

Untitled Landscape

a reflection on an artistic process

RYAN MASON



Untitled Landscape. Photo: Jussi Ulkuniemi

ABSTRACT**DATE:**

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<p>This written portion of this MA Thesis is a reflection on my artistic thesis. It provides a contextual reference to the creative underpinnings of my solo performance ‘Untitled Landscape’, including its thematic viewpoints, its abstract narrative, and the ways I chose to combine a variety of approaches—hyper-detailed bodily expression, complex spatial-temporal-material relationships, deconstruction, and reconstruction of the identity of objects—forming a contemplative landscape of meaning in which multiple identities, concepts, and contexts are intertwined.</p> <p>It consists of an introduction followed by four chapters.</p> <p>Chapter 1 is a visual diary with photos and commentary relating to the dramaturgic underpinnings of the performance.</p> <p>Chapter 2 examines, through a metaphoric device referred to as ‘terrains,’ two choreographers: Philipp Gehmacher and Deborah Hay, a radio-based sound artist: Gregory Whitehead, and a theatre scientist: Erika Fischer-Lichte, in their relation to the author’s choreographic thinking.</p> <p>Chapter 3 is an interview from two collaborators from ‘Untitled Landscape’s artistic team, sound designer/dramaturgic advisor: Roy Boswell and costume designer: Suvi Kajas</p> <p>Chapter 4 concludes with a final vista that reviews the content of the thesis. It reveals 'Untitled Landscape' to be a work that allows for a journey of discovery in which meaning is revealed through abstraction.</p>	
KEYWORDS Abstraction, Representation, Deconstruction, Imagined Experiences, Internal Landscape, Object, Materiality, Repurposing, Concrete, Surreal	

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INTRODUCTION

This written component of my MA thesis is a landscape of thoughts, an exposition of the oblique thought process of my artistic thinking. The structure of this thesis will reflect the nonlinear structure of my choreographic practice as a way to offer the reader a pathway into the complexities, attributes, and challenges of the choreographic practice. With the help of four examples, which I refer to as “terrains,” I will introduce concepts and approaches to choreography. I do this because my artistic process is grounded in the nebulous space among these terrains. Moreover, because the reader will not find this thesis to be a traditional approach to scholarly writing, I hope they will discover that nonlinear thinking can be both clear and liberating, rather than limiting.

My artistic curiosities are constantly evolving, but as a studio-based artist, my processes are mostly centered on staged choreographic works. I approach choreography in a highly process-based manner, often beginning with an explosion phase of exploration through chance and association based on interests ranging from bodily discourses, material relationships, notions of incompleteness and the unfinished, and the absent which reveals the present. These generative explorations function as starting points of the work.

I am drawn to the unique practice of dance, particularly that its practitioners are simultaneously the object of expression and the subject dancing. Much of my artistic thinking stems from my experience as a performer, which I bring to bear on decision-making and navigation throughout the process of dance-making. I find that this has benefitted my choreographic practice through an understanding of the feeling of being seen as a performer and how that correlates with spectators’ immediate experiential encounters with my work. I consider performance a communal experience of co-presence between the spectator and performer. It is primarily within the performance of an artistic work where I find a more extensive understanding of what the work is expressing. Finally, my ontological premise positions the function of art as a subjective opening of one’s experience of reality, as opposed to representing reality as a universal experience.

My artistic thesis for this degree program, the solo performance “Untitled Landscape”, was developed together with sound designer/dramaturgic advisor Roy Boswell, costume designer Suvi Kajas, lighting designer Anssi Ruotanen, and spatial advisor Aino Kontinen over the period of five weeks (09.01.23 – 15.02.23). The set design included a sculpture loaned by Xiao Zhiyu, which was repurposed from its originally intended form to be used as scenic material. The evening was a double bill presenting the MA artistic theses of myself and Lydia Touliatou. Both works shared the spatial and lighting designer, as well as the sculpture as scenography.

Due to a medical emergency, I was only able to perform ‘Untitled Landscape’ at its general rehearsal at Studio 3 at the theater Academy Helsinki on 15 February 2023.

The following written component of my thesis consists of four chapters:

Chapter 1 is a collection of photos and related commentary in the form of a visual diary documenting ‘Untitled Landscape.’ My intention with this chapter is to offer the reader context on my choreographic process. It also includes the program text from the performance to help contextualize the work.

In Chapter 2, using ‘terrains’ as a metaphoric device, I will explore how the perspectives of Philipp Gehmacher and Deborah Hay (choreographers), Gregory Whitehead (radio-based sound artist), and Erika Fischer-Lichte (author and theatre scientist) relate to my own choreographic thinking. My focus is not so much on the themes of ‘Untitled Landscape’ as on the different reflections they offer on my own choreographic practice.

Chapter 3 is an interview from two collaborators from ‘Untitled Landscape’s artistic team, sound designer/dramaturgical assistant: Roy Boswell and costume designer: Suvi Kajas, opening alternative reflections on the artistic thesis’ process.

Chapter 4 concludes with a vista, a viewpoint where all of the features of this written thesis can be seen, all at once, against a horizon and brought into perspective.

1. CHAPTER 1: A VISUAL DIARY OF 'UNTITLED LANDSCAPE'

The following chapter includes photos by Jussi Ulkuniemi, captured from the general rehearsal, on February 15th 2023. All of the photos, and photo clusters, are followed by captions, which locate and reflect on significant moments within the performance.

In 'Untitled Landscape', the audience is taken on a journey through the boundaries of perception and meaning. This solo performance, a choreographic work, shifts from the real to the imagined, from the concrete to the abstract. The figure moves between pantomime and concrete physical actions, exploring the liminal space between recognition and oblivion. He uses both imagined and concrete objects such as microphones, loudspeakers, and lights to bridge the gap between sender and receiver, creating a unique language of sensuality. Objects are deconstructed and repurposed to open up new ways of understanding them, ultimately merging with the environment and creating an illusion of blending. Through idiomatic movement vocabularies, the figure invites the audience to enter a meditative state of creative contemplation. As the work progresses, the figure and objects become correlates of each other, repurposing themselves to create a new identity. The audience is left with visual echoes, an invitation to contemplate the ideas presented in the performance, to explore their own perceptions and meanings, and to question the boundaries between the real and the imagined.

Extract from the program notes of 'Untitled Landscape' written by Roy Boswell:

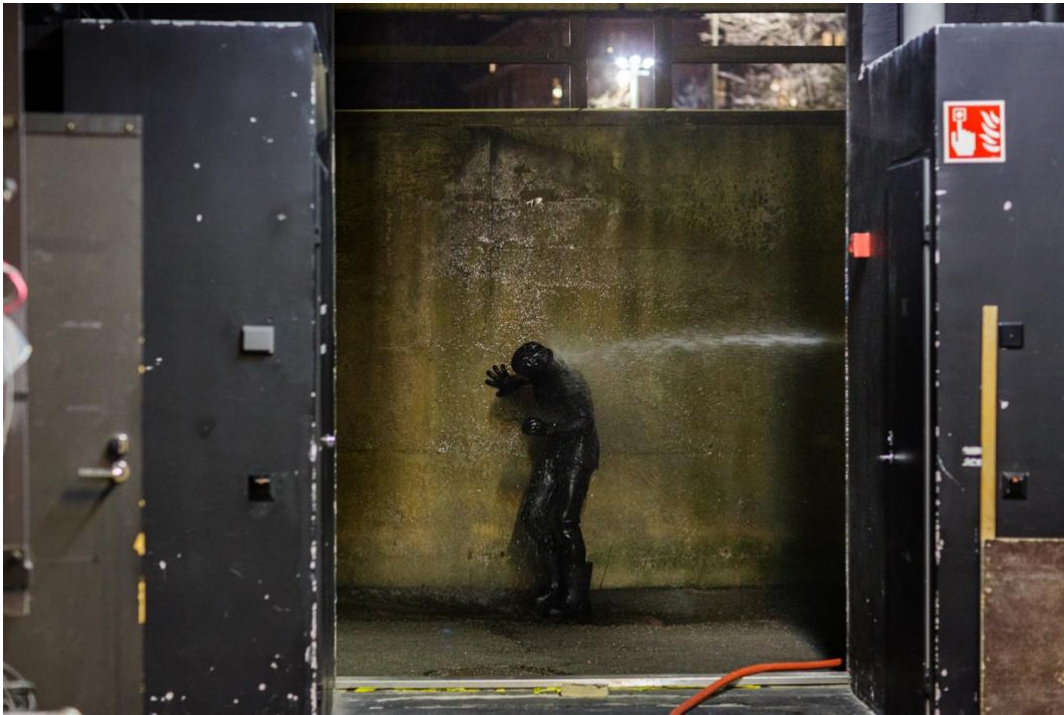
"You lasso the heifer, or the heifer lassos you." - Texas Jack Omohundro

It would perhaps be a mischaracterization to say that this solo contains fragments of a variety of 'American dreams,' although they do feature: the rancher and their rope, home on the range, the free expanse of the dust bowl, an idealized notion of progress - and inversely, the nightmarish aspects of it, in rampant consumerism, in growing up under the threat of war and its various red scares, in colonialism and the claiming (and renaming) of a continent from people that already lived there.

We come to see that the piece is an American dream itself, a dream of America within a dream: the soloist, Puckish, pollinating the stage and the audience with a potion that on one hand will make us fall in love, but also forget about what came before.

The meanings of things change, the uses of objects are reconfigured. A vocabulary of movement that pries itself away from dance - conflicted, not coming to terms - and then abruptly embracing dance again; dance, and then theatricality, mimesis, representation. When the dust settles, we are left with an image of a landscape, the far edge of a strange continent that we may do well to leave alone.

Photos and Reflections



The first image that the audience encounters reveals a dark figure in a wetsuit blasted by a firehose against a concrete wall, enduring mid-winter sub-zero temperature, while 'Nuclear War – Version 1' by Yo La Tengo is pumped through loudspeakers. The intensity of this short-lived prologue leaves the audience with visual echoes as a counterpoint to accompany the coming performance.

The intention behind this scene was to set up a tempo of visual digestion. By this I mean that it is informing the audience that there will be phantasmic imagery that might not adhere to causal explanations, and that these experiences are part of the choreographic language of the work. It offers a lens for the audience to perceive the rest of the work through.





In the following scene, the changing of clothes is a clear choice of transformation, symbolic but also practical. While the wetsuit has a clear purpose of protection against the elements, the jumpsuit, in its surreal design by Suvi Kajas, implies a different function and raises possible questions as to what that function would be. Whatever it is, it instructs the audience that the fantastical or the uncanny will play a part in the reading of the performance.

The steampunk-esque textures of the space, with the solitary figure coinciding with post-apocalyptic lyrics, are images that are all-too-common to cinematic conventions of social collapse. This will be the end of the prologue where the readability of the performance stops relying on tropes and begins to define itself by its own poetics.

Following intuition and associative thinking is common in my choreographic practice. What is perhaps interesting for the reader to understand is that these dramaturgic descriptions were not a forethought in the creation of this scene. Although these tropes might suggest this reading, there was no original intention to tell a story or represent a specific narrative. What is more interesting to me is how we are capable of and live through abstracting meaning from matter. What is especially interesting is when these meanings change for us, or even how abstraction can breathe life into seemingly inert things. I think of this abstraction as a material that you cannot see in itself, but only through matter. I think of it as an invisible force that shapes how we experience the world. So, when observing moments that hold explicit images, my hope is that the images present in this scene are open enough for more than just a linear reading of the work.



The next scene introduces a character through a series of actions that are cryptic yet specifically purposeful to the figure within the dramaturgy of the performance. The soundscape offers a dramatic shift from the cacophony of the previous scene, suddenly enveloping the space in silence. The scene now focuses into the visual field where the detail of its images sharpens. The performer is particular in his actions, yet also distant, as if he is trying to connect to a place beyond the space of the theatre. It could be read as a preparation for something to come, a ritual of sorts. At the same time, it could be read as an event which this figure is merely drifting through. The intention behind this

moment, an intention that will carry through the rest of the performance, was to create a highly descriptive atmosphere without becoming overly identifiable.

This is a method that I often utilize in my work. By means of association, I rely on complex details composed of image, sound, bodily expression, or a combination of any other affectual perception to form a language of sensuality. This is not a language that promotes a metaphoric reading, but a hyper-exact vocabulary that sustains tension in its sensual complexity. While there can be a metaphoric interpretation within this language, I believe this simultaneously has the potential to pull the viewer's concentration into a place that closes off external associations through its specificity, especially in its relation to the dramaturgy of the work. In the obliqueness of 'Untitled Landscape's dramaturgy, its reading becomes meditative through its hyper-concentrated language, inviting the viewer to enter into a state of creative contemplation rather than a only a state of decoding.

One example of this detail can be seen in the physicality of the performer in several moments throughout the performance. Within the performance is a theme of dialogue between internal and external spaces, be that physical, psychological, spiritual, etc. Physically, I explored this by imagining that there are forces that I control, and forces that control me – I make things happen, things happen to me. In the scene from the previous picture, there is a moment where I imagine that my clothes have a will of their own and my body is riding inside of them. Sometimes I give in to this force, sometimes I resist it, sometimes it happens in only one part of my body, sometimes one part of my body is giving in while another is resisting. There are limitless ways to explore and elaborate a physical task such as this. And when combined with other elements of the scene (light, sound, objects, other affects) it becomes exponentially more complex.

*This puppeting idea is a physical task I have enjoyed exploring as it offers the body many options to relate to this external force. Its original inspiration comes from an exercise by Meg Stuart, "The body as a host," which focuses on "finding a variety of ways for energy to enter and exit the body." (Stuart 2010, 158)



In another scene, as if to invite the audience to see what he sees, a series of singular spoken words begin to build an imaginary environment: tree, road, house, cloud, mountain, bird, door, people, star, rain. The space expands and contracts around the figure as the scale of the word's size plays with and against the scale of the performer. He becomes gigantic as he towers over trees and mountains verbally and gesturally built onto the floor in miniature. He shapes clouds in his hands - an invisible bird flutters upon his finger - his body becomes a door - he shrinks beneath a gathering of stars at finger point.

This scene explored an idea of transforming the space into an environment sculpted from words, an imaginary landscape. In early conversations with sound designer Roy Boswell, the notion of spatializing words came up. I was curious to explore how something intangible like a sound or a word might hold a position in space, as if something that could be stumbled into and vocalized. Roy had also introduced the idea of imagined and imaginary sounds, which I found extremely interesting and wondered how this might also manifest in a visual form. Through associative movement explorations, the emergence of different physicalizations and qualities of movement, revealed a character that Roy picked up on. Their suggestion into the idea of naming things, taxonomy, colonization, the destruction of habitat arose and was eventually incorporated into the subtext of the work. This idea was used not so much to illustrate

any explicit political notions behind the idea, but more as a vital energy behind the action of this scene. Of course, this idea was contributory to the narrative which the program notes offer as a way to read the work.



Within this scene, rhythm exists in micro-moments between a vocabulary of half spoken thoughts and their corresponding/contrasting movements (eg. brief pauses of vocal and physical silence texturize the action and internal phrasing). The physical language rambles between a flurry of bodily discourses: dance, mimetic, quotidian, gestural, postural, expressive, abstract, etc. But, in general, the rhythm of this scene remains constantly busy and almost, in this sense, absent of rhythm.

Dramaturgically, this moment continues to pull the figure deeper into a place of abstraction despite its kinetic intensification within the performance. The work becomes more complex as the language of the performance becomes more and more bodily-based, more concrete in its action. Yet, it becomes more abstract in its representation, as it pulls itself away from stable forms such as clearly identifiable locations of internal or external spaces.



Cornflour dust was an idea that originated from Roy Boswell, which added both literally and figuratively to the atmosphere of the piece. As a choreographer, I am interested in exploring the limits of the body but more so in how it extends into other materialities.



This photo captures another moment later in the performance where the limits of the body are explored and abstracted by using a specific LED at a specific frequency, creating an illusion of blending the body into the space around it.





Early on in the process, I was interested in exploring objects and what they might evoke and inspire through physical interaction. Many of the objects were taken from what was immediately available to a theatre space – props, theatre equipment, textiles and costumes, etc. I have always been drawn to objects that incorporate electricity, for their aesthetic value but also because they incorporate a form of technology that is invisible and in some regard abstract. I suppose there is a feeling of mystery encapsulated in these forms that I associate with an energetic force similar to a living being. In this regard, I was inspired to work with mediums that generate or facilitate some form of communication: a microphone and stand, a light source, a loudspeaker and cable, a radio, a record player. All of these objects are used to bridge a gap between two places, the sender and receiver.

Choreographic events were created using these objects, for their functionality and also for how they might be repurposed to open new ways of understanding them as objects in relation to the world. Some objects, like a theatre light, were taken apart to reveal their inner complexity, but also to excavate movement material that was required to do this action. For example, the fine details of dexterity needed to unscrew, or detach, or rewire. Following this was the question, “And then what?” What would the naked bulb of an incandescent light evoke in the imagination? How might that object’s repurposing inspire a new understanding of what it could be, how its meaning might change, or how this affects the things within its perceptual reach?

Movement material was developed through the interaction and manipulation of these objects with an interest in exploring the limits of the body, and how the body might extend itself into another material form. Eventually, these objects were removed, leaving only the echo of their presence within the frame of events that they were used in. Drawing from the bodily memory that had developed with and grown into these objects, their extraction led to a very interesting space that was somewhere on the edge of abstractions of pantomime and concrete physical actions. I sought to explore the liminal space between recognition and oblivion, when a sign or signal is either picked up or lost, and when a vocabulary of movement begins to express the things beyond a semiotic construct.



The moment captured in this scene is from the last section, a sea change, where the performer shifts from a subject of his environment to a sculptor of the environment, where the figure begins to explore the abstraction and concretion of the world around it. In this scene, the original purpose of an object, its identity, is taken apart and left to its constituent materials. As it is repurposed into the landscape of the performance it inherits a new relation to the world.



All of the objects in this scene are theater tools repurposed into a highly specific landscape, which simultaneously holds a peculiarity or singular identity while offering extensive space for the viewer to project their own interpretation of this landscape of deconstructed objects. It might suggest an industrial space, perhaps an oil refinery in miniature. However, the scene is interpreted, the objects are transformed to become something else than what they originally were.

I wanted to integrate myself into this landscape - to become an object. I fused myself into the rhythmic soundscape through corresponding stop-action movement. The sonic atmosphere, in this section, echoed unfinished thoughts in sound, captured by a lavalier mic attached to a rotating record turntable with a small am/fm radio placed in very close proximity. As the microphone would pass the radio, each rotation would pick up a fragment of its broadcast, creating a continuous repetition of sonic slivers: a dissected voice cut from the throat of the radio.

The significance of this scene is in its transformation of meaning. All of its main features, the objects, the light source, the soundscape, and the human body activate new meaning. In their transformation they performatively change their identities through their actions. This creates a new identity, a new language that is both a metaphoric and literal representation of the figure and objects becoming correlates of each other. The figure and objects feed off each other and come to form a greater expression of the scene.

2. CHAPTER 2: TERRAINS

This chapter is composed of four terrains which reference and reflect upon four specific artists in relation to the artistic thesis, "Untitled Landscape," as well as the general contemplations of this written thesis. A terrain is a stretch of land usually defined by its topography or physical features: an expanse to be traversed, observed, and admired. It is sometimes inviting, other times tumultuous. Some terrains are seemingly steadfast in their features, solid and unchanging, monolithic, while others are full of fault lines and fissures, their textures crumbling above seismic vibrations. In this written thesis, I am borrowing this term to frame different landscapes of thought: some solid under the feet, others porous, and some void-like and intangible. All, however, as we see reflected in geographic-time, are impermanent and subject to change, always in process. We will traverse these terrains of choreographic thinking, across a horizon of concepts, relationships, and practices, as a way of co-learning.

2.1. Terrain 1: Philipp Gehmacher – Approaching Performance

In the first terrain, we walk with Philipp Gehmacher, an artist whom I admire for his contemplations on the body and its expressive capacity.

Philipp Gehmacher is a Vienna-based dancer and visual artist. He has created a significant body of work that has been presented extensively internationally. Along with creating an extensive collection of staged works, working in venues ranging from black box to white cube, and collaborating with many established artists within the contemporary dance and art scenes. He has also been a guest lecturer at art institutions and universities including SHK Stockholm, the Iceland University of the Arts, P.A.R.T.S., Tanzquartier Wien, University of Applied Arts Vienna, among others (Gehmacher, n.d.). His work has been recognized for its unique approach to choreographic exploration, which has made a significant impact on the contemporary dance scene. He has also created a performance lecture series, walk + talk, a performance format in which choreographers voice their thoughts on movement and attempt to speak about and on individual understandings of movement. (Gehmacher 2018)

“At the heart of my work is a distinct focus on corporeality, combined with a strong belief in physical expression and representation. Or to be more precise: bodies on stage can, so to speak, choose to tell, show, and express things in a strictly physical way. I believe they can move beyond the extremes of the common spectrum of dance styles and genres, and beyond what can be expressed through them.” (Peeters 2014, 135)

In Gehmacher’s work, one can see the body as a meeting point of multiple bodies. One also sees how, through its physical form, the body can choose how it is read within a theatrical setting. In particular, Gehmacher juxtaposes the notion of the socially ideal body with the “Shadow body,” a description Jeroen Peeters points out in his essay, ‘Shadow bodies: On Philipp Gehmacher’s *Incubator*.’ In it, Peeters reflects how Gehmacher addresses a range of questions that contemplate the body’s physical expressivity in relation to form and content, its resistance to conventions of dance and theatre, and the idiosyncratic body as a form of political resistance to the culturally normative body. He likens this ‘Shadow body’ to one with “little in common with the perfect body of models, [...] the bodies of dancers who dwell in virtuoso choreographic spheres [...], the upright bodies you see on the street or at work.” He believes that the idealistic body image is a result of the meanings that are already in place, which restrict our view to its idealized form. Gehmacher uses the physical body to represent these ideals through the quotidian vocabularies as a limitation, which he contrasts with fragmentation, incomplete gestures, tics, etc. Peeters suggests that it might be within this “Shadow body” where the idiosyncratic expressivity resides. (Peeters 2014, 135-156)

There is also a unique quality to Philipp Gehmacher’s presence on stage, which I will primarily focus on in this section. His approach to performance manages to sustain the audience’s attention in the present moment through distinct rhythms of physical silence and unpredictable action. There is a subtle magnetism that keeps the viewer leaning forward, as if leaning into a whisper or tensing before the pop of a balloon. He combines his idiomatic vocabulary of hesitation, discoordination, stillness and abrupt gestures that fall short of intention, with a constant returning back to the immediate. His gaze seems to

be detached from his bodily activity, as if focused elsewhere. There is an absence of ego that provides space for the spectator to enter into his bodily experience; it does not tell you what to feel. Yet, there is an emotional affect borne out of the vulnerability within this absence of ego—a vacuum that pulls the viewer along, and which he returns to, gesture after incomplete gesture. (Dierckx 2007)

His performance in ‘Maybe Forever,’ (Gehmacher and Stuart, n.d.) a collaboration between Gehmacher and renown choreographer, Meg Stuart, demonstrates a mastery of rhythm as it relates to the expression of the body. Nothing is rushed; the meaning of each gesture and action is intimately connected to its place in time as it relates to what came before, as well as what will come after. There is a brief moment in the duet, which represents an underpinning to Gehmacher’s choreographic language, that I will describe to illustrate this use of rhythm.

With their backs facing the audience, off-center upstage-left, Meg Stuart and Philipp sit next to each other in silence. She stands up leaving Philipp alone in the space. We hear her footsteps fade into the distance. There is a thickness in the atmosphere as we (the audience) sit with that image, in a moment of silence and stillness. It becomes a moment long enough to become aware of the nothingness that has happened and the fullness of meaning within its image. The time becomes an affective emotional tool – we feel a loneliness connected to the solitary figure silently sitting, hands in lap. Just before this feeling stales in the mind, Philipp places his right hand beside him as he shifts his weight, stopping before it settles into a resting position. As the mind of the viewer would expect another long silence, he breaks rhythm, standing up in a manner located between abrupt and timid. Again, he breaks an expectation of timing by shuffling upstage before a following action would be expected. I liken it to the way a jazz drummer plays with time: a swing of the hi-hat, an attack of the snare. He moves between expected timings, yet illustrates the scene and character by doing so.

All of these moments, in relation to the physical body, create meaning through time. The gestures and postures alone hold their own inherent meaning. But when rhythmically entangled within a temporal relationship, these actions develop complex relational meanings. The entirety of the event previously described happens within one minute,

from an evening-length work. Maintaining this sort of rhythmic precision requires something beyond the scope of memorization. A deeper understanding, an intuitive relationship, of time and how time feels in connection to the body in connection to the spectator is a tool and skill that Gehmacher utilizes; one which I also attend to, in my performance, or am at least aware of in ‘Untitled Landscape.’

His stage works reveal what is not there by exposing through his concrete physique the abstract auras that envelope him. The simplicity of pairing engaged physicality with a dissociated mentality lures the viewer to think alongside it, to contemplate the space within an uninhabited mind. It is a presence that is perceived, not only through a visual fixation on the concrete body in motion. It is a perception through an apparatus of imaginative and kinesthetic empathy concurrently perceiving a movement that cannot be seen with the eyes. The composition of his physicality combined with the context of the scene creates a syntax as if an invisible body were filling in the gaps between the frames of a motionless body.

As Philip Gehmacher dances, stumbles, and fumbles through interrupted gestures, conflicted stillness, and quotidian postures obscured by energetic excess, the emotional pull of the movement is embodied by the audience. It is his connection to the difference of each moment emerging from the physicality, as well as the psychological state which the movement is borne out of, that resonates with my choreographic approach to moving with the thoughts of my body in ‘Untitled Landscape.’

Taking a specific scene (the echo scene) from ‘Untitled Landscape,’ I find a connection with Gehmacher’s approach, a section that combines a physicalization of fragmented thoughts, memories, and associations, as well as a vocalization through word, phrases of speech, and utterances, which inform each other. This could be thought of as a collision and rebounding off of the features and textures of an internal landscape and internal soundscape, a meeting place of multiple bodies that echo into the external performance space.

What differs significantly from the character in this scene is the relation to time. While Gehmacher’s signature stage presence sits within each moment of time, returning back to

the present through minimalistic gestures repeated, the movement language of this echo scene is always rushed. It spools out; it hardly stops; it is pulled, yanked, pushed by a force outside the body. In ‘Untitled Landscape,’ the mind of the character is over occupied, leaving a different kind of space for the audience to contend with. It might be a distant kind of observation that repels the viewer by its excessive overflow of movement impulses. On the other hand, this excess might also be interpreted as an absence of the performers mind, which would also create a vacuum for the viewer to step into in contemplation.

By stretching incoherence, the ‘echo scene’ engages with the absent. It builds itself anew from its incompleteness. The choreographic exploration of idiosyncratic impulses and fragmented bodily discourses located between subtle and explicit cultural references and social coding are abstractions co-constructed with the body’s inherent concrete physical form. This fragmentation reveals an incompleteness through its juxtaposition to the culturally normative image of a body and constructs a new identity and subsequent expressivity.

While aesthetically, our works differ significantly, what I perceive in the work of Philipp Gehmacher and what I am attempting in ‘Untitled Landscape’, is a clarity of being on stage, performing. What I am pointing to here is nature of the performer as a physical (actual) body and as an expressive (virtual) body. In both works, I perceive a constant attendance to the unfolding of imagery, affect, expression, and physicality and how the body, in its physicality becomes an emergent canvas of shape, form, expression.

2.2. Terrain 2: Deborah Hay – Approaching the Body

This terrain will appear different to each person. Its topography reflects the the viewer’s internal landscape and is explored through the practices and choreographies of Deborah Hay. I feel a kinship with the way Hay attends to the individual experience of dancing and the sense of wonder and awe that the body offers to those who listen attentively and persistently.

Deborah Hay is an American dancer, choreographer, and writer. A founding member of Judson Dance Theatre, she is considered one of the most influential figures in postmodern dance. Her unique approach to choreography, through the adaptation of textual scores and its accompanied performance practice, has offered an escape from the historical conventions of dance in an abandonment of idealistic aesthetics. Her work celebrates the body's inherent knowledge and ingenuity on a cellular level, imagining that each one "has the potential to perceive action, resourcefulness, and cultivation at once" – one of the many examples of how Hay contemplates and attends to the body as an ever-changing creative entity. (Hay 2000, ix - xviii) Rather than considering the body to be a tool to execute or reproduce a priori a set of predetermined movement directives, Hay considers the body as a site of discovery—of unlimited resourcefulness—a process from which meaning might be drawn. "Calling her body "my teacher," Hay does not produce movement using the body, nor does she transmit meaning using the body as a vehicle of expression. Cultivating a sense of bodily reciprocity, she gives her attention to physicality and invites its responses such that the act of perceiving centrally informs each moment." (Foster 2019, 162)

The challenge in summarizing Hay's work is connected to the infinite ways it might be interpreted, the unanswerable questions she has been offering dance practitioners in their approach to it, and to the opaque nature of her brief scores of choreographies which offer no instructions to their performers. This unique choreographic approach is intimately rooted in her connection to her experience of what it means to be a body, or body-mind. Through her use of what Susan Leigh Foster calls "Koan-like" questions, Hay developed a way to sustain her attention and invite performers to attend to each moment of performance. These questions are designed not to be answered, but to activate the dancers' potential for what the body can be and what it can express in relation to their environment. This combination of the individual experience of inhabiting the body in relation to the environment, with the availability of the particular constellation of awareness present in the choreography, is what allows the individual to continue to experience the choreography in their own body as a process of exploration rather than a fixed representation. (Foster 2019, Hay 2019)

The movement material of 'Untitled Landscape' emerged from a process combining movement exploration and repetition, which was gradually documented in the bodily archive, rather than a written score. Thus, the material itself was never solidified in text but constantly in a process allowing for organic change in conversation with my body's changes from day to day during the process of creating the dance. At the same time, I paid careful attention to the treatment of this material. So, as the material gradually found its form, the way I approached the material became an inherent part of the work's overall structure. This approach was intended to keep the material in a constant state of potential, to keep its meanings open, and to avoid locking the work into a concrete set of representations. This approach was based on my ontological position toward art in general and as a way to maintain a personal interest in the material. The potential for the work to constantly reveal something new is not only important to my choreographic interests but also acts to energize the space of performing and promote a creative attunement to the body and the material. Ensuring that there is something new to discover provides an exciting unknown to contend with.

I liken this approach to the similar attention that Deborah Hay has cultivated. I didn't use the "koan-like" questions that she does, but I did aim to cultivate a deeply curious attention to the physical body as a constantly emerging process of sensation entangled with the mind in each moment. My goal was to think within the sensations of the present and allow both the mind and body to constantly inform, rather than define, each other. In truth, I wonder if it is not already inherent in our nature to do this and that Hay's work might be reminding us of some ability that often lies dormant within us. If one takes the nature of one's existence to be processual, one wouldn't be able to live outside of any event they are experiencing, and would by nature already be living within a process of becoming. I wonder if when Deborah Hay says that 'it is impossible to do her work,' (Edmunds and Hay 2015) it is because, inherent in the processual nature of her work, the doing is already present and unpreventable, and therefore already done.

2.3. Terrain 3: Gregory Whitehead – Approaching Nowhere

This terrain is perhaps less stable than the others. It is a landscape of voids, almost featureless, yet fertile for the imagination to grow inside. This terrain explores the radiophonic no-man's land of Gregory Whitehead.

“I begin with the idea of radio as an adventure, and part of the idea of an adventure is that you don't always know precisely where you are.” (Whitehead, 2002)

Gregory Whitehead is an audio artist, radio maker, text/sound poet, singer of tales, essayist, playwright, and desperado philosopher (Whitehead, n.d.). In an interview with LUFF, he notes radio's richness is expressed in presence and absence, living and dead, infinity and proximity, intimacy and power, connoting an uncertainty or doubtfulness in its message and messengers. His radio work is motivated, in part, by its counterpoint in the “numbing of the brain” by social media, and by the hope of stimulating the creative mind. (Whitehead 2016)

Radio space is more a series of cultural, social and political relations; to be engaged in some way. [] Radio is not about sound. Radio happens in sound, at a perceptual level, but the guts of radio are not sounds but rather the gaps between sending and receiving, between transmission and audition, or however you want to name the space. Radio is essentially a gap medium. (Alvarado and Whitehead 2007, 1-3)

I have been following this author, radio-playwright, and radiophonic pioneer for his sonic compositions but also for his perception of what radio is and does. Radiophonic space, for Whitehead, is a void; on one end a voice, the other an anonymous listener. What takes precedence is the relationships that occur within this transition from the material of sound to the material of media, where infinite possibilities open. According to Whitehead, Radio is “a no place where the living can dance with the dead, where voices can gather, mix, become something else, and then disappear into the night-degenerates in dreamland.” (Whitehead 1996, 97)

Whitehead inspires me to rethink how to grapple with time and space. His views of the intersection between transmission and reception are captivating in the way something so

seemingly empty, so abstract, is the actual medium that renders the material that passes through it. This outlook turns the theatre into a forum for uniting people and a space where the spectators' personal histories become the medium through which the performance is translated. Like a resistor in an electrical current, these personal histories determine the flow of information of a performance – the materiality of life stories will have different densities, and as information is passed through this material, it will itself encounter friction and undergo change.

The audience members inhabit the space with their backgrounds, creating “an echo chamber of details, stories, biographies, life stories, a place of ever-changing frontiers and numerous identities.” (Whitehead 1996, 97) Unfortunately, ‘Untitled Landscape’ was unable to realize itself in this manner because it never had a premiere, only a single general rehearsal with partial audience. If part of what makes a theatre work is found and formed in its rendering within a shared experience, more inhabitants will be required to truly find ‘Untitled Landscape.’

2.4. Terrain 4: Erika Fischer-Lichte – Approaching Each Other

This terrain picks up on the previous terrain where I describe my interest in the theater as a concrete space as well as an echo chamber for personal histories. But concreteness does not necessarily equate to rigidity. This terrain is constantly shifting in response to its inhabitants. Within the context of performance, this voyage is undertaken by spectator and performer together. It is one which is both constructed from and occupied by a specific shared temporality and spatiality: a communal space of transposition, where messengers and receivers entangle and exchange roles in their dynamic co-presence.

Accordingly, 'Untitled Landscape' strives to open a shared space of exploration within the relationship between performers and audience members—one that permits both to immerse themselves in perceiving the entirety of the work as an experience.

Many layers of agency are involved in performance, from the bodily co-presence of the performer and spectator to the construction of the performance itself. Referring to the writings of Max Hermann, theatre scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte notes that, “[t]he specific mediality of performance consists of the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators. Performance, then, requires two groups of people, one acting and the other observing, to gather at the same time and place for a given period of shared lifetime. Their encounter—interactive and confrontational—produces the event of the performance.” (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 38) In the same essay, Fische-Lichte refers to the ‘autopoietic feedback loop,’ which opens another notion relatable to co-presence. This term relates to the different ways in which the audience’s presence affects the performer(s)/performance, and how in turn the performer responds to this influence, creating an energetic dialogue unique to the chemistry between all participants of an individual performance. The dramaturgy of a particular performance determines the nature of this dialogue; some might be more immersive and interactive while others might be more distant. Regardless of where the performance lies within this spectrum of interactivity, there will always be some form of communication due to the nature of co-presence.

As ‘Untitled Landscape’ developed, it called for a certain degree of intimacy and vulnerability. The solo by nature is a solitary act; the performer is alone on stage, exposed. I chose detailed movement that was at times subtle and nuanced, knowing that the close proximity of the audience would allow for a deeper sensorial connection between the audience and performer. This would create an opportunity to envelop the space with an energetic co-presence, to the point where the audience itself would become a character within the performance. The seating arrangement formed three sides of a square, with two rows directly opposite of each other, creating a confrontation with itself. This directly challenged the anonymity of looking into the back of another person’s head, as is on par with a traditional proscenium setting. As a performer, I practiced making a conscious effort to form a bridge between myself and the audience through eye contact without emphasizing an overt need to do this. I wanted the audience to understand that their presence would be felt by me, that their presence would be acknowledged, both as a performer and as a person in the world. In this way, I reveal

the complexity of a real person going through a process where imagery and character could be co-present in the space.

In order to further this connection between performer and spectator, I encouraged the audience to become active participants in the performance by nature of its design. This happens primarily through its amorphous dramaturgy, which does not offer a linear causality for the spectator to rely on or to become passive within. In a sense, the logic of the work is fragmentary, almost dream-like and synesthetic in nature. By inviting them to actively create meaning through the network of mediums entangled within the performance, such as soundscapes, lightscapes, scenography, costume, the moving body, speech and utterance, performative objects, etc., I hoped to create an experience that would encourage an active role of engaging with the work. It was my hope that, through this open-ended journey, the audience would be encouraged explore the work on their own terms and connect to the performance in their own individual regard.

In general, when creating 'Untitled Landscape,' I took a subversive approach with decision making, as a choreographer and within my performance. I purposely avoided overly identifiable relationships between the different materialities of the work, which would pacify its interpretation into ready-made identities or theatrical tropes. As a result, 'Untitled Landscape' sought to create an opportunity for the audience to leave with a unique experience and understanding of the artwork. I believe that providing space to actively create meaning within a performance encourages the audience to explore the work on their own terms, to develop more meaningful connections between the performer, spectator, and to the artwork, in general. Ultimately, I believe this connection to be essential in creating a successful performance space.

3. CHAPTER 3: INTERVIEWS WITH COLLABORATORS

At the outset of this project, it was clear that the solo was to be highly personal. This necessitated that my collaborators actively engage with me, exploring my professional practices, how I connect people and objects, spaces, and so forth. To properly support this project, they needed to be curious, provide input, and gain insight into my creative process, personality, artistic impetus, my status as a neurodivergent artist, and any limitations I face. All of these considerations were essential in helping me gain a deeper understanding of the project.

Collaboration is an integral part of my choreographic process, whether I am working on a solo project such as this one, or with other dancers under my direction. I invite other artists into my creative process to benefit from their expertise and to take advantage of their feedback, dialogue, and reflection. Furthermore, I strive to create an environment where the artwork can thrive and develop into what it desires to be without my own aesthetic preferences influencing it too heavily. Working with other artists can help to decentralize this influence and open up the possibility of something completely new emerging. Though this work focused on myself as the central subject, it was not about me, rather the aim was for my contributions to serve the artwork in a meaningful way. This collaboration provided me with an opportunity to explore within the context of the artwork.

The following questions were developed to open up reflections from the perspectives of my collaborators and gain further insight into the ways in which they think and what happened during the choreographic process. In the same way that I have examined the perspectives of other artists in this master's thesis, I asked my collaborators to reflect on their experiences by exchanging their thoughts through e-mail correspondence following the performance.

(Questions to the collaborator will follow 'Q,' and answers from the collaborators will follow 'A.')

3.1. Roy Boswell – Sound Design/Dramaturgic Advisor

Roy Boswell is a Helsinki-based sculptor, performance maker, writer and translator. They also are a sound designer, which was the initial the impetus for my reaching out to them to collaborate. The nature of Roy's engagement in this process went far beyond the scope of my assumed approach a sound designer would take. Their expansive understanding of performance and their sensitivity to the artistic nuances of their collaborators led to a role that would include dramaturgical advice. While their primary role for this process was to design sound, in this interview, the nature of my questioning was designed to allow for their eclectic knowledge to hold space.

Q: Because you're also a sculptor, as well as a sound designer, if you were to imagine a sculpture that would be inspired from this process, how would you describe it?

A: I think there are some things that are more readily expressed through actions and other time-sensitive things, or perhaps more precisely ideas show different sides of themselves in a dance or in a sound, other than what we'd see in a sculpture. The way of viewing it is different too, as the spectator's attention can be drawn more precisely when the work is something they are (ideally?) concentrated on as part of a captive audience. A sculpture in a gallery has to rely on being understood in a much less mutually engaged way, and its way of being perceived relies on a different set of rules. I think the stage in particular possesses a unique directness in the way it communicates ideas: more so than objects, more so than even music (which can induce emotional states or introspection etc., but remains rather abstract, especially when there isn't discernible spoken or sung language involved). I suppose literature comes close - as it can be very exact - but even then, it falls short of the vast sea of complexities of seemingly simple things happening on stage, like just seeing a person think. I don't really believe that pictures are worth a thousand words, but I think the way someone moves has the power to express things that other art forms usually can't. The social aspect of seeing another person on stage and the fine-tuning of all the complicated cues that we are able to read in our interactions with one another can make the way things are expressed in performance extremely precise. A level of

interpretation is always present, but I think to abstract things in a performance can be seen as a choice of reduction, whereas with sculptures, the communication of a seemingly simple idea becomes harder, and you have to rely more on other object-based ways of communicating - abstract or figurative images, symbols, surface texture, a sense of weight, and so on. All of these constituent parts can be used to form a vocabulary, just like movement material in a dance, but the way they speak is different. I suppose many of the ways of communicating an idea through an object could be applied to a dance, but I'm not sure if danced things can be expressed in objects as easily. Sculpture is kind of a restricted palette – I believe it's important to be quite exact and wary of oversaturating the material with too much conflicting information - something which I think can sometimes come out as a lovely sensory abundance of intermingling material in performance. We're so readily primed as people to read the minutiae of facial expressions and body language that we aren't at such a risk of getting lost in it, I suppose. Maybe finding a balance of meaning is important when you run the risk of making things unclear. Similar ideas apply when making music: as you compose, you try to get a balance of things.

I don't suppose making a performance or a piece of music is that dissimilar from sculpture really (the composer Elliott Carter talks about thinness and thickness of texture in music, for example – everything has materiality); essentially, you're carving out the same kinds of things in time when you edit or reduce or steep in something. That's a kind of sculpting too. You start with something - a material, an idea - then you refine it, and at the end of the process you have the completed work.

If I were to imagine a sculpture to stand in place of your piece (not to replace it, but to communicate some of its ideas in a sculptural way) it would be made of very finely sanded large pieces of driftwood lying partially submerged in a bed of cornflour tinted very lightly with pastel shades. I think I would like to paint some of the wood with house paints, but in very muted tones: washed out Tuymans colours. I would like to include used ice lolly sticks and bubblegum wrappers and other beach trash hidden among the driftwood, lacquered with a shiny acrylic varnish, as well as small, strongly scented, perfumed soy wax sculptures. Vaguely figurative human-like shapes. I'd like it all to be in a transparent perspex container about 30cm high, with the cornflour filling it to within about 5cm of the top. The container should be wide and long enough to almost fill a small room so that people could walk around the installation leaving about 1.5m

between the wall and the artwork on all sides. If it was shown in a large room, there should be plenty of room left around the installation, the maximum size of the container in this case should be about 4 x 5 meters. The container should be slightly raised from the floor, but only by about 10 centimeters. It should be shown in daylight if possible. It feels quite strange to try to imagine what a sculpture would look like in this way as it isn't how I would normally approach work. Also, some of the materials I mention are ones I've thought about before, ones I've worked with recently. I also think about it from the perspective of the American Dream we talked about, destruction of habitat, colonialism, ethnomusicologists going out into the field to record the songs of cultures that are dying out precisely because of the presence of the culture that created ethnomusicology. A destructive force that (sometimes even empathetically) records itself as it razes everything around it to the ground. I know this isn't what the work was specifically about and there were many other aspects to it... But that's what has stayed with me on some level, and perhaps what I think about in relation to it right now, after some time to reflect. The curiosity and a yearning for new information and a sense of wonder - all very human, very beautiful - and how it has this rather dark side to it. On the other hand, I think what we made together has a sculptural aura in itself - particularly in the naming of things, the cornflour in the air and the final sequence with the objects. All these come together in my mind and form a kind of complete whole, in that way a mental or imaginary sculpture.

Q: You have referred to the idea of imagined sound as a part of your artistic considerations. I've been thinking about this, about where sound is and what it is. I find it difficult to restrict sound to its physical description of vibrations passing through matter between an object and a subject. What are your thoughts on this and did you find this consideration within this process?

A: I think my art practice is very material-oriented and I try to think of sound as a material, one amongst many that I use in my work. It isn't really any different from any of the other things that comprise an object. I have this scale of materials that I tend to use, with hard materials at one end (things like stone, glass or wood), progressing through to softer things (like wax or soap), then even softer materials that don't really hold a shape any longer (vaseline, oils, vapour) - then even further into immaterial

materials (light, text, music). The scale goes like this from hard, to soft, to immaterial, but I've noticed that all these materials increase in their time-basedness the further down the scale we go. Nothing is permanent, everything has a duration - it's just that the harder the material is, the longer it takes for it to change.

Imagined sound is at the far end of the immaterial materials; something I equate to the act of reading to yourself, or an imagined thing that can simply be suggested, and that can be enough. It can be enough to just think about what a butterfly's wings would sound like right next to your ear. That sort of thing. I'm also very interested in the point where the immaterial things just cease to exist. Where is the cutoff point? Maybe this is one reason why I'm quite opposed to producing audible things as a sound designer, or why it takes me time to get to the point where I'm comfortable with that. It's almost certainly partly to do with being influenced by people like John Cage, Jakob Ullmann, Alvin Lucier or Rolf Julius - these artists that I love that all dedicated their lives to the (nearly) invisible things: and perhaps that's where the most important things are, on that knife edge of existing and not existing.

3.2. Suvi Kajas – Costume Design

I met Suvi while working on a school project called, “The Big Stage Project”, which was a large collaboration incorporating actors, choreographers, directors, dramaturgs, light, sound and costume design. The thematic focus was located between ‘Romeo and Juliet’ and ‘West Side Story.’ Suvi’s curation for costume, which were all previously made costumes pulled from the theatre wardrobe, as there was no budget or time for building costumes, were vibrant, unique, bold, and nuanced. Her approach to collaboration expressed a sensitivity that supported the vision of the work while maintaining a unique signature that not only elevated the whole process but also inspired my artistic choices as a choreographer.

Her artistic input to “Untitled Landscape” was paramount to its fruition. The skin of the figure was grown out her vision, and wearing this skin, as a performer, enabled me to discover who and what this figure was.

Q: How did you collaborate with the director (Ryan) to bring your ideas to life?

A: The process of ideation had started early on with the director. First from conversations and pictures and movie references that were given to me by the director. Then by trying out different things throughout the process. All decisions were made together and that's how they were brought to life.

As costume designer I believe the costume should be designed as much together with the performer as possible. It's my work of art and its tool for your work at the same time. So of course, the more comfortable you are in it, the better my work looks like.

Working with someone's body and all the identity costume can carry is very sensitive, I want to be aware of that because I know how much what person is wearing effects to whole being of that person. Since you told us early on, this is going to be a lot about you as a choreographer, I took extra care in letting you have a lot of room to search what this could be through costume choices made by you. I can never know how it is to be you, only you know after all.

When at one point it looked like you were going to do that very vulnerable improvisation on finding magical moments, I thought the most important thing in your costume should be that you feel comfortable in it enough for it to help you to get into that mood. I was pleased you found clothing from my offerings, that you could form relaxed and safe looking relationship with. Usually costume designers can get annoyed when performer gets keen on the clothing that are given to them to practice with but in this case, I encouraged you to do that.

I felt confident, I could then design something to the costume to make it fit the performance better, whatever it's going to be. When I formed the idea of making the overall look like it's turning into something growing, I could see the idea resonating with the director and when the director could see the placement of the growing bigger in the back and really small in the front I could see it too, and this decision was made together also.

Q: What was your experience with working with different materialities in this process?

A: This is kind of difficult to grasp. There were a lot of different materialities. I look inspiration from lights and sounds and the movement. It's very complicated process because those things also change a little bit all the time and then I see if I need to adjust. And then there were the brief philosophical discussions, the curtains and the objects on stage. And my favorite materiality - the flour we put in the costume. I had been fantasizing of a costume that is made by something else than fabrics and clothing for some time. I left holes to the plant like things hoping something could come out of there. I thought about putting lights in there or the cloud like stuffing coming out of there. I dreamed smoke would come out of there also so I was excited on us finding that we could put flour on the things in the costume. It was my favorite thing. At first, I questioned, would it look too much like just a trick but soon I saw that flour could make the costume breath and it was magical. An actual cloud being part of the costume. I'm so grateful Roy brought that flour, it made my dream come true. And how you used that effect in your choreography didn't make it look like a cheap trick but it was elegantly joined to the choreograph.

I also took inspiration from the metal curtains in creating metal surface that also looked like a surface on moon and put it in the back of your head in the wet suit.

Q: You mentioned that you were used to working with directors that were clearer with their starting concept or that worked from a narrative. Something more in the lines of traditional theatre. How was it working in this process, which was pretty much the opposite of that?

A: Because I have done theater plays in the past I'm used to getting impulses for my ideas from the script or themes or narrative that are given to me. This is also how I tried to work here. I tried to understand something about ADHD to get ideas from there and then I tried to understand how your mind works since the piece was going to be so personal.

Usually I could start making sketches and sewing work done more early on. But in this case, when we are exploring not knowing, I had to adjust to your pace. Because I had talked with Hänninen and with the wardrobe staff I knew early on that I'm probably not going to know what the piece is about until the very end of the rehearsal period. This is usually considered unfair in our field of work and seamstresses and designers feel that directors do not understand how much time is needed to make costumes. So, my plan was from the start to just figure out something technically simple enough that it could be done in a short time.

Doing choices on what to offer to your costume felt like fishing in an ocean. I felt like I had to be very patient, see what kind of things you grasp on and wait for the potential ideas to come from there. I didn't want to get nervous and start forcing things to happen. I was afraid of trying bunch of stuff that would not work and could cause unnecessary confusion. I wanted to save myself from that because going to school while doing this was tiring enough.

In that case, I noticed my way of working was almost opposite to Roy's. I observed that his way was to bring a lot of stuff and try out many different things based on his own interests, and things were born from there. Surprising things. I thought I could learn from him and, in the future, try more of this approach also.

Q: How did you feel when you saw the final “product?”

A: *When I saw the final product, I felt content. I thought the costume and the choreography worked together in a beautiful way. I felt the costume gave layers to the work and made the piece more whole.*

One reason they worked together was that the costume repeated some of the action in the choreography. You could see a surface of a landscape in the costume as you saw the choreographer observing imaginary landscapes. Different people told me they thought they saw different kinds of landscapes in the surface of the costume. Some said they saw mountains, some that they saw tipis, some saw shells and some plants. Mostly people saw some kind of mixture of things like my niece who though the costume had plants on

it that were also volcanos. (There were also many other things people saw like guns and blisters) Using working clothes like the diving suit and painters' overalls also probably gave the piece the theme of doing some kind of work. It was a thought that inspired you and it also gave room to imagine things for the audience. Like our producer whose eyes shimmering, enthusiastically told me she saw there a mad scientist doing mad experiments.

I personally thought the costume told about the idea of seeing organic where people usually see inorganic like in the mechanical and electrical stuff you worked with during the rehearsal period. I thought it showed time. Creature so forgotten, it had started to grow something like moss on a stone. Like abandoned objects on the woods start to become part of nature when they have been there long enough

4. CHAPTER 4: VISTA

Considering the conceptual features of the four terrains, it is important to acknowledge that this survey is partial and personal to my relationship with the work of the artists and their ideas. Spending more time with each of these artists' work would reveal conceptual relationships and features that could be cross-referenced, each deserving deeper research. However, the motivation behind these examinations was to expose the variety of conceptual layers contained in 'Untitled Landscape.'

'Untitled Landscape' can be considered a work that reveals meaning through abstraction, asking how the invisible can be perceived beyond the primary senses and rendered within the imagination. In the terrains, I have referred to different artists as a way to reflect on my artistic process, less as a way to define what that process is than as a way to filter the dance-making experience through the perspective of my influences.

In the visual diary of 'Untitled Landscape,' my intention is to provide a contextual reference to the creative underpinnings of the work, including its thematic viewpoints, its abstract narrative, and the ways I chose to combine a variety of approaches—hyper-detailed bodily expression, complex spatial-temporal-material relationships, deconstruction, and reconstruction of the identity of objects—forming contemplative landscapes of meaning.

In 'Untitled Landscape,' an enigmatic body takes on the role of a complex vessel of meaning, representation, and abstraction. Deborah Hay has revealed the body to be a culmination of corporeal awareness able to perceive multiple experiences within itself, a body that is materialized through a process of self-reflection and simultaneous action. Philipp Gehmacher refers to a body of context that reveals itself against its environment as well as within its observer—a physique rendered by its interpretation. Gehmacher's body reveals its plasticity through its relation to other materials and rhythmic entanglements between space and time. This body is occupied not only by the mind of its inherent resident but also as a site of kinaesthetic, intellectual, and emotional experience for its observer.

We also see that the spaces we look through are not as intangible as they would appear to be. Gregory Whitehead reveals the materiality of the space between the viewpoint and the body in transit—the dense atmosphere containing elements of personal histories that obscure and texturize the senses as they pass through these void-like forums. Erika

Fische-Lichte's writing shows us that these places are complex ecologies of multiple bodies entangled in relationships, reliant upon each other's co-presence to exist.

The interview section exposes more intimate perspectives and approaches to the creation of 'Untitled Landscape.' Through it we can see that it doesn't originate from a single authorship but is formed in collaboration. Even though it is a solo performance and its motivation to be created comes from a single person, a multiplicity of bodies live and express themselves within the work.

This written portion of the thesis has revealed that 'Untitled Landscape' was not only a representation of process but is, in its performance, a process. The material of 'Untitled Landscape' was made through the relationship of several identities, which were enacted in its performance in conversation with its audience. My intention is that the experience of the work conveys a transference of meaning, a journey of discovery.

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