

**How can I create knowledge through movement while  
embracing my emotions?**

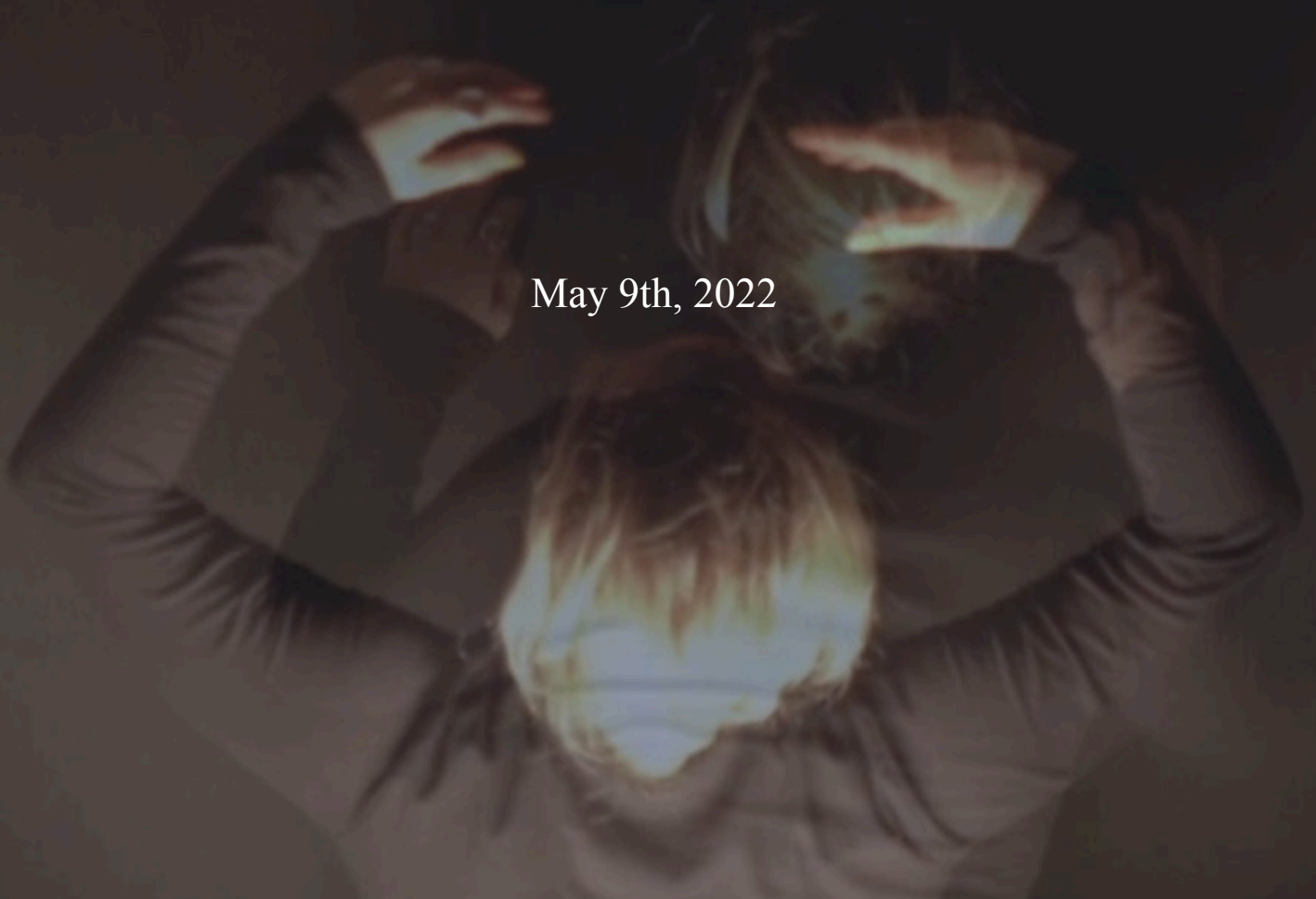
Elissa Fontana

Word count : 6553.

Thesis supervisor:  
Mariska van den Berg

Submitted to:  
Master Institute of Visual Cultures, St. Joost School of  
Art & Design, Avans University of Applied Sci- ences,  
s'Hertogenbosch The Netherlands.

May 9th, 2022





## Abstract

How can I create knowledge through movement while embracing my emotions ?

This research deals with body movements, and how the body moves in relation to feeling or emotion, such as frustration. Which aims to convey knowledge through embodied experiences and 4ea communication. I try to become more precise in how to develop this work, how to communicate, and even, to open up spaces for others in which to share this experience.

I explore bodily movements : actions, motions, gestures, reactions; and the embodiment of emotions to create knowledge. My method is experiential, and through confusion I reach a state in which I am movementing; based on, concerned with, and verified by perception, observation and experience rather than theory or pure logic. I refer to experiments and observations, and I have a very critical examination through movements. It is through the body, it is very individual and therefore subjective, that I express and embrace situations of overwhelming emotions. In order to express in a more sensible way, I investigate in an exploringly poetic manner, in a broken and fractured way. I can only jump from an island to the other, creating, inventing, in a saccadic manner, pondering questions along the way. I wish to gain and create and share knowledge and insight.

From this research, three conclusions emerge.

First, the method of movementing involves not only the body, movements and emotions, but also a connection between the mind and body in the shape of the physical response called embodied knowledge. I coin this connection the movementing. Secondly, the psychical environment is not a space that merely holds the work, rather a whole dimension where I explore, gather and scatter knowledge and experiences. Thirdly, my position in this space is mutable and unstable, yet it lies in the performative realm.

Key words : confusion, embodied knowledge, experience, emotions, frustration, movement, research,



## **Table of content**

### **Introduction**

### **Question**

### **Definitions**

curiosity  
confusion  
circular routine / ritual  
installation  
performative arts / performance  
movementing

### **Experience / theory / framework**

Coastal proceeding, areal views  
Impulsive introducing currents

### **Method / influences**

The archipelago  
Scattered lakes and chains of mountains  
Lagoon distress, wind forces

### **Practice / process**

First encounter : islet  
Second encounter : peninsular shield volcano  
Practical reefs  
Volcanic estuary calmness

### **Conclusion**

Waterfall flow of potency



## Introduction

In the text that follows, I will bring you on a journey of research and deepening into myself. There, we will discover islands working together, forces fighting each other, sources creating new currents, a flow of memories, experiences, anecdotes and emotions. I composed the text that follows driven by curiosity and confusion. Curiosity and confusion are my main engines in life, but also the key engines in my art and therefore key notions to this thesis, I believe they are part of the learning I went through, and aim to share. There is an intuitive interest in exploring experience through the body, experiencing through the body, in the form of an art practice. Different forms of performativity brought in relation to different spaces, retraceable through paint are shown.

Something is missing, and I am searching and researching the different faces and relations I feel are missing, yet present inside me, somewhere in the knowledge of my body. Channelling<sup>1</sup> ancestors I never had, or situations I never lived through. The movements are shown through my body from a place I no longer am in, nor can control consciously.

In this these many questions will arise, and shape the text, I don't necessarily answer all of them, they serve to help me shape and structure the text, as well as informing both me and the different chapters in the text. They are clues to navigate this thesis. They provide some questionings to enlighten the paragraphs underneath, a sort of a priori information; or how I reached certain points, developments, or more questions.

The subject area I'm diving into, body movement, is rather broad; to give a few examples: how a soccer team moves (also depending on who they play against), or how as a society we act or move in response to the external environment. How culture, identities and history shape different movements we produce. While I understand it is a multidisciplinary field, and this means it has many different perspectives and my interest goes, more or less intensely to all the different disciplines; I will focus this research on movement within the realm of the performative arts, more specifically towards embodied knowledge. While looking for support through theories from Rudolph Laban, and practices from Maya Daren, amongst others.

---

<sup>1</sup> Not meaning "The action or process of communicating with the spirits of the dead, extraterrestrial beings, etc." as one of the definitions of the Oxford English Dictionary. Rather, channelling, conveying, directing, canalising energies. By focusing and remembering.

## Question

*How can I create knowledge through movement while embracing my emotions ?*

I have come to a conclusion that since a very young age, I have the urge to vigorously express myself and explore. What has become even clearer is that I am usually confusively overwhelmed by emotions and empathy. In order to make this a strength, and in light of recent health issues, I have been carried to, or better yet, fell upon a circular routine of embracement, or embodiment, I call 'movementing'<sup>1</sup>. In order to express myself in the realm of fine arts, I chose to embrace this turmoil of emotions, and communicate with and within it, rather than pushing it away.

Travelling, exploring and understanding how the world is has made me comprehend how many injustices and unfairness there are around, which frustrate me. But not only, I realise we are growing into societies that lack human contact; intra-humane connections, nature relations.



<sup>1</sup> I will further explain this term I coined below.

## Definitions

Before we begin digging into the details, it is indeed a sensible thought to define and explain several key terms and concepts that require clarification. The definitions come from the Oxford English Dictionary, whereas the second part is my understanding and use of it in the thesis and in my practice.

### Curiosity -

“The desire or inclination to know or learn about anything, esp. what is novel or strange; a feeling of interest leading one to inquire about anything.”

Other than being one of my main engines in life, my practice, this thesis and research; curiosity is for me a key aspect to life, it is how I approach the world and its inhabitants, how I gather knowledge. It is imagination, creativity, malice and astuteness; and definitely an inherent part of me.

### Confusion -

“Mixture in which the distinction of the elements is lost by fusion, blending, or intimate intermingling.”

It is a way of thinking. Confusion really has two aspects for me. On one side the negative, dark, distressful, blinding; on the other side it is positive, exciting, thrilling, spontaneous and intertwined with curiosity, making it a great tool. Similarly to ‘curiosity’ it is an inherent part of me.

### Circular routine / ritual -

“A ritual act or ceremonial observance. Also in later use: an action or series of actions regularly or habitually repeated. A compulsive act or routine, the non-performance of which results in tension and anxiety.”

It is the circular ‘dancing’ process I go through before and during making work. It is also defined by the relationship between the space in which the support, the materials and myself are in.

### Installation -

“A large art work (esp. a sculpture) specially created or constructed for display within a gallery, museum, or other site; an exhibition of such works.”

Installation is the summative shortcut to define the resulting work of art I end up showing and exhibiting. This means that I set a whole ambiance, atmosphere and environment. It is also the setting in which I make my practice. To me it is the only way I can fully present and express my work, as my work doesn’t stop at the ‘object’, there needs to be a scenographic surrounding condition for my work to be properly appreciated, and make sense.

### Performative arts / performance -

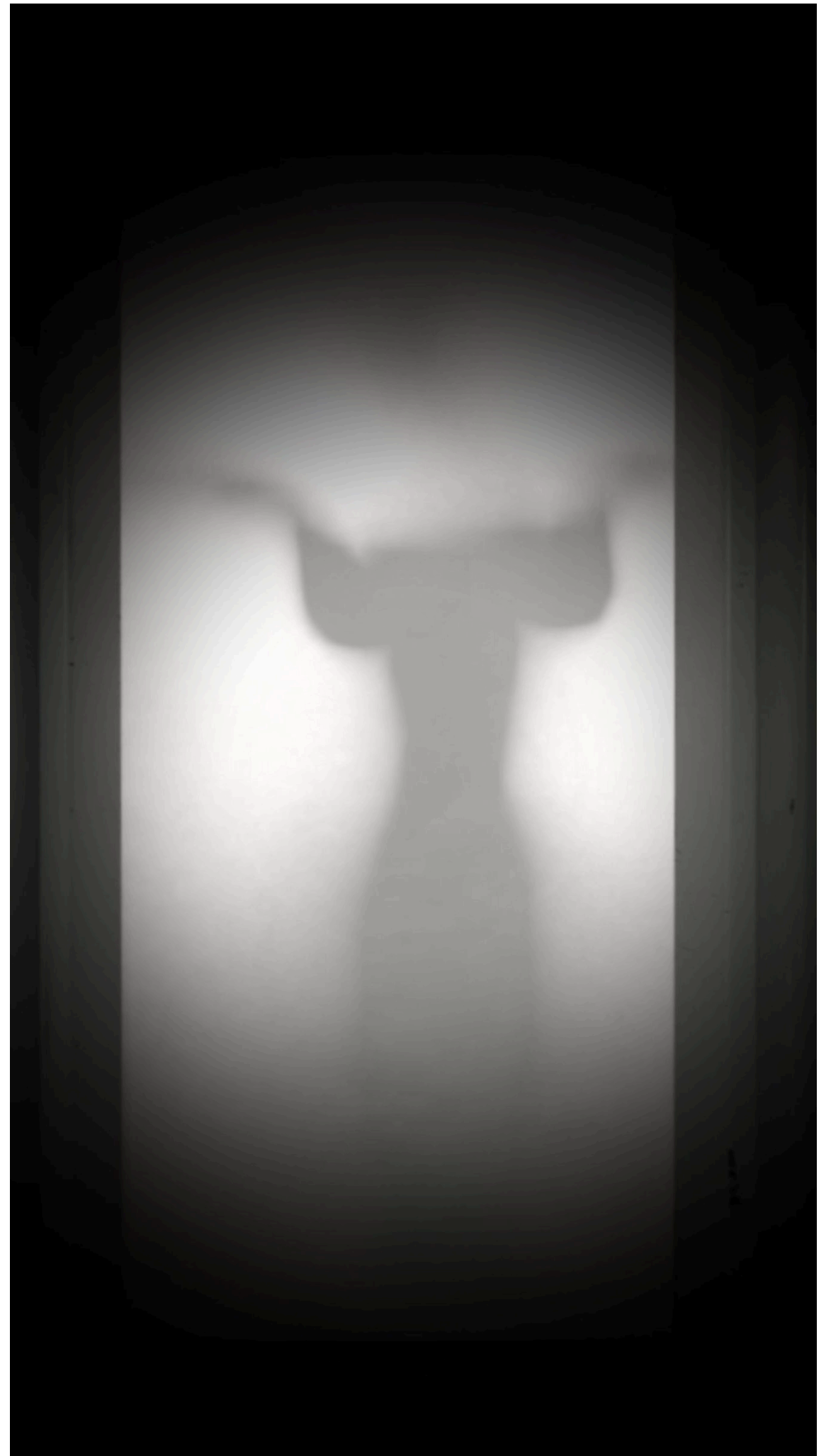
“An art form involving the performance of (usually non-narrative) actions in front of an audience, and often combining elements from both the visual and performing arts.”

Is understood and seen, for me and in the text, as a manner of knowing and learning through definable proof, rather than as a shape of expression.

### Movementing -

is a notion I coined to describe both movement and a certain condition in which a person might attain a distinct form of presence and see space differently and uniquely. It seeks to communicate and express knowledge hidden or visible in and by the body, allowing the body to express itself via motions and emotions. Movementing is a combination of a dance and performance without truly being either.

It is intense and consuming yet liberating, sudden and soft, short and long, tempestuous and calm, comforting and discomfoting, eager, gentle, tactile, angry, frustrated, punctuated, circular, immersed, abandoned, surrendered, mad, obsessive, suffocating, spiralling, caring, indecisive. Movementing is embodied, embedded, enacted and affected. It generates thoughts, and thoughts generate more movementing. It provides more than a better comprehension of life; it provides an inspirational experience of a reality that transcends our daily fears, concerns and satisfactions.



*Where does the body store various emotions ?  
p h y s i c a l i t y of the experience ? W h e r e is the*

This thesis is an ongoing investigation about finding my place -my position- in art, amongst other practitioners, and this research is its witness. With it I hope to contribute to the thinking of embodiment, performance and performativity.

The main subject areas of this research and my current main interests lie within the performative arts and installations with an albeit very small, but necessary addition of research and ‘soft sciences’. I do something that is quite different than regular hard science<sup>1</sup>, which is also empirical, but the way I go about the ‘data’ is rather different.

By installing the material results in a specific way, I create a space and an experience where the audience can thrive in : by opening a space to share and communicate experiences, and hopefully knowledge<sup>2</sup>. The installation will be a creation and recreation of expressive experience(s). For this reason, the medium is important, but the expressive and communicative aspect of my work lies within the performative installation. The ‘soft sciences’ aspect of the research lies in the reflection and unconscious consciousness of the immersed audience.

The primary objective is to explore and experiment; and share this, possibly new, art practice of movementing. Mainly I want to develop (and understand more deeply) the relation between confusion and movementing as a way to attain and reach another plane.[and use the confusion I have as a catalyser.]

*How can the confusion and frustration I have be turned into a tool in my practice?*

<sup>1</sup> Where social sciences are defined as ‘soft’ and natural sciences are defined as ‘hard’.  
“The study of human society and social relationships; a subject within this field, as economics, politics, sociology, etc.”-oed.  
What I mean by soft science in the text is psychology, phenomenology, psychopathology, cognition science, embodied cognition, somatic and psychosomatic science and theory.

<sup>2</sup> Embodied, Embedded, Enactive, Extended, and Affective.

*Do you believe your body responses ?  
Where do your emotions come from ?*

Questioning and trying to find ways to develop and dig deeper into the frustration and ira I have in and around me, and the urge I have to express myself, to move, to use my body, as well as the urge to move with and within my emotions, some theories such as performative documentary helped me shape a concept I have been and still am developing : movementing.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking and reading multiple languages makes it easy to confuse and invent words to fit a particular situation. Movementing is a term I coined to express both the movement and a moment, a specific state in which a person can achieve a different kind of presence and perceive space differently<sup>2</sup>. It is a combination of a dance and performance<sup>3</sup> without truly being either. The former is here not comprehended and perceived as it were, as a shape of expression, rather as a way of knowing through identifiable proof : embodied<sup>4</sup> empirical knowledge. The newly formed relationship with the space can also enable a new relation with myself (performer) which opens a possibility to connect and communicate and experience and learn with the audience; share empirical embodied knowledge and experience. It is a moment of understanding and surrendering to myself, my emotions, my frustrations, the space, the surroundings. It is both a method and a practice where I conduct this method as a sort of ritual, and it is what constitute my practice. Letting the movement leave a visible or audible trace.

Movementing is a representation of past inner-movements, (to be the future?) because when one gets moved and touched, some motions happen inside, fluctuations of feelings and emotions melt and mix, and create other experience/knowledge. It is a moment of understanding and surrendering to myself, my emotions, my frustrations, the space, the surroundings.

<sup>1</sup> Nichols, B. (2017). *Introduction to documentary, Third Edition* (Third ed.). Indiana University Press.

<sup>2</sup> The space I choose to practice movementing is key, and very important. I will come back to this point below.

<sup>3</sup> Where dance is defined by a ‘definite succession or arrangement of steps and rhythmical movements constituting one particular form or method of dancing’ and performance by ‘the accomplishment or carrying out of something commanded or undertaken; the doing of an action or operation’. As defined by the Oxford English Dictionary

<sup>4</sup> Which I understand as corporeal knowledge, or as mentioned by Karen Barbour ‘embodied ways of knowing’ better defined as : “In exploring understandings of mind/body dualism as embodiment, my interests turned to researching embodied ways of knowing” Barbour, Karen N. (1 January 2004) *Embodied ways of knowing* Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, Waikato.

And as mentioned by Berndtson, A. (1960). *Beauty, Embodiment, and Art*. Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 21(1), 50–61. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2104788>

“The basic structure of embodiment : that is, of the relation between the form and the emotion. Three hypotheses may be advanced in regards to that relation : that the form is the cause of the emotion; that the form is a sign or symbol of the emotion; and that the form and the emotion are mutually immanent.”





## Method and influences



Here comes an island !... the archipelago

*Where does the body store various emotions ?      W h e r e is the  
p h y s i c a l i t y      of the      experience ?*

Scientists<sup>1</sup> have been building a body of evidence over the past years demonstrating that confusion can lead us to learn more efficiently, more deeply<sup>2</sup>, more lastingly. I want to find a way to use the confusion I have as a learning, understanding and evolving method. As a way of thinking, I aim to use the confusion to gather thoughts through movement : movement generates thoughts, and thoughts generate movement. Since movements originate from internal stimuli of the nerves, and our bodily movements reveal features of our life; I ponder and wonder, where do the memories and feelings lie, and how do I gather them to them scatter them, how do I show them ?

-Scattered lakes and chains of mountains ... beware, more questions !

*Which parts of your body ignite and react ?      Which m o t i o n s come with  
emotions ?*

As I previously mentioned, curiosity and confusion are inherent parts of myself. Questioning and curious-ly wandering the world, I've always been steered to inquire, observe, contemplate, absorb, be curious, and above all, think and reflect. This brings me to having a lot of questions that shaped my research and this thesis, some of which are the following.

- To what extent can movementing foster empirical embodied knowledge (in the audience) ?
- To what extent do movements in performative art have confusing or calming effect on the audience?
- How can performative art foster a social response in the audience ?
- How can the frustration and anger make a way out ?
- “” Into transferable knowledge ?
- In contemporary climate(s), how movementing is used through frustration to make a way out of it ?
- How does movementing create, show and share knowledge and not more anger and frustration???
- How does the anger and frustrating climates help me movement my way out ???
- How do I share 4ea knowledge through movementing ?

<sup>1</sup> Namely : Tania Lombrozo; Sydney D’Mello; Scotty Craig, Arthur Graesser, Jeremiah Sullins & Barry Gholson; Martin A. Schwartz; Elisabeth Vogl, Reinhard Pekrun, Kou Murayama, Kristina Loderer and Sandra Schubert.

<sup>2</sup> As suggested by a study led by Sydney D’Mello from University of Notre Dame.  
D’Mello S. (2012). *Confusion can be beneficial for learning*.University of Notre Dame ScienceDaily. It can be retrieved from [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/06/120620103233.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/06/120620103233.htm)  
Another study : Craig S., Graesser A., Sullins J. & Gholson B. (2004) *Affect and learning: An exploratory look into the role of affect in learning with AutoTutor*. Journal of Educational Media, 29:3, 241-250, DOI: 10.1080/1358165042000283101

Another study : Schwartz, M. A.(2008) *The importance of stupidity in scientific research*. J Cell Sci; 121 (11): 1771. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1242/jcs.033340>  
Vogl E, Pekrun R, Murayama K, Loderer K and Schubert S (2019) *Surprise, Curiosity, and Confusion Promote Knowledge Exploration: Evidence for Robust Effects of Epistemic Emotions*. Front. Psychol. 10:2474. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02474



*How can movement and body portray an intertwining of psychological, emotional and physical states, when movement becomes beyond unimaginably impossible ?*

This rhetorical question has been keeping me rather busy and worried for quite some time. In this last couple of months, I found myself in a difficult position. I am suffering from menstrual chronic pain, I've been suffering for a month and a half now. The situation has brought great turmoil within me and my practice. This has made me really negative and unmotivated.<sup>1</sup>

This negativity and unmotivation has made a few changes in what I do and how I do. There has been changes in the way I approach a space and a moment to movement. For instance, I have the unfounded feeling of proceeding backwards : I physically advance, but I mentally step back, and it is an impediment. Although I unsuccessfully try to move, I have urges and impulses and ideas I really want to see accomplished. This mainly is a negative note, but it hasn't solely brought negativity<sup>2</sup>. For instance while becoming almost disabled at times, I have had the chance to centre myself more on research. This in turn has led me to have images and thoughts of movements and made me eager to search and explore more.<sup>3</sup>

The lack of enthusiasm I found myself into has also brought a different way of moving and conduct myself. I've had urges to feel softness, and be more gentle both with me, both inside and outside (also both in myself and in the world) and the props I use. I have slowly incorporated props in the spaces I movement in, such as fabrics.



---

1 "Recognising embodied ways of knowing and fostering them in relevant curriculum areas may lead to greater transfer-ence of learning and knowledge, not just from movement activity to movement activity but throughout a learner's life." Barbour, Karen N. (1 January 2004) *Embodied ways of knowing Faculty of Education*, University of Waikato, Waikato Journal of Education pp235-236

2 Cox, A.M. (2018) *Embodied knowledge and sensory information: Theoretical roots and inspirations*. Library Trends, 66 (3). pp. 223-238.

3 On many topics and discourses such as anthropology, feminism, communication, psychology ect. To give an example Merleau-Ponty or Trisha Brown.

**Practice and process**





Having had an education in scenography, and a very large interest in theatre in general, I have been finding myself get more influenced by and pulled again towards scenography. While I felt comfortable in a demarcated space, such as in a safe, or small rooms, usually enclosed, I now feel expanding, being more theatrical and use more elements of scenography. I have been thinking about the play ‘the tempest’ directed by Giorgio Strehler<sup>1</sup>, where the main scenographic element was fabric moved by people. Where the movements created by the people made a huge impact both at the time, and later on me when studying scenography. There were two aspects that made it possible to be of such great impression, primarily the fabric was a type of silk which has sheen and highlights the sea, with its lightness making it almost endowed with a life of its own, the slightest air movement would make the largest surface vibrate. A wind effect, on the other hand, makes them swell in a spectacular way. The other aspect was the sea of people underneath the fabric, flowing accordingly, divided and broken or together and smooth. The invisible actors were mimes who waves and stirred, like the sea, like the spirits, like the subtle air, like a vision, like an unfounded stage of reality.

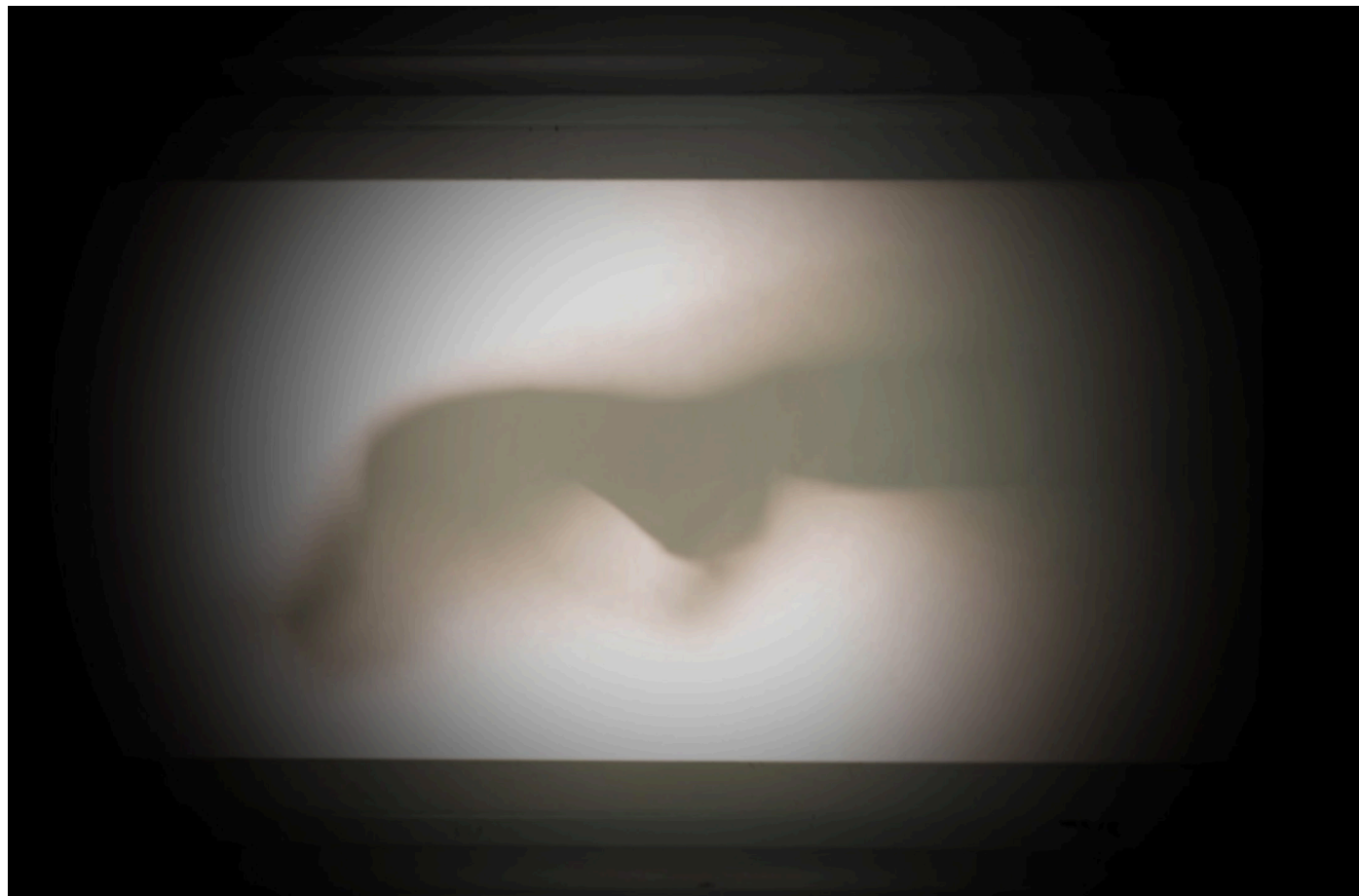
Those two aspects<sup>2</sup> are two of the characteristics I investigated when I was movemventing with and under different fabrics<sup>3</sup>. It has both influenced me and the movements, and the approach I had towards the situation I was in.

---

1 Strehler G. (1977/1978) *The Tempest*. Piccolo teatro di Milano.

2 The aspect of both the flowing moving people and the flowing moving fabric

3 I have tried to do movemventing under thick soft fabric, a sort of blanket-like fabric; I have tried under painted bedding sheets; quite thick and heavy curtains; I also tried behind and under stretched thin fabric.



Having then experimented with larger spaces, I felt quite tormented in the sense that I both appreciate the challenge, the option that it gives me, by making me use the whole space, decide where to go, how to move-menting around. On the other hand though, I also felt lost and minute, and forced to chose more consciously. Those mixed feeling about the new space are in fact useful for the elaboration and development of both my research and practice. It pushes me out of the ‘comfort bubble’ and forces me to be more creative in finding more involving ways to also present my work. It brings out a more focused form, where I truly surrender and movemventing then makes sense : it is a moment, a form, a new understanding of my surroundings, of my body, of my thoughts. It is then that I channel It becomes genuinely authentic embodied knowledge.



I have come to understanding that even though it doesn't make sense yet, or it doesn't have a clear goal, but only is an urge, or an impulse, in a second moment, later, I come up with an understanding, and it starts making a lot more sense, and the art work becomes a more understandable piece, that aims to communicate empirical knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Most movemventing I do in the recent condensed shots I took would make sense, only if edited with a narrative in mind; to me. Great artist Maya Deren is particularly relevant and influences me in the editing, and the different sequences of dance and movements. For instance, in the way she uses forward/backward movement, the way she uses reflections, shadows, shapes and fabrics. A Study In Choreography for Camera<sup>2</sup> (1945) by Maya Deren and dancer Talley Beatty for instance, shows how she uses editing to display the same movements forward in one moment, and backward in another moment; this also leads to the camera being not only audience, but also another performer. In the film Meshes of the Afternoon <sup>3</sup>(1943), she appears behind a window, where the trees in front of her are reflected on the window she rests upon. It all has an amazing aesthetic appeal on one hand, and on the other, it makes perfect sense, and is a great example of what I understand, and mean by empirical knowledge : understanding that and what you can experience, not science knowledge that you can perfectly explain with words, so to say.

I have come to think more deeply about movements; very technical, regarding stretching, volume, space and more. Looking at Rudolf Laban, and I am now elaborating and understanding how to use what analysis or examinations, because they all are extremely pertinent and relevant for understanding and producing body movements. Some examples of the relevant topics he talks about are for instance the relationship between movement and thinking, and knowledge in a way, which I am particularly interested in. He states : “it is a peculiar kind of building up of ideas about movement qualities and their use.” “Movement-thinking could be considered as a gathering of impressions of happenings in one's own mind, for which the nomenclature is lacking.” I understand, and translate these two sentences as ‘embodied knowledge’ in other words.

Another aspect that I relate to and is very much to the point is the Time aspect. From taking time to make sure everything is in order, to realising I've been spiralling out of control or confused for too long of a period. Time as an element comparable to Space and Weight, to cite Rudolf Laban again. Although equally important, time as speed, as a criticism, still applicable from the rapid industrial development. I realised Time is very important for my practice, and the process, especially getting into a correct mind frame.

Looking for sources, documentation, and references, I found and reaffirmed that ‘movemventing’ is a new and unused term. The concept though might be familiar in the fields of performativity and/or experience. I don't have the pretension to say I am inventing anything new, but I am trying to understand how to fit my practice and methodologies. Those are important because I believe we need more connections and understanding, non-scientific knowledge, knowledge based on experience, perception and (not necessarily unverbale) communication. While researching I found a great space that shares knowledge and thoughts, lectures, somatic workshops, screenings and more, on embodied knowledge; called ‘EmbodiedKnowledgeBureau’.

<sup>1</sup> “Once technique-related implications have been identified, a change in normative behaviour can be appropriated. As Humphrey suggested, performance requires an intrinsically human approach that integrates both Körper and Lieb. Merleau-Ponty's ideas of intercorporeality entreat the dancer towards a relational way of being, primarily for her body, then through her body into her world (1965).” pp121-122 Pribyl, J and Johnstone, K. (2011) *Who are we dancing for?Cross-cultural collaborations at Makerere University*, Uganda UCT School of Dance Woolsack

<sup>2</sup> Daren M. (1945) A Study In Choreography for Camera

<sup>3</sup> Daren M. (1943) Meshes of the Afternoon

I am trying to understand, to analyse, deepen and situate what really matters in what I do, and how I do it. It's a whole journey and I'm trying to navigate around myself to understand and discover the difference elements and processes I go through, and am interested about.

Investigate the specificity : what we are, what I am, what and where do I come from, where am I going inside, and what do I have inside. To what extent can movemventing foster empirical embodied knowledge in the audience ?

frustration,	anxiety,	Confusion,	anger,	
suffering		mental infatuation,	pain,	love,
What are we,		what am I	what and	where do I
come from				
I ask myself	.	.		where am I
am I going inside,			what do I have inside	where
		Am I inside or inside		
			Movemventing within and movemventing without	
		But yet,		to what extent can movemventing
foster empirical	embodied	knowledge	in the audience?	

By doing, and subsequently discussing with others in order for it to become clear for me (ie. I am movement-ing from the back because I am retracting from myself to make it even more universal -why- because becoming a mere body movement, it makes it relatable to others, thus making it more of a universal experience to relate to)(where it is not so particular and singled out, or individual and impersonal, it is more general which is what I aim for). Movemventing, with myself, within myself and others to express and generate thoughts and experiences.

Investigate how : moving by movemventing, defining terms and concepts I have in a nonverbal form, by exploring, and explaining both my finding and the process that led me to said findings. What I channel is negativity, frustration, confusion, anger, ira, pain, discouragement, vexation, suffering etc.. but the actual subject of said negativity is personal and I don't want to share that because it is not necessary to the understanding or success of my art. Mainly, the point isn't what makes me negative, everything does; it is how I translate and communicate it. I won't express more because I believe my vulnerability is shown enough in my practice, and the result and the work.

“What is specific to the creator is then be his way of tolerating the anguish faced with this moment of crisis which would be in some sorts of a psychotic nature but not in the sense of pathos. If the border is fragile, Didier Anzieu emphasises that the creator has the ability to preserve during the regression phase a vigilant duplication and the ability to self-observe, to place himself in a certain distance from himself, a distance “good enough” without which this creation cannot happen.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Rey, B. (2010). *Modelage et psychose : de la matière brute à sa mise en forme. Sensorialité, travail de l'archaïque et symbolisation.* (phd). Université Lumière Lyon 2 École doctorale : Éducation, Psychologie, Information, Communication Institut de Psychologie.





How does one's mind and body communicate between each other to transform negativity into constructiveness ?

A workshop I had the great opportunity and chance to take part in, during the ReNature festival in Den Bosch, with artist and practitioner Amanda Piña working in choreography and dance-related research; and 'concerned with the decolonisation of art, focusing on the political and social power of movement, temporarily dismantling ideological separations between contemporary and traditional, human and animal, nature and culture.'<sup>1</sup> This three days workshop, made me understand and aware of certain aspects of my practice and methodology.

Through one of the 'climatic dances', blankets were used as nests, and I further used a blanket to move underneath. I have experienced that covered up movemementing worked particularly well, it allowed me more freedom in a way. The cocoon-like feeling protects me, or I feel protected, and the 'un-flowyness' gives way for more comfort in the movements, and in the lower posture.

I manage to channel and have a greater embodiment, by surrendering, and feeling less constricted and obstructed. Fundamentally, the enactment of somatic practice. Consciously, or rather, less unconsciously than before, I embody differently, and deeper, on a broader level as well. I realise because not being alone in the workshop, the embodied energies were transmitted across to the other participants more powerfully.

An element which I have been going back to, to reflect, and 'bring back' is the term 'eco-somatisation'. Being really familiar with somatisation, this element of 'eco-somatisation' really makes sense, and allows me to embody differently, and channel : 'draw back from ancestors'(sort of). The range of things and concepts I embody is wider than before, but mainly is more conscious. One of them is a body of earth, having the form of a massive mountain.

We are a mountain, a feminine deity, we are the earth whom you  
inhabit, the roots, the birds, the ice, the water,  
ancestral waters, flowing down out





Here is another island !... volcanic estuary calmness

*How does the body store experiences and thoughts ?*

*How does the body deal with negativity and anger ? How can it be suppressed ? Or exteriorised ?*

Observing my practice I discovered that there really are two parts in my work : one unconscious, practical, playful and solar, energetic; and another one theorised, concretised, doubtful and questioning, scared, angry, irate and frustrated. They inform each other, coexist together, one probably couldn't be without the other.

The strategy I use is quite a lengthy and internal one.

It starts with me trying to get to a point where I can convey and channel<sup>1</sup> my feelings, and be guided in the complex mist of confusion and feelings. The main sentiments I start with are negative, and can be directed towards anything or anyone, including (usually) me. Something confuses me in a negative way, I get vexed, discouraged or disappointed. This negativity is also a significant part of the research I conduct. I then channel and fruitfully nourish this anger and frustration where I comply with complacency for a moment, gaining energy and drive from it. I let myself infuse with negative thoughts and feelings. This implies surrendering, and a b a n d o n i n g myself for a moment. A metamorphosis then takes place, through that negativity, I reach over to a state of peacefulness and both ascending and descending, enabling me to move-menting. It sort of has a therapeutic aspect to it, in the sense that all the confusion I get, the distress and affliction I put on myself that I bottle up, starts leaking out. Although I think a better word to describe it would be 'catharsis'.

The metamorphosis then becomes a sort of dissociation. Where on one hand I will ascend to a safe distance from which it is less, or not harmful to observe, detachment in a way, detachment from negative weights that pull me down. Ascending gives a logical, ordered atmosphere. Where all the empathy I have, that leads to my negativity, won't affect me as such anymore.

On the other hand though, the feeling of descending to my roots, to moments, places or people that anchor me back 'down' to roots. It usually brings me to ancestors, or some of their features, ones I have known very well, such as my grandpa, or the peace and liveliness he brought me, although it can also be ancestors I haven't known from centuries back. The other part that composes this descending is the eternal inner child, compared to the prior ones, this part of the process is the 'active' part where I chase myself, I share happiness and silliness, I jump, run, laugh, ect. There again though, is a duality, where all this positivity lies, also lies fear and chaos, similar to Dionysus in a way. Similar to the intertwining nature of Dionysus and Apollo, what happens in this process of both ascending and descending is of an intertwining nature, complementary to each other. Where Dionysus has this impulsive nature, warm and solar, showing multiple facets; and Apollo is calmer and colder.

<sup>1</sup> I am here not 'acting' as someone else, rather I am reenacting emotions and experiences to create different experiential situations.



I know the ‘how’, the methodology I use, which is a very natural and organic decision, that can also be defined as : more freely flowing, strange poetic movements, where they are the results of inner impulses of inherent values. As Hal Foster writes in the Viennese Actionism chapter : “As Nitsch states: “Every-thing comes together in the reality of our actions. Poetry becomes painting, or painting becomes poetry, music becomes action, action painting becomes theater, informal theater becomes primarily an optical event.””(p468) It always revolves around the same things. Revolve meaning ‘to go around’<sup>3</sup> is a very relevant expression and way of writing, as I usually go around and around and around and around and around. Around the canvas, around colours, textures, materials, around concepts, emotions, intentions, intuitions. Without ever fully grasping any of those ideas, without defining primordial basic details. Which I have been brought to develop, identify and think about in the last ten months. To get to either paint, video or photography, for one part; the other part aesthetic choices.

I could also argue that I created a ritual to deal with different inner parts of my personality within myself, and in my practice.  
The whole process can last from five to forty-five minutes, approximately.  
The urge then leads me to the material supporting my body, there are generally the two I use, as mentioned above.<sup>4</sup>  
I will then start the process of movemventing for as long as feels organic and authentic<sup>5</sup>, for how long as is necessary in other words; this can last from a couple of minutes, to a couple of hours.

In the last couple of months I have found myself busy with a new sort of approach, which I call ‘move-menting my way out of anger and frustration’, ‘out of’ for short. This new a<sup>6</sup>pproach to movemventing takes place on a roll of paper, mate on one side, and glossy on the other. The process goes as follows : after find-ing a suitable location, I attach a roll of paper in quite a rudimentary way, usually with masking tape. This rudimentary way can result in the paper falling down on me, as it has happen more than once, this in turn leads to an abrupt ending of the movemventing/act. Following the setting and settling of the paper, I get into a channelling of frustrating situations and emotions, as mentioned above, this moment varies in time. At this point the coloured substance I use is ready, and I can apply it on my concave hands, I have attained the right head space and can start movemventing on the paper.

2 Foster, H. (2004). *Art since 1900: Modernism, antimodernism, postmodernism*. London: Thames & Hudson. p468

3 Which brings back the concept of ‘circular routine’ I mentioned previously.

4 The two supports are either paper or fabric.

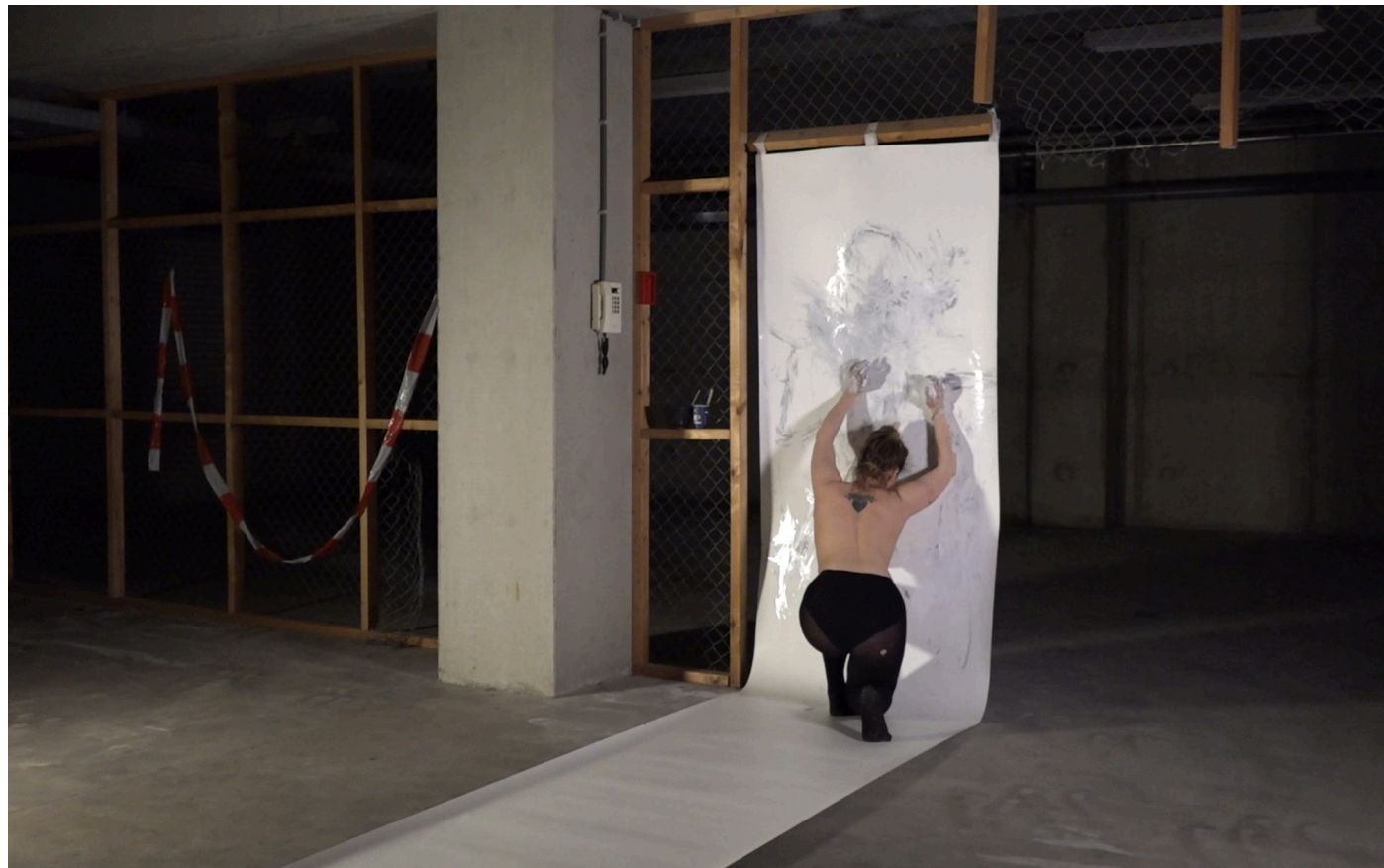
5 Organic and authentic as opposed to staged and rehearsed.

6 It is not necessarily new per se, but I am conscious about all the element, and this approach is new to me. I mentioned above to gain a ‘conscious acknowledgement that we are more than just an entity’, it was only one aspect. I am now conscious of widening my to more and more aspects of my practice, and turning my confusion in a way.



1 March 23rd, st joost school basement, 4 people audience and camera; white, silver and grey mixture (two types of paint and ink); scarcely dressed (wearing tights and masking tape on my breast); long roll of paper (uncut) taped to a wooden structure, surrounded by chickenwire; music while preparing and channelling, no music while movemventing.





Being in both physical and mental pain, including anxiety. Questioning actions, questioning reactions, questioning feelings and responses. While movementing I was aware of my breathing, the way it changed, how heavy it got and then slower. How certain muscles would contract to certain thoughts or questions of pain. How different the pressure and strength of my movements would be at different times and in different points of the paper. I was told after the whole process happened, that one of the audience member saw love and pain, and another person. I understand this latter part as an exchange with and within myself. I translated the person's feeling as having a interaction exchange I have realised in recent works, that my eyes don't always see when I am movementing, rather they sense. I keep my eyes half open/closed, the perception is altered, and becomes more of a sensory feature, whiskers to some extent. Those imaginary whiskers help me navigate the mental space I'm in, and physical, to be present with my body, feel the boundaries of the space, the support and my body. This is a metaphor for another way to create knowledge.

I have discerned a lot of pain in the recent works, the movementing is charged with pain, and it has been driving me from standing and vertical position, to both standing and coming down to the floor. What started as a protective cover for the floor, and my bare feet, rapidly muted into an integral, incorporated part of the continuity for the final outcome. Sensibly, the prolongation of the paper roll makes sense for it allows me develop the progression without breaking the flow and range of movements. Considering this aspect, one could think I would want to widen the support/paper, especially since I find myself working and expressing better on a larger scale support. Although, I have found that having a small amount of movements 'suspended in the air' works in a similar way of not being able to grasp everything or control all the elements. Which is also what happens when I come close to or walk away from the paper, other reason for the choice of the extension of paper on the floor as well. The retrace-ability of the movements made by the upper part of my body is probably the first instinctive reason for wanting to be able retrace the lower part of my body's movementing, to a large extent, the feet's movements; and therefore considering to extend the paper/support in long manner rather than in a wide aspect. Lastly the choice of the long paper previously mentioned, grants me to record on film the environment I am movementing in; environment of abandon referred to above.

I feel people coming alive, routes and tribes  
energies and settling, currents shifting.

My frustration and confusion make way for new landscapes, virgin pristine intact stages.

Both my practice and project are getting more environment specific. I am exploring different environments, and at the moment what works best for me, and what I am investigating, are abandoned spaces, in disuse, or mutating spaces.

The location really has become crucial to the development of movementing. For the time being the location is primarily an abandoned place, under construction, in mutation. A sort of contemporary ruins of the time, or last couple of centuries<sup>1</sup>. I have been experimenting in different places, such as the school basement. It is a very large space, completely unused with a very eerie and macabre atmosphere to it, which I thought would be very nice. Another place I have been going to is a nineteenth century building now being renovated, and I found an underground humid and empty room, very tall and inspiring. It has led me to make some movements in different ways, such as trying to reach as high as possible, which also then makes me want to reach very low.

A future location I will be experimenting in, different than the previous ones in the construction of it, is outside an old religious place. There are wooden beams at different heights, which will be an interesting experience, since I can easily reach one of them. The other main difference, which the results are absolutely not predictable, is the fact that there is no roof, and it isn't an actual room, as opposed to where I have been doing until now.

Sometimes against a wall or structure, sometimes just hanging and sometimes on the floor, movementing takes places in different positions.

Movementing against a wall gives me a sense of stability as I can push against, lean on the paper, and feel supported somehow.

Movementing while hanging gives me a sense of volatility and more depth. The paper behaves and almost performs while I am movementing on and around it. Technically it also allows me to enter and exit the 'scene' with more of a sense of clean and theatrical aspect to the whole 'act'/performance.

Movementing on the floor allows me to trace the feet's movementing. More movements. More logical to have interconnectedness between upper and lower, but also creates a space within the space. Additionally, being on the floor makes me more anchored, and gives me more points to be connected to the space. (I like how the way it marks down and feels) at times I feel like standing/only vertical support is not enough or simply different, and/or the space I am in requires it. This is an aspect I have been developing more, and looking at other practitioners, it gave me more curiosity to explore on the floor.

I am aware of practitioners such as Alexis Blake, which I relate to in terms of exploring concepts of embodiment, and emotions such as anger and empathy, especially thinking about her performance 'Anthology of Anger' (2017). Another contemporary practitioner I have been practically exploring is Amanda Piña, with the concept of somatic practice. They both position themselves within the (large) field of performance, while still naming their practice 'multidisciplinary'.

While I try to become more precise on my position within the arts, I also become more confused. I believe the work I do is both in the moment with me and the participating (mentally and visually) audience, while I am movementing; additionally in the performative painting aspect of it, and the resulting 'painting' coming out of my movementing; moreover in the videos and pictures taken while I am movementing; and lastly in the installation of the whole situation of me, the audience and the camera in either the same space or another fitting space.

To summarise, the work lies in the form of -a performance -a live action painting -a video, both documentary and performative -an installation (with live elements).

<sup>1</sup> I think I realise the failed beauty in certain spaces, and I can fruitfully immerse myself in those spaces.









Conclusion

To recapitulate and conclude, how can I create knowledge through movement while embracing my emotions? Through the agency of arranging and constructing a ritual for myself within the practice of movement that does not act as a healing aspect; rather a sharing aspect, might be an immediate and prompt answer. I want to mention that this thesis is for me, a starting point for much further research and the basis a methodology and process I will keep on using and investigating. Furthermore, the psychical environment is not a space that merely holds the work, rather a whole dimension where I explore, gather and scatter knowledge and experiences.

Feelings are facts, and I have found a way for me to use and apply in a way that is sensible in creating embodied knowledge. The method and practice of movement involves not only the body, movements and emotions, but also a connection between the mind and body in the shape of the physical response called embodied knowledge. I explore the motions that are created by emotions, it gave, and still gives me a way to experiment with, and gain more knowledge. Instead of bottling up, not moving with and leaving aside, the ritual of movement lets me respond to their overwhelming turmoil.

Through the research I have carried out, and keep conducting, I found different positions, that lead me to think more deeply about my own. I determined that I don't have a single position, I cannot be confined to a single position, for the time being. It is still an ongoing matter, my 'position' is made up of a multitude of words that are weaved together; some of them are mover, spatial performer, researcher, enhancer. I am convinced that having a single position is rather difficult in the current art situation, while we might have a specialisation, artists tend to have more than one string to our bows.

I can only hope that this research can contribute to opening framework spaces and thoughts in the realm of embodied knowledge in this disembodied Eurocentric society we live in



## Sources and references

- Dance. (n.d.). In Oxford English Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/47116>
- Circular routine/ritual. (n.d.). In Oxford English Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/166369>
- Channelling. (n.d.). In Oxford English Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/30500>
- Confusion. (n.d.). In Oxford English Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/39014>
- Curiosity. (n.d.). In Oxford English Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/46038>
- Installation. (n.d.). In Oxford English Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/97026>
- Performative arts/performance. (n.d.). In Oxford English Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/140783>
- Social science. (n.d.). In Oxford English Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/183756>
- Auslander, P. (2006). *The Performativity of Performance Documentation*. PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art, 28(3), 1-10
- Barbour, Karen N. (1 January 2004) *Embodied ways of knowing Faculty of Education*, University of Waikato, Waikato Journal of Education pp235-236
- Berndtson, A. (1960). *Beauty, Embodiment, and Art. Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 21(1), 50–61. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2104788>
- D’Mello S. (2012). *Confusion can be beneficial for learning*. University of Notre Dame ScienceDaily. Retrieved from [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/06/120620103233.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/06/120620103233.htm)
- Daren M. (1943) *Meshes of the Afternoon*
- Daren M. (1945) *A Study In Choreography for Camera*
- Cox, A.M. (2018) *Embodied knowledge and sensory information: Theoretical roots and inspirations*. Library Trends, 66 (3). pp. 223-238.
- Cox, L. (2009). *Movement knowledge: what do we know, how do we create knowledge and what do we do with it?* Interface: a Journal for and about Social Movements. - not cited
- Craig S., Graesser A., Sullins J. & Gholson B. (2004) *Affect and learning: An exploratory look into the role of affect in learning with AutoTutor*. Journal of Educational Media, 29:3, 241-250, DOI: 10.1080/1358165042000283101

- Fischer-Lichte, E. (2008) *The Transformative Power of Performance, a new aesthetics*. Abingdon: Routledge - not cited
- Foster, H. (2004). *Art since 1900: Modernism, antimodernism, postmodernism*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique*, Édition du premier titre. Collection Tel (n° 9), Gallimard.
- Goldberg, R. (2001). *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present (World of Art)*. London: Thames & Hudson; Rev Sub edition. - not cited
- Kendon, A. (2004). *Gesture. Visible Action as Utterance*. Cambridge: University Press. - not cited
- Laban, R. (1950). *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage*, Fourth Edition, Republished 2011 Dance Books Ltd., Alton, Hampshire, Uk
- Nichols, B. (2017). *Introduction to documentary*, Third Edition (Third ed.). Indiana University Press.
- Pagnes A. (VestAndPage) | *Notes on performance art the body and the political* pdf - not cited
- Pina, A <https://nadaproductions.at/about-us/amanda-pina>
- Pribyl, J. and Johnstone, K. (2011) *Who are we dancing for? Cross-cultural collaborations at Makerere University*, Uganda UCT School of Dance Woolsack
- Reason M. (2010) *Asking The Audience: Audience Research and the Experience of Theatre, About Performance*, p10 - not cited
- Reason M. Reynolds D. (2010) *Kinesthesia, Empathy, and Related Pleasures: An Inquiry into Audience Experiences of Watching Dance*, Dance Research Journal, 42 / 2, winter, pp. 49-75. - not cited
- Rey, B. (2010). *Modelage et psychose : de la matière brute à sa mise en forme. Sensorialité, travail de l’archaïque et symbolisation*. (phd). Université Lumière Lyon 2 École doctorale : Éducation, Psychologie, Information, Communication Institut de Psychologie.
- Schwartz, M. A. (2008) *The importance of stupidity in scientific research*. J Cell Sci; 121 (11): 1771. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1242/jcs.033340>
- Smith, Jonathan, Flowers, Paul and Larkin, Michael, (2009) *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Theory, Method and Research*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd. - not cited
- Strehler, G. (1977/1978) *The Tempest*. Piccolo teatro di Milano.
- Vogl E, Pekrun R, Murayama K, Loderer K and Schubert S (2019) *Surprise, Curiosity, and Confusion Promote Knowledge Exploration: Evidence for Robust Effects of Epistemic Emotions*. Front. Psychol. 10:2474. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02474