

# **\*\*ck\* the system gently**

Incorporeal, subversive ways of reconstructing body  
narratives through artistic practices

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\*Hack

**ABSTRACT**

DATE:

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The final project can be published online. This permission is granted for an unlimited duration.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The abstract of the final project can be published online. This permission is granted for an unlimited duration.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>The aim of this research is to reveal and enumerate the characteristics of possible artistic (pedagogical) practices aimed at disrupting capitalist (pharmacopornographic) body narratives, and to explore what could work as counterresponses to stereotypes. The research is based on two processes: the body narrativity workshop series <i>Archive B.</i>, which happened between September and November 2020; and the online exhibition creation, <i>My Eye Candy, My Somatic Fiction and My Body Archive</i>, which premiered in December 2020. This study is the analysis and description of the main factors of an artistic pedagogical methodology, focusing on the reconstruction of body narratives through material practices. I also present an artistic process relying on the findings of the workshop's artistic and pedagogical tools.</p> <p>My main research questions are: (I) how could the workshop <i>Archive B.</i> function as a method to deconstruct and reconstruct personal/political body narratives? (Ia) What kind of pedagogy is needed for this deconstruction/reconstruction? And (II) what type of artistic process and outcome could be created following the method of <i>Archive B.</i>? In other words: what type of pedagogical and artistic practices could this method rely on? In my art-based action research in <i>Archive B.</i> and the artistic research in <i>My Eye Candy...</i> I examined the characteristics and function of a material, sonic, sensorial-based method of recreating body narratives. After Elisabeth Grosz's (reference) term the incorporeal, I named this method <i>incorporeal body poetics</i>.</p> <p>Based on the written and verbal reflection of the participants, I came to discover the following artistic pedagogical tools. (1) Purposeless playing, playing together, and the joy of experimenting with different haptic, visual and sonic materials are their core elements. (2) Caring facilitation, unconditional hospitality, the possibility of refusal and the caring presence of the facilitator form an important part of the <i>pedagogy of incorporeal body poetics</i>. The <i>artistic creation of incorporeal body poetics</i> is challenging power structures, sharing the responsibility and giving the participants the possibility to create outside of their "profession." A (3) caring community, co-performative witnessing and intimacy have key roles in both processes. <i>Incorporeal body poetics'</i> key element and main subversive factor is relating to each participant as the expert of their body.</p>			
<b>ENTER KEYWORDS HERE</b>  <i>hack the system, pharmacopornographic body images, reconstructing body narratives, incorporeal, co-performative witnessing, ethics of care, feminist new materialisms, pedagogy, My Eye Candy, My Somatic Fiction and My Body Archive, Archive B.</i>			

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# 1. INTRODUCTION, EVERYTHING IS A MATTER OF DOSES



The body does not have a ‘truth’ or a ‘true’ nature since it is a process, and its meaning and capacities will vary according to its context [...] These limits and capacities can only be revealed by the ongoing interactions of the body and its environment.<sup>1</sup>

Moira Gatens

When I took the pill, I was scared. But this made me feel ashamed, because it was not as if I had to go to a doctor and beg him for a prescription (because we know doctors are probably *him* in that other country). Still, alongside the uncertainty, and the constant fear of the side effects — *When do they start? Is this thought already part of them?* — I felt empowered, supported, and thankful. I was extremely thankful to the inventor of the pill. I was also unbelievably thankful to the miraculous pharmaceutical company that sold this product to me. This thought caught me by surprise.

After my fictive “thank you” speech at the counter and after taking the pill, I spent one long silent moment remembering those who had no possibility to live in this type of capitalist reality. “High on the pill,” the story of Agnes, came to mind (Preciado, 2013, pp. 380–398). Agnes’s body displayed male genital organs while female breasts and testicles produced estrogen. Agnes was “diagnosed” as intersex and was operated on in the Sixties. Their penis and testicles were amputated, and a vagina was fabricated for them. Some years later, Agnes went back to a doctor introducing themselves as a young boy who started to consume their mother’s estrogen-based medicine as a teen. Paul B. Preciado refers to Agnes as a “biocultural artefact” who is “hacking the system,” taking back the power from the “pharmacopornographic apparatus of the production of the truth of sex”<sup>2</sup> that is reappropriating their body (Preciado, 2013, pp. 381–388). As Preciado writes, Agnes took the pills in secret, without the watchful (controlling) eye of a pharmaceutical company/doctor, and in so doing, acted like a bioterrorist. Agnes

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<sup>1</sup> Gatens, 1996, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed explanation and research on the terms, see later.

reshaped their body with the help of the system. Meanwhile, Agnes's mother and sister were taking the same pill, but they "ingest each of these technologies as if they were supplements to their 'natural' femininity" (Preciado, 2013, p. 388).

When I arrived home, I reread the above quoted chapter from Preciado, and I posed the following question to myself: who am I in this system? I consumed the pill and I consumed the biopolitical discussion around it as well. Or maybe the discourse consumed me. Or maybe, dear reader, it was just my hormones. As an Eastern European immigrant woman (or maybe just as a human being living in a capitalist environment), these types of body appropriation and body image questions have been framing my life and my work for years. I found it important to share this encounter as part of my thesis, because it was the inspiration and the origin of my research. And, more importantly, that was not just my starting point: the question of body images shaped by capitalism came up from time to time during the workshops and the creation of *My Eye Candy*, *My Somatic Fiction* and *My Body Archive* project (hereinafter *My Eye Candy*...).<sup>3</sup>

## 1.1. Theoretical foundations and the structure of the thesis

Theory does not only mean reading dense academic texts. Theory can be *lived*, held, shared. It is a breathing, changeable thing that can be infused in many political and artistic forms. Learning requires the patience and empathy of those around you and an investment in the importance of radical education.<sup>4</sup>

Lola Olufemi

We think in a completely absurd way, that the body ends where the skin ends, and this always happens to us. And then, instead of talking about the body, I use the term "body archive". To me the body is a cultural and a political archive. It is an archive that contains images, narratives and practices in it.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mysomaticfiction.com>

<sup>4</sup> Olufemi, L. (2020). *Feminism, Interrupted: Disrupting Power*, London: Pluto Press, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Delatte, M. (2015). Transl. Villalba, Juanja. Testosterone as political weapon – Interview with Paul B. Preciado. vice.es. Retrieved from <https://www.vice.com/es/article/gqep3y/la-testosterona-como-arma-politica>

In this chapter I introduce my research questions, theoretical foundations, methodology and research ethics. In the second chapter I present the pedagogy and its challenges, and I write about the main element of the method, playfulness and the corporeal art pedagogical practices the participants considered as a success (with regard to their body narratives). In the fourth chapter I elaborate on the role of the facilitator and the factors which were found important by the participants. In the fifth chapter I discuss the importance of a caring community and intimacy. I argue that the ethics of care is one of the pillars of the method. Finally, I introduce what type of artistic process could be the outcome following the methodology of the workshops through the example of *My Eye Candy...* project.

I attach two appendices for the main text. One of them is the draft of the workshops, even though it is not a particularly detailed description, as, for example, it lacks the analysis of the position of the facilitator and some key factors regarding the style of the instructions. I hope the first appendix might inspire some art pedagogues and it makes the structure I applied clearer. The other one presents some fragments from the virtual exhibition *My Eye Candy...*<sup>6</sup> This thesis presents research on a possible artistic pedagogical method, which focuses on the reappropriation of body narratives. In this chapter, I introduce the theoretical background of the research, the research questions and the preconceptions of the study.

Judith Butler introduces the concept of gender performativity and describes gender as a socially constructed category people fulfil through accepting and performing the societal rules (norms).<sup>7</sup> Our bodies have a central role in performing, following the rules of – in our current case – neoliberal society (Butler, 1990). At this point, I see it extremely important to explain what I understand by the term “body,” and how I interpreted this term in this research. Although, I had an interpretation of the term, I never shared it with the participants of the workshops. It was an important ethical and methodological part of the process to encourage the group members to create their own narratives, and therefore,

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<sup>6</sup> I have found this important, because the exhibition ends in November 2021, this way, some parts remain attached to this text.

<sup>7</sup> Postmodern feminists, like Judith Butler, have extensively studied the impact and importance of different discourses and linguistic expressions in the making of gender(?) (Butler, 1990, 1993).

their own terminology. The question “what is the body?” is the focus of several philosophical discourses and entire oeuvres. For this study, I collected and organized what I considered the most prolific theories from the perspective of this research and I used their matrix as my starting point. Even though, in the following sequence, I am briefly introducing the definitions of the “body” used by this thesis project, this text does not aim at discussing the “body” in a detailed way.

As Simone de Beauvoir mentions in her work, *The Second Sex*, “body is not a thing, it is a situation: it is our grasp on the world and our sketch of our project” (1945, p. 44). Paul B. Preciado describes “bodies” in a similar way, as cultural and political archive (Delatte, 2015). Sherry B. Shapiro also refers to the term as a collection and sharing point of our memories and experiences (Shapiro, 1999, pp. 31–32), which is in turn close to the definition of Audre Lorde, a materialistic conception of experience,<sup>8</sup> lived experience, tensions and complexities (Weiler, 1991, pp. 447–449). Elisabeth Grosz, moving away from the Cartesian inheritance of body-mind dualism, uses the term of corporeality, which describes the “body” from a different perspective, as “a system, or series of open-ended systems, functioning within other huge systems it cannot control, through which it can access and acquire its abilities and capacities” (2004, p. 3). My understanding of the ontology of the body relies on feminist new materialisms,<sup>9</sup> which perceive the body as a

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<sup>8</sup> New materialism is a concept, theoretical and practical turn of paradigms to the direction of matter, present in arts, humanities, sciences. About the concept of new materialism: “The materialisation of a concept is simultaneously tricky and breathtakingly simple. In an academic setting, the uncomfortable or awkward reaction to a concept’s mattering (through image, sound, bodily movement or any combination of renderings) is important and should be attended to. To render concepts materially through practice forces us out of the comfort zone of using pretermind words or phrases, and we can no longer rely on jargon. Each material articulation is created and perceived anew. There is the real potential for novelty and innovation—a new type of reason beyond the logos of abstract philosophical thought. This is the ‘newness’ of new materialist practice.” (Coleman &Page &Palmer, 2019).

<sup>9</sup> Feminist new materialisms is a multidisciplinary field, based on postmodernism and its agenda to rethink the position of human and non-human. It focuses on the relationship between the materiality of the body and its connection (intra-action) to the materiality of the world. The main representants of the field acknowledge postmodern feminist thinkers’ discourse theories, and their work of raising awareness of gender as social construction, the language we use and the social norms we live in. On the other hand, they criticize such thinkers for keeping the old humanist dichotomies, rejecting one side, but at the same time embracing the other. As feminism has different schools and waves, feminist new materialisms have several diverse directions and paradigms as well. In one of the most prominent sources of feminist new materialism, *Material Feminisms*, Stacy Alamo and Susan Hekman mention that feminist (materialist) theorists “explore the question of nonhuman and post-human nature and its relationship to the human. One of the central topics in this approach is the question of agency, particularly the agency of bodies and natures. Material feminists explore the interaction of culture, history, discourse, technology, biology, and the

materiality shaped and constructed by socio-political structures. Body and environment are entangled, they do not exist as independent entities. As Karen Barad explains, “‘We’ are not outside observers of the world. Nor are we simply located at particular places in the world; rather, we are part of the world in its ongoing intra-activity” (2003, p. 828). Material feminisms focus on the question of agency of bodies and their intersections with social constructions. Through what type of social norms do we experience and perceive our bodies? Do we have control over our bodies at all?

Paul B. Preciado develops Butler’s gender performativity further in his book *Testo Junkie*, where he explores the system of pharmacopornographic neoliberalism, the pharmacopornographic regime.<sup>10</sup> A socio-political system which is based on the power of the pharmaceutical companies, medical authorities and their distribution of hormones and other human biology. They control and manipulate substances and access to different technologies, maintaining a system where bodies are subjects of pharmaceutical market.

The pharmacopornographic entrepreneurs, who are among the contemporary leaders of global capitalism, are trying to restrict and privatise the biocodes of gender and convert them into rare and naturalized objects by means of legal and market techniques. [...] Hormones are chemical prostheses. Political drugs. In this case, the substance not only modifies the filter through which we decode and recodify the world, it also radically modifies the body and, as a result, the mode under which we are decoded by others. (Preciado, 2013, p. 396)

As Preciado writes, our perception of the world depends on this neoliberal system – how we perform, what we consume and what we take in this system. Human beings have no

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“environment,” without privileging any one of these elements” (2008, p.7). Thanks to their multidisciplinary and their detailed system of ethics, I have found feminist materialist texts highly relevant and inspiring from the perspective of art pedagogy as well.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* analyses the system of docile bodies (starting in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the trained bodies of soldiers, stepping to next level in the 18<sup>th</sup> century), shaped and supervised by discipline created by the mechanics of power and political anatomies (1977, pp. 135-138). Foucault’s theory about body control and the disciplined control of the bodies inspired Butler and Paul B. Preciado.

control.<sup>11</sup> What is more, we have no ownership over our bodies.<sup>12</sup> Of course, Foucault, Preciado and Butler do not mean a system governed by a few powerful individuals, but a complex system present in every level of our lives favorizing capitalist patriarchal interests.<sup>13</sup>

Preciado names the above-mentioned method, the illegal use of substances, “do-it-yourself-bioterrorism,” a way of hacking the system and reappropriating bodies (Preciado, 2013, pp 388–389). Capitalism, through the capitalist pharmacopornographic system, does not just sell the image of the perfect or healthy body, but also controls the market and the accessibility of hormones and other body-transforming products. It controls desire and emotions based on the needs and dynamics of the neoliberal system. Inspired by *Testo Junkie* and the story of Agnes’s body reappropriation, my research questions are based on the possible ways of hacking the system. Reading more and more about the feminist new materialist ways of redefining and reframing the world, and relying more on non-logocentric ways of thinking,<sup>14</sup> I started to give more credit to experiencing. I collected ideas for a possible art pedagogical hacking (counterstrategy) directed at the mentioned capitalist pharmacopornographic system and its body image. My pre-research question, which served as an indicator of the process — hopefully leading to an expanded research in the future — was: how could an animated theatre and sound-focused workshop (hereinafter *Archive B.*) reinforce ownership of one’s body? Therefore, my research questions are: (I) how could the workshop *Archive B.* function as a method to deconstruct and reconstruct one’s body narratives? This main question has a

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<sup>11</sup> Maybe they never had, but this could be a topic for a longer theoretical work.

<sup>12</sup> The illusion of ownership, the idea and culture of self-made men is a neoliberal fiction effecting on the contemporary image on bodies. “These new moralities and practices of consumption are central to neoliberal value systems and can be seen informing many of the debates in this book, evident for instance in prescribed bodily practices which become central to profitable markets, rapidly mainstreaming industries focused on the consumption of sexualized bodies, and most importantly contemporary conceptualizations of ‘choice’ which have been shaped in newly economic directions.” (Phipps, 2014, pp. 35-36) The topic is further discussed for example in the book *The Politics of the Body: Gender in a Neoliberal and Neoconservative Age* from Alison Phipps.

<sup>13</sup> These statements are relevant from the perspective of the dominant cultural characteristics in the European and Anglo-Saxon world.

<sup>14</sup> Logocentrism is a term mainly connected to the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. Derrida criticizes speech and writing relying on and privileging the logos, or reason. Logocentric thought always represents some kind of transcendental or absolute truth. Derrida criticizes Western philosophy for being logocentric and phallogocentric and proposes deconstruction, an analytic method, to shed light on and expose the dominant cultural patterns behind texts, meaning, and contradictions (Derrida, 1998).

smaller sub-question: (Ia) What kind of pedagogy is needed for this deconstruction/reconstruction? And the other pillar of this research is: (II) what type of artistic process and outcome could be created following the method of *Archive B*? In other words: what type of pedagogical and artistic practices could this method rely on? Even though I focus more on the workshops in this text, *Archive B* and *My Eye Candy...* are the continuation of each other, and, insofar as the research is concerned, they form a unity. Hence, the artistic part to be examined is the *My Eye Candy...* project.

### 1.1.1. Premises

Language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every 'thing'—even materiality—is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation.<sup>15</sup>

Karen Barad

In this chapter, I aim to present the theoretical base of the artistic practices *Archive B* and *My Eye Candy...* project. In animated theatre — which is Christian Peppino's term to describe the new waves of puppetry and object theatre-related genres — the participants create bodies: human ones and non-human ones, but highly controllable ones (Peppino, 2016). The aesthetics of animation theatre are based on the process of abstraction,<sup>16</sup> for this reason I found it the perfect way to express ourselves using visual, tactile and sonic metaphors. This research relies on three main premises. (I.) The first hypothesis is that our relation towards tactile and visual animation theatre is very similar to our relation to bodies: how we see them, how we project things connected to them, and how we feel them. Therefore, participants using artistic practices of animated theatre and sound art could have a different understanding of their body relations. I believe in the plurality of artistic methodologies; thus, the main factor of my artistic practice is the hybridity of

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<sup>15</sup> Barad, 2003, p. 801.

<sup>16</sup> Artistic, not philosophical abstraction.

genres. Besides the mentioned arguments, I have one more reason for the chosen artistic pedagogical methods. (II.) My research was highly inspired by different texts of feminist new materialisms, which argue that a logocentric description is not necessarily capable of reflecting the plurality of the world, and it is frequently contaminated by stereotypical linguistic terms claiming to be neutral. As Karen Barad writes in *Posthumanism and Performativity*:

The ubiquitous puns on “matter” do not, alas, mark a rethinking of the key concepts (materiality and signification) and the relationship between them. [...] How does one even go about inquiring after the material conditions that have led us to such a brute reversal of naturalist beliefs when materiality itself is always already figured within a linguistic domain as its condition of possibility? (Barad, 2003, pp. 801-831)

Karen Barad, Rosi Braidotti and Luce Irigaray are all proposing the performative critique “to challenge representational and figurative sense of the real, to contest its power, and to break ‘humanities’ own captivity within language” (Voegelin, 2018, p. 162). They are suggesting different, concrete forms for that purpose, such as poetry, cartography, sound art, etc. The first hypotheses about the possibilities of animated theatre and the feminist new materialist proposal about sonic and material poetics strongly support each other.<sup>17</sup> People’s relation to sound is also really special, but in our education we are not socialized to think about sounds or to create sounds besides music. Our sounds are parts of other sounds, and vice versa. Our sonic corpus is a mass of fluid approximations forming and dissolving again. (Voegelin, 2018, p. 119-120). (III.) My third premise is a logical consequence of the first two ones, and maybe the most fundamental concept of my research. Utilizing the above-mentioned elements of animated theatre and sound art, I believe it is possible to hack the system in the Preciadoan sense by reappropriating body narratives. The method provides the opportunity for the group members to shape and think about their body images in a poetic way. It gives a possibility to experience their

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<sup>17</sup> In object theatre and puppetry, there is a phenomenon called opalization (coined by Henryk Jurkowski, 2013, p. 73) that describes the process where the viewer sees the animated object in its materiality and in its character itself at the same time. In my mind, this process makes social habits and learned norms visible through material nature, but at the same time, it is being poetic.

bodies using different tactile, visual and audible materials, finding and constructing their own body narratives in a safe environment that is as free from the contaminated discourses about bodies as it could be. In the past year, I have been trying to develop a workshop model that fulfils my premises. The method and its intentions could be described by a term from Elizabeth Grosz, the incorporeal.

By the incorporeal, I mean the direction or trajectory that orients a movement of concepts or thought, that constitutes the possibility of a process of understanding, that enables the creation of a philosophy or a work of art as an emergence from and an entwinement with a material order, planets, stars, constellations, nebulae, and so on, beyond us, and a world of objects, things, processes, and events that constitute materiality on earth, with the emergence and evolution of life in its growing complexity. The incorporeal is the dimension of ideality that suffuses all things, enabling them to signify and generate representations. (2017, p. 250)

Grosz in her book, *The Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism* presents different philosophical directions which do not rely on the dichotomy of ideas and materials, but which do not represent reductive monism either.<sup>18</sup> In her opinion, the incorporeal could be a philosophical term that does not “privilege ideality over materiality, but thinks them together, as fundamentally connected and incapable of each being what it is without the other to direct and support it” (Grosz, 2017, p.12). The incorporeal is close to a term from Stacy Alamo, the “trans-corporeal,” which is the time-space where nature, environment and human corporeality are inseparable, “emphasizing the material interconnections of human corporeality with some more-than-human world, and at the same time acknowledging that material agency necessitates more capacious epistemologies, [...]” (Alamo, 2008, p. 238). The incorporeal, trans-corporeal, and its practical application could be a way of “hacking the system.” Hence, I would call this particular subversive method as the art pedagogy and artistic practice of *incorporeal body poetics*. I believe that the workshops and the methodology we created could be the first

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<sup>18</sup> Monism is a concept of existence based on “oneness” and is a thesis opposed to dualism. It has different types, such as existence monism, priority monism, etc.

step of a bigger project, merging art pedagogy and feminist materialisms to deconstruct and reconstruct body narratives. The body narratives which are generated and pressured by the (capitalist) system through different societal institutions such as education (see the idea of well-disciplined bodies), healthcare (see fitness-culture and the discourse about healthy and unhealthy products), nuclear model of heterosexual family, etc. The mentioned systematic categories are all dynamically shaping our understanding on bodies.

## 1.2. Research material

I organized workshops (*Archive B.*) open for everyone and facilitated eight occasions between September and December 2020. We were experimenting with nonverbal, poetic intra-acting possibilities of art. Although the first part of the research was based on the workshops, with the creative team (Maimu Jõgeda and Minttu-Maaria Makkonen), we continued working following the framework inspired by the experience of the workshops: the method of *incorporeal body poetics*.<sup>19</sup> I do believe that the process of *Archive B.* and *My Eye Candy...* co-constitute each other. Accordingly, the online exhibition supports and makes visible some elements of the findings of the action research on the workshops as well (concerning the methodology, see more in the next chapter). The online exhibition-creation gave a possibility to experiment with different roles and power structures. Sharing power had a major importance in the creative process. One of my premises was that if we are working with our own body narratives, we are the absolute

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<sup>19</sup> Why did I choose to include the online exhibition into this thesis project? First of all, I did so from the viewpoint of the topic's importance and timing. Currently, the distortions of neoliberal body images are getting more and more public attention. I found it really important to have an audio-visual presentation of our work. At the same time, as the facilitator of the workshops, it was highly important to me that the material created by the participants remain private, something they share only with the present members of the community (if they decide to do so). The focus of the workshop was the reconstruction of something deeply personal, and I have found it counter-productive to break the magic of non-productive, purposeless play of free creation. I also think that asking participants to share the documentation of their art pieces can reduce their creative freedom. I tried to avoid putting the participants under pressure. I offered the option of continuing the work with the topic as part of the online exhibition. Despite the newest restrictions related to COVID-19, one of the group members continued participating (remotely) in the online exhibition as well.

knowledge owners of our body history; therefore, we should have the possibility to decide on its representation, from the very beginning of the process.<sup>20</sup> Decision-making is about taking responsibility, and experimenting with a theatre project in the middle of a global pandemic is highly stressful. That is why I had a team of people I know well, and we prepared together for the project. Shifting the focus was extremely interesting from the perspective of the differences and similarities between art pedagogy and artistic creation, art-based action research and artistic research (see in the next chapter). And when it comes to the relevance of having a public, artistic part of the research, we cannot forget the importance and power of sharing as Lola Olufemi writes:

Visual art, painting, sculpture, photography and literature provide a space for us to test our limits. They are mediums for meditation and reflection. Art moves us because it provokes feelings and calls for a response. Whether that response is repulsion, fear, joy, appreciation, or boredom – art calls for a witness. What happens when we consume a piece of art? We might feel emotional, nostalgic, inspired – a space is opened up where feeling those things isn't silly or self-indulgent but instinctive. [...] But art can abstract us from the demands placed on our bodies at any given time. (2020, pp. 82-84)

In this study I am leaving aside the debates on the critique of new materialist feminism and the aesthetic analysis of *My Eye Candy...* project. I have delineated my research focus into the analysis and description of the characteristics of an artistic (pedagogical) methodology, based on the reappropriation of body narratives, which I call *incorporeal body poetics*.

### 1.3. Research method

As Juha Varto says,<sup>21</sup> there is “no single truth about research” (Varto, 2018, p. 9). Varto encourages researchers to develop their own ways. I followed this guidance. This thesis

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<sup>20</sup> Of course, empowering the workshop participants was extremely important as well, but in that case, for ethical reasons, I found more approachable a clear facilitator role.

<sup>21</sup> In his book: *Artistic Research, What is it? Who does it? Why?*

relies on a longer, self-developed, dynamically changing process, starting with a flipped art-based action research (*Archive B.*) and eventually shifting focus to artistic research (*My Eye Candy...* project). “Art-based action research is a research strategy which guides the progress of research in the cycles of action research and uses art as a catalyst for development work.” (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018, p. 9). I aimed for developing a possible pedagogical and artistic practice through art-based research, with the knowledge-coproduction of the participants. In the workshop, we were “thinking in, through and with art” (Borgdorff 2011, p. 44). I developed the workshop material week by week (see Appendix 1), relying on the verbal and written feedback and reflection of the participants.<sup>22</sup> I consider the group members co-creators; their opinions, reactions and experiences shaped this method. Even though the analysis of the research material and the framework of the workshops were researcher-led, the process of developing the creative exercises and articulating the characteristics was highly participatory. Their critique of the different tasks and directions had an effect on the weekly material (see the circular methodology of action research). Every workshop had a different title and the participants created their own definitions and explored their relations towards them. I am relying on four types of research materials, mainly given by the participants. Two of them are written entirely by the participants of the workshops and the *My Eye Candy...* project. (I.) These are concrete questions posed by me right after and one month after our process. I posed the question “what does your body mean to you?” at the beginning and at the end of the workshops as well. After every occasion, I asked “how could you describe your personal experience?” I also encouraged the participants to give feedback about the facilitation. (II.) The questions posed after a longer period passed were:

Could you recall a moment of the workshops that had an importance for you? What was its importance? After a few months how do you feel about participating in the workshop(s)? What emotions did/do you have about them? Do you think that your relation to your body changed recently? How? What do you think, what caused this change? If you have something else to share with me, please feel free to write here!

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<sup>22</sup> I hope that with this appendix maybe I can contribute to a subversive pedagogy of bodies.

(III.) I am also using my own notes, but since they are not necessarily a precise description of the verbal expressions of the participants (I wrote them at the end of every occasion from memory), I am using them only in case they support something else that was written down in the feedback forms. When the *Archive B.* project ended, I organized the research material and thought about the possible implication of some core factors into the online exhibition creation process. I shared some of these with the creative team as the framework, but we developed it further together later on. (IV.) After the online exhibition, I interviewed the co-creators of *My Eye Candy...* and I documented their answers; these notes are my fourth type of sources. After a long period of hesitation, I have decided not to use the visual and sonic material created by the participants, because from the perspective of the research, their experience and reflection are in focus. Their personal experience is the only way to analyse the relevance and verify the hypotheses. Even though we co-created the research material, the participants did not take part in its analysis. I decided to quote from the original texts often, in order to secure the agency of the participants. The structure of this thesis is based on the answers I have gathered. I organized the reflections along with some pedagogical and philosophical concepts that supported their main viewpoints.

#### 1.4. Research ethics

During the entire process, the physical and emotional safety of the participants was the most important. In the open call and at the beginning of the process, I clarified that I, as a facilitator, have no psychological training and background. Although the workshops were part of a pedagogical process, which meant that they might have had therapeutic effects as side effects, therapy was not their main goal. During the workshops, we were not revisiting past traumas or analysing bad memories but moving towards joyful moments as a counterstrategy. Of course, I was aware of the fact that unpleasant body memories could be easily triggered, despite the above-mentioned intention. I prepared myself for such incidents as much as possible. I educated myself about panic attacks and I also introduced some anxiety relief techniques to the participants at the beginning of each of the workshops. I offered the possibility to leave the room, whenever they needed

to, and I mentioned the rule called pause.<sup>23</sup> It means that whenever someone needed to have a short break, even just a few minutes long, they could say pause without explanation and everyone stops, only continuing when the person who mentioned pause also continues. I also articulated that the participants can always choose whether they want to share their creations with the other group members, and I aimed to create a caring ambience, where the participants were encouraged to act upon their needs. For me as a facilitator, the possibility to say no had a major ethical and pedagogical importance in this particular process. I therefore did my best to create an ambience where the participants felt free to speak out their needs, wishes and disagreements (for more details see chapter 4).

Although I created the workshops' and the research's framework, my intention is to rely on the experience of the participants. I do believe that the best and the most ethical way is for me to do it by quoting their own words as much as I can. Ownership is one of the key issues of the workshops; as such, I ensured participants' ownership of their feedback and creations. I asked for the consent of the participants to use their feedback forms and I sent them the current text highlighting the used quotes. The process was entirely anonymous (except in the cases where the participants signed their reflection).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> My supervisor Susanna Hast mentioned this method to me and I tried it. Even though no one used it during the process, I had the feeling that it contributed to the secure and safe ambience.

<sup>24</sup> Of course, due to the small number of the participants, in some cases, I knew the author of the writing, but in the majority of the cases, I could not know who shared them. In the quotations, I differentiate between the online feedback forms and the immediate written feedback. In some cases, the participants used Hungarian. Whenever I am quoting from the Hungarian feedback forms, I always use my own translation. To protect the anonymity of the author, I never mark which quote is a translation.

## 2. TOWARDS THE SLIPPERY SLOPES OF THE HYPOTHESES, SOME CONTRADICTIONS, FLOURISHING FAILURES AND OTHER CHALLENGES



I had to face several different challenges, the biggest ones being the restrictions and the consequences of COVID-19. Needless to say, the pandemic situation shaped the entire process and the conditions of the research, from the accessibility (persons from the risk groups could not participate) to other difficulties, such as the fewer number of participants and the online form of the planned performance of *My Eye Candy*... I will not detail the changing circumstances, because despite their major effect, the outcome of the research and the research material was not different. Though I had to postpone the entire project, I already knew about the possible upcoming difficulties when I started the practical part. Therefore, I designed the research accordingly from the beginning.

Besides the virus situation, I had a slightly unfortunate situation owing to my communication skills and the advertisement of the workshops. The workshops had really small groups. The total number of the participants was ten, but on one occasion, the maximum number of the group was four. Honestly speaking, contrary to my initial, grandiose plan, the groups were not diverse at all when it comes to gender, physical and cognitive ability, and nationality. (Although half of the participants were international, the participants represented Finno-Ugric countries, mainly Hungarians and Estonians.) On the other hand, I happily noticed that the group members had very diverse professional backgrounds. The majority of them had no previous experience of art practices, or they had a different type of art practice than performative art forms.<sup>25</sup> Of course, the small size of the group had its advantages as well: the participants perceived the occasions as intimate and personal. One of the positive consequences was the intimacy the group

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<sup>25</sup> The participants were mainly female persons in their twenties and thirties. The workshops had two male participants from the same age group. The fact that the majority of the participants were young female immigrants had a major effect on their resistance against the body images of the society. The world is built up to follow the needs of heterosexual white men and treats women as atypical. These discriminations are systematic (Criado Perez, 2019). These structures put a bigger pressure on female bodies.

members wrote about, which encouraged them to share more about their experience and to freely use more unusual creative solutions. As they wrote: “It really mattered from the perspective of sharing my experience that my partner was a person I could entirely trust. The small size of the group was also a great experience.”<sup>26</sup>

## 2.1. A special challenge and the mind map

The biggest challenge when it comes to the hypotheses of the research is the dichotomy between the idea of deconstruction of the oppressive (logocentric) way of reflecting on body narratives and its (pedagogical) practicalities. As a pedagogue and facilitator, I have found it particularly important that the participants know the different viewpoints of the topic. They are co-creators, and in order to help secure their agency, I chose to share the title of the session at the beginning of the workshops. When we started the whole process, I presented the other topics as well, emphasizing that these could be changed in accordance with their needs and wishes. This type of naming, at first glance, not just recounts the main dynamics of logocentrism, but also metaphorically represents the societal phenomena of “labelling” and encourages the participants to verbally describe, name and label their own creative thinking process. How could I expect the participants to step out of the toxic discourse of the society by using similar techniques to those discourses? On the other hand, naming could work as counterstrategy; the act of naming oppressive practices and structures could work as a subversive act (Ahmed, 2015). Words themselves, language and naming, are not good or bad practices, but the organizing logic behind them could be part of an oppressive structure. The critique of logocentrism (poststructuralism) shifts the attention to those structures. Hence, even though seemingly there is contradiction, by paying attention and being alert, language could work as our ally. The real challenge is whether it is possible to step out of the societal pressure of certain body images.

Of course, I am aware that for a workshop of two and a half hours per week, the subversion of the body-oppressive structures is a really high expectation. After some trials, with the participants, we developed a method, or better yet a pedagogical

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<sup>26</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

dramaturgy, which I consider to be a successful attempt.<sup>27</sup> An attempt that aims for not necessarily to leave the existing norms and discourses about bodies, but to highlight them from a critical and materialist perspective and to reconstruct them by focusing on the own narratives of the participants. The title forms part of this dramaturgy. And based on the reflections, giving titles as counterstrategy worked as an empowering and encouraging element. In some cases, it directed the attention and inspired critical thinking:

The topic of the workshop, the ‘trustworthy body’ was a new concept to me, as in general, I have not given a lot of thought earlier to the role of my body or any bodies in society. It was interesting to talk about what our bodies mean to us or how we see them socially functioning.<sup>28</sup>

During the eight occasions, I chose topics based on marginalized perspectives and possible starting points of body narrativity, such as the strong body, the trustworthy body, the playful body, the remembering body, my body ownership, the protective body and the risk-taking body.<sup>29</sup> These titles guaranteed a(n probably) unusual starting point for the participants. In this case naming worked as a key factor, as a subversive act:

It is actually funny, because brave, strong, playful... are kind of basic adjectives but somehow when I have been thinking about my body, I haven’t connected those adjectives with my body. Now I do and it is amazing.<sup>30</sup>

The questions posed at the beginning of the workshop also had a dramaturgical importance. The same questions meant to reflect on the happenings of each occasion and to inspire the participants’ own creation of body narratives. The question “what does your

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<sup>27</sup> About the concrete exercises and the structure of the workshops see Appendix 1. especially the part: “All of the workshops started and ended on the same way, and I had some exercises I repeated every time applying some variations. I improvised some changes on the drafts time to time regarding the participants’ feedback. Some of the participants took part on the workshops week by week, some of them just came for one time. The background and the previous art experiences of the group members were extremely diverse. I used some elements what I have learned in Hungary from drama pedagogues, experiential pedagogues and Finnish art pedagogues.”

<sup>28</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – some days after the workshop.

<sup>29</sup> For the details, see appendix 1.

<sup>30</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

body mean to you,” and the options of drawing, writing a poem, etc. as an answer, opened up the possibility of associations and free, uncoerced reflection. After the starting dance session, which is a relatively open form of icebreaking and probably not entirely unknown to the participants, we played some topic-connected warm-up exercises (about playfulness as a method, see more in the next, third chapter).

The workshop’s dramaturgy’s key point — where, in my opinion, the shift from verbal, reason-based, logocentric discussion happens — is the mind map. The mind map was the first point of the occasions when a clear, artistic abstraction happened.<sup>31</sup> It was the first trial of an artistically abstract, material-based thinking process, creating new personal dimensions with visual and sonic simplification and compression. After some discussions and a common brainstorming about the title and what the title meant for different participants, the next task was to spend some time creating a mind map. The mind map was based on the topic, labeled by the title. Mind map is a really fruitful genre regarding pedagogy; it has the specific capability to help the thinking process by combining visual elements, writing, organizing, space, shapes.<sup>32</sup> As John W. Budd writes in his paper about mind map research, in case of mind maps the role of associations is essential; the different visual elements form part of the thinking process (2004, pp. 38–39). Based on this elemental idea, I decided to experiment with different artistic forms of mind maps. Drawing was the first step. It had some variants such as drawing on your mirror image. Depending on the topic, we created 3D mind maps with objects; we took photos and videos using smart phones; we moved in a place we imagined as a mind map (movement-based mind map); we used some sonic elements and tactile materials as well.<sup>33</sup> Such creative multi-material mind-maps excited our thinking: they opened up associations and connections through a leap, between reason-based labels and free, poetic abstraction. They also inspired abstract, floating thoughts. As the next step, the participants had a chance to continue this process using different offered artistic ways to create and recreate their narratives in a more poetic way of thinking. As one of the participants wrote:

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<sup>31</sup> I use the word abstraction here in its linguistic (being used for concepts further removed from the objects to which they were originally attached) and artistic sense (something unconcerned with the literal depiction of things from the visible world).

<sup>32</sup> Mind map is an assemblage of associations. It is organized in a similar way to what a possible artistic outcome could be (see in chapter 6).

<sup>33</sup> For more examples and a precise description, see Attachment 1.

Mindmap helped me to think what protective body is to me. [...] I thought of my mindmap in a form of a tree that grows leaves and flowers and branches in every state of its path.<sup>34</sup>

I consider the main artistic part as the next level of artistic abstraction. In this case, I consider abstraction as a method of creating something sonically, visually or linguistically poetic. After that, the workshop ended with sharing (in case we felt it was needed, especially concerning the experience of the participants) and a writing session, which was the participants' own awareness-raising moment about their process of narrative creation. Even though it is extremely hard to detach ourselves from the societal norms and methods of thinking about bodies, and the total demolition of reason is impossible, I am convinced that the workshops' less logocentric, materialist way of creating and thinking through creating gave a possibility to the group members to reconstruct poetic body narratives. It is important to emphasize that visual or artistic does not necessarily mean deconstructive or less logocentric. A visual or sonic piece could be organized around one certain line of thought, be understood as a rational and clear line of thinking, ordered based on one particular, organizing mind. Deconstruction can be present in any field of art, but "it is within a certain experience of spacing, of space, that resistance to philosophical authority can be produced. In other words, resistance to logocentrism has a better chance of appearing in these types of arts" (referring to visual arts, Brunette & Willis, 1994, p. 10). We attempted to create new thinking, new experiences, new body memories through corporeal and sonic tools – subverting the patriarchal, capitalist neoliberal thoughts we were socialised with. For this attempt, we tried out different ways of experiencing the word, emphasising the corporeal side of human experience without creating any hierarchies of knowledge.

During *My Eye Candy...* creation the same problem was verbalized by the working group members. Before *My Eye Candy...* the usual working method of the group members was improvisation, or creation based on a certain topic we discussed. It is extremely hard and challenging to twist this pattern in a way that the members are inspired by the materiality of the used items and the different theatrical methods. Even though material and object-focused improvisation forms part of theatre exercises in almost every

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<sup>34</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

theatrical tradition, this method, as a way of creation, is more popular in animated theatre, especially object theatre, where the artists rely on the materiality of the puppets. In the online exhibition creation process, although we read some theoretical texts (especially fragments from Preciado's *Testo Junkie*), and although we brainstormed about our interests and the varying importance of body narratives, we never decided on a scene's "theme" before we started the material-based creation, and this choice caused some uncertainty and challenges.<sup>35</sup> Our working method started by reading some framing material and discussing the topics we could associate with; it became a sort of self-labeling. After collecting these keywords, we chose different materials and techniques to work with and we started to improvise with the objects, clothes, lights and sound. Every material inspired us differently; we were thinking about our bodies creating. At the end of the creation of one scene, we did not really try to find symbols in it or connect it to the topics, but we had discussions about our associations. When we created the final webpage of the exhibition, we gave titles to the pieces, which was another phase of the association-creation circle when we named the pieces and we discussed them. We agreed that it was an aesthetic choice not to give explanations or descriptions to the art pieces. I personally imagine that the association circle continues in the imagination of the viewer; the viewer creates their own narratives. Ines Masanti, who participated in the workshops and continued working on the exhibition, was involved in the same way. We sent "clues" and some inspiration to her and we had a visual-poetic-based dialogue. The mind map helps to create (corporeal) counter-narratives and also could symbolize the association-creation-reflection circle or frame we used.

On the other hand, playing with representations raises some other questions. We shouldn't forget that logocentrism and our society's oppressive discourses about our bodies are not just textual. We are surrounded by different body-objectifying images in our everyday life and of course, their effect will not disappear. During the workshops and the creation process as well, we were really conscious of this fact. It is barely possible to abolish the effect of society's body images, but the tactile, sonic, and other exercises gave the possibility for subversive acts. As one of the participants wrote — answering the question "how could you describe your experience?" — "Sometimes I think we would be

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<sup>35</sup> Based on the interview with the participants after the process and reflections during the process.

happier without our sense of sight. we could concentrate on how we hear, feel, smell and taste each other.”<sup>36</sup>

Despite the fact that not involving a sound and a light designer was not entirely our own decision, on the first day of the two intensive weeks of creation, we realized that we could use these elements as we used any other materials. It became important that we were the ones who manipulated and controlled the lights and the sound, not just from the perspective of ownership, but from the perspective of the method.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>37</sup> Based on the reflections of the creative team and my notes during the process. About this see more in chapter 6.

### 3. ART PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES AS GAMES, “MY BODY IS MEANT FOR PLAY”



Creativity is at the heart of any new world we seek to build. Without the demands placed on our body by capital, by gender and by race – we could be freed up to read, write and to create. Alongside political freedom comes an escape from the social conditioning that deadens our creativity. Every time we engage our creative faculties, we are going against a logic that places work and the nuclear family at the centre of our existence. Art is threatening because when produced under the right conditions, it cannot be controlled.<sup>38</sup>

Lola Olufemi

During the workshop (and *My Eye Candy...* process) the importance of playfulness and playing different games came up from time to time in the written feedback form and verbally as well. Because of the particular framing of each workshop session, the participants played several different games, gradually shifting their attention to free creation. Based on their reflections, I have decided to devote a special chapter to this topic, mainly from the perspective of the group members and in view of the above-mentioned method. In the following sub-chapters, I discuss the key factors present in the feedback forms. Playing, especially “playing like a child,” had a major importance in trying out different art forms and experimenting freely. Engaging with the materials and relying on the haptics encouraged the group members to think outside the box and to wander around. In the following chapter, I write about the joy of playing, which had an empowering effect on the participants and supported their new narratives and ideas. Playing had an important role in facing the different body narratives and acknowledging their dynamic changes. Games and trying out different roles, as well as experimenting, also worked as a searching process, a joyful investigation. At the end of this chapter, I present the idea of — to quote a participant — working and playing “against the shit” of society, and also present the subversive aspect of playing mentioned by the participants. In this chapter, I do not intend to go into detail about play and game theories, but present

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<sup>38</sup> Olufemi, L. (2020). *Feminism, Interrupted: Disrupting Power*, London: Pluto Press. 84.

the similarities and the frequently described factors of the workshops and *My Eye Candy*...

Playing and art have several similarities.<sup>39</sup> Playing and art are both engagement in a joyful process without having a serious or practical purpose (i.e., work, in most lexicons). This way, they are fulfilling a counter-strategic role; they do not really fit in the capitalist mindset of using the time to produce something.<sup>40</sup> Of course, it does not mean that there are no outcomes. On the contrary, we cannot forget the different mental and societal goals both of art and of playing. As Stuart Brown and Christopher Vaughan write in their book, *Play: how it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul*, play is voluntary, purposeless; it has improvisational potential; it means freedom from time; and one of its properties is a continuation of desire (2009, p.31). Play is not an activity; it is more of a state of mind (Brown & Vaughan, 2009, p.91). The stress releasing “purposefulness” was clearly present in the reflections as well.

The workshop was playful in a way that I had forgot for some time, so it brought me the feeling of being able to play without any goals and work pressure. This itself is a very precious feeling.<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand, we can see the similarities, for example, in the role of experimentation and freedom of creativity. Playing and art rely a lot on the participants’ creativity, and through this creativity, they offer the possibility of a sort of freedom from societal pressure. As one of the participants reflected on this: “I learned that maybe sometimes when I want my mind to be even more playful, I should first play with my body. In a way to let energies flow freely.”<sup>42</sup>

Playing gives the possibility to experiment, to redefine relationships with your body through new, joyful experiences. Playfulness was a key factor in the creative, more art-

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<sup>39</sup> “In fact, I would say that the impulse to create art is a result of the play impulse. Art and culture have long been seen as a sort of by-product of human biology, something that just happens as we use our big, complex brains. But the newer thinking is that art and culture are something that the brain actively creates because it benefits us, something that arises out of the primitive and childlike drive to play.” (Brown & Vaughan, 2009, p.92.)

<sup>40</sup> See for example Ahmed, 2004 and 2014 p. 163. “Pleasure becomes an imperative only as an incentive and reward for good conduct, or as an ‘appropriate outlet’ for bodies that are busy being productive (‘work hard play hard’).”

<sup>41</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

focused exercises. It appeared in the reflection as well: “I think big ideas come from playing, it makes me creative.”<sup>43</sup> The playfulness already established by different games and dancing at the beginning of the workshops clearly affected the other exercises. “When the time came to do my presentation, I felt awkward and insecure, but because this playfulness had been built, I felt comfortable improvising and exploring/challenging my imagination for the others.”<sup>44</sup>

Playing was also a way of shifting the awkwardness of being in this new situation to freed creativity. Playing also appeared as the participants having their own private time and space.<sup>45</sup> Playing might have felt uncomfortable at first, because we are probably not used to it and it is something we mainly attach to childhood.<sup>46</sup> The sensation of discomfort was present in different feedback forms, and it was related to the games or to the dance at the beginning of the session.

It was quite awkward at first, but in the end, I felt that it was very liberating. Usually, I don't let go of my control when it comes to my body if others are present, so it felt silly to dance like a crazy person in front of others. But as time went, I became less self-aware and I loosened up.<sup>47</sup>

As the quote demonstrates, as time passed, the games and the group became more and more familiar.<sup>48</sup> The role of the community and witnessing I discuss later in chapter 5.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Thoughts from a participant based on the feedback form – right after the workshop.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>48</sup> Or in a different feedback: “at the beginning, I felt myself extremely weird, especially at the dancing part, but after I could release my tension and at the end of the workshop, I felt myself really comfortable in my skin.” Ibid.

### 3.1. Feeling takes over seeing, body narratives and materials

The conceptual and material are co-constituting each other within and beyond the incorporeal. Incorporeality frames and effects on the corporeal and it makes materiality meaningful (Grosz, 2017, p. 254). As Elisabeth Grosz suggests that the values and senses of the incorporeal and of the material are made by themselves (Grosz, 2017, p. 261). In my understanding that is happening on the workshops utilising differently textured and sonic materials to recreate body narratives. “Art, science and technology are [...] explorations and inventions through the framing that incorporeals provide for our ongoing explorations of matter. They are contingent, contested elaborations of the world’s qualities and processes” (Grosz, 2017, p. 258). The body reconstructions are happening with the help of the incorporeal explorations of the material within artistic practices.

Based on the (verbal) immediate reflections, for the majority of the participants, the different materials and theatrical methods were new. Probably by reason of this novel quality or thanks to the introductory games, some of the group members referred to the creation part as “going into child mood, using different materials.”<sup>49</sup> The bodies’ intra-activity with different textures, materials (plastic, yarn, paper, metal, liquid, oil, etc.), shapes and movements appeared in a joyful exploratory way. For example: “I also liked that Nóri brought funny retro dresses to the workshop, and we had to touch them, move around with them as if they were our bodies.”<sup>50</sup> During this playful process of try-out and investigation, the question “why do we care more about how we see our body than how we feel our body?” occurred frequently. Another example from a different feedback form is: “I enjoyed coming here and just feeling myself.”<sup>51</sup> Somehow the feeling of learning and creating through experimenting not just revived playful childhood experiences, but through them, the participants also recreated their body interpretations and their relations to the word.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. Nóri is a nickname of Nóra.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

The painting exercise (the last one) made me realize that I see the world as a group of threats. This was a surprise to me and a great revelation. I realized the same when I was drawing on the mirror, but somehow seeing the painting made this feeling a lot stronger.<sup>52</sup>

In this case, I would emphasize the choice of the words. The participant's artistic creation and sensual experience offered them new perspectives on their body narratives and their relationship with the word. Reading the reflections, it appeared to me that the group members enjoyed the freedom of playing with the techniques of animated theatre and textures and the fact that it gave the possibility to dive deeper into smaller details.

I am super thankful for you that I got the possibility to use overhead-projector things today. It has been a while. Today my body is ready for a change. I don't yet know what the change will be, but I see how the way I see my body has changed. I really enjoyed the way we were able to think about our body in a cell-level.<sup>53</sup>

This type of analysis of different small details using the tactile and haptic senses and the pleasure of a creative experiment is a strong need, which was verbalised and named as something missing from everyday life.

This is the first time for many years that I have played for a few hours. Playing is something that I gave up a long time ago and this lack of practice has made me stiff, both mentally and physically. [...] thank you for inviting me and giving the chance to play. It is something that I will be keeping in mind, because time spent playing is time invested in my own well-being. My body is meant for play.<sup>54</sup>

One of the things I realized during the workshops is that the participants communicated their extremely positive feelings and a positive surprise connected to the different

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

materials. This excitement of trying out the materials and spending a longer time with flexible boundaries to wander around not just helped participants to go deeper into the sensational experience of intra-acting with textures, but somehow taught the participants about their own body perception. Likewise, it taught them to enjoy spending some time without a concrete purpose or personal goal. It is something similar to the discipline of design pedagogy.

Besides the different methods of education of students with special needs (such as multisensory education), tactile and haptic learning is popular in diverse pedagogical directions, such as wild pedagogy and design pedagogy.<sup>55</sup> László Moholy-Nagy, one of the founders of Bauhaus and design pedagogy, developed a method of training architects and designers using tangible elements. This pedagogy was — and is — frequently described by teachers and the topic's researchers as unlearning, pre-linguistic, intuitive, childlike (Bittner, 2019). Otti Berger, a student, textile designer and later the most prominent teacher of the tangible Bauhaus pedagogy wrote:

one must be able to comprehend it with the 'hands'! The value of a fabric is to be recognized in the tactile, in the tactile value. ... one must listen to the secrets of the fabric, trace the sounds of the materials, one must grasp the structure not only with the brain, but feel it with the subconscious ...<sup>56</sup> (Bittner, 2019).

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<sup>55</sup> Wild pedagogy is based on the idea of re-wilding education, including experiences about the non-human world, inspired by the affect-theories of Deleuze and Guattari. It frequently takes place in nature and uses cooperative forms of learning. "In this aim is an acknowledgement that learning to become different people will require being in the world—dwelling there. Re-wilding education thus requires learning from place and landscape. Listening to voices from the more-than-human world. Attending to the untamed. This will require, at the least, making the walls around modern western education more permable and in some cases, removing them all together." (Jickling & Blenkinsop & Timmerman & De Danann Sitka-Sage, 2018) Even though there are not many sources about the relations and possibilities of art pedagogy and wild pedagogy, it could be enriching for both disciplines, especially the focus and a deeper connection with materials and environmentalism. As The Crex Crex Collective writes, "Wild pedagogy seems to embrace thinking and acting beyond the norms. If an art gallery is open to stretching one's thinking and perceptions then wild pedagogy is a welcome fit for an art educator. [...] It is part of the job of an arts educator to help students understand the materials they are using for their art projects [...] Wild pedagogy would align quite nicely with this idea [of a stronger alliance with plants] since it immediately addresses our relationship with nature. Art educators may be assured that many artists are potential strong allies in following a "wild pedagogy." (Jickling & Blenkinsop & Timmerman & De Danann Sitka-Sage, 2018, pp. 112-113).

<sup>56</sup> The original Otti Berger text can be found in Berger, O. (1930), "Stoffe im Raum" (Fabrics in the Room), Berlin: RED, Sonderausgabe: Bauhaus, p. 145. I quoted it in the translation of Regina Bittner from Bittner, 2019.

Otti Berger (artistically known as o.b.), as part of Bauhaus, developed a method rethinking László Moholy-Nagy's. It is not especially well documented, but based on the available traces and sources, we could say that her pedagogy was focused on the idea that through interaction with different materials and haptic sensations, people can learn something about themselves beyond the logocentric (Smith, 2006, pp. 17–19). As a student, she gave an interview in which she phrased her goals about learning in Bauhaus as “To overcome me and find me.”<sup>57</sup> (Bittner, 2019). Even without knowing the full context and meaning of Berger's statement, I see potential similarities to this thesis' hypothesis about the *incorporeal body poetics*. In this sense, Otti Berger's pedagogy appears very similar with the main elements of material feminist pedagogy (intra-action with the materials, poetic materials, deconstructing the language) and incorporeality and also particularly relevant from the perspective of the method of *Archive B.* and *My Eye Candy...*

There was another surprising factor of using different materials that the participants emphasized. Sometimes we took photographs, videos, but in several cases, we created physical objects, and everyone had the possibility to take their creation home. Those materials became a memento, a symbolic item, a physical memory of their reconstructed ownership. They make possible to recall the memory of the workshop. “Through these materials I remember the playful and peaceful atmosphere of the workshop.”<sup>58</sup>

### 3.2. Joyful moments for regaining the ownership, playing together

Almost all of the people who took part in the workshop emphasized the fact that they had fun and enjoyed the activities. Even though I could separate some differently shifting focus points regarding the main source of the joy, all of them were describing different

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<sup>57</sup> The original Otti Berger text can be found in the interview mit bauhäuslern (interview with Bauhaus student), in: *bauhaus zeitschrift für gestaltung* 2. Nr. 2-3, 1928, p. 24 I quoted it in the translation of Regina Bittner from Bittner, 2019.

<sup>58</sup> Direct quote from the workshop feedback forms (online) a few months after the workshop.

forms of togetherness, a sort of sense of community which resulted in feeling their bodies differently.

I'm so glad that I was encouraged to explore the notion of playing together in this workshop. The framework of the workshop made it easier for me to relax and move towards the other participants psychologically, even though in the beginning I was intimidated. It helped me return to something that I had left behind in childhood and warm the wounds around my psycho-social development.<sup>59</sup>

Freedom and the liberating sense of playful human connection had a major role for the participants.

I think that playing is absolutely crucial to human well-being. Sometimes development traumatic events or interpersonal sequences can take place in our development that force us to act “hard” and, in doing so, ultimately lose connection with our bodies and the more fragile parts of ourselves. We force ourselves to grow up early and become tough, but this ultimately makes us brittle. The workshop provided a space to explore with others in a playful way. Somehow this space can remind or re-vitalize one’s innate desire to stay connected to his/her/their child part and carry with us throughout our lives.<sup>60</sup>

And here I have to mention the context of this project, which was influenced by the pandemic. The workshops started in September 2020, in Helsinki, in the sixth month of the virus crisis. This text will not research the different body conceptions that were changing due to the lockdown and COVID-19 anxiety, but I have to mention that it probably had its consequences for the workshop participants’ body perception, not to mention the *My Eye Candy*... team. I will not elaborate on the possible effects of the virus

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

and social distancing more than it was clearly present in the reflection.<sup>61</sup> In the feedback form, the joy of playing together probably appeared more intense due to the lack of similar experiences in the months before. As one of the participants wrote about playing in their workshop partner's installation: "[...] it was an intimate and really personal experience, which is —especially at the times of social distancing — extremely rare, valuable and precious."<sup>62</sup> Somehow, I can say that the timing of the process was very fortunate vis-à-vis its relevance in the participants' life based on what they shared.

The chance to engage and explore play with others is important because the knowledge of being seen causes major physiological changes in our body. In my case the tension and stress reactions that I have experienced for most of my life have started to gradually fade away.<sup>63</sup>

One of the sources of joy was the above-mentioned material experience, which made the participants rethink their connection with their bodies "And super fun to make these 'simple' exercises. [...] And I love using different materials: not just theatre practices. Puppets were amazing <3"<sup>64</sup> The beyond-verbal exercises resulted in some particularly empowering moments in between the group members. Breaking the verbal-based everyday experience, the non-verbal moments could be the base of a really unique connection, like in this emotion mirroring exercise:

There was one task where we had to mirror our partner and tell a story without saying a word, just using our body language. During this task I felt so strongly connected to experiencing my partner's emotions through their body language. It was really powerful. I realized that I don't necessarily need words to understand others and to express myself.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> In general, the discomfort of bodies — aching — was not really a frequent topic during Archive B. process. I am convinced that the fact that the different pains and incapacities of bodies stayed in the background had several reasons, for example, all of the participants were physically abled. In the creation process of My Eye Candy... it was slightly different; pain had a special importance. Another reason could be that the workshops themselves focused on the underrepresented strength and trustability of bodies.

<sup>62</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>63</sup> Direct quote from the workshop feedback forms (online) few months after the workshop.

<sup>64</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>65</sup> Direct quote from the workshop feedback forms (online) few months after the workshop.

The intensive non-verbal inter-are with materials and movements (see Barad), especially when they formed part of connecting to another person, seemed to be the main factor of the joy the participants described.

### 3.3. Playing dynamics, acknowledging changing narratives

The methodology of the workshops and the possibility to deepen into sensorial experiments clearly had an effect on how the participants saw their bodies, and how they related to bodies in general. Based on the feedback form, I can say that all of the participants had a shift in their view about bodies. It was written in one of the reflections: the workshop made it possible to “see our own and also each other’s bodies more than some objects.”<sup>66</sup> But, what I would like to highlight in this chapter is the effect of the games and the material experiments — in better words, the material, sound and visual poetic creative tasks — at the individual level. The texts I am referring to are all talking about a personal experience, a change, a recognition that was triggered by the exercises and the discussions of the workshops. In feminist materialism, incorporeality, trans-corporeality, or, in Otti Berger’s tangible pedagogy, the phenomenon of learning something through experiencing the sense-based intra-action between the body and the world (materials, sounds, movements, time and space), leads to a different perception of the world. Relying on the feedback forms, it is hard to tell the reason — whether it is the animated theatre-based exercises, the topic, the safe (and brave) space, the community, or the facilitation, or (probably) a mix of all of these — but the participants described a change in their body narratives. As written in one of the forms, the workshop “opened up new ways of thinking about my body.”<sup>67</sup> One of the frequently mentioned facts was the acknowledgment of the constant changes of the body:

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

If my body feels bad, I get depressed and blame it — it feels like my body is like that always for the rest of my life. I think I can change that attitude. Today I feel fat, ugly, stuck and horrible, but tomorrow is a new day. My body is changing every day.<sup>68</sup>

This feeling of accepting the changing body and realizing that the attitude towards the body (which I would even call narrative) could be controlled was described as empowering. In another case, the acceptance of this change was mentioned as powerful and needed.

We feel different every day and not letting that show is not good for a human being. Luckily more open spaces for more wide feelings and expressing them are formed more now, hopefully even more in the future. This has been a space like that.<sup>69</sup>

In some reflections, the problem of not accepting these changes was identified:

in the end of the session, after all the exercises, I came to think of my body more as a way of expression and also as becoming more curious about what is the meaning of body for me. One of the biggest revelations was that I realized how much I actually count on my body, which doesn't always mean trust. Or does it? Maybe it is trust, but also not accepting change? Or maybe not that I am not accepting the change, but maybe I see my body working one way.<sup>70</sup>

In some cases, this realization led to appreciation: “My body is brave, because it is always ready to adapt. Whatever happens, it does not stop.”<sup>71</sup> In some other cases, the constant changes have a protective and exploratory overtone. The body is a fluid collection of experiences interacting with the world:

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

My body is protecting me by growing. It grows out of states and situations that are no longer good for me and do not serve me. It grows to take me to new phases and spaces. Sometimes it is painful, but worth it.<sup>72</sup>

As Karen Barad writes in the paper, “Nature’s Queer Performativity,” identities are plural and dynamically changing (fluid), which fact actually raises serious questions about the world’s “ethico-ontological relations”<sup>73</sup> (Barad, 2012, pp. 50). If we perceive bodies as part of identities (following the body definitions above), the reflection of the participants could be read as the realization of a dynamically changing plurality of identities, as well as the challenges and the anxiety concerning ethico-ontological relations that Barad mentioned, such as the questions of what my body is supposed to do, how it works, what it should express, and what its function in the world is.

Several different participants phrased different types of learning processes, situations or games that made them realize something about themselves. Such self-discovery could be extremely empowering.

Yes. This was so important for me especially because my body is changing a lot at the moment. I know these workshops gave me a possibility to admire my changing body and see my body strong, Sexible, loving and miraculous. I could use this time panicking but I won't. I try to remember what I learned during workshops and I try to remember that it is just about which point of view I choose. Workshops taught me that there are choices and I can be the one who chooses.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> See for example: “Identity is a phenomenal matter; it is not an individual affair. Identity is multiple within itself; or rather, identity is diffracted through itself – identity is diffraction/diff rance/differing/deferring/differentiating” (Barad, 2012, p.32). Or “Indeed, the point is not merely that identity is multiple or fluid, but rather that identity itself is at stake and at issue in what matters and what does not matter, where accountability is part of the ethico-ontological relations and entanglements of worlding. (Barad, 2012, p. 50).

<sup>74</sup> Direct quote from the workshop feedback forms (online) a few months after the workshop. “Sexible” is the creative linguistic invention of the participant. For me it sounds genius, beyond grammar, unifying the word loveable and sexy.

Some of the feedback forms mentioned the importance of the encouraging ambience of Archive B. “In general, I felt that here I was capable of realizing things I am not sure I could have phrased/wanted to phrase in different situations.”<sup>75</sup> Or in another example: “I learned a lot about expressing myself through my body. It is something I have wanted to do but haven’t had courage to do.”<sup>76</sup> Some participants wrote about their process of understanding something about their bodies through the exercises and the games — something they have been thinking about, something that forms part of their everyday life. “After that we did playful bodily exercises which made me digest some things bodily.”<sup>77</sup> Or it gives some inspiration and encouragement to think some specific questions further:

it is easy to come here and every time after this, when I am going home, I realize how I have made some kind of thought more concrete in my mind. I might have been thinking of something and often, in here it all comes clearer. Good exercises.<sup>78</sup>

The online feedback forms had more information about the changes of the body, probably for two reasons. One of them is the presence of two questions clearly asking about body-changes and their perceptions.<sup>79</sup> The other one is my assumption: as time passes, it is easier to reflect on the happenings.

### 3.4. Playing out the society, working against the “shit”

For the participants, the act of playing and creating functioned as a way of deconstruction, a rebel act, working against the “shit” of the society. In the written feedback forms, the

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<sup>75</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>76</sup> Direct quote from the workshop feedback forms (online) a few months after the workshop.

<sup>77</sup> Direct quote from the workshop feedback forms (online) a few months after the workshop.

<sup>78</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>79</sup> The exact questions were: “Do you think that your relation to your body changed recently? How?” and “What do you think, what did effect on this change?”

dichotomy of workshop versus society, joy versus perfection-oppression, feeling versus seeing were strongly present.

Our society teaches us that your body is never good enough and you always have to work more to make it perfect. In these workshops, the point of view was not how to make ‘perfect’ body and feel better. It was that your body is already ‘perfect’ and realizing that makes you feel better.<sup>80</sup>

The societal pressure of the ideal body was present on different levels on the occasions. One form of it was revisiting body memories from a highly critical perspective: “my body has always been super strong. When I was a kid, I hated that I wasn’t as skinny as my sister. Well, it was the 1990s and skinny was the only right body.”<sup>81</sup> The general experience of being judged and criticized for not fitting into the society’s ideal body image appeared frequently as well:

I love to be in my body, I love how it works and reacts to things. How it keeps me safe and heals me when needed. But then there is this stupid society which cares about how I look and tells me to hate myself and my image. It’s crazy.<sup>82</sup>

On the other hand, the strong need to take action against the perfectionist oppression was phrased in different feedback forms: “I want to notice what I want my body to be and separate the learned images and throw deep to the trash with the whole patriarchal shit we still have to deal with.”<sup>83</sup> For the group members, taking part in *Archive B*. was considered a subversive act, reflecting on the patterns of society was a clear expectation. “I also want to understand the ways in which things coming from the ‘outside’ of myself affect me and what I think of my body. Here are some reasons why I am here.”<sup>84</sup> In some cases, a clear dichotomy was phrased between the workshop’s joyful poetic self-created narrativities and the societal pressure:

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<sup>80</sup> Direct quote from the workshop feedback forms (online) a few months after the workshop.

<sup>81</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

I enjoyed coming here and just feeling myself [...] I think that in some situations it is easy to forget that yes, my body is mine and no one else's. It is also connected to being a woman in a patriarchal society.<sup>85</sup>

Some participants were inspired by the experiences and expressed their commitment to share their body narratives (based on the frame of *Archive B*.) "I will definitely talk about trustful, strong and playful body with other people outside these workshops."<sup>86</sup> These dichotomies referred to the role of the workshops of disrupting the capitalist, stereotypical body images by concentrating on the playful and joyful moments with the materials and their dynamically changing plurality of identities.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Direct quote from the workshop feedback forms (online) a few months after the workshop

## 4. THE IMPORTANCE AND PEDAGOGY OF FACILLITATION



We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, [...] to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body<sup>87</sup>

Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari

One highly important component of making a creative, poetic body-reflection process possible is facilitation, and its relevance showed in the feedback as well. This chapter focuses mainly on the workshops, due to the fact that in the *My Eye Candy...* process, the role of the facilitator was changing (for the details, see chapter 6). I have collected the key points of the participants about my facilitation, emphasizing its relationship with their perception of the occasion. In the reflection, I encouraged the group members to give a general feedback about the facilitation. Therefore, it is not a surprise how remarkable and detailed it was. On the other hand, based on what I have read, I could say that one of my unwritten hypotheses was proven: the facilitation and the safe space maintained by the facilitator (and the group) played a key role in the workshop experience. It is not a surprise, given the sensitivity and intimacy of the topic. In the following, I am enumerating the core factors mentioned by the participants: *gentle facilitation*, *hospitality*, and securing a *safe space* (and *brave space*). *Safety* and *hospitality* meant, for example, not forcing verbal reactions and creating a space where the participants could refuse the tasks suggested by the facilitator. Finally, I would like to reflect on a point that was highly relevant for me as a pedagogue and which I feel to be an underrepresented topic, the bodily presence of the facilitator and its ethics.

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<sup>87</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 257.

## 4.1. Unconditional hospitality, gentle facilitation and safe space

Unconditional hospitality, gentle facilitation and safe space are barely separable. They reflect similar things, but from slightly different perspectives. Francisco B. Trento, in their paper *On Unconditional Hos(ti)pitality: Thinking-doing Strategies for Dis/Abling Arts Education*, argues that the term hospitality is understood as a universal value, even though, by relying on social cues and taking gestures for granted, it has the danger of excluding non-neurotypical people. Extending Derrida's concept of hospitality,<sup>88</sup> Trento suggests avoiding authority maintained by the host, even the host-guest dichotomy, and introduces the idea of a queer, intensive, unconditional hospitality (2021, pp. 1–6).

Intensive hospitality, which I understand as pushing all of its limits, involves the risk of dealing with the uncertainty that one's space may not retain the same physical, functional, and performative characteristics after the newcomer — human or non-human — arrives. It means embracing the potential queering of the space itself and facing its contingency. The space does not host — is immanently built with the one(s) that enter(s) it (Trento, 2021, pp. 3–4).

As a facilitator, I was aiming to reach an ambience that could be described as unconditional hospitality. Trento lists seven factors what could help to reach absolute hospitality in the classroom (Trento, 2021, pp. 20-22).<sup>89</sup> I would like to focus on some of the components that (in my understanding) played a major role in the workshops. The

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<sup>88</sup> Hostility is always embedded in hospitality due to its hierarchical, normative rules. Derrida, J. (2000).

Hostipitality. (B. Stocker & F. Morlock, Trans.). *Angelaki*, 5(3), 3-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09697250020034706>.

<sup>89</sup> The seven propositions are: (1) a procedural and contingent space, (2) a laboratory for invention of new modes of sociality. (3) The laboratory is a space for crash-testing onto-epistemological concepts, and concepts are machines. (4) To facilitate the conceptualisation of new futures — rethinking past and presenting — by critically questioning our perceptions and subjectivities. (5) To disrupt neurotypical perception, spatially, discursively, and rhetorically. And the rhetoric is more than words. (6) To promote practices that dissolve the boundaries between the able and the disabled, the sane and the mad, the human and the non-human. (7) To test the limits of unconditional hospitality. (Trento, 2021, pp. 20-22)

workshop aimed to be a laboratory of invention,<sup>90</sup> without any formal requirement. During the main part of the workshops, we were focusing on material, sonic, spatial, visual poetic explorations, sometimes even a chaotic mixture of all of these. Besides this, one element that absolutely made the free creation possible is the fact that the participants could document their own pieces in their own ways. The participants had absolute freedom in choosing their way of taking part in the workshop activities (see more about this in chapter 4.2). “To facilitate the conceptualisation of new futures—rethinking past and presenting—by critically questioning our perceptions and subjectivities” (Trento, 2021, p. 21).<sup>91</sup> In the workshops, we touched upon the topic of body representation in education and discussed the societal pressure regarding ideal bodies (for example, body shaming coming from teachers). But we also collected some concrete examples of possible alternative approaches to body representation in education and broader society (for instance, smell-based or taste-based understanding of bodies). Disrupting “neurotypical perception, spatially, discursively, and rhetorically” is the fifth proposition on the list (Trento, 2021, p.21). This characteristic could be quite challenging due to different institutional environments, especially in art institutions, because, up to a certain extent, it forms part of the expectations. I am convinced that we were lucky enough to have the possibility of experimenting with space and materials. As a facilitator, I encouraged the participants to engage in free creation. But I also felt that the disruption’s possible limits were the ethical boundaries I faced as a pedagogue. Disruption was more present during the free creation processes, but as a responsible facilitator, I felt that I had to follow a certain (familiar) structure to maintain the emotional and physical security together with the group. The participants were encouraged to reorganize the space, to experiment and find their spot for their (creative) activity. During the workshops, we spent some time just observing and experimenting with the environment. Creating installations and reorganising the space were one core element of the process. This meant the acknowledgement of intimacies and knowledge which “exceed the eye to eye” (after Trento, Yergeau, 2018, p. 211), and what is beyond “the spoken words as proof of participation” (Trento, 2021, p.5), especially during the prolonged creation. The dancing at the beginning and the different ways of existing in the space, focusing on “what feels good,” was supposed to lead to that direction as well. A significant disruption happened

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<sup>90</sup> Point number 2. (Trento, 2021, p. 20.)

<sup>91</sup> Point number 4. (Trento, 2021, p. 21.)

when the participants refused the task I planned to do. They articulated their needs and wishes following the framework of the workshop, which is regaining the sense of ownership. (See more about it in chapter 4.2) Testing the limits of unconditional hospitality was always present,<sup>92</sup> but it is hard to name moments when it was activated, mainly because of the lack of conflict. On the other hand, there were moments when the participants showed resistance (see later). I am convinced that the aspects of hospitality listed by Trento are similar with the characteristics mentioned by the group members.

Two other component described by the participants were connected to the above-mentioned hospitality. The first one is the gentle energy of the facilitator. Based on the comments of the group members, the importance of a caring facilitator-figure emerges. This figure is a facilitator who senses the participants' mood and practices companionship:

You are very creative in finding and creating tasks for us to do. You have a gentle energy. I like to come here even if I was scared at first, I like it that it is in a way mostly surprise what comes in each session. And that you adapt to our feelings and moods of the day.<sup>93</sup>

Gentle facilitation is one of the components of safe space:

I remember the feeling of having the freedom to feel how I feel and be what I am in that moment. I think that for me this is one of the most important things when creating a safe space for all.<sup>94</sup>

In the workshop, the people who were present did not only have different abilities and physical and mental states, but different moods as well. Gentle facilitation and securing a safe space (a place in which a person or a particular group of people can know that they will be free from harm or criticism)<sup>95</sup> constitute each other. For the participants, the safe space had several other components as well, namely, encouragement and the

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<sup>92</sup> Point number 7. (Trento, 2021, p. 22.)

<sup>93</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Definition of the Oxford Online Dictionary. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/safe-space?q=safe+space>

supportive presence of the facilitator. One participant wrote: “I was scared a bit since I’m not super used to express with my body but this was not scary. It was a warm and gentle experience.” The structure of the workshop contributed to the feeling of safety, gradually offering more and more challenging tasks and ensuring the possibility to say no. “Really nice build-up for the workshops. Great to start with some games. Music was also really nice. It seemed that people were opening up.” Another mentioned component of safety was how the facilitator ensured the group members had enough time for the tasks. As one group member commented, it was highly important and felt safe that I gave “space and time for the participants.” In order to feel safe, a general trust between the participants and the workshop facilitator is fundamental. “It was clear/we could feel that you have experience and — additionally — patience as a facilitator. If I had similar teachers in primary school, I would have related differently to life. :D”<sup>96</sup>

Securing and maintaining a safe space had an effect on the sharing process of the participants and the material they chose to work with. “It was nice to share today. [...] I feel safe here!”<sup>97</sup> Clear yet open instructions and responsible facilitation were other listed components. “I think you are facilitating this session fairly, clearly and responsibly.” Inspired by experiential pedagogies and feminist materialisms, I apply and believe in offering the possibility to the participants to choose their method of creation freely. In every creative practice, I offered a wide range of materials and several concrete techniques, and I encouraged the group members to experiment with different things based on their experience from the previous tasks. From the feedback forms, it became clear to me that, although the group members appreciated the time to play and to experiment, the open-ended instructions were sometimes challenging and, in some cases, confusing for them. I usually mentioned some examples when I explained the task, but one dominant part of the method is the respect of the (creative) agency of the participants. Therefore, I avoided showing concrete versions for the creative task and I tried to give a broader scale of examples. The group members are the persons who know their bodies the most; I encouraged them to experiment with the poetic ways of reflecting on it. I emphasized: there is no bad solution. Stacy Alamo states that “the agency of the body demands an acceptance of unpredictability and not-quite-knowing” (2008, p. 250). Inspired by Alamo’s text, I found the intra-action of the body and the offered materials

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<sup>96</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

the most suitable way to experiment, from a pedagogical as well as from the research's point of view. Feminist materialisms' doing/being could be linked to the pedagogical bases of (among others) experiential education and learning/doing. This way of giving instructions, or rather offering options, is a way of securing the space for learning/being/doing/creating. These actions were intra-acting, for example, with social backgrounds, body histories, the atmosphere and materials. This acknowledgement of each of the body's forces and intra-actions, as Alamo says, is not just useful, but ethical as well (2008, p. 250). On the other hand, as a facilitator, I learned from the feedback and realized that there was a difference between the not necessarily clear instructions and the instructions encouraging free creative choice, although the line separating them could be very fine.<sup>98</sup>

## 4.2. The power of refusal

In several modern pedagogies (starting with Maria Montessori's method),<sup>99</sup> creating and maintaining an ambience where the participants can freely take agency over their own decisions is a core factor. This is one of the main principles I adhered to as a facilitator, and this is one of the elements the participants reflected on the most, verbally and in the feedback forms. During the entire process, it happened three times that the participants expressed their inner resistance towards the task. They had several reasons. In one case, it was a concrete critique of the task that they didn't feel theirs. The two participants, one of them present for the first and the other for the second time, discussed the task, and, since both felt the same, they asked me as a facilitator whether we could change it, because they did not feel their ownership over the exercise. Of course, I thanked them for their openness and, together, we changed our direction. This made me rethink the concept

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<sup>98</sup> As a pedagogue, I have learned a lot about giving instructions balancing maintaining clarity and creativity, thanks to the participants' honesty and braveness for always questioning and giving immediate feedback. On the other hand, I do think that this balance is connected to the challenge of the disruption of spatial, discursive, rhetorical neurotypical (see Trento's fifth point) norms. The unknown is always challenging, and it could be extremely uncomfortable and discouraging for the participants. Therefore, I believe that it is important to sense and communicate (about) the group members' needs and boundaries.

<sup>99</sup> See for example Montessori, 1965.

of the workshop and my position as a ‘caring’ facilitator. On the other hand, this moment was remarkable for me as a facilitator, as it was further proof that it is necessary and possible to create an ambience where people have power and feel comfortable saying no. As Nel Noddings writes in her paper, in care ethics, it is important to differentiate between the expressed needs of the participants and their assumed needs. The facilitator should listen to the “cared-for” (2012, p. 773), but not forget that caring is a reciprocal process. In the mentioned cases, I, as a facilitator, had to realise that what I planned was reflecting more on the assumed needs of the participants. Sometimes, it might be hard to realize this, but it is always a necessary realization, leading to relief and a satisfying experience at the end of the day. It was also important for me and, based on our discussion, for the group members as well, that they didn’t refuse the task because of the challenge (of course, this could have been a possibility as well). They did it because of their consciousness over their agency and their ownership over their body narratives. As one of the participants wrote: “It was great that we could stop when we wanted. I still really like the workshop, it is just the perfect discomfort that still feels good, even if it sounds weird. Thanks!”<sup>100</sup>

The two other cases were connected to the participants’ mood and feelings at the moment of the particular workshop-tasks; they emphasized this on those occasions. On the other hand, the importance of this act is the same as in the previous case: they knew that something didn’t feel comfortable for them. They also felt that the workshop’s structure and ambience allow, and even encourage, them to express and live these feelings. In the feedback form, its importance was stated: “I love it how we can do each task however we feel suitable.”<sup>101</sup> Changing and reshaping the structure of the occasions with regard to the mood and the needs of the participants had a major importance in creating a trustable, safe space. “Luckily more open spaces for more wide feelings [a possibility of expressing them] are formed more now and hopefully even more in the future. This has been a space like that.”<sup>102</sup> Whenever this happened, we figured out together a way of continuation based on what the materials offered us. Such behavior on the part of the facilitator is the only way I can imagine a body-narrativity workshop, where the goal is to recreate one’s own poetic body image. Based on the experience of the

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<sup>100</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

workshop, it was proven that ownership and agency in the topic and in the working method strengthen each other.

### 4.3. The corporeal<sup>103</sup> facilitator

The facilitators' or pedagogues' embodiment and bodily presence are not broadly discussed in the literature of pedagogy. There are some papers focusing on the importance of the voice, the movements and the clothing of educators, but there are not many sources on the role, the representation, the power of the facilitators' body. Even though I would like to believe that the situation has changed since bell hooks talked about it in her book, *Teaching to transgress, education as the practice of freedom*, where she describes the tabooed teacher's body, the sources show otherwise. "To call attention to the body is to betray the legacy of repression and denial that has been handed down to us by our professorial elders, who have been usually white and male" (hooks, 1994, p. 191). For a long time, acknowledging the bodily presence of the facilitator was denied or claimed unprofessional. From what I experienced and learned from the discussions in the workshops, I can say that in case of *Archive B.*, my bodily presence as a facilitator contributed significantly to the caring and safe space. The group members emphasized my "gentle energy"<sup>104</sup> as something that had an effect on their experience and sense of security. Another expression that they used several times was "being there"<sup>105</sup> as a facilitator, concentrating fully on supporting the group members. Besides being present as a facilitator, I frequently chose to do the tasks myself, depending on the nature of the task (e.g., whether it required me as an instructor, or whether it was better not to be an observer but rather be involved on a different level). I decided this way several times to ease the participants' stress over performing during the experimentation. Given the small

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<sup>103</sup> Social and sociopolitical bodies, a body which is experience, presentation and activity as well. "Social bodies are maintained through the social molding of corporeality" (Schatzki and Natter, 1996, pp. 5–6) In this chapter I use it referring to the social factors of the facilitator's professional body.

<sup>104</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

size of the group, I felt this was the only solution. What's more, in some cases, it even turned out to be quite encouraging.<sup>106</sup> From time to time, the facilitator became a playmate, a creative partner. Nevertheless, I never shifted focus and never fully concentrated on the creation, or the game. I was well aware of the responsible position of the facilitator and I was listening without requiring that participants be exposed. I see this as a special version of the pedagogy of doing together, affecting each other. As Deleuze writes: "We learn nothing from those who say 'do as I do'. Our only teachers are those who tell us to 'do it with me.'" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 26.)

From all of the above-mentioned reflections on the facilitation emerges a clear picture of the "caring instructor." Several academics have published on the importance of care in education (Tronto-1993, hooks-1994, Freire-2005, Foster-2008, Anderson-2020). Joan C. Tronto lists the main elements of caring (and, therefore, of a caring pedagogue):

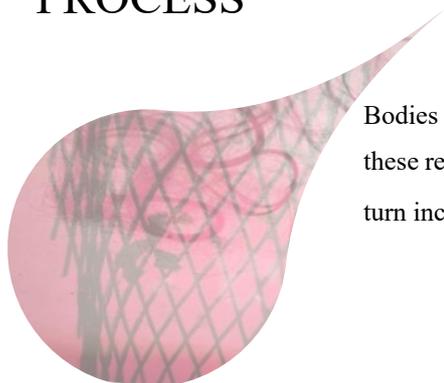
The four elements of care are: caring about, noticing the need to care in the first place; taking care of, assuming responsibility for care; care-giving, the actual work of care that needs to be done; and care-receiving, the response of that which is cared for to the care. From these four elements of care arise four ethical elements of care: attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness (Tronto, 1993, p. 127).

After discussing with the participants and reading the feedback forms. I would say that these were the main elements of the facilitation they described as gentle. A caring facilitation and environment (group) can ensure the safe and brave ambience that is needed to open up, experiment and recreate one's body narratives through artistic practices and poesis. Hence, besides playfulness (and the material experiments) and intensive hospitality, the caring facilitator is one element of the incorporeal process of body narrative reconstruction.

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<sup>106</sup> It happened especially during the mind map and the creation exercises.

## 5. CARING COMMUNITY AS THE PILLAR OF THE PROCESS



Bodies of all sorts are in constant relation with other bodies. Some of these relations are compatible and give rise to joyful affects that may in turn increase the intensive capacity of a body [...]<sup>107</sup>

Moira Gatens

The workshops, and the online exhibition creation as well, were conducive to individual work, especially given the privacy and the sensitivity of the topic and the material. On the other hand, co-creation and sharing had a major importance, not just from the above-mentioned playful perspective, but from an affective point of view as well. Affect is a term originally used by Gilles Deleuze, relating to “a passage from one state to another taking into account the correlative variation of the affecting bodies” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 49). Besides the affective presence of another body, the affective connection between the participants appeared in two major forms in the feedback: the emotional support of witnessing and the intimacy. It might seem like performativity and intimacy are slightly contrary to each other. However — and the feedback forms support this view as well — they could function as compulsory in a workshop situation. Witnessing, which is connected to performativity and intimacy, was the key element in creating affective relations. Another aspect of creating a community is ensuring a safe space, which — thanks to the participants’ activity — occasionally becomes a caring brave space.<sup>108</sup> A

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<sup>107</sup> Gatens, 2000, p. 64.

<sup>108</sup> In some literature about the topic, maintaining safe and brave space together might be presented as controversial (Arao & Clemens, 2013). A safe space is a space where a person can be sure that they can get support and they will not be exposed to any discrimination, harassment or any other emotional or physical harm. A brave space is where the participants, respecting each other’s integrity, can have discussions, disagreements, sometimes even uncomfortable ones. The idea of brave space was developed based on the critique of safe space (microaggressions, restricting free expression) (Palfrey, 2017, p. 57). In the debate of safe space and brave space, I agree with the ones who hold that, regardless of the name, “The mission of the educational institution must guide the school’s practices in this respect. There is a point at which the educational values of creating a supportive, equitable learning environment are more powerful than the importance of supporting unfettered speech, even when one might do so in the public square. There is a point at which intolerance of the intolerant is not only acceptable but appropriate in a learning community. To find that place in our schools and universities can be a great challenge, but we need systems that

brave space is a space where people have the possibility and the braveness to take risks and to challenge each other's opinions, as well as to have respectful but honest discussions. I do agree with John Palfrey, who, in his book *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces*, shows a possible model of both existing together within an institution. Palfrey emphasizes the need of their co-existence to support and challenge the participants in learning (2017, p. 58). On the other hand, I do believe that it is possible to create a safe space which gradually shifts its focus towards a brave space. The only situation that I can imagine for the emergence of a brave space is in a small community and in the context of work with body narratives, when the group members initiate such a shift together (for example asking permission from the others to bring up a topic). I am convinced that the participants in the workshops maintained a balance between a safe and a brave space through their mutual understanding and communication, witnessing and empowering each other and the intimacy they created (see the following chapters). The participants formed an attentive, responsible and responsive caring community.

The workshop and the online exhibition both had just a few participants, and this could be one of the reasons behind the feeling of intimacy and openness during the processes. As the group members wrote, listening to each other's stories, witnessing their sonic, visual, performative reflection, their poetic reconstruction of their body narratives challenging social norms — all these were powerful and encouraging.

## 5.1. Coperformative witnessing

I assumed from my experiences on *Archive B.*, *My Eye Candy...* and the feedback forms, that witnessing body narratives created by group members empowered the participants, regardless of at which end of the act they were. Sometimes witnessing meant reacting and being part as an audience member, in some cases it meant being part of an artistic practice,

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enable us to find it. We also need educational systems that teach students ways to engage in debates about free expression and diversity, which they will inevitably face when they leave the shelter of schools and universities.” (Palfrey, 2017, pp. 52–53)

but not being involved on the same level as the initiator. I count all of these situations as witnessing. Witnessing was the main indicator of the emotional empowerment. Kelly Oliver writes about the connection of emotions (especially those pertaining to love) and witnessing. Inspired by bell hooks, Oliver articulates that love is a choice (as Sarah Ahmed also finds concerning the complexity of socially constructed emotions, 2014). As Oliver writes: “to love is to bear witness to the process of witnessing that gives us the power to be, together. And being together is the chaotic adventure of subjectivity.” (2001, p. 219). What I want to articulate here is not necessarily love (this text does not try to engage in the broader philosophical discussion of love), but the feeling of compassion. I would like to rely on this empowering statement, because I think that in the workshops, witnessing the participants’ creation and the discussions affected the participants and encouraged them in their process of reconstructing their body narratives. As one of them wrote:

“It took me many years to feel comfortable engaging with others in an imaginative and playful way and to feel a sense of togetherness and safety. It was somehow very important for me to experience how nice it felt to be received after I had created something for the purpose of fun and showing my inner world.”<sup>109</sup>

It is something Ahmed refers to as the feminist, powerful “we”, that aligns, connects with the “I.” This togetherness is formed by listening to each other, feeling the other’s energy and pain, being surprised by these emotions, learning about what we feel for, and feeling that this emotion is moving (Ahmed, 2014, pp. 188–189). A situation where you are invited to perform an art piece, especially when you have no previous experience, might be challenging. On the other hand, if there is a sense of caring togetherness between the participants (the facilitator has an important role here), the witnessing bodies can have a major encouraging affect. “I learned a lot about expressing myself through my body. It is something I have wanted to do but haven’t had courage to do.”<sup>110</sup> The process itself can be empowering to both parties: the one witnessing and the one whose act is being witnessed. Witnessing and being witnessed have transformative power. What’s more, I

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<sup>109</sup> Direct quote from the workshop feedback forms (online) few months after the workshop.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

would take the chance to emphasize that in some cases witnessing, happened through performing (when the participants were giving roles to the other participants in their creative process), something I would call “co-performative witnessing.” It is originally an ethnographical term referring to the method of “radically engaged and committed [...] politics of the body deeply in action with Others” (Madison, 2007, p. 827). It basically means repositioning the self into the other’s position as one imagines it, for example, observing taking part in protests (Conquergood, 2013, p. 37). Although, the dialogue between the self and the other does not happen in the environment of the other (see Conquergood, Madison or Calafel & Chuang, 2018), in the workshop’s case, it happens in the artistic, poetic narrative of the self, in a space where the other gets an invitation. Hence, I would call this phenomenon *artistic co-performative witnessing*. Regarding the “outcome,” it is a similar process to Ahmed’s creation of the powerful “we.” Taking part in the artistic body narratives encourages the participants to “challenge ourselves to critically interrogate different cultural codes, experiencing and meanings [...] and we further learn to create possibilities for alliance building that moves from me to we.” (Calafel & Chuang, 2018, p. 113 based on Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991 and Jones 2010).<sup>111</sup> In a participant’s words: “it was highly exciting to play a role in the installation of my pair, it was an intimate and exceptionally private experience, I felt it valuable”.<sup>112</sup> This type of acceptance, acknowledging the other’s experience, appeared several times in the feedback forms. Another description of the transformative power of dialogic co-performative witnessing, when it comes to experiencing the peer-participants’ opinion:

I think most important moments were our conversations. I liked how we shared our ideas and thoughts about ‘trustful body’ or ‘strong body’. When I heard how beautifully people talked about their body it helped me to see my own body differently.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Calafel and Chuang don’t differentiate between the actual verbal dialogue of co-performative witnessing and an artistic practice of narrative creation. In their example of listening to narrative poems, they use the expression co-performative witnessing, but in this case, the involvement of the Other is the perceiving of the art piece Calafel & Chuang, 2018, p. 113). In the case of the workshops, it was an actual practical involvement on the part of the group members. Therefore, I would introduce the term artistic co-performative witnessing.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Direct quote from the workshop feedback forms (online) a few months after the workshop.

## 5.2. Intimacy, sharing and caring

Intimacy, as an interpersonal phenomenon, appeared in several feedback forms. It was one result of the caring community that formed every occasion. The participants entrusted their personal narratives to their pair, their small group, opening up and getting support from them (see the quote about participating in each other's installation earlier). Sharing personal stories is always risky and makes one vulnerable. Some communities, especially caring ones, are cognizant of this, acknowledging the trust of their peer group member. In *Archive B.* and *My Eye Candy* as well, this common understanding, the respectful and discreet attitude of the participants, guaranteed security and intimacy. In some cases, the participants were encouraged to work in small groups or in pairs and it was up to them whether they wanted to, or in what way they preferred to, include their partner in their creative body narration. As I mentioned earlier (see chapter 4.2), the refusal of this inclusion happened. As the participants emphasized, it was not about the difficulties of coworking with their pair, but about taking ownership and expressing their needs. I consider it to be a deeply trustful action of communicating their needs towards each other and having a profound discussion about it. This trust from their partner was one of the sources of intimacy: "it was highly exciting to play a role in the installation of my pair, it was an intimate and exceptionally private experience, I felt it valuable."<sup>114</sup> (*Artistic co-performative witnessing* not just created the Ahmedian sense of "we," but was a main factor of intimacy: "I love the atmosphere we have created. It is sharing and caring. [...] I did not feel bad at any point today even if some things we shared were personal"<sup>115</sup> Trust, caring, intimacy and sharing worked as a feedback loop constituting and strengthening each other. The playfulness (see above) and privacy made it possible to open up: "the atmosphere was laidback and helped me loosen up."<sup>116</sup> Sharing in a caring community encourages one and causes feelings of joy: "I was thankful today that I am surrounded by amazing and sensitive human beings."<sup>117</sup> It might be important to emphasize that sharing during the workshop had several different ways; in the majority of the cases, it was beyond verbal (for instance, see the reflection about the installation).

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<sup>114</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

## 6. AN ARTISTIC PROCESS OF INCORPOREAL BODY POETICS: MY EYE CANDY, MY SOMATIC FICTION AND MY BODY ARCHIVE



In this chapter, my aim is to analyse the above-mentioned characteristics of a possible incorporeal material-poetics based on their function and appearance in this process.<sup>118</sup> I want to emphasize that the difference between *Archive B.* and *My Eye Candy...* is not the “level” of art practices. It is the institutional environment, the power relations and that *My Eye Candy...* had an emphasis on the outcome. These factors have all led to slightly different research methods (artistic research). In this chapter, I will not analyse the [online exhibition](#) itself, although some of the factors might affect its interpretation.

Even though we planned to have a theatre performance, and we were convinced that the bodily presence of the audience would have a major importance to us, when the new corona restrictions forced us to think about a remote version, the idea of an online exhibition came to mind immediately. Based on our final discussion, it turned out that we started to feel a close ownership of the structure already at the beginning.<sup>119</sup> It didn’t feel like a compromise; it felt absolutely as our own choice, which is a constructive and important part of the concept. We felt excited by the idea of the virtual, poetical fragments and the possibility of controlling what we communicate about our bodies without having the danger of exposing something we do not want to. Some of us felt that we had more control online, since we could show only the certain body parts that we wanted to.<sup>120</sup> This process inevitably has an outcome, but it is one that is not necessarily common in theatre (maybe our performance could never have been performed live). We call the outcome fragments, or, following Deleuze and Guattari, an assemblage (1987). Without a centre

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<sup>118</sup> This part of the research was implying more of the elements of artistic research. Therefore, I am including more about my experience as a participant as well.

<sup>119</sup> Based on my notes about the creative team’s final discussion.

<sup>120</sup> On the other hand, in some cases, we had to face the fact that online representation had the danger that we would not know who, what and how someone was relating to the pieces, to our body narratives. About this discussion, see more [‘MY EYES ARE HERE’](#).

of organization, “assemblages are composed of heterogeneous elements that may be human and non-human, organic and inorganic, technical and natural’ (Anderson and McFarlane 2011, p. 124). Assemblage “in its multiplicity necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 22). The website we created could be interpreted as an assemblage, or, using the terms of Rosi Braidotti, the bodies presented on the website could be understood as an assemblage of techno-bodies, subjects of the prosthetic culture showing “technologically mediated social relations” (Braidotti, 2006, p.37). The assemblage form of the online exhibition is slightly similar to the mind maps created in the workshops. The online exhibition is playing along with technological materialism, representing fragmented bodies, body-fragments, shadows and instruments as prostheses, animated paintings and virtual body transformations. This way, we can say that the outcome of the process was embedded in its method itself. Even though, at the beginning of the creation, we were thinking about asking for help in editing the website, during the process, we decided to include it as part of the creation.<sup>121</sup> On one hand, the idea of a website gave us the chance to reduce the work we had to do if we decided so, because we had the freedom over what we published. Of course, this decision made us face the fact that we are not really experienced in these types of activities and the lack of experience caused extra pressure, especially in the last phase of editing.<sup>122</sup> Despite the anxiety, it was an important learning process, and it gave us the confidence and strengthened our feeling of reconstructing our body narrativities.<sup>123</sup>

## 6.1. Challenging the power structures and the ethics of caring

During the workshops, as a facilitator, I was responsible for the participants, many of whom were in a new situation. The question of agency was a core concern in the entire process, from a pedagogical point of view and from the perspective of this research as well. The method of incorporeal reconstruction of body images requires a strong sense of

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<sup>121</sup> Based on my notes about the creative team’s final discussion.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

ownership, and the participants' agency had a major role in the process. To balance the power structures (facilitator-participant), while remaining conscious of my pedagogical responsibilities, I applied the above-mentioned caring facilitation and unconditional hospitality. In *My Eye Candy...* project, at the beginning of the process, I chose to shift the focus of agency and made it clear that I can manage the administration, and that I can introduce an organizing framework (mainly the topic and some inspiring texts and materials), but also that I would like to step back from a facilitator position and to share the responsibility. I found it extremely important that we decide about everything together as a group and create things together about topics that are personal and important to us separately or together. Sharing the power and responsibilities worked well in terms of encouraging everyone to take an active role in forming a caring and hospitable atmosphere. That was the idea behind *My Eye Candy...*, supposed to somehow overcome the contradictory problem of agency as discussed by Erin Manning:

[...] even when we talk about the 'agency' of the artistic process, even when we try to give agency to an oppressed people, we assume a mediation between an act and its unfolding, most often attributing the push to action to ourselves [...] retaining a strong sense that the world is ultimately led and enhanced by the neurotypical few. This is the problem with agency: it makes the subject the subject of the action. What if the act did not fully belong to us? (Manning, 2016 p.16)

At the beginning of the creation, inspired by the team Blaue Frau,<sup>124</sup> we decided to collect our rules and wishes about the theatre piece (at the time we were believing in the possibility of creating a performance).<sup>125</sup> Although several things changed between this

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<sup>124</sup> In December 2019, I had the chance to take part in a seminar facilitated by the founders of the company Blaue Frau, Joanna Wingren and Sonja Ahlfors, about feminist theatrical creation process. We rethought and applied some of their suggestions, such as one about common rule writing, thinking together about what we would like to have as an outcome and the rule about no overtime working, see later.

<sup>125</sup> The rules we agreed on (the order is not based on their importance): we respect each other's opinions, we respect each other's boundaries (if you need to do something, you have the right to do without being questioned). We have responsibility toward the performance equally. We respect each other's time. We trust in each other's expertise, but keep artistic democracy. We believe and practice trust and honesty, we don't take aesthetic criticism personally. The goals we set: we want to collaborate, integrate different art forms, experiment with different art forms. We do our best to create an anxiety-free environment. We are conscious about what we represent and reflect on what we are

act and the actual rehearsal/creation process, these rules formed part of our discussion culture, which we found really successful.<sup>126</sup> On the other hand, some elements of this creative democracy led to uncertainty and some major challenges: frustration about not knowing the exact tasks and responsibilities of the group members, and the anxiety based on the lack of time.<sup>127</sup> We did not have separate roles; we had the idea that everyone can try out and experiment with the things they felt inspired to do (playfulness and experimentation became a fundamental part of *My Eye Candy*... as well). To reduce the stress and clarify the rhythm of the work, we set some goals and reshaped them from time to time. We were also strict about keeping the previously set working hours (although we failed at it in the editing phase, it was an expected failure). These rules and the common understanding on them gave a certain sense of security.<sup>128</sup> Participation had different layers: regarding the intensity of the work and the responsibilities, the core part of the group was the trio of Minttu-Maaria Makkonen, Maimu Jõgeda and me.<sup>129</sup> On the other hand, I offered the possible participation to the *Archive B* members, and Ines Masanti decided to join us. She chose to take part in a remote way, so we agreed to keep the cooperation [exploratory](#) and joyful.<sup>130</sup> During the process, we had written and unwritten guidelines on keeping a general sharing and caring rule, partly because we agreed on it, and partly thanks to previous friendships between the group members. Friendship, or rather the possibility of a mutual caring relationship, or an already existing relationship, is the basis of the feeling of duty behind care (Noddings, 2013). From this perspective we were in a privileged position. The basic ethics of caring that dominated our working

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missing. We aim to not exploit ourselves. One of our main goals is to have fun and enjoy the process. We aim to inspire the audience in our way of thinking about and questioning body images and narratives. We aim to combine research and artistic practice.

Our expectations, hopes and needs: We try to encourage new discussions and connect to the existing ones. Try new artistic experiments, experiment with artistic freedom. Don't get affected by oppressive body images, work against sexism. We need to create a light process. We aim to work with the unknown, take risks, and try not to rely on our strengths. We do want to do good art. We aim to surprise people and ourselves. We are giving in to the demands of guilty pleasure.

<sup>126</sup> Based on my notes about the creative team's final discussion.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Although, when we planned the rehearsals, we had two extra members who were professionals of sound design and costume design, they had to leave the project before the rehearsals started due to personal reasons.

<sup>130</sup> We sent artistic materials back and forth connected to the main topic (reconstructing body narratives), without any further explanation, and the person who receives the material is asked to react.

dynamics had several consequences. One of them was an honest, but gentle discussion culture, which was emphasized by all the group members.<sup>131</sup> Another meaningful and important factor was the natural process of the time we consciously planned to use to inform absent members about happenings that they missed.<sup>132</sup> In my opinion, this is extremely important in every group, but in practice, sometimes it is extremely hard to do, especially if there is time pressure. We managed to organize separate sessions where we showed and explained everything to the one who missed the previous occasions. We showed and presented everything we had done, even the experiments we didn't plan to continue to work with. Based on the feedback of the previously absent persons, it was crucial in reducing the feeling of being an outsider or being lost. Caring meant clear communication and acceptance of the other's feelings and needs.<sup>133</sup> Besides the pressure of responsibility, for one of the group members, Maimu, it was extremely challenging being exposed as an actor.<sup>134</sup> And, because of the internal desire to comply with the artistic process, this particular uncertainty was not acknowledged by the group members on time.<sup>135</sup> The defusal of this tension happened with a delay, still during the rehearsal process in the form of a discussion. As Nel Noddings writes about the ethics of caring: dialogue, sharing and reflecting aloud have central importance in "nurturing the ethical ideal," but practice is essential (2013, pp. 121-122). Saying no, listening to this "no" and acknowledging one's refusal had a core role in our process as well (as in the case of *Archive B.*), even if it happened with a delay that we recognized. On the other hand, along with the discussions, another solution was the online editing process. The final self-

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<sup>131</sup> Based on my notes about the creative team's final discussion.

<sup>132</sup> For different reasons, we had to face the fact that not every group member could be present on each occasion of the rehearsal period.

<sup>133</sup> Based on my notes about the creative team's final discussion.

<sup>134</sup> Maimu's name is published with her permission and knowledge about the textual context. In her own words: "For me - telling you two about it was one solution. Exposing my weakness and acknowledging that it's okay to not know. And after that we did \_\_\_\_\_ anymore. So, we didn't really do solo acting performances in front of each other. And you both offered your help and expertise after that, whenever needed. For example, with working with [Heavy seat](#), and *Heavy seat* didn't \_\_\_\_\_ ting." Based on a short interview with her on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2021.

<sup>135</sup> Based on our discussions, I would suggest for this problem a longer team-building process before the creative process starts. I think that is the only solution to encourage open and brave spaces. Next time, I will keep this in my mind. Although we planned to have them, we had no time, but now I do think that it has a core importance. Just like the separate "catch-up sessions" where we filled in the ones who were not present before, it needs a conscious extended time frame.

editing and the techno-narrative creating worked well. It gave the possibility to choose the material we felt ready to share. In the online feedback form, one of the participants wrote about how it worked:

When I felt (at the very last minute) that I cannot publish on website some things, which were to be published, I felt that I had crossed my own boundaries. But after our common discussion with the group, I decided to make some changes to that piece and I think that change made it better and much more interesting. In some other group or working culture I can't imagine it going so well.<sup>136</sup>

Of course, the small size of the group had a major effect on these above-mentioned core factors,<sup>137</sup> and something else was named as well as a key element: the similarity of our taste and interest in the topic.<sup>138</sup>

The multimedia creation process and virtual caring had another positive impact on the project, and it was the effect on the involvement of the group members — not just in the case of the “catch up sessions,” but also in the case of the artistic cooperation with Ines Masanti. The artform we chose to develop was multimedia. This form of work made it possible for us to communicate with Ines, sharing the art pieces instead of sharing the documentation of the art pieces. This way, the multimedia creation made inclusion possible. Therefore, this had a major effect on the sense of togetherness as well.<sup>139</sup>

All in all, the ethics of caring had a major influence on the working process. It was an essential condition of the body narrative recreation. As one of the participants emphasized, in deconstructing and reconstructing body narratives, what had an important role was the material-based experiments and the “honest, caring, dialogic and equal atmosphere and conversational culture.”<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Direct quote from the online exhibition feedback forms (online) a few months after *My Eye Candy*.

<sup>137</sup> As one of the participants stressed it later in the final discussion.

<sup>138</sup> Based on my notes about the creative team’s final discussion. These factors were named as elements helping our process.

<sup>139</sup> The online exhibition itself has the advantage of accessibility, which was one argument for it along with the aesthetic ones.

<sup>140</sup> Direct quote from the online exhibition feedback forms (online) a few months after *My Eye Candy*.

## 6.2. Experimenting with materials, playing with technology

A seemingly absent-minded floating attention or a fluid sensibility that is porous to the outside and which our culture has coded as 'feminine' are central to the process.<sup>141</sup>

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(Artistic) co-performative witnessing was one of the bases of our creation process.<sup>142</sup> A non-traditional material-focused creation was the other. We refused to rely on the more conventional ways of theatre-making, such as a well-constructed dramaturgy analysing and representing certain topics, or following certain roles such as director-performer. Instead, we were searching for material-inspired connections creating our body narratives. We thought that disrupting the traditional forms and structures of creation could help us challenge the systematic body representations. We had two types of improvisational practices, and two levels of and different involvements in co-performative witnessing. Both of them were material-based experiments. One was a collective one, when we started to improvise with different tools and materials, joined in or left, and played around with sounds, lights, objects and bodies. In case of collective improvisation, we discussed two versions of improvising and then shared our associations. But even if we labelled the scenes, we never described them semiotically (similar to the work during *Archive B.*). In this case, we participated in our own and each other's narratives as well. The scenes had slightly different meanings for us, but they were all connected to our frame discussions. In individual improvisations, we played around with the mentioned elements and our personal body interpretations. After creating a short scene, we invited each other to watch it as an outsider, and if the creator asked us to give some opinion and direction, we played along. Even though we didn't semiotically analyse the pieces aloud (neither through the eyes of the creator nor from the perspective of the audience), we knew that there was a connection between them, be it loose or close. We had this certainty because we had frame discussions. We read some literature together

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<sup>141</sup> Braidotti, 2006, p.146.

<sup>142</sup> Even though, it was not named as such. during the creation.

(fragments from Preciado), and — what is even more important — we discussed a lot about our bodies and our body histories, narratives and key points of interest.

Besides the recreation of body narratives, one of the principles regarding the working process was enjoying the process (see chapter 3.2). Partly due to the corona restrictions, we chose the majority of our objects and costumes at the beginning of the rehearsal period. Since relying on the materials was part of our project, we needed a system to choose the different textured materials, clothes and objects that we were to include. Minttu suggested that we give tasks to each other, and, following this concept, we created challenges for ourselves and for each other in terms of spending time in the costume and the props departments of the Theatre Academy.<sup>143</sup> The time spent in the mentioned departments were not just particularly enjoyable childlike moments, but it was a deep intra-action with materials and objects, thinking about ourselves and our body narratives through/with/inspired by those elements, an incorporeal experience. During the rehearsals, we worked with the collected items. Almost everything we used later were gathered as part of this first task. We agreed on utilizing these collectively, regardless of who collected them. We had a similar situation with the lights and the sound as well. The infrastructure of the university had a very strict system regarding the help we could use. We had to make decisions about them before we started to use the actual rehearsal space. The organising idea behind our planning of the sound and light system setup was the plurality of the spaces and functions. The choices supported the idea of experimenting and playing around. It was also crucial that we could separate and inhabit several different spaces at the same time. We basically aimed to build a theatrical adult playground with diverse tactile and visually interesting materials, objects, and a variety of lighting (coloured spotlights, fresnel, flood, cyclorama) and sonic (reverb, microphones, speakers, synthesizer, etc.) possibilities. It was also important that we had an overhead projector and some other focused light sources, which made possible experimentation with shadow-prostheses<sup>144</sup> or different shadow-based body transformations. In the case of the costumes, we happened to pick several pieces that — thanks to their material or shape — made body transformations possible, such as different nets, huge fur coats, several wigs,

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<sup>143</sup> The tasks were the following: Choose something what you are attracted to (from the props department, from the costume department). Find something what you could call guilty pleasure (props and costume). Find a costume that is You, but not like people see You. Choose an addictive object. Choose a costume that reflects how you saw your adult self as a child. Choose an object that could be the part of your body.

<sup>144</sup> Similar to prosthesis puppets, the use of shadow acting as prosthesis of the performer.

facial hair, etc. We also used two cameras. From the beginning of the rehearsal process, the idea of the online exhibition was more than clear. Therefore we related to the photos and videos not as documentation, but as part of our body narrativity.<sup>145</sup> I would like to emphasize that even though the original concept led to these choices, the unusual times we created in also pressured us to make unusual decisions. In an art piece about body narrativities, one cannot ignore the pressure caused by the pandemic and its burden that makes its marks on our bodies. This — the familiarity and new dimensions of virtual body extensions — could be another aesthetic reason to choose technological, online body representations.<sup>146</sup>

If we use the word playground, we can think about the expanded virtual playground, the different photo and video editing programs, the website editing — they all formed a fundamental part of *My Eye Candy*.... In a more traditional theatrical context (in case of a performance), I would use the term cyborg theatre of Jenifer Parker-Starbuck (after Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto*)<sup>147</sup>: “‘cyborg theatre’ form emerges as a site for the examination and experimentation of the interconnected relationships between bodies and technologies forming through the cyborg poetics of the twenty-first century” (2011, p. XIV). Incorporating multiple forms of media, cyborg theatre problematizes the objectification of bodies. Parker-Starbuck calls this phenomenon subject technology (2011, 126). Since, in the case of *My Eye Candy*..., we speak about an online exhibition, I will not use cyborg theatre here. On the other hand, cyborg poetry is a characteristic with which our process could be also described.<sup>148</sup> Without romanticising technology, acknowledging all of the difficulties we, as theatre and music professionals, had to face

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<sup>145</sup> For this reason, we had several discussions before recording, about the eye and perspective of the camera. The “owner of the body narrativity” could decide about their position, in order to strengthen their ownership. In some cases, the person who planned a scene was the one recording it.

<sup>146</sup> Based on my notes about the creative team's final discussion.

<sup>147</sup> Haraway, D. (1985). A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's. *Socialist Review*, (80), 65–108., Based on Braidotti (2006), Haraway's text with the phenomena of cyborg offered another solution to count down with body-mind dichotomy.

<sup>148</sup> It is important to acknowledge that utilizing multimedia can be present on several different levels. In *My Eye Candy*... we didn't use the most current and in everyday life popular ways (for instance philters or different avatars), but older technologies what we felt that it suits the best our incorporeal body narratives. On the other hand, I think the use of this type of technology and virtual body transformation (hacking) could be a possibility for the future to create philters which ones can be part of a subversive cyborg body narrativity creation. On the other hand, I don't think that technology is a “source of our salvation”, but it is a “ground upon which we can resist” (Garoian & Gaudelius, 2001, p. 347).

(the lack of ephemerality of art, the distortions of multimedia), I have to emphasize that different techniques of multimedia gave us the possibility to embed cyborg poetics into our subversive incorporeal body narrative creation method as one of the materials to explore. Artistic practices are enabling us to use cyborg and cyborg metaphors as a resistance strategy to hack the (pharmacopornographic) capitalist system, and, at the same time, build new narratives of identity, images, myths and ideas about ourselves (Garioian & Gaudelius, 2001, p. 337). This way, a form of cyborg poetics could be a potential characteristic of creating incorporeal body narratives.

### 6.3. Sensorial subversion

The first time we had a chance to work together with all of the collected costumes and objects, Minttu gave us a task. We improvised a particularly long scene, where we focused on the joy of playing together and playing with the collected things. Later on, we developed this scene, but we agreed that we could experiment and play like this for hours.<sup>149</sup> This joyful experiment became one of the frames of our work (later it became [Discorpse 1-2-3](#)); we replayed it once at the end of our rehearsal process and we experimented with the options of recording it. At the end, we figured out a way of passing the camera around. We had some choreographed parts for this scene, especially for passing the camera around, but the person recording was always the main decision-maker about the framing of the scene, directing the gaze. With the camera movement, we actually succeeded in sharing what we experienced, the playfulness, the intertwined haptic and sonic experience, our body (hi)story fragments through a form of cyborg poetry. In the case of *Archive B.*, I was relying on the experience of the participants to write about the contradiction between seeing and feeling one's body. The workshops helped to create a body narrative that reflected the experience of feeling one's own body, and through this experience, they developed a fundamental quality of reconstructing a subversive, incorporeal body narration. In the case of *My Eye Candy...*, the technological possibilities (cyborg poetics) and editing, as part of the creation, helped to share one's

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<sup>149</sup> Based on my notes during the creation.

reconstructed body narratives, relying on well-suited aesthetic decisions. The use of multimedia and its editing (with all of its challenges) supported perfectly the idea of hacked poetic body narratives. I would describe the multimedia's (cyborg poetics') connection to the body narratives in the same terms as Rosi Braidotti writes about Virginia Woolf's "steam of consciousness."

[...] the artist's 'eye' captures the outside world by making itself receptive to the totality of an assemblage of elements, in an almost geographical or cartographic manner, like the shade of the light at dusk, or the curve of the wind. In those moments of floating awareness when rational control releases its hold, 'Life' rushes on towards the sensorial/perceptive apparatus with exceptional vigour. This onrush of data, information, affectivity, is the relational bond that simultaneously propels the self out of the black hole of its atomized isolation and disperses it into a myriad of bits and pieces of data imprinting or impressions. (Braidotti, 2006, p.145).

The camera's gaze floated around, focusing on the sensorial perception, textures, harsh sounds, warm colours like an old family tape. With the multimedia material, we aimed to keep the sensorial experiences of our body narratives, body (hi)stories, and reconstructions. This is what we attempted to express somehow with the website's structure: a free joyful playing around, wandering around, floating in the cyber space, thriving with the joy of exploring. As in the case of *Archive B.*, the subversive, sensorial attitude towards societal body images somehow changed the participants' relation to their bodies in several cases.<sup>150</sup> In the online feedback form of the *My Eye Candy...* project, a member wrote:

I understood better that my body or me don't need to be somehow 'good' or 'able' when I am using them in an art context. I mean that maybe I have

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<sup>150</sup> I state this relying on the feedback forms. On the other hand, I don't want to claim that the workshops had a major life-changing effect. I do think that in some cases some participants had a special, well-timed encounter with the incorporeal body narrative workshops, offering them a different perspective and experience (see the direct quotes), as art pedagogy usually does. And maybe that is what we could call a "life-changing experience."

had an image of what kind of body would be a perfect on stage or anywhere. I found it very interesting how I created the most interesting things when I was just using myself without some idea or filters of how I ‘should’ be.<sup>151</sup>

My next — mainly rhetorical — question regarding the change of the performative body’s appearance on stage (in our specific case, online) is: what effect could it have on society if all bodies would represent the hacked, incorporeal body narrativity? Consequently, what is the responsibility of performative arts with regard to body representation?<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Direct quote from the online exhibition feedback forms (online) a few months after *My Eye Candy*.

<sup>152</sup> I am not the first and probably not the last person who is emphasizing this question, but as long as we do not see hacked bodies on stage, on screen, in print, we have to pose the very same question.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS



At the beginning of this research process, I knew one thing for sure: that the relationship of our society to our bodies is oppressive. I wanted to hack the system.<sup>153</sup> I chose to experiment with the possibilities of subversion. I was looking for ways of artistic disruption, a counterresponse to stereotypes. This process started earlier than this particular research project with *Archive B.* and *My Eye Candy*.... I do think that this very same problem is framing the life of many of us. The participants' feedback strengthened this notion, verified the need for such counterstrategies, and encouraged me to develop a possible method. The method, named after Elisabeth Grosz's term the incorporeal, is *incorporeal body poetics*. During my art-based action research on *Archive B.* and the artistic research on *My Eye Candy*... I examined the characteristics and function of *incorporeal body poetics* in two, slightly different environments. The artistic creation process followed the findings and values of the workshops.

At the beginning of this text, I posed the question: how could the workshop *Archive B.* function as a method to deconstruct and reconstruct body narratives? Here, as part of the final conclusions, I have to admit that this is a question the participants can answer the best. "I feel more softness and gentleness in my body. I believe that this workshop contributed in a meaningful way to a deeper personal process of relaxing and opening up that I am currently going through."<sup>154</sup> "I know these workshops gave me a possibility to admire my changing body and see my body strong, Sexible, loving and miraculous."<sup>155</sup> In some cases, there was a strong need for deconstruction: sometimes, "if my body feels bad I got depressed and blame it — it feels like my body is like that always for the rest of my life. I think I can change that attitude."<sup>156</sup> In some cases, the workshops reconstructed an old body narrative: "Somehow this space can remind or re-vitalize one's innate desire to stay connected to his/her/their child part and carry with us throughout our lives."<sup>157</sup> Or constructed some new narratives:

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<sup>153</sup> And look for ways to hack the system without consuming hormones illegally, as Preciado did.

<sup>154</sup> Direct quote from the workshop feedback forms (online) a few months after the workshop.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Direct citations from the workshop feedback forms – right after the workshop.

<sup>157</sup> Direct quote from the workshop feedback forms (online) a few months after the workshop.

I think we are not used to think about our bodies as strong, playful, trustful etc. Our society teaches us that your body is never good enough and you always have to work more to make it perfect. In these workshops the point of view was not how to make ‘perfect’ body and feel better. It was that your body is already ‘perfect’ and realizing that makes you feel better.<sup>158</sup>

And some less conscious narratives: “I feel like I was able to consciously reflect on the unconscious relationship that I have with my body sometimes.”<sup>159</sup> Based on these answers, some changes definitely took place. Although every participant had a different personal experience of deconstructing and reconstructing body narratives, for many, the material-based method opened up new ways of experiencing their bodies.

I also posed a question about what kind of pedagogy is needed for this deconstruction and reconstruction of body narratives. I think a safe, caring, and playful pedagogy is what is needed. In this research, I proposed a possible way for this reconstruction, a possible pedagogy that encourages one to think outside of cultural and social stereotypical practices, based on experimenting with different materials and sounds. It could be called a *pedagogy of incorporeal body poetics*. An artistic process built on this pedagogy (which was my research question as well) could be named the *artistic practice of incorporeal body poetics*. Meanwhile, the online exhibition *My Eye Candy...* can be an example of a possible artistic outcome relying on the method of *incorporeal body poetics*. The incorporeal is the dynamically changing framing of our research on the material, art and artistic practice is an exploration of this process (Grosz, 2017, p. 258). Incorporeal: the forces, resources and resistances of the world, also acknowledging and understanding them through, beyond and within materiality gives the possibility to become (Grosz, 2017, pp. 260–262), to reimagine and recreate our bodies. In this thesis, I collected the main characteristics of both: the *pedagogy* and the *artistic practice of incorporeal body poetics*. In the following, I shortly summarize these factors, comparing their influence in both processes. I try to clarify the different elements, dividing them into three major groups following the structure of this thesis: (1) playfulness, (2) facilitation, and (3) caring community — though these elements are not necessarily separable, as they are

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

closely connected to and indicated by each other. (1.) Playfulness is one of the key element in both cases. (1a) The purposeless state of mind indicated by playing had a major influence on *Archive B.* Even though this type of purposelessness was not present in *My Eye Candy...* due to the pressure of art creation, playing and especially experimenting made us more open to the sensorial subversive narrative creation. (1b) Playing also strengthened the sense of community, hence the sense of caring. In the workshops, playing had a major icebreaking effect. (1c) *Incorporeal body poetics* is relying on experimenting with different textured materials and sounds in a joyful, childlike way. This joyful material experimentation and the structure they are embedded in are the key factors of subversion. This framework of the joyful intra-actions of textures, sounds, body memories, virtual possibilities and other sensual experiences leads to an artistic process where these are present in the final aesthetic choices as well (for example, cyborg poetics, assemblage, etc.). The group members of the workshop used the dichotomy of feeling over seeing, referring to the power of disrupting capitalist, stereotypical body images and instead focusing on playful and joyful moments with the materials and their bodies. *My Eye Candy...* group members also referred to the material work as a different artistic practice, during which the creator focuses less on how their body “should be” on stage, how their body would be seen by the audience members. In both cases, the strong need to forget about or to working against the constantly reverberating picture of our body performativity is present. Different textured and sonic materials give the possibility to reconstruct, reinvent our narratives, our identities, therefore through this different material dimension it is capable to question the processes we might regard as natural. Through the incorporeal a material form of communication, a new material language can help us to reimagine and recreate our identities. Playing is a perfect counterstrategy, not just because it is a purposeless time (challenging the capitalist concept of useful time), but also because of the joy it brings.

In *Archive B.* and in *My Eye Candy...* the joy of creation, the joy of playing together disrupted the constant thinking of body performativity and offered other options, including surprising materials and unusual creation (expression, construction) processes. In the case of the workshops, the material artwork had a different relevance as well, because the participants could take their creation and it could serve as a material memento to remind them of the joyful moments they spent in the workshops.<sup>160</sup> As such, it could

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<sup>160</sup> Based on the feedback forms, see more about it in chapter 3.1.

be a material reminder of counterstrategies. As some of the participants expressed, they will continue some practices and do them by themselves in the future.<sup>161</sup> Acting against the societal “shit” was an open desire and need on the part of the participants, and on the part of the online exhibition creators as well.<sup>162</sup> During the process, the systematic problems were punctually phrased, problematised and personalised. It became a goal for the workshop participants (with the terms of sociology, the action of the resistance Hollander&Einwohner, 2004) to explore their own counterstrategies with the help of *incorporeal body poetics*. In the case of *My Eye Candy...* one of our aims was to develop material strategies to create an art piece disrupting the artistic practices influenced by capitalist body images. Both processes were considered by the participants as opposition of the system, therefore the participants formed their micro level resistance within the group and became committed to share it with the outside world (Williams, 2009).<sup>163</sup> (1d) Material exploration and *incorporeal body poetics* opened up new dimensions of thinking about and reflecting on one’s constantly changing body dynamics, and the plurality of identities. These new dimensions of creation and the body narrativities in their plurality gave artists further confidence as creators.

(2) Another important characteristic of the *pedagogy of incorporeal body poetics* is the caring, attentive, responsible, and responsive facilitation, which has the closely connected components of (2a) unconditional hospitality, providing the participants the (2b) power of refusal, and (2c) the caring corporeal presence of the facilitator. Unconditional hospitality ensures the inclusion, for instance, of non-neurotypical group members or participants with special needs, or participants in different moods or in diverse emotional states. The possibility of refusal should be part of every type of pedagogical method, especially the ones dealing with such private matters. The caring presence of the facilitator is a fine balance between, on one hand, taking part in some creative activities, supporting, encouraging, and giving instructions; and, on the other hand, stepping back and witnessing, activating different energy levels. It is a hard task, and its success depends on the gentleness and sensitivity of the facilitator and their practice of mapping the needs and moods of the participants. Regarding the sensitivity and privacy of *incorporeal body poetics*, the above-mentioned factors of facilitation had

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<sup>161</sup> Based on some verbal reflections of the participants.

<sup>162</sup> As the participants phrased it, see the direct quotes earlier.

<sup>163</sup> Based on the feedback forms and some verbal reflections.

a major importance. In case of *My Eye Candy*... I do not consider myself as a facilitator, but as the initiator and the creator of the bases. Therefore, it was a cardinal point to clearly state the framework (which itself was not as clear, due to the method's freedom and cooperative development). Regarding the social dynamics, clarifying the roles and power structures before the actual creation was crucial.

In the third category, I collected the elements of a (3) caring community and its role in *incorporeal body poetics*. During the workshops, and the creation process as well, a caring community emerged, supported by playing together, sharing and (3a) (artistic) co-performative witnessing. Co-performative witnessing is bodily engagement with others (in some cases initiated by others, in accordance with the others' narrative). This forms a sense of "we," a sense of community and a version of togetherness. Artistic co-performative witnessing takes place when it is happening in an artistic form (for instance, taking part in the other person's scene on body narrativity). Due to this feeling of community and the trust of sharing (the safe and brave space we created together), (3b) intimacy became an important element of the workshops. In the case of *My Eye Candy*..., the caring community was strengthened by the feeling of common responsibility over the project and over the physical and mental wellbeing of the group members. Intimacy indicated deep discussions and the power to change our minds if, in the end, we preferred not to expose something we initially planned to. Virtual caring and caring for the final product had a relevant part in our creation process as well.

I do believe that over the past year, during this prolonged process and with the above-mentioned characteristics, I succeeded in collecting and organizing the main elements of a version of the *pedagogy and artistic practice of incorporeal body poetics*. Although I created an expanded process with the workshops and the online-exhibition, and collected a lot of material, I feel that this thesis was the first step, a base of a possible extended research about the possibilities of *incorporeal body poetics*.<sup>164</sup> In the future, I plan to polish and develop a version of this method by involving participants from different age groups and with diverse backgrounds, in order to reflect on the process itself together with them, with a focus on our needs. Another possibility of extension is the development of cyborg poetics as subversive acts. Without overstating the significance of this process,

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<sup>164</sup> Due to the limitations of this research, I focused on the artistic counter strategies of body narratives of two processes, I did not go into details of any other options of body reappropriation (such as not following the societal expectation of gender performativity or the illegal hormone consumptions).

I do think that *incorporeal body poetics* has a place in (art) pedagogy, and in art as well. Therefore, I hope that other art pedagogues and artists could use the material I collected to hack the system.

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<sup>165</sup> Paul B. Preciado, Spanish philosopher before his transition he published under the name Beatriz Preciado.

Respecting the choice of the author I am referring to him and his works using Paul B.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. - Archive B., body narrativity workshop drafts

Before each of the workshops, I wrote a detailed draft to myself planning the next workshop. I always built on my previous experiences. I wrote the draft in my notebook in my mother tongue, but I translated the main points into English. During the workshops, I was changing a lot in the drafts, adapting them to the current needs of the group. This draft tries to reflect on what actually happened (except in some cases where the plan changed drastically; I marked these in the text). All of the workshops started and ended on the same way, and there were some exercises that I repeated every time, though applying some variations. I improvised some changes in the drafts from time to time in accordance with the participants' feedback. Some of the participants took part in the workshops week by week; some of them just came for one time. The backgrounds and the previous art experiences of the group members were extremely diverse. I used some elements that I have learned from drama pedagogues in Hungary, from experiential pedagogues, and from Finnish art pedagogues. I hope that this appendix helps to explain the dramaturgy of the workshops, and maybe it could inspire my fellow facilitators' work.

#### **I. What is my body for me? 17.09.2020 17:00-19:30 (object installation)**

**15 minutes** – *Introduction*, about the thesis and some basic rules: everybody can do what feels good, if it does not feel good, feel free to stop. Some rules about safety, the break and the respect the participants' personal integrity. We all introduce ourselves, name, some basic info we would like to share and pronouns we use. Introduction of the pause rule: whenever they need some minutes to stop, they can say pause.

I pose one question: What does your body mean to you? I ask the participants to answer this question just to themselves, they can write, draw, as they wish. I emphasize that the question is about their current state.

**10 minutes** – *Dancing freely*, concentrating on the movements that feel good, starting slowly, I give some instructions time to time directing attention (for example: experiment with weird dancing styles).

**10 minutes** – *Walk in the space*, we ask the participants to observe the space meanwhile walking, to observe their body in the space, their rhythm, their tempo, try to change the tempo, walk like they are feeling the strength of their body. We give some movement quality instructions always starting from a more concrete description going towards more metaphoric ones, for example: focus on the slowness of the movement, experiment smooth movements, focus on the softness of your body.

**15 minutes** – *Creating a body map*, the participants get some huge pieces of paper and colored pens and they are asked to create a body map focusing on their trusted body, their strong body, their stable body, about their relationship with their body, I encourage them to focus on the things we tend not to talk about, the protective and trustable, strong, joyful body. I also encourage them to shape that map a bit, they can use the materials on their way, they can shape the paper, cut it, color it, write or draw on it.

**10 minutes** – *Break*

**10 minutes** – *Body scan*, we ask the participants to lie on the floor (if it is possible on their back) and try to scan their bodies mentally, listening to music. Firstly, we do some breathing exercises and after we start scanning slowly. As a facilitator I have to be aware of the fact that the music shapes the rhythm and the emotions of the process.

**10 minutes** – *Walk with the body map*. I ask the participants to think about their current relations to the body map they created and especially what it symbolizes. Walk with the body map in the space, move with it reflecting on their feelings about it. The pairs (body map-creator) can meet in the space.

**25 minutes** – *Installation using objects*. I ask the participants to choose a space in the room and I show them a huge bag of randomly collected objects. I ask them to create an installation which reflects on the things they collected on their body map. I explain what

I mean on installation. After 15 minutes of creation, I ask them to show it to each other without explaining it. I ask them to form pairs and I give 3-3 minutes to each one of the members to pose questions about their pair's installation, this way the pairs will discuss 3-3 minutes about each installation. Of course, if they really need more time, we can offer some extra minutes.

**15 minutes** – *Sonic animation of the installations*. I ask the pairs to be part of each others' installation, the creator can instruct the other member, they can animate the objects, or be part of it sonically. After the instructing and a short rehearsal, we ask them to show the creation and at the same time (of course based on their agreement) we ask them to document their own installation, they can use their phones, shooting videos, recording sound or taking pictures.

**15 minutes** – *Showing and closure of the pair work*. I give some time to the pairs to discuss about the installation and their experience working on them. We can give some starter questions, but we give the possibility to discuss freely. Depending on the group dynamics, we can ask them to share some thoughts with the bigger group.

**15 minutes** – *Three questions*. I close every workshop with some writing reflection, I ask the participants to answer the same question what I posed at the beginning, "What does your body mean to you?" this answer is just to themselves. I pose two more questions emphasizing that it is for me and for my research (I am informing them about the use, anonymity, storing and about the fact that they can take their permission back any time). How could you describe your personal experience? Please give a general feedback about the facilitation of the workshops.

## II. The strong body 24.09.2020 17:00-19:30 (movement études and sound scapes)

**15 minutes** – *Introduction*, about the thesis and some basic rules: everybody can do what feels good, if it does not feel good, feel free to stop. Some rules about safety, the break and respecting the participants' personal integrity. We all introduce ourselves, name, some basic info we would like to share and pronouns we use. Introduction of the pause rule: whenever they need some minutes to stop, they can say pause.

I pose one question: What does your body mean to you? I ask the participants to answer this question just to themselves, they can write, draw, as they wish. I emphasize that the question is about their current state.

**10 minutes** – *Dancing freely*, concentrating on the movements that feel good, starting slowly, I give some instructions time to time directing attention (for example: experiment with weird dancing styles, make movements that make you feel strong).

**5 minutes** – *Ninja game*, a short concentration game about positioning the body and reactions of the body.

**15 minutes** – *Cat-tag game*, the tag person is the cat the other persons are the mice, we can explore different types of animals, but we always have to keep the quality of the movement and the sound in our mind.

**10 minutes** – *Walking in the space* with different energy levels, we move on a scale of 10, the 10<sup>th</sup> is the most energetic, we change the numbers, we can experiment with speed, heroism, etc., but the last one was the strength.

**15 minutes** – *Experimenting with sound*, we learn a short dialogue of four sentences It was not me. You did it. But yes. But no. And we repeat it together several times. we give the task to shoot this sentence to someone in the circle and that person says the next sentence pointing out to someone else. As the group has found the rhythm, we can start to give tasks about the volume, the style, experimenting with the sonic possibilities.

I asked the participants to form pairs, the members are facing towards each other and I ask them to count to ten in a way that one of them is saying one and the other one goes with two. I ask them to try to do it from silence gradually adding extra volume.

**10 minutes** – *Interview*, I ask the participants to form pairs and interview each other about their relation to their strong body and about the concept of the strong body. Each one of the interviewer can have 5 minutes to pose questions, but I ask them not to comment on the answers of their partner.

**10 minutes** – *Break*.

**10 minutes** – *Listening and sound experiment*. I ask the participants to choose a spot in the space and sit or stand still. We close our eyes and the task is to listen the environment, we continue listening the small details and taking mental notes about the sounds we hear, we focus on. After five minutes we can add some sounds, gradually. Our goal is to experiment, how can we change the space sonically. After some time of experimenting, we can try to add sounds what changes the space so that we feel ourselves stronger.

**10 minutes** – *Soundscape about the strong body*. I ask the participants to choose a spot in the space and we create a more or less ten-minute-long sound scape using every type of sonic material we think that fits to the exercise, experiment with the category of strong bodies as you personally feel it.

**15 minutes** – *Movement études of 'my strong body'*. I ask the participants to create a short movement etude (a movement based short scene) about their strong body. It could be dancing, or a silent-movie styled scene, it is u to the participants' decision. After the creation I ask them to show those to each other.

**15 minutes** – *Études with sound*, I ask the participants to form small groups (of 3-4 persons) and to remake the same études with sound, giving instructions about the sound to their group members. It could be a free instruction, or it could be that the creator of the étude shows a sound they want to hear. After rehearsing the études, we show them to each other. (I planned to give another instruction, encouraging the participants to work together

on each one of the études, but they expressed their concerns about it, for the details see the main text).<sup>166</sup>

**10 minutes** – *Three questions.* I close every workshop with some writing reflection, I ask the participants to answer the same question that I posed at the beginning, “What does your body mean to you?” this answer is just to themselves. I pose two more questions emphasizing that it is for me and for my research (I am informing them about the use, anonymity, storing and about the fact that they can take their permission back any time). How could you describe your personal experience? Please give a general feedback about the facilitation of the workshops.

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<sup>166</sup> *I mark this (mentioned) part using a different color, due to the fact that the participants expressed their need to do a different task. I rephrased the original idea and I asked them to work together and improvise a scene in which they both can participate but at the same time their body interpretation is strongly present.*

### III. The trustable body 01.10.2020 17:00-19:30 (human-sized puppets)

**15 minutes** – *Introduction*, about the thesis and some basic rules: everybody can do what feels good, if it does not feel good, feel free to stop. Some rules about safety, the break and respecting the participants' personal integrity. We all introduce ourselves, name, some basic info we would like to share and pronouns we use. Introduction of the pause rule: whenever they need some minutes to stop, they can say pause.

I pose one question: "What does your body mean to you?" I ask the participants to answer this question just to themselves, they can write, draw, as they wish. I emphasize that the question is about their current state.

**5 minutes** – Ho-shi-ho, concentration, energizer, ice-breaker game.

**10 minutes** – *Dancing*, starting with what feels good and gradually experimenting with different movement qualities imagining ourselves into a disco party.

**10 minutes** – *Mirror game*, I ask the participants to choose a pair and start a slow mirror game, firstly just testing the rhythm, the quality of movements and gradually start to show something what tells about their day. After the game they can have a few minutes for discussion about their experience.

**10 minutes** – *Leading the other member of the pair using one finger*. When we are giving instructions, we can give some other perspectives for this probably known exercise, I ask the participants to observe what they need to trust in the other person's leading, what is what depends on their trust, what is what can surprise them, what is what is confusing for them, etc. After the exercise the pairs can discuss a bit about their experiences.

**10 minutes** – *Creating a mind map* about their trustable body. What does it mean to them, sharing some key thoughts.

**10 minutes** – *Break*.

**10 minutes** – *Interview*, I ask the participants to form pairs and interview each other about their trustable body, memories about trustable bodies and their trust in their body. Each one of the interviewer can have 5 minutes to pose questions, but I ask them not to comment on the answers of their partner.

**25 minutes** – *Puppet creation*, I ask the group members to create a puppet (head), inspired by their thoughts about your trustable body, using the material I offer (recycled plastic bottles, tape, paper, paper boxes, etc.). I show some clothes they can build in their puppets, using hangers as puppet bodies.

**10 minutes** – *Puppet walk*, I ask the participants to have a walk with their trustable body puppets, position them in the space and manipulate them based on how they feel about their trustable bodies. The puppets can meet, interact with other puppets.

**10 minutes** – *Puppet dance/performance*, we mark a space what is our stage and I ask the participants to go and leave the stage area whenever they wish. The ones on the stage I ask to show something about their trustable body, their relationship with their trustable body manipulating the puppets.

**15 minutes** – *Three questions*. I close every workshop with some writing reflection, I ask the participants to answer the same question that I posed at the beginning, “What does your body mean to you?” this answer is just to themselves. I pose two more questions emphasizing that it is for me and for my research (I am informing them about the use, anonymity, storing and about the fact that they can take their permission back any time). How could you describe your personal experience? Please give a general feedback about the facilitation of the workshops.

#### **IV. The playful body 22.10.2020 17:00-19:30** (projector, paper dresses)

**15 minutes** – *Introduction*, about the thesis and some basic rules: everybody can do what feels good, if it does not feel good, feel free to stop. Some rules about safety, the break and respecting the participants' personal integrity. We all introduce ourselves, name, some basic info we would like to share and pronouns we use. Introduction of the pause rule: whenever they need some minutes to stop, they can say pause.

I pose one question: What does your body mean to you? I ask the participants to answer this question just to themselves, they can write, draw, as they wish. I emphasize that the question is about their current state.

**10 minutes** – *Dancing*, starting with what feels good. Gradually changing the dance styles, dark disco, dancing as no one sees us, experimenting with ridiculous movements.

**5 minutes** – *Gaze-tag*, we stare at the floor and when some of us claps, we look at one member of the circle we are standing in. If the person we are looking at stares back, we play a quick rock-paper-scissors and the one who wins tries to catch the other one. After it happened, we started another round.

**10 minutes** – *Small ball-battle*, we take a huge bag of small plastic/rubber balls, the goal is to collect some and try to hit the other persons, who are doing the same. We have a time frame for this task and we can play it so, that we have to count our hits. We can gradually add a special task based on the color of the ball, for example some persons cannot touch green balls, etc.

**10 minutes** – *Parachute*, I use a colorful pedagogical parachute for this exercise. Firstly, we try to make waves with it, everyone is holding one side. The group tries to find a rhythm of waving, one person at the time can run under the parachute. We collect the small balls and put on the top of the parachute, we give ourselves a task as a group for example to get rid of a certain colored ball saving the others. The group has its common goal.

**15 minutes** – *Mind (map) installation*, I ask the participants to think about their playful body. Instead of a mind map, I am asking them to create a mind installation meanwhile thinking. I tell them that it is just for themselves. I show some objects they could use (cards, Dixit cards, dice, other small games, objects).

**10 minutes** – *Break*

**5 minutes** – *Walk through*, documentation. I ask the participants to walk through their installation and document it, just for themselves. After I ask them to go through the documentation (most likely photos) and to think about what part they find particularly important for themselves. I emphasize that they can think in pictures, they do not have to be able to verbalize their points.

**20 minutes** – *Paper dress*, I ask the participants to create a paper dress based on their mind installation. They can use infinite amount of paper, tape and scissors. They can also decorate the dresses if they would like to.

**10 minutes** – *Dress walk*, I ask the participants to think about a walking style what fits the dress, keeping their mind installation in their mind. We walk in the space, observing the other dresses meanwhile walking. After a short walk, we develop a dance, a movement sequence for the dress.

**6 minutes** – *Short interview*, I ask the participants to pair up and interview each other about the dresses.

**24 minutes** – *Projector disco*, I bring a projector into the room I attach it to a touch screen computer and project a blank page of Paint to the wall. I ask the participants to choose a music and move in the space meanwhile someone from the group (most likely their pair) draw a background around them. After everyone had a turn, we unite the dresses and we gradually make a huge projector-animation-paper dress dance session. (Originally, I planned some short scenes with the projector and the dresses, but the participants

expressed their different needs, therefore we agreed on taking a slightly different direction).<sup>167</sup>

**10 minutes** – *Three questions.* I close every workshop with some writing reflection, I ask the participants to answer the same question that I posed at the beginning, “What does your body mean to you?” this answer is just to themselves. I pose two more questions emphasizing that it is for me and for my research (I am informing them about the use, anonymity, storing and about the fact that they can take their permission back any time). How could you describe your personal experience? Please give a general feedback about the facilitation of the workshops.

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<sup>167</sup> *I mark this (mentioned) part using a different color, due to the fact that the participants expressed their need to do a different task. I rephrased the original idea and I asked them to work together and improvise a scene in which they both can participate but at the same time their body interpretation is strongly present.*

**V. The remembering body 29.10.2020 17:00-19:30** (overhead projector)

**15 minutes** – *Introduction*, about the thesis and some basic rules: everybody can do what feels good, if it does not feel good, feel free to stop. Some rules about safety, the break and respecting the participants' personal integrity. We all introduce ourselves, name, some basic info we would like to share and pronouns we use. Introduction of the pause rule: whenever they need some minutes to stop, they can say pause.

I pose one question: What does your body mean to you? I ask the participants to answer this question just to themselves, they can write, draw, as they wish. I emphasize that the question is about their current state.

**15 minutes** – *Dancing*, starting with what feels good. Gradually changing the dance styles, dark disco, dancing as no one sees us, experimenting with movements what reflect on your day.

**5 minutes** – *Ninja game*, a short concentration game about positioning the body and reactions of the body.

**10 minutes** – *Body memory walk*, I ask the participants to walk in the space and while walking to think about joyful body memories that played a key role in their lives. I ask them to start a movement from time to time which helps them to refresh the memory. As they want to go to another memory, they can continue walking. Every group member can do the movements at the same time, including the facilitator, this way no one is exposed. It is important that the participants are doing this task for themselves. I encourage them to think about places as well, they can imagine walking in the place they are thinking about.

**5 minutes** – *Choosing the most interesting ones*, I ask the participants to choose one or two body memories, what they find the most interesting for themselves, they do not have to share it, but I ask them to draw something about it for themselves.

**10 minutes** – *Break*

**15 minutes** – *Introduction of the overhead projector.* I present the machine and its safety rules. I provide several different materials to experiment with (this time focusing on folia, food colorant, dish soap) and I am offering my assistance. I leave the participants to experiment with the projector in small groups (max 3 persons). If there are not enough projectors, we ask the participants to take turns, and they can do some planning without the projector or observing the other groups.

**20 minutes** – *Planning the sequences.* We ask the group members to create their own sequence (short scene) with the overhead projector with the help of their peer group members, based on what they worked on during the first part of the workshop.

**10 minutes** – *Presentation.* The participants are showing their sequences with the assistance of their small group members. After each one of the sequences, we ask the audience to tell what they associated with the sequence.

**20 minutes** – *Involving movement and music,* we ask the participants to rearrange their own sequence in a way that they can involve music based on their choice and their bodies/body parts, moving/appearing on the screen. We ask them to use the time for rearranging in a well-thought way, so it is really fine if they do not rehearse, but discuss and improvise.

**15 minutes** – *Showing and discussion,* we watch the sequences and I ask the small groups to have a short reflection about the experiences.

**10 minutes** – *Three questions.* I close every workshop with some writing reflection, I ask the participants to answer the same question that I posed at the beginning, “What does your body mean to you?” this answer is just to themselves. I pose two more questions emphasizing that it is for me and for my research (I am informing them about the use, anonymity, storing and about the fact that they can take their permission back any time). How could you describe your personal experience? Please give a general feedback about the facilitation of the workshops.

## **VI. My body, my narrative – ownership and possibilities of the body**

**05.11.2020 17:00-19:30** (overhead projector)

**15 minutes** – *Introduction*, about the thesis and some basic rules: everybody can do what feels good, if it does not feel good, feel free to stop. Some rules about safety, the break and respecting the participants' personal integrity. We all introduce ourselves, name, some basic info we would like to share and pronouns we use. Introduction of the pause rule: whenever they need some minutes to stop, they can say pause.

I pose one question: What does your body mean to you? I ask the participants to answer this question just to themselves, they can write, draw, as they wish. I emphasize that the question is about their current state.

**15 minutes** – *Dancing*, starting with what feels good. Gradually changing the dance styles, dark disco, dancing as no one sees us, experimenting with movements that reflect on controlled movements and less controlled movements. The joyful movements and the crazy dance styles in the focus.

**15 minutes** – *Ho-shi ho* game a quick and easy concentration game. the participants are passing the imagined energy ball around.

**10 minutes** – *Potato scale game*, I say different categories and the participants have 10 seconds to form a scale where on one side there is the person who is embodying the worst potato and on the other side of the scale standing the person who is embodying the best potato as they imagine it. Of course, the categories are up to our imagination, after some round I asked the participants to take over the narrator's role.

**7 minutes** – *Photos of the day*, I asked participants to walk in the space and I tell a title that refers to their day or week. They have 10 seconds to embody a statue, that represents the title in their interpretation. I repeat this several times, I also give the possibility to the participants to give titles. The last titles are connected to the possibilities of the body.

**13 minutes** – *Sonic mind map*, I ask the participants to think about the possibilities of their bodies, how they see their bodies better say how they feel their bodies. Instead of

writing or drawing a mind map I ask them to walk in the space and whenever they think about something they can use sonic material or movements to register a thought. the participants are doing that at the same time. This way they are not exposed, they are doing the sonic movement based mind map to themselves. The process is supposed to help their thinking process beyond the verbal way.

**10 minutes** – *Break*

**10 minutes** – *Experimenting with the overhead projector.* I ask the participants to use the material I provided, such as wigs, some paint, tubes, pipettes, nets and lightening folias. I also bring some white clothing the participants could wear, this way they can expose, project on, and hide different body parts on the “stage”.

**30 minutes** – *Creation,* I ask the participants to plan a short sequence with the overhead projector, based on their sonic mind map. After some experimentation they can give some instructions to their peer group members, and create a scene where their body (or chosen body parts) appear(s) with a projection on it.<sup>168</sup>

**10 minutes** – *Discussion,* I ask the participants to discuss their experiences in small groups. Focusing on the methods they used, their perspective on the topic and reflecting on the group dynamics during the process.

**15 minutes** – *Three questions.* I close every workshop with some writing reflection, I ask the participants to answer the same question that I posed at the beginning, “What does your body mean to you?” this answer is just to themselves. I pose two more questions emphasizing that it is for me and for my research (I am informing them about the use, anonymity, storing and about the fact that they can take their permission back any time).

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<sup>168</sup> I mark this (mentioned) part using a different color, due to the fact that the participants expressed their need to do a different task. I rephrased the original idea and I asked them to work together and improvise a scene in which they both can participate but at the same time their body interpretation is strongly present.

How could you describe your personal experience? Please give a general feedback about the facilitation of the workshops.

## **VII. The protective body 12.11.2020 17:00-19:30** (overhead projector, photos)

**15 minutes** – *Introduction*, about the thesis and some basic rules: everybody can do what feels good, if it does not feel good, feel free to stop. Some rules about safety, the break and respecting the participants' personal integrity. We all introduce ourselves, name, some basic info we would like to share and pronouns we use. Introduction of the pause rule: whenever they need some minutes to stop, they can say pause.

I pose one question: What does your body mean to you? I ask the participants to answer this question just to themselves, they can write, draw, as they wish. I emphasize that the question is about their current state.

**10 minutes** – *Dancing*, starting with what feels good. Gradually changing the dance styles, dark disco, dancing as no one sees us, experimenting with movements following the rhythm and trying to work against it.

**5 minutes** – *Clothespin tag*, every participant has 3 clothespins; and the goal is to try to get more clothespins from the others.

**10 minutes** – *Clothespin ninja*, the ninja is standing in the middle of the circle, they have some clothespins either on their clothes or around them on the ground. The ninja's goal is to protect the clothespins the other participants goal is to take some of them from the ninja. The ninja has a paper sword and if the ninja touches someone with the paper sword that person should go back to their original place.

**15 minutes** – *Mirror mind map*, I ask the participants to take a white board marker and choose their space on the mirror, I ask them to focus on their understanding and interpretation of the expression protective body, including their body memories, their definition or their opinion, interpretation of the term. They can watch their mirror image and start to draw, somehow build their mirror image into their drawn mind map.

**10 minutes** – *Interview*, I ask the participants to form pairs and spend 5-5 minutes interviewing each other about their protective body. I asked them to pose questions their pair might have not thought about, which is probably from a really different perspective.

**10 minutes** – *Break*

**15 minutes** – *Experimenting with the overhead projector and different white costumes*. This time I bring different textured materials (oils, vinegar, sand, baking soda, cotton wool, strings, rubber), not just the ones which ones could be used when projecting, but also the white costumes the participants can wear. I also encourage the participants to draw on the folia using whiteboards markers.

**20 minutes** – *Composition*, I ask the participants to try out different projected backgrounds and position themselves behind it wearing some of the white costumes if they wish. I ask them to use their associations based on their interviews and their photos. After they find the perfect composition, I ask them to communicate with each other giving precise instructions to their pair, who is taking composed photos on them. If they are inspired, they can choose the option to take a series of photos.

**10 minutes** – *Discussion, replanning*, I ask the participants to show the pictures taken by each other to their pair and discuss them. If they wish they can replan and recompose their pictures, or they can prepare a short stop motion about their protective body.

**10 minutes** – *Stop motion, second session of overhead-projector photos*. Keeping their protective body in their mind, thinking of the previous exercises about it, I ask the participants to create a short maximum 10 picture-long stop motion.

**10 minutes** – *Picture showing*, I ask the participants to go through on their pictures with their pairs, think about and decide what they would like to show to the group. Together with the showing we discuss about the process itself, especially about what worked for them.

**15 minutes** – *Three questions*. I close every workshop with some writing reflection, I ask the participants to answer the same question that I posed at the beginning, “What does your body mean to you?” this answer is just to themselves. I pose two more questions emphasizing that it is for me and for my research (I am informing them about the use, anonymity, storing and about the fact that they can take their permission back any time). How could you describe your personal experience? Please give a general feedback about the facilitation of the workshops.

**VIII. The risk-taking body 26.11.2020 17:00-19:30** (shadow theatre in tent, behind umbrellas and on the ceiling)

**15 minutes** – *Introduction*, about the thesis and some basic rules: everybody can do what feels good, if it does not feel good, feel free to stop. Some rules about safety, the break and respecting the participants' personal integrity. We all introduce ourselves, name, some basic info we would like to share and pronouns we use. Introduction of the pause rule: whenever they need some minutes to stop, they can say pause.

I pose one question: What does your body mean to you? I ask the participants to answer this question just to themselves, they can write, draw, as they wish. I emphasize that the question is about their current state.

**10 minutes** – *Dancing*, starting with what feels good. Gradually changing the dance styles, dark disco, dancing as no one sees us, experimenting with movements following the rhythm and trying to work against it. Experimenting with the forms of losing control. Experimenting with the speed of the movements, the individual ones and dancing together.

**5 minutes** – *Concentration game*, Similar to every energy passing game. We are passing around different sounds paired up with different movements and directions.

**15 minutes** – *Blind folded searching game*, I ask the participants to form groups of three. every member will have a different task, one of them can see the stage but cannot talk, another one facing towards the previous one can talk, but this person cannot see the stage but sees the one who cannot talk. the third person who is blindfolded is searching for an item hidden by the facilitator. the person who cannot talk can watch the blindfolded member of the group and try to give directions to the one who can talk but cannot see the blindfolded member. The team is working together for a common goal. When they are ready they can change the rules and the facilitator can give them a more challenging task.

**5 minutes** – *Sound scape about how we are*, I asked the participants to stand in a circle showing their backs to each other, they can also close their eyes. We will create a

soundscape using the sounds we want to use including noises, vocal cords, speech or the floor. The topic of the soundscape is our week and how we feel ourselves at the moment.

**5 minutes** – *Pictures on what the body mean to you.* I ask the participants to take photos, what makes them think what the body is for them. those pictures could depict body parts or any other objects, spaces, etc. I emphasize that those pictures are just for themselves, they do not have to share them.

**15 minutes** – *Multimedia mind map,* I ask the participants to take their phones, cameras and improvise a video which is about their risk-taking bodies. the multimedia mind map is a way of thinking about the topic, I emphasize that they will not have to show those videos to the person. it is mainly for themselves. I asked them to experiment with the method of thinking using visual images instead of verbalizing thoughts.

**10 minutes** – *Break*

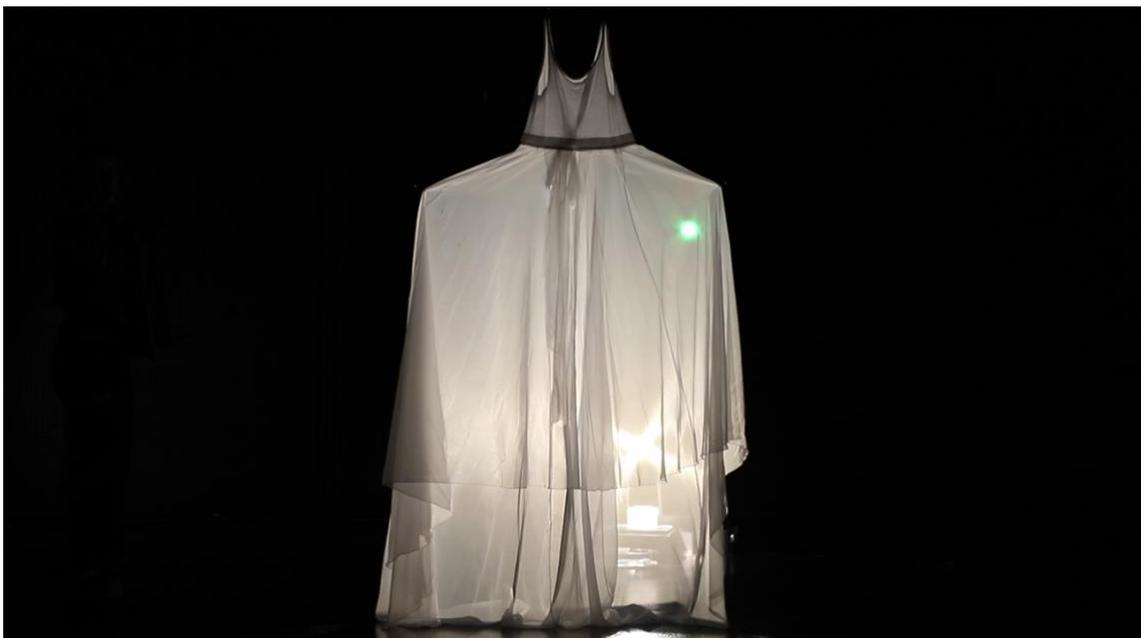
**15 minutes** – *Experimenting with the materials,* before organizing the group members into smaller groups I introduced the different materials and techniques they can use. I show firstly the light sources, such as the overhead projector (probably some of them already know), the torchlights, the colored lights, the disco ball, the bicycle lamps. as a next step I showed them the different surfaces which they can use, the tents, the umbrellas, and the surface is given by the space we use: the curtains the ceiling. I also introduce the different objects and show some examples how their shadows look like. I encourage the participants to experiment with the different materials. at the end of this experimentation, I ask them to choose a surface they would like to use, and based on their choices they can form groups.

**30 minutes** – *Creation and showing,* I ask the participants to compose a short scene using the elements of shadow puppetry reflecting on their multimedia material/mind map about their risk-taking body. I asked them to choose a sonic material. I asked them to think about how they wish to position the audience, and give instructions to their assistance if it's needed. The facilitator's position is highly important during those 30 minutes, and it depends on the needs of the participants.

**10 minutes** – *Reflection and discussion*, I ask the participants to refresh some important images they remember from the other’s performances and I asked them to share their associations, feelings, thoughts about those images.

**15 minutes** – *Three questions*. I close every workshop with some writing reflection, I ask the participants to answer the same question that I posed at the beginning, “What does your body mean to you?” this answer is just to themselves. I pose two more questions emphasizing that it is for me and for my research (I am informing them about the use, anonymity, storing and about the fact that they can take their permission back any time). How could you describe your personal experience? Please give a general feedback about the facilitation of the workshops.

Appendix 2. –Pictures and videos from [My Eye Candy, My Somatic Fiction and My Body Archive](#)  
photos by @myeyecandyteam



'MY EYES ARE HERE'



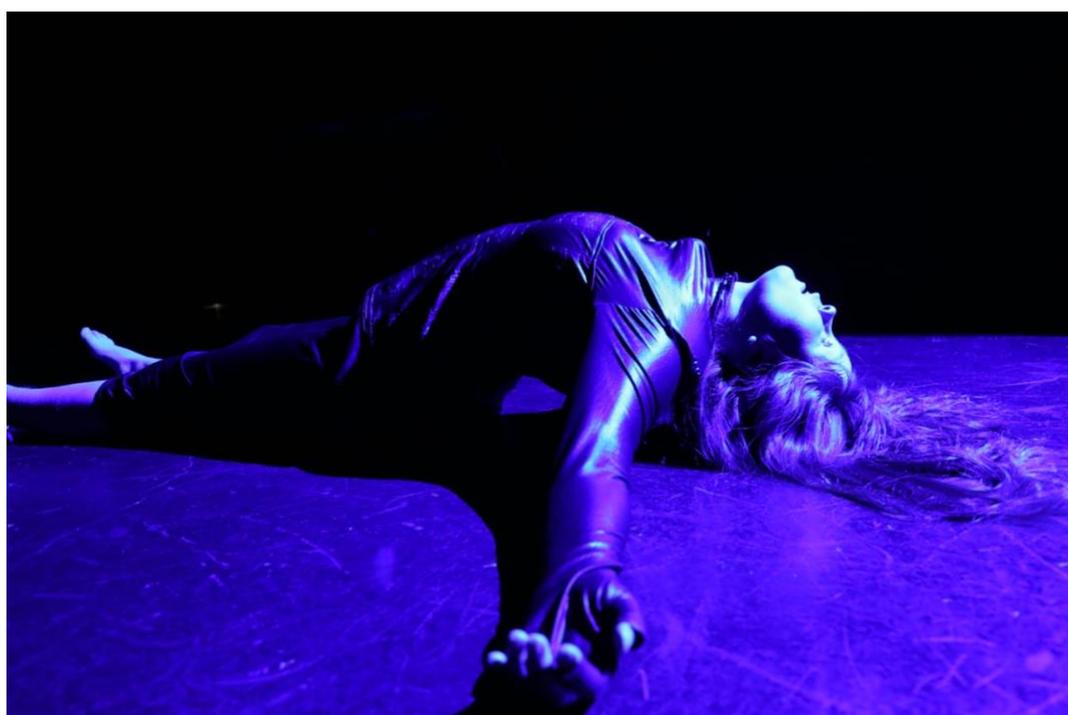
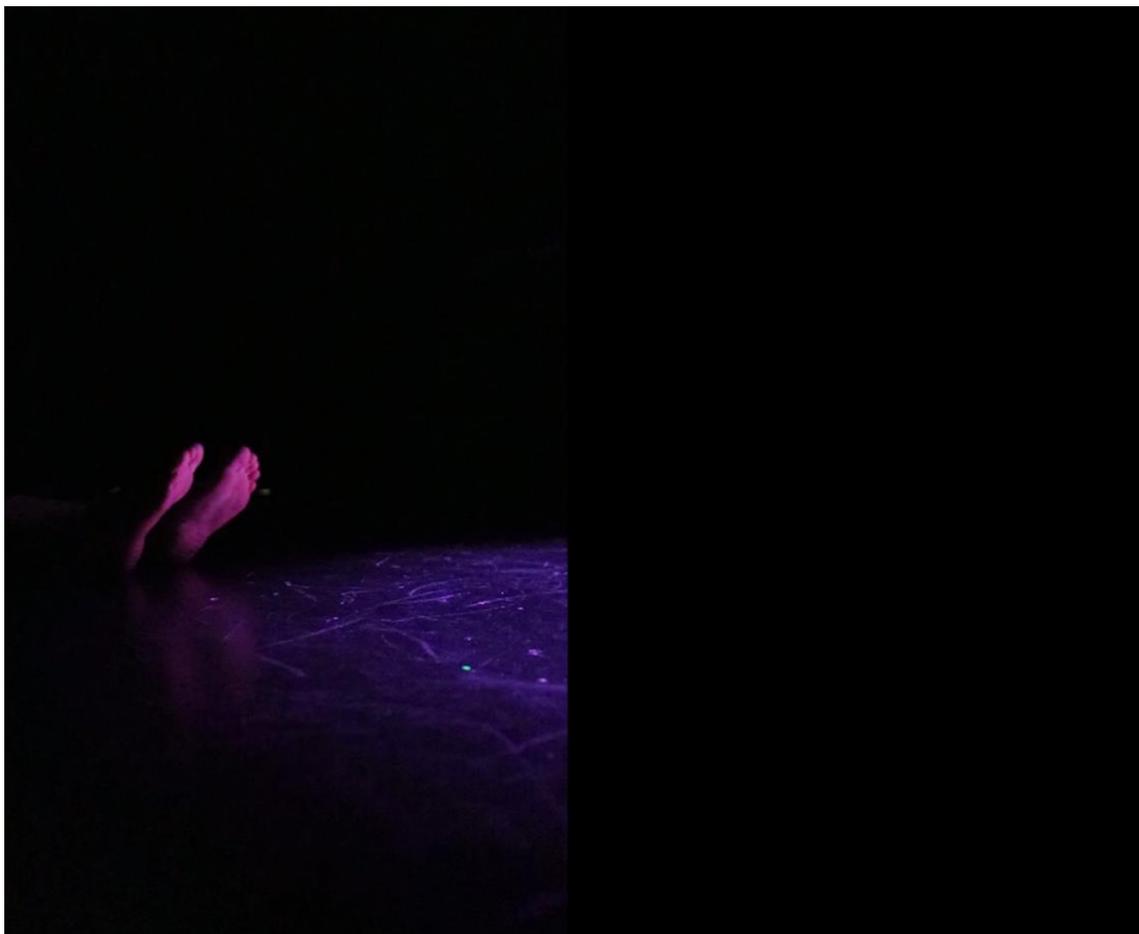
# PAIN IN THE ASS



# HEAVY SEAT



# PINK SINK



# ALIENATION

