

SCORES N°1

touché



Rafael Barthelemy, Agathe Gervais, and others... these scores in the various fields of art, which are not necessarily literary, figure a landscape and a landscape in English with meanings, images, metaphors and expressions... (text continues)

This volume finds patterns in movement, which is a kind of movement in the physical world... (text continues)

Touching, under its French name, escapes the scientific of movement, which is a kind of movement in the physical world... (text continues)

And yet French also will be surprised with the subtle, material and dynamic of touch... (text continues)

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(RE)VISITING

Anna Bikkis

TOUCHING

TOUCHING THINKING

Fields, the lines, I am a touched philosopher because I touch philosophy at the University of Toronto... (text continues)

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Paula Caplan

IMPLAUSIBLE CONNECTIONS

on the score of Giuseppe Penone's photographs

This was not playing at all... (text continues)

Here is Marjorie... (text continues)

SCIENCE
SCIENCE LONG AGONIZES
NOTHING MOVES
BUT FOR THE END
IN THE LAZARUS

LETTER ONE: MUSIC
A CHIMNEY BUZZING
AROUND THE BRIDGE

Can we stop here for a while in the distance?

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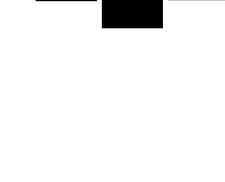
PARASITES KISS

Quod est demonstrandum: Parasites Kiss... (text continues)

Four-flashing blades of resistance... (text continues)

All these sensory pleasure... (text continues)

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TRACING TRAILS, TRACING TRACKS

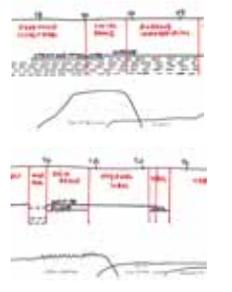


Of the traces left from the parallel with... (text continues)

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Isabelle Chabreau

TOUCHING THE TOUCH

I don't know, for there was no stroke of a muck or heap from a shovel, just hard earth and dry land, unbroken, no trace of wheels, but the workman worked without sign. When the day watch first showed it to us, we all thought it a most distressing marvel.

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COMPILED BY ANNA BIKKIS

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Robina Kana

LOVE LETTER

TO PROGRESS

PAST, FUTURE

PRESENT AUDIENCE

Kenneth Kowalski

THE FIRST LINE OF TOUCHING

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touché

touché: touching and being touched – affected, challenged, made to respond, questioned. In the context of the (stage) body, the concept of touching summons up various technical and historical dance concepts of expression, contact or kinaesthetics and recalls the questioning of the body as a medium of communication that is negotiated in them and in the present simultaneity and mediality and continually updated by life.

In the framework of the artistic-theoretical parcours SCORES°1: *touché*, from 16 to 25 April 2010 at the Tanzquartier Wien we dedicated ourselves to the question of touching and being touched in the context of dance and performance. Not understood as a separating caesura nor as an intersubjective connection, our interest was more in the distance that every touching marks, and which precisely in its inner and outer difference is the condition of each and every encounter, of each and every exchange. Following this conception of touching as a figure of mobilisation – gesture of calling up, of reacting to and of the desire for the other – the invited artists and theoreticians concerned themselves in different formats with questions of closeness and distance, of recognition and responsibility, of (their own) life stories and influences, of the fictional and the documentary, of personal inscription and extrapolation of the body in the choreographies and beyond. The choreographic shows itself as the punctuation of an in between, in which the separate individual constructs him or herself in the material and immaterial, active and passive, medial or unmediated contaminations and infections of the encounter with the other.

The second issue of the Tanzquartier Wien's periodical SCORES pursues an attack and taking up of this artistic and discursive touching, continues it and reformulates it in its media transmission.

Intervening in the texture of the instable, constantly moving exchange relations of art and life, of society and politics, the choreographic marks touching as an act and action of our shared participation.

*Walter Heun
Krassimira Kruschkova
Sandra Noeth
Martin Obermayr*

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touché

SCORES^{Nº1}
touché

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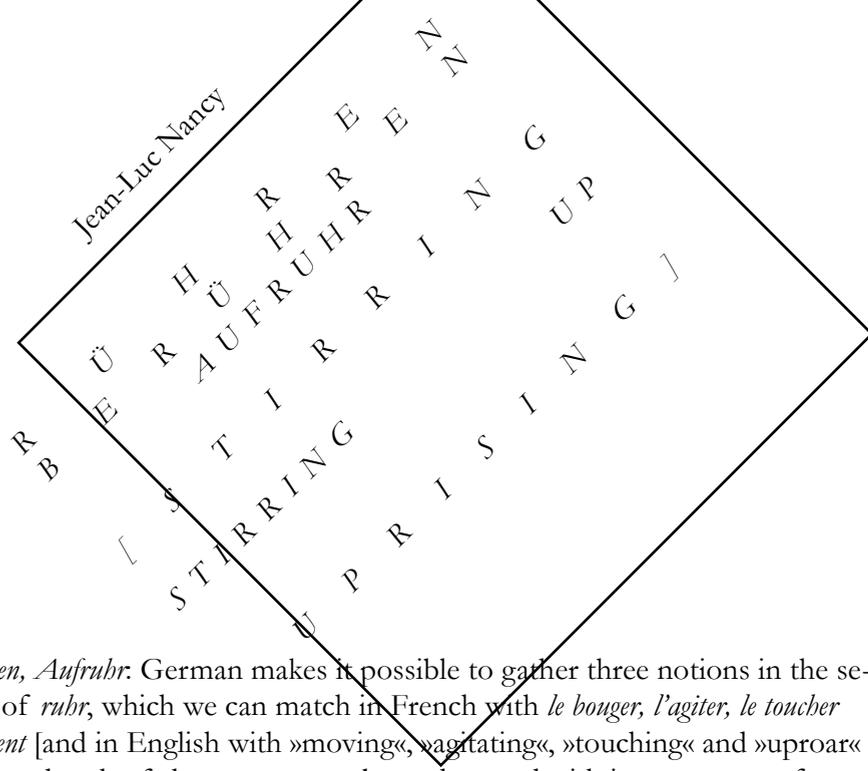
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NOTES



Rühren, Berühren, Aufrubr. German makes it possible to gather three notions in the semantic family of *rubr*, which we can match in French with *le bouger, l'agiter, le toucher* and *le soulèvement* [and in English with »moving«, »agitating«, »touching« and »uproar« or »uprising«]; and each of these terms can be understood with its own array of possible values. »Moving« and »agitating« convey some physical as well as moral senses, as do »touching« and »uprising«. The latter term, for its part, gives its moral value a socio-political orientation.

This semantic family pertains to movement, which is neither a local movement (a displacement, *Bewegung* in German) nor a movement of transformation (metamorphosis, *Verwandlung* in German; for example, generation and corruption, increase and decrease), but instead a movement one may most suitably call »emotion«, a term modalizing »motion«, the closest transcription of the Latin *motus*, from the verb *movere*, which also gave us »motility« and »emoting«.

»Touching«, *toucher* in French, seems rather foreign to the semantics of movement, while in German it manifestly belongs to it. »Touching«, »tact« or »contact« seem to involve an order that is more static than dynamic. Granted that one has to move in order to touch and one has to »come into contact«, as we say, but touching itself appears to designate a state rather than a movement, and contact brings to mind firmly joining something rather than engaging in a mobile process.

And yet French is also well acquainted with the mobile, motorized and dynamic value of touch: it crops up when we speak of a person or a work that »touches« us; when we allude to the special »touch« of a pianist, or the »touch« of a painter, or the »touch« of divine grace.

Touching shakes up and sets in motion. As soon as I move my body closer to another body (even an inert body made of wood, stone or metal), I displace the other (be it infinitesimally) and the other sets me apart, holding me up in a way. Touching acts and reacts at the same time. Touching attracts and rejects. Touching propels and repels—impulsion and repulsion, rhythm of the outside and the inside, of ingestion and rejection, of the clean and the unclean.

Touching begins when two bodies distance themselves and set themselves apart. Children come out of the belly and in turn become the belly, which can swallow and spit something out again. They take the mother's breast or finger into their mouth. The first touch is a suckling. And yes, the child sucks and inhales the milk that nurtures him. But suction is more than that: it latches the mouth on to the body of the other. It establishes or re-establishes a contact thanks to which the roles are reversed: in turn, the child who was contained becomes the container of the body that contained him. But he doesn't enclose it; on the contrary, he holds it before him at the same time. The movement of sucking lips keeps redoing the alternation of proximity and distance, penetration and escape, which presided over the downward drop from the belly to the way out of the body of this new body, which is ready at last to separate.

By separating, the new body conquers this new possibility whose sketchy design is all it knew: the possibility of intercourse and contact. The sketch was mostly auditory, and hearing itself was diffracted according to the whole prism of the small body immersed in the resonating liquid with which the other body had been enfolding him. The sounds of this body, its heart and its guts, and the sounds of the outside world would touch his ears, his closed eyes, his nostrils and his whole infused skin at the same time. Yet »touching« would be saying too much. Each possible sensation was still diluted in a dim way, a permanent, quasi-permeable exchange between the outside and the inside as well as between the various entryways of the body. Touching would be saying too much and yet it is there already: it is the first *rühren*, the first flow and flotation, and something mindless swings with it, which hasn't yet got to be born. At birth he'll separate. But he will remain this thing, this he or she floating within an element or world in which everything relates to everything, everything strains towards everything and pulls away from everything—but this time according to the numerous scissions of all the insides/outside of separate bodies.

Only a separate body on its own is able to touch. On its own, it can also entirely separate its touch from its other senses, which is to say, constitute as an autonomous sense that which nonetheless traverses all the senses, differentiating itself within them while distinguishing itself as a kind of common reason. Reason or passion, impulsion, motion.

Where he was immersion, an all-encompassing floating and enfolding, in the relative lack of distinction between his outside and his inside, tending to confusion in the common sway of two bodies, sucking his own finger, there he detaches himself, and once outside, finds himself on his own before this outside. That is to say, he is no longer inside the inside, within this immanence. He transcends, in the most proper sense of the word: going beyond being in itself.

His mobility leaves the suspension behind, the almost complete absence of gravity and the viscous indifference of directions. His mobility becomes true movement as other bodies are further off. Far from seeking a return into immanence and immersion, on the contrary his gestures assert his distinction, a separation that is neither a privation nor an amputation of anything at all. The separation is the opening of the intercourse. The intercourse isn't seeking to restore a lack of distinction: it celebrates the distinction; it announces a meeting, which precisely is contact.

In truth, contact begins when the child begins to occupy all the space in which he had been floating. He comes to touch the walls and his movement becomes that of the slow reversal which puts him in a position to exit, to let himself be pushed from the inside and sucked out by the outside—which is to say, decidedly this time, to embrace the order of an inside/outside. Touching the limits of the vase and the belly, he becomes himself the same as another wall as well as a wave ready to insinuate itself and glide between the labia that are going to spread apart for him. This sliding gives its final form to the passage from flotation to friction, from immanence to transcendence, and by opening the vulva, it also opens up all the other breaches that his separation is going to stir up, through which contact will become properly possible, itself both breach and adherence, intimate extimity.

* * *

Contact doesn't cancel the separation—on the contrary. All the varieties of (metaphysical or psychological) logic that posit the primordial attraction of a supposedly lost unity and the need to accept a forced separation (sectioning, sexuation, the plurality of senses, guises and aspects) belong to the logic of a kind of monotheism or morbid mono-ideism. They are patho-logic without being a logic of *pathos* or *dunamis tou pathein*, which is the ability potentially to receive and the capacity to be affected. And affection is first of all passion and the movement of passion, a passion whose very nature is »to touch«: to be touched, touching in its turn, self-touching one another with the touch coming from outside, from the one who touches me and the one through which I am touching.

To be affected doesn't mean that an erstwhile subject comes to receive an affection, in a given circumstance. How could one receive without being capable of doing so? But this

capacity itself has to be capacity in the most proper sense: the power to receive. Being capable of receiving implies that one is already receiving and is affectable. To be affected requires that one has been affectable and that one has always already been this way. That is why there has always already existed an outside and always already an opening towards it—always already an opening straining towards the outside, a desire for the outside such that it can only have been preceded by the outside—otherwise it couldn't have a desire for it. The subject is neither prior nor exterior in relation to the outside; it is (if we choose to speak of the subject, that is) much rather, *sujet au dehors*, as we can put it in French [and in English: *subject to the outside*]: that is, prone or subject to the other, subject to the other's touch. In this vase, the amnion, where the homunculus is bathing, it is this touch of the outside that is set off as a flotation turning into a friction. When the vase lets its contents pour out, water spills and the little one emerges, drenched. His entire body (whole and detached for the first time) bears the humid imprint that becomes his skin, melting into the outline of his skin but making this skin always able to receive the outside, and to be bathed and lulled, rocked by the swells of the outside.

Thus touching, at first and always, is this rocking, this flotation and this friction, which suckling then repeats, reigniting and playing up again the desire to feel oneself touched and touching, the desire to probe and feel oneself in contact with the outside. More even than »in« contact: being contact oneself. My whole being is contact. My whole being is touched/touching. Which is to say, also open to the outside, open with all its orifices—my ears, eyes, mouth and nostrils, not to mention all the channels of ingestion and digestion, like those of my humours, sweats and sexual juices. As for the skin, it sets out to extend an envelope around these openings, these entries-and-exits, which locates and specifies them while at the same time developing for itself this ability to be affected and to have a desire for this. Each sense specializes affection in a specific setup (seeing, hearing, smelling and tasting), but the skin never fails to connect these schemes while it avoids blurring them. The skin that envelops is itself nothing but the development of the entire circumscription of the body (of its entire detachment), brought into play and generally exposed. French allows the word-play *ex-peau-sition*. In German one could make up *Aus-sein* / *Haut-sein*. [In English, one could say *exhibi-skin*.]

But most importantly in any language, the exhibition or exposition, the *Ausstellen* that the body is, as well as its *Ausdehnen* (Freud wrote, »Psyche ist ausgedehnt«, »Psyche is extended«), doesn't consist in spreading things out fixedly as on to the picture railing of an art gallery. On the contrary, we can only understand this exposition as a permanent movement, an undulation, an unfurling and refolding, an air of continual change in contact with all the other bodies—that is, in contact with all that comes near and all that is approached.

Since Aristotle, we have known that the identity of the sensible and the sentient in feeling or sensing (which is thus a being-felt or being-sensed as well), similar to the identity of the thinkable and thought in the act of thinking, implies at the focus of the sensation (in vision, hearing, olfaction, gustation and contact) a kind of compenetration of both, in the act and as this act. The act of sensation, which is to say, *energeia* according to Aristotle's concept of act, constitutes actual effectiveness, the event being produced by the sensation. The sentient soul is itself sensible and for this reason feels itself as it feels. And nowhere is this clearer (nowhere is it more sensed) than in the sense of touch: not the eye, nor the ear, nose or mouth, feel themselves feeling with the intensity and precision that the skin feels. Images, sounds and tastes remain distinct in some way from the sentient organ, even if they fully occupy it. This may be true for touching as well in the event that I represent the touched substance to myself (by thinking, »this fabric is rough« or »this skin feels fresh«). But, though it is in truth impossible to determine these things, one could say that representation is less immediate when we touch. With the other senses, representation comes on more quickly, though in different ways, depending on each instance (an image is concurrent with its vision; a melody and a timbre with their audition, but a little less so; a flavour is still less concurrent with the sense of taste; and a smell is even more removed from the sense of smell, which brings it into the order of the sense of touch).¹

Now, one can only understand the identity of touching and touched as the identity of a movement, a motion and an emotion—precisely because it isn't the identity of a representation and the thing that it represents. The fresh skin that I mentioned isn't that at first (a »fresh skin«) in the action of my hand as it touches it. But it »is« my gesture; it is my hand and my hand comes across because my hand is its contact or its caress (in reality, except for a medical touch, there isn't any contact with skin that is exempt from a potential caress). Motion and emotion—they themselves a single thing—envelop the act, the sensitive *energeia*. And this *energeia* is nothing but the effectiveness of the contact, which is the effectiveness of a coming-towards and a reception-of-something—a double, exchangeable quality: I come towards the skin that welcomes and receives me; my skin welcomes the coming that the welcoming reception of the other is for itself. The coming-towards-one-another meets them at a point of quasi-confusion. Nor is this very point itself a motionless dot: it only is the image of a »point«; its reality is motion and emotion, something that budged, traction and attraction, and at the same time, continual variation and fluctuation. At the same time it is a vibration, a palpitation from one to the other, a swaying to and from, and for this reason it is an »identity« that doesn't identify although it gathers the one and the other and lets their presences partake in a shared coming.

Such is the *rühren* of touching. The liquid movement of a rhythm, a swell, an undertow of ex-istence, which is »being outside« because the »outside« is the inflection, the curve and the scansion of this flotation and friction ruling the way in which my body is steeped among all the bodies and my skin alongside all the other skins.

The movement of touching, therefore, isn't what another term designates: *tasten* in German, *tâter* in French (which also has *palper*)—which might seem more appropriate. Indeed, *tâter* [feeling, handling, patting down, examining by touch] designates a cognitive behaviour, not an affective one. One extends feelers in this way [on *tâte*] in order to recognize or appreciate a surface or a consistency, or to assess a density or a flexibility. But that is not the way we stroke or caress. Touching is stroking; it is essentially a caress, that is, the desire and the pleasure to come as close as one can to a skin—be it human, animal, textile or mineral, and so on—and to engage this proximity (namely, this superlative and most extreme approach) to play off two skins grappling with each other.

This play takes up again the rhythm that is essentially and originally the game of the inside/outside—perhaps the only game there is, if all playing consists in taking and leaving an area, in opening breaches, filling and voiding places, boxes and schedules. Touching is a movement in that it is rhythmic and not in that it might consist in the process or the steps of an exploration. »Approaching«, here, doesn't amount to coming into some area, and »contact« doesn't amount to establishing an exchange (of signs or signals, information, objects or services). »Approaching« rates as the superlative movement of proximity, never cancelled out in an identity since what is »closest« needs to remain at a distance, an infinitesimal distance, so as to be what it is. »Contact« amounts to a shake-up of sensitivity (also superlative and extreme), that is, of the very thing that makes up the capacity to receive and be touched. (*Rühren* can also have the meaning of playing an instrument. In French, one used to say *toucher le piano* [to touch the piano]: it always has to do with waking, shaking and animating.)

* * *

This play and this rhythm of the tactile are the *rühren* [stirring] of a desire—perhaps desire itself: indeed, is there even a desire that hasn't a desire to touch, if touching gives the pleasure of desire itself, the pleasure of desire straining towards the proximity of intercourse, since the intercourse is nothing but the sharing of an inside and an outside brought into play.

The first and once most widespread meaning of *rubr* has been the sense of pleasure in love and sex. The rhythmic movement and overflow, gushing forth not only juices but whole bodies spilling against and into one another, and one setting itself off from the other only to take it up and move in again together in succeeding waves that they become thanks to one another—this movement doesn't belong to any process of

action or cognition (and let's not mention here the finality of generation — which opens up another body; since this pleasure is without finality, or only has an end in the ending that suspends it on to itself in the overflow, exhausting it and opening it beyond itself).

It is understandable that the most widespread of taboos corresponds to the sense of touch. Freud noticed this, as can any anthropologist and ethnologist. In our own cultures, we know the importance of this taboo very well: while it no longer has an ostensibly sacred component, it watches with jealous care over all the conditions, permissions and modalities of bodies coming into contact. We do know exactly up to which point we have permission to touch as little as the hand of the other, not to mention the rest of the body; and up to which point and how permissible it is to embrace and to kiss, to hug and to stroke.

The knowledge we have of the degree to which touching involves one's being is solid — and consequently of the way in which being is strictly impossible to dissociate from intercourse. There isn't — absolutely not — »being« followed by a relation. There is »to be«, the verb whose act and transitivity are formed in connection(s) and only in this manner. Descartes' »I am« doesn't contravene this necessity, no more than Kant's »I« (or Fichte's, or Husserl's), or Heidegger's *je mein*. Each »I« is — and is nothing but — the act of its intercourse with the world, stretched out towards it, towards what one calls the »other« and whose otherness reveals itself in the touch or as touch.

Now, the touch (which didn't just accidentally give its name to a mode of divine intervention in the soul), as motion and emotion of the other, consists both of the tip of a contact and of the reception or accepting of its pressure and its reach. It grazes and pricks, punctures or seizes, indiscernibly and in a vibration where it immediately withdraws. The touch itself is its own trace already, which is to say, it wipes itself away as a mark or the point of its imprint while propagating its effects of motion and emotion. Saint John of the Cross speaks of »touches and impressions of the divine union towards which I am directing the soul«, and he specifies: »the activity of the understanding can very easily disturb and destroy this delicate knowledge, which is a sweet supernatural intelligence, which no natural faculty can reach or comprehend otherwise than by the way of recipient, and never by that of agent. No effort, therefore, should be made, lest the understanding should fashion something of itself...«² An understanding that isn't »active« is a passive understanding, the taste of a flavour, the feeling of a touch. Mystics have no monopoly on these metaphors — if they are metaphors. The »touch« of a painter, the »touch« of a pianist (and the keys of a piano, known as *touches* in French, and why not a computer touch pad), an added »touch« of something (a touch of fantasy, a touch of melancholy), to a decor or a text, as well as an erotic »touch«³, share the same quality, both on the dot and vibratory.

Now, it is never a matter of metaphors. It is always a matter of sensible reality, thus material and vibratory. When the soul quivers, it really is quivering, just as one may speak of water about to boil. What we commonly call the »soul« is in fact nothing other than the waking and welcoming — both mixed — of motion/emotion. The soul is the touched body — vibrating, receptive and responsive. Its response is the sharing out of the touch, its rise towards it. The body rises up, as the German word *Aufbruch* suggests, designating, as I pointed out, a socio-political uprising. Indeed, there is some insurrection (and sometimes some erection) in the motions of touching. A body rises up against its own enclosure, against being locked up within itself, and against its own entropy. It rebels against its death. It may not be impossible that the very touch of death triggers a last surrection, heart-rending and abandoned at the same time.

Whether it is about the coming of another (him or her), or the absolute alteration of death, it is the body that opens up and extends outside. It is its pure act: just as Aristotle's prime mover is pure *energeia* in which there is no remaining »potency« (*dunamis*), that is, nothing to expect, nothing that could come from the outside, likewise, when I am *touched*, I have nothing to expect: the touch is all act, in its mobile, vibratory and sudden action. And as for Aristotle's god, this act is accompanied by its own excess, which is its pleasure, the climax that is the flower or spark of the act — sun or darkness, always an abyss, and towards it, always the stirring *rubr* of *berühren* gushes forth or spills.

*

Translated by Christine Irizarry
This text was created for the lecture series
The Apostrophes of Love
at Tanzquartier Wien Season 2010/2011.

¹ Within the scope of this text, I can't possibly linger here. But we should refine the differential analysis of the senses. All the senses partake of touch in that they all carry the possibility that the sentient is identical with the sensed. But everyone modulates this identity as he or she pleases, and the difference in modulations is part and parcel of sensibility, which cannot be one and general. If it were so, it would only have an abstract »sensible«, a concept of the sensible. But in each setup, it brings to the fore both a (visual, auditory, and so on) sensibility and the plurality of sensibilities, that is, the fact that they refer the ones to the others in a differentiated and

inexhaustible manner. One will thus be able to go through all of them according to the model of the sense of touch, and to differentiate all of them by referring one to one or another among them. Now, to keep this short, taste and smell have a different involvement with the inside/outside relation: for them, absorption and assimilation occur in a very particular mode. Moreover, taste mostly has to do with a sensible that has some (solid or liquid) consistency, and olfaction mostly a fleeting, gaseous or airborne sensible. In each instance the relation differs from the extension and movement proper to the sense of touch. Each time they are special touches,

whose full meaning varies from one body to the other: so and so »has a nose«, as we say in French, whereas someone else »has an ear«, and so on. This »having« is a way of touching/being touched.

² Saint John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, trans. David Lewis (London: Thomas Baker, 1906), pp. 237–238 and 278.

³ *Touche moi, tu te touches*, in an absolute sense, are erotic words in French [and in English: *touch me, you are touching yourself*].

Philipp Gehmacher / Vladimir Miller / Friedrich Tietjen



ARM'S LENGTH

Philipp Gehmacher

o n
AT ARM'S LENGTH

Q U E S T I O N S ?

What do the performers look at when facing the camera?

What does this eye-like lense represent to them?

Who are they looking at and who is looking at them?

Where do they look when placing their focus in relation to the architectural front, parallel to the back wall, letting the camera record them from the periphery of their vision?

What is the reward of gazing at this infinite horizon?

What are they looking for when standing at the edge of the frame, at the edge of the camera perspective, for once leaving the back wall behind them?

Is it a threshold they don't decide to step over? Is the back wall the screen for them to unfold their experiences or existence?

Why does Yannick fall to the ground, his head just caught by Venke before he lands?

Why does An go back to where she has been before and all others keep on going on their timeline?

Where is she when she is back there?

Why do we chase Venke around?

What has she done or rather what are we doing to her?

What is it that Sabile and Yannick hold in their hands when shaping seemingly just air in front of them?

What does An do when rearranging all performers like figurines?

What is this stretched out arm signifying when measuring and visualizing the gap between the person standing next to me and myself?

What is the tracing across those bodies lined up, just connected by extended arms?

Is it a walk of condolence, a good-bye saying hello?

What does An touch when putting her fingers on Philipps stomach?

A wound, a mark, a hole?

Vladimir Miller / Friedrich Tietjen

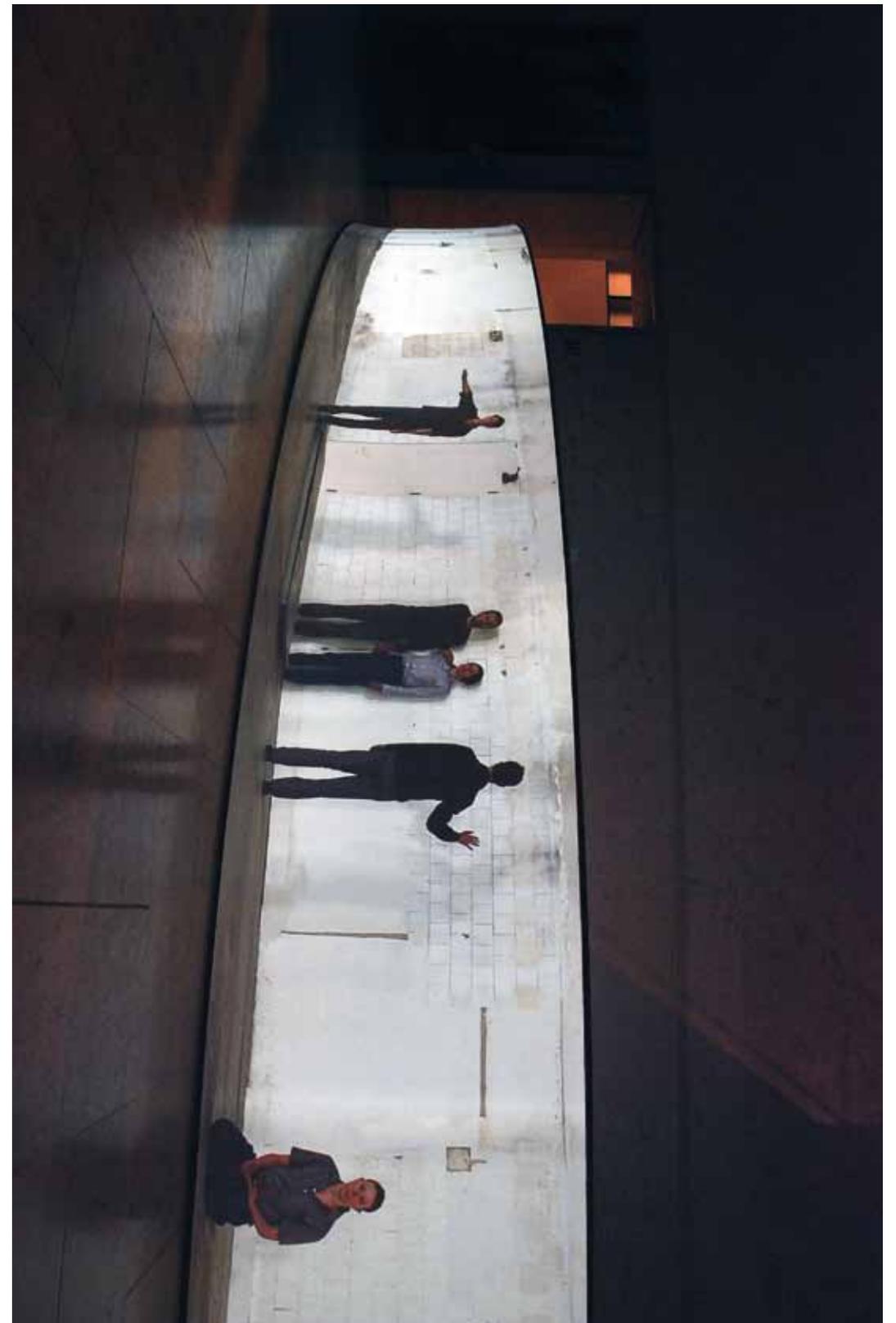
o n
AT ARM'S LENGTH

A R T I S T
T A L K

FT In *at arm's length* I saw a video of a performance or a dance. Isn't that two very different things, performance and video?

VM I think you saw very much its own thing. It's not a video of a performance or a dance piece and you're not asked to recreate a performance in your imagination which happened elsewhere from the video. The video is not a mere record. In this video-performance the performers relate to their ›being an image‹. It is a choreography of ›bodies being an image‹, to be precise. The actual performance merges with its medium and the spatial structure to create something in its own right. But I cannot describe it in terms of ›then‹ and ›now‹, as performance and its video. It's a newly merged object.

FT But where, then, would you see the difference of performing for an audience and performing for a camera and thus a film-viewing audience?





VM I think in this work you can see that the performers are actually aware of how the camera (re)shapes the space they are using. The camera lens distortion creates a curve in the space which becomes the new front. So the camera eye does something to that actual space of performance, imposing a new frontality within the architecture of the actual space. The performers relate to that new front, which was still an imaginary one at the time of recording. The performers act with the knowledge of the future limitation of their space, of their later presence within an image of their performance. So it is not a performance for the human eye, it negotiates explicitly through the eye of the camera with its presence and spacing now, in the moment of its viewing.

FT But isn't it one more space then? The camera lens and the actors bend the space they were performing in. But then the projection surface is being bent as well. By moving, the actors give a dimension to the projected space that is very flat on the right-hand side of the screening and very deep on the left-hand side, and there is no telling which space is bent away from the other. What kind of role do these bendings play in the choreography of the performance?

VM There is on the one hand a formal choice for the choreography to use the gradually deepening space that the viewpoint of the camera proposes and creates. We draw attention to the way the camera is constructing the space it is recording. This space is used as a tool to spatialize the choreography, as a dramaturgical arc, evolving slowly from a confined individual and group portrait towards a social body at the very end of the performance where space is wide and dispersed. Only the camera allows this perception of space and such clear arc of development. Also, due to the optical mechanisms of the camera, the frontal line is curved. The idea was to inverse this optical curve in the projection structure, to resist it further and to draw attention to the way the camera

shapes space. The two curves of the projected and the projection space come together and contradict each other, opening up a paradox to the viewer.

FT That means it is intended to be a coherent rather than a distorted, blurred, fractional space?

VM It is an ongoing negotiation between the continuity of space as seen from the static point of view of the camera and the fractured point of view of the audience. The space we show in the projection is perceived as a fractured space because it curves away from the view and the audience needs to reposition themselves to continue following it. The curve of the projection structure is anti-panoramic as it resists the illusion of a complete overview. The specific spatial constellation is also part of the dramaturgy of the piece. During the performance the group disperses more and more. At some point one of the performers goes backwards and the audience standing on the left-hand side of the projection cannot see her anymore. The illusionistic capability of video is questioned: the projection has this illusionistic mode of space depiction, every gesture towards the camera is going towards you, you can almost forget that it is a video. But as the video image curves away from you, you realize that it is an image. Looking to the side along the projection screen, you look at that image from a strange angle. The image gets a strange kind of »un-depth«. This gradual development away from the illusionistic space towards the realisation of it as a picture within one and the same structure was kind of fascinating.

FT So the work is meant to be disillusioning?

VM It is meant to allow for a gradation between the two polar terms of illusion and dis-illusion, to see them as a continuum. Not to be misunderstood: I'm very much for illusionism, I love illusionism precisely for its inherent breakdown. The question for me is: what do you do once you realize that something

is an illusion? The beautiful thing about illusion is that you are fully aware of being »tricked«. You engage with an image differently once you know its mechanics. I think there is a space of freedom for the spectator within that paradox of illusion, of a voluntary contribution towards the mechanics of the image. Illusion is something you partake in actively as a spectator. Just like when you watch a magic trick being performed. You kind of contribute yourself to that magic. That is the paradox of illusion; you cannot call it illusion actually: because once you see through them, they are not illusions anymore, they become delusions. So there is a kind of sustained intersection between delusion and reality, which is illusion.

FT Could you say more about the choreographic elements for the video? In the beginning on the right-hand side the performers seemed to aim at forms similar to group portraits; when they moved left, their performance gained spatial depth and the movement itself became more visible and, thus, important. So were there parts that were meant to be images and others to be performance?

VM Philipp and I share a big fascination for the in-between space of photography and video. So the choreography is composed as a very fluent sequence of stills, moments of non-movement and of body compositions. One thing that was choreographed specifically for the image is the performer's gesture towards the frame of the image itself, a kind of pointing to its limits, the knowledge of the limit of the frame, which of course is not present in the space in the moment the gesture was executed. It is an imaginary border, a relation towards the future of this gesture as an image. There are interesting aspects of who is relating to what and what do performers know about the future of that image and about being watched. They are enclosed within a frame, we are looking into something which is clearly artificial and somehow they are aware of their being-an-image, that is choreographed very specifically.



FT What does that do with the body, when it consciously becomes an image?

VM For me it is basically a question that relates to power, of how to deliver yourself consciously to that other condition. This knowledge of becoming represented in the future, becoming an image in the future is emancipatory towards the otherwise very powerful, maybe overpowering medium of video. When video depicts an event, you do have control over how you are relating to the other bodies within that event, but you seldom control how the video relates you to the other bodies and objects. How meaning emerges from that relation which is specific to the viewpoint of the camera. It is very interesting for a choreography to knowingly submit itself to the viewpoint of a camera, and even more so to include an awareness of the picture plane as a compositional plane into the movement. Or, as in our case, in relating to both spaces, the actual and the camera-formed space, try and make that control of the camera over the spatial structure and the production of meaning apparent and available to the spectator.

FT But does that power not exist in the performance as there are no frames as in the image? Does it exist only in video?

VM That response to the control aspect of the camera is usually left out in the perception and production of videos, especially in videos of movement and choreographic relations in space. In relationship to the event of the performance that was filmed, this video is a new event, and not a representation. Performers overlap only because the camera was positioned specifically and they do it only here, on the projection surface. They knew that they would be overlapping, that their bodies were touching on video but not in reality when they were filmed. All those relationships of touch, of pointing, of sizes, of distances, they exist only towards the camera. In this

work they are actually never »pictured performers«, they were performers when they were filmed, and then they become a different kind of being, a moving image. They actually do disappear when they leave the frame, they actually do negate each other when they overlap in the projection. The drama that they develop is as much a drama of a picture as it is a drama of spatial relations. That thought is very important to me.

FT But if I would have a document of another performance I probably would have similar relations when I look at the relations of the bodies.

VM But the video and the performers usually will not make you aware of this, video tends to hide its control. It asks you to forget the framing and to re-imagine the performance, it asks you not to pay attention to its properties as a picture: to the contour of the bodies, their touch, their relations and overlappings on the picture plane, because they don't exist in the reality the video is apparently merely referencing. Video does say »I am insufficient, I have techniques like montage to convey an experience«, but it never says »I am the event and not the performance«. Video as a medium is »see through«, transparent.

FT I wonder whether you can escape that. When I was looking at the video and I couldn't get away from recreating the performance in a way.

VM Sure. But this apparent impossibility is the thing I want to explore. It is a specific question on the video side of this performance.

FT But if there is a definite beginning and an end as it was – how to escape narrative developments?

VM There is a separation between the movement itself and the drama and pathos it produces. It is a negotiation between the movement and its symbolism within that choreographic space.



FT Is it aware of its pathos?

VM Yes. There are very abstract elements within the choreography and there is a resistant layer of drama. But it is never one or the other. It is an ongoing negotiation between the gesture as such and what it produces in relationship and proximity to other gestures. It is a co-existence, not just jumping from one to another but constantly allowing for a double reading, a double reading of the space, the image, and the double reading of the gesture.

FT I was also wondering about the speed of the performance: except for the part where people were chasing each other, things were going always at the same speed. Why is it so slow?

VM This is not something we have explicitly discussed. Philipp choreographed the particular sequences of movement and from that we took the length of the video. I think it is lingering somewhere between movement and non-movement, between photography and a moving image. Sometimes when you look away and then look again you find that nothing had changed, the image was close to a still. I enjoy these moments of self-destruction, something that video should allow for in a kind of self-attention.

FT One last question: could you describe in a few sentences what the difference between producing a video and doing a choreography is? Is there a difference in thinking about a video and thinking about performance?

VM Surely there is a huge difference. In our work we kind of meet in the in-between space. So it is not the difference between them, but the space in between and we are trying to put something in that space.



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The previous text is an edited version of the artist's talk with Vladimir Miller and Friedrich Tietjen on *at arm's length* on April 21st in the frame of SCORES No1: *touché* at Tanzquartier Wien. Due to the flight-situation caused by the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjalla, Philipp Gehmacher, who originally should take part in the artist's talk, couldn't participate.

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The video-installation
at arm's length
by Philipp Gehmacher and Vladimir Miller
was premiered on
April 21st 2010 in Leopold Museum in the frame of
SCORES No1: *touché*.

Philipp Gehmacher

o n
AT ARM'S LENGTH

A N S W E R S ?

The movements and pathways of the performers are highly choreographed, like a school play. People are set in their ways, follow a sequence of events that carries them across the lifeline of the installation. They are stuck together, only leaving each other for short moments of solitary or coupled existence. They fall at times, as it is their tool of disappearing. It is a desire to take their face from view and ground it. It is hiding underneath the camera eyes, a desire to be swallowed up by the landscape they live in, the landscape they want to be part of.

Still they get caught sometimes and put back upright again. We don't know whether that is what they are asking for. They appear to operate slowly as they indeed have to constantly fall into a constellation, thus their moving is an action as much as a pathway into the next image. The stills might then appear as pauses. It is like they keep asking: ›Is this another still? Another still image?‹ Or rather: ›Is this another event, a moment of significance that I am not aware of?‹ They try to make contact with the imagined gaze onto them that is exceedingly more and more to their left and represented by the camera. They are aware of the ›landscape‹ in front of them they are partly caught up with. They are a group bound together by constellations that I've partly trapped and tricked them into. They are figures that I arranged, led by the never-ending desire to depict interestingly family-sized community and trauma passed on through generations.

Post-memory, whose memory is it anyway? Trying to touch the subject of interdependence, an inside and an outside never quite matching, they stay close for most of the time. At some point one of them starts running wildly across the space, seemingly chased by most of the others. A moment that tries to break the so far established spatial and temporal hierarchies. The screen becomes the location of the event, the timeline is gone. The running attempts to erase all previously engaged actions, rhythms and inscribed places. But they arrest themselves and stop, to be arranged and rearranged by one of them. The further they move away from the camera the more space they have, the more ›reak their space becomes, yet they still line up again. At the very end, they look not just back but actually start to perform for the camera, that still looks at them from their faraway beginnings.

Arno Böhler

o n

T O U C H I N G

1

T O U C H I N G T H I N K I N G

Hello, I'm Arno. I am a so-called philosopher because I teach philosophy at the University of Vienna. First I would like to thank Tanzquartier Wien, especially Krassimira, Sandra und Mette, for their kind invitation to share some thoughts with you about touch and visibility. As a philosopher, of course, I would like to address this question first by examining the relationship between thinking and touching.

In the history of philosophy we encounter quite a fascinating gang of thinkers who have already tried to solve this problem. They have iterated questions like »What is the sense of touching?» or »Is it possible at all to think touching?» The second question, especially, will haunt me in this talk, because there do exist good reasons to assume that any relationship between touching & thinking is, in itself, an aporetic one. This becomes evident as soon as one remembers that thinking has been designated as a mode of touching the untouchable. According to this powerful tradition, the performance of thinking touches precisely that very aspect of something that cannot be touched — namely its literal meaning. Hence, one touches something in a thoughtful way only as long as one does not touch it in a sheer physical manner, like I am touching this book here and now: in a crude, physical manner. It's a gesture that immediately looks insensitive. [Arno indeed takes a book in his hands and presses his fingers forcefully on its cover.] So, whenever one touches something in a thoughtful, sensitive, respectful mode, one is automatically called to resist touching it in a purely physical manner. This is the reason why thinking finally became the meta-physical gesture par excellence in the course of our human history.

Having this picture of thinking in mind, I immediately remembered a Jacques Derrida text when I was asked to speak about the relation of touching, visibility & thinking. The book is called *On Touching* — *Jean-Luc Nancy*. It is one of Derrida's last works

before he passed away in 2004. The title already says that this text tries to address — or touch on — the thinking of a close friend: Jean-Luc Nancy. It is as if the book does not merely speak on touching, but actually comes into contact with — touches — somebody else. Like a speech-act, it actually does what it says. And — perhaps, who knows? — maybe his words in *On Touching* really hit their addressee in such a way that they actually touched him in a striking mode.

In any case, we face a bizarre scene here: one philosopher tries to touch another philosopher by addressing his thoughts on touching to him through his book *On Touching*, in a more or less touchy manner. And this other »friend of thinking« is not just any philosopher, but the one Derrida explicitly called the other great contemporary philosopher of touch, beside himself.

Jacques Derrida <— in touch with —> Jean-Luc Nancy
//on touching\\

I instantly had the impulse to talk about this book in my own talk on *touché*. I have to confess that maybe this is because I was haunted by the narcissistic desire to be part of this touching story. Who knows? Who has ever unveiled the secret goings-on in the labyrinth of one's desires? I'll confess again that I've never met such a person.

Despite this perhaps obscure fact that humans, and maybe philosophers in particular, are more or less blind concerning the strivings of their psyche, Derrida had indeed uttered this strange, perhaps ironic claim that he and Nancy are the two big contemporary philosophers of touch. He justified this assumption by stating that they discovered the very law of touching for the first time: That touching always implies a moment of dispense; a withdrawal; a step backward; a dance of difference; of separation and »dis-dance«.

From this it follows that being in touch with something or somebody else is never just a romantic form of synthesis, a way of coming together to join with others in order to satisfy one's bonding desires.

This warning signal is the decisive point which both Nancy and Derrida called us to consider when we try to think touching in current times. Because now, after Derrida, after Nancy, after the cesura of their thinking has taken place, one is definitely called to consider touching being not only a way of contacting things, but even more, and even more important and necessary, a mode of distancing oneself from the thing one actually is in touch with. Henceforth one has to assume that there is always already a counter-movement at work in touching, so that one indeed separates oneself from the thing one is in touch with in order to let the contact become a sensitive, tactful, touching one. No one could ever be truly in touch with some-body or some-thing else if one is not fleeing the other while simultaneously contacting him, her or it.

To express this difficult matter in simple terms: There is something at work in touching that itself cannot be touched! And it is this untouchable aspect that constitutes the very dignity of touching, since it allows us more or less to distinguish a thoughtful, sensitive and tactful mode of contact with a thoughtless, insensitive, tactless one.

In line with these thoughts, Krassimira Kruschkova from Tanzquartier Wien co-edited a book with the wonderful title *It Takes Place When It Doesn't*. This title truly hits the very nature of touching since it plays in a thoughtful way with its aporetic double nature — that is to say, with the chiasmic double-bind of connecting and disconnecting oneself from the thing one is actually in touch with that makes the contact indeed a sensitive one. This is the reason why, when touching takes place, it can be said that it also doesn't. One will never feel touched by anything if one just touches something in a purely physical manner. (In the simple presence of its presence.) Rather, you have to take a step backward once you connect yourself with somebody else in order to make the contact a touching and tactful one. Nobody can escape this law of tact in any contact, as Derrida expressed this matter so nicely while he was in touch with Jean-Luc Nancy concerning *On Touching!*

Some of you might know that the call to perform such a step backward (*einen Schritt zurück machen**) is a basic concept in Heidegger's late work. He introduced this notion as a thoughtful critical weapon against the mega-tendency of our times to step forward only, over and over again. The true reason, of course, why we are all called to step forward to be *fort-schrittlich** lies in the fact that bourgeois societies, societies driven by the very logic of capitalistic production, are called to grow indefinitely merely in economic, to wit, quantitative or measurable terms. This, and just this, is the very

systematic reason why we are all called by the logic of our economic system in a methodological and not arbitrary sense to step forward day by day in order to become bigger, better, faster, more efficient or innovative. But, and this is what Heidegger asks us to remember when he called us to perform a step backward, by trying to step forward constantly we are actually compelled to ignore the very law of tact with our contacts. Respecting this law would demand the opposite: to perform the counter-movement of a step backward in all our contacts in order to tune them in a qualitative, tactful sense and manner.

W H E N O U R E Y E S T O U C H ...

So, maybe this is the right moment to return to Derrida's book *On Touching* — Jean-Luc Nancy and present to you the sentence that haunted me in the primordial part of this talk when I was invited to speak about touch and visibility.

»When our eyes touch, is it day or is it night?«
(*On Touching*, p.2)

I think this stupid, absurd question can actually help us to re-think the relation of visibility and touch in quite a fresh deconstructive way.

If two people look into each other's eyes, Derrida seems to say, they obviously establish a visual connection with their eyes. Insofar as this contact is enabled by the light that allows their eyes to see, there indeed exists a luminous physical connection between their eyes. They obviously have to be in touch with — and at once touched by — the light that enlightens the space between their eyes to be able to see the eyes of the other. It is due to this that they are actually in a position to look through the light that exists between their eyes and see the eyes of the other as something that is visible, something one can look at.

So, concerning Derrida's question, it seems as if one would have to conclude that:

W h e n e v e r o u r e y e s t o u c h , i t i s d a y !

It seems this must be the case from the premises we have established, for without the light offered by day (and lacking in the night), a pair of eyes would simply not have the resources necessary to see another pair of eyes. However, if one just sees, just looks at the eyes of the other — like a physician does when she is doing an eye-operation, looking just at a pair of eyes as merely a physical thing — one would doubtless fail to see the gaze of the other. If one aims to look into the gaze of the other, one would rather have to look through the eyes actually being looked at, and into their depth. Establishing purely physical contact between eyes is never enough to be truly in touch with the eyes of the other. One rather has to enter the night of the withdrawal that commands us to look behind the eyes that we see in order to discover the gaze of the other. Now, from this perspective, it seems as if one would have to conclude that:

When our eyes touch, it is night!

This is because, as I said before, one is actually called to perform a step backward whenever one is ready to touch something or somebody in a truly touching way. There has to be a blind spot, a certain kind of untouchability to let touch become a touching (that is, moving or affecting) event at all!

By the way, this is the very reason why it is especially insensitive to touch anyone's eyes with one's fingers. [Arno demonstrates the truth of this utterance by touching his eyes with his fingers.] Such an act is intrinsically tactless because one mistakes the very law of tact while one is touching one's eyes as if they would be just an insensitive, death matter. This strikingly shows that one is ready to perform a tactful mode of contact only when one is ready to contact, to see, touch, sense the untouchable while one is touching something or somebody. And, maybe, this is part of the story Derrida wanted to tell when he wrote that seemingly surreal question:

»When our eyes touch, is it day or is it night?«

T H I N K I N G T O U C H I N G

The last question I would like to address in this talk is the relation between body, touch and visibility. So, let us finally come back to the kinesthetic performance of touching somebody in a corporeal manner.

Whenever one touches something, it can indeed be said that one experiences the fact that one's self ends just there where one is touching something else. Now one knows: Here I am! Namely, just there, where I end — where I actually feel myself being in touch with something else, with some other thing. In touching something one observably experiences the margins of oneself because right there, where I definitely feel that I am in touch with something else, I experience at once the borders and limitations of myself. Right there, where it hit me, I felt in fact that I was touched by some sort of thing, which necessarily restricts an infinite extension of myself, for I experience some kind of resistance in its existence encountering mine. Something must be there, because I could definitely sense a something right there.

Let us demonstrate this matter. If I touch this table here, [Arno indeed touches the table he is sitting at several times] I sense its reality insofar as I actually feel that at the very borders of my fingers something else starts to be: namely, this table. The »it« is real insofar as I sense a difference between the table and myself. Whenever I touch something I am convinced by the very evidence of the sense of touch that there exists something else, something real, as I have been indeed been touched by something. And this is the very meaning of touching: it gives us a sense of reality, in two ways:

First, it provides us with a sense of ourselves as being a finite, fragile entity restricted by others. In this particular sense one is always already in touch with oneself when one is touching another. I literally touch myself (*Ich berühre mich selbst**) whenever I am in touch with somebody else. (Philosophers like Kant, Heidegger and others called this self-affection.) Second, on the contrary, touching provides us with a transitive sense for real things insofar as we experience that they hit us when they encounter and halt our extension. (Derrida called this aspect the alter-auto-affection at work in touching).

In his tremendously thoughtful reflections concerning touching in his texts *On Physics* and *On the Soul*, Aristotle already claimed that touching is, in itself, nothing other than the very experience of heterogeneity. Whenever one touches something one senses a difference between oneself and the thing one is touching.

This means that the distinction between
myself and others
is fundamentally born right here from
the sense of touch!

Originally, the distinction is neither simply a sense of ethic nor esthetic, but rather a kinesthetic sense. One will always feel to be part of a real world as long as one is actually able to be in touch with things. Therefore, one has to realize that the performance of touching is not merely an inner performance of inner feelings, as bourgeois philosophy wants us to think.

— No! Precisely not. —

Because, on the very contrary, it actually gives a feeling of something that in fact exists outside oneself. Or, to be more precise, it exists directly at the very border of myself, just there, where I end and some heterogeneous entity starts. It is this very experience of being ex-posed to something else which we have whenever we are touched by something. Therefore, every striking experience of being in touch with something else actually brings us »down to earth.« It literally re-territorializes the self, as Deleuze would probably say, since the sense of touching something actually shows me the borders of myself. It restricts the territory and thereby the kingdom of the self. The German word *Befindlichkeit** is beautiful in this respect because it literally says that I can find myself only when I actually sense myself being already in touch with a world in a more or less tactful way.

Even the notion of feeling, of sensing myself while I am in touch with the world, is therefore never an inner feeling of myself within myself. Even feelings are not private, inner entities, as bourgeois philosophy has taught us to think.

— No! Precisely not. —

Feelings are, as the Greek word *ek-stasis* says, rather a form of being outside, in the middle of the external world that surrounds me. They are — and Nancy has offered this matter over and over again, like Heidegger did before him — the experience of ex-posing oneself to others. One actually becomes a lived body once a body develops a sense for the external world it is in touch with, in a more or less sensible way. It is in this way that it becomes world-wide.

In many ancient philosophies, for example in Greek philosophy and even more in ancient Indian philosophies, you'll find the notion of a world-soul (*Weltseele**). Since touching something is the performance of an extroversion, the exposition of one's self toward others, it is not at all an inner, private feeling. One is indeed leaving one's body as one is in touch with the world one is affected by. And, as a consequence of this, the borders of one's body become skin-like, porous, bright and world-wide. Now, since a body is in fact ready to sense the world it is corporeally in touch with, it definitely has become a lived-body — through this way of touching the world and being in touch with it in a more or less touching, tactful manner. And this mode of perceiving the world is precisely what the Greeks have called *aisthesis* in ancient times.

Lived bodies are, by definition, bodies capable of escaping the envelope of the »private body« so that they are able to sense their environment through the periphery of their own bodies — their skin. They are, as Nancy said in *Corpus, Haut**, skin-like entities; they are the microcosm of a world-wide macrocosm, as Renaissance philosophies probably would have expressed it. Since a lived body is sensing the environment it is in touch with, it should be called a being-in-the-world rather than a being-in-itself. It has always already ex-scribed its proper position by starting to sense the external world it is corporeally in touch with in an eccentric, ex-territorialized manner. Again, it was Aristotle who discovered this link between the notion of life, of lived bodies and the sense of touching. With this, the psyche would just be the name of certain kind of body — one capable of touching and being in touch with others, of being a lived body, a body with a periphery: *Peri-Psyche*!?

Maybe the psyche is extended — but can't know it?

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The previous text is a transcription of a video-lecture titled *On Touching*, by Arno Böhler on April 21st 2010, commissioned by Tanzquartier Wien in the frame of SCORES No1: *touché*.



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The performance CRY ME A RIVER
by Anna Mendelssohn was coproduced by and premiered at
Tanzquartier Wien on May 21st, 2010.

Anna Mendelssohn

CRY ME A RIVER

HOW TO FIND A
POLITICAL MONOLOGUE

At the outset of this project* I had in mind to research myself into the topic of melting ice caps and climate change in order to finally write a performance text for myself. But as my research progressed, I discovered that there is a vast amount of monologues on the web just ready for me to use. Interviews, conferences, lectures and all of these monologues were much better than anything I could ever write that could make sense, because a lot of these people actually have an excellent understanding of what they are talking about. The only thing I could talk about, I realised, was myself.

So I decided to approach this topic in a similar way an essayist in literature would approach a topic. Aldous Huxley says essays are comprised of three poles: the personal and autobiographical, the objective and factual, the abstract and universal pole. Climate change seemed ideal for embracing all of these poles. I began to collect monologues that seemed interesting to me. My definition of »interesting« was entirely intuitive and associative, as was my research. I collected hard facts, personal accounts, philosophical excursions, apocalyptic scenarios, instructions, battle cries and many more. The personal texts I then began to write were very much informed by this research. Certain ideas kept coming up, fascinated me and seemed to have analogies with aspects of my own personal life. Time (running out, frozen in ice cores, predicting the future), truth (scientific, subjective, higher), tears (mine, other's, the planet's). If my starting point had not been the melting of the ice caps and glaciers but rather a massive oil spill, would my personal texts have taken on an entirely different direction — a more murky, gloomy, sticky one? The way the final texts were chosen and then fell together to form a single monologue was again an intuitive, associative process. It happened very fast and without much thinking. There is a lot missing and more to say.

C R Y M E A R I V E R

The Evolution Biologist

I just had a call from my Inuit friend Angaangac. He is a Greenland Inuit and he was on his way to Baffin Island and we were talking about this and he said to me »How do you refreeze the ice up there? It can't be done.«

The Surgeon

So I went to the public library, and I found there are 14 definitions of the word hope. None of which hits you as being accurate, making sense because it's an abstract concept, it's an abstract idea. They all come down to the expectation that something good is going to happen. So I looked at where the word comes from and I found it has it's indo-european root in the word *ken* and that's the same root as where the word curve comes from and that of course means a change in direction. I find that idea very interesting and also very provocative. Because now, when we think of hope, we have to think of looking into other directions. And there is another not so much a definition as a description of hope that has always appealed to me — it's from Vaclav Havel in his perfectly spectacular book — *Disturbing the Peace* — in which he says that hope does not consist of the expectation that things

will come out just exactly right but that they will make sense regardless of how they come out.

The Poet

I have always had very simple ideas, and they haven't changed that much. One was always to write good poetry, to try to write good poetry, and the other thing has always been to pay regard to the issues that are right in front of you, the problems of politics and history that are right on your doorstep—not to turn your head aside, not to avert your eyes.

Me

Now I know I am not the hub of existence. I am meaningless, a bit of chemical scum, as Stephen Hawking puts it very nicely. And yet I am all I can think of. I spend hours every day thinking about nothing but myself. It's also my favorite conversation topic. If someone opens a conversation with me for example saying: you are quite a pedantic person, aren't you? I immediately go: really? That's interesting! What makes you say that? Whereas, if someone starts a conversation with me, for example about the Chinese economy, I must say.

The Activist

I am not at all optimistic. I think it's silly to even use the language of hope and optimism. I think the whole discussion of hope, fingers crossed and so on is utterly ridiculous and and and juvenile, quite frankly. There is no point in hoping for something that is not on the negotiating table. When you look at what's on the table — the level of financing is an insult. We are looking at 10 billion dollars max. Every single credible estimate starts at a 100 billion. To me it's politically dangerous to call 10 billion a success because it creates an illusion of having addressed a very dire crisis! And I think serious activists have a responsibility to truth. And you know sometimes, NGOs are governed by other parties, just like politicians are, where it's more important to claim a success, because claiming a success means you can go raise more money because you look positive and efficient and effective. But I don't think the environmental movement should be governed by those kinds of concerns. So I think that when something is not on the negotiating table, the level of financing for example, then what you need to do

is to develop strategies so that it will be on the table in the future. Which is why my hope is placed in these new movement alliances that we have seen forming here because

The movie quote

everything is so much more complicated than you think. You only see a tenth of what is true, there are a million little strings attached to every choice you make. You can destroy your life every time you choose. And they say there is no fate. But there is, it's what you create. And even though this world goes on for eons and eons, you are only here for a fraction of a second.

The Journalist

And I think the consequence of that is self-evidently that the consensus itself, the consensus about the consensus, has begun to crack. I mean that's just a political reality. All of these factors, starting with the East Anglia emails, move through this very snowy winter. All of these have an effect; a political effect, a real consequence and I think the consequence, is that there is a crack in the

the problem is absolutely soluble. And even in a way that is relatively cheap. The idea in its most basic form is that you could put sulfuric acid particles, sulfides, into the upper atmosphere, the stratosphere, and they reflect away the sunlight and that cools down the planet. And I know for certain that it will work!

It cools down because we have shielded the atmosphere a little bit. There's no big mystery about it. There is lots of mystery in the details and there are some bad side effects, but it works and — it's fast. This is really important to say. Scientific engineering, whether we like it or not, gives us the extraordinary power to affect the future of the planet, to control the planet, gives us weather and climate control. Now scientists in their labs are not working on some crazy ideas to engineer the whole planet, they are simply developing science that makes it easier and easier to do.

But there is one more thing I want to throw into this discussion: right now we are thinking of a big and rich country like the US that will do this, but it might very well be that in, say, 2030 China wakes up and realizes that the climate impacts

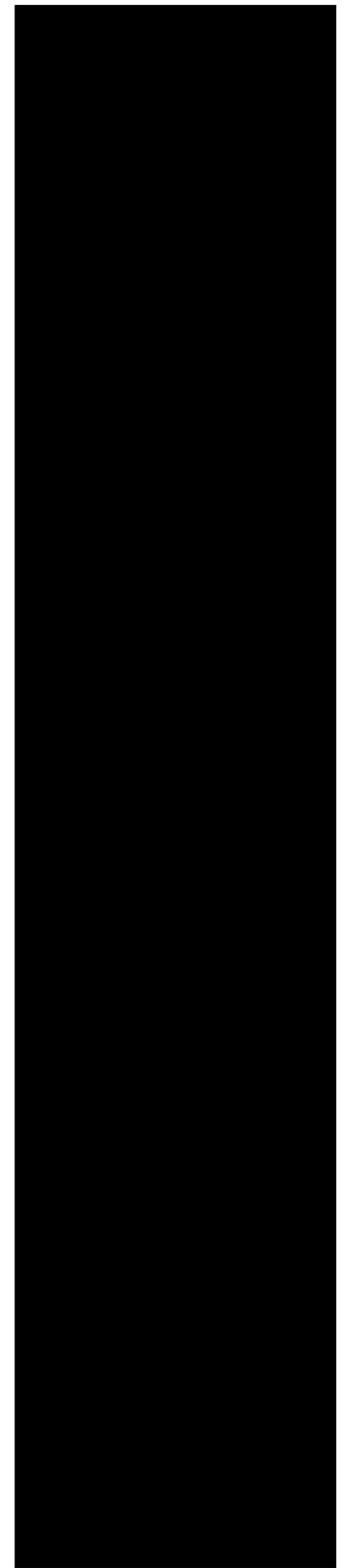
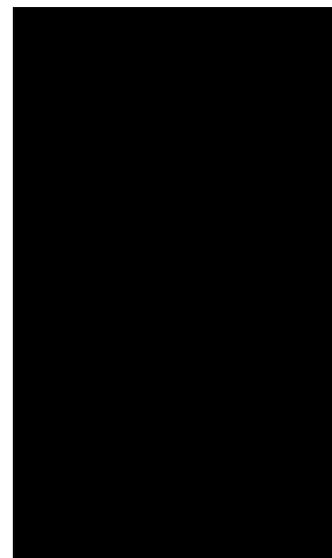
Me

At some point I began to cry. And that went on for many months. Sometimes it was just a few romantic tears rolling down my face. But other times, especially when I was alone, it would come from deep down inside me and I would wail and I would lament and I would cry out to the world: I have this pain.

And I went to see the psychotherapist and that was great because I would go in there and I would sit down, and I would talk about nothing but myself for 50 minutes, crying, and that cost me 70 Euros! So I think



have become completely unacceptable. Now they might not be very interested in the moral conversations we have been having here and they may just decide that they would rather have a geo-engineered world than a non-geo-engineered world and we will have no international mechanism to figure out who makes the decision.



Brigitte Wilfing / Katherina Zakravsky

Q U O D E R A T D E M O N S T R A N D U M :

P A R A S I T E S K I S S

Quod Erat Demonstrandum: Parasites Kiss was a joint lecture performance by Brigitte Wilfing and Katherina Zakravsky (in the frame of SCORES No1: *touché*, on April 23 2010 at Tanzquartier Wien / Studios). On the trail of horror movies and Spinoza's Ethics, the multivalent expression *touché* triggers an ecstatic reflection on the nature of emotion. As performers we found ourselves touched, affected, infected, and so recognised the infectious character of emotion. Emotions, passions are infections. From the most miserable neurosis to the noblest of passions everything is a socio-cultural infection. So it is necessary to study the centres of infection in detail and to cultivate the art of allowing oneself to be affected in this way and not in an other, as an individual and collective art of immunity.

Immunity — that is both protection against poisonous emotions as well as preventive contact with wholesome foreign and dirty substances – this is the new art.

Excerpts from the performance

Free-floating blocks of emotions clump into ever more complex emotional clusters. The complexity of the mixture overstrains the taxonomic capacity of the system. The following unsettling manifestations appear:

Self-ironic anxiety pleasure
Balanced enjoyment revulsion
Panic alternating with boredom
Sentimental fear of the future
Nostalgic anger
Furious empathy
Being hysterically ashamed for the other
Cheerful control-freakery
Sheepishly reflected mischief
Multiple jealousy affected by the craving for information
Coquettish self-hate disguised as envy
Tragicomic love-hate in all its nuances,
And, naturally, the deeply melancholic hunt for amusement



Stills from *Shivers* (David Cronenberg, 1975)



Stills from *Shivers* (David Cronenberg, 1975)

The second stage of the touch virus is described as a heightened desire for attention. It produces the pressure to enthuse and impress other people about oneself. The idée fixe develops of being able, through sweat, to transfer one's ego to others. The result of this is that one wants to make contact with ever more people and the desire arises of getting people in one's immediate environment to sweat.

The absolute strongholds of the infection are rehearsal and studio rooms where the contemporary dance form »contact improvisation« is being experimented with. In CI, two or more people move in more or less permanent body contact with another; the forms are not prescribed but are free, which can lead to an arrangement of bodies that prevents the drops of sweat dripping freely to the floor.

Instead, the other body catches it, dances with it, integrates it, adds its own to it in order then to pass it on. It is to be observed how this dance form mutates into a caricature of a manic sweat-sharing ambition. In the intoxication of dripping, the infected clasp others below them, which leads to the formation of human pyramids that reach out into the street and barricade public space. Grotesque body landscapes now obstruct free movement in the city.

(...)

Definitio

I also call the body of the second order body of pure sexiness

Axiom

Observe your affective potential as a plastic, malleable mass that is the object of affective self-education. Through the methodical application of the laws of association, by which we deliberately produce particular affects in connection with people, events, weather situations, landscapes and circumstances and repeat this connection between affect and object as often as possible in order to imprint it in affective memory, at the same time we are expanding the quantity of things that are loved and the wealth of affective modulation. Affective self-education creates individuals where before there were only vague conditions; and they recognize the wealth of their potential through the surprising discovery of all the various traits that they have in common with particular modes of other conditions.

Thus our capacity for action can be influenced, and consequently be promoted and inhibited, through the capacities of another individual thing that has something in common with us, but not through the capacities of a thing whose nature is thoroughly different from ours.

Ultimately collective self-education will produce new affectabilities, thus far unknown individuations, which enormously differentiate the market of desire and pleasure. No longer bothered by competition, everyone can become the lover of one's affective niche, an undisputed desire specialist of thus-far unloved, unnoticed, even unrecognized event individuals. Everyone can specialise their affect apparatus to the extent that it is completely suited to being affected by one or more singularities of their choice or of their fortune. Through years of rigorous modulation, there will be highly specialised lovers of the blue four-o'clock hour in the afternoon, of the pensioners and the pigeons associated with them in the park, of that street or that smile or that dialect, of that particular bar at three in the morning, of this person, but only if he or she appears with those two others; everyone will be the molecular cook of their singular affect landscape, refined to the state of delirium – until a never-suspected disgust will destroy this delicate web. Because, in the end, the late descendants of the House of Usher could hardly bear the friction of silk upon their skin.

(...)

The third stage is described as the compulsive lasciviousness syndrome. Touching the other is very fixed on their sex organs or the exchange of saliva through kissing. Here for the first time the infection assumes a physical form. The pressure to touch and be touched increases drastically. Those concerned are subject to a constant compulsion to rub their body against someone; if there are no people in the vicinity then house walls, street lamps, buses at bus stops, trees in the green areas of the city serve for short-term relief. As soon as one has marked an object, the ability to distinguish between subject and object decreases. One develops a romantic attachment to every place that has been marked. The marking of objects produces a high level of frustration, as it is not possible for the carrier to generate heat and sweat in the object and thus produce a reaction.

(...)

Definitio

I call a transient affect a potentially complete exchange of the programmes, which is not characterized by a sporadic time unit but through the event mode of transience. At this level it continues to exist in its transience universe and is reactivated as soon as it enters a congruent transience zone.

You do not need to love the programme whose dissemination you are serving: you do not even need to know it, as you are disseminating it anyway. Don't waste your time on the programme; love the pure means that it chooses for its purpose, love the finite, destructible shells, the carriers; and in their unique course of destruction love your – yet unknown – own. You will be destroyed, so make sure that you are loving what destroys you. Embrace the Amor Fati of the frequently shared decay of all these transient carrier bodies.

Become its living proof.

Paula Caspão

IMPLAUSIBLE CONNECTIONS
on the uses of an (in)certain choreographic

- They won't find anything (do we agree?).

- Sure.

- But it has to look as if they were looking. Looking hard (I mean).

- I see. All around, up and down, under water, and again... (SIGH)



Here is Max Perna, born in Prairie du Chien twenty years after the publication of *The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody*, official address Belleville, Paris. Fond of the Great Lakes history and detective TV series, lives mainly on fishing. Loves martini dirty. Welcomes any gardening part times in Le Jardin des Plantes (e.g. catching metamorphosis in flagrante delicto). Remembers little of his life before the day he was seen here (on the left), looking for a solid plan under water. It was Tuesday, twenty to ten, sunny, burning hot. A long time ago. Too hot to be true.

SILENCE.
FOR FIVE LONG MINUTES
NOTHING MOVES
APART FROM THE WIND
IN THE LEAVES

AFTER ONE MINUTE

A FLY STARTS BUZZING

AROUND THE IMAGE

Can we stay here for a while
in the shadow?



Then the woman in red bikini whispers something in the other's ear. Max Perna swears he heard her saying *The history of Prairie du Chien dates back to the 17th century, to the arrival of the French voyageurs.*

Not bad. More improbable than that you die. Go on.



That's when they focus on the dog. *Isn't he cute?* The other woman whispers in the dog's ear: *Prairie du Chien is located near the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers, a strategic point connecting the Great Lakes with the Mississippi. It has many amazing sites open for visits, and its event-calendar is filled year-round with special events to intrigue and satisfy a variety of interests.*

Hm. Did you say *intrigue*?

(asks the little boy in blue

addressing a tree we cannot see)

Humming Rumba Azul
(Caetano Veloso),
the kid decides to go for it.
Tchiky tchicky tchiky
Ai mi Corazon, ai ai ai...

The vibration of his voice frightens a young eel – just passing incognito between his ankles (*y su canto azul, sensuaaaal* – tchicky tchicky tchicky tatarara).



Certain parts of his body start moving in hardly visible ways (»eel's electricity effect«, they say, hope you can see it, despite the bad quality of the transmission).



Oh hi. Glad to hear you.
 SILENCE.
Picking Rosa canina in my garden?
That's terrible. How many are they?
 LONGER SILENCE.
Well if it's only four
I don't see the...
 SILENCE AGAIN
 (a bit shorter but more significant).
I'll drop by, promised.

In the meanwhile, in a living room with a view to the lake, the phone rings.

[1, 2, 3, 4 TIMES. 1, 2, 3 TIMES. STEPS ON A WOODEN FLOOR]

The woman in red bikini looks to that side and catches a glimpse of the window. She pulls a wry face.

That's where I don't resist. I tell her:
Are you the mad one?

She: *Oh, I see, an inquiry, they want to know who is who and who does what, who will catch the eel and when, who's picking the roses, who's frying the onions, what they really tell in each other's ears all the time, and what happens to Max in the end; most of all, they want to know how many times (you know, they always want to know how many times...)*

The little boy is about to do it (look).

It would have been here – exactly HERE – that grandmother would have interfered.

More or less like THIS.

(supposing she hadn't fallen asleep after lunch)

And more or less THERE, that cousin Ondina would have been seen.

(from behind)

About to do it herself, while fancying a martini dirty

with four green pitted olives

(August – burning hot indeed)



side of the lake is way more intriguing. A fly has just entered the living room and is buzzing around the phone. The air conditioning is out of order. Arriving from the kitchen in small waves, the effluvia of frying onions flow gently through the living room and meet the fly. Together, they travel cheerfully in the dog's direction, ignoring the snoring lady slouched in grandmother's summer armchair.

The dog is delighted: fresh paws, wet jaws
 (SIGH).

It's time. You're ready. Halfway, the dog barks twice.

You follow the echoing instructions: you cross the square swimming, caressing, chewing, snuffling across the surface swollen with smells and words (gosh, it's so slippery), there are forgotten half-words, onion and banana leftovers and song remains, accumulated and lost gestures between the infinite come back of the waves (yeah. In lakes too)

[SPLATSCH SPLATSCH]

...and sometimes just there in the corners of your mouth...



Now the dog too catches a glimpse. Whether he saw us?

Hm. Implausible but not impossible.

Shshshshutttt. Did you hear that?

A misunderstanding is slipping in – vraschvruchhshtst:

AWKWARD. AWKWARD.

AWKWARD

None of the women sees or hears it AWKWARD takes an invisible nap in the sun

even motionless it sounds like the Niagara Falls

(or is it just the women's chatter against the watery background?)

The little boy is finally doing it.

The dog has other worries

(Nick Cave sings *Standing at the window*)

I wonder if she knows that I can see)

Sure. The open window on the other



It's a woman aged 34, standing still on the right side of a wet square, somewhat spicy in her red bikini, at around twenty to ten in the morning, her lips moving languidly. She is called Ondina, her friend Olga met her 5 years ago in the Isles of Scilly. From a distance we would say she is just talking (probably telling the recipe of the gnocchi printaniers in every single detail), but anybody who bothers to come closer will just hear her providing the soundtrack of the image she is caught in:

[EYES UP.
EVERYBODY
LOOKING AT THE
WINDOW NOW.]

There's a naked woman in the room. Ondina sings:

*Alice wakes
It is morning
She is yawning
As she walks about the room
Her hair falls down her breast
She is naked and it is June*

June then. Just stay there, hang around moving the least you can.
Beautiful.

Oh, I see... Like grazing cows in a Swiss meadow. A still life in somebody's mind. I mean, someone sitting somewhere, looking out of some window, asking herself whether it is possible to catch metamorphosis in *flagrante delicto*... (SIGH)



Don't look at me like that. Some people insist that metamorphosis have hands to do things and caress other metamorphosis, and a mouth to speak and spit (huh, it's not scientifically proved yet).
Do you hear this noise starting and ending with a full stop?

AWKWARD. AWKWARD.
AWKWARD. AWKWARD.
AWKWARD.

(hm. shouldn't it be faster?)
Quite right. Something is foul about the rhythm.
Let's push them:

**Allez, les équivoques, on dépêche.
C'est votre tour à nouveau, montez.
Eteignez les cigarettes et
bougez-vous.**

Indeed, after a while, in a bakery near by in the Isles of Scilly, misunderstandings peacefully pursue their infinite lives:

*Could you give me two of those ones
THERE please?*

THESE ones?

No, no, THOSE ones.

THESE ones?

No, not quite. More to that side there, golden brown (the song, remember?)

[PFFF, look at them, looking in the wrong direction all the time]

These ones HERE?

You're close. It's the ones next to those.

AH, you could have said before.

Before what?

Well, the best would be that you decide before...

You know... (SIGH)





Before the dog looks at you.
 Before grandmother falls asleep.
 Before Ondina disappears into the lake,
 out of the square.
 Before the phone rings again behind
 the bush.
 NO. Why should you do it BEFORE,
 FASTER, BETTER?

By the way, what exactly makes choreographic practices so interesting to re-think and re-practice other practices and the ways in which they can interplay, huh? The answer that follows is divided in 2 interrelated topics. The order in which they follow is a purely fictional arrangement:

HESITATION. CRITICALITY.

A choreographic practice is not about knowing or not knowing; it is about letting the unknown move into the known; it is about making both the known and the unknown move, and most of all move into hesitation. As such, a choreographic practice is not really about critical thought or critical moves but more about the criticality of thought... whenever a thought feels moved, affected by something that doesn't belong to it alone. As a practice of hesitation, the choreographic is about uncertain knowledge, uncertain positions, and uncertain situations, that may change according to the very provisional specificity of what, right now, makes *me* think, move, feel, and act... or take a nap with my double instead (like Max Perna at 18, wearing red shorts).



FICTION. SPECULATION. Let's say a choreographic practice is fictionally »interesting« when it fully embraces its power of speculation: when it invests on what seems impossible, not plausible, not at all there as a possibility; when it deviates from cartographies of territories, activities, bodies, disciplines, humans and non humans »as they are« (supposed to be). In short, when it sets up improbable situations where entities that had no place no voice no name become audible and visible and force us to think, move, speak, feel and act otherwise.

The issue of choreographic practices then might well be to understand that any specific constellation is always the provisional result of a hesitant local artificial negotiation that has to remain hesitant, local, artificial and negotiable. And who knows, a highly hesitating, highly critical, highly fictional, highly speculative choreographic practice in this sense might help us deviate from any blind mobility (from the blind adaptation to frenetically changing situations; from the blind obligation to change with the flow with the tide; from the blind obligation to interconnect 24/24), that is nowadays the definition of many practices »as they are« or are supposed to be.

Two ongoing (rather fuzzy) projects have been dealing with the question raised above (that I really suspect to be more connected with my catastrophic experiences in bakeries than I'm ready to admit):

The Filmmaker in you – a long-term cinematographic project designed by the *Fictional Department of the Directors of What Happens*: Virtual Archives for Whoever Whenever.

T-Fi – A Series of More or Less Musical Comedies of Theory-Fiction – a project of inter-media writing which explores the dramaturgic and choreographic apparatus of writing modes, including the theoretical one.

THE END
 (THE PHONE RINGS AGAIN)
 (I don't answer)
 I listen to the music
If you were a dog
I'd feed you scraps from off the table
 And gone they were. One by one
 swimming to the other side.
 I stay a bit more listening to the
 sound of moving water
 in a lake

tonight

*

Paula Caspão's video with voice over
It happened in the Isles of Scilly,
around 6 pm has been commissioned by
 and premiered at Tanzquartier Wien
 on April 22nd 2010 in the frame of
 SCORES No1: *touché*.

Barbara Kraus

L O V E L E T T E R
A
i n P R O G R E S S
t o m y
P A S T ,
F U T U R E
a n d
P R E S E N T A U D I E N C E

Dearest,

We do share the spaces of discomfort, fear, stress, frustration, unfulfilled desires, buried anger and bewildered eyes. We do share moments of intimacy and beauty, the smell of watermelons and horses, we do share the fragility of becoming and belonging. We do share the loss of beauty and our beloved ones, and we definitely share the undeniable conditions of life in itself, which are based on sickness, ageing and dying. So there are more things we share and have in common than those that separate us from one another. And still we are made to believe that we are separated. That's what we have been practicing, that's the ideology of neoliberalism and that's what plunges us into deep crisis. The concept of being separated makes us believe that there are winners and losers, but in the end nobody is gaining anything. And I strongly believe, »yes, I am a believer«, and totally agree that it is the space inbetween and beyond right and wrong where we are going to meet. The space where everything is embraced and friendly welcomed.

Art is not a product. Respect yourself.
And yes, I do care about you.

I do my very best in order to please you and make you happy, and yet it never seems to be enough. Therefore I call myself a sorry entertainer, without regret, and try to please myself.

I need to jump,

I need to run,

I need to hunt.

I need to put on those fancy shoes,
I need to wear this scary wig,
I need to talk,
I need to walk,
I need to wheep,
I need to sing,
I need to shout,
I need to be loud,
I need to be somebody else,
I need to be you,
I need to be it all and I need to save my soul.

From time to time I need to be alone.

My body and my life are definitely a product of other circumstances, you can see the ideologies of believes in my broken neck and twisted shoulders. My whole body is a container of fear that was implanted in the name of god and other authorities in order to create a functional and useful human being, willing to obey to any kind of slavery.

The slavery of capitalism
The lies of democracy
The hidden worldwide dictatorship of the market

Yes, it scares me.
Yes, it makes me feel numb.
Yes, I try to forget.
Yes, I do have nightmares.
Yes, I don't know what to do.
Yes, there are no quick answers.
Yes, my house is on fire.
Yes, this nightmare is real.

Wake up.

Therefore I don't need to make another solo, or, if so, as an attempt to find and inspire some other human beings in order to discover, share and practice new modes of being, listening and responding.

Yes, we are scared.
Yes, it makes us feel numb.
Yes, we try to forget.
Yes, we do have nightmares.
Yes, we don't know what to do.
Yes, there are no quick answers.
Yes, our house is on fire.
Yes, this nightmare is real. Wake up.

Is there anybody willing to help me to save the planet, without knowing how, and can we allow ourselves to breathe through this terrible state of discomfort with all the compassion that we're able to create for each other.

And, in case we're not compassionate, is there a possibility to embrace it? To embrace it all. That's my practice. That's my practice as an artist. To embrace it all.

(See me beautiful,

look for the very best in me,
it may be hard to find,
it may take some time,

but see me beautiful.)

*

*What my friends Pippi and Robin have to do with the Commons
oder warum es notwendig ist, die Erde weinen zu hören*
premiered on April the 16th, 2010 at Tanzquartier Wien
in the frame of SCORES No1: *touché*.

Jefta van Dinther

~~JEFTA~~ = a void **KNEEDING**

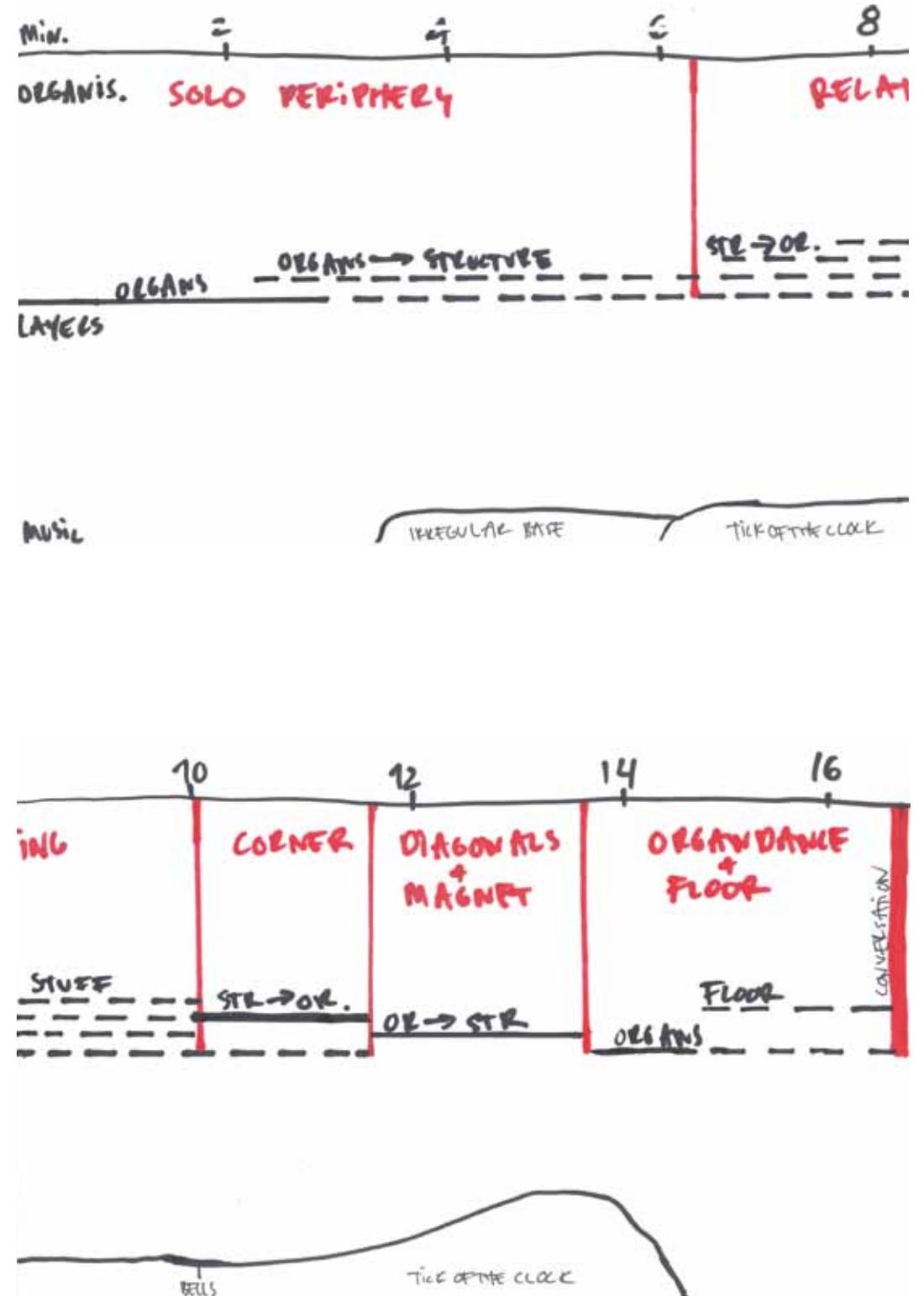
*The text below is a project proposal:
conceptualized, revisited and revised. It is written and rewritten at different moments and displays a change of thinking and framing of the project in relation to the passing of time. At first, it served as an outline for a research. Then, it was the centrefold in our investigations. Later, it became a reminder of the origins of the work.
And later yet (as the performance Kneeding crystallized), it was almost completely discarded.*

*Plain text is written in August 2008
Red text is written in the summer of 2009
~~Strikethrough~~ is invalidated in the summer of 2009*

~~JEFTA~~ = a void **KNEEDING**

~~I should do a solo because it's the last thing that I would do. I should do a trio because it's the first thing that I would do (if not a duet).~~ It is quite inconceivable and frightening for me to work on a solo, not only because I am not used to it but also because it is centripetal. For me, solo has been a format that makes sense only in relation to problems and confrontations, something I hitherto have not wanted to endeavour upon. Group-dynamics is for me much less complicated than my own dynamics. ~~I think by doing this I am asking for trouble. That is why I choose to work on a trio. But in many ways, the trio consists of three solos. More than choreographically and compositionally speaking, I mean in terms of how we associate with what we do: we have an intimate relation to it. We use the centripetal focus, but in three performers simultaneously.~~ However, I want my problematics of the solo-format to be productive, by using and even abusing it. **I want to confront my reservations and iffy impressions of this personal method of working, by using and even abusing it.**

There are many no-nos existent in my thinking of ~~the solo~~ **a personally driven work** that I want to discard in favour of elasticity of conceptions, ~~working-methods~~ **expressions** and materials. Hence, the first ones are listed hereunder in a no-problem list:



SELF-REFERENTIALITY no problem
 THERAPY no problem
 INTERNALITY no problem
 SEARCH no problem
 PSYCHOLOGY no problem
 (SELF-)EXPRESSION no problem
 INDULGENCE no problem
 DEVOTION no problem
 PROCESS no problem
 DISCOMFORT no problem
 SLEEPING IN THE STUDIO ~~no problem~~ a little problem
 EXPOSURE no problem
 FEELING GOOD no problem
 UNINTELLIGIBILITY no problem
 FEELING no problem
 FLUFFY no problem

~~Recently, I found~~ A year and a half ago, I found myself interested in myself for the first time in my life. More specifically, ~~that~~ I analyze and evaluate how I function: my thoughts in relation to my actions, my inside in relation to my outside, what people don't see (or what I think they don't see) in relation to what they see, intrinsic movements in relation to external movements. The mechanisms at play between psychology and physicality, between states of mind and bodily manifestation, between internal processes and expression, I ~~now~~ find ~~amusing~~ ~~engaging~~. But I don't want to work on my identity nor express my insides for the sake of telling something. I am interested in how the work can be centred around me without a personal perspective being the agenda. I therefore want to invert the method of working: ~~the source being me and my self-expressions albeit constructed through others and through the integration of external sources; using others to create the (fictional) (hi)story of me, yet letting an air of self-centeredness prevail. This method not only implies a personal disconnection to the making of the material but it also shifts the aboutness from being about saying something to doing something.~~ ~~The attempt lies in formalizing a system based on personal needs and »problems«. The »problems« can be manifold and belong to any register: personal, emotional, physical, relational. In the project we succumb to the idea that we can work on our problems through movement.~~

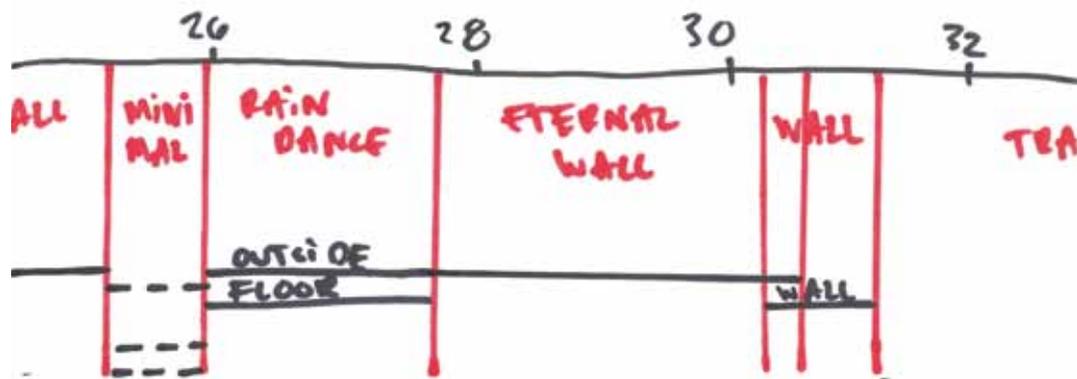
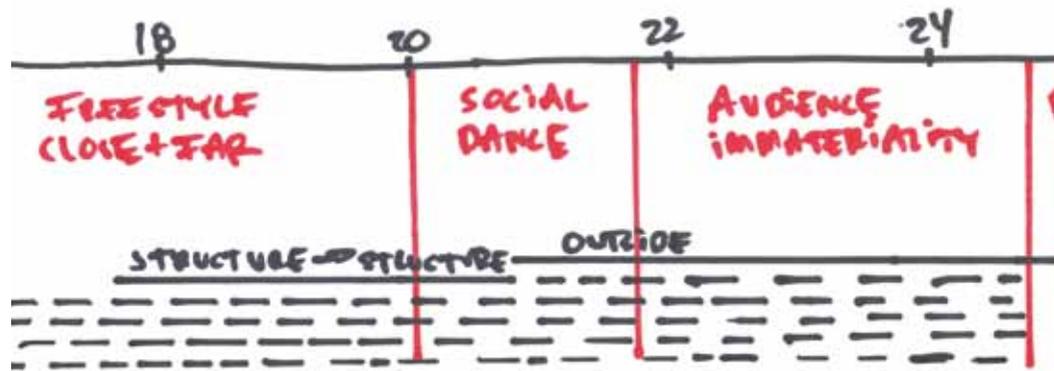
The source will be dance therapy:

Dance therapy, or dance movement therapy is the psychotherapeutic use of movement (and dance) for emotional, cognitive, social, behavioural and physical conditions. It is a form of expressive therapy. Certified dance therapists hold a masters level of training. Dance therapy is based on the premise that the body and mind are interrelated, that the state of the body can affect mental and emotional wellbeing both positively and negatively. In contrast to artistic dance, which is usually concerned with the aesthetic appearance of movement, dance therapy explores the nature of all movement. Through observing and altering the kinesthetic movements of a client, dance movement therapists diagnose and help solve various psychological problems. As any conscious person can move on some level, this therapy can work with any population.

To apply on myself movement as a trigger of therapeutic self-expression for making art I find a horrendously appalling thought. I am very interested, however, in seriously attempting just that: to find movement that is expressive of my thoughts, states of mind or even my subconscious ~~directly working on what I consider beneficial for myself~~. Also, I want to investigate the appearance of (dance) therapy: the aesthetics, the expressions, ~~the codes~~, the qualities. The activity of connecting internally for the sake of solving or searching for something; the movement from inside to outside, are things I want to attempt to not only exercise in the process but also in the performing of the sessions.

~~What happens when dance therapy becomes performative? What happens in the slide between dance therapy and artistic dance (as they call it above), where dance therapy should happen in a closed, safe environment with the aim of self-reflection and artistic dance should produce the opposite, namely activation and reflection in the viewer?~~

~~As a procedure I want to work with people who make my performance through being my therapists. The therapies or practices can be fictional or not, but the therapists should act from a position of knowledge and belief. I initiate, I am the material subject, I make choices and I author (I can lie). But my collaborators, or dance-therapists, have a certain power. Since I am the client, they hold more knowledge than me, sometimes even the truth, even though this lies inside of me to discover. I am all ears. I am all body. Together we find out how I function in relation to movement. The therapists have a methodology of working on and with me to unblock my patterns and problems through moving, accessing ways of moving for my wellbeing, creating connectedness by movement etc. There are multiple therapists. Through this I want to suggest an ever-changing, flexible performative process, that doesn't consist of one therapy or practice applied, but many.~~



With my dance-therapists I can talk about the artistic process outside of the studio, as with anyone else. In the studio, however, it is strictly a therapy session, this »strictly« being for us to construct. In the studio, we work on JEFFA. For therapy to take place there needs to be a problem to work on. A problem can be a blockage, a desire, a question, a need or a curiosity concerning myself that implies using my body in movement. The problematics of the »problems« are simplified and given a clear frame. Hence, procedures that deal with these »problems« in a very concrete and physical way are invented. By layering these procedures and by being busy with them for a longer duration we design a practice. I think of this practice as something we do that is not training, process, nor product, and yet is the thing that is all three at the same time. I think of this as a »working on myself« actively. The practice is not about creating a true therapy that we believe in. It is experiential yet fictional, and not to be shared as a therapy.

There is a devotion to our own bodily experience, i.e. creating a sensorial body, not set in time nor space, and a trust that through this experience an audience can have an experience. We as performers work on ourselves, affect ourselves, do and undo ourselves. We use our bodies to do that, explicitly and actively so: the expression becoming that of an activity. The attempt will be to first find these materials, then layer them, working on macro and micro levels of movement. There will be practice in order to become virtuous in the doing, with a principle of constant rejuvenation. Then we will create a score, which complies of rules as to what happens when and where. This is a score, which is open to change: which in fact accommodates change, supplying a way to dance this material with a highly present yet invisible structure.

*

KNEEDING by Jefta van Dinter was presented on April 16th 2010 at Tanzquartier Wien in the frame of SCORES No1: *touché*.

Alexandr Andriyashkin / Patricia Aperi / An Kaler / Willy Prager

M A P P I N G S

C o m p i l e d b y A n K a l e r

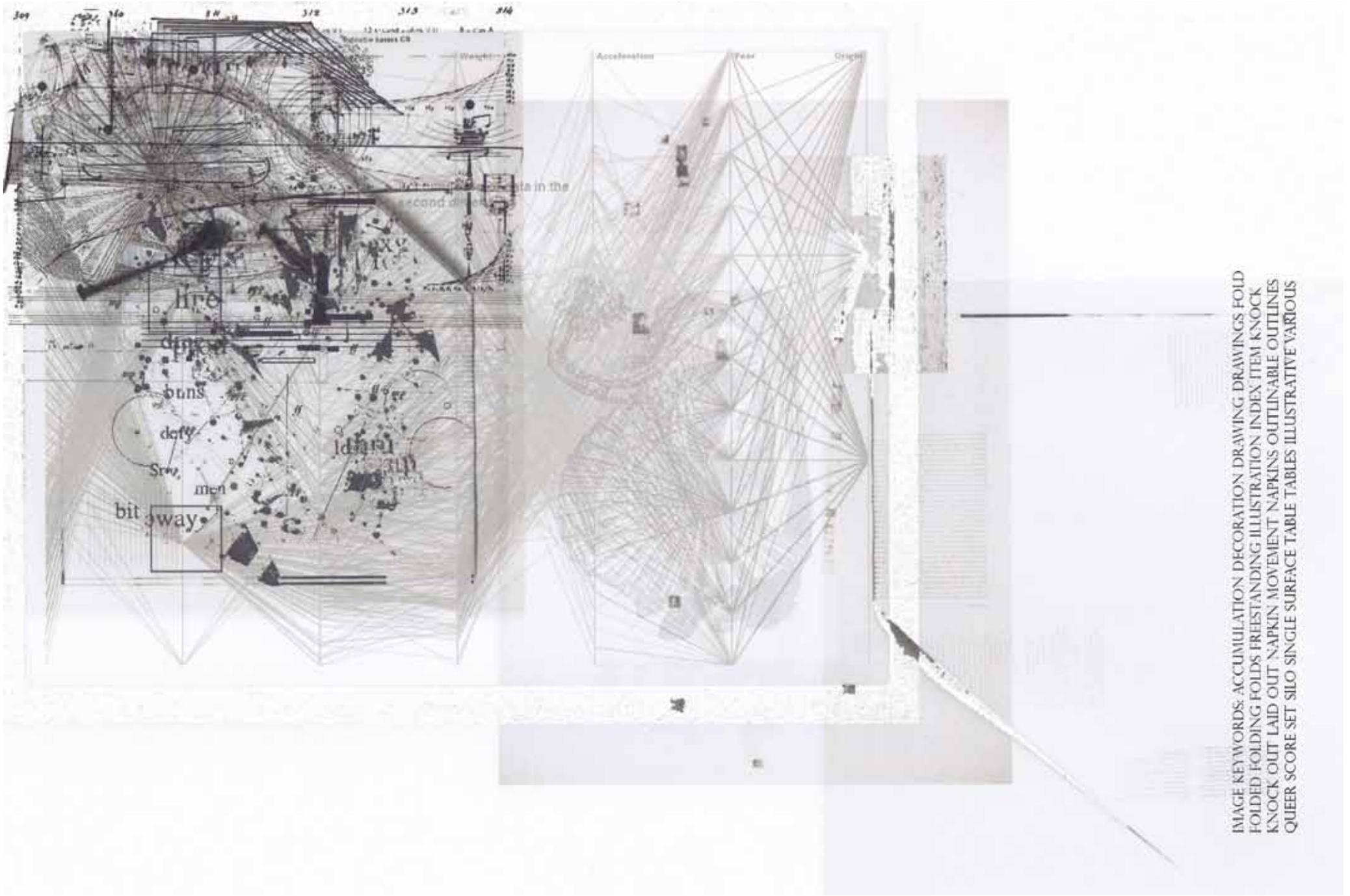


IMAGE KEYWORDS: ACCUMULATION DECORATION DRAWING DRAWINGS FOLD
FOLDED FOLDING FOLDS FREESTANDING ILLUSTRATION INDEX ITEM KNOCK
KNOCK OUT LAID OUT NAPKIN MOVEMENT NAPKINS OUTLINEABLE OUTLINES
QUEER SCORE SET SILO SINGLE SURFACE TABLE TABLES ILLUSTRATIVE VARIOUS

Previous to the contribution to the publication SCORES, a three-month residency and exchange between the choreographers and performance artists Alexandr Andriyashkin ^(RU), Patricia Aperi ^(GR), Raimonda Gudavičiute ^(LT), An Kaler ^(A) and Willy Prager ^(BG) took place at Tanzquartier Wien.

The participants were invited to explore, make up and adapt formats of working together and cooperating under the concept of accumulation, anticipating its implications for their personal and shared creative and choreographic practises. This initial period of exchange was accompanied by regular transmissions of the choreographic approach, contribution or input by the artists presenting their work, performances and investigations at Tanzquartier Wien.

Integrating and recycling the received »donations« into their ongoing practise and routines, the artist-in-resident group rounded up their endeavour by a final performance installation. The format was based on reoccurring issues and approaches the group built during their stay in order to construct a playfield that would give insight into the areas and fields touched.

Bending what choreography as a practise might cover, the translation of creative practise into the format of this publication is a further step to explore the overlapping and parallels of our shared and simultaneous pathways (even when following more individual trajectories at times). How do those individual processes resonate and relate to one another, when the common basis to start off for the reformulation of the choreographic in the two dimensional is: writing, space, movement, donation and free choice.

The resulting maps can be read and looked at as a way of drawing connections, layering encounters and extending experiences and journeys that mingle with an ongoing quest, finding here another peak on display.

*

The three-month residency program took place from February to April 2010 as a cooperation of Tanzquartier Wien and KulturKontakt Austria and in collaboration with the embassy of the Republic of Lithuania.

The starting point of the artistic research and working project was the concept of accumulation.

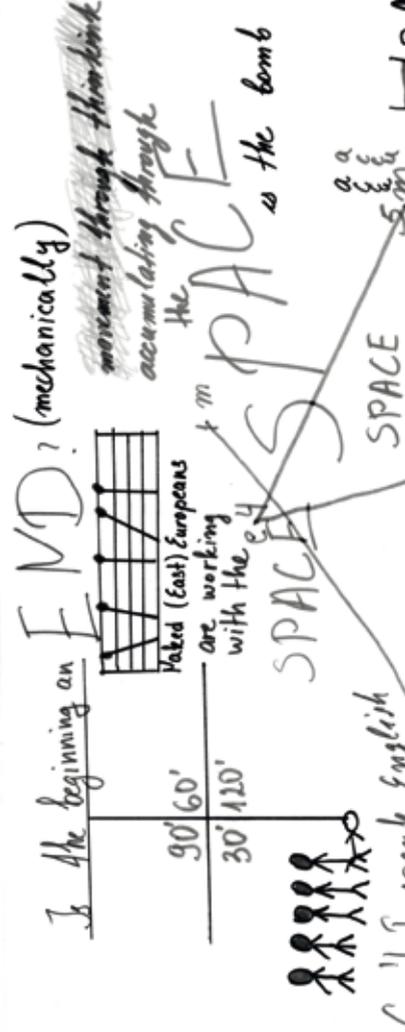
The exploration of principles and methods in the choreographic process is linked with this concept as a central motive of the movement composition.

At the same time the perspective of accumulation describes a specific understanding of material and cooperation that emphasizes individual and artistic cooperation.

Still relevant questions of authorship, identity and community as well as the preconditions of a historic and current (dance)

historiography formulate themselves on the basis of the most diverse transmission strategies – repetition and quoting, fixing and reformulation of movement material.

The performance chain *Donated Nations* took place on April 24th 2010 at Tanzquartier Wien.



Sabina Holzer

SOME NOTES ON THE ENCOUNTER OF LISTENING

*Whatever I am thinking I do not think alone.
There is an intermingling of disparate motives which would warrant analysis,
but whose power lies in the disorder brought about by the combination of sundries.
It is as if thoughts which can only be thought together were thronging at the door
while their diversity blocks the passage.¹*

(Nevertheless trying to keep it simple.)

I initiated »On listening. An artistic research lab on listening« as part of the production process of the performance *IT IS NOT THE PICTURE*². It was a research framed in relation to the music and concepts of Morton Feldman and the writings of Maurice Blanchot, which were the major lines of reflection of the production. I was interested to do research in exchange with others, focusing on aspects of listening in relation to (a certain) silence.

Morton Feldman considered *sound* to be *material* and the very base of his compositions. He claimed that *listening to sounds, to hear what they want* was his tool for composing and even went so far as to suggest that we should treat sounds as people — *which also do not like to be pushed around*.³ He opposed his approach to music to ways of primarily composing with musical forms or systems against which he polemicized and argued quite passionately throughout his entire career. His compositions are mostly at the border of audibility with irregular rhythms and intersections of silences.

His sound material seems to appear from a notion of silence, which in this way becomes something other. It is a silence full of sounds that can be at times even very loud. Silence is no longer the absence of sound. Maybe death bears absolute silence, which we try to understand and think, but the experience of absolute silence remains an aporia to us, a radical otherness.

¹ Maurice Blanchot, *Die uneingestandene Gemeinschaft*, Matthes & Seitz, Berlin 2007, pp. 16, 17. Translation: David Ender

² *IT IS NOT THE PICTURE* Concept: Sabina Holzer in collaboration with Jack Hauser; Performance: Sabina Holzer; Space and Projection: Jack Hauser; Live Sound and Composition: Martin Siewert; Conceptual Cartography: Jeroen Peeters. Premiere: December 2010, WUK, Vienna.

³ Morton Feldman, *Essays*, Beginners Press, p. 144.

Maurice Blanchot explored in and through his writings concepts of otherness. He developed a poetics in relation to the notion of an essential solitude and an ethics within a community.

For him community is not a place of sovereignty; rather, it is that which exposes. An exteriority which thought cannot master, which is always present. He points out that thought gives various names to this exteriority, like *the relationship with the other*, *death*, or also *speaking* (if it has not withdrawn into phrases, where it does not admit any relation with itself, the identity of otherness).⁴

But how to undergo the process of thinking, which tries to solve this paradoxical abyss by giving names, inventing forms to make life easier?

Feldman suggests the following facing this problem (»I try to not name things« or »What is a non-idea?«):

»If we are gonna say, »let's have a non-idea«, we can't have that, and then we are left, then we are left without all the things we know. Let's think about that what we don't know. Someone else's idea is your non-idea.«⁵



(Therefore trying to keep it practical:)

ON LISTENING — a practical and theoretical research of one week.

CONCEPT: Sabina Holzer (performer, choreographer, author, A)

PARTICIPANTS: Lucia Glass (choreographer, D), Jack Hauser (author, visual artist, filmmaker, A), Torsten Michaelsen (radio artist, D), Benoît Lachambre (choreographer, performer, CAN), Sandra Noeth (dramaturge, D/A), Jeroen Peeters (author, dramaturge, performer, B), Martin Siewert (musician, composer, A).

*I'm asking again (for Bataille): why »community«? The answer is clear enough: the foundation of every being is governed by a principle of deficiency (...) (a principle of incompleteness). Let's keep in mind: it is a principle which governs and controls the possibility of a being. From this follows that this lack is not on principle accompanied by a necessity of completeness. The insufficient being does not try to associate with others in order to form a holistic substance together with them. The consciousness of deficiency results from an investigation of itself, which needs the other or another to come into being.*⁶

»On Listening« was about suggesting a given space. Projections concerning this space should not mean overtaxing it regarding its given dimension, but always letting it exist as a space of liberality, thus hinting at freedom.

This space, like the sheet of paper on which a score is written, is not so much a space of unequivocal agreements than one free of any agreement. With Feldman one could call it a fictitious, musical space.

Beside the option of discussion, the idea was to find different ways of conversing and communicating. Each of the participants would provide and expose *material* for others to engage with, or not. By putting these into space, the *materials* would also start to converse on different levels. This created a dynamic of multiplicity, destabilization and play. Nonetheless it was not smooth. Depending on where each of the participants would come from, they have different interpretations and different ways to speak. Heterogeneity is a challenge for esthetic concepts and methodical approaches. The concern either way was to let different viewpoints coexist.

⁴ Maurice Blanchot, *Die uneingestandene Gemeinschaft*, Matthes & Seitz, Berlin 2007, p. 26.

⁵ Morton Feldman, *Essays*, Beginners Press, p. 160.

⁶ Maurice Blanchot, *Die uneingestandene Gemeinschaft*, Matthes & Seitz, Berlin 2007, p. 16.

⁷ Maurice Blanchot, *Die uneingestandene Gemeinschaft*, Matthes & Seitz, Berlin 2007, p. 25.

In a prepared structure and a planned »open moment« (with a duration of 4 hours), during which the involvement is opened for visitors, the question arises again and again, how a process can be devised without controlling it, and what it could mean not to generate any *production value*.

Maurice Blanchot: 1. Community is not a restricted form of society, and neither does it strive for communal amalgamation. 2. As opposed to a social cell it prohibits itself to create a work, and it does not aim at any production value.⁷

And there is another aspect, which is quite essential for research and mutual exchange: Shared responsibility. Same amount of shared time. Equal distribution of resources and salary.



(Compilation of extracts of transcriptions from »On Listening«)



Reading as means of listening to a resonance, evoked by letters, signs, following lines and curls connected to a melody, a rhythm. Voiceless voices are formulated, mumbling, singing, speaking in different volumes. Emanations of textures. Every text connects with another text. Texts of otherness. Texts of various densities and vibrations.

Thoughts expand in reverberation. Things and memories. From the past and from the future. They vibrate through our ears, our skins, our bodies. They vibrate through the space, the architecture. Thoughts are bouncing against thoughts, words are bouncing against words, sounds against sounds. Engaging in such a process, leads to the peripheries of music and into a sonicity at odds with musicality itself. Noise comes to bear down on the conventional parameters of musicality because by nature it appears along the lines of confrontation, in a no-man's land between the interior and the exterior, imagination and law, and where the two overlap and converse and interpenetrate.



List of Input and Materials:

Morton Feldman, *String Quartet II, Essays*,
Beginners Press
Maurice Blanchot, *Die uneingestandene
Gemeinschaft*, Matthes & Seitz, Berlin 2007
Brandon Labelle, text (»Private call –
Public speech« by, in: *Writing Aloud*, errant
Bodies Press, New York 2001

Radio
Voices from the dead
Work in progress *The Sound of It* (work-in-
progress presentation by Lucia Glass)
IT IS NOT THE PICTURE
(work-in-progress presentation, Sabina
Holzer, Jack Hauser, Martin Siewert)
Marguerite Duras, Audiobooks
Lecture about Emmanuel Levinas on caress
and touch
Luc Ferrari, sound
Martin Siewert, sound

Noise
Tonus Peregrinus

Installation of headsets on the wall /
»speaking walls«

Sound of studiospace
Sound of the courtyard
Sound of the office space
Sound of actions
Recorded Memory Traces

Kottan ermittelt: Fit mit Ilse Buck.
The newest song I love
Tom & Jerry *Quit Phase*
Marx-brothers *Animal crackers*
Memories & stories
Christian Marclay *Guitar Drag*

List of Activities:

Listening
Witnessing
Reading

Recording with headset
Amplifying space with eyes closed
Listen with an open camera
Reading text out loud
Making someone reading a text out
loud

Thinking — Transmitting thoughts
Moving — Projecting
Writing — Dreaming

Radio/Transmission

Day dreaming

Looking — Mixing

Introspection
Witnessing
Xeroxing
Sensing
Non Intentional Listening:
Bodily ening
The Body as a receiver
Concentrating

There are always more voices.

— »There is a whole contradiction in reading this text out loud. Because he writes about the difficulty and problematics of reading and utterance. So reading it out loud is a very odd experience. If you read it out loud it heightens the difficulty and the problematic.«

— »He is trying to catch the point of not knowing.«

— »But this sends us back into the dilemma. And reading about it loud, sends us also into this dilemma. Because it is there, but you cannot grasp it. You just feel and hear it. It performs itself.«

— »What performs itself?«

— »The faster heart beat, the influence of the breath on the voice. There you have the whole complexity of this process of having a thought and articulating it into the word. Having to put an inside dialogue going into a public speech.«

— »There is this anxiety because when you talk you do not articulate the interior. You are always already externalized.«

*

— »*Language* is never your own and the space is not your own. The exterior is always the language of another in which you articulate yourself.«

— »Therefore the acoustic side of the text can get more important than the signification. It is more the sound, than it is the content.«

— »It is like talking and gesturing.«

— »Speech makes language site specific because it participates in the ecology of time and space. It is embodied and socially embedded.«

— »When I was I child, we were in the mountain. There were some real cool guys smoking pot and having fun, making fun of us. We were kids. I ran away and tumbled on rocks. I screamed out and heard this very high-pitched voice. It was my voice! I was very ashamed. I was supposed to have a deep voice, especially in this masculine environment. I was as hurt from my voice which came out than from my bruises. It was a great pitch, but in my social surroundings it was totally unacceptable.«

*

— »It is about the collision with the symbolical order. If you don't confront that, you end in a kind of narcissistic space.«

— »Maybe, but a narcissistic space can also be a space of discovery.«

— »A space of odyssey. A space of possible audacity.«

— »I would like to come back to this *addressing in a public context*, with all its impossibilities. I think this is important. It is a negotiation with the symbolical order.«

— »It is interesting, how they interfere. How the internal and external spaces are speaking through each other. Not just one is speaking, there are always more voices.«

The caress.
Or how we create community.

A notion of body, which is
a vulnerable body.

Perceiving.

Responding.

The hand on the skin of the other.

It is the hand on the skin of the other, but
the most important is the distance between hand and skin.

No penetration.

No possession.

Not even grasping.

The caress does not know what it is looking for.

It is non-intentional.

It is not directed.

It does not make a demarcation between us and them.

It is always forthcoming.

This non-intentionality, this
not knowing what you are aiming for
can fail.

Failure. Collapse.

Distance.

Caress.

In relation to listening and responding
an answer is required.

Depending on the other, I am
always responsible for the other.

Based

on listening.

It is not
just the reflection of an intentional
relationship of
the other.

It is in
relation to the other which is
unforeseen.

It is unforeseeable.

The answer.

The responsibility is
a state of listening.



Or call it a weight either reminiscent or discovered. This weight does not have its origin in the area of dynamics or tension, but comes from a visual-aural response to sound as an image gone inward, resulting in a general synthesis. Weight depends on the finding of a pulse which allows a natural fluidity. Weight discovered presupposes balance discovered. Balance discovered presupposes movement discovered from this pulse. ⁸

*

Photos: Sabina Holzer

David Bergé / Satu Herrala

TRACING TRAILS,
TRACKING TRACES



›No path is like any other.<

Out of the traces left from the guided walks in May 2010— the documentation pictures by Jack Hauser and the article by Elke Krasny (see: *Tempted to Walk*, www.corpusweb.net, 02.06.2010)— we chose images and text fragments to recollect *VIENNA FOOTNOTES* on paper.

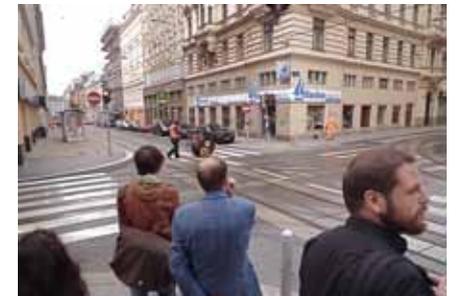
The simple group choreography of walking became a practice of mapping our individual topography of the town as we moved through various public, semi-private and private spaces. Each walking group became a temporary community that was connected through and exposed by the silence we shared and the intimacies we negotiated along the way. The banal narratives of the everyday street life suddenly unfolded as meaningful gestures in front of our eyes and under our feet.



›The air of expectancy gets higher along the way.<



›The city once again turns into a landscape that invites one for surreal temptations.<



›An ingenious play of pausing and framing creates new details of the city, lets familiar things enter the perspective of the unseen.<



*›Together they circle the playground. Exactly when they are crossing the street,
the park attendant drives up in her car and takes out the key.
Did someone order her appearance, or did the choreography of chance take
care of this exact timing?‹*



›One perceives each other. Silence intensifies the experience.‹

*

The guided walking project *VIENNA FOOTNOTES* took place from
26th to 28th May 2010 in the City centre of Vienna.
There were three days of walking. Each day, there were three appointments:
5:30 am, 2:30 pm and 5:30 pm and two tour guides:
David Bergé and Satu Herrala.
That's 3 x 3 x 2. Altogether 18 paths.

TOUCHING THE TOUCH

1.

*I don't know, for there was no stroke of a
mattock or heap from a shovel, just hard
earth and dry land, unbroken, no trace
of wheels, but the workman worked without sign.
When the day watch first showed it to us, we
all thought it a most distressing marvel.*

This is how the guard in the tragedy of Antigone describes the heroine's act of covering her dead brother's body with earth so that, in defiance of Creon's ban, he does not remain unburied. It reads as if Antigone had done nothing, had not even been there, and nevertheless has realised what was necessary for the undertaking so that what is yearned for comes to light: the buried brother. It is noticeable that the lack of any sign of the deed, the absence of traces that might betray a perpetrator greatly confuses the guard. He is used to reading signs in order to give reports to the authority, from which stories, meanings are produced. But here something has happened — there is, after all, earth over the dead body — but no explanatory traces are visible to the eye, absent and at the same time still there, similar to a touch. Antigone's touching of the dead with the earth remains anonymous. It provides no signs that can be read to explain the reasons that could have moved a perpetrator. Only the aim, the touching of the dead with the earth, remains, without comment or subject and as the only thing that alone and for itself »speaks«. Like an unsigned work whose particular technique of execution consists in the fact that the »creator« would simultaneously co-produce his or her own absence, an unbridgeable distance between him or her and what is produced. A guarantee of the autonomy of the one who has been touched.

Touching as an action is a philosophy of contact, of exchange, without claim to ownership, without appropriation, without assault, without grasp, without name. The touching wishes to name the unnameable, to open up what is actually alien in the other and leave it untouched while it encounters it. It wishes to measure, to plumb the incommensurability of the other, to grasp the unreachable other, which nevertheless eludes any codifiable meaning. It opens up, it does not answer, and creates a space of the possible, the time of potential. The touching is a conscious gesture. It is a decision not to want to grasp. It can very easily turn into ownership, appropriation. Antigone could have exploited the dead body of her brother through her signature, could have left behind recognisable traces of herself as the perpetrator, as the author. But she wanted the deed to remain anonymous. And it is precisely this desired, produced »distance« between her and what has been touched that is the »marvel«. It is not the fact that someone has touched Polyneices with earth that impresses the guard, but his whole amazement is for the »doer« who was »signless«, «leaving unreadable traces behind, which seal the deed within a context, a biography, and accord the touched his untouchable and never fully reducible meaning potential.

The sign alone, he himself as inexplicable, is to speak — the alien in him, the non-integrable, the indefinable. The touching is the action that places itself at our disposal, for thinking. It is a decision for the infinite possibility of thinking, the delusion of the real, which relativizes and terrifies every symbolic authority. »The workman worked without sign«, says the guard. He does indeed mean that the

workman left no sign of himself at the place of the contact, but at the same time he wants to inform us that the workman himself has no sign. As if the signlessness of what is touched contains the signlessness of the toucher, without it being possible to distinguish whether the signlessness of the toucher was the condition or the consequence of the touching. Touching and being touched are combined in the signlessness, inseparable, undifferentiable. The alien released in the other through the signless touching vibrates with an (other) signlessness in the toucher himself. An — other? — strangeness in him. Touching means at the same time being touched. One cannot decide to touch without being touched by the other (in oneself? in the other?), without becoming signless or already having been so. The workman worked without sign. He had no sign, he owned none that he could use, that could be applied for meaning; he himself was a naked sign in the eye of the others, at the mercy of their interpretation, powerless.

Touching is reflexive. Mutually revealing, illuminating the alien in the self and the self in the alien. Antigone touches her brother. The brother touches Antigone. She wants to give him the right to a death, keep his death uncolonised by authority. Death is to speak through the dead; the recognized death in the dead is to write history and not the staging of an unburied, disappearing dead body which refuses the dead his own death, his foreignness, his eternal potential, the freedom of his unoccupiable sign. Through the dead Antigone defends this right, her right, our right to a — to our — death. Only a touching can complete this need, as it is an action that allows the dead, the death is indefinable strangeness.

In his *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan writes that Antigone obeys a different law to Creon's law: the law of desire. This desire is the authority that pre-exists the subject and sends precisely this subject in search of an object that has been taken from us and which cannot be recovered. The absence of the object opens the room for the desire and the non-existence of this object opens the yearning for death. This not-to-be-found object will always be alien to us, unattainable, but at the same time it constitutes our singular structure, our uniqueness, in the direction of which we will always move, what one does not give up, says Lacan. A nothing, an absence, an insurmountable strangeness that completely determines us. A paradox. To decide totally for desire necessarily means to decide for death, because only there can desire find its object, the eternally absent, the inexplicably alien, the nothingness. To decide for the alien, that is to wish to complete the touching, means giving oneself to death. Wishing touch means wanting to die, wanting to abandon oneself to signlessness.

»The meaning of tragedy = 0«, writes Hölderlin in his notes on Antigone. The meaningless (signless?) touching of tragedy is the only apposite touching. Desire is its law and death is its achieved aim. Owing to this, a repetition of the touching is impossible. It is only repeated because it always fails, and the vibration, the warmth, the intensity, the nakedness that seize one in trying a touching are perhaps already the intimation of the deadly danger that real touching means. A touching is always a failing approach of the actual, tragic touching or only touching of the (desired) touching.

As long as one does not wish to be part of a tragedy, one is condemned to watch as one's touching fails. The touching never succeeds, or only once. And the theatre, the place of seeing in the first place — in ancient Greek »theatre« means »behold« — is perhaps the place where the deed can be touched, that is, its impossibility can be observed. A potential crime scene where the deed is never realized, but is always only taken to the threshold of realisability, and from whence the actors and the spectators together with the theatre touch their lasting failure, our inability to become completely »signless« or free.

Everyone watches and allows their eyes to perceive the impossible touching that desire wishes for through the gaze. Watching, then, means allowing one's gaze to touch the impossible touching. A two-dimensional story, as the gaze can only understand, read images. The cinema is therefore the best setting for touching: the images do not have to be sought on (in?) the bodies, they are already there in front of us, signless, naked, made available to the spectator's desire, already touched and struck by another gaze, that of the camera. The material body, the disturbing factor in the realisation of the image is circumvented by the camera and the actual impossibility of being touched by it is forgotten, betrayed. The cinema is the room where people leave their tragic situation, where they are no longer aware of their constantly failing situation. In contrast, the theatre could become the place where the impossible touching, our impossible but desirable signlessness, our repeated failing as a person between the image and reality, might be repeated or touched. The theatre could become a crime scene where an ethics of touching might be developed, an ethics of the movement that does not lead to death, which touches the impossible touching. A desired approach. A future that touches the reality of the illusion.

Matthieu: Are you my mum?

Lisa: No, Matthieu.

(From *Tanzstück #4: wanting to live (together)*,
choreography by Laurent Chétouane)

If a scene, a sequence or an improvisation was right, I always have to tell the actors or the dancers: »It touched me« as the ultimate sentence, as a reason why one should keep what happened. »It touched me« always sounds like a final judgement that wishes to remain without comment. It always includes a thank you. Thank you that we have been taken to a limit, back to the surface of the skin, where the touching dares to caress the shoals of the deep and with gentle force shows the touched the absence of his site, his volume, touches his unbearable blindness. There is always a too much in it. A touching is always too intimate, because it brings something to the surface, to consciousness, that can only be looked at with difficulty: the impossible to attain but always yearned-for depth. Touching above all is a paradox: what is to be touched may indeed remain untouchable, but it is touchable in its untouchability. The simultaneous realisation and unrealisability constitute the essence of touching. What does it touch, the touching? The nothingness. But that touches.

It never lies, touching. It is merciless. It is what allows my desire to flow out of me into the emptiness, by leading and tempting me into the place of touching and simultaneously whispering to me that there, where I am touching, there is nothing, no depth, no explanation of my ego, except for a baseless quivering, a vibration that stirs me to movement, attracts me to a renewed touching as long as I maintain the necessary distance. A decision for an existence that does not wish to occupy, understand/grasp, hold on to or explain, a constantly to be repeated movement that says that the other is the same, the same always means the other, without wishing to mix these two poles. A desired separation that perhaps touches on the ethical.

An ethical movement would be a touching that made »reflection« lastingly possible — and not only during the pause/pose, where everything freezes into an image to be sold, to the sign of authority. A movement would be ethical if it lastingly, continuously knew that we have lost the three-dimensional programme and its political utopias in the form of a realisable »having«, and would give a space, a time to the nevertheless still prevailing desire that is finally liberated from the belief in the original object. An extended caesura.

Touching is the most radical resistance against authority, because its strength comes from the mobility of the inexplicable, incomprehensible, and does not permit us to believe that it knew IT, but in the act touching shows that it writes, that is, thinks. Anyone who writes perhaps is not doing anything other than this: touching a page, an idea, a language in order to free oneself from one's crippling volume.

Touching opens the space of the layer, of the minimal surface, perhaps the space of what Duchamp was describing with his concept of the »infra-mince«. This »wafer-thin« space that has neither area nor depth, like a state, would imply temporality, duration. It would be a processual state in which association and differentiation, proximity and distance take place simultaneously, a kind of state of possibility. The possibility of touching.

I often talk to actors about the fact that they should »touch« the scene. Not act it, not enter it, not play it, take it on, animate it. No. Stay outside and touch the situation of the text, its dead script »underneath«, get someone else's dead script to speak, that is, always look at it. Stay on the edge, where touching is possible, without seeking one's fate between dying (the dead script has become mine) or lying (this dead script is mine at the moment). The possibilities of the meaning of the script must be opened, without signature, either from the author or from the actor, from the director, from the spectator. Far from the actual untouchable touching. But near to this through the theatre. A theatre that makes one blind, and that knows that the actual, the desire, is not to be seen but only to be touched. We are all blind. I do not speak, but the language speaks. I do not move, but the movement moves by itself and it moves me.

*

Laurent Chétouane presented the pieces
Tanzstück #3: Doppel/Solo/Ein Abend and
Tanzstück #4: leben wollen (zusammen) at Tanzquartier Wien.
His new work *Horizons* is coproduced by and premiered at
Tanzquartier Wien on April 15th 2011.

THE
FAULT LINES OF TOUCHING

In the tense breathless silence, the motionless restlessness at the beginning of the installative performance *the fault lines* by Meg Stuart, Philipp Gehmacher and Vladimir Miller, something is foreclosed and at the same time revoked — something that will have been. *Fault lines*: something will have happened, and reconstruct, remember the tectonic fissures between the bodies, between the media — just because of their paradoxical emptiness. From the outset, a dispositive of the past shimmers through which could have been, will have been totally different. A scene under the sign of farewell which will pass into the strangely melancholy restlessness of technical challenges — choreographical and medial ones. Neon lamps flash up, glittering, which paradoxically mark a kind of ramp for the white cube and simultaneously engulf the scene in laboratory light. No black box, an exhibition space as location of this installative performance. A dance performance which turns into a kind of video installation, which however happens frontally towards the audience. There is a curtain, too; not as a partition between stage and auditorium, though, but stretching along the one white wall of the stage area — a curtain behind which there is nothing. And nothing will stand behind the performative gestures either, they will stand for nothing — and disclose more and more nothingness, wistfully uninvolved.

We hear the room's breathing, the

whispering of Vincent Malstaf's sound installation which later will turn into the stuttering acoustics of a film soundtrack. We see Philipp Gehmacher, Meg Stuart and the video artist Vladimir Miller (likewise on stage already), all of them still at first, far apart. Abandoned. And exposed. Exposed, too, the projection equipment, the golden beamer, the golden cables. The tectonic fissures. Then, Meg Stuart and Philipp will not fall into each other's arms but rather attack each other, in a fighting embrace, violently, repeatedly, with absentminded resolve — and fleetingly, an undecidable tenderness, an inactive solicitousness will yet arise. Already under the sign of parting, on the verge of farewell the performers, the man and the woman will turn towards each other for evanescently brief moments only in order to turn away again immediately. The movements will pause in a *still*, in a picture, but not as a picture. Idiosyncratic. A thwarted expenditure which cannot be actualized in any act. A movement which would rather be none, which prefers not to. Rapt touches bordering on violence, fierce, unrestrained and at the same time casual, oblivious. Amnesia of gestures, contingency of touch. Later, the two will remain on the ground for some time as if they might fall asleep; nor will Vladimir Miller's drawing directly on the projection area which shows a virtual double of the two bodies remaining in still wake them up — it just caresses their images. These

drawings will not trace or continue the movements that took place, rather they will continue to imagine dreamt touches: as if they were small whirlwinds and tongues of flame, proliferations in all the contingency of caresses or landscape structures, the drawings note down the *fault lines* of contact between chaotic structures, their contingent, maybe provisional and not retroactive traces – as a »memory of that which was not« (Giorgio Agamben: *Bartleby o della contingenza*). Meg Stuart will briefly turn around on the floor, smile lopsidedly, tickled by the video artist's pencil – not she herself but her image. Later Vladimir Miller will leaf through the room by slightly changing the projection's position so that he virtually takes along the performers' live body, turning it into two dimensions. The paradoxical, trembling flatness of the live bodies which in the beginning seem to miss each other so intensively when they converge in reality, is taken apart, dissected more and more by the medial manipulation. The projections of the figures which live are positioned near each other are separated virtually — as if the medial event were articulating something the live event was not able to formulate even if it could only happen live:

It takes place when it doesn't. Like touch. Between the bodies, between the bodies and their images, between the singular body surfaces and their plural projection

areas. In *Être singulier pluriel*, Jean-Luc Nancy writes: »The law of touching is separation, and even more, it is the heterogeneity of the surfaces touching each other [...] insofar as the actual power of a body consists of its capacity of touching another body (or touching itself), which is nothing else but its de-finition as a body.« Thus Vladimir Miller's medial de-finition, defnialisation of the bodies, his articulation, his medial touch with the live event — especially in the heterogeneity of this contact of different presentation and projection areas — will not be illustrative but strikingly illusive, in all its openness and its apparentness of illusion, which exposes itself to its own techné and so, in a literally potential manner turns reality into possibility. Literally exposed illusion made visible, and in spite of this — or rather, just because of it — magical. The video artist who performs his apparatus on stage becomes part of it. The exposed path of the images and electronic impulses through the golden cables will paradoxically oscillate between illusion and disillusion, simultaneously present and absent, visibly illusive: real virtuality instead of virtual reality. The whirl of projections will make the projected live bodies (and not only their projections) tremble. Comparable — if in a different way — in Meg Stuart's *ALIBI* (2001) and *Visitors Only* (2003):

A brief reminder, something like *fault lines* between works: Meg Stuart's *Visitors*

Only begins with the vibration of the bodies with which her previous work *ALIBI* ends. This time there are bodies clothed in transparent raincoats whose long trembling unsettles the scene's visibility. Like trickling, vibrating raindrops the bodies in transparent coats fold the transparency of sight. The virtual veil of rain translates the scenic air into another state of aggregation. Intension instead of intention. The trembling choreography makes the room vibrate and fold: real movement, which however virtualizes real space. And when at the end of the scene the vibrating bodies now and then jump on the spot, as spring-back ball-point cartridges, it is as if the gestural tension of the sequence were critically whipping the writing utensils out of the choreography's hand.

In *the fault lines*, too, there is critical optioning instead of clinical representation; here, too — even if with an entirely different medial implementation, a kind of virtual rainbow after the virtual veil of rain — a choreography in italics instead of boldface — as if it were only quoting the dancing body whose outline resists any presence like bristling skin, like goose-skin, as if the bodies only were trembling quotes of themselves, put between quotation marks, as if they weren't there at all. This is the strong mutual affinity between the choreographies by Meg Stuart and Philipp Gehmacher, the author of *in the absence* (2003), *Mountains are Mountains* (2003), *incubator* (2004), *like*

there's no tomorrow (2007), to name only some of his works. What does the choreography by two of the most interesting protagonists of contemporary dance try to present so passionately, long after having conceptually committed itself to the un-presentability of passions? What shakes the bodies on stage, makes them tremble so — searching for an *ALIBI* for their own movement, their own being moved, for grasping their own emotion? What may still touch them when every kind of solid ground withdraws from under their feet as if they were floating — like at the end of *Visitors only* — over an abyss? As a place of medial ascriptions, the motivation of touching becomes increasingly harder in contemporary dance and performance practice, and the more it is interested in the emotive fall of the body which keeps evading the idea of its dancing weightlessness, even lightheartedness. As if this practice were asking again and again where the customary oppositions conceptually/emotionally, minimalistically/affectively are coming from, by letting these oppositions fall anew in getting to their bottom. Instead of rehabilitating affects or opposing emotions to concepts, it tries to dis- and reassemble the ever emotive texture of choreography especially in the course of minimalism. It tries to defigurate the illegible figurations of feeling, to deconstruct its all too blind constructions — and to persevere, knowing about its referential imponderability.

The question of the potential of touch also deals with the main rule of the scenic — visibility. This investigation of the preconditions of a medium also has to be seen politically — i.e., against the ideology of sentiment, against the paroles of a positivistic view which postulates the evidence of visibility. The scenic emotion however stays in the trembling, the oscillation of potentialities — never actual, never present, but potential, in marked absence. »There is no falling in love, no falling out of love« it says Meg Stuart's and Benoît Lachambre's *Forgeries, love and other matters* (2004). The fault lines of lack, of failing, of falling: falling in love, falling out of love. »There is no dance in this place, there is no reason to stay in this place«, it says in *Forgeries, love and other matters*. And yet the piece ends with the words: »I'm staying here forever.«

Maybe forever is the name of Meg Stuart's and Philipp Gehmacher's first joint performance created in 2007, which they continue in 2010 with *the fault lines* — to draw further confused fault lines and lines of distortion, of touching the other, prone to fault and missing, measuring, impudent, missed. Joint artistic research, too, between the video artist Vladimir Miller and the choreographer Philipp Gehmacher: in the choreographic video installations *dead reckoning* (2009), *at arm's length* (2010) and the group piece *in their name* (2010). Here, too, choreography and

video installation, body and images go along each other — toppling and diving into each other, immersing and submerging. That which not only seems to separate the live figures but also the various projection areas actually connects them — if they are to be connected at all. Bodies and their stories, put down by themselves but not anywhere else either, which linger at the fringe of their mirror-image without breaking the glass. »One reaches a border not by crossing it but by touching it«, Jean-Luc Nancy writes in *Corpus*.

The fault lines: bodies which touch the border between them without crossing it — which *are* this border. Exposed bodies, exposed to touch, in all their immeasurability, incalculability — and vulnerability. As if they were phantom pain, a painful nothingness, completely exposed to the other. Touching each other as attention and distance. For it is necessary »to interrupt the immediacy and continuity of touch«, says Jacques Derrida in his book *Le toucher: Jean-Luc Nancy*. This chance of possible interruption, of interrupted immediacy in all the anchorless melancholy of every gesture in *the fault lines*, this chance which endows the scene with the optics of the optional, of openness. The camera makes the eye alert for the live event, the invisible distances within the live touches. Doubles, reflections, surfaces, layers. Bodies disrobed by

themselves, bodies on withdrawal, which at the same time are quoting themselves, setting themselves in italics, every gesture resisting itself — and merging into the pixel-like goose-skin of Vladimir Miller's projections. Medial replays which only play the live bodies back into their real virtuality. Stills which always assert the choreographical and medial movement. That which remains is the never-shown, the performative residue of absence, the performative and medial gesture of the undeliverable. Gestures which are too big and too small at the same time, which mark the rest of the inexpressible, which only behave with restraint — if at all.

The reserved manner of pathos and melancholy, so typical for Philipp Gehmacher's choreography, here deals with the incommensurability of the other with the highest aesthetic strictness. The too-much/too-little of scenic gestures as residue. The rest is silence. And the melancholy absent-mindedness of these gestures which evoke the exceptional circumstances of dance, ecstatically immobile or stutteringly bespoken, existential and exhaustive. Gestures so small that they touch their absence, as if they weren't even there yet. Gestures so big that they tear apart. *Fault lines*. The bodies of Meg Stuart and Philipp Gehmacher will leave each other and themselves — while touching. That which will remain will have been their outlines. Even after the two fighting/embracing bodies separate, one of them will

stay in the interrupted gesture of touch. An embrace with empty hands. And Meg Stuart will not caress her partner so much but rather retrace the contours of his body — a line along his body, almost as if tenderly outlining a dead body on the crime scene. Nor is this gesture accidental in *Maybe forever*. Choreography as an epitaph, as touching the ephemeral. At some point in *the fault lines* HE will push her corpse, her unmoving body along in front of himself. And again SHE will caress his outlines, touch her border to him, cut out not the body so much but the touch. The peephole projection too, with which Miller will softly spy on, sample the two bodies, inert again — entirely different — cuts out the live bodies or rather the distance of their touches in order to focus on them: however, as *punctum*, as a crossfade of something invisible, in the sense of Roland Barthes' *punctum* (*Camera Lucida*) of photography, the incalculably interrupting and simultaneously painful punctuation of the ephemeral which records the literal withdrawal of the figurative, as a kind of blind spot in the eye of the hurricane. On the other hand, in *Les morts de Roland Barthes* Jacques Derrida, on the occasion of Barthes' death, specifies the *punctum* of transience as »incompleteness made visible«, as »punctuated yet open interruption«.

Interruption once again, narrative spots instead of narrative plots: the peephole of projection, its spotlights virtually

punctuating the live event. The virtual touch of reality punctuates, isolates, focusses, interrupts, hurts it. It, too — a touch in the mode *I prefer not to*. Like the performative violence in the beginning, when the two performers touch each other to become separated — along their opposing fault lines. When they attack each other in order to let go of each other, to desist; when they go towards each other in order to part. Bodies parting. They turn towards each other to turn away from each other. The live touch raves, goes up the wall, is played against the wall, in the beginning a brutal and painful touch of the two bodies literally throwing themselves at the wall, letting their embrace fail intensively — and later also cast their projection on the wall, the projection which vibrantly repaints the live figures. The foil which Vladimir puts in front of the projector like a curtain makes the projected bodies shimmer, letting them immerse in virtuality. The rainbow of movements passing into each other is virtually doubled by the lyrical rainbow of glittering colours Miller will cast on the wall. Like a »drop of sky« (Friederike Mayröcker) the touch will camber down to the other — without actually touching. And always, shortly before the bodies raving with and at each other throw themselves against the wall, his body will cushion her body's blow. He will protect her. Too much? Lyrical film soundtrack. The performance's *making of* by Vladimir

Miller. And time and again one will come to lie in the other's arms. Untouched.

Near the end Philipp Gehmacher and Meg Stuart will sit on the floor together in front of the curtain before the white wall behind which there is nothing, and draw big circles around themselves with their arms. Two embraces without object, drawn embraces, two circles intersecting. The empty intersection of embrace. The arms are folded, but in the frontal drawing of an embrace which never happened. An entanglement of two semaphores, two clockworks ticking peculiarly instead of signalling. Vladimir Miller will pull the glittering foil over the images' projection, let the figures glimmer pixel-like, thereby transporting them somewhere else entirely, uncannily enlarging the pointillist distance between them. And once again he will virtually isolate only Meg Stuart's projection which now — depixelated — will seem to inhabit a parallel world. The interrupting, painful, invisible *punctum* of touch in the image of the finale, the parallel worlds of touch will pause — in a downright transcendental longing for each other. Meanwhile, Philipp Gehmacher will have quoted his »long arms«, his self-referential gesture of a singular absentee's outward tension.

In the choreography — as a punctual temporization and spatialization of touches — rather the untouchable is inscribed. The untouchable in figures of touching, figures without shape. Choreo-

graphy as a technique of borders. And the borders as the figures of touching. Where the choreography splits the scenic bodies and glances with its sense of rhythm and touch, no body and no gaze will have stayed intact. In the fissure of this impaired and longing seeing and feeling, haptic and optic contact each other, contaminate without ever becoming one. The touchingness of a scenic touch will have been its potential, its strong weakness of touching without touch; without transgressing any limits, without mingling surfaces, but rather touching the borders, affecting, tangential, contingent: in all the contingency of a contact which occurs, happens, is imparted — only in separation, only in the non-intactness of tactile experience which does not concern unimpaired subjects, which takes no immediacy as given, which aesthetically, ethically, politically opens and closes the quotation marks for »touching« — as if they were the eyelashes of an ever distant, interrupted gaze. No immediacy, uninterruptedness, continuity, symmetry. The technique of touching rather concerns the caesuras, the syncopes, *the fault lines*.

As if our world were built on *fault lines*, on those subterranean fissures and crevices in deep rock strata that are supposed to be responsible for our aggressions and depressions, for our violent *stills* and tender distances. *Fault lines* — perhaps those fissures, disturbance areas, lines of distortion at which we always abide, anchorless and restrained, in our mutual inverse desires, the lines at which — only in our inconsistency, our brokenness — we can touch each other.

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the fault lines by Philipp Gehmacher /
Meg Stuart / Vladimir Miller
was presented by Tanzquartier Wien on
February 4th 2011 at MUMOK Factory.

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studied theatre sciences. Directed productions at various major German theatres and also worked on several projects with dancers. In 2008 he was awarded a Sponsorship Prize from The State of North Rhine-Westphalia for exceptional young artists working in theatre as well as the Wild Card from the RUHR.2010 GmbH.

Philipp Gehmacher ^A

dancer, choreographer, realised amongst others the project *good enough, mountains are mountains* and *incubator*. The duet *Maybe forever*, started the collaboration with Meg Stuart and was carried on together with Vladimir Miller in *the fault lines* (2010). Gehmacher and Miller created the video installations *dead reckoning* (2009) and *at arm's length* (2010). Gehmacher's latest performance *in their name* was premiered at festival steirischer herbst 2010.

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