

# Reddening

Methodology for intensifying emotions during  
dancing

By Maja Kalafatić



*...like crazy*, TADaCollective. Photographer: Johanna Naukkarinen

**ABSTRACT****DATE:**

<b>AUTHOR</b> Maja Kalafatić	<b>MASTER'S OR OTHER DEGREE PROGRAMME</b> Master's programme in Dance and Performance
<b>TITLE OF THE WRITTEN COMPONENT/THESIS</b> Reddening: Methodology for intensifying emotions during dancing	<b>NUMBER OF PAGES + APPENDICES IN THE WRITTEN COMPONENT</b> 56 pages+ 1 appendice
<b>TITLE OF THE ARTISTIC/ ARTISTIC AND PEDAGOGICAL WORK</b> ...like crazy Co-dance makers Jacqueline Aylward and Sonja Karoliina Aaltonen Lighting designed in collaboration with Lauri Hietala Costume designer Kasia Gorniak Sound designer Lauri Kallio Produced within the context of TADaCollective Premiering Theatre Academy Helsinki January 30th 2023  The artistic work is produced by the Theatre Academy. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The artistic work is not produced by the Theatre Academy (copyright matters have been agreed upon). <input type="checkbox"/> There is no recording available for the artistic work. <input type="checkbox"/> The final project can be published online. This permission is granted for an unlimited duration. YES The abstract of the final project can be published online. This permission is granted for an unlimited duration. YES	
<p>My written thesis unpacks the concepts, principles, and methodologies I used in my artistic thesis <i>...like crazy</i>. I reflect and analyse how I worked with emotions inside of the frame of contemporary dance. My areas of interest lie in the landscape of emotional, physical, and representative bodies. One of the main questions I was dealing with is: How can I be more emotional while dancing?</p> <p>In the introduction of the thesis, I position myself and frame my work inside of a wider context of my geographical and language paradigm, as well as my artistic preferences. I reflect on my strategy on renewing my approaches in dance making, which was the base for my artistic and written thesis.</p> <p>In the second chapter I connect my dance making to interdisciplinarity and intertextuality as my relation towards text, dance, and writing. I contemplate on the nature and the form of the text. In the third chapter, "You are terrific and I can't stop loving you" I describe my field of interest and my main questions. The third chapter outlines the working process inside of a <i>...like crazy</i> performance and unpacks challenges and solutions in a collaborative way of working with Sonja Karoliina Aaltonen and Jacqueline Aylward. The following three chapters are part of a triptych: "Construct", "Reddening", and "Gentle Drama", which represent the most important part of the written thesis. In the chapter "Construct" I write about costume as a performative tool and my view of the concept of an extended body. "Reddening" represents a playful chapter about how words and colours correlate as textual and nontextual material. In the chapter "Gentle drama", I write about emotions, perceptions, and methods for enhancing emotions while dancing. In chapter seven, "Questions of the Volume", I discuss and reflect upon the concepts of the gaze, timing, and intensity.</p> <p>At the end, I reveal my future plans with the performance <i>...like crazy</i> and my solo. Ultimately, in the conclusion I discuss and answer some of my questions, as well as reflect on the whole process, concepts, and my relation towards dance practice and writing.</p>	

**KEYWORDS**

Dance, emotions, drama, performativity, costume, extensions, red, collaboration, textuality, interdisciplinarity, intensity, gaze, sensation, perceiving, facial expressions, Jacqueline Aylward, Sonja Karoliina Aaltonen, solo, ...like crazy



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

When I applied to the Master Dance Performance program at Uniarts Helsinki's Theatre Academy I did so wishing to create a space for myself where I would be free to retry, redo or request certain knowledge and methodologies. I was gaining a space for experimenting and learning. Being a student offers a great deal of stability and security, especially after such a long time of freelancing as a dance-maker. I found it beautiful to surrender to studying and being completely immersed in learning processes without any guilt or pressure due to deadlines and writing applications. When applying, I felt it necessary to take time for new perspectives. Dance practice is constantly changing and developing. I was honestly curious about how it is to study dance today. I graduated in 2006 from the Salzburg Academy of Dance, and earned my master's degree in 2015 from the University of Music and Dance Cologne, Germany, which drew my interest to the educational system to see how it may have changed. I wanted to learn more and be in touch with students, dancers, and choreographers, who are currently studying and possibly offering completely new or different practices and concepts of dance-making. I am writing all of this because it also contextualizes my artistic and written work. My main interest and topic of the work was in a way born out of necessity to resist my previous ways of dance-making. I created a strategy for myself. A strategy that allowed me to renew my understanding of things. I wanted to push myself into exposure and work with the idea of emotions. My strategy was to always allow for things to resolve in unconventional or even avoided paths. This means that I allowed myself to work against my usual way. I allowed myself to work more freely when it came to dramaturgy or choreography. I would persist in my decisions, which may not have necessarily been logical or right, but they were rather odd or unusual for me. I am applying the same strategy in my written thesis. I decided on a strict selection of references and theories to use in my writing. Once again, I am putting constraints as a challenge and a way of revisiting known concepts or even changing my mind. I am aware that it is still me being myself but I wish to believe that certain restraints and choices led me to a different path. I am satisfied with how this strategy has led my artistic expression and although it might not seem easy, I am very keen on it. When talking about writing, it is also quite difficult to escape familiar concepts and authors, but I will do my best.



It seems that today we can hardly speak of a homogeneous way of working or understanding concepts and ideas in art and in general. There are so many collaborations between artists coming from different fields of expertise who are keen on combining disciplines and creating new formats and new ways of art making. I mainly work in an interdisciplinary way. I would position my art between dance, visual art and activism, where I use a fun, transdisciplinary and dynamic practice to address pressing matters (Shitart Project, Works in Progress, Queues in Progress, Dance and Act, etc.). It is important and joyful to me to integrate knowledge from different fields to reach broader and richer solutions. Previous to my studies at Uniarts, I have been collaborating with artists, some of whom include Ajda Tomazin, who works as a designer, choreographer and performer, Venelin Shurelov, a versatile artist and professor, Stephanie Felber, who is choreographer, performer, photo and videographer, visual artist Polona Maher, performer and architect Esta Matković, Ema Stojković Jerinić, who works as an architect and scenographer, dramatist Dimitrije Kokanov, musicians Jaka Kopač, Luka Železnik, Milica Božović, and Milena Jančurić, composer Matej Bonin, and many others. For quite some time I worked in theatres as a choreographer. I was researching the choreographic expression within the drama theatre and questioning the relationship between text and the body, as well as speech and the body within the framework of performance of traditional textual forms in connection to dramaturgy and theatre direction. I also closely collaborated with many costume, sound and music designers, as well as actresses, actors, dramatists, and directors. My work is usually participatory, performed in public or semi-public spaces, or even in the streets. My interest is not only to create interdisciplinary work, but to expand my dance practice outside of the context of dance/theatre, as well.

### 1.1. The structure of this text

This text was written in a nonlinear manner. That means that I started with one chapter and then wrote a bit of another chapter, then jumped back and went to the first chapter while writing the last one. This way of writing and working is also relating to the performance of *...like crazy*. Both the text and the performance propose many possible ways of reading the work. From back to front, from the middle, or any other direction. It proposes a play between textual and non-textual material, between personal and formal,

between colours and between lines. Dear reader, please feel free to handle this text as you wish.

The names of chapters were chosen from key words or phrases that arose during the process of writing the thesis. The second chapter is called “Text-uality-inter-disciplinarity”. This chapter is concerned with my relationship with the text, writing, and language, which is also reflected in my dance-making and vice versa. The third chapter “You are terrific and I can’t stop loving you” came from my first research on how to be emotional. I was interested in love letters and wrote down some of the funniest ones I came across online. The quote “You are terrific and I can’t stop loving you” appeared on my list of favourite love lines. I thought it suited the third chapter very well, since it outlines my artistic collaborators and friends, I consider terrific. In this chapter I describe my field of interest and my main questions. I write about group dynamics, challenges, and solutions. The third chapter outlines the working process inside of a performance *...like crazy*. I was under the impression the whole time that (friendship) love was the main guidance not only about the topic or the matter of the work but also, or mainly, about how the work was done. How you work, create, or make dance says more about the content than naming the topic or saying what the work is about. For this I am most grateful to my comakers and co-dancers Jacqueline Aylward and Sonja Karoliina Aaltonen. You are terrific and I can’t stop loving you. The fourth chapter, “Construct,” aims to define how I myself became the construct I wanted to become. It is a chapter about performativity of my costume. It describes how I decided on a character and the process behind it. This chapter is a part of the triptych: “Construct,” “Reddening,” and “Gentle Drama,” which represent the essence, the heart, the flesh and blood of my artistic and written work. All of the chapters are about both my solo and group work. The triptych comes as we are three and we had three parts of the process: the whole group, only the three of us, and solo work. We have solos, duets, and trios. Number three is also befitting because of its magical, numerical, and historical power. My character has three main courses of development. Chapter five is “Reddening”. Red as a colour, as a word and as an emotion. “Gentle Drama” is the sixth chapter, the final and probably the most complex part of the triptych and the whole work. In this chapter I write about emotions and perception. I describe my creative strategies. I question the connection between action and emotions. The seventh chapter, “Questions of the Volume,” contains very important content on artistic approaches and

very concrete methodologies. It reveals how I deal with timing, gaze, and details. Last chapter gives short predictions on further plans and future dances. The Conclusion is only an illusion that serves as a wrapping tool. In the name of suspense, I accept that and shall have a great exit. Good exits are just as important as great beginnings. “Thank you” as chapter nine acknowledges everybody that supports and love me.

## 2. TEXT-UALITY-INTER-DISCIPLINARITY

”Each word (text) is an intersection of other words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read” (Kristeva 1980, 66). Text is not an enclosed structure but it always contains traces of other texts and leaves traces for other texts. Texts carry various contexts such as cultural, historical, social, geographical, etc. Intertextuality is a notion developed by Julia Kristeva, a psychoanalyst and feminist theorist of language and literature. The idea of intertextuality appeared in 1969 in her essay “Word, Dialogue and Novel.” She wrote: “Every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an inter-textuality)” (Kristeva 1984, 60). Closely tied to this concept is the work of Umberto Eco, *Opera Aperta/The Open Work* from 1962. The main idea behind this concept is that the creator and the recipient are equally important and active in the process of creating a work of art, which will be discussed further in chapter four.

This text is a part of my master’s thesis which includes the artistic part and written part. I am dealing with two sets of text; one is a performance as a text and the other is a written text. They both have certain conventions that help us read them and they both require a reader in order to be read. These two texts convey similar meanings and concepts throughout two very different apparatuses. This text is made from other texts and it might be used in creation of a new text one day. This text is a hybrid of different kinds of texts. This text analyses, feels, represents, confirms and questions. Professor Dragana Stojanović, based in Belgrade, who is an ethnomusicologist, theorist of culture, art, and media studies, says: “Hybrid writing is similar to other hybrid procedures in the field of art, which defines art as a whole as a text with which it is possible to work, through which it is possible to ask questions, explore it with its own means, explore it with the means of other texts, paratexts, transgress it or subvert it into to the process of its multiplication, hybridization” (Stojanović 2015, 177).

### 2.1. The nature and the form of the text

My writing is a textual embodiment of experience and my ideas about dance-making. This text is open for the reader to experience it and read it in the way they want to or need to. This text is written in the first-person narrative. Rosemarie Anderson, Professor of Transpersonal Psychology wrote: “Embodied writing tries to “presence” the

experience in the writer while writing and in the reader while reading” (Anderson 2001, 3). Hélène Cixous, a French writer and literary theorist, says that when we communicate about our bodies, ourselves, we are entering into language, into the arena of representation. Once again it is a question of the morphology of the body and not essence. “All bodies come into being through language” (Bray, Cixous 2004, 71). Stojanović says that the feminine writing is a writing of difference, a difference that writes (Stojanović 2015, 167). When writing in a different language I also notice the difference in gender sensitivity of the language, especially in the Serbian language. Svenka Savić, the professor of psycholinguistics and founder of women's studies in Novi Sad, Serbia, says that language is transformed and developed by everybody. She wrote: “That is why the conversation about gender-sensitive language does not belong solely to linguistics, but equally to other social sciences (mathematics too, music too). This is why not only philologists and linguists can master the language. We ask about language also everybody else” (Savić 2019, 132).

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the notion of the text and the multiplicity of its layers are what I find captivating. Positioning my work as interdisciplinary means that different aspects are essential in my artistic work and I also transfer that idea onto my text. My text has many natures and many layers. It is analytical, emotional, and visual. I am using visual aspects to highlight those layers. This text is a mixture of academic, reflective, and documentary texts. It includes notes from a diary, reflections, and theory. Visual distinction will be used for different kinds of texts. For instance, I am using italic for all of my diary notes. Moreover, the quotes, poems and shorter text emerging from the artistic work will be aligned on both sides. The rest of the text is aligned to one side. Non-textual text are images and colours.

## 2.2. How I understand theory

Theory will not validate my practice. Theory will not validate my dancing and will not validate my dance. Theory is not here to endorse, upgrade or perfect my dancing and my dance-making. There is no superior or inferior position of practice and theory. They stand together as two parallels that may or may not meet. They can mirror each other, ignore, diminish, lift or support each other. I feel it as a circle that moves, and sometimes I cannot see the beginning nor the end and cannot clearly see where one ends and the other begins. Sometimes they are the same and sometimes completely different.

I am quite fond of this way of writing about theory. There is a quote from one unnamed student who wrote: “Theory is not limited to academic or intellectual inquiries. Theories develop through evaluative processes initiated by artists in the moment in which they assess what “works” about a performance” (Gonzalez & DeFrantz 2014, 6).

### 2.3. The language and the place of the text

“There are no mother tongues, just linguistic sites one takes her/his starting point from. The polyglot has no vernacular, but many lines of transit, of transgression; some common habits are lost on her/him - for instance to be able to recall in what language s/he chants nursery rhymes, in what language s/he dreams, loves, or fantasizes” (Braidotti 1994, 13).

Rosi Braidotti is a philosopher and feminist theoretician who was born in Italy but raised in Australia and currently working in Utrecht. Braidotti says that the polyglot is a linguistic nomad (Braidotti 1994, 8). In connection to transdisciplinarity and expanding the notion of dancing, I will address my relationship with language. I have always been fascinated with language and its structures and sounds. I am bilingual and ever since I can remember, I would find myself transforming according to the language I was required to speak. It is funny how language shapes everything, including my text currently. While I write in English, my other languages are sneaking up on me. Words are simply appearing and disappearing and I am juggling them in order to find the fitting ones. Some things tend to make more sense in one language than they do in another, it is like I can feel something is sitting in the right place. Just like with movements in connection to space. They might fit exactly as they should or they might float around. I wish to believe my practice and my writing has nomadic traits. Surfing on a fluid identity wave and all the time being on the edge of belonging. When writing in English I carry my Serbian and Slovenian with me and simultaneously translate or compare words and phrases. As a dance language, I use mainly English, or after that Slovenian, and in the end Serbian. But for more general writing I would use Serbian first and after Slovenian. For reading I would usually pick Slovenian first. There is a whole system that comes with a language and I think that is absolutely beautiful. Each language carries specificities that are transferred into the corporeality, personality, etc. I believe this is not only my personal fascination but is also a reality for many artists who work all over the world. For me, being a polyglot is understanding of an idea

throughout the prism of many points of view. Language affects my dancing and each language proposes different understanding of dance. In artistic work ...*like crazy* all three dance-makers come from different countries and speak different languages. We tried to work with this idea also in some parts of our performance.

When I thought about the place of the text, two things came to my mind. The first one was the place of making and writing the text and the other was the final placement of the text. The place of writing is connected to a language, habits, patterns, and even to a certain way of being. I am writing this thesis in one of my homes. Try as I might, I cannot define home as a place. I was raised in many different places and I have studied and worked in many countries, so luckily, or sadly, there is no such thing as one home for me. This home in Belgrade I connect with a certain concept of home and family life, but I do not connect it with a dance-making life. I am trying to create a new place for my thesis inside of a place that, for me, metaphorically, concretely, language-wise, and body-wise does not carry traits of the dance world. Therefore, I try to find dance in everyday life, everyday activities, and my habits.

The other place is the place where my text will end up. With my approval this text will become a public document. Students and visitors will also be able to read it in the library of the University of the Arts Helsinki.

## 2.4. The ways of the text

Lately, I was quite preoccupied with observing how I shape ideas and concepts revolving around contemporary dance. By concepts I mean the matters of aesthetics, importance of topics presented in the field of contemporary dance, questions of authorship, questions of production politics, etc. In particular, I was questioning my field of references and the scope of my knowledge in general. I had to ask myself, where do my preferences come from and why? Of course, it is impossible to grasp all the experiences, thoughts, ideas, and patterns to understand how my way of thinking and dance-making developed, but there is definitely something quite strong when I think about how universities of arts influence and shape us. There is a much bigger machinery than only universities - there are the production lines, funds, festivals, and in general the needs of the market that guide us and even make decisions for us. These decisions form my way of art-making. Since I am tired of using the same authors, mainly dead or alive white men, I want to change my writing canon by following three

directions. The first one is to use only female authors as my bibliography. I think it is good to create space for other writers, creators, and artists to enter the field of public knowledge, to give them space even if that space is on the cloud server. The second direction is to use some of the authors I have not encountered before and I have to get to know them now. This gives me the opportunity to broaden my reading field and extend my knowledge. Lastly, I wish to refer to authors from different fields aside from art. More poetically: This decision could be as simple as me identifying as female, my interest in female authors, and the female gaze upon dance. This decision might be as simple as the work I did with my two other female performers. This decision might be as simple as me being interested in female performers and female bodies on stage. It might be about how I as a female relate to dance and how the audience relates to me as a female performer. This decision could be about how my dancing and writing come together. This decision might be highly personal, or artistic, or political.



## 3. YOU ARE TERRIFIC AND I CAN'T STOP LOVING YOU

### 3.1. Artistic work

In one of my mind maps I wrote a title: *Back to the future. It gives me a sense of a circle. It gives a sense of a cycle, repetition or a loop. It makes me think about where I am as a dancer, where I am as a person, as a part of the community, as a part of Finland, for that matter. What is going back and what is going to the future? Where is dancing now? It goes back and it reaches forward. I guess one always feels, or at least I do, in the middle of a transformation or on the verge of a big change which feels like it's taking so much time to happen. When looking back, it feels more comforting, the changes are visible, clear and somehow done, even though the process has the echo and the transformation is ongoing.*

My areas of interest lie in the landscape of emotional, physical, and representative bodies. Some of the questions I ask at this moment are: How can I be more emotional while dancing? How can I make myself feel more deeply? I know this question is not connected with how I can dance a certain emotion but the other way around. How can I feel certain emotions while dancing? What the audience perceives as emotional and how do they perceive it? There is a question of spectacle as well. Why is something spectacular? What are the characteristics of a spectacular dance? I feel that tuning is among key words. Tuning, zooming in and out, details and bigger picture, sensation, perceiving, intensity, clarity, sharpness, execution, passion, plainness, sexuality, emotions, connectivity, etc. Therefore, it is not about representing emotions, but seeing and discovering methodologies that would help me intensify feelings during dancing. What kind of movement comes out of the narrative and how do I play with that? What closes or opens in the sense of movement when wearing certain clothes (are they an obstacle or not)? What can be an extension of the body, how can costume interact with the body?

These questions arose during my solo practice and inside my solo work which were all part of the performance of *...like crazy*. I recognize and see my artistic work made out of three different parts, which I will unpack the following three sub-chapters.

### 3.2. First beginning

The first beginning, as I call it now, is the research I did inside of a workshop *Performer's practice*, we had with Anna-Mari Karvonen and Anna Mustonen in March 2022. Looking back on my notes, I will disclose 4 scores for the solo I was working on. The importance of this lies in its notable impact on my later work, both solo work and in general.

This is what I wrote on 5.3.2022:

*Art of performing. When starting the course, I had a few questions on my mind. Questions or topics that have been important to me lately. One topic is rather close to me and it concerns my inner state and the other is more connected to how I as a performer interact with the audience.*

- 1. How to be emotional? How to make the audience emotional?*
- 2. Where is the connection between movement and emotion? Where is the connection between the performer and the audience?*
- 3. Where or what is the energy that is being generated?*

*My notes:*

*The energy is in between. In between the bodies, in between the eyes, it is simply there. It is everywhere. It is transmitted by air.*

*Body to body.*

*Body to music.*

*Body to space.*

*What is interpretation?*

*Generating emotions by using different facial expressions or by using music.*

All of the tasks and my work from this course will be addressed in chapter six.

### 3.3. Second beginning: TADaCollective

TADaC was previously Theatre Academy Dance Company which was the production in collaboration with a professional choreographer. Today TADaC stands for Theatre Academy Dance Collective and represents joint artistic thesis project of master's students in dance.

TADaC went through many changes, including members, formation, frame, budget, collaborators, spacing, etc. In short, we are five students from the Master Dance Performance program (Sonja Karoliina Aaltonen, Jacqueline Aylward, Iris Blauberg,

Arttu Halmetoja, Maja Kalafatić), light (Lauri Hietala), costume (Kasia Gorniak) and sound designer (Lauri Kallio), people helping in the process of making costumes, all technicians, helpers, cleaners, producer, mentors and, of course, the audience.

This working period I identify as my second beginning.

After three months of working together as a TADaCollective we restructured into three groups. Third beginning is a process which started inside of a small group of Sonja, Jacqueline and myself.

### 3.4. Third beginning: ...like crazy

*Dear reader,*

*I can't stop thinking about you. When I saw your shoulders on Friday, I went crazy. I had wished you would kiss me then, but you just hugged me. How could you? I would have kissed you like crazy. I just want to smell your hair. Lay beside you skin to skin. I just want to be naked with you. Hear your heart beating and taste you. I know we shouldn't but reader. I can't.<sup>1</sup>*

I am starting this subchapter with a love letter to you, dear reader. This love letter was written in one of the rehearsals of the performance ...*like crazy*. Even if this feels like starting in the middle or even at the end, I am choosing to put it in the beginning of this subchapter. This is the third beginning. As written before, during the process of TADaC graduation work model, the group of students split into smaller groups due to dissimilar interests and ways of working. In the end, there were three different works/performances.

I started to work with Jacqueline Aylward. She is a dancer, dance maker and pedagogue from Naarm (Melbourne), Australia who is based in Tapanila, Helsinki. Jacqueline studied a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Contemporary Dance) at The Victorian College of the Arts in 2014 - 2016, a Bachelor of Arts (History and English/Theatre studies) at The University of Melbourne in 2009 - 2014, and Classical Ballet at The Australian Conservatoire of Ballet 2012 - 2013. We had already worked together on *The Helsinki Duet* project and we were supporters of each other's work. Even at the beginning of the first year of the master program we shared a similar interest in dancing and dance-making. What is even more important is that we found a great way to work through

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<sup>1</sup> Love letter from the performance ...*like crazy*. The addressee of the letter is modified in order to create an emotional connection with whoever is going to read this text.

friendship and affection for each other. I enjoy the intertwining of artistic ideas and our personal preferences and interests. There is a certain ease, comfort and effortlessness that underpins our creative processes. We worked together, or we chose to work together, in many seminars. There are many different ways of collaborating and many different types of collaborators. For the sake of enrichment of dance vocabulary, or just for fun, I can propose a name for the collaborator based on common interest in dance, nourished by friendship. An intuitive friendship based creative collaborator, or IFBCC for short.

Jacqueline and me were mainly working on generators of material, generators of energy, and generators of relationships. We were both interested in specific performing modes and ways of entering such. We started very intuitively. I read that intuition is a form of knowledge that appears in consciousness without obvious deliberation.<sup>2</sup>

Intuition is mostly described as a net of past experiences and knowledge. There is a way to understand things beyond analysis, comparison, evaluation or examination. When using the word intuition, I certainly do not think that something simply happens with no reason. I see it as fast forward understanding of a certain situation based, of course, on previous knowledge and experiences.

Our way of working looked simply like one of us starting to do a dance or to propose a task and the other one just followed and we solved the question on the way of doing the question. This functioned as a dialogue which sometimes did not follow one question, one reply, but went also just into reply without a question which would completely change the stream of events. Sometimes it went into endless questions or fast actions and reactions. Everything would merely develop as it should. And there were no breaks or silences that would be separated from our work, everything was somehow already integrated and all parties were constantly agreeing even when disagreeing. We had started with a wish to do a full, intense movement material. At first it seemed that we were working with the idea of exhausting the body, but that was transformed quite early on. We realized that we just wanted to make a relatively quick entrance into the heightened state of performing. The material was shaping and getting clearer with every repetition. This section was named "The Shake". The other thing we tried is a sort of bodily connection in certain relationships, mainly animal couples. We named them postures: the Frog, the Kangaroo, the Cheetahs, the Meerkats, the Raccoons and the

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/intuition>

Specky position. All the postures would suggest a certain relationship and the postures would appear very dynamic. Even though they were still, it would look like they were in motion because of the high muscle tonus and engagement. The last thing we were preoccupied with was the task of vomiting. I have to admit that I personally have an affection towards a few so-called disgusting bodily functions, such as vomiting or defecating. I believe that vomiting had already come up as a topic or task for me and Jacqueline a few times before this process. We even wrote monologues for each other which also contained tasks such as “vomit your emotions out,” or “start vomiting and start dancing like Maja, but keep on saying I am Jacqueline,” etc. Vomiting is a strong physical experience and it logically came after all the energy was built up in the “Shake” section. Vomiting was very triggering for the audience, too, and was shifting from funny to bizarre to disgusting.

After a while our duo became enriched by our colleague Sonja Aaltonen and we became a trio. What a delight! Sonja Karoliina Aaltonen (she/they) is a dance maker and dancer-performer currently based in Helsinki, Finland. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Dance Performance from Stockholm University of the Arts (former DOCH, 2021) and has graduated as professional dancer from Tampere Conservatoire (2019). Sonja is a part of the international collective Rhizome Dance Collective. Previously, she has enjoyed dancing with Amanda Piña, DACE - Dance Art Critical Ecology, Cristina Caprioli, Isabel Lewis, and Salva Sanchis.

There is more potential in a trio than in a duet, which in its form already suggests certain ways of reading the relationship between two performers. The trio took off successfully and the flow was present. We could create a good working environment and each of us could contribute to the conglomerate.

We started by sharing the material of shake, postures, and vomiting. Sonja would learn by watching and, of course, by verbal explanations of how the material was made and what the main characteristics of each section were. Each of us had a different approach to the material. I think there was a mutual understanding about what we wished to produce, but we were quite different in how we would achieve it. Another thing connected to these differences is also that even though we had common understand of things, I always had space for my own “directions”. So, not everything was shared. This gave me a feeling of self-management and freedom to treat the materials as I needed or wanted to.

Since we started working, we spoke a lot and shared both artistic and personal matters, we would send references and visual material, etc. I remember we liked putting ideas and tasks and scores on a big piece of paper and, in the end, we had a heap of big papers which eventually ended up in my locker. I remember we shared bold ideas and wishes. We wanted to have fire, we wanted to break the walls, we wanted wild animals, we wanted to scream and make a ritual, we wanted to sing and, most of all, we wanted to support each other. We understood the pool of ideas we had made and we were trying them out and seeing how we could put them together.

### 3.4.1. Group dynamics

Due to a certain set of circumstances, we often ended up working in couples and after that informing the third person about what we had done. This part I call “Duo dynamics in a trio”. I would often work either only with Jaqueline or only with Sonja. This was not a decision but a circumstance. My observation was that this format worked very well for our group. Looking back, this way of working was also allowing a faster dive into certain sections, as two people come to an agreement more quickly than three. The other advantage was that the third person who was not a part of rehearsals, could see a new proposal with a fresher pair of eyes. That worked well for offering observations. In this regard, we were using a principle of embodying as a way to inform and give feedback to each other. Alice Chauchat, Berlin based dance practitioner, in her essay *Not-knowing: mobility as a state of unrest*, questions what is indeed performing. She says: “Performing might mean exercising one's awareness of how one's own activity may be perceived, which is a difficult thing not to do when committed to perceive one's own activity as precisely as possible” (Chauchat 2018, 3). We were performing each other's roles for each other. This is a great way to learn how to understand material of other performers. For me as an observer this task gave me an insight into how the material shapes the body. I observed the quality of movement and what was produced in the sense of where the energy was, what the trajectory of movement was, where the gaze was, how the relation towards the space was, how time was treated, etc. I tried to gather as much information as I could only by observing. After that I would try to step into the score as if it were mine. The attempt revealed some possible ways of understanding the material. I would create my own understanding in performing the material. I would usually try several different approaches and then see if they fit the

original performer. When I observe, I can relate to the material to a certain extent, mainly out of my own experience and being familiar with Sonja and Jacqueline. Knowing each other and having the experience of dancing together for a year and a half built the common ground in understanding our physicalities and our attitude towards dance practice. When I was watching Sonja or Jacqueline doing my material, I would pay attention to the similarities and differences. The similarities would usually indicate the form of what my dancing looks like, whereas the differences would usually appear in the timing, as well as in the gaze. I was noticing a different kind of motivation about moving. They could execute movement material and to a certain extent the quality but the intention was different. I took the differences as positive, since they allowed me to see alternative ways of performing the material. The differences could even offer a solution for something I was not sure about. The third position was observing, for example, Jacqueline doing Sonja's material. In that case, I could compare my understanding of Sonja's dancing with Jacqueline's. It again gave me an insight into what was important about understanding dance in comparison to others. It is simply a great way to study not only other dancers but mainly yourself. It mirrors your own principles and tools you use while dancing. It highlights the important components or it extracts your way of dancing.

The three of us come from three different countries and very different environments and cultural behaviours. We carry different dance contents and dance contexts. We are different in dynamics and energies as well as approaches to work. Sometimes it was not easy to coordinate all of our differences. Due to incompatibility in our working habits and approaches to practice, our collaboration required a fair amount of negotiations. There were differences in approaches towards ideas and tasks. During improvisation I would extract one or two principles and then stick to those. Jacqueline works much faster and likes to make many changes before anything is established. In my opinion Sonja would be on the opposite side of Jacqueline and I would be in the middle. We had to negotiate a lot with the time of things and timings of doing the material. It was frustrating for a while, but luckily it turned out to be beneficial. At first, I imagined the whole performance to be only about shaking and, in the end, there were numerous different parts and non-linear developments, which I enjoyed quite a lot. As a recognition I was happy to have noticed that the presence of other dancers and being

able to follow them helped me drop my overthinking mode with a certain task. Once I start following, I stop questioning things and I am able to surrender completely to the joy of dancing. Some of the questions which arise during this process would be: Can I enjoy more? Can I dance more? Can I dance myself out? Can I just dance? And I managed all of it and I am most thankful to Sonja and Jacqueline for that.

Another struggle appeared after we had not had time to have a single proper run through before the premiere. Only after having gone over the whole thing, we were hit with the realizations about how something could have played out differently, been in different order, etc. The whole performance offers a diversity of landscapes of movements, colours, sounds, and energies, and it is necessary to do as many rehearsals as possible to see how all of the materials were conversing with each other and how they interacted. After the premiere we already felt the urge to make a large number of changes. Coming to a decision to make changes was challenging, since for some the changes felt good and necessary and for others, they were frustrating and difficult. Almost every day we would make at least some changes. The biggest change happened in the last scene. For me it felt as there were a few possible ways in which the performance could end. One narrative, as I saw it, would be accelerating the last scene. It meant accumulating the energy, underlining the dance material by going into unisono, and bringing all the other elements - sound, light, and scenography (lamps) - to the same narrative, time, and energy. Essentially, it meant to bring everything together to produce the same meaning. This could have been one rendition of the performance, but it never came to fruition. We never took unisono seriously and other elements could not reach the desired level of intensity. The song was not fast or pompous enough, the smoke machine was giving only one puff of smoke. It was just not working well enough for me. I thought of an option where there could be a way of us doing the end scene as marking out the dance material. In this way I would understand the marking out as a tool to unpack theatricality. Jacqueline's proposal was even more radical. She proposed that we would unravel and strip the whole space and our way of performing, like peeling all the elements off. We unpacked the space by rolling off the dance matt, we took lamps away, opened the back stage storage as way of demystifying the theatre space and most of all by doing the quotidian actions we unpacked relation of the so-called dance material towards the "normal" movement in the service of cleaning the space.



I think we worked with the idea of how we can share or propose what we produce without thinking a lot about how the material will speak to the audience. Here I relate to the general structure of the whole performance of ...*like crazy*. The truth is we did not work much or at all in connection to the dramaturgy. Of course, it is impossible not to relate to dramaturgy, but we did not dwell on it or choose a certain direction in the performance. I agree with one of the leading performance scholar, Erika Fischer Lichte that everything on stage has a meaning.<sup>3</sup> But for us it was at that point enough to be aware of non-linearity in our work and trying to dance around that notion. With each repetition we created new dramaturgies and by that proposed different ways of reading the work. This felt liberating and I could step out of being concerned all the time with how this or that is being read. When listening to the feedback of others in connection to the dramaturgy I felt like, yes, I see that and if I were you, I would say exactly the same, but somehow our way of working was proposing something else and it felt good that it was what it was. The materials were not created in relation towards previous materials or even concepts, so fluid structure was the only logical option for us. It felt unusual, it felt wrong but also good as it was wrong and it gave me the feeling of strange ache, which I would feel many times when choreographing in dance or even more in theatre context. I took this ache as a good thing.

I find it interesting how people relate to dramaturgy and how everyone creates meanings or outcomes based on their own knowledge and experience. In contemporary dance, practitioners and theoreticians share a large part of that knowledge and experience in dramaturgy, or how materials should be put together. Julie H. Reiss who is art historian said: “There is always a reciprocal relationship of some kind between the viewer and the work, the work and the space, and the space and the viewer” (H. Reiss 1999, xiii). Another art historian, Clair Bishop, explained the relation between the audience and the work through two terms, activation and decentering. She said that activation is the active participation of the observer and in a way means taking responsibility on the part of the observer (Bishop 2005, 11). It means that his engagement is sought. She explains decentering as a departure from the idea that there is only one ideal view of a work of art.

The performance of ...*like crazy* was received differently and the opinions of the audience varied.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.critical-stages.org/14/understanding-versus-experiencing-interview-with-erika-fischer-lichte/>

### 3.4.2. Dynamics before the performance

My warm up usually consisted of a combination of yoga somatic exercises. I had to warm up my feet well, because I sprained an ankle the previous September and I had not yet fully recovered from it. After that I opted for high intensity sequences of push-ups, jumps and similar. If there was time, I would put on my costume, especially the red coat and go into the spacing for my solo. I would try some movement qualities and facial expressions.

In the end we would get dressed and help each other with make-up. I was putting fake eyelashes on Jacqueline's eyes. As an energizing and unifying activity, as well as fun, we would sing karaoke. The song we sang most often was "It's All Coming Back to Me" by Celine Dion. We would also frequently sing and listen to the song we made during one of the rehearsals, which was later recorded with our sound designer Lauri Kallio and used in the last scene of the performance.

### 3.4.3. Dynamics outside of the studio

Three of us worked through shared friendship which fed on a lot of time spent together. Among my favourite activities was unwinding on the grey sofas, going to sauna, tracking each other's flights and sending notes: "I see you are in India now," or "Passing Poland," etc.

We created a "vomiting" group on Telegram, where we regularly share personal and artistic matters.

I believe that alienation from our families and friends in a way brought us together. All of us had left our homes and to study abroad and we all share the experience of home as a very fragmented concept.

This is what I wrote on 14.1.2023. It was only two weeks before the premiere.

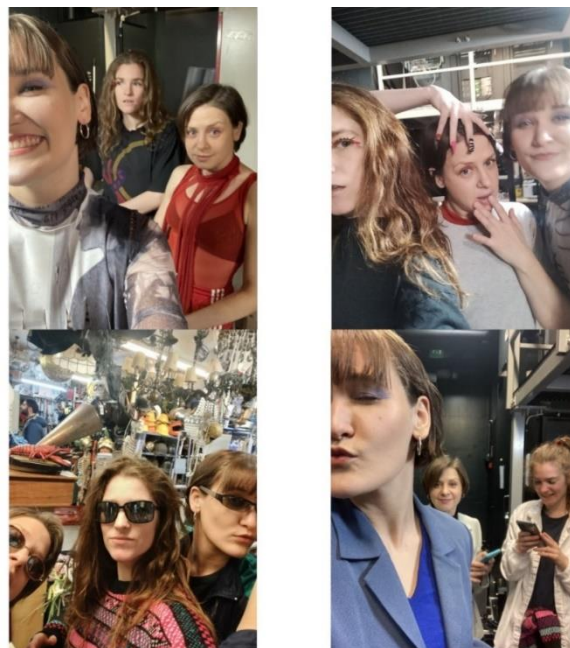
*Materials speaking to each other through previously experienced friendship and togetherness. Not staying with one idea and one concept and working on it in a linear way but disclosing many different possibilities fed from the same container. There are materials and ideas appearing and disappearing, maybe rising again in another material, acting as an echo or even as a reply to the new material.*

*There is space for our previous materials to reappear in this new constellation. There are feelings, colours, atmospheres, bodily material, qualities, sounds which are recurring from our previous works. From our solos and duets or some other work we did.*

*What is material offering or how it operates as a whole is still not completely tried out. We offer space for the audience to experience a variety of landscapes we are constantly reinventing. The proposed direction or curve is interrupted or redirected and appears as new or as the complete opposite of what it looked like it will produce. There is a space floating between togetherness and fragments, sensations and sexuality and sadness, wrestling and indulging ...*



*...like crazy, TADaCollective. Photographer: Johanna Naukkarinen*



*...like crazy, backstage. Photographers: Jacqueline Aylward, Sonja Karoliina Aaltonen*

## 4. CONSTRUCT

In this chapter I will focus on the costume as a performative tool. While I write this, many ideas are coming to my mind and I know this chapter could be a large one, so I will attempt to concentrate on several key points I find the most interesting at this moment and the most relevant for my artistic work.

In my notes I wrote a construct. It might be in connection with the concept of construct in philosophy, psychology and literature or it could be a combination of all of them. Personally, I define Construct with a single word red. For now, I will name my solo “Red”. From this chapter onward most of the writing will be related to my solo work.

### 4.1. Performance and performativity

Since performativity is the primary focus of this chapter, I would like to address the notion of performance first. I have a feeling that the word performance today, more than ever, fits almost every type of event or action. One of the main developers of the notion of performance studies is Richard Schechner, who is a performance theorist, author and professor at Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. According to Schechner, performance goes beyond performing arts and enters the field of various practices from the fields of art, society and culture. Alternatively, Aneta Stojnić says: “Performance is a directed or not directed event, based as an artistic work which is realized by the artist/performer for a specific audience or without it” (Stojnić 2015, 41). Stojnić is a psychoanalyst, theoretician and artist. The theorist and performance maker Bojana Cvejić claims that the term “performance” in “performing arts” (theatre, music, and dance) or in “performance art” or “live art” commonly signifies a live event with spatio-temporal coordinates, implying a process of carrying out an action (Cvejić 2015, 22). In some other contexts performance also means the effective use of the skill. For some, performance is every event that does not fit into conventional theatre, music or dance. Numerous questions concerning performativity arise. Can a body have a separate performing model? How do body parts perform? Can I perform what I do not think? This relates to the definition of performative principally attributed to the English language philosopher J. L. Austin. It was later developed by Judith Butler, an American philosopher, professor, author and gender theorist, who argues that the body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through

time (Butler 1988, 253). Erika Fischer-Lichte writes: “Performative acts (as bodily acts) are “non-referential” because they do not refer to pre-existing conditions, such as an inner essence, substance, or being supposedly expressed in these acts; no fixed, stable identity exists that they could express. Bodily, performative acts do not express a pre-existing identity but engender identity through these very acts” (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 27).

## 4.2. Live performance

In connection to my artistic research and my current interest in dance performance I wish to elaborate on the notion of live performance. This has especially become relevant since the COVID-19 pandemic, when our lives completely shifted to online spaces. Liveness has become something that we need and that we are missing, now more than ever. However, conceptually speaking, when one works in relation to the audience and strives to provoke emotional effects, live performance might be allowing more space for participation and by that should provide a bigger effect for the audience. It seems to me that we are all drawn towards the notion of liveness. There is a certain appeal towards live happenings. I would rather watch a live broadcast of a tennis match on television than the replay. On the other hand, I would rather watch the game in person than on television. I am drawn towards the common, the exact time that I share either with the performers or with the audience - if I am the one performing. That creates a sense of togetherness and experiencing something together might be something that influences how I perceive or feel. It seems to be somewhat similar to films and TV series which are based on true events. That immediately creates a bridge and a possibility for me as a spectator to truly identify with certain situations and I can immediately recognize emotional patterns, as if there was a strong argument if something had really happened. When it comes to live events, what I find appealing is the feeling of presence, participation and sharing the tension arising from the action. It creates a density.

With dance or theatre, I feel this even more although I am quite keen also on hybrid formats and all sorts of mixed live/mediatized performances or installations. There are countless discussions on this topic and experiencing something live. With regards to live performance, I should mention that the awareness of movement, weight and spatial position of the body comes from within and not from the environment. It is worth to

mention the term proprioceptive sensations (proprioceptive nervous system), of which there are three groups. The first group includes the feeling of movement found in muscles and bones, also called kinesthesia. Secondly, there is the sense of position in space. We perceive where we are in space with the help of organs in the inner ear, and we call this feeling stateesthesia. It is the ability to sense position and weight of the body. Lastly, the third sensations come mostly from the digestive organs and we call it visceral sensations. I think the main reason for the comparison of the live and the mediatized comes mainly from thinking that the mediatized is the same as a live event only through the objective of a camera. But there are so many ways of how cameras can transmit performance that in itself represents already kind of a new approach towards the performance. Peggy Phelan, an author, professor and director of the Stanford Arts Institute, explains that the video is a different medium and it pursues a different aesthetic (Phelan 2003, 294). I strongly agree with Jill Dolan, a feminist critic of theatre, film, and television and Dean of the College at Princeton, that live theatre remains a powerful site to establish and exchange notions of cultural taste, trends, and styles. Yet she believes that people are drawn to attend live theatre and performance for other, less tangible, more emotional, spiritual, or communitarian reasons (Dolan 2005, 36). There is something very valuable when attending live performances and that is sharing space and time with other people, performers and the audience. "Performance's only life is in the present" (Phelan 1996, 146). Many would argue against this statement and I would agree that there are many views on this question. For me, this is only one perspective and sometimes I agree with it and sometimes I completely disagree with it. Different contexts tend to provide different answers. Erika Fischer-Lichte wrote that constitutive of a performance is the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators. For a performance to occur, it is necessary that actors and spectators assemble for a particular time span at a particular place and do something together (Fischer-Lichte 2005, 23). At one point I was an admirer of Philip Auslander, a professor of Performance Studies from the United States, especially in regard to questions connected to live or intermediated art and questions of documentation. All of his views oppose those of Phelan and, for the sake of keeping myself curious, I will this time argue on behalf of Phelan. I still agree that the notion of live art is not superior to mediated art, rather I find them to be in a parallel position. I agree with Phelan when stating that when a performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the

promise of its own ontology (Phelan 1996,146). I also remember reading about the artist Marina Abramović's early thoughts on documentation or re-enactments of performances. She did not believe in documentation and re-enactments which is evidently not the case anymore. What would possibly be the easiest way to understand the differences between the live and the mediated would be as Phelan said about noticing where performance's political power lies (Phelan 2003, 295). This is perhaps something I was interested the most while working on the artistic work for my thesis - discovering the biggest potential, power, or most valuable property of live performance where I as a performer use myself as a generator and see how/where and with whom I can produce as much as I can, or as powerfully as I can. And that something which is being produced could be energetic, emotional, or corporeal property.

### 4.3. Performativity of the costume

The costume designer, Kasia Gorniak asked me what colour I wanted to wear and my answer was: red. Yes, I wanted to wear red. Red represents passion, love, blood, sex and that was what I needed to wear. Not quotidian, not every day, not plain, not personal, but something red and overdone, oversized, too long, too tight, too silly, too red, too meaningful. I felt refreshed by only wearing a red costume. I am aware that the colour red possesses many different kinds of properties. Emotional, energetic, cultural, experiential, and many more. Colour meanings are developed from context and can have different connotations in different environments or in relation to other colours. I know that red is also associated with either negative or positive connotations and it is used by many cultures for many important acts or rituals, social events, etc. Also, among animals and plants, the colour red has an important place to signalize either danger or beauty. The colour red is on the colour chart between orange and violet. The colour red is intense and intensity is what I am pursuing.

Costume possesses its own laws and regulations. It can be heavy, thick, or light and silky. The materiality of the costume carries certain performativity. Dorita Hannah is an architect and trans-disciplinary performance practitioner who says: "Like performance design, costume design can therefore be asserted as simultaneously active and activating rather than purely mimetic" (Hannah 2014, 18). In *...like crazy* I was wearing very particular costume. It was an incredible experience for me to work with such a specific

clothing. Its restraints were very potent in producing specific physical and visual language. Oversized turned around coat, extremely long gloves and stockings, red leotard and running shoes. My costume was my co-performer. The only problem was that there was not enough time. The coat was finished on the day of the premiere so I did not work with the coat long enough. I was mainly using a regular coat which I wore backwards. However, I did work with gloves and stockings. The costume transformed me and supported my actions I felt as though the costume was an equal part to myself when performing. Jessica Bugg, who is an academic with a background in fashion and textiles, currently a Dean of the School of Media and Communication, London College of Fashion, wrote: “Dress as bodily practice in the context of performance is affective, resonant and transformative. It is felt, embodied and re-embodied by those that wear, view, design and make it in both its production and reception” (Bugg 2021, 213).

Donatella Barbieri, a costume scenographer, researcher and writer based in the United Kingdom, says: “In a transformative and expanded field of costume research, the aim is to embed specific material performative qualities through costume from the start, which may, in turn, engage the body of the performer in movement and be equal partners in the performance” (Barbieri 2021, 203).

I dealt with a number of questions in connection to the costume. What is a leaking body? How is the leaking body created? What are the extensions of the body? What kind of movement comes out of the narrativity of the costume and how to play with that? Am I separated from my costume?

From my notes 14.9.2022:

*What was I thinking today as a mode and not a question? The costume had a big impact on me today. On my dancing and my presence. Kasia asked us to go to the costume department and pick one or more pieces of clothing. I was searching for something I would usually not wear in my practice or my performances. I would usually like something plain. Plain pants, baggy pants in which I could move and then a shirt on top. I love shirts with buttons, also a bit bigger. They fall nicely and have a certain aesthetic to it. Something I would call casual, street like. That is something I also like in my private life and while dancing I would always think that is me dancing and I am no character nor I am a spectacle presenter nor a narrative driven.*

*This time I have chosen very colourful and theatrical pieces for my dancing. I got a stuffed bra with a leopard pattern, a tailcoat with deer and deer skulls on it in a nice green and*



*brown colour. To go with it I chose silver shining shoes, a tie made from two strings and stone, and long, elegant green gloves. At the end I also took a wig attached to a hat.*

After the rehearsal I wrote down what stayed with me:

1. *Finger/nail polish dance (duet with Jacqueline, dancing with our fingers and colours of the nail polish.*
2. *Costume: tits, gloves, wig, coat.*
3. *Pleasure dancing.*
4. *Studio as a forum where we gather and do stuff.*

*Tits scores and questions*

1. *Treating them as an object, which they are, but still carry such a strong body connotation.*

*I am thinking of female, sexuality, a prostitute, a mother, breastfeeding, shame, exposure.*

2. *Giving them attention = performative tits.*
3. *What does my dancing look like when I am dancing with tits? My arms are hitting them, touching unwillingly. It is a funny feeling.*
4. *Tits starting the movement, like leading the whole body.*
5. *Treating them as my body, as my tits in a sexual way.*
6. *How do I appear to others? Can I break such a strong image? Tits with animal print. Underlined meaning!*
7. *How does music affect my dancing?*
8. *Displaced tits. One tit in the middle, both tits on the back. Tit as a penis.*
10. *Connecting with others, mixing body parts, mixing meanings.*
11. *Tits as a crown, tits as eyes of a giant fly.*
12. *Tailcoat turned around.*

*Creating emotions: narrative.*

*Creating characters: absurd combinations of familiar characters, animals, bodies.*

*Exaggeration as a tool.*

#### 4.3.1. Extensions as a memory or prediction

The idea of the extensions and the leaking body came out of a rehearsal. I was using long gloves but I did not want to pull them up over the elbows, instead I had them just over my wrists, so the rest of the glove would hang from my arm. I was trying to see what kind of movement solutions would appear. I was restrained, in a way, because my

palms and fingers were trapped in the gloves, but I also gained an extension of my arms. While dancing and trying to find ways of coping with my new extended body I had two questions. Is the body becoming an object? Is the object becoming a body? I framed this question and tried to work both ways. Having a thought about my body being extended into an object or an object becoming or growing into my body. This is of course not something I would debate about, but it is a rich concept that highly influenced my way of moving. I was working with the qualities of dropping, slowness and dragging. I called those qualities “Traces of the Past.” It seems funny to address past time as a movement quality, but I found it to be a good way to frame my solo. It also fits my temporal narratives (explained in a chapter 6). Those qualities suggested dropping is something fast and dragging is something slow, but in practice, both of the qualities worked well with opposite timings, as dropping could be slow and dragging could be fast. My elongated arms and legs were, for me, evidence of the past and I enjoyed dragging my past with me. Other qualities I named “Traces of the Future.” Displacing arms and legs were for me an act of future. I cannot offer an explanation for this, but it made sense to me at the time. I understood displacement of body parts as a prediction or a trace of the future. I worked a lot with idea of a mismatched body. For instance, there was the idea that my body parts do not fit or that they fit but are facing the wrong side. Sometimes these seemingly insignificant ideas can drastically affect the quality of movement. It gives a certain attention and direction to the body. The displaced body or, as I call it in chapter seven, the flipped body. Another quality was leaking. Leaking as material and leaking as fluids. I was a leaking body. The phrase evoked in me an intense visuality, almost like a painting where the colours would melt, mix and drip. I imagine in the future one part of the solo could develop into a series of images of a leaking body. I imagine I could be leaking outside of a big picture frame. Concerning fluids that are leaking, I was sometimes successful in crying and other times not. I imagine how impactful would it be if I could cry so much that I would fill a cup with my tears, so that my fluids would match, in an exaggerated mode, my leaking arms and legs.

#### 4.3.2. Solo “RED”

I found inspiration in how the colour red is used in some works of art. For instance, Barbara Kruger’s work, John Baldessari’s works on colours, language, and facial expressions *Prima Facie (Fifth State)*, films *Women on the Verge of a Nervous*

*Breakdown* and *High Heels* directed by Pedro Almodovar. Song “Un Año de Amor” by Luz Casal, performed in the film *High Heels* by Miguel Bose, the installation work of Pipilotti Rist, a Swiss visual artist, Doja Cat, an American rapper who painted her whole-body red and embellished it with 30000 crystals, and many more. I was inspired not only by how the colour red is utilized, but also how the characteristics, materiality, and properties of red are manifested.

I entered the stage from the outside of the theatre hall, following Sonja’s solo. I was wearing a sheer red leotard, shorts made from the same material. Kasia, however, used double layers, so that her shorts would not be transparent. The shorts had stockings attached to them, which were long enough that I could pull them up or let them hang from my ankles. For the beginning of the solo, I made suspenders out of the long stockings and put them around my shoulders. The rest I tucked into my running-shoes. On my arms I wore red gloves from the same material as the rest of the costume. The upper part of the glove was above my elbow. I had my gloves pulled up, so that the hand segment fit on my palms and fingers. That was quite difficult to do, since the gloves are very long and I had to get ready on my own backstage while Sonja was performing. I had a red coat which had exaggerated shoulder pads to make my body look disproportionate. I wore the coat backwards, so that the buttons were on the back, creating an image of my chest being on my back.

My directions for the solo:

1. Enter the stage, like being cast out from another world. Use abrupt way of entering. Sonja created very strong visual aspects in her solo, using specific blue light and strong soundscape, you aim to interrupt and make a clean cut between our two worlds.
2. When thrown on the floor, stay there and take some time to arrive and prepare. Gaze over the audience from the laying position.
3. Imagine your body and environment conditions are a bit different than usual. Imagine that the body parts are a bit weirdly put together and some feel heavier or more difficult to resist gravity. Move like picking up the body parts and trying to establish yourself into a standing position.
4. When standing, acknowledge your torso and costume as one and see how can you recombine torso with the coat and arms to become the “right” combination of body parts. Enjoy the materiality of the coat and all its possibilities and restrictions.

5. Search for movement material that suggests something like victory or movements of gratitude or bragging. Try to play between performative and acting expression.
6. Take a walk and position yourself for undressing. Take off the coat and after that release your long stocking from the shoulders and spill them over the floor. Slowly start taking your right glove off the hand. Use mouth to take off your left glove.
7. Acknowledge your body, long arms and legs and try to take the mood from the visuality of the posture and colour.
8. Try to cry and observe the physicality that is produced.
9. End the crying with stepping slightly out of the performativity of sadness. Gather your costume and try to grab everything at once, leaving the space for things to drop and again develop around the clown or slapstick tools of clumsiness.
10. Walk out.



TADaCollective rehearsal. Photographer: Kasia Gorniak



...like crazy performance. Photographer: Raphaël Beau



...like crazy. Photographer: Kasia Gorniak





## 6. GENTLE DRAMA

*I want to discover which methodology could help me intensify feelings during dancing. How can I be more emotional while dancing? How can I make myself feel more deeply? I know it is not connected with how I can dance a certain emotion but rather the other way around. How Can I feel certain emotions while dancing? The other question I have is connected with how and what does the audience perceive as emotional? There is a question of a spectacle as well. Why is something spectacular? What is the characteristic of a spectacular dance? Key words: tuning, zooming in and out, details and bigger picture, sensation, perceiving, intensity, clarity, sharpness, execution, passion, plainness, connectivity, etc.*

I wrote this at the beginning of the process, when I found myself overthinking and analysing everything and it was frustrating. In one of my notes from autumn last year I wrote: *I am sad, because I wanted to feel emotional while dancing, but here I go again with my tasks and working only on producing something that is read as emotional while I am only the executor of an action. I felt nothing!* Reading this note made me smile, but I do remember the frustration I encountered after completing one of my Rehearsals. My mentor, Maija Hirvanen pointed out that in my writing I tend to be analytical and go into too many details which is somewhat paradoxical if emotions are something in the register of the uncontrollable. I laughed. We deliberated over this and in the end agreed that maybe analysis does not need to be the opposite of feeling or emotions. That was decided spontaneously on the spot, so I will try not to overthink it.

Another thing I had a hard time with was the term drama, even though it was among my key words. I never really liked the word drama. It has always been just a reminder of how little space there is for dance and how much space there is for drama. When I write drama, by which I mean theatre and written text, it comes from the necessity for the institutionalization of contemporary dance. It means having no space to rehearse, perform, and everything else which had historically been given to drama. That was one of the reasons why I tried to avoid it, but it just kept coming back to me. I needed drama. In the end I admit that I felt the need for it. I wanted to feel it and I wanted to act it out. However, I felt it needed to be from some other perspective and from my own experience. I have termed that form of drama “gentle”, so I created “gentle drama”. The main reason why I avoided everything that has to do with drama or theatre or



theatricality is the western dance canon. Needless to say, dance, for me, is not only about expressing emotions, but I also do not want to place it in a hierarchy where something we value is in the binary opposition of thinking vs. feeling. Minimal dance was developed within the Judson Dance Theatre in New York, in the fifties and sixties of the last century. An important phenomenon in minimal dance is the disciplinary indeterminacy of the dancer who becomes a performer. After that, conceptual dance closely relates but also expands to the wider context of dance and re-examines not only “the dance” itself, but it connects to the wider social field and establishes political issues, and above all, it deals with dance as an artistic institution. Cvejić explains: “The idea which constituted modern dance in the first decades of the twentieth century is the synthesis between the body and movement under two operations: subjectivation of the dancer through (emotive) self-expression, and objectivation of movement through the physical expression of the dancing body” (Cvejić 2015, 16). This prevented any kind of self-expression as again Cvejić wrote: “The “self” of the movement, its self-referentiality, the articulation of which becomes the task of the dancer” (Cvejić 2015, 19).

Here I would like to stress that, of course, there are notions of sensitivity and kinaesthetic empathy and different types of emotionality present in contemporary dance. The term “kinaesthesia” was coined in 1880, in response to a growing body of research establishing the existence of nerve sensors in the muscles and joints that provide awareness of the body’s positions and movements (Leigh Foster 2011, 18). There are varying emotional landscapes arising from working with the body, all of which I love working with. But this time I did not want to move away from narrative and self-expression.

## 6.1. Emotions and perceptions

The word emotion comes from the Latin word “emovere” which refers to move out, disturb.<sup>4</sup> When I think of emotions, I refer to the inner state and to the performative state. I understand emotion as something that is both an individual act and a collective act. On this matter I agree with the feminist writer Sarah Ahmed, who also believes that

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<sup>4</sup> Online Etymology Dictionary, last updated on December 7, 2020, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/emotion>

emotions should not be regarded only as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices (Ahmed 2004, 9).

My first thoughts about emotions, when I first started researching the topic, were archetypes and rituals. I wrote in my diary: *I think of a ritual and of a colour. What do we do in the name of feelings but we don't actually feel anything? There are so many rituals that different societies created, but acting them out seems as a formality. As there was once an intention filled with a certain emotional body, now there is only an acting body which carries out the act.*

During the process of creating the solo and trying out things, I did not feel the need to read about emotions from a scientific perspective. I operated inside of my scope of knowledge, although I had much support from other artistic fields, such as visual art and cinema. When I started writing this thesis and thinking about what I wanted to include in my research I came across a book *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of The Brain* by Dr. Lisa Feldman Barrett. I found the book incredibly inspiring and was not able to put it down. Feldman Barrett claims that emotions are constructed and that there is no such thing as a universal emotion. I had similar thoughts and concerns when thinking about the context in which I am creating my work. I was aware that in Finland there are different ways to perceive and name what is emotional. I agree with Feldman Barrett that emotions definitely vary from culture to culture. She states: "An emotion is your brain's creation of what your bodily sensations mean, in relation to what is going on around you in the world" (Feldman Barrett 2017, 30), and continues to explain: "Our brain uses all our past experience, organized as concepts, to guide our actions and give our sensations meaning" (Feldman Barrett 2017, 31).

There seem to be no universal emotions and, as Ahmed also explains. "Emotions in their very intensity involve miscommunication, such that even when we feel we have the same feeling, we don't necessarily have the same relationship to the feeling" (Ahmed 2004, 10).

When returning to my questions of how to be emotional while dancing, I knew that in order to achieve that I could try out many different methods. My first division of how I could approach my topic was:

1. Start with emotions from the "inside". That meant that I would somehow try to feel a certain emotion by targeting a memory. In my case, I was searching for a sad

memory, therefore inducing sadness. I was usually standing still and trying to remember a certain situation that I knew would make me feel sad or upset.

2. Start with the emotion from the “outside”. In other words, I would try to evoke emotion by submitting myself to a demanding physical action which would in the end provoke a certain emotion in me.

Feldman Barrett explains that from our brain’s perspective, our body is just another source of sensory input: “Sensations from your heart and lungs, your metabolism, your changing temperature, and so on, are like the ambiguous blobs of a figure. These purely physical sensations inside your body have no objective psychological meaning. Once your concepts enter the picture, however, those sensations may take on additional meaning” (Feldman Barrett 2017, 29). She also claims that certain body actions and, for example, face configurations can produce specific physiological change associated with a certain emotion, but that there is still a big question of whether these actions can really evoke a fully emotional experience (Feldman Barrett 2017, 12). In my experience, I have to argue that I am able to have a certain emotional experience evoked by a certain bodily action. The range of the experience is, of course, questionable, but I would still claim that an intense body action can evoke emotions. I remember a piece called *The Laughter* by Antonia Baehr, a Berlin based choreographer, performer and visual artist. They said in one of the interviews that they were doing a lot of laughing scores and that after a while one starts to feel happy or happier.<sup>5</sup> This is also my experience with laughing yoga. Another example of body action triggering emotions is certainly the performance *While We Were Holding It Together* by Ivana Müller, a Zagreb-born, choreographer, artist and author. In this piece there are five performers trying to stay in one position for the whole time. After a while there was an immense quantity of movement happening in seemingly still bodies. The action of trying to stay in one position was of course very tiring and I imagine the struggle of the performers was indeed very intense. The imposed position was causing muscle trembling and a great deal of pain and, I assume, evoking certain emotions. For me as a spectator this performance evoked many emotions and affected me deeply.

Feldman Barrett explains that from social construction, it acknowledges the importance of culture and concepts. She says: “From perspective of psychological construction,

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yb794jyy5X4&t=35s>

emotions are considered to be constructed by core systems in the brain and body. And from neuroconstruction, it adopts the idea that experience wires the brain” (Feldman Barrett 2017, 35). So, there are many layers involved in how one feels or perceives the emotions.

Concerning perception, I remember that Alva Nöe, an American philosopher wrote that perception is not something that happens to us but something that we do and, similarly, Feldman Barrett says that we are not a passive receiver of sensory input but an active constructor of our emotions (Feldman Barrett 2017, 31).

If I go back to the ritual, a certain Serbian custom came to my mind when working on my crying score. I thought about “narikače”, which means “professional mourner”. This custom derives from Egypt, Middle East, China, and South-Eastern Europe. In Serbia, the mourner is a woman, usually a family member, but not necessarily. The mourning consists not only of loud wailing but songs of mourning, too. This performative act embodies the sadness itself. Sadness and great distress. The mourners would wail and at the same time say things like: “Why did you have to die? Oh, my dear, you left us and you are never coming back.” I was thinking a lot of this acts. Even though they are performative, the person performing can still feel “real” emotions. Feldman Barret claims that emotions are real, but real in the same manner as the sound of a tree falling, the experience of red, and the distinctions between flowers and weeds. “They are all constructed in the brain of a perceiver” (Feldman Barret 2017, 132). She names this social reality. The concept imposes new functions on these sensations, creating reality where there was none before: an experience or perception of emotion. (Feldman Barret 2017, 134).

I was trying to feel sad and I was practicing my score in a studio or at home. I usually did this in the bathroom in front of a mirror, but also in my room on my bed, or just sitting in front of my computer. Usually, I would start to cry quite soon, but not only would I cry, I would also feel sad. I have to agree with what Lorna Marshall, an anthropologist, wrote about evoking emotions. She said that emotion, like any impulse, can be triggered just as effectively by image, or empathy, or sensation, or pure imagination (Marshall 2008, 55). I was thinking of my grandmother Anđelka. That was my trigger for evoking sadness. Dolan says: “Emotion and affect, too, are performative, stagings done in a moment of feeling that need to be shown to have effect” (Dolan 2005, 170).

In one rehearsal I asked Jacqueline and Sonja to witness my crying score. I started crying incessantly. I felt so sad and probably stressed out and tired that I could not stop my tears. I was crying loudly and very intensely. I could hear Sonja on my right side, she started to cry as well and, on the other side I heard Jacqueline laughing loudly. I was deeply engaged in my task, but could still feel a bit confused by these two utterly different reactions from my collaborators. At one point I was able to imagine the situation from the outside and it felt bizarre. Later, Sonja said she had become sad and felt bad for me and Jacqueline had found the whole situation very confusing and funny. She connected my crying with my costume and created a funny narrative about how I became sad because I did not like my costume. That was the only time I could really cry that much in this task.

To go back to my other question on how to make audience feel emotional I wrote:

*I can start with movements that can a) be perceived as emotionally strong movements; b) Do whatever movement but treat it with high intensity, or use repetition as a generator.*

## 6.2. Feeling and presenting the emotions

(All four tasks were tried out in a workshop by Anna-Mari Karvonen and Anna Mustonen, *Performers' practice* in February 2022).

*Task 1.*

*Notice how I feel*

*Emphasize the feeling*

*Represent the feeling*

I found this task quite informative and fun to do as well. The first part was easy but the transition between emphasizing the feeling and representation was very challenging.

I would do a few tries with two basic emotions, sadness and happiness. I tried to do the task while still and while being in motion.

1. Being still as standing in one spot. Body and the face would react. I could notice some gestures appearing. With sadness I would slouch my shoulders, bring my chin to the chest. If I would start crying, my whole upper body would start to shake.

Sometimes I would bring my palms to cover my face. I noticed that it was harder for me when I was trying to be still. As Marshall wrote in her book *The body speaks: Performance and Expression*: “When you hold the body back, you prevent the emotion releasing itself through its habitual pathways. Yet the urge keeps trying to

find a way out. As it seeks an outlet, you become aware of the multiplicity of emotional channels that are available to you, many of which are normally overshadowed by habitual responses” (Marshall 2008, 63).

2. Being in motion as moving around the space. I would usually walk and then maybe sit down or squat. My hands would be more active and would gesture. Sometimes I would notice that I try to create an inner monologue or even a dialogue and my body would follow in explaining or somehow showing my inner state.

Emphasizing the feeling felt like expanding from the inside and the outside. I tried to be sadder or happier and add volume to my movements. It felt like expanding the emotion into the environment. I could also feel my muscles more involved and the task would require more energy.

The representation was much harder. I attempted to use several different methods. One method was to amplify everything. This meant to not only expand and make it bigger, but transform it in the way of making it bigger. Transforming meant that the movement would not stay the same. I would amplify it and the movement would change, become more “plastic” and sometimes I felt caricature-like. Another method was picking one particular detail or gesture (very recognizable for a certain emotion, at least in the context of the western world) and then repeating it. Repetition brought to it a sense of oddity. So, a usual gesture would appear odd because I would repeat it many times. Another method which would work in a similar way was changing the timing of doing the movement. I would do the usual gesture but much slower or much faster and that would give the sense of irregularity. In all these cases I also included my facial expressions and my voicing (usually crying or laughing) and would use the same methods as described.

### 6.3. Transforming the emotion into the dance

*Task 2.*

*Enter the space easily.*

*Allow audience to see you and for you to seem them.*

*Search for sadness. (Think of something that makes me feel sad)*

*Try to become sad and try to cry.*

*When/if you cry, try to slowly transfer sadness (sadness is here the way of moving) to the other body parts.*

*Body parts start to cry. (I have transferred the movement of my diaphragm into my arms and legs. This was a shaky movement)*

*See how the body parts cry and develop it (The whole body got a certain quality, trembling but in a particular way and in a particular timing).*

In this task my aim was to begin with feeling sad and allowing my body to respond to that emotion. After that I would try to transform my “natural body behaviour”, which was in this case crying, trembling, and shaking, into dance material. I started to displace the trembling movement from my chest into my arms right to the tips of my fingers. I followed the rhythm of my exhalation. My gaze would follow one of my arms and then the other. After a while trembling and shaking was transmitted into my legs and, ultimately, my whole body was moving. I started to play by expanding my movement with inhalation and shrinking my movements with exhalation. After that I continued developing the dance while paying attention to the rhythm.

#### 6.4. Body tensions are supporting the face

Task 3.

*Go for the set material (I have prepared a movement material usually perceived as very emotional or passionate or intense movement. This was similar to a paso doble movement)*

*Use facial expressions (I tried to use my facial expression to support my movement action)*

*Body tension is supporting the face (Tension in my muscles of the arms, neck, stomach and legs was supporting my face)*

*Finish with eternal dance (I named this way of dancing “eternal dance” because I was searching for a dramatic name to support this kind of highly intense dancing where the whole body is extremely active).*

The task was to execute a movement sequence which reminds of a certain dance style believed to be extremely passionate and intense. I chose the material resembling paso doble and flamenco. The movements were quite staccato, sudden and separated from another movement. Each movement had a great energetic property. My face supported each movement with a very strong facial expression. I was also voicing to add even more intensity to the dance. This task was difficult but extremely fun to do. It had a self-boosting effect on me.

Body tension and facial expressions will be further dealt with in the next chapter, “Questions of the Volume”

## 6.5. Coming to the heightened state through physical action

*Task 4.*

*Choose a highly demanding physical material. The aim is to reach the heightened state through physical action. This action is to be quite intense, either highly difficult with a great usage of muscle tonus or by moving with high speed or using a great number of repetitions.*

I decided to use a certain kind of movement which would not require thinking and inventing while doing the action, so I could concentrate on performing the material precisely, fast, and with great intensity. As a child, I did gymnastics, which led me to choose that kind of body language. I was trying to exhaust the body through the material. It was incredibly demanding, not only because of the material but also because I was not really able to control my state while executing difficult movements at high velocity. I could feel how my mood was changing and how my emotions were surfacing out. The tiredness made me lose control even more. I remember I could feel my lips moving uncontrollably. I felt like running downhill knowing it was dangerous but I had to do it, like free fall. The enormous rush of adrenaline kept me going. It became a mission and there was no coming back. I felt tired, excited, exaggerated, funny, sad, excited, all of in a loop. I felt when I reached the climax. After that, I just let go. Letting go did not have a calming effect at first - it felt like everything was catching up with me. The emotional outburst was amazing. I wanted to cry. I could feel my heart beat and my breath. My body was responding and I felt many uncontrollable movements happening again. There was a big change in my gaze. I noticed how my focus changed. At first, I was very focused and had a more inward gaze towards myself, my body. When the “cooling down” began, my gaze changed. I was confronted with the audience and became very vulnerable. Not because I could see the audience, or even because of my proximity to them, but because I felt everything that was released during my intense performance was coming out. There was also a feeling of surrender. I had a very similar feeling during the intense performing. There is something that happens in the domain of uncontrollable registers. In the first part it happened during the physical action and in



the second part while I was seemingly still. I stayed in one position until I calmed down and my journey ended.

I felt very emotional during the performance of my task. I could also feel that the audience was affected. This task was just a confirmation that highly intense physical action brings me into a heightened mode and evokes motions in me.

After that task I had many thoughts on the ways of performing and ways of doing a certain action. I had a question in connection to what the performer was sharing or showing. What is in the focus and why? Could it be that I did all the demanding physical action in the backstage or before the audience would enter the place so they would witness only the last part? Or how would it be if the last part would be taken away, which is most often the case. Or how would it be if I would start with the cooling down part (doing the demanding physical part before the performance) and then after cooling down go again into the intense performance?

One person witnessing the rehearsal wrote me a note: "For me there was a really nice twist in the intimacy of your performing after the climax and in the cooling down scene (which to me created the image of sex). The cooling down is something you rarely share or witness so it felt really generous to see you in that state, trying to read your emotions."



*...like crazy.* Photographer: Johanna Naukkarinen

## 7. QUESTIONS OF THE VOLUME

“Although human vision always occurs through the frame of representation, it is not always easy to control which frame is mobilized in a given viewing situation”

(Silverman 1996, 155).

While I was contemplating on the topic of emotions and expressivity, I was mainly working with the concept of the volume. I imagine it like a volume knob on a radio which can be controlled by the hand turning it clockwise or anticlockwise. I refer to volume as a degree of or the intensity. I was thinking of layers such as: intensity as muscle tension, intensity in facial expression, how fast or slow I move, and how I direct my gaze.

I thought it was particularly challenging for me to find relevant female writers, since in the domain of film theory I am mainly familiar with very well-known male philosophers, which I specifically wanted to exclude. I found inspiration in the writings of Kaja Silverman, specifically *The Threshold of the Visible World*. Kaja Silverman is a critical theorist, art historian, and professor. In her book, Silverman examines the field of vision relating to psychoanalysis and feminist film theory and in particular, discusses the notion of the gaze and look. She makes division between gaze and what it means to look. In connection to Lacanian concepts, she writes: “Unlike the gaze, the look is within desire” (Silverman 1996, 155). I found these concepts relevant, since I am interested in how we “read” the world around us and how conscious and unconscious circumstances shape our way of looking and relating.

In my artistic work I refer to the work of John Baldessari, an American conceptual artist and in particular I related to his work *Prima Facie (Fifth State)*. Secondly, as mentioned earlier, I took interest in silent cinema. In particular, I was interested in the performativity of face and in the relation of textual and non-textual parts. For that purpose, I chose Italina Lida „Ida“ Kravanja (later Tamara Đorđević), an actress from Slovenia who performed under the name Ita Rina. She mainly acted in German and Czech productions and became very famous for the film *Erotikon* (1929). I found her a very particular and interesting persona coming from my local surroundings. Another actress I took interest in was Corinne Mae Griffith, who was an American film actress, producer and author. In both cases I was going through video materials, observing how the face was framed, what the expressivity of the face was, what kind of corporeality

was present, how the female was presented and represented on camera and so on. My aim was not to analyse theoretically (at least not at this point), but to observe and see what I can recognize as potent material for my solo.

## 7.1. Intensity as muscle tension

When I think of a certain way of moving, I think in terms of muscle tension or the quality of the space surrounding me. For this reason, I mainly worked from two ideas, either starting from my muscle engagement or thinking about the consistency of the space. In my solo I had to consider the condition of my costume, too, since the costume influenced my way of moving.

### 7.1.1. Flipped body



...like crazy. Photographer: Raphaël Beau

I was working with the idea of recombining some of my body parts. I named this principle “the flipped body”. I have to mention that I am highly inspired by a Slovenian choreographer Mateja Bučar with whom I worked for over ten years. She frequently works with the idea of perceiving the body as an object and working with its recombination.

“Recombination demands that materials and their attributes be necessarily recombined in sometimes formal, and at other times imaginative, ways. For example, there can be a choreographic stipulation that a dancer’s body engages in a

recombination of his/her movement qualities with that of surrounding structure, such as that of the floor. In this way the dancer denies/refuses what is or would be attributed to him/her as a person with subjective agency, and appropriates or mimetically re-enacts the ‘flatness’ of a surface, for example” (Bučar 2016, 23).

For me this way of imagining and working with recombination inside my own body gives easy entrance to slightly unconventional and interesting movement qualities. It also creates a certain tension in the body and I find that it gives the body very precise intentions. When I was working with the coat wearing it backwards, I felt how the costume can significantly support my act visually. In addition, it also helped me to imagine my back on my chest and my chest on my back. In my mind I was trying to inhabit the space of my body and the space of the body of the costume. When writing about inhabiting the space of my own body, I think of bringing awareness to a certain body part and trying to volumize it, somehow make it larger. However, I had to inhabit as well as imagine that I am inhabiting certain body part in a wrong place, like inhabiting my chest but in my back. More precisely, what I was doing would start with the tension in my stomach and throat. When I imagined my upper body as flipped, it would cause me to pull my stomach in and I felt my core muscles engaging. This created tension and I would sometimes even hold my breath to increase the tension. I was imagining my breasts on my back to give more volume to my back, whereas I was trying to make my chest somehow harder. When walking forward I was trying to imagine walking backwards and vice versa. This thought created a kind of friction when I was walking, as if something was pulling me backwards while I was walking forward. I this worked incredibly well for my red persona. The quality that is produced by the flipped body task offers a sense of two-dimensionality and supports the idea of a character, because it brings something that tries to escape the human condition. In this way, I can build a character through my physicality. In the second part of the solo, where I was mainly standing and taking off my gloves, the tension in the muscles of my body faded and I felt myself more as indulging into the floor. At one point I was slouching and imagining that the weight of my endlessly long legs and arms was pulling me down. As my body became more relaxed, I felt my face increasingly engaging. It was as if all the tension from the body, that had been built in the first part of the solo

transferred into the face. This was again a procedure to build up emotions from strong or specific physicality.

## 7.2. Facial expressions



John Baldessari, *Prima Facie (Third State): From Aghast to Upset*

I was always told that I have such a strong facial expression but in dancing I almost never used my face in a particular way. I mostly dealt with the gaze only, and everything concerning my face would be about the eyes and how I use my eyes. Where do I look and how do I look without involving my face, or involving my face but in a very minimalistic way without any significant changes or tensions in the muscles. The question of gaze is something very interesting and it is a thing that can change the perception of the whole act by means of a very slight change.

In my solo I had a wish to work with my face and facial expressions. I am a big admirer of John Baldessari's art, and as I already mentioned, I was referring to his *Prima Facie* work. I have always had a fascination with language and I am generally driven to search for connections between image/movement and text, and working by mixing them and creating new meanings. Baldessari worked exactly on using juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated images and words, questioning the relation between the language and the image, colours and emotions.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "John Baldessari," Jim Kepner Fine Art, accessed on May 4, 2023, <https://www.jimkempnerfineart.com/john-baldessari>

“In an inventive way *Prima Facie* (Fifth State) demonstrates the cultural, psychological, and symbolic interpretations that are inherent in our perception of colour, language, and facial expression.”<sup>7</sup>

In my practice I would pick a certain emotion or a feeling or a state and try to perform it using my face. But in my solo, I did not get far enough with research and practice to completely focus on how the intersection of facial expression, text, movement, and sound could function. For me, the focus was on the sadness and expression of that emotion. I was particularly interested in crying as an expression. In one of the performances, I burst out laughing right after crying. This happened unintentionally and it showed me the possibility of working between different expressions and ways of combining them in order to create bizarre and funny meanings.

Facial expression was to me a build-up, either from the physicality, or out of imagination, or by evoking certain emotions. The facial expression could also be completely separated from the movement. It could also work as a mask or as a background. This idea led me to also consider clowning.

### 7.3. Timing

The timing of things is something that I have found quite a bit of interest in. My main experience and perception of movement is mainly through the time frame. I read my own dancing comparing to the timing of events. One move makes certain sense in connection to the other according to the time frame in which each of them were set. They connect to each other according to a certain way of treating the time. This is my way of making sense if making sense is something I feel is necessary. If I need to consider narrative, I think of nonsensical narratives which have their own narratives. I refer to those as “time narratives” (not related to any theory about time or narrative). The intensity of the movement is defined through the time. For me it is not as much about what kind of a dance or movement I would do, but about how I would do it in the sense of timing. If something very slow is happening and then suddenly there is a quick movement coming after such a long suspense, this, of course, creates a surprise element. There is particular interest in breaks or pauses which are again formed by a certain way of timing the movement. In my solo I was trying to understand what kind of timing goes

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<sup>7</sup> “John Baldessari,” Artmap, accessed on May 4, 2023, <https://artmap.com/simonlee/exhibition/john-baldessari-2006>

with my different qualities in moving or doing an action. I had a feeling that with more rehearsal I would expand the time a lot. In the beginning when I enter the stage, “splashing” myself to the floor, I wanted to stay there for much longer. To almost create an image of a red spot on the floor and leave it there for a longer period of time.

Unfortunately, there was not enough time for it, since it had already been quite long, so I had to measure my solo to approximately seven minutes long. This resulted in the length of my solo being very short and all the timings of different parts were changed, but I tried to maintain the idea of how time should be treated in certain parts. There is another part where time can be prolonged to even a few minutes. It is in the part where I start to take off my gloves. I feel now that the material (the gloves) and the time of doing the action of taking it off could be prolonged and in this way create a very odd perception of what is usually a quick action (taking off the gloves).

I wish to point out different temporalities in a few of the performances I find very interesting. I already wrote about the performance of Ivana Müller’s *While We are Holding it Together*, where I found that the way of perceiving the time is captivated by the still physicality of the performers. When performers surrender under the pressure of the heaviness of the stillness, they bring out the motion and velocity. Just as the movement is born out of stillness, so is the tempo. In performances *Betwixt*, by a Spanish dancer and choreographer Maria de Dueñas López and myself, tempo was constructed by positioning two bodies together considering all the in-between happenings, the stillness of the postures in relation to the coming towards and going out of the postures. In the durational installation *Medomai*, by a German choreographer and visual artist Stephanie Felber (performed by me, among others), the slow motion created the constant rhythm and constant change in the physicality. Even with very slow constant movement, the perception of time seemed fast because every change was very visible and it happened so quickly that the viewer could not even fathom all the changes. The exact opposite happened to me in the scene *shake from ...like crazy*. The fast execution and the repetition of the movement created a constant which provided the illusion of unchangeability. Because of that, I would sometimes completely change the pace of my movement. During solo *Red* the tempo was built by combining actions with very different temporalities.

In my solo I had a lot of trouble with positioning myself in the space, since the stage had two-sided audience and frontality seemed optimal for me. Frontal audience came

out of a desire to go for more traditional positioning and taking a clear performer/audience perception. I was even considered a bigger spotlight which is again very typical for monodrama or stand-up comedy. In the first part of the solo, I was positioning myself in a profile, but for the second part I had to move further back in the space, so that the audience would not only see my face and my body only from the side. In that part I wanted my face to be visible frontally.

#### 7.4. Details and gaze

When I think of the gaze, many concepts come to my mind. How do I look at the world and how does the world look at me? What are the socially established ways of looking? I think about the lens through which we can observe everybody and everything around us. I immediately think of visual art and early works which were done by male artists projecting their own, the male gaze upon the world, especially in relation to women. This is also true for cinema, where the constant objectification of the female body is, of course, created out of the male desire. Here I relate to the concept of the male gaze. Laura Mulvey, who is British feminist film theorist, introduced this concept in her essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* in 1975.

It is safe to say that we live in a time (not arguing that it has not always been so) of great disbalance of power imposed by men. This is also contributing to the fact that most of the concepts are understood and explained through the male gaze.

Mulvey wrote: "Pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey 1975, 11).

From my point of view, the gaze has almost nothing to do with how somebody or something looks like and almost everything with our conscious or unconscious preconceived ideas about somebody or something. Thus, it is about how I engage with somebody or something. If I jump back to the beginning of this thesis, where I speak about looking at things as text, I imply that everything we see, we can analyse, question, and read in a certain way. But the question is what is guiding our gaze? What is in the focus and how is something represented?



I evaluate and question ideas and concepts by relating them to other ideas and concepts. So, by relating to others I am also creating myself. The image of myself is created in relation to others. In my lived experience I am mostly dealing with two different gazes. The first one is of course me being represented as a female and the second one is the ethnicity lens (if I can refer to it like that). As a female, I am faced with the male gaze on a daily basis. I feel that in the way of how I am being talked to or referred to, in establishing authority, for example, in the working place, etc. It does not really matter what I do, or what I say because certain layers that are shaping the gaze of the observer are defining me in a great way. If I show my Slovenian passport, I can enter other EU countries, but if I show my Serbian passport, I need to have a visa or other documents. So, even though I am the same person, I am observed through two different sets of lenses which regulate my socio-political status in the society.

”The eye is always to some degree resistant to the discourses which seek to master and regulate it, and can even, on occasion, dramatically oppose the representational logic and material practices which specify exemplary vision at a given moment in time” (Silverman 1996, 156).

When thinking of art and the gaze, I think of how the main ideas or the concept are established and shown in the painting/performance/film. I ask questions such as: What is in the frame? How is the point of view directed? Who do I identify with? From which perspective do I look and understand the work? What is in the focus? In film, the gaze is directed by the camera and in painting by the angle and the proportion? How do I direct the gaze in a dance performance? In *...like crazy* it was a bit difficult to work with the questions of the gaze, because I was deeply engrossed in the process and I did not see the work from the outside (except for some parts of Sonja and Jacqueline, or the video material). Sometimes the feeling or perception from the “inside” do not correspond with how something actually looks from the “outside”. As written before, we did not have much time nor did we especially work on how the materials were framed inside of the performance. Nonetheless, this question was important for me in my solo “Red”. I thought a lot about what was in the focus and how I could work with framing.

I remember thinking a lot about my face and how I could bring it into focus. How could small facial expressions be perceived? What would it mean if I only moved my face and had a still body? What was it if I was in the movement with my whole body including

the face? How can that be combined and how could I create fluid narratives? How is my red persona being perceived?

In connection to the gaze, I ask myself what is not a detail. This is a such an interesting question to think about. When I observe movement, I like to think in frames and sometimes I do the framing myself, as an observer, and sometimes this is done by certain elements, such as light, props, or media.

When I think about details while moving it is not actually about details, or how I move, but how I, as a performer, guide the audience's gaze. To me, detail is formed from the outside (as from spectator) and not from inside (as from the performer). This has everything to do with how I treat space and time.

#### 7.4.1. How I look at myself and other performers

The gaze in dancing is for me one of the tools of creating a shared space. By looking at my co-dancers, I create a shared space for us. During Jacqueline's solo, Sonja and I were observing Jacqueline and, by gazing at her, we were supporting her. By doing so, we also invited the audience to pay attention to her. While I was observing her, I would either observe her as a whole, as a performer, or I would get stuck on her gestures that were sometimes strongly associated with animals or fairies. Sometimes I would gaze into her body and zoom into the skin and the particularities of the epidermis. I would see her birthmark or body hair or a subtle blush in her cheeks. Sometimes I would look at her directly and sometimes I would see her with my peripheral vision. Then again, if our eyes would meet, that created another meaning. Eye contact is the fastest way into connection.

There are different ways of looking - how soft or hard, how open or closed the eyes are. Everything creates a change in perception for me as a performer, as well as for the audience as a witness. I noticed I had a few different gazes in ...like crazy. In the first scene called "The Shake" my gaze was internal. That means that I was not looking at anything particular, I was deeply focused and involved in my action. My eyes were open but I remember I was observing myself more from the outside. I think it means that I was extremely aware of myself and my movements, which were very demanding, and the gaze had to be very still and soft, almost like not seeing the outside world. In other parts I was using a lot of eye contact, in order to connect to Sonja and Jacqueline, and the audience. In "Red" I gazed a lot on my own body. I was observing my body

parts and following the movements of the arm for example. My gaze was directing the gaze of the audience. By closely looking at something or somebody I invited the audience to focus on that what was being looked at.

## 8. CONCLUSION

### 8.1. Continuation of ...like crazy and solo “RED”

So far, there have been many versions of ...like crazy. We are about to perform with the TADaCollective, which means three consecutive performances. We have to meet certain criteria in connection to the time of the whole performing night. There is an agreement about shortening each piece.

One transformation will happen for two occasions. The first one is for the performance in Kuopio and Järvenpää happening in the beginning and the middle of May this year. I will not be able to be present to perform, unfortunately, so Jacqueline and Sonja will adapt their solos to suit a one-piece. Having duets performed consecutively but in a joint performance gives two female voices, distinct and yet joined together.

When I return to Finland there will be a performance in Tampere and Tallinn. For that occasion, we came to a conclusion on how to shorten and as well develop ...like crazy. We decided to interlace materials and see what kind of landscape of movement, feelings, and colours that will bring. I will drop to the floor and stay there for an extended period of time, including during Sonja's solo. By doing so, I get to work with the notion of time. Jacqueline will be naked for almost the entire time and I will wear my costume most of the time. There is still much to consider, as well in regards to the soundscape and light.

The structure of the performance is very flexible. This provides a lot of creative freedom and can offer different perspectives on the piece for us, as well as the audience. It is of great value to be able to stay with one performance for a long time and this changeable format allows us to take parts and perform at different festivals. We can present solos or duets or trios. We can work more on our relation to the audience or speech performance, or confessions. We might offer unpacking the theatrical context. We might offer exhaustion. In this sense, I am very happy and grateful for this performance and I am excited to see how many formats will come out of it at the end. For the development of the solo, I will research more on the image and text relation. My next question is how can I produce funny or confusing meanings out of playing with a specific body and facial expression in connection with language? I see the possibility of the red person seeming to be in a silent film without giving any live sounds, but have

them recorded or written down and projected. I am still interested in generating a lot of tension and energy. I am curious about not only producing something that is read by the audience as an emotional action, but producing strong emotions while performing for myself, as well. I imagine working more with the costume and explore how I can relate and use tools of the silent cinema, cabaret and slapstick.

## 8.2. Continuation of the collaboration

Sonja, Jacqueline, and myself are planning our future collaborations. We are applying for residencies and looking for ways to develop and perform ...like crazy. Jacqueline and I are continuing working on our next project together Go strange.

Another thing we discussed is shared writing. Personally, that has been a great wish of mine. I think co-writing, especially with Sonja and Jacqueline, would be an immensely valuable experience. For now, we have not had time to do that, but hopefully in the future we will combine our three theses together and create a joint text out of it.



...like crazy. Photographer: Johanna Naukkarinen

### 8.3. It's All Coming Back to Me Now

I am writing this conclusion to complete my thesis, but it is only a small illusion. This work is going to continue and expand. This work does not feel finished or complete. It feels as if there are pieces missing and by reading it over, I keep remembering more and more concepts, details, and topics that should have been a part of this text. I assume it is always like that and it also contributes to the motivation to do something again and do it better.

My experiment will soon be over and I am most grateful and happy for having had the opportunity to work on it. Looking back on the whole two years, it was not always easy to proceed and endure financial struggles, living situations, geographical and cultural differences, and, for the most part, being away from my family, friends, and my dog. ...*like crazy* is as an experiment inside of a whole experiment of my MA studies and I am very glad I did it. I can say I danced with pleasure and for pleasure. My dance practice was born of friendship. I managed to work inside of fluid structures and have been able to follow my needs in relation to other people's needs and wishes, as well. Throughout the process and in this text, I wrote a mini-guide or a score-book on some aspects of emotions and physicality. This is especially important to me because I want to share my methodologies with dance practitioners. I believe it is valuable and very practical knowledge that may serve to others. Many times, when reading about dance I was actually searching for some concrete explanations and closer looks into the practice. That is why I have chosen to open and disclose my practice in such detail. I am not finished with the question of emotionality and I will continue working on it, alone, with my friends and co-dancers, in order to develop it more. I have some tools on how to make myself emotional while dancing and I have the tools to create something that is read as emotional from the outside.

I will continue researching about emotions, effects, and affects. I want to learn more about how I can find new expressions inside of dance and dance making. I wish to work with language and spoken word. Most importantly, I wish to use my knowledge in non-dance and non-theatre contexts and share it with local people. I hope to nourish and develop creativity and empathy.

In the creation of this text, reading played a large and important role. I read a lot and I read things I would have probably never read had I not set myself a direction for my

references. I am happy to be able to present female authors, artists, and work, and write around the female voice. In terms of theory in relation to my dance practice, there was some dancing born out of the theory and writing out of the dancing. I can confirm that when writing I am triggering or opening other ways of working in comparison to the work inside of the studio. When I started writing this text, I was inclined to develop ideas and concepts that derived from different theories. It feels to me like looking at my artistic work from another perspective which is expanding into other disciplines.

The more different practices I read about and understand, the more complex solutions I can offer throughout my dance practice.

Looking back, it was important for me to start developing my artistic work in the studio and from what was proposed there. Letting things develop and disclose from the material itself and not from premeditated or directed way of working. I had the urge to work in the field of emotional and representational body. I wanted to cover myself with layers of emotions and layers of material. I know I cannot escape being looked at from certain angles but I can add more layers to that. It felt comforting being supported by the performativity of the costume. The representative body was, in a way, freeing me of my own representation. That could mean that I wanted to disguise myself, or I wanted to reveal other parts of myself. Wearing costume allowed me to perceive my body in a different way and by that expanding my understanding of what is possible in the range of my own limitations. In any case, for me, the transformation was working on the level of physical as well the emotional.

In order to give answers and a conclusion, I have to remember the main question I had when I started working, which was: How to be more emotional while dancing? That is still something I am drawn to. Even though I believe that working the field of dance is deeply emotional and triggering, I am concretely interested in enhancing my emotions while dancing. I feel that has something to do with being connected to myself and others. Maybe this wish also comes from the place where operating from the emotional register is not something very wise and safe. Maybe I need more of self-expression. Maybe I just need a change.

My way of working with the flipped body and extensions allowed me to work in the frame of imagination, working its way through bizarre physicality. This reminded me of how dance and dancing can propose a lot in the field of visuality. Questions still to be worked out are, for sure: How to work with the gaze if there is no camera to direct it?

How to frame the body on stage with scenography and light design in order to achieve the effect of a close up?

Nonlinearity as a way of working felt generous and not at all confusing or out of order but proposing different ways of structuring the material. This was reflected also into my writing. This is a text but word red and colour red trigger me in different ways. What if I say: "This is not a text; this is a performance?" If the performance is also a text. If everything is a text, I can try to read it. I can try to understand it. Sometimes the principles and norms of understanding are also a text. Text can be nonverbal as well.

For me all the concepts I discuss in my written thesis are intertwined. They are maybe not banded in a logical way but more in a rhizomatic structure. All the concepts are in way producing either emotion in myself while dancing and performing, so manifesting from the inside, or producing materials that resonate throughout the emotional platform and triggering or producing effect for the audience.

I wanted to utilize my method of enhancing emotions also in my writing. I think I managed to do that to some extent.

My artistic process and my writing process meet in relating to others. In my artistic work I was in close up correspondence with Sonja and Jacqueline. Everything I did it was in relation to them and in my writing, I am all the time in relation to concepts and ideas, dance practices, texts, artistic works and approaches from other authors and artists. Research helps me in developing my ideas. My writing helps me articulate my researcher and that makes me question my ideas again.

Lastly, I am happy with being persistent in finding and following my own voice inside of the frame I have imposed upon myself. I am happy for the experiment and I am most satisfied I had a chance to do things differently and push myself to some other directions. I feel my practice restructuring and taking on dissimilar working methodologies and approaches.



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## Appendices

From google document: Vomit text (created by Sonja, Jacqueline and myself)

Jacqueline: How would you describe our different energies and styles mixing? (The answer should be either a drawing or a poem made from found text).

Sonja: I enjoyed the differences between us, which generated motion that glided and splashed. My rooting and grounded energy brought a nice discussion partner with the speed of J and M, which I also then loved to join. Of course, sometimes we were in totally different energies depending on the day. Still, I think we worked nicely together and in a constructive way. We set boundaries and communicate about our needs. It was very honest actually, I think, through the sharing of our strengths and vulnerabilities between each other. We also supported the artistic working process in the way of rotating the motoring or leading in the artistic work. If someone was tired, others took a lead in speaking and proposing the next thing. Truly, I enjoyed the variety of rhythms that we brought into the artistic work and creation. I also experienced it enjoyable that we let the working temporality to evolve after our needs and desires, which I experienced as a sustainable way of engaging with artistic work.

Maja:

Watch a wildlife show on television

Watch a wildlife show on television.

I am peeing babes.

Me too!

The same here!

Movie night?

The harp is coming to school.

Baby, we have headache.

See you soon.



We can rehearse tomorrow if we want.

I am still in tori.

I have a physio.

Babes, I started coughing during the night.

Baby sucks you are sick.

Missing vomiting with you already.

No stress.

Our messages are worth a thump up.

There is a really good idea about giving the audience cookies!

Don't you think baking cookies for eight performances and all the audience seems a lot?

Yes, it makes sense.

More sense than cookies?

I think so.

Honestly, I was making frittata this morning and it took a bit longer.

Babes, just saying, our song is great!

Almost unison.

Start without me.

Could you baby make some coffee?

No hurry, be chill in the slippery slush weather.

So good times.

I only want to see you when you ...

I hope your fingers are feeling better.

Hugs to both!

Miss you too!

Quick zoom!

Miss you and crazy times!

It's getting big!

I am hooked.

Did anyone fart?

Not yet.

I hope someone did.

Just sorting some tech stuff.

I had a good sleep and a possible solution for us.

Maybe it's your time zone.

Count me in!