few hours ago, I was sitting on the periphery of the morning jam on the closing day of the Freiburg Contact Festival 2016. The huge gym hall was completely open, full of colored lines and even more colorful clothing, a moving, changing mass of bodies running walking lying rolling touching flying. It felt like a giant swimming pool full of possibilities. I pushed off the edge and dove in, not knowing what I would find. After 12 days of dancing, I noticed the excitement, apprehension, what attracted my eyes, my body. And then I took the plunge...

Romain Bigé, one of the two researchers at the festival this year (“Touch & Talk - Thinking in CI”), planted philosophical seeds for dancing on each day of the five-day Teachers Meeting (TM) right before the Festival. Throughout the entire 12 days of the TM and Festival I found myself coming back to the first seed he offered:

Love is giving something you don't have to someone who doesn't want it.

Jacques Lacan

Romain went on to comment that the giver doesn't possess it because 'it' is potential, the potential of becoming. And the receiver doesn't want it because it is unimaginable. The gift is created through relation. It comes into being in the moment of being given and received. This description seemed an apt one for the encounter with other and unknown that is the spark of every CI. Not knowing what will happen, but being willing to engage it. As Romain said, “so, CI is love.”

Mandoline Whittlesey, this year's other researcher (“Seen beings, or the art of framing a dance space”), was engaged with the act of watching, and its power over both the watcher and the one being watched. In her lab proposal during the TM we worked with a trio of doer, seer and an active watcher who paid attention especially to the space moving between the first two. I perceived echoes of Romain's and Mandoline's research reverberating throughout the entire 12 days: each one's research affecting the other's, the performance, the labs and classes, jams and even my walks to the lake.

Jurij Konjar, who was invited to curate the performance evening, worked with 24 participants and teachers on a score called *The Gravity of Watching*. In this score we worked with roles of doer and watcher, where the doer provided the field for the (active) watcher to work in. Again, this active watching was echoed, encouraged and supported from many different directions during the many focused, open, and musical jams throughout the Festival.

Dan Farberoff was working with video documentation this year, with a similar research interest in the relationship between witnessing and doing, and Ka Rustler and Susanne Martin co-facilitated the Teachers Meeting, squeezing deftly into the space between witnessing and doing.

Both the TM and the Festival were supported by a large team of helpers who provided clean studios, dressing rooms and bathrooms, technical/logistical support, and delicious and abundant food (and probably a million other things I didn't notice). I saw this team of helpers work very hard, all the while chatting in many languages, singing, laughing, chopping, cleaning and, of course, dancing.

Teaching intensives this year were Eva Karczag, Andrew de Lotbinière Harwood, Christine Mauch, Tim O'Donnell and João Fiadeiro. I was fortunate to offer a class alongside fellow teachers Alyssa Lynes, Iván Baucia, Mario Ghezzi, Miriam Wolodarski, Tal Avni, Abhilash Ningappa, Alex Guex, Alice Godfroy, Kees Lemmens, Lea Kieffer, Mary Pearson, Defne Erdur, Ville Johansson, and Nina Wehnert, whose proposals ranged from CI principles to Somatics into CI and more.

As a first time proposal, Laura Hicks and Otto Akkanen introduced and facilitated an optional feedback structure for teachers, based on a process they learned while studying their Master of Arts in Contemporary Dance Education at MA CoDE Frankfurt. This system, based heavily on Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process, created a formal space for participants to provide supportive feedback to teachers directly after the class, and for the teachers to receive it in a structured, facilitated context. Many teachers, myself included, took advantage of this offering, and I hope they will offer it again in the future, as I found it both informative and supportive.

Eva Karczag, Andrew de Lotbinière Harwood and João Fiadeiro gave a talk entitled "Suspending Contact", facilitated by Romain Bigé & Alice Godfroy. Themes that emerged included suspending time as well as the speakers' evolving and varied, yet overlapping, ways of researching not knowing.

Musicians (and dancers!) David Leahy and Jan Lee were in constant collaboration, both with one another and the studios full of dancing. They did all this with great sensitivity, creating episodic moments of music, sound atmosphere and silence.

Sounds of double bass, flute, keyboards, clarinet and voice moved in and out of being throughout the festival.

During the 12 days I witnessed several times the vocal delight of new and seasoned dancers surprising themselves, or being surprised by a dance partner. In addition to the many hours of dancing, I also actively observed (and took part in) many conversations on dance, the body and performance, as well as swimming and sunning by the lake, an outdoor milonga (which formed spontaneously when Gabriel from Buenos Aires took out his bandoneón), full court international 5 on 5 barefoot basketball, Pappu's discolight filled circus, flower tour walks through the neighborhood to the far studio, the many children running, laughing and playing through all the hidden spaces, excursions to seek out gelato and espresso, late night post-jam talks and walks and songs and moonlight dips in the lake. As I moved through several small tweaks in my ankles and neck and the nervous uncertainties of new encounters, I also experienced the (literal) healing powers of sharing this moving, opening, touching, and unfolding of the unknown with others.

This is the first year in a long time that the organizers are a trio, with founding organizer Benno Enderlein having transitioned out of the team. Happily, he was present for the TM and Festival. Barbara Stahlberger, Dani Schwartz and Ecki Müller continue to organize and grow a festival that takes care of 310 people (!), open the facilitation and share it with a dedicated group of former teachers, keep things fresh by inviting almost all new teachers every year, create a container for research & renewal, empower participants to experience many angles into CI and above all endeavor to open and hold a space for difference. Even with all of this, I saw them relaxed with themselves and each other, dancing and participating fully the

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whole time. For me, it was a joy to be there, and seeing this joyful trio move with ease through the Festival was a big part of that.

So, these are some of my observations. Undoubtedly other people had different experiences, and I've probably left out some important details and names of people integral to the Festival, for which I apologize. In any case, I can't wait to return to Freiburg for more research and dancing next year. Maybe we'll see each other there!

CQ Newsletter Report by Bryce Kasson
Festival 2016





WORKS & STUDIES

Conversation from lab with Mandoline

DANI. As a witness : my eye activity changes so fast that I couldn't name every single change that happened. But the naming happened, even silently. Many languages were superimposing.

As a mover : it can be taken as a sound, suggestion, real time feedback. Sometimes it created a narrative: as if pointing to the fact that something was missing.

SABINE. As a mover, it made me more present, not necessarily because of something that was being said, but because of the sheer naming. As a witness, I didn't say all the things that were coming. I limited myself to English.

MARY. As a witness, sometimes I was just at the surface, sometimes I would go deeper, and then I noticed that there is always this uncomfortable moment of being watched: I have to do something, and then it passes through, it changes.

MARIKA. As a mover having witnessed before, it really changed how the body was moving: I integrated the activity of the eyes of the witness, and my own eye activity within the movement. Witnesses were a support, there was not this usual spectacular gap between audience and performer.

MARY. For me the support happens after some time. Almost like rabbits when caught in car lights: they stop for a second.

BARBARA. As a mover having witnessed before, I was very comfortable with my eyes. One of the last words said was "returning" and it really created that narrative.

NINA. From the moving experience, the words coming into the dance didn't feel as directive, they allowed for the space to become aware of itself. As a mover having witnessed before, from the very beginning I felt very comfortable in the moving space because there was a witnessing activity already at stake between the movers. From the outside, it was difficult not to enter into "task-giving".

JURIJ. When I was dancing, I went into several different stages: dancing in a group, dancing alone, dancing from just doing something. As an observer, I didn't have such a varied journey: I felt as a support throughout. So I wonder how changing the situation of the observer, which was outside, would alter that "continuity of tone" in the witnessing.

ALYSSA. When I was observing, I was observing body sensation, and that's why I said, "empathizing physically". I also said the word "composing", because when observing a contrast, I'm doing more than simply observe, I'm entering into that subcategory of observing that is composing. And the difference between composing and letting something come to me. As a mover, I noticed the emotional effect of some words: "comparing" felt not so good, "appreciating" felt like "are they looking at me?" And I had a strong desire to watch the watchers.

MIRIAM. As an observer, I felt I had a hierarchy between my activities: some activities felt like I was a good observer, sometimes, a bad one, especially if I was imagining I was the dancer.

ALICE. It was difficult to stay with my activity as a witness when I heard someone else's word.

DANI. Sometimes, I felt like a little stepping into something that I was not doing, and then back to my original activity.

LIOR. I was just passing by and somebody told me there's a lab about composition and performance and I was planning on going there but when I passed here, I was feeling that something was happening here. Jurij, you were talking about presence, being in and being out, but I was really out, and I still felt very much invited in.

BRYCE. I notated the verbs that were used, and amazingly, most of them hadn't been said. So I was going back and forth between listening and scribing, and on the other hand, seeing.

MANDOLINE. I'm thinking of zooming in more specific relationships. Someone came and asked me what this lab was about, and when I explained, he said "that sounds way too intellectual". And it made me realize how dynamic watching is for me. So follow what is interesting to you.

I'll say what I had in mind: trios with someone moving, with a person being a particular witness of the mover, and another person witnessing the two. The first witness is committed to the mover, the second can be as far, as close to the relationship as needed. In what we just did, as a mover I found that I was confused... "do I want to perform, do I want to be an AM mover?" and I didn't choose in the end, so I suggest now that you choose: performing, AM, napping, whatever feels right for you.

ALICE. Words?

MANDOLINE. I would say without language.

ALYSSA. What can the first witness do?

MANDOLINE. The first witness wants to be as spacious as he can be, in the sense that he is a kind of lighthouse in this context, and for that, maybe less movement, less sensations to attend to might be better.

Proposed by Mandoline Wittlesey as
researcher at the TM 16

Contact like in a Quentin Tarantino Movie

Intro: Filming aspects of a QT film: close ups, extra long slow scene followed by an unexpected explosion, extra long violent scene. Epic-ness. Taking a loooong time to die. You can be your own camera, in the dance, or you can create a close up of your own somatic experience—like imagining a camera is inside your body. Or you can be the director of the film. LK tells us she is helping QT cast for his next film, and if we do well she might recommend us. Like when Uma gets out of the coffin and goes to a bar and asks for the glass of water.

Warmup: We warm up with feeling the quality of ‘coolness’. You are infused with coolness. Nothing you do is wrong. Even your bones are cool. Even the air you breathe is cool. (imagined QT film music in the background—we didn’t use it but it would have helped!). Imagine you are John Travolta, before Pulp Fiction, when you know there is so much coolness in you, just waiting to be found again.

Exploration: We attack one another on mats with sound effects, explosions, violence, slow motion. We film this. A cripple passes behind us—like a cripple passing in the background of an extended scene of a car crash. This was the inspiration for this scene. We film mug shots of each character. LK says, feel the coolness, don’t project it.

Discussion: there is a totally different process in playing with the imagination of violence while dancing, versus inhabiting the physicality of play fighting. Difficult to imagine the 2-dimensionality when we

are practicing 3D in contact. QT movies are often a series of monologues—no dialogues—characters rarely / never speak over one another. This could translate to the dance.

LK: the sensation of watching a QT movie is similar to the sensation of doing CI and having a really good dance, like yeaaaaah, like mmmmm!. This is the motivation that keeps me in dialogue with these two things.

MP: the action of committing to performance, or presence is like being without doubt.

Ville: That is the opposite in some ways of what I am interested in for CI, which is doubt, questioning, etc.

LK: I’m interested in how this can feed into the dance, like to explode what is possible. Also in our imagination. Like in the jam yesterday I was dancing with Benno and I was being really precise in the editing of my sensation and choices, like I would be busy with the place of the touch and the weight, and then stretch and keep this focus on where I’m looking—like to keep the micro-sensation and move it to the macro-sphere.

MP: I also watched this duet and found it fascinating. I could see Lea feeling the sensation she was in, while at the same time having the sense of where the image could be watched from. It’s like a filmic sense of imagination—sensation rather than representation.

LK: Like the Tarantino scene of the cheeseburger royale sandwich, when the eating just continues, or when Laura Dern starts to dance, it’s just surreal.

MP: Screendance conference in Ireland, a woman gave a paper about how Lynch uses dance to express subterranean aspects of human nature that can't be dealt with in other ways.

Participants: Mary Pearson, Ville, Romain Bige, Dan Farberoff, Malaika Sarco-Thomas

Lab at 2016 Freiburg TM
Facilitated by Lea Kieffer



Energetic Phenomenons in CI

Introduction:

Sabine and Mario are introducing to four energetic phenomenons. In the group we talk about them and what they are.

1. Streaming = sensing the continuity of your life force (It is also a state named in Nancy Stark Smith's Underscore). How do we experience streaming in dancing?
 2. Channelling = letting energy, which comes from outside, in my body. Letting energy flow through us; let us be danced by that energy
You can send that energy out.
 3. Creating a field, which the other can feel and touch
This field can be created by presence, attention, energy, thoughts.
1. Bonding
getting energetically one with the other person or the earth

We were voting, which of these states we want to explore further. 8 votes fell on streaming, which were the most.
We research on streaming, based on what was said before.

Research for 20 minutes:

We start all together with shaking the body to get into the energetic state of streaming. We have 20 minutes of streaming and dancing.

Feedback (10 Min):

While walking, staying in the state of streaming, we shared some associations about what we experience/d:

- Different flow
- Inside – outside
- Breathing something
- First impulse
- Before first impulse
- More skin surface
- Extending
- Following
- What's the difference from "flow"?
- Acknowledging that everything is changing all the time; now is all that is
- Surprise
- Staying in the dorsal root of my nerve system – the back allows me to stream
- Sensation of air on my skin
- Collective state of trust and ease
- Different temperatures in the space; through that I can feel the others
- Past streaming is stillness after streaming
- Avoiding eye contact
- Looking for eye contact
- Centre of the earth
- Expansion through the membranes
- Following, avoiding, breaking social codes
- Space pulls me, rather than me going into space
- Objectifying human bodies
- Different rhythms
- Control – uncontroll[ed]
- Relationship pelvis-floor-under the floor; (also 3 floors)
- Being
- Letting go of the moment
- Allowing myself to not know
- Perceiving body (my own body, others) as more than material, more than objects
- Sharing streams
- What is energy?
- Receiving
- Memories of Sarah Shelton Man's palms
- Dance for healing
- Streaming is there, even if I don't realize it
- Enjoying the state of my not knowing
- Non stop-----=∞∞∞∞●●●●○○○

That was the end = pingggggggg

Participants: Ulli, Ester, Ville, Eryn, Iris, Gabriel, Tal, Alyssa, Nien Mari, Susanne, Gesine, Heike, Sebas, Ka, Kees, Sabine, Mario

Monday 8th August 16 TM Lab
Facilitated by S. Sonnenschein & M.Ghezzi,
Notes by S. Sonnenschein & S. van Wetten

Aging in, with, along CI

We gathered in a circle and each of us said their name and age.

We then had time on our own, going through a timeline of our dancing life, perceiving sensations or watching it like a movie. Simply noticing anything that came to mind/body/heart. After experiencing we took a few minutes to write or draw.

We then got into little groups and talked about our experiences and about the following three questions:

* Is there anything you miss from an earlier period of your dancing life? if so, what?

* What do you bring to a CI situation now that you think might be specifically related to aging?

* Does your definition of CI change with time?

Time was up already, so we gathered again and moved about walking and meeting and naming treasures of the past hour.

To finish, we each said again our name and an age of our choosing, which was mostly different than the first age we had shared...

Aging (which is not the same as getting or being old) seemed to bring calmness, anarchy, precision, a reconnection to a childlike state, less worry, ease

Response from Defne:

Personal journey back in time:

Ballet – swimming -----

Sheer joy of feeling my body... following but not theorizing.

I am tired of the frames I happened to fall, follow, create and recreate...

I am missing my body... Simple joyful connection --- tuning in...

I am missing my dance...

I am tired of trying to accomplish something of and for the dance and the theories/ideas around it...

I am missing my personal interest...

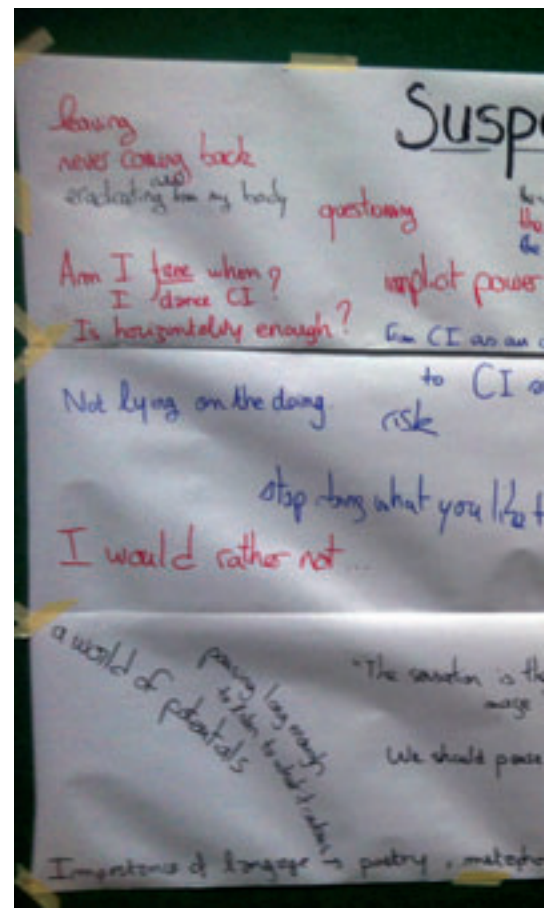
I am missing my focus...

I am missing what the hell all this is about, what am I about...

Death, transformation,

Spiritual practice...

Facilitator: Natanja, prepared with Lior



Power and Privilege

Attending: Peter, Niklas, Gesine, Mary, Robin, Joao, Susanne, Dan, Heike, Richard, Natividad, Ulli

Miriam spoke about her reasons for wanting to set up the lab. In a multicultural setting such as Freiburg festival, how much time do I give to cultural misunderstandings? Do I speak up? [When someone makes a joke that upsets me] How do politics come into interpersonal relationships? The violence of having a political feeling in an apolitical scene.

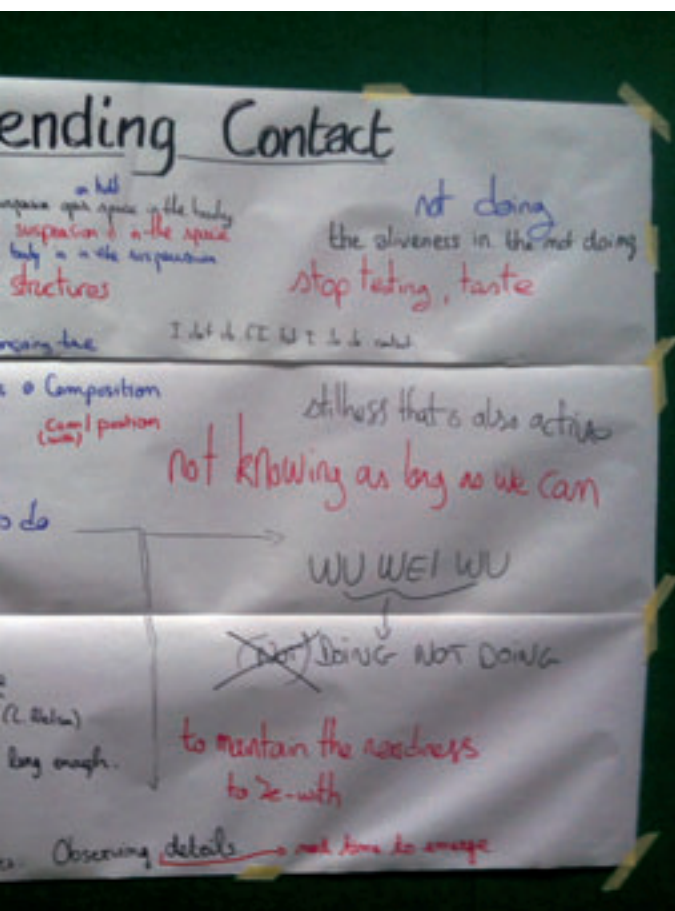
First, we made 2 circles, one inside the other. We talked in pairs, facing a different partner for each of the following questions:

1. Why are we talking about Politics?
2. Is your CI practice related to social Justice or Political activism? If it is, how? Why do you think it is/isn't?
3. How do you see power play, manipulation, exercises on edges in CI as a support for personal, social, and/or political change?

After this, we each wrote a statement or question on a small piece of paper. Sitting in a circle, someone could read one of the papers out loud, and others could go into the circle to move and/or speak in response to the statement or question.

We had a long discussion about the experience after the moving/talking circle.

Lab with Alyssa, Miriam, and Filip



Facilitating Group Composition / Improvisation

We began by discussing our interests:

- how to frame CI as relevant to contemporary dance students
- how to facilitate dancing within improvisation & composition, not just narrative
- how to empower individuals to be bold, have fun, and be inventive

Scores which we named which interested us:

The Oracle Dance (introduced via Eleanor Bauer)

1. rule number one is that the oracle is never wrong.
2. a group of dancers, as the oracle, 'answer' the question of an audience member, and a reader of the oracle 'reads' the dance for the benefit of the audience. The dancers do not hear the question or the reading.

Three things maximum in the space (introduced via Ray Chung, Chris Aiken, Andrew Harwood)

- a group improvises, but makes sure there are maximum 3 events in the space at any time (whatever that means to you)

Anything is possible; nothing is required

We discussed how specifically for contemporary dancers, it is useful to have scores to cut the ego, things which require

dancers to problem-solve, improvise and find a way to keep busy without focusing on the 'self'

liris mentioned Nancy Stark Smith's scores, to create focus:

1. Telescoping Awareness (in to detail/ specificity, out to the wider composition)
1. Quintet score: two duets are a background in the space, and then a 'come as you are' solo passes through the space

We observed the role of text and language in creating enjoyable, relevant, stimulating performance: e.g. Malaika's *touch + talk* score, in which 2 or 3 dancers respond to a question which is posed, e.g. 'How does your CI practice relate to the environment you live in?', or the Oracle Dance as a way of making sense of, and finding access to the work of dance.

It was observed that there is a natural tendency toward creating story in improvisation, because story is an easy way to develop composition.

Peter Jasko's solo work, for example to stand in a circle and enter with one thing, but to perform a totally different quality than the others before you.

Nita Little says that to perform is to disturb.

Chris Aiken's solo movement research, then in duet. He proposes to develop a solo movement research score (e.g. opening and closing; exploring a pivot point; momentum and suspension; cartoon character) and then to continue that exploration in contact with another body. So two different scores meet.

Deborah Hay, in Turn Your F*ing Head proposes group scores with simple tasks. A strategy to play against the tension that comes into the head and neck when people go into 'performance mode'.

Find the challenge in the score. E.g. what happens when you stick with something for a longer time than you are comfortable with, longer than you want to.

Lisa Nelson score: work with timing (duet or trio)

We discussed what makes a satisfying performance:

- a variety of dynamics
- contrast between complexity and simple, solid things
- energetically, Deborah Hay's work integrates the whole—the performer has a deep engagement and curiosity
- ignites the imagination of the mover and the spectator

A sub-question would be: How do you generate a score that promotes dancing: movement groove + imagination + enjoyment

We tried three variations of scores: 3-minute duets, with one watcher. Focus on 'to perform is to disturb'. We discussed the tendency to 'do' a lot which comes from this score.

One way to counter this is to go for 50% movement, 50% stillness, to give also time to feel the resonance of what you do.

We tried Lisa Nelson's Timing Score.

1. start and stop moving at the same time as the other
2. start moving just after the other
3. start moving just before the other

We played with this in 3 x duets, and one trio, which we videoed. The next step would be to try this in contact. It is more challenging to find stillness in contact / weightsharing.

We discussed:

- Ready – Fire – Aim (by Eleanor Bauer) in which you act on the impulse before deciding how you will finish it
- Gesture creates meaning
- How do you keep your body fresh and active in choice-making, keep the animal alive?
- Siobhan Davies' work with a rhythmic phrase as a source for movement, e.g. 'Row-row-row your boat'. Then do this in 5/7 time.

Facilitator: Malaika Sarco-Thomas, with Eryn Rosenthal, and Iris Ripala
Notes by Malaika

THE UNIMAGINABLE

“How is the original proposition of CI, of not-knowing how the body reacts when it is crashing into another body, still a part of your research (and teaching)?”

Present dancers: Barbara Lucarini, Elske Seidel, Kees Lemmens (also scribe of this report), Barbara Stahlberger, Filip Wencki, Laura Hicks (also this lab’s facilitator), Bryce Kasson, Gesine Daniels, Marika Rizzi, Christine Mauch, Heike Kuhlman, Niklas Valenti, Daniela Schwartz, Jori Snell, Nina Wehnert, Jurij Konjar, Peter Pleyer, Sebas van Wetten

10 minute introduction by Laura Hicks:

Laura told us that she was very inspired by working with Karen Nelson, who said that at one point CI was the unimagined in dance ...but nowadays CI has become so imagined that it is difficult to un-imagine it.

Laura explained the lab objective/ description: we need not necessarily crash, but what is happening in a moment that you cannot know, cannot planshe was of the meaning that it is a different kind of unknown than in Composition: the unknowing of the bodies response/reflexes.

Laura quoted Steve Paxton from the video ‘Chûte’:

“CI has a study of the passage from up to down as a focus [...]

The act of falling has come to include an ability to adapt to the variables of distance, position, and direction, and to intuit which part of my body will take the first moment of impact.”

“[...] understanding a technique with the mind is different from understanding it with the body.”

“Commitment to something that is not happening, is a barrier between me and my bodies circumstance.” [On request of Niklas to further explain this quote the ‘commitment to something that is not happening’ was explained by Laura (and Sebas) to be about ‘pre-planning’ (and/ or thinking of something else; ‘not being present’).]

“I have little memory, muscular or mental, of what I danced.

The specific movements my body executes, when I improvise, do not register consciously and I can’t reconstitute them.

I feel transparent in the action, causing it only a little and holding no residuals.”

Laura ended her introduction by repeating, on request of Gesine, and somewhat explaining/elaborating the main question of the lab:

“How is the original proposition of CI, of not-knowing how the body reacts when it is crashing* into another body, still a part of your research (and teaching)?”

[* ‘Crashing’, as I understood Laura, not necessarily meaning literally crashing (only), but being the typical metaphor for any kind of situation which would elicit an inability/ impossibility of planning the (reflexive) response and in that sense of the word a “not-knowing”/unknown.]

The dancing:

We quickly warmed up individually, and ‘danced this question’ for 30 minutes in which (in my experience and observation from within) there were several kinds of ways to bring this ‘not-knowing’ alive into our dancing/research; quite literally “crashing into each other” certainly also being a main one of these.

Right after the dancing, on Laura’s proposal, we did a 10 minute Small-dance.

Then Bryce liked to have some time to write, so we all took 5 minutes to write.

Sharing/Harvesting after the dancing:

We went around the circle to each share from our experience one by one.

Elske said that we seem not so used to this [crashing into each other]. She noticed a lot of feeling sorry or guilty. But also it brought her joy and a sense of innocence. New physical forces were released in her. What a great agreement!

Christine said that she felt the sharing of the question forming the space.

It was good to her to not at all need to give up softness and subtlety in the wildness of it all; we do not have to make it hard.

Jurij told us that he had seen and understood the state that the dancers were in from seeing Magnesium on video, and took it on since quite early in his dancing. In his dancing career he however felt some people seemed scared of him. And this in turn made him wonder if other people got from him what he gets from other people and/or the other way around. Some people he encountered in his dancing-life took his risks for him [i.e. by

holding him or so] and he did not want that ...and Juri wonders if he might perceived to be like that by other people.

Gesine liked very much that we can do this just like that [in a snap], even though most of us don’t do this very often. It affirmed to her that our somatic practices, different as these might be (from this, and/or from each other) did also prepare us. The somatic experience brings this ability, and the daring to go further.

When she felt a high-body tone in Jurij, she would soften even more ... and this response made her feel very safe. From the start she noticed how her body always introduced a shaking in the Small Dance, to bring her this state.

Jori said that she was very pleased and satisfied discovering all the spaces inside her body that were unpredictable, and she felt she need not to go into the wild interaction with the others in the lab. Then suddenly she was somehow in the wild crashing anyway, and she found herself deeply enjoying it. Especially the “de-estheticalization”, “de-personalization” and the “de-storyline-azation”...

[When she was asked to repeat/explain this last word and the other words, Sebas added ‘de-personalisation’ ...which I then guessed was the first of the three words Jori had said.]

The deconstruction of the personal and the esthetical, and the deconstruction of the presence of a story-line.

Barbara at first felt a little fake. Floppy. She felt too educated, and she could not find this freedom ...trying to do something that was outside of thoughts.

She found she could not find engagements with any one in the group; it were all very fast, short meetings. She wondered if there would be a way to find the unpredictable, but slower.

Jurij suggested in reaction to Barbara that one could also train for stamina in order to make it last longer.

Marika recalled the Steve Paxton quote about the passage from up to down. She also mentioned french philosopher Michel Bernard who added a third “chiasma” to Merleau Ponty theory around the phenomenology of the perceptions. M. Bernard names this third chiasma “intra-sensoriel” (in french) determining that when you touch any surface you are touched by it at the same time, meaning that you are active and passive in this double sensitive exchange. This brought her to question the notion of receiving in her dancing while being in contact with someone and shifted her perception of giving weight : giving and receiving happening simultaneously the direction towards gravity was much softer and the touch extremely sensitive. No more decisions were necessary, the dance was unfolding from the weight double dialogue. Marika also found it great to be out of the binary function of giving weight and receiving, lifting became then a result of the falling.

Filip found the dancing in this lab a beautiful set of moments of truth. Each may last only milliseconds, but the state is actually longer. Filip wishes we could do it more often: he wished it wouldn't need so much asking for allowance in/during regular jams.

Niklas somewhat in contrast to Filip said that he likes to have a build up and not a jump to suddenness. But in accordance he, too, would wish we could build a culture of trust, risks, getting to know the boundaries. From his Alexander Technique background Niklas feels the small dance is a strange practice: all those things going on are just “bad patterns” and he/we should not listen to these but focus on the correct posture according to Alexander Technique. (Laughs; turning the statement into a joke of exaggeration)
When Niklas sees people shaking: he feels he can't trust these guys...



I (**Kees**) then asked what is wrong with shacking, because I really didn't understand ...and I think Niklas on this answered: Are you in the state, or are you trying/wanting to be in the state?

Heike relays that she had a big injury recently. So she felt herself scared, but also liking the crashing. Eventually her body found a way to be very soft/safe. She wonders: Is it more the mind and nervous memory, or is it really the reflex caring?

Bryce, kind of like others were saying earlier, had also noticed that a lot of energy went into managing fear (of hurting others?), managing worry.

Similar to Heike he wondered: how much is habitual tension or trauma and how much is reaction?

Bryce reminds us that it was hypothesis of Steve Paxton that the body would always be able to reflexively safe itself, if it were 'left alone' enough to do that. There is a chance that it might not be true. Yet: all the practice and understanding of crescent rolls etcetera is so good!

Bryce added on to this his view or his realization that the weight is not the tool; the weight is a force. The touch is the tool!

Finally he had enjoyed not having to be a stable base, and not being able to expect a stable base.

-The small dance becomes checking into an alert state where you're ready for anything.

-If I don't know someone I question giving them my weight.

-I question where the edge is - where is the reflex to go with falling with someone

-Trying is also truth.

Sebas considered his teaching-practice, and whether or how one could do this with beginners?

"Don't try this at home?" We all (have) train(ed)/learn(ed) how to read all the instant

little "no's", all the small "maybes".

In teaching Sebas likes to focus not on rules but on tools for safety.

Nevertheless he feels he/it also goes into thinking about safe jams: fine-tuning a judging of what is still kind of safe versus what is really too dangerous.

Daniela had during the dancing at first been lying on the floor with closed eyes for a long time in order to open a door for the unimaginable.

She mentioned an experience of a multiplicity of directions: people coming closer and going away etc. When they came closer very fast, she wondered/noticed if her eyes would open, and when? Dani was experiencing small huge falls while lying on the floor.

Eventually Jurij had arrived on her body and she was swept up. She felt very comfortable in it all, and Dani wondered if that were because she is small and light? The whole thing was very much about time and space for her.

Dani felt the proposal [at the end?] of the small dance also in the horizontal; how much gravity and weight, and the breath, are related. Finally it exited her through her toes ...and the she got sad. Something had left.

Barbara told us how she got into the state fast: she had started with rhythm and then went off-rhythm to see what was happening in her.

She also tried to notice where her body says 'no'. Like today it wasn't willing to go into the backspace. It felt like the alert state.

Barbara talked about her experience with Dani ...that if she wouldn't know Dani she would be more careful to put weight on her. Barbara realized that she trained to relearn certain reflexes, and she noticed that these are very present: it would even be hard not to do particular trained things.

At some point the thought had crossed

Barbara's mind: what if I would really hurt myself? No big injuries ever happened in the Freiburg Festival. We've had some broken ribs in the past, Barbara said, but these didn't happen in contact ...and people do not damage themselves: they're safe with each other.

Finally Barbara felt that there's a truth in trying too; I try to find my edges ...so that is, these are, also a truth.

Peter differed from many earlier speakers in that for him it is not a state.

To Peter it is a way of dancing that he knows, a way of dancing truth... [If I understood well. According to Peter this is] the clarity in the language of weight, which knows only one direction: down.

If any part of the body is really falling, it is always sensational; it need not be big falls. ...The passing of the weight; Peter says he still regularly uses Steve Paxton's exercise of "the arm-drop" to convey this.

At the same time he wonders: how retro is this, what we just did? Steve Paxton's performance project called "CI" is almost 45 years ago.

And, kind of like Sebas, he also wonders: how does one teach this to beginners?

Kees: In answer to the lab-question: yes, I find that this is still part of my individual/personal research and teaching ...it is also in the workshop "The Falling Underdancer" I give in Freiburg this year. Although I might (also in my dancing) 'make others' dance CI more than I do myself.

[i.e. I might (consciously) surprise and challenge my partners, more than I am surprised ...Or than I able to allow myself to be surprised?]

Something worrisome, which I had realized before but also quite strongly in this lab, is that I may in a sense be "naturally violent" in that my body (not precisely/completely 'me', or my mind), when it comes to it, seems to prioritize self-preservation over

the preservation of others. Yet I am also partly naturally safe for others in that I have also sometimes recognized a moment late on some occasions that my body had even subconsciously taken care of others quite somewhat ...but this isn't something that can generally be counted on somehow. And finally, about the name of the lab: it may (logically) be almost impossible for (re-searched) CI to remain 'unimagined' ... Maybe kind of like Peter's "retro", I feel that it is an 'expired artwork' (in the way that I understand Marcel Duchamp to have said/meant that all artworks have a limited life-span.) ...even as we just did it, CI may nowadays only still be valuable for the individual.

[NB With this I meant to say that it is probably no longer 'art-historically' relevant to do what we just did ...or in a sense: it is no longer very 'high art'. I.e. it might principally not contribute to mankind's understanding anymore (like after Apollo-11 just another moon-landing wouldn't in itself be "a giant leap for mankind" anymore) ... Yet CI can still be very relevant (as, in this sense, a 'lower' kind of art) for communities of individuals for who it is relevant, and as such 'for society'.]

Laura: Are we dancing the question or are we dancing the answer?

How much is it about just ,being less polite' and how can I create space for that?

How do I listen and perceive detail and subtlety while working with reflexes and responding?

How do I honour my knowledge while dancing a question?

Nina, finally, literally shared her dreams with us. She had been present from the start of the lab, yet she had needed to sleep and tried to do so on the one of the thick mats on the side of the space. The energy and noise emanating from the dancing had kept her on the edge of sleeping and waking

at first, until she could finally sleep in the quiet of our small-dance. All in all this led to interestingly relayed dream-states which I as sadly unable to record in my notes very well and to me seemed an experience somewhat akin to that of Dani.

Lab proposed and facilitated by Laura Hicks
TM Festival 10th Aug 16

Below is a reproduction with the computer of the A4 on the wall on which the lab was announced. The idea was circled, and the duration, exploration-format, and facilitator were written on it by hand. The rest of the text was lightly crossed, but still legible ...as such these sub-ideas may have been of influence on the lab too.

GRAZING 1 hour, silent exploration + sharing, Kees

"A Grazing Date?"

At its most simple, and maybe most powerful (?), I would really like to have a meeting with the/a group and have the score to commit not to 'engage': not to enter into (separate) duets for a whole jam/lab of a solid time (say at least 1 hour), but 'graze' for the *entire* duration. I believe something of interest might come out of this.

[NB I use 'graze', 'engage' and some other terms further on more or less after (but maybe not completely in accordance to) my understanding of Nancy Stark Smith's "UnderScore". Can I assume these terms are known well enough for this, and/or that otherwise it is also understandable?

Otherwise no-one needs shy from asking my further explanation, of course.]

"Immediate Meetings"

How short a duet can be 'satisfying'?

What are the shortest meaningful interactions?

Particularly I would like to practice the following:

"Confluence Rides"

Taking *opportunities*, rather than invitations, for "immediate lifts" on other dancers in solos (which may or may not be directed at this: i.e. "underdancing solos" or not.)

"Falling into Graze?"

Basically grazing, but from falling through space.

Can we 'build' (to) a pretty much all falling jam?

Maybe our shared space can become a 3-D field of tangibly connected interactive ballistics...

Onward possible answers/scores in this might be:

*Evasions

Collisions

Deflections

...and how might each of these lead to different relations/findings/dances?

present dancers: Benno Enderlein, Gabriel Forestieri, Mary Pearson, Miriam Wolodarski, Romain Bigé, Sabine Sonnenschein, Kees Lemmens (also facilitator & scribe of this lab)

Before we started, as it seemed there were maybe going to be a quite few people to graze with for an hour, I as a facilitator shortly asked if we would in that case maybe rather study some of the more specific ideas about grazing as they were on the A4-paper. But as a group we decided to go for it as planned, and see how long we would keep the grazing up with eventually these seven dancers: we went straight into it the grazing, the idea seemed simple enough.

...And in the end we went a little over time even. Plus some of the ideas on the A4-paper, such as clear short duets and what I called "confluence rides", had come by anyway/spontaneously throughout the silent exploration.

Sharing, afterward:

For the sharing, on suggestion of Romain, we sat in an 'anti-circle': shoulder to shoulder circle facing out.

(NB I will try to relay what was said as well as I could keep up scribing, and mostly 'in third person' as it is never exactly what was said.)

Gabriel said that it allows for a lot of flow in your own consciousness. He liked to be able to let go. It helped him to keep changing his state. He also sensed more listening in the group. And Gabriel also felt the grazing-only helped him to be more in the space and include the space/surrounding more ...but noted that he might be biased toward this, because this is his practice of 'Worlding'.

Mary first remarked that the main difference for her was that she doesn't tune in to people's center of gravity as much as in longer duets. She remembered a long duet the night before with a tiny person, and then afterwards with Benno. It was confusing – it takes awhile to get used to the person's size and dimensions.

Benno did not feel the need to move so much, because the other dancers were coming and going to him anyway: he could just receive more.

With faster moving he felt confusion, he needed the ground. It freaked him out a little. When does a duet start, and when does it end?

On the other hand the very fast changes from solo, to trio, to duet etcetera, made it on the whole more Benno's own solo: he could continue his own solo.

Sabine liked the changes of state. It was pleasurable.

What was great for her was that it was a habit-breaker because she usually likes to engage in a longer dance.

She thinks it helped her that we know each other and have danced with each other before.

Romain had been testing different 'levels' of grazing: between people, between attentions... etc. Even within a duet he/one could still graze different aspects.

When he dances longer duets, one thing leads to the next.

But grazing feels like jumping: conscious shifts.

As a noticeable 'interlude', or 'aside', in the sharing:

Romain also remarked that the French translation for (Nancy's) 'grazing' is 'papillonner' ('butterflying') ...and he feels this is more accurate.

And there is also a French word for the bees going from flower to flower
Grazing is a cow....or a goat! I said,
Or a deer, a donkey, a zebra, a gazelle...
said Gabriel,
and a number of other grazing animals quickly came by, which all seemed more 'exotic' to me as European.
I personally liked this little interlude a lot, and my relative thoughts of 'exotic'.

After this, we shared more like 'popcorn' instead of taking turns, more in ordinary conversation ...The outward facing circle had changed into a more informal facing and addressing of each other: neither a circle nor any particular shape.

Sabine added that there was no need to find a partner. No searching for a specific person.

Mary and others talked about the unrealistic fear that in jams, because we have the sense that we "have to commit", we cannot or dare not connect to everyone.
Mary also once practiced the interesting score of breaking up as many duets as she could.
She remarked that it is interesting to perceive which duets are closed and which are open.

Gabriel wondered if by doing (t)his practice in jams, he was demanding of dancers to be more attentive to space ...if he were "just being an asshole".
By practicing his thing, does he also impede on the 'closed-duets praxis' of other people?

Miriam asked if we were still facing out (because she was aware that we were not anymore) and then shared 'schizophrenic' and 'argyle' as word-/image-associations.

When she's not confronted with an interpersonal demand, she can feel sucked into a void.

Facebook and the density of internet were mentioned as a "virtual grazing".

My own sharing ...plus added 'personal conclusion', as the initiator/facilitator:

Kees A lot of my own interest grazing (as a phenomenon and/or 'promulgation' of a group-space, but also just in itself) was confirmed in what everyone said ...and also worthwhile things were shared, which I had never yet thought of.

Especially however am I happy with the experience/memory of actually many, now relatively very distinct, moments that stood out for me ...

For example:

A view of Gabriel, upside down on the rafters, through framing hands of Romain.

Weight-shares and continuous pushes from our arms with Mary, while running, ...one of us running backward.

With Sabine: an intimate non-romantic momentary exploration of unusual body-parts to meet as these did.

Memorable matches and mismatches (What is which?) with Benno and Gabriel.

(Attempts at) "Confluence rides" ... sometimes wonderfully failed and going down together with Sabine and with Romain.

Two separate very short but somehow also very complete duets with Miriam ...both completely different in nature.

Each memory maybe indeed 'jumpcut-shift edits', like Romain suggested?

But also somehow this little 'grazing jam' was all in all one complete experience, one dance, as a whole... And maybe also distinct as such?

'Depth' and 'the superficial/surface' folded into each other, fleeting.

8th of August 2016
Facilitation Kees Lemmens





10x5

10 x 5 Monday

1. Jurij Konjar

[introduced his performance project]

2. Gabriel Forestieri

has been working outdoors for 7 years, traveling around, working with local dancers in site-specific areas, usually voluntarily. Practicing something called “Worlding”. “Me trying to dance with the world.” Realised everything he is doing is trying to dance with the world. 2011 he started working with water. Dolphin Dance project was his first attempt, trying to be a dolphin with mask and fins, but this was not for him. The first time he tried free diving, he saw someone shoot out of water quickly, black out, and start shaking. It took him about 2 years to start dancing in the water. What is moving in the water? After 25 years dancing in air, which has another dynamic. It has given an amazing freedom – inside the intense cage of how long you can hold your breath, or stay under the surface. He wants to share it – apnea is a training, death pressure equalizing. How do you get down? This is a whole other practice. Then once you get in the water, what are you doing? Trying to figure out how to get people together to do this, he realized he has an aesthetic - a whole other layer. He has found that free divers are a better source [for this aesthetic] than dancers.

3. Heike Kuhlmann

“Colonized Body”. I am talking about what I call the colonized body. I have many questions after some history of going back and forth to Latin America. This year, I have been for the first time in Malaysia, in Asia, and I was astonished to feel again like in Latin America the so strong and overall presence of colonial times. Still after so many years the colonisation is still present.

The economic system of today is the continuation of the colonialism earlier. It is visible everywhere; in the streets, the way people behave, the similarity of the built houses in town. This makes me feeling sad and helpless in a way. One experience I had in a small village Iguatu in Bahia, Brazil with around 50-60 inhabitant, where the first Contact festival of the Chapada Diamantina happenend. The community was involved working. There was a moment, when the organizer was talking with a cook. This cook was black, and he was approaching her in a very equal way. But she was looking down, she was not looking in his eyes. From the outside, I was seeing the boss and the servant. Afterwards I had talked with the organizer, Julio, about it and he said to me that this never changes. I am wondering about how is it possible to change? What can we do? Contact is a non-hierarchical form, mostly, but also mostly white middle class European. What do we need to do? It looks like it is in the memory of the cells. What do we need to do to address this deep sitting memory in the cells to be able to approach each other on an equal level. I don't know, I have the experience of being a woman and not a man in the world and having experienced the difference in how we are in life and treated. Yet I am white middle class European. I am interested in finding ways to be able to apprach and meet each other on the same level, face what we need to face. Using Contact Improvisation as a tool, but what other tools do we need to have others than the dance in order to work with acknowledging the difference in possibilities and acces in the world.

This is a deep interest. Pioneering work where we research and discover, not use it as a Western European work which is colonizing again, from the white middle class from the US. I have many questions to dance and discuss them.

4. Romain Bigé

How do we focus our attention when we are listening to someone speaking? Do we let ourselves being raptured by the talker? Can we turn our attention to the non human parts of this world? It's not about exploring deep sensations while we are listening to someone else, just about listening through what I am attending to. This questions arise from another: How to translate our non hierarchical non human ways of moving into language and experience. CI offers partially ways of perceiving the world that don't force the partner to attend to you – in language we tend to focus really strongly on the human face, the human eyes, but there are other ways to listen, other ways to attend than to focus on the speaker. I teach philosophy in a university and my main pedagogical ideas don't come from what I've learned in University: the studio has been my real school for teaching. So I try and invite my students to go into the same situation as you are in right now, paying attention to what I'm saying and at the same time, attending to your bodies and your heads, looking away closing eyes. Dance - the word comes from Indo-European root- *tan tension- gave word tonos in Greek, gave our word tone, muscle tone musical tone, gave our words Tanz, dance, danser, danza. Attention is another consequence of that initial word *tan. Attention is a tension addressed to (ad-) – a way of directing tension – attending to what is said is a way of directing this tension that inhabits me – if I forget about what is in me, and only focus on the tension of the speaker – there is a chance that the tension inside me will not be resolved, nor that it won't be able to resonate with what is said.

5. Malaika Sarco-Thomas

spoke about the recent conference, 'Thinking Touch in Partnering and Contact Improvisation: Artistic, Philosophical and Scientific Perspectives' that she organized

with a partner in Malta the department of Dance Studies. The conference took place on June 30th 2016 as part of CI festival Dartington in Malta (a festival which existed 5 years in the UK, then a version of that continued in Malta). They allocated 1 day for academic conference, thinking touch. There is a call for publication out of the conference activities, deadline 15 August, and a deadline for more developed papers in January.

The publication will seek to ask:

- What is embodied knowledge of anatomy, of physicality, and of working with the body in partnering work? How is this quantified and articulated in 21st Century practices?
- What thought processes and knowledges are particular to partnering practices, and how might these be understood in relation to performance philosophy?
- How can partnering and touch-based partnering practices be recorded, documented and archived, and what are the implications for this within different fields of research?
- How are understandings of touch as developed in martial arts applied to partnering and contact improvisation, and vice versa?
- How do pedagogies of touch-based bodywork, contact improvisation and partnering dance challenge or affirm diverse theories of learning?
- How can touch offer non-logocentric modes for critical engagement with artistic and philosophical work?

She is Head of Dance Studies programme in the School of Performing Arts, University of Malta - which is an island in the Mediterranean south of Sicily, where English is spoken. The Dance Studies programme

has existed for 5 years. In 2018, sometime in July, the University of Malta will be hosting a large dance conference, a joint event between 2 organisations: Congress on Research in Dance and the Society of Dance History Scholars (CORD & SDHS). The conference will take place in Valletta, which will also be the European capital of culture that year. The topic of conference is 'Contra: Dance and Conflict'. Malta is in a pertinent location in the Mediterranean to address this theme, and the organisers are seeking to create a space for issues of conflict to be addressed creatively through dance and scholarship.

6. Mathilde Monfreux

started by looking for a body position, a woman giving birth, shitting, let speech go out, symbolic tremors.

For many years she worked with a visual artist from a feminist perspective. She worked with "non erectile" structures, which are looking like organs, and are confronting audience with what we are made of. Now she is working more with language, and is inspired by Kathy Acker, who wrote a novel in the 70's called Guts and Bloods in High School which was revolutionary, and feminist, because she was allowing language to come out in an unconventional way – as she says, "to get rid of language". Acker also said she is speaking from her body, language is coming from the body. Mathilde is currently researching how to translate that book with her body.

7. Mandoline Whittlesey

Gazing and seeing each other is much too big a topic for her – too big for mind and heart, needs to be broken into little pieces. Why interested? Why want to share it? Micro forms of violence, how that affects tone in body, exists in language and how we look at each other... How to undo patterns of holding, soften into vulnerability in language and gaze. (What frames allow

this?) Tiny things can be experienced as violent. What frames or ways of speaking about looking create a space where the body is available in its tone to being looked at by other people? Caryn McHose writes "Calm the forces of defense against failure". Interested in early infancy, how we sculpt tone in relationship to the world, how we learn language within a matrix of gazes. Expectations to become somebody, fear of failing (to locomote, walk, become somebody), how that patterns tone – patterns of fear, fear of not growing into movement – of being looked at – how can "being enough" land, without becoming complacent or passive. An artistic practice, a spiritual practice, a life.

8. Eryn Rosenthal

spoke about her performance research. For the past two years, she has been developing a dance theater performance, Freedom Suite: Transaction Being Processed. The project is based on ongoing oral history research with friends from South Africa who were youth activists in different anti-Apartheid movements during the 1980's. These friends are now in their 40's and 50's, and asking themselves, What was it we were fighting for? (And is this it?) Plus some other maybe impossible questions: What does freedom mean, and how do you know when you get there?

One question that's been a central part of the creation process has been how to reach different audiences with these questions, and with the larger social questions embedded in the work that have resonance with current events in different parts of the world right now. For example, this past year, there were some huge protests that shut down universities across South Africa - the biggest protests since the days of Apartheid. In many cases these protests have been met with police violence. Before those protests erupted, though, our research focused on the activism of young

schoolchildren and teenagers in South Africa during the anti-Apartheid movements, many of whom were subjected to extreme police violence. This historical research inevitably brought up strong elements of self-other reflection already embedded in the work—further intensified these past two years in the U.S. in the immediate context of police killings of people of color. Self-reflection on this recent spate of killings and the ensuing youth activism it has galvanized in the U.S. has also left a deep imprint on our creation process.

In connection with what we do in Contact Improvisation, the project examines questions about democratic process. The CI research that we are doing here at the Teachers' Meeting and at the Festival has deep resonance with activists and larger audiences in South Africa and elsewhere, who have been very moved to learn about this investigation of democracy through the body and physical listening.

Freedom Suite examines the related issues of education, aspirations, and freedom. It also examines time, empathy, and intergenerational question-asking. The project aims to open discussion on these very complex questions. How can physical performance awaken our attention and reflection capacity through kinesthetic empathy?

CI and the implication of the body have formed a critical part of this project's question-asking process, perhaps most so through CI's connection, for me, to delight and joy and dance—very necessary when you are dealing with difficult subject matter. Thank you to each of you for the important and powerful work you are doing here at the festival.

Eryn is organizing a tour of the work throughout SA and Europe for 2017-2018. She will organize a showing of a 5 min video clip from Freedom Suite during the festival. If you have ideas of potential festivals or curators that could be interested in presenting Freedom Suite, please write

to Eryn and she can share the short video clip and additional information with you.
erynrosenthal@gmail.com,
www.erynrosenthal.com
<http://erynrosenthal.com/2015/12/freedom-suite-transaction-being-processed/#>

10 X 5 Monday August 2016



10x5 Tuesday

1. David Leahy

conducted a group sound improvisation with different hand gestures to indicate: short noises, long noises, getting louder or softer, higher or lower, or babbling solo (talking)

“Pink sound” and “white noise”

slow morph - slowly changing to something else

imitating [the baby making sounds]

microphone gesture meant commentary on the action

Mamen said she is doing the same with a big orchestra and movement improvisation she conducts (moves) the people, David made the sound

Mamen gave instruction to the dancers

Duets, Solo, going into what you're doing to change into something else

Softer, stronger, etc..

2. Peter Pleyer

In February he got an sms asking if he would be in Vienna this year at Impuls Tanz. Nancy Stark Smith and Mike Vargas were teaching, and Andrew Harwood, Nita Little, and Ray Chung were going to be there for a conference, performance, jam. It said they would really like it if he would come as a facilitator for the conference. The sms said if you are there, you could probably teach a workshop – let's make a date to Skype. Rio from ImpulsTanz said there is always a focus on CI, and they would like him to teach but there is also always Keith Hennessy who does subversive things with CI. The young people, the dance webbers, love what he does. She said Keith is not coming this year, and we need something like that. Peter invited Eszter (Gal) to come to Impuls Tanz to do subversive CI

with participants - since they had taught at the freiburg festival 2015 and that this intensive had subversive elements that were successfully applied. They wrote text about why they think their work in CI is subversive. Karen Schaffman was laughing - CI is per essence subversive! You don't even need to articulate that. Peter kept thinking about this and wondering, is there something about CI that young artists don't want to go into it? Why and how is it or not subversive, and are they interested in what we are doing? The last day of the visit, Nita and Benoit had a talk which was called an unorthodox event, and this 'f word' was coming up: 'ferrel' which means wild or untamed, like a wild animal. The thought came up that something has been tamed, and needs to be freed up to be wild again, resonated strongly. Perhaps this is a key to a problem or question with CI. Have we tamed it through all of this knowledge and teaching into a pet or a cat? Isn't it time to let it free again? The proposition is 2 or more bodies dancing in physical interdependence to each other. It's so simple and so complex at same time. Let's let it wild again!

3. Susanne Martin

Spent the last 5 years writing a doctorate, which is why she was not here in Freiburg the last 2 years. She was working on it, and finished it this spring. Some of it in 5 sentences: it connects to the aging lab yesterday – „Dancing Aging: re-thinking aging in and through improvisation practice and performance“. Very basically, the phd is saying that the practice of improvisation has something to offer to do aging differently. Performance also has something to offer towards giving other images of aging. What is it then, aging differently in improvisation practice? Dealing with physical constraints, going into them, studying them, improvising with them. Other things that are done

in the practice of improvisation are the building of micro-structures for long term practice. It is inherent in improvisation that it continues and continues, you never reach the end, the best or the perfect. It is a life long practice, rather than a work towards my ultimately best piece of art. Also this festival is taking part in building structures that support continuous practice, peer groups, feedback structures. How to make peer practice happen? How to build structures to sustain and develop our artistic practice? Developing ways of reflecting on our practice. Developing reflexivity, acknowledging the bigger context, actively becoming a reflexive and critical practitioner ... We have a lot of reflective activity and tools for reflection built into our improvisational practices. We can use this capacity to become more and more critically reflective also about aging. We can re-think aging in different ways, recognize the demands from society, the ideas and stereotypes of aging put upon us. We can step back and recognize what we do to ourselves in terms of habitual and incorporated ageism, rethink patterns and choreographies of behaviour. We can change perspective and improvise things from different sides. „Dancing Aging“ will be published by Transcript December 2016.

4. Asaf Bachrach

has been dancing for many years, while also doing linguistics/neuroscience research. In 2012, it came together in a project trying to bring together sciences and dance practice in the large sense, spectating, improvising watching dance and being watched. It was a hard process, very challenging, and he learnt a lot of people involved in science meet dance. What he really enjoyed is how much we need scientists, how improvisation can do science differently. It goes unstated and hidden, unrecognized, people with

money, scientists and dancers themselves. What we do is research - we are researching consciousness. Your science is CI, not objectifying what you do. There will be a conference about gesture and inter-subjectivity, making meanings together is the subject. Anyone doing research on how meaning emerges from interaction can send an abstract.

5. Mary Pearson

I'm exploring the consequence of digital life on the psyche. Maybe there are changes happening to us that we don't yet understand. I am making a performance called 'FoMO, mofos' (Fear of Missing Out Motherf**ers). What is the difference between the connection I have with people that I see in person on a daily basis, versus those I meet somewhere for a short time and then stay connected via digital relationships or 'absent presence'. I invited 5 people to come work for a week with me, and I made a chapter of my solo about how each relationship moved me or expanded my practice after they left. The work ended up being about something else beyond this Fear of Missing out. It's about our disconnection with place, and what happens when it's possible to be anywhere at any time. We are all watching each other all the time. What happens to us as animals when we don't know who is watching? What if the limitations of space and time do not apply to us? It is about how the sense of self is changing, and how many connections can we hold. What is that restlessness I feel when I can watch something from someone's life online and I want something from over there?

6. Defne Erdur

is trying to finish a phd in reflexive creative practice: art therapy tools and techniques for artists at MA level, in a contemporary dance department. The micro-politics within the university made her quit. She moved away from that, and thanks to CI activities, was invited back to Istanbul. She performed, traveled around, and started sharing how to facilitate jams. She tried to plant seeds, but it didn't work 2 years ago. Thanks to the political need in Turkey to connect to something, in the body, she was naming workshops, calling it teaching, and getting paid. It is a young community, and there was a struggle to build the community. Looking back on CI history, there were some things that did and didn't make sense. To start with touch and body awareness: she is a sociologist and this makes sense from a psychophysical point of view. The university department thinks this needs to be made visible. On a parallel level, continuing teaching creative process, reflexive art therapy practice, creative practice. Kerstin Kusmahl initiated a platform for contemporary dance teachers to document their teaching practices. Her own phd struggles led her to want to support an online digital platform about documentation. IDoc asks what is documentation? They are discovering this along the way, meeting at symposiums every summer in Vienna. Join: <http://www.idocde.net>

7. Rock Rainbow (PP)

Has a thread of pearls going - Nita and Benoit had their conversation about ferrel practice, a restless night resonated with what we want to do next. This is an incredible group of people to be utilized, it's not a matter of everybody meeting everybody. Everybody is responsibility for their own depth. But what is my mission to be here? List: incredible happiness

sensation of depth, "I could cry", for love and depth of reconnections, complexity and physicality in the dance with Jurij (Konjar) and the reconnection and love in the trio with Marika (Rizzi) and Tim (O'Donnell), and the talk with Niklas was about his life plans, about negotiating new kinds of queer relationships with Flo, the touch of Alex holding his head during 5 X 10, Gabriel holding his ribcage, seeing his water dancing, his friendship with Georg. We meet in jams where everyone does what they need to do, we do not need more scores, or more gongs to tell us when to change. We are grown ups and teachers. This is not CI kindergarten. Let's move forward and keep doing what we do!

8. Natividad Insua

A project in studio in Barcelona, trying to translate AV documents into Spanish. She has connected this with a project called EMOCIE (a meeting similar to ECITE in Spain) coordinating documentation in website. She would like to promote CI in Spanish too. It is difficult for people who don't speak English very well. In Argentina, it is more difficult to access different texts or documents, now different teachers of Spain, Argentina, are collecting different documents. If you have something interesting thesis, articles, or if you have in Spanish, she ask for them by email. All the texts information in English, maybe this is colonialism? There is a very big community who speak Spanish.

9. Mamen Agüera

asked questions about the helpers, to see how many people knew the answers to these questions:

How many people know that one of the helpers:

- teaches contemporary dance in university?
- Is a programmer at a theatre and dance venue?
- Is a manager of a studio?
- Has danced in a company of a major choreographer?
- Is a choreographer?

10. Sebas van Wetten

Dancing from a meditational state

„Can I be in a meditational state and at the same time dance with someone else?“

Proposed by Sebas: He was telling us about his own 10 years practice, training with Lucas van Gool (lifeforcefitness.nl) who is combining therapists work/trauma healing, with Osho based meditations. Sebas used the word 'meditational state', knowing that words can never describe the experience. Attempts to word it, for him it has something to do with connecting inside of himself behind the voice in his head, finding connection to the silence inside and behind it, a whispering silence; observing the observer; my most [highest] self; He had an experience a few months ago, where he would be in touch with this state and at the same time connect to someone else and talk about the experience while experiencing. The question came: Can I take this experience into my dances? Or into jamming?

He proposed taking this experience now, as a transition into jamming...

We started the jam with a individual time meditating, each in a personal way, and each with an individual transition into jamming.

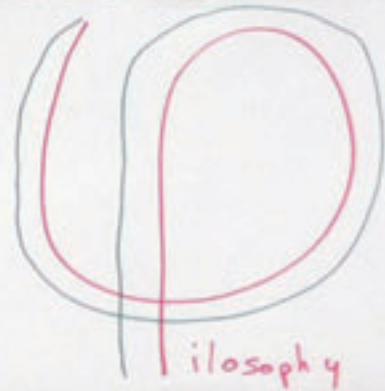
We had a nice jam. And ended in a short silence/meditation again.

More ideas/questions of Sebas about this:

- Can I bring this presence of me in contact with my partner; can I get a glimpse of the inner you?
- how much do I want to open myself to this partner/is it allowed to „enter“ in the you of my partner
- how to prepare for that state
- allowing myself also to get out of that state, and how to get back into it while dancing
- allowing myself to get in and out of my dance

Philosophical seed DAY 1

"Love is giving something you
don't have to someone
who doesn't want it."



Philosophy

Philosophical seed DAY 2

LISTS OF THEMES AND TOPICS

Teachers' Meeting LABS/enters 2016

Monday

Architect of selfdestruction
Video basic bodywork
Mary Pearson for non dancers
underground jam - studio 4
From words to (gestures) movement

Tuesday

Powerdynamics in CI
Alyssa, Filip,
Worlding outside
Gabriel
Notatiting relational patterns
Asaf

Wednesday

Rhythm of enterin exiting out in an
investigation
Ivan

TM 2016
Report from Barbara Stahlberger

Philosophical seeds at the TM/Festival

#1 Love is giving something you don't have
to someone who doesn't want it.

Jacques Lacan

#2 Joy is a tuning-with of speeds.

Spinoza (read by Deleuze)

#3 Of my body is that space occupied by
my consciousness my immense body e
stends to the stars

Henri Bengson

#4 Humans are animals that live in herds,
walk on thw feet, and are without feathers

Plato

#5 Neurotypical & Neurodiverse perceptions
/ unchunking reality

Erin Manning

from the researcher
Romain Bigé

TO CONTINUE...