

(writings on) ...like crazy

Reflections on dance making and performing with
Maja and Sonja.

By Jacqueline Darby Aylward



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

ABSTRACT

DATE: 21/04/2023

AUTHOR Jacqueline Aylward	MASTER'S OR OTHER DEGREE PROGRAMME Masters of Dance and Performance
TITLE OF THE WRITTEN COMPONENT/THESIS (writings on) ...like crazy - reflections on dance making and performing with Maja and Sonja.	NUMBER OF PAGES + APPENDICES IN THE WRITTEN COMPONENT 46 pages + 1 appendices
TITLE OF THE ARTISTIC/ ARTISTIC AND PEDAGOGICAL WORK <i>...like crazy</i> Co-dance makers Sonja Karoliina Aaltonen and Maja Kalafatić Lighting designed in collaboration with Lauri Hietala Costume designer Kasia Gornik Sound designer Lauri Kallio Produced within the context of TADaCollective Premiering Theatre Academy Helsinki January 30th 2023 The artistic work is produced by the Theatre Academy. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The artistic work is not produced by the Theatre Academy (copyright matters have been agreed upon). <input type="checkbox"/> There is no recording available for the artistic work. <input type="checkbox"/> The final project can be published online. This permission is granted for an unlimited duration. YES The abstract of the final project can be published online. This permission is granted for an unlimited duration. YES	
<p>In the written part of my thesis I reflect upon my personal history and qualities as a dancer and dance maker. I unpack how this functions in my recent collaborative performance making. I situate myself within both Australian and European contexts and discuss some of the particular qualities and difficulties of this. I am critical of the universalising tendencies in Contemporary and Postmodern dancemakers and theoreticians arguing in favour of a more specific discourse. I attempt to model this in my own writing.</p> <p>Throughout the written thesis I use the artistic part of my thesis <i>...like crazy</i> (2023) as a focal point for discussing themes and topics. The images included in the thesis come from professional photography taken of artistic work, from rehearsals and of screenshots of personal messages. I use mainly artistic references to situate my work because this is the body of knowledge through which much of my understanding has been formed - in particular I look to Mette Invargten's <i>50/50</i>. I touch upon Post-Lacanian and Deleuzian theories of the singularity to broaden my discussion of solo dance. I include Susan Sontag's explanation of Camp as a possible way to categorise some of the artistic work. I turn to my fellow dance maker Maja Kalafatić to bring in a different inside perspective of the working and cite personal feedback from my peers to help see my work from the outside place. Throughout the writing there are my personal reflections upon and descriptions of dance and dance making. Overall, my approach is that of an artist writing within the context of academia and the style of writing/performative authorial voice is a product of this. I encourage my reader to also take their own approach to the text.</p> <p>In the first chapter, titled <i>Looking through lineage</i>, I have an autobiographical approach. Opening understandings of contemporary dance, postmodern dance, Camp and the impact of working with First Nations choreographers.</p> <p>In the second chapter, I discuss solo dance making and performing. I use my <i>naked dance</i> in <i>...like crazy</i> as a central pivot point. In this chapter I discuss the broader topics of dance making, solo dance and singularity. Here I make use of post-Lacanian and Deleuzian thinking. I also explain how I personally approach dance making through a mixture of choreography and improvisation. Finally, I place solo dance in relation to the social and more than human world.</p> <p>The third chapter is my favourite. I discuss and reflect upon my collaboration with Maja and Sonja. I discuss our way of working as being driven by desire and reflecting the approach outlined in Audre Lorde's <i>Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power</i>. I look at what did and didn't work so well in our process and consider the role of witnessing in our work.</p> <p>In the last chapter I take up the specific theme of naked dancing. I give some context, attend to other dancers talking about dancing naked and then outline my own experiences. I end by considering naked dancing and the audience's gaze. Here I introduce Laura Mulvey's gaze theory and open up how I act as a spectator of naked dance through a personal anecdote of watching Mette Invargsten's performance of <i>69 positions</i>.</p> <p>To conclude I summarise my writing and look towards upcoming artistic outcomes that grow from the artistic and written thesis. I propose for myself ways in which this upcoming work can be informed by what has come before and become something other.</p>	
KEYWORDS Dance, dance making, collaboration, collective, naked, nudity, contemporary, postmodern, solo dance, singularity, camp, gaze theory, Naarm, love letter, Sonja Karoliina Aaltonen, Maja Kalafatić, TADaCollective, <i>...like crazy</i>	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement of country	2
General acknowledgements	3
INTRODUCTION: a letter	4
1. Looking through lineage	6
1.1 Contemporary dance training - what exactly that was for me	7
1.2 The problem of the “quotidian” body in postmodern dance	9
1.3 Dancing within First Nations contexts in Naarm	10
1.4 Ponderosa - Camp	12
1.5 European Australian in Finland	15
2. Solo dancing: the singularity and enmeshment	17
2.1 Dance making	17
2.2 Making the naked dance - love letter score	18
2.3 Making the naked dance - echoes of previous dances	20
2.4 Singularity	23
2.5 Enmeshment	25
3. Working together with Maja and Sonja	29
3.1 Difference cohabiting the performance	30
3.2 How we worked together	31
3.3 How Maja and Sonja explain it: another letter, some writings and a song	33
3.4 Challenges in working	35
3.5 Disappearing at the edges and performing witnessing	37
4. Extracted theme of nakedness and dance	38
4.1 Dancers reflecting on naked dancing	38
4.2 Personal reflections on naked dancing	40
4.3 The spectator gaze and naked dancing	42
P.s. Conclusion or what is the afterlife?	45
References	47
Appendix	54
1. A vomit text	54

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

My first 28 years were spent based in Naarm (Melbourne), Australia, on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. I would like to take space to acknowledge these traditional custodians of the lands on which I lived, worked and danced. I want to pay respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their Elders past, present and emerging. I acknowledge that in Australia I dance and write on unceded land and that even when I leave to live, work and study elsewhere I maintain a strong connection to this beautiful land and its difficulties in the past, present and future.

GENERAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Thank you Teak Staff, in particular Jana Unmüßig (my supervisor for the written thesis), Simo Kellokumpu (my supervisor for the artistic thesis) and Eeva Muilu (the program supervisor). Thank you examiners Leena Rouhiainen and Pier Kär. Thank you co ...*like crazy* dance makers Sonja Karoliina Aaltonen and Maja Kalafatić - you are my biggest inspiration babes xxx. Thank you other members of TADaCollective: Iris Blauberg, Arttu Halmetoja, Lauri Hietala, Kasia Gornik and Lauri Kallio for being on the journey together. Kisses and thanks to mun kulta, Jesse Ojajärvi. Thank you to my family: Mum, Dad, Bren, Nicci and their partners/pets. Big hugs to my supportive friends and lovers. Finally, thank you to all the dancers I've danced with and for, in particular the other Dance and Performance MA students.

Thanks, Personal Communication, Photographer/Screenshotter: Jacqueline Aylward

INTRODUCTION: A LETTER

Dear reader,

This written artistic thesis is a personal reflection based upon my work as a dancer/co-dance maker in the artistic thesis *...like crazy*. This work was made with dancers Maja Kalafatić and Sonja Karoliina Aaltonen, with the support of Kasia Gorniak (costume design), Lauri Kallio (sound design), Lauri Heitala (light design) and within the wider context of TADaCollective (involving dancers Iris Blauberg and Arttu Halmetoja). Due to the fact that there were a few different versions and improvised elements in the performance I will comment specifically on one performance: the matinee that took place on 6th February 2023, at Theatre Hall of the Theatre Academy of University of Arts in Helsinki, Finland. I will open up the creative process for this project and other practices or performances in which I have been involved that feel relevant. For example, I take significant time at the start of this thesis to reflect and unpack my personal dance history (including my training) to help reveal the ground from which I make and discuss my current context.

This writing process is an exercise for me to reflect upon what I do and the effect it has - to learn more about the craft of dancing, making, performing and co-being. I am writing as an artist working within the frame of academia and the mix of formalism, casualness and performativity in my writing style reflects this. This writing connects with other people's writings (of theoretical and artistic kinds) and performances in an attempt to better understand itself and to feel out its place. It does not claim to do this task exhaustively, but earnestly. It sits in concert with the thesis writings of artistic collaborators Maja and Sonja whose work I recommend reading if you wish to understand more about *...like crazy*. Throughout I use a lot of artistic references to position and unpack my work and key ideas that emerge from reflecting upon it. This is a conscious movement which supports my belief that in artistic work there is valuable knowledge.

Finally, as well as being a reflective exercise and an attempt at finding situatedness, this text is also an offering to you, the reader. Feel free to meet it as you like: chronologically, in small parts, look only at the pictures or whatever else. I would be happy if this writing could lead to a conversation, a dance or an anonymous love note.

Yours,

Jacqui

xxx

1. LOOKING THROUGH LINEAGE

“the relationship between convention and invention has become really interesting to me, and how you kind of navigate that relationship. Because that includes the kind of historical situatedness of where you learned what you learned... it kind of links the past to this idea of, we're always making new conventions.” - Rebecca Hilton (2020, 25)

Understanding where my dancing comes from and to what traditions, conventions and genres my performing now speaks is one key way in which I will open up ...*like crazy*. I do this because it proposes to me a direction of working in which singularities (a concept I will open up later on in the thesis) emerge from somewhere, amongst other things and towards divergent horizons. Additionally, as Rebecca Hilton comments, this recognition of the passing of culture is an alternative direction to a culture of production and consumption where the new is unsustainably fetishized (Hilton, 2020, 25). I enjoy the process because it makes space for me to consciously reconnect with all the dancing, talking about dancing and witnessing dance I've done with others. It is difficult because within this personal history there are points of unresolved confusion, curiosity and tensions I have as a performing body - largely in relation to my position as a European Australian who now lives in Finland.

Throughout ...*like crazy* I recognize that I am drawing from my personal dance lineage that formed as a European Australian born and raised in Naarm; who spent some time in Stolzenhagen, Germany and currently has residence in Helsinki, Finland. I am performing in a variety of modes learnt from these contexts, specifically postmodern and contemporary dance as well as Camp. I identify both postmodern and contemporary dance as categories that require some unpacking so as to situate them within specific performing traditions and current practices. This is a movement against the universalising tendency of these categories which can be blind to, or simply not interested in articulating, their own specificity and recognising alternative positions. I see myself at times as working complicit with this universalism, clumsily and unconscious of my identity, and sometimes able to make and perform with more awareness, generative criticality and hope.

1.1 Contemporary dance training - what exactly that was for me

I trained in “contemporary” dance at The Victorian College of the Arts in Naarm (2014 - 2016). Here I studied a range of formal techniques including: Classical ballet, Release Technique based dance, Cunningham, Modern dance, Contact Improvisation and Skinner Release based kinesiology. Teachers, choreographers and dancers I met there included: Rebecca Hilton, Lee Searle, Sandra Parker, Brooke Stamp, Phillip Adams (all connected to the contemporary dance scene of 90s and early 2000s New York, Trisha Brown, Stephen Petronio, Sarah Rudner etc.) and Prue Lang (a key collaborator of the Frankfurt based American choreographer William Forsythe). These people affected me in terms of defining notions of dance technique and developing a type of virtuosity. In particular at this school I experienced a strong and largely uncritical focus on postmodern dance as both constituting dance history and informing current dance and choreographic practice. In general I would say that I came out of my “contemporary” dance training with a confused combination of unaffected gestural minimalism, energetic release technique based 'dancey dance' (quick, abstract and complicated movement patterns) and hyper articulate formalism.

One notable anomaly in this education was a performance project *Poetry in Motion* (2015) made with the choreographer Mariaa Randall (a Gidabul, Gulibul and Yaegl dance maker) who didn't offer an alternative movement practice but rather an alternative choreographic scaffold. The thematics of the work were connected to female empowerment. The work was informed by notions of solo dance as being made in duets of support and performed within a form of concentric rings of witnessing and holding space - ideas drawn from Randall's experiences of how dance functions within her community. In *Poetry in Motion* I was not a 'neutral' dancing body but an individual who had the capacity to practise supportive community structures and collaborate on thinking around and moving towards female empowerment. I see some echoes of this working structure in the ...*like crazy* process and performance to be further opened later on in the thesis writing.

When writing more generally on the contemporary art field Dutch art theoreticians Geoff Cox and Jacob Lund propose that the contemporary is not only “our era, the time in which we live” but also “a modal or experiential category in the sense that it is a

particular relationship to time and to history, or maybe an experience of a loss of history, of a loss of a futural moment” (Cox and Lund, 2016, 9). While throughout their writing the authors do stress the multiplicity of differing senses of time in the contemporary which they say is “constituted by the bringing together of a multitude of different temporalities on different scales, including different grand narratives and imagined communities of nation-states and cultural clusters” (Cox and Lund, 2016, 9) I would argue that at some points they narrow down their position by speaking of “a particular relationship to time and history” (Cox and Lund, 2016, 9). If we really hold space for the multiple differences Cox and Lund describe then there is no one clear contemporary relation to time, to history or its loss. In Australia, for example, the loss of history experienced by First Nations people and their children who were part of the Stolen Generation (a government policy that was in place 1905 -1970s and saw the forcible removal of children from their families and culture whose effects are ongoing) is of a very different nature to the loss of history described by Cox and Lund. I would suggest that what the authors are mainly describing in their work is informed by their particular context within Europe and that when they start to frame contemporary as one "particular" kind of relationship to history, willingly or not, they silence marginalised voices.

Likewise, Armen Avanesian and Suhail Malik, writing from the position of Austrian and British academia, when describing the post-contemporary as the contemporary condition claim that “(w)e no longer have a linear time, in the sense of the past being followed by the present and then the future. It’s rather the other way around: the future happens before the present, time arrives from the future” (Avanesian and Malik, 2016, 7). Avanesian and Malik locate as the departure point an unacknowledged position of the Euclidean sense of time and space. Through the use of the word “we” it seems to me that they include all humans - though this is not made entirely clear in the text. Again if I look to include the position of some Australian First Nations peoples and if I recall the storytelling of Emily Johnson (a choreographer of Yup'ik descent who I will talk more about later in this chapter) - time is circular. As Sara Kianga Judge, a neurodiverse Walbanja-Yuin woman from Burrumattagal Country, explains: “(f)or First Nations people, stories and lifecycles don’t need to have a beginning and an ending because they happen continuously in circles and patterns” (Kianga Judge, 2022). Here there is no

linearity for the post-contemporary to invert and so making claims about the time(s) we live in becomes more difficult. I would suggest that the cultural constructions of time (as with history), with the multiple personal and community based variations of what that is and how it functions, render notions of the contemporary and post-contemporary opaque and slippery.

In an attempt to avoid this tendency of universalism I will lean more towards looking at the specific relatedness, modes of performing and aspects of currentness to which I feel ...*like crazy* belongs. Inspired by the thinking of writers like Adrienne Rich I will consider my work within the frame of a politics of location: to understand it as the work of particular people in a particular place which is relevant for their communities and open to anyone who is interested in it, agreeing that everything is moving in a particular mode and all bodies host identity politics and practising acknowledging that (Rich, 1984, 230).

1.2 The problem of the “quotidian” body in postmodern dance

I turn now to postmodern dance technique/performing and the way that this is often problematically presented as neutral while actually adhering to a very specific aesthetic regime. Of postmodern dance, Finnish scholar of cultural history Hanna Järvinen explains, the term “depends on definitions of American modern dance” and works to “focus attention on hegemonic white bodies in a manner that aestheticises the political and conceals presumptions about what kinds of corporealities are accepted as “quotidian”” (Järvinen, 2017, 26). In such a way, the style of “quotidian” or “ordinary” movement that was adopted in Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A* (1966) or Simon Forti's *Dance Constructions* (1961) was not neutral. As work done from the late 90s, like that of Brenda Dixon Gottschild (*Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance*, 1996) and Ann Cooper Albright (*Choreographing Difference: The body and identity in Contemporary Dance*, 1997), shows: “the space for dance within American postmodernism was shaped by the white bodies that inhabited it, and was thus 'oriented 'around' whiteness, insofar as whiteness [was] not seen' within its habitus” (Chaleff 2007, 157). So when I locate myself within the postmodern dance tradition I am connecting to a tradition of performing that is from white America, a tradition that (alongside classical ballet) had privileged space in my Naarm dance training institution.

Specific moments in ...*like crazy* that I connect to this tradition of non-theatrical, minimalistic 'neutrality' in my performance were scattered throughout the work. They include: when I take my clothes off onstage, when I put my clothes back on onstage, when I put away the microphone and adjust the lamps and finally when I help roll up the dance mat. The quality of doing and being during these moments feels very practical to me, it feels energetically dropped and close to the everyday, it is largely task based and has a concrete and conventional relationship to object use. In general, throughout the performing I had the experience of clicking out of more theatrical and noticeably affected modes of performing during these sections. Somedays I would feel more at home or based in the theatrical mode of performing e.g. the vomiting, hair pulling and naked dancing. Other days I felt more easeful, rearranging the lamps. It was quite dependent on my energy levels and general connection to a sense of creative/imaginative expressivity.

In our performance-making me, Sonja and Maja welcomed this mode of performing to co-exist with other states e.g. the emotional, the strange and the theatrical. Changing clothes, for example, happened in a few different ways. There was the simplistic and practical mode (performed by all three of us after the vomiting), there was the hidden magic of the theatre mode (performed by Maja when she appears for her solo wearing the big red jacket, gloves and stocking), there is the dramatic (adopted by Maja during her solo dance and by Sonja when Maja brings to them the suit jacket and helps to put it on with Sonja already working in their altered floaty, thick air solo dance state). In the examples of dressing or undressing the approaches are at once all facade and all sincere. Adopting any of one of these modes, including the simplistic and practical, was speaking to a tradition which has a particular virtuosity and politics. In our making it was hoped that each mode or state is exposed as equally constructed by the dancers and the designers. However, though we were conscious of the constructed nature of the non-theatrical 'neutral' performing actions, upon reflection our performance ultimately did little to address the politics of performing this mode.

1.3 Dancing within First Nations contexts in Naarm

Upon leaving school there were other people and influences with whom I was involved artistically in periods of creative process and performance who had more diverse backgrounds and acknowledged specificity in their work. Here, through engaging in creative processes that worked with the particular themes and concerns of a variety of First Nations choreographers/performers I was able to understand, through lived experience, the way in which dance could be a space where my European Australian performing body could work towards decolonisation in the local and international context.

When working as a dancer for Victoria Hunt (her tribal affiliations are to Te Arawa, Rongowhakaata, Ngāti Kahungunu Maori, English, Finnish and Irish) in the re-staging of her work *Tangi Wai...the cry of water* (2017) I was part of a group of dancers who together helped build the images of the work whereby “audiences are transported to the Maori realm of spirits Te Arai” (Hunt, 2017). This was “an arduous passage at the precipice of human existence and the afterlife. Here, messengers from the past, bodies abandoned by spirit and urged by unknown forces, transform mythology into flesh and bone” (Hunt, 2017). The work was supported by training and performing dance methods from Body Weather (a dance form developed by Min Tanaka in Japan in the 1980s), this technique was new to me and I enjoyed the use of imagination scores (or image flows) as choreography. Previously, I had only used this kind of approach to moving in Skinner Release styled exercises in a training context that was aimed at achieving greater ease and range in movement. In this work my role was to use my dancing skills to bring to life Hunt’s vision and story. To help her mourn the death of her grandmother (whose ashes the British Museum refused to return) through a public performance.

In working with Emily Johnson (of Yup'ik descent) on her work *SHORE: in Naarm* (2017) I was also taking on a premade role. In this work Emily brings together her Yup'ik and Northern American culture in dialogue with that of the local Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and other non-Indigenous locals to create multiple points of gathering, share stories and feel together. My part in the work was originally performed by Krista Langberg in Lenapehoking (New York). In a written reflection of the

performance Jacqueline Murphy, who was involved in the production of the performance commented “Aretha and Krista are gone. And yet they are not fully gone: I see flashes of them in the two new dancers, like when Krista’s clawlike hands appear on one of the dancers, the young woman with a ponytail just for an instant” (Murphy, 2017). I find it interesting to read the way in which my body is channelling another in performance - somehow helping to bring a story from another land to Naarm. From the creative process with Emily Johnson I learnt psychic storytelling techniques that I can see influencing my dancing in ...*like crazy* when I am holding the microphone and silently commentating Maja and Sonja’s rubbing duet. I also learnt more of Emily’s cultural understanding of time and space and how these can inform the storytelling and poetry of performance.

Through these two dancing and performance experiences I understood more that there could be something at stake in performance, that there were many methods to approach choreography. There was so much you could do in a performance aside from throwing your limbs around (though I do remain a big fan of throwing my limbs around). Dancing bodies have the potential to move the political and work towards healing deep cultural and personal wounds.

1.4 Ponderosa - Camp

Following my postmodern inspired contemporary dance training and eclectic working period in Naarm I took a bit of a break from my Naarm dance context and spent time in Ponderosa. Ponderosa is a pluralistic performance art/dance centre in the German countryside that was originally set up by a group of contact improvisation practitioners in the 90s who were connected to Berlin and West Coast North America. I was there Summer 2017/Spring 2019 first as a student but then as hired help. I was at one point working with Kathleen Hermensdorf (in the context of Fake Company), often fan-girling Stephanie Maher and hanging out. Diva culture, hyper expression, queer being, non-dogmatic self-reflexive magic - these elements, already a part of my sensibility, emerged more fully in my performing after my time at Ponderosa and I believe it is this period that most heavily informs the Camp and funny aspects of my performing.

Of Camp, Susan Sontag writes: “(t)he essence of camp is its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration” (Sontag, 2018, 1). She states it is a “sensibility that, among other things, converts the serious into the frivolous” (Sontag, 2018, 1). In her 1970 manifesto Yvonne Rainer said “no to camp” (Rainer, 1964). In her 2004 solo *50/50* Mette Ingvarstsen, in manifesto format, said yes in response to everything Rainer said no to (Ingvarstsen, 2016, 50). She claims it “as a strategy ... (for) defining an area of interest as a positive of rather than a negation” and opening up choices that would be consciously adopted in making work (Ingvarstsen, 2016, 50). She does not include Camp in her manifesto. However, in *50/50*, which is performed naked wearing runners and sometimes an orange curly wig, there are Camp elements. I see Camp in her delivery of exaggerated gestures and emotional vocal and movement material drawn from opera that unashamedly pushes past limits “good taste” (Grady, 2019) and even moves towards elements of clownery. Like much of Ingvarstsen’s work in *50/50* there is a playful subversion of the conventional use of nudity in performance and in society more broadly. As she explains in *69 positions* “(i)n this work nudity is worn as a costume. It is made very clear by the shoes and the wig (bright orange and covering her whole face) that we are not dealing with a natural nudity, nor with a liberatory nudity” (Ingvarstsen, 2016, 49 - 51). It is Camp nudity intent upon converting the serious into the frivolous in a conscientious manner.

In Constance Grady’s Vox article *Camp, the theme of this year’s Met Gala, is almost impossible to define. Here’s our best effort* it is said that “camp has no interest in traditional ideas of beauty or good taste. It wants exuberant fakery. It wants spectacle...it loves itself even as it parodies itself” (Grady, 2019). In my performance costume elements and movement vocabulary that indulge and love themselves in the indulgence produce Camp or at least something that is Campy. For part of this dance I am naked but wearing costume items: colourful fake eyelashes and nails covered in different scraps of material (so long they flop), a Norwegian cowbell made into a necklace using a shoelace and Adidas runners (as seen in the accompanying image). Like Ingvarstsen’s shoes and wig, these elements turn the nudity away from the naturalist and the classical into something more playfully gaudy and hyper feminine. In terms of dramaturgy this part goes on and on for probably too long and in terms of movement vocabulary it slips into the verbosity of flailing limbs, preparation postures and

diagonally leaps which produces a sense of too muchness and ornamentation - this I commit to and celebrate. The soundscore is also working to support this reading, there is a fake crackling fire, fake owl hoots, extravagant trills of the mandolin and a dramaturgy of hanging out in the middleness for ages.



...like crazy, TADaCollective. Photographer: Raphael Beau



Nails closeup, Personal Communication,

Photographer/Screenshotter: Jacqueline Aylward

The film scholar and author Pamela Wojcik explains that “Camp tends to live at the borders of gender: at the extremes, where gender becomes so hyperbolic as to seem artificial, and in the middle, where gender boundaries become ambiguous and androgyny reigns” (Grady, 2019). I agree with Wojcik that Camp can conventionally be found at the extremes of gender but would explain Camp’s effect on the reading of gender differently. Since, as Judith Butler explains all “gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceeded; rather it is an identity tenuously constructed in time...(through) the illusion of an abiding gendered self” (Butler, 1990, 519) Camp’s play with extremes that suggest artifice draws attention to the constructed nature of *any* gender.

In *..like crazy* playful gender readings were developed in a few ways. My nudity, exposed breast, a vulva and no penis, coupled with fake nails, eyelashes and big long hair performs a kind of hyper feminine. The fake elements are key in demonstrating the augmentation that makes it possible to touch this place - gesturing towards drag and complicating the reading of gender. Sonja performs a more ambiguous gender identity and used clothing to that end. They wore an oversized tailored suit and a dress that is torn to shreds all made in matching photo-printed dyed light purple fabrics. As a group we created a subject of desire “L” to whom we composed a love letter. L deliberately has no sex or gender indication in their name and the “shoulders” that we “went crazy” for as well as the tasting we craved could come from most human bodies. Interestingly,

out of these three performing bodies, it was the absent L who could most simply move away from readings of gender.

1.5 European Australian in Finland

After Ponderosa I briefly returned to Australia before returning again to Germany and moving onwards to Finland. Here, most recently, I have been immersed in the MA Dance and Performance studies at The Theatre Academy. These recent experiences, dislocated from my original local context, further mixed up my lineage, my patterns and my worldview. I see this mixing clearly in the creative collaboration between Maja, Sonja and myself in *...like crazy*. We have different languages, styles, aesthetics and senses but they are in the process of becoming together as described in part three of this thesis.

Here I will note, just briefly, that I used to think that moving to dance within a European context as a European Australian would simplify my sense of my own identity. This was super naive. Here I feel even more confused, dislocated and mixed but still highly functional. It is this state that underpins much of what I stayed with and performed in *..like crazy* whether I consciously acknowledged it in the working process or not.

2. SOLO DANCING: THE SINGULARITY AND ENMESHMENT

To open thoughts around solo dance, dance making process and my recent performing experience in ...*like crazy* I have chosen to focus on the *naked dance* section - the part that spans from when I take off my clothes until I lay down. I will explain how this dance formed in the studio and the experience of performing it. I will also explore the form of solo dance more generally and discuss this in relation to the post-Lacanian and Deluzian conceptions of the singularity. The specific aspect of nakedness that is a key aspect of the *naked dance* will be addressed in the final chapter of the thesis.

2.1 Dance making

In the *naked dance* section I consider myself to be working as a dance maker: my specific understanding of this being someone who merges together choreography, improvisation, the dance and the dancer. I will discuss this role largely in relation to the European locale and European conceptions of dance and choreography to match the theoretical context with the place in which the work was made and performed. Though I do wish to briefly acknowledge that the practice has personal roots that reach all the way into my childhood in suburban Australia when I would make up dances (alone or with friends) in the garden or the living room.

In the context of producing a notion of expanded choreography Mårten Spångberg separates choreography from “the art of making dances (a directional set of tools)” (Spångberg, 2012). In this gesture he references and frames dance making in relation to Doris Humphry’s well known book *The Art of Making Dances* (a text published in America in 1958 that offers biographically based insights into the modern dance practices of Humphry’s American context). However, the reduction of dance making to a set of directional tools used in Humphry’s American Modern dance making and the dislocation of choreography entirely from this practice, though potentially useful for Spångberg in clarifying their notion of expanded choreography, does not provide a theoretical support for what I understand a dance maker to do. More relevant to this is Anna Leon’s approach to expanded choreography whereby she recognises “choreographic plurality, with different conceptions of choreography forming – both in

contemporaneity and in history – a constellation of multiple specificities.” (Leon, 2022, 19 - 20) This plurality offers the potential for the choreographic to exist both with and without dance. Moreover, it can see choreography exist playfully with improvisation.

As I will describe in the next section, as a dance maker I not only mobilise dance and choreography together but also mix this with improvisation. Since the 19th century there has been a tendency in Western Europe to separate choreography (a high art) from improvisation (belonging to the uneducated and the rural) this separation is increasingly demonstrated to be artificial (Sawyer, 1999, 31-38). As João Cerqueira da Silva Junior’s research in *Reflections on improvisation, choreography and risk-taking in advanced capitalism* shows, for the last 30 years or so the choreography and improvisation antagonism is not longer widely operational in practice “(b)oth agencies, in their plural manifestations, have become to a large extent intensely intertwined and co-dependent, with the aesthetic of spontaneity and the improvisatory techniques that have helped produce it an integral part of the mainstream (dance) culture.” (Silva, 2017, 106-7). My dance making is situated within this culture. Moreover, it connects with “the idea (that) improvisation (is) basic to the concept of the performing arts” as was common in Western Europe in “the Middle Ages and through to the Renaissance” (McGee, 2003, xi).

2.2 Making the naked dance - love letter score

When I started making this dance I asked: what would the dance be if I started with running naked and then turned the running into a love letter? The answer formed throughout the creative process even as the question fell into oblivion.

In making the dance I often forgot the original questions or concerns and gave space to the logic and needs of the dancing. The original questions and concerns were important as a starting point for the dance. They operated as a limiting point for my choice making as I attempted to perform the dance that was planned as a section of the performance during earlier rehearsals when I hadn’t yet made the dance. I realise this might seem like a strange working method but for me it felt very natural and functioned within the working group. I would always start with “the running” but the dance as a “love letter” score slipped from my focus as I came to know the dance as embodied materials and

real choices through repeated doing. I feel that forgetting and being loose with the language “doing” of the dance (being a love letter) gave it space to start to understand itself as something that I did not yet know, as something different from the English language. As Hilton comments “a lot of the time when you're writing or talking about dance practice, you are, you do end up getting to a place where you just cannot... there's some things you cannot say. And that's why we do it. You know” (Hilton, 2020, p27). I can relate to this.



Romancer, Leah Landau. Photographer: Gregory Lorenzutti

The idea of dancing a love letter falls in with the thematic of romance and romantic love which I have worked with before. In November and December 2016 I collaborated with choreographer Leah Landau and together we made the short work *Romancer* which premiered in Naarm as part of Pieces for Small Spaces. I’ve added a picture of the work to give a sense of the style. Here we worked with decoration as a movement score and played with the aesthetic of Rococo. This approach, a movement against the aesthetics of cool minimalism and towards an overflow of expressivity that borders the tacky, is something I would describe as ‘too muchness as just enough’. It is an approach that helped to lay the terrain for my orientation towards the “dance as a love letter” task. (I personally think of a love letter as a form of expression that is slow, expressive and

deeply personal. As a writing that overflows with the feelings of romantic love and straddles the edge of tacky).

If I think back now on my making process I remember the initial focus on the love letter idea, transforming into a broader thematic of romance in the *naked dance*, which fed my thinking towards images I'd seen in art galleries of naked dances, which touched upon idealising female form and a relation to a particular kind of beauty. Interestingly, the love letter task was still lurking in my subconscious in the rehearsal room and came up again in rehearsals when I was watching Maja and Sonja working on the lamp lowering section. As their movement try-out was coming to an end I asked them to "read a love letter" - to improvise one and say it. The try-out was recorded and the text was to form the base of the material that ended up in the final work.

In the end, this naked section did form some clear relation to my original enquiry: it starts with running and moves through a dance that could maybe be read as a love letter. However, it also became something peculiar and strange which I had not imagined before. Something that was heavily informed by my corporeal impulses, patterns and the imaginings but also remade those things. The material that emerged was an expression of my human body, exalting in its own animal vitality, in play with tempo, temper and tone. Characterised by a relentless resetting, this dance was moving on and catching a breath and moving on again.

2.3 Making the naked dance - echoes of previous dances

This *naked dance* is informed by my embodied history of dancing/moving which is enriched by the memory or ghosts of my movement history. There's my classical ballet training which is obvious in the very limb orientated and vertical movement vocabulary. There are echoes of my gymnastics training in my approach towards navigating the space of the square dance mat (loading diagonals, waiting in corners), in some of the nonsensical arm waving and the adoption of a dramatic ending pose. Some of the "dancey dance" I practised in contemporary dance training had space in quick movement that appears light and jumpy. In performance I would sometimes deliberately push these vocabularies into more ridiculous directions or states of expressivity so as to scrub across the coolness and specificness of the techniques and stay within the world

and logics of the ...*like crazy* work. In terms of dance material I practise recycling, reusing and reimagining dance from the living archive of my body, which hosts other imaginations and moves through shared practices. In general, I work with and against these histories by trying to recognise them and make space around my choices to go with, against, through or past them. Perhaps this is close to a definition of my personal approach to dancing - a product of processing a multitude of shared contexts, other styles and ways of being.

Another example of the residues or echoes that settled in this work is "co-calling cowness". This is coming from a week long group movement exploration that I was a part of in the Spring of 2022 within the context of the Masters of Dance and Performance program. I was working in a group with Tuija Lappilainen, Iris Hilden and Sonja in a two week workshop led by Simo Kellokumpu. The topic was "body" and we started an investigation into cow bodies. We named the work co-calling cow. It involved embodying our own sense of "cowness" together in a group "herd" situation. I remember bringing into the studio a cow bell and some other simple percussive instruments and these were sometimes included in the practice. Co-calling cow was recognised by both Iris and Tuija when they came to see the final ...*like crazy* performance. They both separately commented to me the connection they saw between parts of the performance in which I was dancing naked and wearing a cow bell and the earlier shared practice commenting on the use of the simple percussive instrument and the similar sense of calling something into the moment of performance through dance. I like this feeling that as dancers/artists we make each other up. And also that the cow makes us up. Like what we had access to in this week of practising together co-calling cow and for what came later in the TADaCollective performance came from our time spent together and separately with cows, in cow contemplation, company or dreaming.

Amanda Hunt, a practitioner of performance art who is currently studying sculpture at Kuva (the plastic arts school part of The Helsinki University of the Arts) sent me an email after they saw my performance in ...*like crazy*. They commented on "(t)he 'keep on going-ess' of (my solo). Continuing through what could have been many endings... the searching for what more can be carved out from that vocabulary and energetic perfume" (Hunt, 2023). I can connect what they saw to my internal experience of the

dance. In a way the dance could easily be whittled down to five or so easy-to-watch minutes, but in stretching out the duration of the dance with the same approach I was forced to work to form the dance. It became about persisting, sniffing out the next thing, staying with the situation and enjoying the labour of the too-muchness.

Finally, I consider the *naked dance* material to be a continuation of my solo work *for Magella* (2021) which was made in the context of my Masters studies at the Theatre Academy Helsinki and performed again in September 2022 as part of Uni Arts Fest. Here I started developing instructions for improvising as a solo dancer which I also used in this *naked dance* (which both is and isn't a solo dance performance). These are not instructions I have ever written down before now or concretely delineated for working in the studio or performance setting. Rather this instruction set is a reflective summary of my thinking while dancing or preparing for dancing.

1. Go confidently into the choreographic scaffold you've made.
2. Modulate the attention to the self, others and the space.
3. Welcome images to arise from moving.
4. Welcome feeling to arise from moving.
5. Welcome dance ghosts to arise from moving.
6. Remember earth, sky and broad horizons.
7. Know where you are and what you've done.
8. Enjoy dancing.

These instructions or directions for thinking help to create a safe space for me to work the dancing inside of. This word welcoming suggests to me that images, feelings and dance ghosts are not to be directly controlled but to be given some space to appear. It has a lot to do with allowing impulses and subconsciousness to play within the performing space. The choreographic scaffold is the limits for my actions: it is spatially, thematically and temporarily defined. Remembering earth, sky and broad horizons is a tendency I have for feeling into epic landscapes when performing. They release me from the claustrophobia that can come up in performance by holding an imagined airiness and perspective. Knowing where I am and what I've done is my attempt to form (or craft) large areas of open improvised score space. I feel I'm not very good at this because I get caught up in the "doing" of what I am doing when dancing, but I still like to remember it when I can to cultivate more control in performing.

2.4 Singularity

Following this focused and specific exploration of my *naked dance* I now move into broader theoretical frameworks as I situate this particular dance within the larger category of solo dance. I read solo dance as a form particularly suited to the expression of “singularity”. To begin I will outline the concept of the singularity as understood in Lacanian and post-Lacanian theory as well as (briefly) in the terms proposed by Deleuze and then connect the singular back to the social (post-Lacan route) or the rhizomatic (Deleuze style). I deliberately use two schools of thought to reach towards the singularity because I feel both offer useful frameworks for considering singularity; with the post-Lacanian thinking having a more human central approach and Deleuze a more broad connection to both human and non-human agencies. I'm not yet sure what position I relate to more, or to put it another way, at this point I enjoy thinking in either direction.

First, to introduce Lacan's thinking I use Mari Ruti (a post-Lacanian scholar's) explanation:

human subjectivity entails a constant negotiation of the three principal registers of being: the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real. The symbolic interpellates us into the normative regulations of the social order. The imaginary founds our conception of ourselves as individuals who possess unique personalities and the potential for exceptional existential trajectories. And the real intrudes into our lives as an unruly vortex of bodily jouissance and unintelligibility that disturbs the reassuring (yet ever-fragile) coherence of our symbolic and imaginary configurations alike. (Ruti, 2012, 1)

It is the drive energies of the Real aspects of human subjectivity, with their volatile corporeal expressions and opacity of meaning, that relates to the “singularity” (Ruti, 2012, 1121). It is this which is allowing for something to appear which exceeds categorisation and codification. (Ruti, 2012, 1121). But how does this relate to dance and performance?

As João Cerqueira da Silva Junior identifies “both choreography and improvisation as taking place outside of already fully known, pre-established and prescriptive paths or norms by means of their performativity and their contrasting (but not opposing)

capacities to virtually activate and/or actualize alternative plans” (Silva, 2017, 111). When this capacity of dance performance to actualize alternative plans has the additional aspect of the solo form (thereby letting go of the social or to put this in Lacanian terms the symbolic) there exists particularly fertile ground for the drive energies to express.

In Jacques Lacan’s 1975/6 seminar entitled *The Sinthome* he takes time to connect the literary output of James Joyce as increasingly exhibiting the singularity of his person. I see a similar capacity in Mette Invargsten’s solo dance *50/50*. For Lacan “the art of Joyce is something so particular, that the term *sinthome* is indeed what is, what is appropriate to it” (Lacan, 2016, 77.). *Sinthome*, meaning “the idiosyncratic jouissance of a particular subject” (Verhaeghe; Declercq, 2002, 68) is seen in Joyce’s increasingly unintelligible texts that take pleasure in the very materiality and cadence of language rather than its capacities for transferring stable meaning. Likewise, in Invargsten’s *50/50* there is a significant rupture in sense making. As stated in her personal webpage description of the work “(m)ovements deriving from clearly coded situations, like a rock concert, an opera or a circus act are processed until they obtain a certain kind of deformed expressivity” (Ingvarsten, 2023). This functions to open up spaces around the stability of gestural meaning - it remakes it. Similarly, in the action of taking pleasure in the very materiality of the moving body for an extended period of time, as in the arse shaking section, there is a sense that Invargsten’s performing is able to gesture towards the symbolic and imaginary but ultimately rupture their wholeness through a new particular, strange experience that operates beyond their reach.

I do not propose that all solo dance is entirely an expression of the singularity (indeed it is often a practice of stabilising the symbolic and imaginary aspects of the subject) but that there is possibly a space in this form for ruptures - especially in more experimental contexts. Furthermore, by necessity solo dance doesn’t emerge in vacuum and the context is paramount. The singularity, as it sometimes appears in solo dance, becomes and becomes meaningful because of its connectedness to the community and the community to the wider world. To return again to Ruti’s thinking, “it is our embeddedness within the social that makes singularity meaningful to us in the first place... (and without it) we would have no framework for making sense of our lives, let

alone for living out our idiosyncratic (singular) passions.” (Ruti, 2012, 8) For instance, my *naked dance* in *...like crazy* is work that emerges out of a mesh of voices and bodies from many times and places that are channelled through the singular body at the moment of performance. It becomes meaningful when it is located within the rest of the *...like crazy* world, when this is shared with an audience in the moment of performance and when it is later recalled by either the performer, their co-performers or the audience.

As stated earlier, the major difference between Post-Lacanian and Deleuzian conceptions of the singularity is the human centred vs the cosmological perspective. (Jagodzinski, 2014, 91). For Deleuze singularity are “turning points and points of inflection; bottlenecks, knots, foyers and centres... sensitive points” (Deleuze, 1990, 52) not bound to singular human experience or even to the human being at all. When reading this theory in relation to recent experimental dance performance, Andre Lepecki has identified the elements in dance in general that lend it as suitable material for singularities to appear. These are: its “ephemerality, corporeality, precariousness, scoring, performativity and the performance of effective labour” (Lepecki, 2016, 14). According to Lepecki it is these qualities that give dance a “privileged critical position of analysis and resistance in regards neoliberal rationality, corporeality and subjectivity” (Lepecki, 2016, 8). These qualities, not bound to individual performances but as found across them (within the field), like the role of the embeddedness within the social which post-Lacanian thought posits, in Deleuzian thought it is “the rhizomatic connection of singularities” (Borum, 2017, 96). These connections are necessary for creating the value and possibility of the singular. For Lepecki, herein lies the political value of the work (Lepecki, 2016, 8).

2.5 Enmeshment

Starting from an understanding of the enmeshment or socialisation of the performing subject, solo dance can be understood as something that is always “with” other people, imaginings, objects and ideas (Burgoyne; O’Hara, 2020). Moreover, it is often this “with-ness” that is enabling the dance as it forms a relation through which the dancing is produced and sustained.

I will open up the way I use music in the *naked dance* to help illustrate this dancing solo “with” idea. In the *naked dance* this partner is both invisible (the recorded music which allows for its maker’s absence in space/time) and visible (the live triangle back-up band formed by Sonja and Maja) and physically tied to my dancing body (my cow-bell necklace). The solo dance worked with multiple different agencies of music in relation to the dance in live performance which were all valuable in complexifying the sonic atmosphere and supported the emerging dance. The recorded music was made by sound designer Lauri Kallio with whom I worked in a back and forth exchange that consisted of movement try-outs, music proposals and conversations. During the performance Lauri’s choice making is stabilised by the recording but my moving is characterised by my changing desires around how to be with the music. The live triangle playing actions of my co-performers was a more dynamic exchange with no set cues or way of relating being made explicit between us but rather felt out through the doing. Finally there is the cowbell Lauri gave me to wear, this sound was generated as a reverberation of my dance and offered me a sense of amplification. I had the feeling that with the clang of the metal my movement was able to touch the walls and the ceiling of the space. Overall, when dancing this section, being with the music gave me a means of crafting the situation in dialogue rather than alone.



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

I suggest that the *naked dance* performing situation has the properties of a solo and can be thought of in that way but can also be considered as a trio: solo + duo. In the dance both Maja and Sonja act as compositional counterpoints to my doing and me to theirs. They are slow and minimalistic in their movements while I run around and execute expressive and dynamic moving. I dance towards and away from them while they remain seated for a large section of the dance. They move in clear relation to the geometry and parameters of the light grey dance mat while I sometimes do, and sometimes attend to the larger spacial limits of walls, corners and the three lamps.

In addition to being with the sonic space and Maja and Sonja, I am also touching into the wider animal world through my imagination. I already mentioned the cow, but when dancing I also sometimes imagine I am other creatures: horse, ostrich, peacock, bull or deer to name a few. It's not that I go into the dance with the intention of representing any other lifeforms, but in a way I am "with" them. The images arise when I start to move and get into the dancing practice. It is a whole sense of being that slightly shifts and then I may recognise some temperament and then move through that. The conditions of the performance: my costuming, moving and the relaxed/open state of mind I cultivated invite the otherness into me. Once recognised it may grow, stay or fade away as I wish. For example, when wearing the fake eyelashes the coloured feathers would get into my line of sight and I could easily imagine feathers to be on my whole body and that I was some kind of flightless bird. The fake nails, with their floppy ends, made me feel like I was a creature with some kind of feather or fur. In the dancing, when I moved to feel more grounded and swiped my foot on the floor, I felt the bull. If the energy was welling up I could spring around with the feeling of a deer etc.

The horse-lips and hoof feet that appear at some points during the performance are particularly significant for me. They draw a line or act as an invocation to Katheleen Hermensdorf, a dance mentor of mine who passed away late 2020. In some archival footage of her that was included into the film, *FAKE Company Aftermath: Reckoning/Rebirth* (2022), she's talking about being (according to Chinese Astrology) a "fire horse". In the film she is talking about horse sayings and tries to explain them but gets confused and keeps going and mixes the sayings into something like advice, then free associates and loops the phrase "horses are reckless and restless and reckless"

(Fake Company, 2022). In performing I felt supported by her ghost when horsey movement appeared, as this element only came into the dance material once I was performing it for an audience.

As I perform the *naked dance* I am open to repetition, open to continuity and open to change. It is not done after the rehearsal period and then performed in repetitions. It's an ongoing practice of being with my dancing, with the sounds/space, with the performing situation and with Maja and Sonja. The experience is always different because I am improvising. The scaffolding is there but it's also negotiable. It is a solo but also not at all.

3. WORKING TOGETHER WITH MAJA AND SONJA



...like crazy, rehearsal 26.01.23 TADaCollective. Photographer: Ivan Mihailovic

This trio of me, Maja and Sonja formed within the context of the TADaCollective working group. The TADaCollective group was initiated by Masters students of the dance and performance programme at Teak who had a desire to work together to produce their own artistic thesis outcomes. The group involved me, Sonja, Maja, Iris, Arttu and we were joined by Lauri (MA lighting design). About one month into our creative development the group split into smaller working units that formed out of a period of negotiating and trying-out together as a whole group. I can recall one key moment during this period that led to the trio formation: Maja and I were presenting some material we had devised together (which ended up forming the basis of the Shaking and Postures section of the final work) and Sonja's response was "I want to do that with you." So they did it with us the next rehearsal and we all felt that the move from two performers to three in this section was working and things grew from here. This trio separated from Arttu and Iris as it became clear that we had different needs and desires in relation to working.

3.1 Difference cohabiting the performance

Me, Sonja and Maja converge in this project from a stretch of ages, places, tongues and tempers. Sonja (she/they), a Finnish born dancer and the youngest of the three of us, was returning to Helsinki and entering the Masters studies directly after having completed a Bachelor of Dance at The University of the Arts Stockholm, Sweden. Maja (1984, Celje), came to the MA programme at Teak after a long period of working between Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Belgrade (Serbia). She is currently also completing her PhD studies at Faculty of Media and Communications in Belgrade and has previously studied at Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance and Hochschule für Musik und Tanz, Köln: HfMT. Between the three of us there was enough shared ground, care and curiosity to make the process pleasurable. I enjoyed developing my existing working relationship with Maja and forming new ways of working together with Sonja.

The differences of our movement preferences and approaches to performing was something that was given space in ...*like crazy*, even in moments of shared intent and tighter movement parameters. For example, in the opening shaking movement, postures and vomiting we were in the same mode, had the same score and similar spatial and temporal limits. Yet I see that there is a clear sense of personal style. In the shake Maja, is balanced, mostly standing and really active through the arms and head. She had some signature moves such as the forward bend head rolls with one circling lower leg and a staccato rhythm. There is some suggestion of a boxer or a tennis star getting ready for a big event. Her material had no set order but the repetitions were mainly similar. Sonja was busy with the footwork. They made use of their costume tassels through shimmying movement. Their choreography was set and each performance happened in mostly the same order. Sonja enjoyed sometimes to channel a rock star. I was mainly kneeling or laying on the ground. My body is a bit more rubbery looking than the others. I was the only one with long hair and was using lots of head whipping actions to get it moving. I had some slapstick inspired movements like the bent forward, hand flapping between the legs and laying on the back, legs circling. I also had a deep inner shake I would do that foreshadowed the vomiting. I had the first two moves set and then would go with whatever I felt like from there. Lots of the time this produced something that was pretty similar.

Another material that was shared but worked with differently was the love letter. The original text was a combination of an improvised love letter that Maja spoke during one rehearsal augmented with some text that I added which came out of my personal life. In the performance we had three repetitions of the same text filtered through the different mother tongues and styles of each performer. Maja's text was delivered with pace and bubbling desire, Sonja's with a slowness and sense of melancholia and mine with a directness and caricatured Aussie accent. We supported each other's delivery by literally sharing their focal point of address in the performance and by taking turns in being fake audience members in the studio rehearsals.

3.2 How we worked together

Within our trio group there was a commitment to continuity and nourishing what was already there in terms of our relationships. With Maja we were building upon our existing creative relationship which emerged through friendship, our shared study context and common experience of being foreign in Finland. Together we supported each other's solo dance making process already in November 2021 and later in Spring 2022 we made a duet (*The Helsinki Duet*) together (both as part of our studies). The rubbing material Sonja and Maja used in the popping candy section was taken from the duet and remade into this context. With Sonja we were building on friendship and shared studio practice (like the aforementioned co-calling cow practice) formed through the Masters studies.

In the work we made together there is no singular authorial voice. There are our personal styles, aesthetic and artistic trajectories. Throughout we had this really shared sense of creative control that was not always based on agreeing and compromising. Instead it functioned through allowing each other space to act out individual desires (even if it conflicted with personal aesthetic or thematic desires for the whole work). This mode of working required letting go of trying to manipulate the effect of the whole and focused on making space for each of us to work and hold different logics, energetics and powers. It made the working more sustainable because we could step up and hold things together for each other when we were injured or stressed or tired or sad or distracted. We trusted that each of us was investing as much as they could into the shared process.

Our collaboration was nourished by a collective opening towards pleasure and joy. In reflecting upon the process I am reminded of Audre Lorde's writings. In her famous text *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power* she writes:

The erotic functions for me in several ways, and the first is in providing the power which comes from sharing deeply any pursuit with another person. The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference.

(1984, 4)

Throughout the creative process and into the pre-performance moments we made space for enjoying our time together. Often this was through karaoke. Our favourite song was Celine Deon's *It's All Coming Back to Me*. This song is really dramatic, very hard to sing well and quite long. It nourished our dramatic sensibilities, warmed up our vocal chords and left us laughing at our earnest attempt and lack of skill. Close to the opening night we went to the props department and browsed sunglasses just to have a break from the rehearsal mode. It was little things like this that kept things silly and helped us not to get caught up in the stresses and pressures of making work.

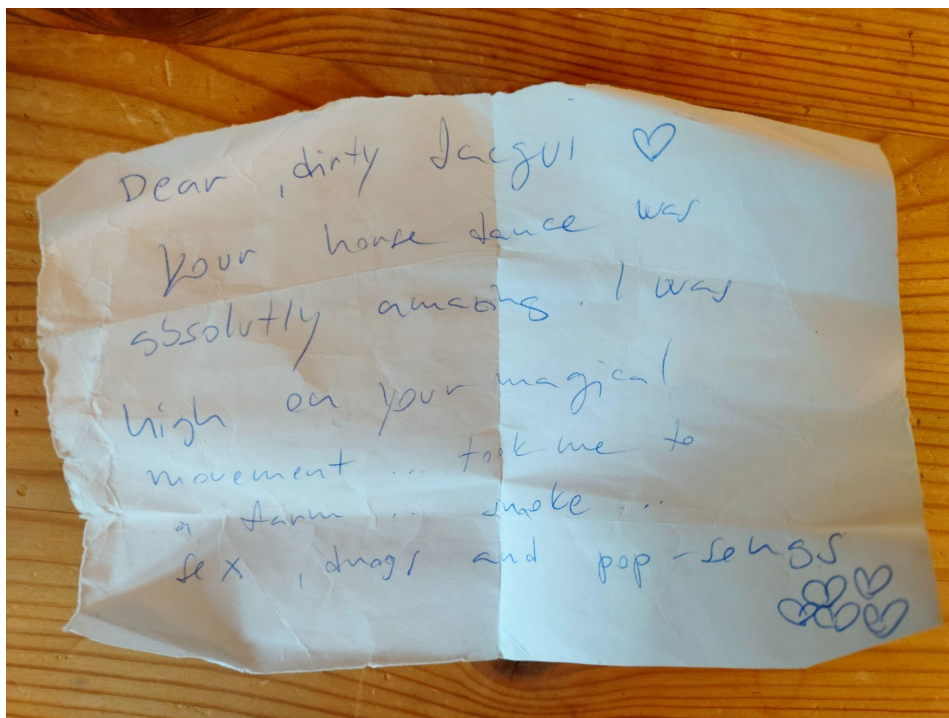


Sunglasses, Rehearsals for TADaCollective, Photographer: Jacqueline Aylward

Working through the erotic bonded us together as a group. I don't think we had a sense that there was a "threat of difference" (Lorde, 1984, 4) to overcome but there was a desire to work to deepen our understanding of each other that was helped by this approach. I feel that this bond served us in the final performance outcome by creating the mode or relation we had as a performing trio. This way of co-being was offered up for our audiences as a model for supporting each other's artistic practice. For me it is a way of working that also rewards beyond the working/artistic life: as it strengthened our friendship with each other adding more love, care and support to our lives.

3.3 How Maja and Sonja explain it: another letter, some writings and a song

To give a different sense of how we worked together I include another letter and song written by Maja as well as writings from Sonja. This letter was found in the feedback box that was left out the front of the Theatre Hall. The author is unknown but I have my suspicions... p.s. It was Maja. This is an example of the kind of feedback we would give each other during the process - affectionate, personal and playful.



Anonymous feedback, photographer Jacqueline Aylward

A couple of months after the performance me, Maja and Sonja started to write another shared text to help reflect together the ...*like crazy* performance. This impulse came from the feeling that I couldn't quite catch the sense of our shared working when I started to write reflectively about it alone. The text is titled *A vomit text*. In this text I asked the others to describe how we worked together.

Sonja reflected:

the differences between us... generated motion that glided and splashed. My rooting and grounded energy brought a nice discussion partner with the speed of J and M, which I then also joined. Of course, sometimes we were in totally different energies depending on the day, but still I think we worked nicely together and in a constructive way. Setting boundaries and communicating about our needs. It was very honest actually...

I relate to the way Sonja talks of differing tempos. I was very "on" in the morning, Sonja was more alert in the afternoons and Maja would fluctuate depending on how well she did or didn't sleep the night before. It never felt like a problem as we could all turn up and get working at whatever time if it was needed. In general we didn't intervene too much and let this be and let these energetic differences be as they felt comfortable for each of us. In *The vomit text* Sonja comments on the way this configuration of tempos helped to make the working sustainable. I would agree.

To explain our working together Maja wrote a song that is a mesh of our voices. The text is taken from the telegram chat we used to communicate during the working process and then remixed. I include an excerpt of it below. Here I can recognise something of our working sensibility - eclectic, connected to feeling, flexible, caring and fun.

Watch a wildlife show on television

I am peeing babes

Me too

The same here

Movie night?

The harp is coming to school

Baby, we have headache

See you soon

...

There is a really good idea about giving the audience cookies

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

Yes, it makes sense

More sense than cookies

I think so

...

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

Babes, just saying, our song is great

Almost unison

Start without me

Could you baby make some coffee?

...

Hugs to both

Miss you too

3.4 Challenges in working

From my perspective the trio working group was most challenged by differing needs for resolution of choreographic decisions. For example, when working through the final scene and resolution of the work the three of us could not settle on a plan. Maja had a feeling that the song we had made was too slow and wanted something more upbeat and

spectacular or for the group to be clearly working with the anti-spectacular. Sonja desired that we end together dancing in unison and that we would not change the ending multiple times during the performing season. I desired something chaotic, improvised and changing. In this instance we were not able to agree or resolve with our usual strategy of each acting out their own desires because the desires stretched into the actions of the whole group/scene and working style. It ended up being that we tried out a few tweaks of the choreography during the first few performances until we settled upon something that felt okay for all of us (but to differing degrees). This final solution did effectively ignore Sonja's desires for stability and never become the spectacle or the anti-spectacle that Maja had hoped for. It was also not really chaotic enough for my own desires to be met.

For me this difficulty opened up the awareness that a shared sense of how changeable the performing material is something to discuss. It exposed a point at which I placed my own artistic visions and desires over the established collaborative care for the working environment of my collaborators. I also feel that this tension was a shared failing as collectively we didn't get to the artistic resolution early enough in the process so as to work through the differing senses of how the work could end together before the third performance. We've since talked through this part of the process together and now have more knowledge now about this kind of issue. Hopefully this will help us work more easily in future collaborative contexts.

In relation to racial politics I think our work is underdeveloped. One aspect that was working for us was the use of multiple languages to open up the different lands and communities we are a part of. Most obviously in the love letter reading when we speak in our mother tongues. I take this opportunity to hyper perform the Australian accent which is a regional transformation of English and something I have access to largely due to holidays spent in Torquay (the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung people). Later on in the work our recorded voices again appear in three languages but this time my accent is softer and more like my everyday voice which is less easy to locate as coming from a specific English speaking region of the world. However, this is only an aspect. Overall I would say we did not work enough to produce a position in relation to race but rather accept it as a non-thing.

3.5 Disappearing at the edges and performing witnessing

One of my favourite parts of the way we worked was the space given to disappear at the edges of the performing and inhabit the role of witness. It allowed me as a dancer to perform a yielding, to hold space for the others and to grow through relation. It reminds me of how in contact improvisation there's this teaching that "(w)hen you retreat to the sidelines, you're still in the jam, witnessing, holding, responding" (McKenzie, 2008, 10).

When witnessing Maja and Sonja's solo I felt my dancerliness, here largely invisible to the audience, to be activated as an empathetic witness. The term dancerliness, made up by Rebecca Hilton, I first heard in a lecture she wrote that was spoken in unison with Alice Heyward, Ella Meehan, Ellen Davies, Megan Payne and Chloe Chignell at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (Hilton, 2014). This term is used to describe "the specialised noticing and complex managing of sensation, space and time" (Hilton, 2017, 196). For example, during the performance of *...like crazy* I was with Sonja feeling out the tension in the hands and arms as a dance was called forth in their solo moment. I was with them feeling the weight, negotiating the whirling forces and finding the ground amongst the loops. I was there before every performative attempt anticipating what would come and I was there afterwards reflecting on when things were "working" and what could be attended to next time. I felt myself approaching this witnessing with deep embodied knowledge that dancers have which is different to that of choreographers, visual artists working with choreography, spectators and curators (Hilton, 2017, 197). There were also more theatrical witnessing moments in the work. The previously discussed witnessing/accompaniment of Maja and Sonja to my naked dance and also my witnessing of their rubbing duet. Of course, throughout there was the witnessing of the audience who co-create the moment of performance through the giving of their attention to the unfolding dance.

4. EXTRACTED THEME OF NAKEDNESS AND DANCE

Throughout my process of making, performing and writing about ...*like crazy* there emerged the key question of naked dancing. Since the 1960s nudity in dance and performance art has been, as Australian based dance artist Atlanta Eke describes, “a common condition” (Eke, 2014). Artistic conventions and audience sensibilities (particularly in the urban centres) of Europe, Australasia, America and Canada are nowadays generally accepting of the exposure of flesh. As a dancer working in the Australian and Finnish context, nakedness is still an interesting condition for me to work within because it opens up the body as material and because cultural conventions around nudity in society more broadly are still strong. I feel the unclothed body often offers rich material for me as a dancer to witness and work with largely because the naked state is so particular and every body is idiosyncratic. For me personally, the particular is valuable because it is a source of new knowledge and appeals to my curiosity which triggers my desire to work.

Each naked body possesses what Eke dubs a “glimmer of inimitability”, whereas “clothing is what potentially homogenises us the most” (Eke, 2014). I would agree that clothing (as well as serving to heat and protect the body) can offer uniforming, offer censorship and offer a blurring of the particular features of a human body but it can also be queering, can be radically unique and can highlight the human form. In artistic contexts of today naked dancing can offer something unique and political (gesturing beyond the norms of the medical, the commercial and the pornographic; exposing a new poetics or a deeper truth) but it can also be a cheap gimmick and potentially blend in with all the other performed nakednesses that have proliferated in dance performances during the last 20 years.

4.1 Dancers reflecting on naked dancing

In this next section of the thesis I will attend to the reflection of performers commenting from inside the naked state. I found researching this to be refreshing and insightful. So often nakedness appears in discourse via the position of the external gaze and the information available from this inside vantage point is limited.

For Alice Heywood, a Naarm/Berlin based dancer informed by her teenage naked modelling for Bill Henson's photography, the power of the naked body as material is that it "speaks a different language and possesses idiosyncratic sensibilities, tones and freedoms" (Heywood, 2014). Heywood suggests that naked performing "can offer a place to experience self-awareness, take in the physical world around us, learn, transform, and grow" (Heywood, 2014). She suggests that this place is "a different conscious reality, infusing in us a powerful sense of awareness and presence" (Heywood, 2014). I would largely agree with her sentiments but think it is important to be a bit more particular because I feel all experiences offer the possibility of cultivating self-awareness, learning, transformation and growth - there is not some inherent power in nakedness that offers access to this. Rather it is our own relation to our naked being and the culture's relation to our nudity when exposed in the artistic process that can offer this power and transformation.

Dance maker Luke George describes his experience of performing semi-naked (t-shirt, socks, shoes and cap wearing) in his work *The Unnamed Feeling* (2013) as, "a different physical and conscious state to be in", allowing him to "affect and induce particular sensations and perceptions" (Heywood, 2014). He talks about how he ended up performing naked because that's just how he was practising in his house and that it felt comfortable and supportive so he kept doing it (Heywood, 2014). George also notes that it was important that his dance would eventually transcend the nudity as it developed in performance (Heywood, 2014). I feel that this "transcendence" of nakedness is important for naked performers to be witnessed as subjects - it is when the doing and the being foregrounds appearance. In such a way, when the dancer's relation to their nakedness is opening up altered states of physicality and consciousness there is a direct pathway to transcendence being naked in performance.

In an artist talk given in 2010 Deborah Hay opens up her experience of rehearsing and dancing naked in a work titled *O beautiful* (2002) (renamed *Beauty*). For Hay the decision to dance naked initially came about because she was working in a hot dance studio. She recalls: "(o)ne morning, I stripped off my clothing and danced. My body felt animal and my movement naked" (Hay, 2010). Here again we hear a dancer speaking of

the change in bodily perception that can be brought about by dancing naked and how the decision to perform naked came about in rehearsals from impulses around comfort. Hay only performed this work once and was also prepared to perform a clothed version of the work if she felt like the environment wasn't supportive.

4.2 Personal reflections on naked dancing

My own naked dancing in *...like crazy* started out as a joke with the costume designer Kasia. We were talking about costume ideas and then I said "maybe I will just be naked" and then we kept working on costumes with this joke of "Jacqui will be naked". Then at some point I realised that I liked the idea of dancing naked. It felt as comfortable as any other clothing decision and I got curious about what my naked dance would be. So we went with the naked costume idea.

Based on my previous experiences I felt that I would be comfortable performing naked in *...like crazy*. I have danced semi-naked before. The first time was in 2016 during Leah Landau's *The sequel 2*. For part of this performance I was wearing sunglasses, a bra and underwear walking and chatting with another performer while holding a t-shirt in front of myself. I was nervous before and during the show but noticed that the feeling of cool air on my skin was really pleasant. Again in 2017 I was dancing semi-naked. Here I was involved in Shian Law's performance lecture *Fuck Dog* that they worked on with Jo Llyod. The work involved a group of naked and semi-naked performers moving in a one time scored improvisation context. I remember the nakedness felt really supported by the large group (15 or so dancers) producing a culture where it was a normal thing for a dancer to do. Upon reflection there was maybe a bit of peer pressure involved given the performance was being led by two key mentors of many of the young dancers in Naarm who had just graduated. However, I don't regret doing the work because it opened up new spaces of comfort in my performance by further undoing shame and nervousness around my unclothed body. Additionally, it wasn't filmed or photographed.

Before the performance I was talking with my friend Emma Richies who was also dancing in the work. We weren't sure about doing it and were deciding whether we would be fully naked or wear underwear or a bra. We started talking about how our

bodies were really great and not things to be shy or ashamed about at all and we decided to perform but also that we would wear underwear. I remember another more experienced performer Nana Biluš Abaffy choosing to only wear a bra which gave our choice more of a deliberate costume vibe. I recall that semi-naked dancing felt electric and also liberating to a certain extent probably because the performing act had dismantled a limitation of a border I felt in exposing myself in performance. Since this work I have run around naked in rain storms in semi-performative contexts (Ponderosa) and worked as a nude model. In each performed nakedness I have noticed myself being less and less concerned about the exposure. I introduce this history to position my now easeful relation and knowledge about the experience of performing naked as built through experience.

Before the *...like crazy* show, in preparation for this naked section, I would take off all my clothes and look at myself in the mirror. One time Sonja asked me what I was doing. I said "I am looking at myself in the way I like before other people do". It felt important, and the psychology of it reflects something of the function that the conversation me and Emma had together in 2017.



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

When dancing naked in ...*like crazy*, I attended to the physical experience of dancing without clothes on. As in earlier experiences, I had a particularly heightened awareness of the sensation of air on my hair and skin. New to me was the consciousness of the bits of costume I was wearing (runners, eyelashes and nails). I found pleasure and a sense of freedom in not being restricted by the feeling of clothing which so often brings a strong impulse to move with a particular quality. This pleasure is a big part of the reason the nakedness made its way out of the rehearsal period and into staged performance. I generally enjoy being naked. As a child I would often go swimming naked at the beach and I remember feeling very alive and wild - like a mermaid or a dolphin. As an adult I can still connect to these sensations and bring them into my dancing experience. I can also welcome a host of other sensory/imaginary things that come up, such as the feeling of air rushing by my breast, a bead of sweat rolling freely down the side of my ribcage or the delusion that I am an alien just appearing from another planet who would not even know what clothes were.

4.3 The spectator gaze and naked dancing

In 2015 I travelled to New York with a dancing friend. While there I attended Mette Invargstens's performance of *69 Positions*. Early on in this performance there is a part where she would undress holding the gaze of audience members until either she or the audience member felt uncomfortable. After quickly moving through a few different audience member gazes she came to me and almost completely got undressed before she sensed I got uncomfortable (not with her nakedness but with the duration she had spent holding my gaze which meant that other people were watching me more than I liked). When talking about this experience later on with Rebecca Hilton she said that I was an easy person for Invargsten to do this undressing holding the gaze score with because of my age and sex relative to hers. I think this is partly true but not the whole reason it happened. I feel it mainly had to do with the fact that she felt comfortable undressing in front of someone and that I felt comfortable watching someone get undressed in the performative context (perhaps having seen it many times before).

When performing in any context where the audience visibly has individuals in it (rather than an audience melting into one huge black void as happens in large traditional Opera or Ballet theatres) I am conscious of working with multiple differing gazes of changing

natures. This sea of specific different approaches to watching affect how I feel myself to be seen. When performing naked as an assumed female there is a connection to an objectifying gaze of which I am conscious. I am referring here to a history of painting, cinema, pornography, advertising, performance and photography in which the assumed female body (particularly when partially or fully naked) has been objectified by the “male gaze” (Mulvey, 1975). This term was first introduced by scholar and filmmaker Laura Mulvey in 1975 in her famous essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. It is used to describe a gaze that “projects its phantasy onto the female figure which is styled accordingly” (Mulvey, 1975, 11).

Using a framework drawn from psychoanalysis the male gaze is said to be voyeuristic and sexualizing from the position of male pleasure. Since this theory was first proposed it has been criticised for its lack of consideration of non-straight people, binary gendering and its reliance on stereotypes of the thinking of people of any gender (Doane, 1999, 134). I agree there are these huge limitations to the theory. However, I do agree that assumed women performing bodies are connected to a history of their objectification, of their “to-be-looked-at-ness” rather than in relation to their own desires, agency and action (Mulvey, 1975, 11). To reconnect to the problems around “neutrality” and “ordinary” discussed in relation to American postmodern dance: there is a history of power in gaze linked to assumed body gender, race and age. It is arguably only middle-aged white males, such as Xavier Le Roy in *Self Unfinished* (1998) whose work is produced and read as working with a body which dissolves its identity (therefore its politics) and moves into a presentation of itself as pure material (Susan Best, 2021, 45). A body that is abstract. Neutral. As Susan Best explains “(i)t is possible for Le Roy to speak of ‘the body’ and its transformation as his focus because he does not have to contend with gender - his body is generic” (2021, 47). She explains how other gendered bodies, and I would add other racialised bodies, must first work to undo the objectifying gaze before they can attempt to work with the body generic, to become transformed material or present pure action (2021, 45-47). I believe there is no such thing as a generic body for any performing artist to be working with and no generic body for any audience to perceive. There is, however, a history of producing some bodies generic or ordinary and some as the other of this.

In performing naked in ...*like crazy* I work with a reading of my body as female (and its accompanying history of objectification and sexualization) to reclaim the audience's gaze in a number of ways. Firstly through my active performing state which includes my gaze. I am busy with the work of dancing. Exhibiting an oscillating indifference to beauty of form and expression. Secondly, my nakedness is a state that I have chosen to perform in and am personally curious about. It is not asked of me by a choreographer, costume designer or collaborator. It is supported by the gaze and co-presence of my friends and collaborators Maja and Sonja. Finally, within the frame of this performance it would have been completely fine for me to perform with clothes on any time I wanted to and my collaborators expressed this sentiment to me.

Though I am reluctant to call ...*like crazy* a feminist work (I think it is dealing with many other themes that are neglected in this reading) I do believe it offers a space for the feminist gaze to exist. Hannah Dickson writes that “the feminist gaze can be understood as an active refusal and disentanglement of the male gaze, which constricts women, femmes, and queer people to the role of passive object, providing the performer with opportunities to construct new, intersectional ways of seeing and being that centre the self and one’s own agency” (Dickson, 2022, 1). Within the frame set up by our working methods I think Me, Sonja and Maja do make a space for our own agencies to be at the heart of the performing.

P.S. CONCLUSION OR WHAT IS THE AFTERLIFE?

In this written thesis I have reflected upon my personal history and situated myself within both Australian and European contexts. I discussed some of the particular qualities and difficulties of this; making connections to my own experiences, theoreticians and other artist/artistic work. Against universalism I argue in favour of a more specific discourse. Maybe this is a practice of specificity, an exercise in understanding where the idiosyncratic voice of a dance artist comes from. I can't help but reflect on how partial my inquiry has been but hope that in listening and including the voices of others this writing moves past "erotic self-oscillation" (a phrase I borrow from the lyrics of Jenny Hval) (Hval, 2016).

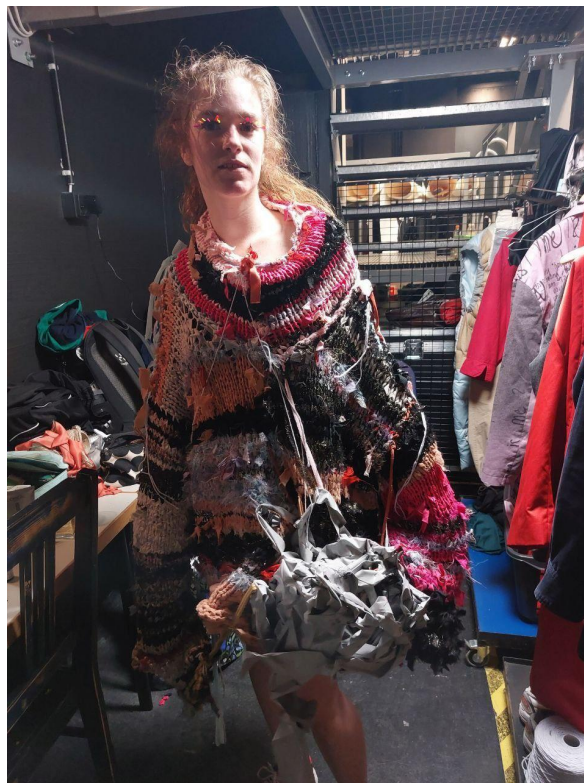
I now look towards upcoming artistic outcomes that grow from the artistic and written thesis. For the adaptation of *...like crazy* into a solo version for touring (Maja will be back home in Serbia for some of the performances) I have crafted a dance that opens the difference between naked and not-naked dancing. The title of the work is *Sometimes naked, sometimes nude*. The basic structure will be 10 minutes of dance material derived from the artistic thesis, performed wearing a nude lycra one-piece costume followed by a 10 minute repetition performed without the skin suit. Maybe I will have some darkness at the end. It's a set up which feels a bit like a science experiment. Hopefully it allows me to feel out the nature of my naked dance as a performer and offer some kind of insight for viewers. The following solo dance work I am looking towards making has the working title *dancing with clothes on*. It takes the clothed dancing body, not as a given, but as a chosen state with implications for the dancer and the dance.

With Maja and Sonja we are also adapting the work for touring as a trio. We are shortening the work by 15 minutes: choosing to cut out some sections, overlay other parts and re-order the whole. This feels quite easeful because for us the work was never understood by the three of us as having a stable sense of lineality. Drawing from learnings in our previous collaboration we will set more clearly the shared materials and leave space in the solo parts for more unstable territories so as to hold space for our diverse needs. There is also the plan that in general we would have less costume

changing: I will stay naked much longer and Maja will wear the exaggerated red elements of her costume for longer.

Both future lives of ...*like crazy* offer interesting avenues for the integration and development of the key themes and ideas addressed in this thesis writing. I see it in trajectories of loops and squiggles. Here in the thesis the dancing moved the writing, in the next iterations of ...*like crazy* the writing moves again into the dancing. Likewise, my working relation with Maja and Sonja, configured together, considered apart and reconfigured both together and apart.

Finally, I am interested in making a shared text with Maja and Sonja, something that has grown out of our separate artistic thesis writings. I imagine it being akin to the jumper I wore during the second half of the ...*like crazy* performance. Something made from the old ends, off-cuts and things ready to be thrown out from the costume department. A hybrid monster that engulfs the body and accumulates the sticky tape which keeps the floor in place.



After going ...like crazy, Backstage 6th February 2023 TADaCollective Performance,
Photographer: Sonja Aaltonen

REFERENCES

Books

Albright, Ann Cooper. 1997. *Choreographing Difference: The body and identity in Contemporary Dance*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Avanessian, Armen; Malik, Suhail. 2016. The Time Complex. *The Time Complex: Post-Contemporary*, ed. Avanessian and Malik. Miami: Name Publications.

Best, Susan. 2021. *It's not personal: Post 60s body art and performance*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Cox, Geoff and Lund, Jacob. 2016. *The Contemporary Condition: Introductory Thoughts on Contemporaneity & Contemporary Art*. Series: The Contemporary Condition. Co-publisher Aarhus University and ARoS Art Museum. London: Sternberg Press.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1990. *The Logic of Sense*. Ed. Constantin V. Boundas. Translators Mark Lester, Charles Stivale. London: Athlone.

Doane, Mary Ann. 1999. Film and the masquerade: theorizing the female spectator in *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 131-145.

Ebeling, Knut. 2017. *Contemporary - there is no now an archeology of contemporaneity*. Series: The Contemporary Condition. Co-publisher Aarhus University and ARoS Art Museum. London: Sternberg Press.

Gottschild, Brenda Dixon. 1996. *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Lacan, Jacques. 2016. *Seminar XXIII: The Sinthome or Joyce and the Sinthome: 1975-1976*: beginning on November 18th 1975. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, translator Adrian Price. London: Polity Press.

Leon, Anna. 2022. *Expanded Choreographies - Choreographic Histories Trans-Historical Perspectives Beyond Dance and Human Bodies in Motion*. North Dakota: Transcript Publishers.

Lepecki, Andre. 2016. *Singularities: Dance in the age of performance*. London: Routledge.

Lorde, Audre. 1978. *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power*. New York: Out & Out Books.

Invargsten, Mette. 2016. *EXPANDED CHOREOGRAPHY: Shifting the agency of movement in The Artificial Nature Project and 69 positions*. Lund: Lund University.

McGee, Timothy. 2003. "Improvisation in the Arts." *Improvisation in the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Ed. Timothy McGee. Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 2003. Xi-28.

Rich, Adrienne. 2003. "1.2 Notes towards a politics of location." *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 210 - 231.

Ruti, Mari. 2012. *The Singularity of Being: Lacan and the Immortal Within*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Sawyer, Keith. 1999. "Improvisation." *Encyclopedia of Creativity Volume 2, I-Z Indexes*. Eds. Runco, Mark A., and Steven R. Pritzker. San Diego: Academic Press: 31-38.

Sontag, Susan. 2018. *Notes on "Camp"*. London: Penguin.

Verhaeghe, Paul; Declercq, Frédéric. 2002. "Lacan's Goal of Analysis: Le Sinthome or the Feminine Way". *Re-Inventing the Symptom: Essays on the Final Lacan*. Ed. Thurston, Luke. New York: Other Press. 59–82.

Articles

Butler, Judith. 1988. Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay. *Phenomenology and Feminist Theory Theatre Journal* 40:4, 519-531.

Borum, Peter. 2017. The Notion of 'Singularity' in the Work of Gilles Deleuze. *Deleuze Studies*. 11:1, 95-120.

Chaleff, Rebecca. 2018. Activating Whiteness: Racializing the Ordinary in US American Postmodern Dance. *Dance Research Journal* 50:3, 71-84.

Hilton, Rebecca. 2017. Dancerness. *Performance Paradigm* 13, 196-200.

Järvinen, Hanna. 2017. Democratic Bodies? Reflections on «Postmodern Dance» in the United States and Finland. *Nordic Journal of Dance* 8, 18-29.

Jagodzinski, Jan. 2014. When Deleuze and Lacan {finally} Meet :The Singularity (Life) of Art in [Art] Education. *Research in Arts and Education* 2, 77–98.

McKenzie, Varhi. 2008. Contact Improvisation. *Proximity* 11:3, 10.

Mulvey, Laura. 1975. Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. *Screen* 16:3, 6–18.

Platt, Ryan. 2014. The Ambulatory Aesthetics of Yvonne Rainer's "Trio A". *Dance Research Journal* 46:1, 41-60.

Thesis

Dickson, Hannah. 2022. *Performing Agency – Contemporary Burlesque and the Feminist Gaze*. Submitted to OCAD University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Contemporary Art, Design and New Media Art Histories Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Available online at <https://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/3747/>. Accessed 13/04/2023.

Online Sources

Burgoyne, Sophie, O’Hara, James. 2020. *WITH*. Episode 13 Audioreflexion pod, Department of Dance at Stockholm University of the Arts. <https://www.uniarts.se/english/about-uniarts/department-of-dance/audioreflexion-pod/sophie-burgoyne>. Accessed 13/04/2023.

Eke, Atlanta. 2014. What can a naked body say today that a clothed body cannot. *Issue #06: Body in the Raw. Nudity Today*. <https://www.dancehousediary.com.au/?p=1890>. Accessed 16/03/2023.

Silva, João Cerqueira da. 2017. *Reflections on improvisation, choreography and risk-taking in advanced capitalism*, Theatre Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki: Kinesis 8. Available online at <https://taju.uniarts.fi/handle/10024/7131> Accessed 13/04/2023.

Grady, Constance. 2019. *Camp, the theme of this year’s Met Gala, is almost impossible to define. Here’s our best effort. Camp, explained in five examples, from Oscar Wilde to Donald Trump*. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/culture/2019/5/3/18514408/what-is-camp-explained-met-gala-susan-sontag>. Accessed 16/03/2023.

Hay, Deborah. 2010. *A Lecture on the Performance of Beauty*. The Great Hall, The Cooper Union, NYC. Youtube: <https://youtu.be/nLbGprgCoOo>. Accessed 16/03/2023.

Heywood, Alice. 2014. Nakedness is a process not a state. *Issue #06: Body in the Raw. Nudity Today*. <https://www.dancehousediary.com.au/?p=1902>. Accessed 16/03/2023.

Hilton, Rebecca; Parkinson, Chrysa. 2020. *Dance Dialogues: Rebecca Hilton & Chrysa Parkinson*. LGI conversation series. Transcript available online https://lucyguerininc.com/content/news/listen-again-rebecca-hilton-and-chrysa-parkinson/dance-dialogues_-rebecca-hilton-and-chrysa-parkinson_8-october-2020.pdf. Accessed 16/03/2023.

Hunt, Victoria. 2017. Tangi Wai program note. ArtsHouse. <https://www.artshouse.com.au/events/tangi-wai-the-cry-of-water>. Accessed 21/03/2023.

Invargsten, Mette, 2023. 50/50. Personal artist website. <https://www.metteingvartsen.net/performance/5050/>. Accessed on 21/04/2023.

Kianga Judge, Sara. 2022. Starting *where you are: First Nations non-linear storytelling*. Australian Museum. <https://australian.museum/learn/first-nations/burra/non-linear-stories/>. Accessed 21/03/2023.

Murphy, Jacqueline. 2017. SHORE in Narrm ESSAY. *Catalyst Dance*, Emily Johnson. <http://www.catalystdance.com/mental-contagion>. Accessed 21/03/2023.

Spångberg, Mårten. 2012. *Seventeen Points for The Future of Dance*. Spangbergianism. <https://spangbergianism.wordpress.com/tag/choreography/>. Accessed 24/04/2023.

Artworks

Fake Company. *Aftermath: Reckoning/Rebirth*. Premiering 2022 as part of Fresh Festival, San Francisco. Performers ensemble. Available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvfieozLzuY>. Accessed 16/03/2023.

Dion, Celine. "It's all coming back to me". Track 1 on *Falling into You*. 1996, Sony Music, CD.

George, Luke. *That Unnamed Feeling*. Premiering 2013 in Pieces for Small Spaces, Melbourne.

Hilton, Rebecca. *Dancerness*, Lecture performance, 2015, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne. Spoken in unison with Alice Heyward, Ella Meehan, Ellen Davies, Megan Payne and Chloe Chignell.

Hval, Jenny. "Conceptual Romance". Track 4 on *Blood Bitch*. 2016, Sacred Bones, CD.

Invergsten, Mette. *69 positions*. Premiered in 2014 at PACT Zollverein, Essen.

Invergsten, Mette. *50/50*. Premiered in 2004 at Mousonturm, Frankfurt.

Landau, Leah. *Romancer*. Premiering 2016 in Pieces for Small Spaces, Melbourne. Performers Leah Landau and Jacqueline Aylward.

Landau, Leah. *The sequel 2*. Premiering 2016 in Room2Move Residency Dancehouse, Melbourne. Performers Leah Landau, Natalie Abbott, Jacqueline Aylward, Cam McLauchlan, Caitlin Dear.

Law, Shian. *Fuck dog* performance lecture. Premiering 2017 as part of Vanishing Point shown in DanceMassive, Melbourne. Ensemble dancers.

Johnson, Emily. *SHORE in Naarm*. Premiering 2017 in Yirramboi Festival, ArtsHouse, Melbourne. Performers Emily Johnson, Benjamin Hurley, Jacqueline Aylward and ensemble.

Hay, Deborah. *Beauty*. Premiering in 2012 in London.

Hunt, Victoria. *Tangi Wai... cry of the water*. Premiering 2015 in Carriageworks, Performance Space, Sydney. Performers Victoria Hunt, Kristina Chan, and ensemble.

Le Roy, Xavier. *Self Unfinished*. Premiering in 1998 in Cottbuser Tanztage, Germany.

Rainer, Yvonne. *No Manifesto*. 1964.

Randall, Mariaa. *Poetry in Motion*. Premiering in 2015 in The Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne. Performers 2nd year dance students of VCA.

Courses

Kellokumpu, Simo. *Body Kurssi*, Theatre Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki, 31/01- 3/02/2023.

APPENDIX

1. A vomit text

Unpublished text

Extracted from a live google document on 24/04/2023

Authors Sonja Karoliina Aaltonen, Jacqueline Aylward and Maja Kalafatić

A vomit text

By Sonja, Maja and Jacqui

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

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

S: I also enjoyed the fact that our paths are coming from different places. I think it affected the styles mixing in the artistic creation.

J: how did you relate to or understand different kinds of creative control you had in the work?

S: we rotated quite nicely around responsibilities within the artistic creation, or what do you think?

S: For me, it was nice that we recognized strengths in the ways of working within the trio, and shared working responsibilities also based on this. Something to embrace!

Other comments

J: I've been feeling like I'm missing explaining something about how we made a vibe or a micro culture or something else important that formed the background of the whole process. And what exactly that was. Like I remember we were dreaming a lot of solutions right? We made a space for supporting choices without a reason if they were backed by desire? I remember enjoying rehearsals.

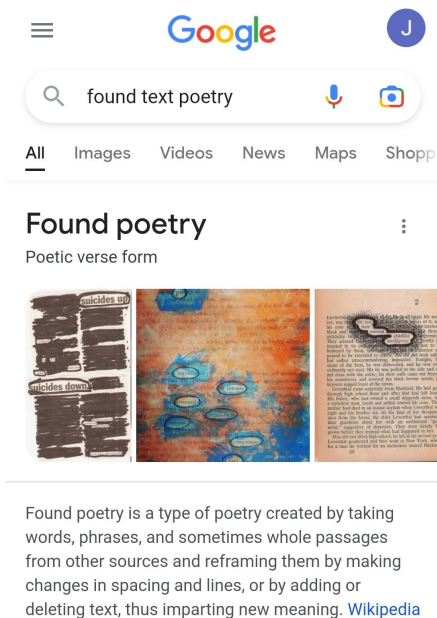
S: Yes yes yes, the dreaming was so good. I remember that I was so excited and my body was tingling from the excitement... maybe I even have some notes about our dreams. I remember that at least there was a dream to set the room on fire, I guess more on an empowering and sensual way. Rather than concretely setting the room on fire... or maybe I wanted to light something. But I guess, our dream was to affect the emotional body of the audience.

S: the fire was again affected by the song that you sang J on the singing classes at TeaK.

"This girl is on fireeeeeee..." and then I danced into this in one of our common rehearsals with the impossible score of turning the room on fire with enjoyment. wauh. This became a proper story opening.

M: Jacqui, what found text did you mean? Like, the random text that we collage into a poem or text from the performance or our notes?

J: like you would re-mix pre-existing text so that you could express something else



M: The task is very clear. I just meant if you have more specific pre-existing text in mind or we can use random text. I guess we can use whatever we like.

J: you could use stuff from our telegram chat maybe?

M: A song

Watch a wildlife show on television

I am peeing babes

Me too

The same here

Movie night?

The harp is coming to school

Baby, we have headache

See you soon

We can rehearse tomorrow if we want

I am still in tori

I have a physio

Babes, I started coughing during the night

Baby sucks you are sick

Missing vomiting with you already

No stress

Our messages are worth a thump up

There is a really good idea about giving the audience cookies

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

Yes, it makes sense

More sense than cookies

I think so

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

Babes, just saying, our song is great

Almost unison

Start without me

Could you baby make some coffee?

No hurry, be chill in the slippery slush weather

So good times

I only want to see you when you ...

I hope your fingers are feeling better

Remember the scents

Hugs to both

Miss you too

Quick zoom

Miss you and crazy times

It's getting big

I am hooked

Did anyone fart

Not yet

I hope someone did

Just sorting some tech stuff

I had a good sleep and a possible solution for us

Maybe it's your time zone

Count me in

S: There is so much pleasure with you two ...like crazy heyyy

S: How is our text with witches?

Sugar dissolves in water

And when it makes contact with your t(h)ong

The water in your saliva breaks up these bubbles

The pressurised gas escapes

Sometimes with enough force to crack the rest of its crystals

This is what causes the tingling,

popping sensation

J: unperformed (you might think it's a chemical reaction but actually it's a pretty cool combination of gasses and heat. Recipes vary from brand to brand but typically it involves a few different types of sugar and tiny bubbles if a carbonated gas - usually carbon dioxide.) Xx

S: This is mine. Thank you cosmos.

S: ... but what happens with L?

S: After: "I know we shouldn't but L. Fuck. I can't."

J: the love song happens. Is this what you mean? Or like they negotiate an open relationship...

S: that's very true. And yea, I started to think on a futurologist way

J: I don't know what that is. I will goggle it.

S: like how is the next letter?

J: L.O.V.E.

S: love it.