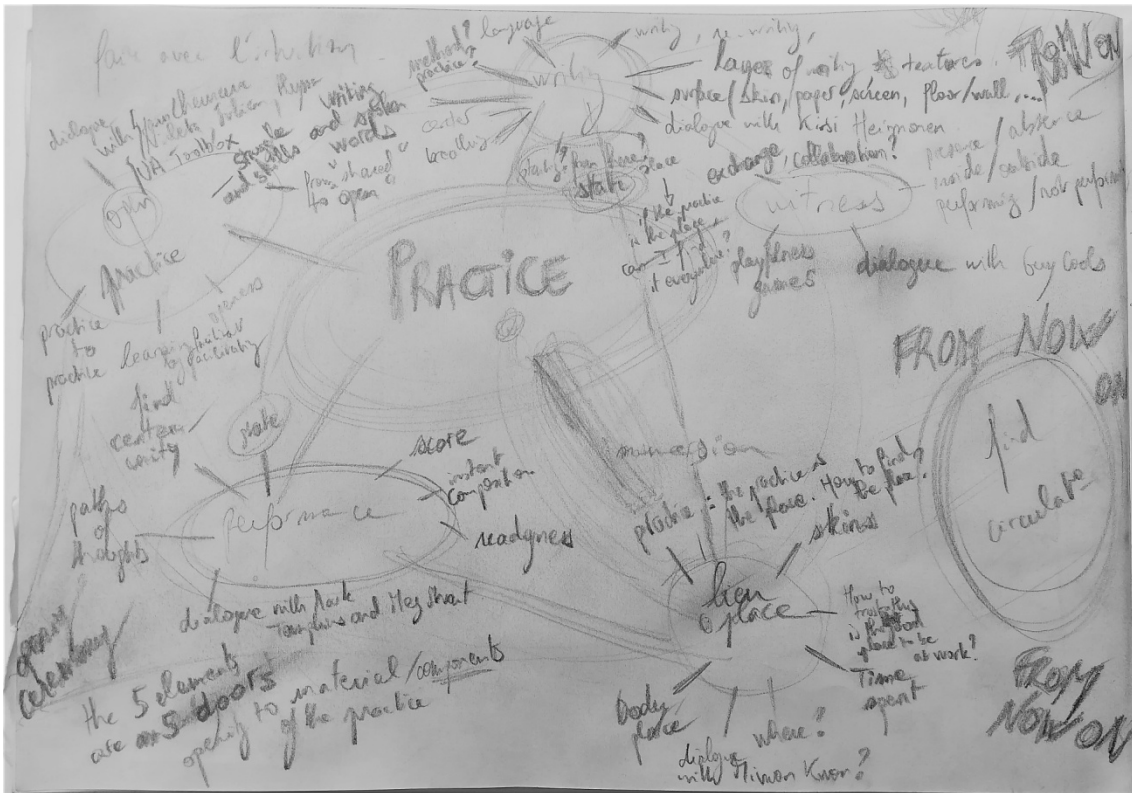


here for a moment an attempt to knowing the practice by practicing

RAPHAËL BEAU



ABSTRACT**DATE:**

AUTHOR Raphaël Beau	MASTER'S OR OTHER DEGREE PROGRAMME Dance performance
TITLE OF THE WRITTEN COMPONENT/THESIS here for a moment. an attempt to knowing the practice by practicing	NUMBER OF PAGES + APPENDICES IN THE WRITTEN COMPONENT 51 pages
TITLE OF THE ARTISTIC/ ARTISTIC AND PEDAGOGICAL WORK "here for a moment (it may change)", performed at Vapaan Taiteen Tila, Helsinki, Jan 22 nd , 23 rd , 24 th , 2023 Please also complete a separate description form (for the DVD cover). 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"/>	
<p>...Knowing the practice by practicing...</p> <p>...(Under)standing performance by performing... ...Learning how to facilitate by facilitating...</p> <p>...Learning to play by playing...</p> <p>This document is about an artistic practice I have been developing for the past five years, and more intensively for the past two years, during my studies in the Master's Programme in Dance Performance at the Theatre Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki. It is an attempt to find words to better define this artistic practice. "here for a moment" both refers to a specific location in space (here) and a specific duration in time (for a moment). This document gives a framework to this practice which has its origins both in improvisation and instant composition. It attempts to capture what my practice is at this moment and where the practice happens. It is about finding the practice by practicing. It is about inviting the practice to a place within me, and let it grow from that place.</p> <p>The first chapter is an opening of the practice. It is an attempt to start writing: writing as practice and writing about the practice. It opens to the practice as I have been experiencing it during Uniarts opening ceremony in September 2022. It opens to the origin of this practice, to the place and to the human environment that allows the practice to grow.</p> <p>The second chapter is about the practice itself, a practice that does not have a name yet but which is finding its own name by being activated with words. This chapter is in dialogue with practices and writings from a choreographer-performer, a dancer-researcher and an associate professor of art History. Through their experience of "practice", "writing" and "place", they are opening ways for me to relate with the notions of writing and place when it comes to my own practice.</p> <p>The third chapter is about performance and performing and how my body and mind have found a place to experience them. This chapter is in dialogue with texts and practices from improvisation and instant composition practitioners and a dramaturge. It goes through the understanding I have been building about performance and performing, the combination of score and instant composition within a performance, and the notions of witness and public space when it comes to performance.</p> <p>The fourth chapter is about the practice when I open it to other practitioners. I have been opening this practice every week for one year now. Together with the making of the performance reproduced in various contexts, the open practice has become the second main outcome of my studies at Uniarts Helsinki. In this chapter I attempt to trace the history of the emergence of this open practice, through other practices that has informed it. I describe how facilitating an open practice has allowed a space for me to learn how to facilitate.</p> <p>The fifth chapter is another opening, From now on. It is about pushing towards and from the "now" in order to move forward. It is about acknowledging what happened during my Master studies at Uniarts Helsinki and how I can move on from that place.</p>	
KEYWORDS performance. performing. writing. layers. loops. on-going. talking. thoughts. spoken words. play. playfulness. actions. questions. learning. facilitating. practice. open practice. here. place. skin. body. state. scores. instant composition.	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
1. OPENING CEREMONY	6
2. PRACTICE	15
2.1. <i>(not yet) Naming</i>	15
2.2. <i>Writing</i>	18
2.3. <i>Place</i>	27

3. PERFORMANCE: HERE FOR A MOMENT	32
3.1. <i>Performing</i>	32
3.2. <i>Score and instant composition</i>	36
3.3. <i>Witness and public space</i>	38

4. OPEN PRACTICE: PLAY AND ACT FROM WHAT IS HERE	43
4.1. <i>Beginnings</i>	43
4.2. <i>Unfoldings</i>	45
4.3. <i>Inspirations</i>	50

5. FROM NOW ON	52
REFERENCES	54
APPENDICES	55

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to all of you who have been present during the process of these two years of studies in the Master Dance Performance at the Theatre Academy, Uniarts Helsinki, for offering me a caring and supportive context for my artistic practice to grow and for the writing process of this thesis to emerge:

Eeva Muilu, Professor in Master Dance Performance, for your attentive listening, precious feedback and warm support for my practice to exist and evolve;

Maija Hirvanen, supervisor of the artistic part of my thesis work, for your deep understanding of my artistic practice, for hosting my doubts and struggles, with attentive listening, and always giving me inspiring perspectives about the work;

Simo Kellokumpu, supervisor of this written thesis, for your clear guidance in the process of writing and your support in finding words to define as best as possible my artistic practice;

Sonja Jokiniemi, artistic godparent, for your presence, interest and precious guidance all along my studies;

Sanna Myllylahti and Maria Saivosalmi, lecturers in Master Dance Performance, for your presence and support of my work;

Leena Rouhiainen and Mikko Niemistö, examiners of my artistic work and written thesis, for your time and interest in my work;

Maja Kalafatić, Sanni Kriikku, Yun-Chen Chang and Vishnu Vardhani for witnessing my work and offering me your presence and caring and stimulating feedback;

Alyssa Coffin, my partner, for your loving presence, for knowing me, for deeply understanding, closely following and supporting my artistic work, and questioning it with love;

Violeta Rodriguez, Lysanne Bruneau and Julien Martinez, my friends, for your presence, active support from distance and for bringing me new perspectives about the work;

My classmates in the Master Dance Performance, as well as students in the Masters Choreography and Live Art and Performance Studies, for your precious friendship and your caring presence;

All of you who came to the open practice “play and act from what is here”, for what you brought to this practice and how it has nourished and continues to nourish it;

My mother, father, sister and brother, niece and nephew, always present.

1. OPENING CEREMONY

September 15th, 2022. University of the Arts (Uniarts) Helsinki's Opening ceremony. Tori of the Theatre Academy (TeaK). It starts here in the middle of Tori. It will take some time. I arrived here ten days before the actual ceremony to start. I need time to immerse in that space, to get to know where and how this space speaks to me. I am sitting on the edge of the stage. This is home. My body is home and I set a home where my body sits. A home made of a notebook, a few pencils, sheets of paper, a computer, a cap, a water bottle and an open bag. This is where the thesis starts. If I make the thesis a home, then I know that I can be safe to return to it. Much of the work seems to be in that place: making the thesis a home. The work, which the thesis attempts to give a typed representation, had begun earlier, at the beginning of fall 2021, when I first arrived in Helsinki, in the Master Dance Performance, at the Theatre Academy, Uniarts Helsinki. It had started even before, during my one year studies at Tanzfabrik Berlin, in Dance Intensive program, and earlier in South of France when I used to share my days between social work and performance. However I decide to frame it as such that the work that the thesis attempts to cover starts with Uniarts' Opening ceremony. I decide now that the thesis starts here. Now. It has started.

I will never totally succeed. I keep on failing. I know I am failing with this thesis. I know I am on the way to find a voice that feels close to the voice of the artistic work. Will I ever find it? What a challenge. This thesis is the opening of this challenge: an attempt to find words for what I call my own practice. I am endlessly torn between the structure of this template and how my mind and body seem to relate with this artistic practice. What is the structure that contains the practice I am involved in? Can words for the practice fit in this template? What to think? What to do? What to write? If not writing. Writing brings suffering. What do I know about suffering? I might not even touch what suffering is. Am I over-estimating my own suffering? I am sure I am. There are paths to overcome this suffering. It helps to take care of myself. Writing helps. Performing helps. This thesis is also about the challenge to invite references to dialogue with this text. How to invite references, give them space in this thesis, find connections between them and the work I am doing?

It seems to me that the thesis has already been written, somewhere. The task is to let this writing settle onto this page. How to let the thesis be written? How to give space for the thesis to be written? How not to force too much on thoughts in order for them to appear on the page? Step by step, this thesis is being written. Some steps are bigger than others. I keep on falling. How do I get back on my feet?

It has been written, it is being written and it is endlessly written again. Watching what is already written makes me want to erase and write again. How on this page is it possible to let appear the traces of all that has been written, and write again on top of it? Artist Vishnu Vardhani, artist-facilitator of Urbanapa mini-residencies, has been the first person mentioning the word *palimpsest* to me, when hearing and looking at my work, during the artistic residency I spent at Oodi library in November 2022. This thesis has some similarities with a *palimpsest*. When I am writing on a sheet of paper, it seems to me that the flow of signs that I am producing with my fingers holding a pencil is quite faithful to the flow of my thoughts as well as the state of my body. Even if I write here, erase, write again, I cannot reproduce visually what is happening when writing on paper. The image below is an example of how I experience writing on paper, erasing with my fingers, writing again on top of the first layer of writing, and so on.



Master thesis notebook. Accumulating layers of writing. April 2023. Photo: Raphaël Beau

This written thesis **is about** a practice. And I immediately sense that I should rather write: this written thesis **is** a practice. This is the practice of the moment. This is a way the practice I am interested in is implemented at this very moment: in the form of a typed written document. By writing I am learning how to write, I am searching for a

way of writing that feels close to my sensations. I see writing as a way to teach me what I am made of and how to better relate to myself and to the other humans I live with.

I know the practice much better when I am practicing it than when I am using written words to describe it. Will I ever find words to name the practice? At the same time I struggle with finding words, I acknowledge the importance of words to materialize this practice, to make it more understandable for myself and for others. I have sometimes the dream that the practice can exist without being told about it, that it exists because it is implemented, because it is at work. Words come easier to name the practice at the moment I am practicing. It must be the most complex thing to put words on the practice when the practice is not in a state of activation. How do I write and keep the artistic practice alive at the same time? Writing about the practice is an attempt to grasp a sensation of what this practice is. The practice exists before I know what it is. I know it better and better by practicing it. Do I? Where do I know the practice? If the practice is a place, which of its corner do I know best? I found a place with this practice. The practice is a place that finds itself in another place. The practice is about seeing, listening, feeling what my body touches, and letting it resonate with these feelings. It is about naming what is here, naming what I choose to give attention to. The practice is about repeating again and again. It is always the same and always a bit different. It changes by accumulating layers.

This document is **about** my artistic practice. This practice will be visited in chapter II through two different approaches: writing and place. In Chapter III, I will develop how the practice reveals itself into a performance, or a way to be at performing. This chapter will include some aspects of the making of the performance as well as ways of working, especially in the presence of a witness. Chapter IV is for the open practice. It is about how I have been starting to facilitate the open practice. It is about this practice activated in the presence of other practitioners. It is about the transformation of this practice when being activated in the same room with other practitioners. Each of the chapters opens several dimensions of the practice. The practice is what covers the whole. It is always about the practice, activated in different ways depending on the context. Practice, performance and open practice are interwoven and relate to each other on a 3-dimensional level (see thesis cover picture). Approaching them in the thesis is an attempt to give a sense of this three dimensionality, though within a two dimensional template.

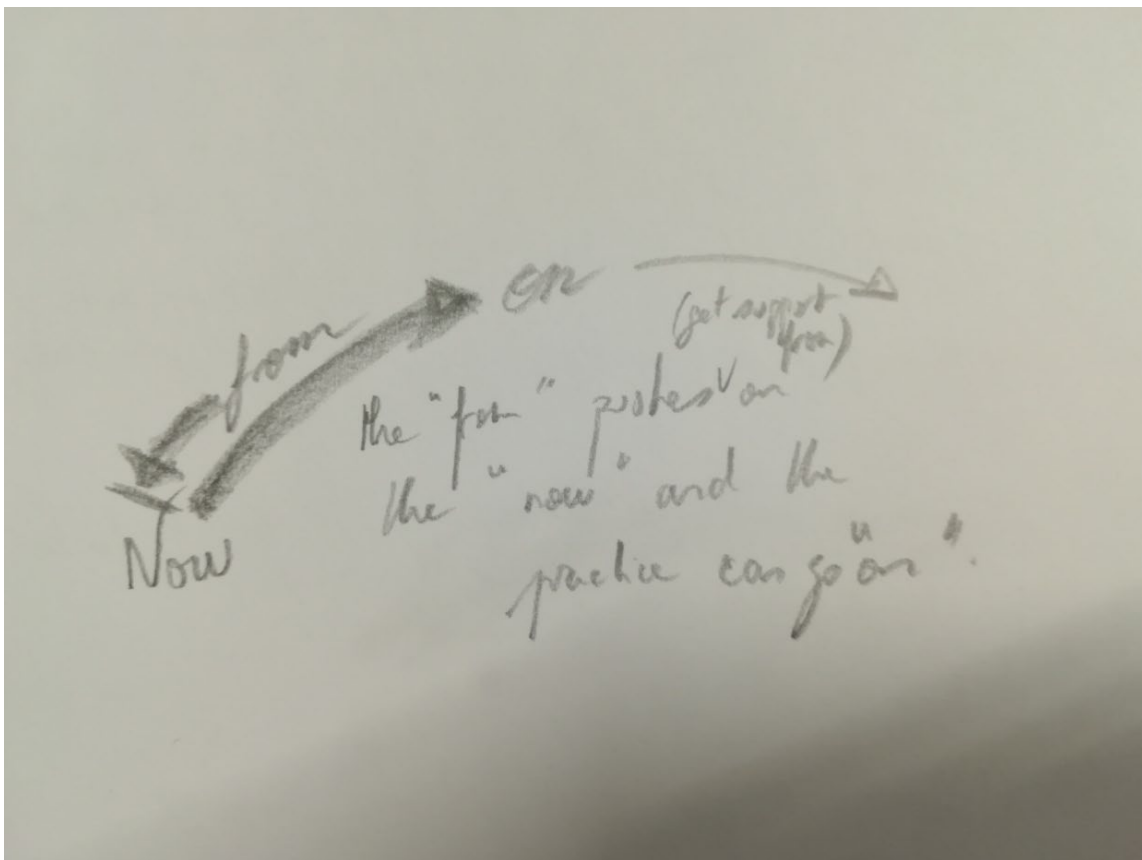
Writing (§2.1) is what is happening when making the thesis. It is also what happens at other moments of the practice, in the studio or on stage. Writing as practice is interwoven with writing about the practice. This document is an attempt to give a sense of the practice I am doing, by writing. I trust that glimpses of the practice will be unveiled through the meaning of words composing this thesis. I also trust that a sense of the practice will be given by the way the thesis is written, by the materiality of words and how writing is composed, repeats, hesitates, gets stuck, starts again, etc. This chapter will explore topics such as my past writings, the form of writing the pronoun “I”, the writing’s medium, English language and how written material is composed and produced. It will be about surfaces where writing happens. It will be about layers and textures. This part will be in dialogue with *If only. Writing through the spatiality of corporeality* (Heimonen, 2021).

Paragraph 2.2 questions the **place** of the practice (where the practice takes place) and also questions the practice as place. Place will first be introduced in relation to writing. Where do I find myself when I write? What is the place that allows me to write? Being at work, in the practice, brings the question of where I am when I am at work. What is this place of work? Where am I physically and where am I in my body (i.e. how is my inner state)? Place will be envisioned in its uniqueness and multiplicity. This part will also be about the surfaces of a place and how exchange and connection can happen where surfaces/skin of the body meet with surfaces/skin of the place. In relation to surfaces will be approached the notion of inside and outside, the inside of a place and the outside of it. A dialogue with the book *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* (Kwon, 2002) will support this chapter.

From September 2022 to January 2023 the practice has been implemented in the form of a **performance**. Performance will be approached in chapter III as the event itself as well as the fact of cultivating a state of being which I experience by performing. I will consider the question of score and instant composition and how both compose and dialogue within the performance. It will also be about witness sessions in public space. I will discuss the influence of a witness on the practice and on the state of performing. Topics such as presence/absence, inside/outside, performing/not performing will be considered. The notion of playing will also be developed. It will also be about how collaboration occurs in such this space of performer/witness. This chapter will be in conversation with *One Shot: Dialogues Sur La Composition En Temps Réel = Dialogues on Real Time Composition* (Tompkins, Stuart, Tutevoix, 2022) and dramaturg Guy Cools’ approach of dramaturgy.

Since March 2022, every week, the practice is implemented in an **open practice**, mostly at the Theatre Academy, in the context of my Master studies in Dance Performance. Other practitioners are invited to join the practice with me. In chapter IV, I will develop the notion of learning by doing and how struggle can turn into skills. In this part, I will dialogue with practitioners who have inspired me in their way of facilitating (dancer, choreographer and teacher Yann Lheureux, dancer choreographer and teacher Mark Tompkins, performer, choreographer, researcher, teacher and curator João Fiadeiro) as well as with other artists who I have been in dialogue in relation to this open practice (dancer and choreographer Violeta Rodriguez, visual artist and performer Julien Martinez, interdisciplinary artist Alyssa Coffin). I will also describe how the open practice has been evolving from its beginning until now, and explore ethical questions that come with it.

This thesis comes to an end with chapter V. This chapter explores where the practice goes, from now on. The practice is what exists now. It moves on from the now. The now is a place for the practice to take support from. It allows the practice to go on. The sketch below is an attempt to get a visual sense of this chapter.



Thesis notebook. An attempt to physically give a sense to chapter IV. FROM NOW ON. April 2023. Raphaël Beau

With this perspective of the now, I would dream for this thesis to be entered by any entry point, as the practice can be entered from any entry point. I value the possibility of entering the practice at any time as a sign of its accessibility. A wish, though seemingly difficult to reach, is that no chapter here, and no sentence, would need to be opened by forewords. Since I have been starting to write the thesis the chapters have been constantly reorganized. Words are here to be read from any entry point. I wish so.

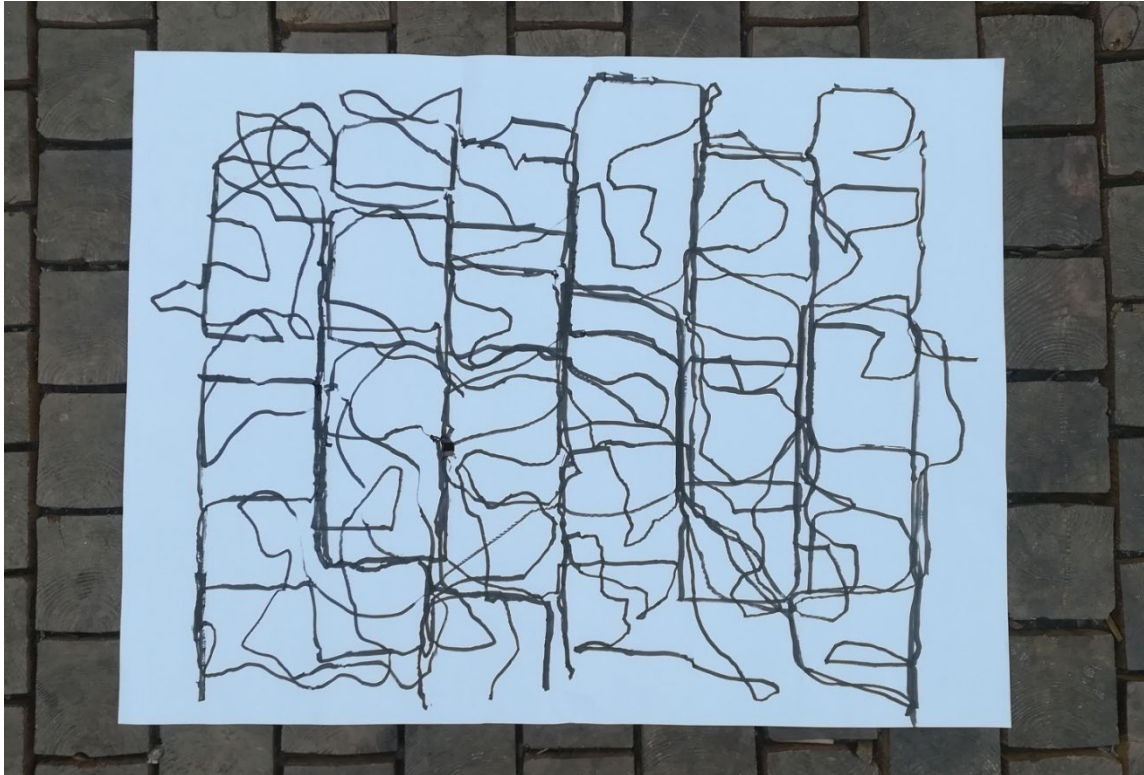
Before coming back to the thesis, let's come back to the opening ceremony:

I am crouching, alternatively taking notes, drawing, typing, looking at what is happening right now, sensing the ground under my feet and feeling the air around what I call my body, this entity endlessly processing what is in it and around it. I mark down things, what catches my attention. In TeaK Tori people are walking, eating, sitting, chatting, etc. I trust that writing down what catches my attention makes sense, now.



Setting a place working towards Uniarts' Opening ceremony. The Theatre Academy's Tori. September 2022. Photo: Raphaël Beau

I start mapping the floor, letting the marker follow its roughness, sensing the resonance of the ground, through my arm, in my whole body. I change position around the drawing which starts to appear. The ground is making my body, shaping it. There is a connection between my body and this floor, a connection made of forces, a force from the ground towards the center of my body, and vice-versa. I can witness the ongoing trace of this connection on the paper.



Mapping the floor. Working towards Uniarts' Opening ceremony. The Theatre Academy's Tori. September 2022.
Photo: Raphaël Beau

I leave the marker and the paper aside for a moment and I start digging in between the wooden paving stones. I am amazed by the quantity of objects I find here. They are one form of memory of this space. Some might have been here for decades before I arrived in this place, some might have fallen in the floor grooves during the past week. I go on from what I started to initiate. I don't know what I am doing. Each new action determines the next one. It seems that there is a way to work that is offered to me. I follow it. I realize that the map is here to receive the objects that I found in between the wooden paving stones. The actions which are happening and driving my hand start to make sense. I am digging layers of history of this place: its history from the point of view of the objects that have fallen on the floor and got stuck in those in between. I am now involved in bringing back these objects to the surface, revealing them in the light of the map. This is what is happening, before I had planned to do so.



Digging up and placing objects on the map. Writing words in between lines and objects. Working towards Uniarts' Opening ceremony. The Theatre Academy's Tori. September 2022. Photo: Raphaël Beau

I start writing combination of words that are short stories that could be told by the objects. Together with the objects and the lines the words make associations. Stories of the place are revealed by the lines, the objects and the words. I am practicing. And practicing is already performing. It is performing in the sense I feel my body fully invested in the action I am involved in. The opening ceremony's performance I am making is already at work, is already being performed. I could say I am whispering the performance. By whispering the performance, it is gaining layers until it is ready to be performed for the actual event *Opening Ceremony*. In an almost same way, the written thesis is gaining layers when being written until it is ready to be submitted and read.

These two years of studies at The Theatre Academy, Uniarts Helsinki, brought me a place to be at work. They created space inside me to dedicate to the artistic work I had the sensation I wanted to develop. TeaK tori has been an enormous potential for cultivating the feeling of being part of a community. The Theatre Academy gave me the possibility to benefit from free studio spaces, a locker where to store material, showers, a changing room and a non-heated sauna which has hosted dozens of my naps and acted as a refuge whenever I felt overwhelmed by TeaK community and needed a place where to breathe and rest.

Being a student at the Theatre Academy, Uniarts Helsinki, provided me support from professors, teachers and supervisors. Choreographer Eeva Muilu (Professor, Master's Degree Programme in Dance Performance), choreographer Simo Kellokumpu (Lecturer, Master's Degree Programme in Dance Performance, Visiting researcher, Performing Arts Research Center, and supervisor of my written thesis), artist-researcher Jana Unmüssig (Lecturer, Master's Degree Programme in Choreography), choreographer Sanna Myllylahti (Lecturer, Master's Degree Programme in Dance Performance), choreographer and performer Maria Saivosalmi (Lecturer, Master's Degree Programme in Dance Performance), choreographer Veli Lehtovaara, choreographer and artist Maija Hirvanen (supervisor of the artistic part of my thesis work) and choreographer, performer and artist Sonja Jokiniemi (artistic godparent during my studies in Master's Degree Programme in Dance Performance) were of great support accompanying the practice I have been caring to develop. Through their listening and feedback they hosted challenges and questions I have been going through when being at work.

I am also deeply grateful for the quality of education brought in the courses *Introduction to Racialisation and the Politics of Visibility*, *About Whiteness*, and *Stop Hatred Now*. Choreographer and artistic director Sonya Lindfors, community organizer and media producer Monica Gathuo, performer, musician and producer Lehmus Murtomaa and all the people I met during these courses were very inspiring through the engagement, determination and openness they carry with them. They brought a lot of perspectives to me to be confronted with the work I am doing and what it represents.

Eventually, I felt very nurtured by the community of students at Uniarts, by my classmates in Master Dance Performance, by students in Master Live Art and Performance Studies (LAPS), students in Master Choreography, as well as students from The Academy of Fine Arts (Kuva) whom I met during *Translations* and *Walking towards no thing* workshops. I am deeply grateful for having met interdisciplinary artist Alyssa Coffin (student in Master Time and Space at Kuva). Her presence, curiosity and deep understanding of the practice I am doing have been very supporting and continue to support where I am at with my artistic practice.

I am also grateful for all the people, artists who came to the open practice and have been nourishing it by their presence and will to explore and share their own artistic practices.

2. PRACTICE

This chapter is an investigation about a specific practice that I have been able to call “my practice” around five years ago, after almost fifteen years practicing dance, improvisation and instant composition with other practitioners, performers and choreographers. Writing about the practice is what allows me to discover and discover it again, to find a way to name it, un-name it and name it again anew, by adding and removing layers.

In § 2.1. *(not yet) Naming* I will review the evolution of this practice over the last years and attempt to define it as closely as possible to what it is today.

In § 2.2. *Writing*, I invite dancer and researcher Kirsi Heimonen’s text about her writing practice to dialogue with my practice of writing. In this chapter, I try to define each time a bit better a language that emerge from the practice and find its way to be formulated into a written text.

In § 2.3. *Place*, I attempt to locate the practice in a place. I will describe how the practice travels from place to place as much as the practice is the place itself.

2.1. (not yet) Naming

It has been in 2018 the first time I was able to identify a practice that I could call as “my practice” or “the practice I am doing”. Before 2018 it felt that the workshops I was participating in, and other artists’ works I was involved in, were a place where to explore and refine a material. What I call today “my practice” is very much informed by improvisation and instant composition workshops I have been participating to, before studying at Uniarts. It is mainly informed by artists such as Mark Tompkins, dancer and choreographer Vera Mantero, João Fiadeiro, Yann Lheureux, dancers, choreographers and teachers Jackie and Denis Taffanel, director, actor, marionettist, ventriloquist, dancer and singer Jonathan Capdevielle, among others. They are the main ones. I have also been playing on my own with this material that little by little became a practice of mine, a practice I felt I could eventually own.

Qu’est-ce que vous dites? (English: *What are you saying?*) has been the first name that I gave to this practice. It was about transforming spoken conversations by writing them down, embodying the resulting text by reading it and recording this text, making a soundtrack out of it for the body to interpret through movement. This practice has been

activated through a performance and later on through an open practice. The open practice took form during my studies in the Dance Intensive program at Tanzfabrik Berlin. Later on, it evolved into a piece *W.hat A.re Y.ou S.aying? (W.A.Y.S.)* that I directed, and was co-created and performed by 5 performers who were my classmates at that time. At the same moment, my solo practice evolved from *Qu'est-ce que vous dites?* into another practice I started to call *An attempt to tune thoughts, speech and movement*. This practice has been informed by the group work as well as by a wish I had to explore the unfolding of thoughts through both speech and movement. This is the practice I came with to the Master Dance Performance at Uniarts, with the will to develop it and bring it further.

During the Master, this practice has been supported within workshops with Sonja Jokiniemi, performance artist, researcher, pedagogue and writer Pilvi Porkola, performance artist and director Julius Elo, Lehmus Murtomaa, Simo Kellokumpu, choreographer, dancer and teacher Anna Mustonen and theatre director and performance artist Anna Mari Karvonen. They have been setting playgrounds where I have been able to implement my practice and be supported in my research as a performer. It has also been this practice that I have been working on during the periods dedicated to the creative work. For each period, the Solo Demo and the Spring Demo processes during year 1, and the Final Work during year 2, I have been processing and expanding this practice. Each time when being at work in the studio or in the actual place I would perform, I have implemented the practice over and over again. Each time I put the practice at play, I found new ways to approach it. It was also a lot about doing and doing again the same things, but often without knowing what I would start with and how I would go through each material during a work session. It was about to start moving, talking, writing, touching. It was about to start. And once I started with one thing it opened multiple possibilities to go on with another thing and so on.

It was when I was offered to facilitate a course as part of the Theatre Academy, Center for Joint Studies (YOK) that I pushed myself to find a name for the open practice. It became *Play and act from what is here*. At that time (September 2022), this name felt like the most relevant name to describe this open practice. Yet the practice, the one I am implementing by myself and takes form either as a practice in the studio, in the street, a performance or an open practice, has yet to be named. The process to name this practice is part of this master thesis. Today when the practice unfolds in an open practice it is named *Play and act from what is here*. When it unfolds in a performance it is named *here for a moment (it may change)* and it could also be named *here for a moment*. It has already changed. It lacks a name when it is about the practice as a whole.

The exercise of naming the practice is not easy for me. I know when I am in the practice. I feel more skilled to define the practice when I speak about it. I feel that telling out loud about what is the practice allows me to embody it at the same time. I have the sensation that in the moment of speaking out the practice, I communicate to others what the practice is about. I feel the presence of the practice. I search for a way of writing that allows me to embody the practice. It has helped me to speak internally and sometimes out loud when writing. How to find this written language that approaches as much as possible the practice and that makes possible for the practice to be understood by the reader at the same time? How can I transfer this meaningfully felt practice into a text that feels meaningful and truthful to this practice? How can I embrace the practice with written words? How to find a way of writing that is faithful, respectful and close enough to this practice and at the same time that communicate to the reader about this practice?

On her website, choreographer and performer Jeanine Durning describes her practice, named *inging*: “‘ing’ is used to express actions that are still in progress, that haven’t yet ended” (Durning 2023). And she adds: “inging proposes the insistent practice of unscripted nonstop languaging as performance, where speaker (performer) is in direct relation with listener (audience) at the moment of articulation” (Durning 2023). I find in Durning’s practice several similarities with my own practice. The similarities are the performativity of the practice, its process-based characteristic, the presence of speech, unscripted language, and the interwoven relation between thoughts, speech and movement. I am also interested in the way Durning describes her own practice. She first of all gives visibility to her practice through naming it. Then she gives a sense of what is the practice as well as what the practice is made of, its components and its sources. Later on she describes in a few words what happens in her practice. Following her method of describing her practice I attempt to describe my own practice.

I acknowledge that I did not find words to name my own practice as a whole yet. It is on the way to be named. The performance and the open practice both are named and their names as well as what they contain will be described respectively in chapters III and IV. I stand without a name for the practice. What starts to point now is that the whole process of writing this thesis would be about finding a name for the practice. At the end, a name, made of one word or two, might emerge or not from this document. The practice is what happens when I am at work. It is something that I keep defining. It comes out from the body I inhabit. Practicing is about noticing the ongoing flow of events inside and around my own body. It is about letting go, letting go an inner flow

responding to these events. It is about playing with the responses. I play with what is present in the place where I find myself. What is present is both inside and outside myself. I play with the limits of the self. Where does my inner self stop? Where does my outer self start? Being at play is implemented through movement, speech, writing, and drawing. Most of the time, at least two of them are intertwined. When I am practicing I am doing nothing, nothing in a way that I do not manufacture anything. Or I always manufacture and what is manufactured is always transformed and does not stay. It nevertheless stays as traces to be watched, memories. Memories in body.

2.2. Writing

Writing is not easy. Writing comes out in bursts. The flow of writing is irregular. This chapter came with many questions that are still here, though always slightly changing and opening to new questions. Sometimes I write possible answers to these questions. Here are some of them: -How to give, through writing, a sense of the work I am making? -How to write with being interested about what I write? -Is this thesis writing me? -Does it say something about what I am? -How to channel my thoughts into this format of writing? -How can I make writing something that is close to me? -How to make writing something that is not beautiful? I mean not looking for making the writing being beautiful. And then it is what it is. -How to make writing something that goes in multiple directions and finally still find its way? -Why do I write? To let go, to find a state of being at work, to process ideas, to find words. -How to differentiate ways of writing? -When am I writing about? -When writing is the thing, the practice itself? -How can I track, when I am writing about and when I am writing-performing?

Each time I start writing I feel like I start again. I have the sensation that I am making loops and that I could write and write and write again, without really finding what I want to express through writing. How to find an exit of one specific way of writing? How to find diversity in writing, a diversity that allows me to search for a “writing voice” that feels closer to my “spoken voice” and embodied sensations about the practice? I wish for the written thesis to be a performance, to be a chaotic performance, being written and written again. Never totally finished. Always an on-going process. And from the chaotic writing something arises. That is what I experience when I write on paper before typing. Is there also a space on the virtual page to be chaotic and from the chaos sentences to organize? By writing I am searching for a way to write, as by performing I am searching for a way to perform, as by facilitating an open practice I am searching for ways to facilitate. Where is writing? How to grasp writing? Where are the words to make the practice exist here? How to channel the practice by writing?

I have been struggling finding references when it came about writing. Which text, which author could I dialogue with when being at work, writing? Dancer and researcher Kirsi Heimonen's words, appeared to host the best the way I relate to writing practice at the moment. Heimonen introduces her article by: "This text discusses the act of writing, or rather the impossibility of writing in artistic research projects, from the perspective of the artist-researcher and suggests possible conditions for writing to happen" (Heimonen 2022). This is what I am looking for: "possible conditions for writing to happen". It seems to me that writing can happen at any time. I type on keyboard and writing is happening. But what kind of writing is happening? Is it the kind of writing that I am looking for? The practice is constantly in the process of being written. It exists through the fact it is implemented. Could the thesis also exist under these conditions? What is written now is what constitutes the thesis and what is written can always be written again. Until this thesis is submitted. And then writing will continue, elsewhere.

Heimonen continues writing: "this presentation illuminates a process of writing through corporeality in artistic research, in which the impossibility of writing forms a challenge, in which re-writing and erasure, naming and un-naming produce on each occasion a certain kind of temporality through which something from the lived, sensuous experience of moving may continue to resonate in the text" (Heimonen 2022). How corporeality can be transferred into the text? How does the text gain corporeality? How the way I experience the practice with my body can appear in the form of a written thesis?

At times, I feel like in order to write I need to get rid of some thoughts; I need to clear my mind from some thoughts, in order to let space for other layers to emerge. Writing affects my thoughts; it gives space for other thoughts. At times, I write in order to modify my state of being as a body. I write in order to make my body ready to be at work. And if the work is about writing, then I write in order to reach a state that will enable me to write. However, I am already writing. And writing is visible. I come to realise that the written material I produce in order for me to be ready to write is sometimes very similar, if not identical, to the written material I start to produce when I am eventually ready. That said, I feel a refinement of the text by working and working again with its materiality. I am writing by adding layers. The structure of the thesis is getting clearer layer after layer. Most of the chapters are being written at the same time. Writing about one topic makes me think about another topic.

When I have been starting to use the Master's thesis template I felt supported by its structure. I started to feel that there is a place where I can channel the dispersed

thoughts that come to me and write them in this place. Within this structure I can add/delete/re-arrange chapters and contents. This document is a constant draft. On the day it will be submitted it will be a version of the moment. The minimum I expect from this version is to be satisfied with the words it contains, satisfied in a way these words are close enough to how I experience and value my practice today.

For this writing process I really look for an experience that is getting closer to the way I make a performance. I wish to take this writing process as an opportunity to write. It is an opportunity to get to share my thoughts about how I experience performing and an opportunity to make the practice I develop more consistent. What if I would write as I perform? At the same time that I write about something, writing is also the thing itself. My performances are seldom about something but they rather attempt to be something by themselves, to find their own topic by being activated. One could say they are about the moment. But in which way do they treat, deal with the moment? I am not looking to write about something, even if this still happen in this document. I wish to report about what happened in the artistic process and I also want that writing be one form of expressing the practice. Writing is here alternatively about the work and how the work is happening. It often combines both. I tend to approach writing in the same way I am making performance, to find a state of being at writing in a similar way I am being at performing.

If the process of writing is present in this thesis work, writing is also in the practice, in various forms. It can be challenging to differentiate writing the thesis from other moments of writing. I feel sometimes divided between the thesis to produce and the practice that is being produced by moving forward through the process. At times, writing the thesis separates me from the practice. How to write and be in the practice? How to find this place that feels I can be with the work and not separated from the work? Can I trust that challenges are part of the process? Can I write without being satisfied about what I am writing? What if my mind thinks about something else than what I am writing at the moment? There is something about a connection that needs to happen between my thoughts and what I write, and something that allows a flow from thoughts to writing.

I identify three main fields that have been occupying my professional life and which I have been writing about:

- environmental and energy engineering
- social, community work
- art, dance and performance

The first writings I was involved in were produced in the frame of my Master degree in environmental and energy engineering, from 2006 until to 2009. Ten years later I have been writing for a degree in social work and community animation.

Writing about engineering was a task. It was something I had to do. I have been framing a lot the writing, and it used to appear quite dry to me. I felt not aligned with what I was writing, not aligned with the method of working and often not aligned with the values. I needed to counter balance what I was writing by documents that were criticizing the methods of work of the structure I was part of.

Writing about social work had been a hard work and at the same time I felt passionate with what I was writing about. At that time I was working as a community animator. I was writing about my experiences as a community animator at the same time I was working as a community animator. What I was writing about had happened and was still happening. I can see similarities with the current writing process of writing the thesis.

I am now writing about the art I dedicate to. I could also write: “I am writing the art I dedicate to”. I don’t need to write about something. I don’t want to write about something. I want writing to be an action, the continuation of the performance, the performance itself.

Studying at the Theatre Academy in the University of the Arts Helsinki opened space for me to write. Writing has been involved in almost all the sessions I spent in a studio. It has been part of the practice and manifested in various ways. Having the opportunity to dedicate space and time to my practice while in school has allowed me to broaden my experience of writing within that practice.

When it comes to writing I wonder if I shouldn’t write “i” instead of “I”. i am questioning the use of a capital letter for the pronoun “i” in general and more specifically in this thesis and in the work i am making. Why does the pronoun “I” is written in capital letter even when it is not placed at the start of a sentence? The “I” placed at a middle of a sentence seems to split the sentence in two parts. “I” looks big compared to the other letters that make the sentence. Why “I” should be bigger than the rest? In the performance i am making, who is the “i”? The fact that i am performing solo makes the “i” being very present. And at the same time, who is the performance about? Is the performance about the “i”? During a one-week workshop with German

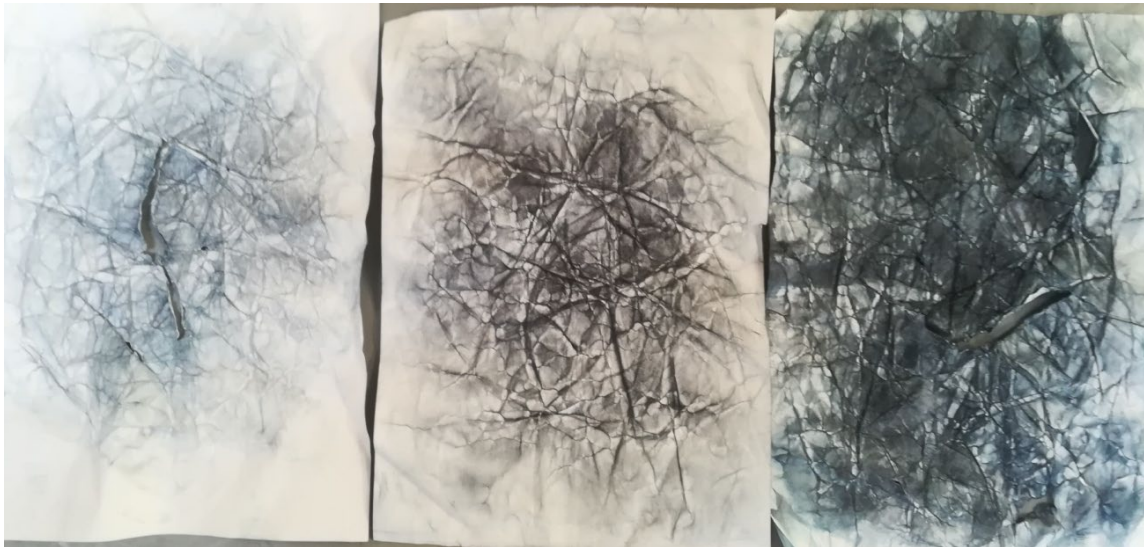
Jaurequi and Antia Diaz Otero at Impulstanz festival, summer 2022, in Vienna, we were asked to name what we wanted to develop regarding our practice during the week. i expressed the wish as a performer to explore my body “being a place (“i”) that let itself be passed through and channel the information it receives” dialoguing with my body “being an “I” that states and affirms what I am and believe in”. The quality of the “i” performer fluctuates depending on where i situate myself as a performer. In the first case, the “i” appears to be more appropriate whereas in the second case it is the “I” that appears to be more appropriate.

When I think about writing, I think about the tools I have been using to write as well as the surface/material I have been writing on. In the past two years, writing has happened on various mediums during practice time. Writing has been a support for me. Writing is something I can relate with. It engages my body and it leaves a trace. I can read what has just being written. I can play with writing, play with how writing traces lines on paper. Writing changes my state of being, if only I find a place for writing to manifest. In November 2021, during the Solo demo process, I have been journaling. Journaling became the text for the whole first part of the performance. I have also been going on with writing questions. Questions emerged when being at work in the space I was going to perform. The questions were addressed to me and to the place. In April 2022, during the Spring demo process, I started to write on my own body. It came as a necessity to find an anchor. Writing on my skin allowed me to materialize questions and intentions and embody them. I felt supported by these questions and intentions written on my skin. I could carry them with me. It became a practice to embody words, to affirm desires and decisions, to make them as close to myself as I could. Words were present on paper during the practice; they were present as spoken words during the performance (live voice and recorded voice); they became present written on my own body.



Writing on my skin. Spring demo. Studio 709. The Theatre Academy, Uniarts Helsinki. April 2022. Photo: Ronja Syvälahti

In July 2022, I re-activated the practice during Atlas program at Impulstanz in Vienna. I started to explore contact between skin and paper. After writing, I rubbed paper on my skin. Words underwent a transformation from skin to paper, through the process of rubbed contact. Paper's texture became softer and in a way closer to skin texture or at least closer to an organic texture.



Papers rubbed on skin after writing on skin. Atlas program. Impulstanz, Vienna. July 2022. photo: Raphaël Beau

Gradually, this experience encouraged me to explore further the theme of skin as a surface of exchange. Naming the surface of a place as the skin of the place opened up a new way of relating to that place. This became clear during the residency at Oodi library, as part of Urbanapa mini-residencies, in November 2022. I started working with the skin of the place being an extension of my own skin, and my own skin being part of the skin of the place. This way of working has greatly influenced the performances that followed November 2022 and I started to name this way of relating to a place in the open practices.

During the process of writing the thesis I have been writing both with pencil on paper and typing on computer. Writing on paper allows me to be closer to my body. It allows me to let go a flow. I go back and forth between paper and computer. I might not write the same things on paper and on computer. I do not write on paper to make a draft. I write on papers to let words be. I write on paper to let go thoughts that sometimes prevent me to write the thesis. I look for concrete actions of writing. I look for writing to be physical and close to sensations animating my body.

Writing has also been about finding a voice within English language. I struggle with English language. English is not my mother tongue, and the more I use it, the more I realize I lack skills in this language. I struggle finding words that express what I sense. I struggle with the syntax. My favorite online translator *DeepL traducteur* is always open. I keep on checking words. This morning, my cousin told me about *General Pre-Trained Transformer-3 (GPT-3)* this artificial intelligence that can expand a text from a draft made of basic ideas. Would I ask this artificial intelligence to write a text in English language about my practice? What would that bring? I see the value of keeping my broken English. The practice is made of this broken English. Through reading and writing, I little by little find a way to a better and more nuanced English. I know that I will also struggle in French language. It is not only about language, it is also about how I find ways for my thoughts to be formulated. It has something to do with how my mind is structured. As much as I need to learn how to write, I also sense that I need to unlearn how I am writing and to explore with writing. I see exploring with writing to be a path for new meanings. It is hard, and I hope there are some spaces of softness in the middle of this hardness. By writing I improve my language and my way of writing. Again, writing as a practice of learning how to write. I have been talking in English during all the performances I made this year. Cannot I trust that something of the performing voice will be found in this written voice?

Lastly, writing has brought me to consider the relation between the production written material and the way to compose and combine this material. Both in making performances and in the present writing process, I simultaneously work by adding/subtracting material and constantly re-composing. Material is constantly emerging. Composition is already here at the very beginning. Every time there is new material, the composition is re-arranging. The arising of a new material can be a reason to create a new chapter. Composition happens by merging chapters, re-organizing the order of chapters, displacing content from one chapter to another, etc.

I am typing on the keyboard of my computer now. This is the site: body connecting to keyboard through touch and eye contact. Body, chair, table and computer form a whole, a system. And what is happening within this system is a flow allowing space for the thesis to be written.



Writing the thesis. Connecting body, computer, table and chair with the practice of writing. March 2023. Photo: Iris Blaumberg

2.3. Place

What to say about place? Where am I when I am practicing? Where am I and where is the practice? What does it mean to bring this practice in different places? During this chapter I attempt to locate the practice I am doing. As a transition from the previous chapter to this one, I start by locating the writing.

I may find it difficult to write in one single place, in one single position. I have been writing the thesis at Töölö, Kallio and Kontula's libraries, at Uniarts Helsinki Sörnäinen Campus Library (1st floor and basement), at TeaK tori, in room 409 TeaK's 4th floor, at Kuva's 3rd floor lobby and at home. I wonder how a place affects my capacity of writing. I feel the necessity to connect with the place where I am writing. By connecting I mean letting a bond to emerge with the place, becoming somehow part of the place, feeling that the place where I am writing allows circulation from inside out, from outside in. At times, a place can be supporting for writing and later on this same place loses its capacity of support. It can be because I am disturbed by some noise (outer noise), or thoughts (inner noise). It might be complex to identify how a place affects my thoughts. However I might return to some places where I found myself inspired regarding the writing process.

I have been writing sitting on a chair, squatting, lying on my belly, crouching, kneeling. And in between these positions I have been moving. Movement seems to be necessary in between the writing moments. I identify movement as breathing, as giving space for writing to happen again. Walking re-activates thoughts. Drinking, urinating too.

After a conversation with my supervisor Simo Kellokumpu I began to look more closely at the notion of "site-specificity" in relation to the work I am making. I do not want people to assume what the work I am doing could be when they read the term "site-specificity". Associate Professor of Art History Miwon Kwon writes: "...if the aesthetic and political efficacy of site-specific art has become insignificant or innocuous in recent years, it is because it has been weakened and redirected by institutional and market forces" (Kwon 2004, 1). I wish for finding words that can give to the reader an image or even a sensation of what the work I am doing is. How much can I give an image/sensation to other people about the work I am doing? And if I give a sense of what I am doing to some people, wouldn't there be other people who will be left out by the work, who the way I word the practice I am doing does not make any sense? How to make the work as much accessible as possible?

I have been delaying to start reading Kwon's book. One of the reasons was that I felt it too complex for the intellectual energy I wanted to give to it. When starting reading it now I actually find correspondences between the work I am doing and the works that are cited. What alternative formulation of site specificity in this book could define the most closely the work I am involved in? Kwon writes: "...many artists, critics, historians, and curators, whose practices are engaged in problematizing received notions of site specificity, have offered alternative formulations, such as context-specific, debate-specific, audience-specific, community-specific, project-based" (Kwon 2004, 2) Am I making "audience-specific" work or "context-specific" work? Where is the specificity of the work I am doing? Can I say that I do "..."-specific work. What is the "..."? I would say now that the work I am doing is moment-specific, but not only. And does it have any meaning? Can I relate this term to any other work? I can relate with how Miwon Kwon describes site-specific works in the late 1960s and early 1970s: "the art object or event in this context was to be singularly and multiply experienced in the here and now through the bodily presence of each viewing subject, in a sensory immediacy of spatial extension and temporal duration (...) rather than instantaneously perceived in a visual epiphany by a disembodied eye" (Kwon 2004, 11). The work happens here and now. I work with immediate sensations. I process them in the moment and they become material for the performing acts. It is a site-specific work in that understanding. It is site-specific in the very moment it happens. It is also site-specific in the sense that the work is informed by the time I have been spending on site before the performance. At the same time this performance is always relocated, it happens in different places and different contexts. In that sense it differs from Kwon description of early 1970's works: "It is a site-specific work and as such not to be relocated" (Kwon 2004, 12). In the work I am making, it is the score that remains the same. The place where the work happens changes constantly. It plays with the score and transforms it.

Kwon writes: "The 'work' no longer seeks to be a noun/object but a verb/process, provoking the viewers' *critical* (not just physical) acuity regarding the ideological conditions of their viewing. In this context, the guarantee of a specific relationship between an artwork and its site is not based on a physical permanence of that relationship (...) but rather on the recognition of its unfixed *impermanence*, to be experienced as an unrepeatable and fleeting situation." (Kwon 2004, 24) The practice I am doing (will I ever find a name for it?) is a process, wherever it happens. This is what makes its strength. The practice exists all the time. I could (I can?) write that the practice exists within me. I can decide at any time to summon again the practice within me. Its "unfixed impermanence" resides in the fact that the place finds the practice and disturbs it. This disturbance is what makes the practice alive.

Later on Kwon writes that artists “have reflected on aspects of site-specific practice itself as a ‘site’” (Kwon 2004, 28). The practice is the site. I relate to the practice as I relate to a site. I can be in the practice. I can leave the practice and look at it from distance. I can come back to the practice. I can take the practice with me and carry it somewhere. I can lose the practice. I find it again. I can exercise to find it again. I can let it come back to me. When I am with the practice I can decide to let this practice/site expand or concentrate. The practice takes space in the actual/physical place where I stand. The practice unites me (inner place) and the place where I find myself (outer place). It is sometimes hard to find the practice again. Where is the practice-site? Where am I? Am I with the practice now? There are different ways to find the practice-site again. One way is to listen, to acknowledge that the practice is here. Another way is to start moving and doing, touching, writing, drawing. Being in motion brings back the practice.

Kwon adds: “...different cultural debates, a theoretical concept, a social issue, a political problem, an institutional framework (not necessarily an art institution), a neighborhood or seasonal event, a historical condition, even particular formations of desire are deemed to function as sites” (Kwon 2004, 28). In this case, the site is what I choose to take in consideration when practicing, the outer place I choose to embrace with my inner place. When practicing in the street, playing with dirt or snow, the site is where I stand or sit and its limits are until where my hands can reach. Little by little the site expands when my actions expand.

During the residency at Oodi library (November 2022), as part of Urbanapa mini-residencies, I started to interact with the place through giving more attention to touch and sensing the materiality of surfaces. I used a piece of paper that I put on the floor or the walls and started to run the pencil on the entire surface of the paper. The drawings revealed the texture of the surface. I started to play with the paper as an intermediate between the surface of my skin and the surface of the place. At that time I have been starting to talk about the "skin of the place", and meeting point between the skin of the body and the skin of the place.



Mapping the floor. Residency at Oodi library Helsinki, part of Urbanapa mini-residencies. November 2022.
Photo: Aman Askarizadmasouleh

It has also been during the residency at Oodi library that I started to play in between the inside and outside of a place. Maijansali's large window facing the street made me want to explore performing the last part of the show in the street while the audience stayed indoor, watching from the window. Performing at Open home festival one month later was the second time I have been performing outside the place from where the audience was witnessing the performance. In January 2023, for the artistic part of the written thesis, I have been going on playing with this notion of inside-outside: 1- by bringing the outside space (Sörnäinen neighborhood) into the performance place (Vapaan Taiteen Tila) through video material recorded one week before the performance in Sörnäinen; 2- by inviting the audience to follow me outside Vapaan Taiteen Tila during the second part of the performance.



here for a moment (it may change). Performance at Vapaan Taiteen Tila and around. Sörnäinen neighborhood, Helsinki. January 2023. Photo: Roosa Oksaharju.

3. PERFORMANCE: HERE FOR A MOMENT

3.1. Performing

What do I mean by performance and performing? I early on found a place in performing where existing got a flavour that I could not taste outside of the state of performing. This has started when I started to practice within improvisation and instant composition's workshops with Yann Lheureux in Montpellier. His prompts inviting us to be at practice liberated a space in me that felt quite new at this moment. I have been stepping in another dimension, touching a place where possibilities to be as a body-mind seem to expand. Today I define performing as a state enabling to let an inner space to exist and grow, as well as to let flourish one's own and singular relationship to the world. It feels to me that the growth of inner space allows for more diversity to relate to the outside world, the world I am in contact with.

How do I define "performing"? What is it to perform? When am I performing? When am I not performing? Why do I perform? A part of me is performing because it needs to perform. Performing is a way to process, to channel what is inside the body I carry or the body carrying me. They both carry each other: the body carries the self and the self carries the body. What is it that I call me or myself? What is this "what" that is inside? Performing is a way to reconnect to myself and reconnect my self to the world. I am part of the world, and accessing a relation to the world means that I access a relation to myself.

Can I trust that performing in order to fulfil my needs will communicate something to the audience? It is not about me performing. It is about the body in a state of performing. I let the body be taken by forces that go beyond me. By saying that, I would not like to resign in front of the issue of agency. Can I pretend that my body is taking the control of my mind? Can I let my body take the control of my mind? I let space for the body to speak. I wish words to speak from the place of the body. Thoughts might emerge in the brain. They are processed by the whole body. And words come out from this body. Words are movement. Words are physical, words are material. There is still a possibility to affect words after they come out of the mouth. They are here, in front of me, in the air or somewhere on the floor, the walls, the ceiling. Words are constantly shaping my body at the same time that I shape words with my body. Words and body are both a mould for each other. Words themselves are body.

How to define this state of body and mind I access when I perform? The state in which I sense my body and mind at this moment, while writing, is quite similar to the one I experience when I perform. I am ready to perform, now. I could start now. Someone would come and ask me to perform and I would perform. It feels good to be in that state. I can sense my muscles under my skin. I can feel the floor I am stepping on. I can feel the room, its walls and ceiling, through the air surrounding me, the body I am inhabiting. Am I inhabiting this body? Who is inhabiting this body?

After having been introduced to improvisation and instant composition by Yann Lheureux, I started to look for other spaces to practice instant composition. Among them, practices of Mark Tompkins, Vera Mantero and João Fiadeiro strongly impacted me and opened a way to be at performing that encouraged my inner performing self to be at work and expand. Mark Tompkins' instant composition practice is the one that influenced me the most. Mark Tompkins' and Meg Stuart's *One Shot: Dialogues Sur La Composition En Temps Réel = Dialogues on Real Time Composition* (2022) are a support for me in getting my body into a state of performance. By wording how they experience instant composition, they provide me an anchor. It is an anchor that is always in movement. They do not give me advice about how to get ready, how to prepare as a performer, but rather instil a sense of body presence to itself and its environment.

Mark Tompkins writes on his website: “The art of improvisation resides in each performer abilities to remain open to the wealth of internal and external impulses, and to receive, process, and propose material in an uninterrupted flow of feedback” (Tompkins 2023). I can recognize this experience of uninterrupted flow of feedback. When I perform I receive a constant flow of information from what I see, hear, touch, sense inside my body, think, imagine, etc. There is a warm up to sharpen the ability to receive information as well as a warm up to process this information. The warm up to sharpen the ability to receive information is about being attentive to senses, and by activating them. The warm up to process this information is about training being with these sensations and relating with them in the moment they happen. Not before, not after. In the moment.

Again, in *One shot*, Franz Poelstra advises: “If you need to prepare, do it on stage. Without public, improvisation does not exist. Not reacting is usually the best reaction. Do unreal time composition. Never try, always do. Be silent. Get naked. Love your public. Be embarrassing. Fuck methods” (Tompkins, Stuart, Toutedvoix 2022, 90). On the way to a performance, I tend more and more to work by performing. I tend to blur

the difference I usually make between rehearsing and performing. I tend to limit preparing for performing. During a conversation with Simo Kellokumpu it came that the word “prepare for” was not relevant for the work I am doing. I am not working in order to prepare for something. I am working and what I am doing in the moment has its own value. I trust that what I am doing at the moment is part of the whole process of working-performing. I trust that this is through performing that I sharpen a state of being at performing. Inviting witnesses to see the work in progress is a way to make this state of being at performing already occurring well before the “actual” performance. During the two weeks working in Sörnäinen neighborhood, in and around Vapaan Taiteen Tila, I started to consider rehearsing as part of the performance itself. What if rehearsing for the performance would already be a performance? Each time I perform I reactivate the state of performance. By performing I accumulate performance experience.

About preparation Meg Stuart writes: “I look for an entry, a door. That’s what I understand as improvisation, more than preparing. The idea of preparation baffles me. What is a good preparation? Often, you have a great improvisation in the afternoon and then it falls flat during in the performance. Do you save or spend? That’s a question” (Tompkins, Stuart, Toutedvoix 2022, 86). I like this idea of door: a door opening to the performance, to the practice, to the open practice. What is essential for me, when the practice/the performance/the open practice starts, is to be present, awake, in a way ready to receive and be with what happens in the moment. More than preparing it is about finding a way towards readiness. I found different ways towards readiness. There are ways to access readiness I go through each time before a performance: -doing 11 min breathing exercises following Wim Hof’s technique, -doing 11 min Qi Qong routine that was taught to me by choreographer Kirsten Debrock, -doing yoga routine gathering movements that were taught to me through different teachers/other practitioners, -having a few minutes, lying down, breathing and letting body parts settle on the ground. Another way of finding readiness is to tune with the place where I am going to perform. The process of tuning with the place is a sensorial one. This involves paying attention to the surface with which the surface of my body is in contact: the surface of my clothes, the surface of the walls, the floor, the seats, the furniture of the place, etc. Tuning with the place is also about looking at what is present, from their very tangible materiality. Mark Tompkins’ teachings about connecting through touch and look to oneself, others and the place, have been inspiring me a lot. Other paths I activate to find readiness are: -to draw a quick score, a score that is not even made to be read but rather to put on paper the multiplicity of possible directions the performance could take. I am drawing and reading the score at the same time; -to practice automatic writing, often in

the form of questioning, addressing questions to the place and to me in relation to the place I stand in. In a more general way, finding readiness is about catching, through touch, look, thoughts, movement, what is present in the place. The closer I get to the start of the performance, the more the place starts to be affected by the people who inhabit it, and the more I start to be affected by the energy of the group of people. Being ready is about being with the energy that is present in the room, an energy brought by each person inhabiting the room as well as the energy of the ever changing composition of the group: people entering, leaving, moving, sitting, standing, talking to each other. It is about sensing an energy that is circulating in between people. Finding a way towards readiness differs from preparation. Preparation implies that there is a time before the performance and that there is a time that is which of the performance. It is not the way I work. The time before the performance is part of the performance. What interests me in finding a state of readiness is that this state can be summoned at any time. The way to readiness is a bit different each time. I have a toolbox. The tools are activated in the moment, combined in a different way for each performance, practice or open practice to begin. Finding readiness is a clear sensation in the body. It manifests by a certain kind of presence that allows to be with the moment, ideally neither before nor after the moment. However, readiness can escape at any moment, even during the actual performance. Readiness is a state to be practiced at any time. It then become easier to summon it at any moment.

João Fiadeiro writes about Real Time Composition: “Real Time implies that whatever is happening, is happening here and now, in the present. Composition suggests that one must refer to the existence of previous knowledge while actively projecting the future. Real Time and Composition are notions that cancel each other. The resulting tension and attention generated by the collision of these two opposing forces allows an alternative way to perceive and experience time” (Tompkins, Stuart, Toutedvoix 2022, 64). I like this proximity between tension and attention. There is an acute presence and a high level of energy in both of them. At the same time I feel that allowing the body and mind to be attentive requires a need to release tension. In the performance there is an opening of time. There is a possibility to play with time, to concentrate and expand time, to play with ones sensation of time.

By performance, I mean the work that I have been performing since December 2021, along my studies at the Theatre Academy. It started with Studio time, the work performed during the Solo Demo in December 2021. The work sometimes has a title, sometimes has not. It is based on the same practice and has taken different formats, depending the context and the place. In this chapter I reflect on this performance as a

whole, however having a main focus on the work performed at Vapaan Taiteen Tila in January 2023 (final* work). Below is the list of times when this work has been activated in a form of a performance. For each performance the following specificities are given: -title, -duration, -audience specificity, -space context, -place, -context, -city

2021, nov 30th - dec 3rd, Studio time, 20min, closed audience, indoor, studio 2, Solo Demo, TeaK, Uniarts, Helsinki

2022, avr 21st - 22nd, Gonna try something out of it, 20 min, closed audience, indoor, studio 709, Spring Demo, TeaK, Uniarts, Helsinki

2022, aug 6th, Solo, 12min, semi-closed audience, outdoor, Arsenal courtyard, Atlas program, Impulstanz, Vienna

2022, sept 15th, Solo, 7min, semi-closed audience, indoor, TeaK tori, Opening ceremony Uniarts, TeaK, Uniarts, Helsinki

2022, nov 6th, Solo, Rehearsing a site-specific residency, 20min, semi-closed audience, indoor/outdoor, Urbanapa mini-residency, Oodi library, Uniarts, Helsinki

2022, nov 17th, Solo, 10min, semi-closed audience, indoor, Open mic, Siba, Uniarts, Helsinki

2022, nov 24th, Solo, 10min, closed audience, indoor, ELIA conference, Ravintola Töölö, Helsinki

2022, nov 25th, 10min, semi-closed audience, indoor, ELIA conference, TeaK tori, Helsinki

2022, dec 4th, 7min, semi-closed audience, outdoor, Open home festival, Performance Artists Unite! & Kino Club, Helsinki

2023, jan 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 1h, semi-closed audience, indoor/outdoor, Master thesis artistic work, 'here for a moment (it may change)', Vapaan Taiteen Tila, Helsinki

3.2. Score and instant composition

It is sometimes complex for me to tell what is scored and what is improvised in this performance. From one performance to another what is scored and what is improvised varies. For the Open Mic at Sibelius Academy on Nov 17th, 2022, I decided to come with no score. Or rather than no score, the score was: "I come to the place around one hour before my time to perform, I do breathing exercises, I touch the walls and surfaces of the building, I let myself be affected by the place, receive from the place, through touch, I open my eyes and ears, being attentive to what is happening, I write about what I sense and about what could happen during the performance. I visualise possible events to happen during the performance".

* the work will never be final, it will go on

As mentioned earlier in the text, it is a lot about being ready, which means for me being here, all skin pores open, or at least most of them. Being in the place, drawing, writing, talking, listening, touching surfaces and touching my own body participate in building that state of readiness within me.

For the Open Mic I decided to reduce movement at its minimum. Open Mic. I stick to the microphone. From the microphone I sense what is happening in the room. Everything is already here. The performance is already here. Audience faces the stage, eyes open, waiting for something to happen or maybe already witnessing something that is happening. I don't have to perform. I am here. I listen, ready to be touched. I am already touched. Performance has space to happen. I can trust that the score is already written. I ride the score. The score is made by the people who are presents, by the walls, by snatches of conversation I receive. I receive information, my body processes them, I give attention to one specific thing, by naming it or looking at it, I share with audience the attention I am giving to things. Drawing a score before the performance is part of getting to this place of readiness for the body. I do not draw a score to follow it. I draw a score so I can relate to it. I distance myself from an inner score. It is not anymore stuck with me. I can look at it. Often the score contains various possibilities. It needs to contain various possibilities. That is what allows space for playfulness in during the performance.

At times I work with an overall precise score. The performance is divided in 3 parts: - a part that is driven by a recorded soundtrack: I am present in the space, in action, connected to the space, -a part that is the core of the performance: Everything is improvised. Improvisation has been practiced in this specific place where the performance happens, -a part animated by a soundtrack of recorded questions. There is a blank space in between each question. It is the place for the performer to answer the questions in real time.

Another way I have been practicing is to improvise as if it has been scored beforehand. I work in a way I convince myself that every actions that I am doing are scored. What happens in the performance is what was planned to happen, and still it is a surprise. It is a way to be present in the moment and to act without judging what is happening.

3.3. Witness and public space

It was in summer 2022, during a workshop with dramaturg Guy Cools at Impulstanz festival in Vienna that I understood more about the notion of witness and how it could interact with my own practice. Guy Cools opens the role of the dramaturge acting as a witness. In *The dramaturg as witness, dialogue partner and editor*, Cools write: “already through your silence, but felt, presence, you will influence somatically and energetically the dialogue between choreographer and performers” (Cools 2021). Right after this workshop, I have been starting inviting other artists to witness me being in action in a semi-public space (Arsenal courtyard at Impulstanz festival). I had a feeling that being in action in public space would be a way to practice a quality of presence for when I would perform. It became a way to sharpen a performative state of being within the on-going flow of life. I see “being in action in public space” as a way to let myself being playful with what is present. I attempt to let my own presence match the presence of the place. I attempt to become more and more part of the place. Because I am acting in a place already inhabited by people, there is a potential for these people to be audience of the actions I am doing. I am not specifically involved in these actions to make them visible, but rather to offer an opportunity for them to be visible.

I started the witness practice as following: I invite a witness. We agree on a time and place to meet. I tell the witness: “I am going to be in action in this public space. Your role is to witness what is happening. You can focus on my actions and also on other things. You do not have to look at me all the time but I ask you to always have in mind that you are witnessing me. If you wish you can document”.

The actual act of witnessing then begins, for a duration that may vary. After the witness session, there is a dialogue session where both the witness and I share about our experience. After having experiences witness sessions at Impulstanz, I asked my friend and artist Violeta Rodriguez to witness me in action in the city of Sète, France.



Playing and acting in public space. Witness session with Violeta Rodriguez. Sète, France. August 2022. Photo: Violeta Rodriguez

During these sessions it became quite obvious that being witnessed was supporting. I felt validated in my actions, validated that this way of being in the street, in a playful way, can happen. There is a space to play and act while being witnessed, and then a space to be critical of what happened earlier during the time of playing and acting.

If I come back to Cools' vocabulary, I can say that I have been experiencing "the (silent) witness" and "the dialogue partner". In my own practice, it is rather about witnessing an action (and what these actions make visible or give attention to, in public space) than an interaction (Cools is describing the role of the dramaturge witnessing the dialogue choreographer-performers). Adapting Cools' words to my own practice I would write: "already through your silence, but felt, presence, you will influence somatically and energetically ~~the dialogue between choreographer and performers~~, **the actions of the performer, and support them**".

When coming back to Helsinki in August 2022, it became quite obvious to me that I will go on with the witness practice. I felt more and more interested in bringing the performance outside the university and explore other contexts, to meet other audience and challenge the work. Urbanapa mini-residencies and especially the one at Oodi library became a quite obvious opportunity for me to go on with explorations of being

witnessed in action in public space. I thought about Yun-Chen Chang, a student in LAPS, whom I know was sensitive to my work and whose work I was sensitive to. I asked her if she wanted to apply with me, to activate both our works at Oodi library and witness each other works. We applied and got the one-week residency. I spent a lot of time drawing, mapping, getting texture from the place. Yun-Chen was supporting these actions by witnessing. I noticed that I felt space to breathe from my work, when I witnessed Yun-Chen's practices. I could release from my own practice, take distance. I value these moments when I could disconnect from my own practice and then come back to it later.

When it came to activate the work at Vapaan Taiteen Tila, I wanted to go on with the practice of being witnessed. I invited 5 persons to witness's sessions which format were: - introducing the session (15min), - witnessing (45min), - dialogue (45min). The witness were persons I know, artists whom I trust and value the ways to be at work and who are attentive and curious towards the work I am making.

I spent a bit more than two weeks working around and in Vapaan Taiteen Tila, from January 9th to January 24th, 2023 (see record of witness sessions in Appendix).

During week 1 I met with the witnesses at Pic-Nic Cafe at Sörnäinen square. Pic-Nic Cafe started to be the base for the witness sessions. Sitting by the large window at Pic Nic allows a wide and open view of Sörnäinen square. When watching at Sörnäinen square from the window I felt like watching at a movie from which I could not hear the sound. The sound was the sound of the inside, the sound of the Cafe place. I had a sense of the outside through what I was seeing and a sense of the inside through what I was hearing. I could also sense the inside through my skin which was surrounded by the atmosphere of the Café. At the same time I could also physically be touched by what I was seeing from the outside.



Playing and acting in public space. Witness session with Sanni Kriikku. Artistic part of Master thesis. Panoramic view of Sörnäinen, Helsinki. January 2023. Photo: Sanni Kriikku

The witness sessions started from Pic-Nic Cafe during week 1 and from Vapaan Taiteen Tila during week 2. From there I started to perform and the witness to witness. A sufficient amount of time given to the witness session became very important. I realised that it takes time to really start to play and be in action. I needed time to be in that specific place, to walk, to stop, to look at the place, to feel at ease in this place. I sometimes felt a need to perform, for the reason I was watched and I needed to produce something interesting for the viewer (the witness). And sometimes I sensed I could relax, trust that I did not need to do many things, that there were already plenty of things happening. I had no specific score for my actions. I switched from an interest to another. I let myself driven by curiosity.

There were these specific moments when “playing” led me to “playing a game”. The game came by playing. It was the fact of giving me the time to play that allowed the game to exist. I was learning the game while playing. It was a game whose rules I did not know. It was a game I understood while playing. Each time I go on with playing, each time I know a bit more what the game is about. Its rules are accumulating. There is a moment it feels to me that there are enough rules to play. I keep on playing with these rules and at some point new rules invite themselves in the game. There is a moment when some rules are not relevant anymore. They might have been relevant a moment before but now the game has changed.



Playing and acting in the street. Witness session with Maja Kalafatić and Ivan Mihailovic. Artistic part of Master thesis. Sörnäinen, Helsinki. January 2023. Photo: Ivan Mihailovic

Many topics have emerged during the dialogues with the witnesses. Below I name a few of them that I found relevant and nourishing for the practice:

-**presence/absence**: for the witness I sometimes disappear and appear again somewhere else, in a different action. Sometimes I strongly feel the presence of the witness.

Sometimes I do not feel its presence. I start looking for them. I remind myself that I can trust that the witness is still there, somewhere,

- **measuring space**: it is an action I am often involved in when I practice. It is a way to engage with the place where I find myself. I measure things with my own body; I look at my body parts as much as I look at place parts. My body becomes part of the place,

- **contrast/resemblance**: how do I play, how do I act in public space? How much do I contrast with what is already happening in the street? How do I navigate between resembling and contrasting? How can I be resembling and suddenly contrasting?

-**performing/not performing**: am I performing or am I not performing? Performing is an intention. If I decide that I perform then I am performing. Is what I am doing enough to call it a performance? What is enough? For whom am I performing? I enjoy being in that in-between state of performing/not performing. I find public space a good place to practice this in between. How am I acting the same and a little bit different? By the only fact the witness is presence it makes my presence being at this place of performing,

-**inside/outside**: I sometimes felt like I have been inside when playing / acting / performing in public space. The state of performing brings the stage within it, at least the sensation of being on stage. The snow and the quality snow give to sounds also reinforced my sensation to feel in an indoor space. It is an indoor space whose ceiling is the sky.

While the witness witnesses the performer in action, they also witnesses how the performer reveals the space, how the actions performed make visible or give attention to what is present in public space. The witness witnesses interactions such as: - performer-space, - performer-passers by, - passers by-passers by, - passers by-space.

When Maija Hirvanen came for supervising my work, I asked her if she could witness me “being at work”. I asked if she could witness the “how I am at work”. I start working, I do not know how it is going to start. It starts. I know I am working. I know I am witnessed. It became for me an entry point to open a conversation about the artistic work. Rather than using words to explain where I was at considering my artistic concerns and issues, I wanted to explore addressing those concerns by being at work. I have the sensation that this way of working opened to me a way to more directly connect with the work. It made sense regarding the practice-based specificity of this work.

4. OPEN PRACTICE: PLAY AND ACT FROM WHAT IS HERE

In January 2023, at the beginning of an open practice I spontaneously started describing it to the participants from its title “Play and act from what is here”.

Play: it is about playing, with curiosity. Playing is interacting, dialoguing, with you, with this place, with myself.

And: the “and” connects. Playing and acting. Two forces. Playing has a soft and spontaneous quality. Acting is a choice, a way to be in the world with determination. It can also be soft.

Act: an “act” in the sense of doing an action, taking position, affirming, stating, now. And later I can state something else. Things are ever changing. I can still act, I can still make choices, in the moment.

From: “from” indicates an origin. It is about a movement that starts from this origin, thinking a movement from its origin. It is a movement that does not know where it goes. Possibilities for destinations are endless. It is about starting. And about witnessing what happens from that.

What: “what” is the thing; it is what I give attention to. It is what I can touch, see, taste, smell, hear, sense. It is material. I can name it within me. I deeply know what it is when I am with it. I lose it. And I keep on finding it.

Is: to be. It contains the quality of being. There is not much more to do than being. It is already huge. Being, sensing and the rest comes.

Here: this place. Here is also this body, my body. It is also: where specifically in my body? And it is here, this room, this specific part of the floor I am touching with my hand.

4.1. Beginnings

It was at the beginning of 2011 that I met with improvisation and instant composition, within Yann Lheureux’s workshops in Montpellier, France. I have been practicing in his workshop, on an almost weekly basis, until 2016. I’ve often be impressed by the quality of the experiences Yann Lheureux offered to experience in the frame of his workshops. I could access what I would name today “performing as widening what my own body and mind can experience”. I was encouraged to play. For me, these workshops were a place to practice various states of being through the act of performing. They have been setting a ground for meeting other artists through this state of being that is that of performing, and later some of us started to work collaboratively. Once I asked Yann

about his method to lead his workshops. I wanted to know if he had a prepared score. I remember him telling me that he had an idea of the topic of the day or how to initiate the workshop. For the rest, he was unfolding the workshop on the moment. This way of teaching felt quite powerful to me.

A few years later, just before I moved to Berlin, I was invited by my friend, dancer and choreographer Violeta Rodriguez to share my own practice within a platform of practice sharing in Montpellier. Experiencing sharing my practice encouraged me to start facilitating a shared practice as part of my studies at Tanzfabrik in Berlin. Five of my classmates who attended the practice expressed their wish to dedicate more to this practice and together we decided to start to work on a piece based on this practice. They were performers-co creators. I was directing the work.

When I decided to move to Helsinki to the Master Dance Performance at the Theatre Academy, Uniarts Helsinki, I had a strong wish to dive more in the performance practice I was already involved in and take it further. I have been struggling to start sharing this artistic practice. At the same time I have been intensively willing to share with other people what felt so relevant for me to practice as a performer. How would I be able to share with others this experience of accessing a state of being that is which of performing? How could I become myself artist-facilitator of a practice I had developed as I had myself received a lot by participating in workshops from other artists' practices? When would I be ready to start sharing? The closest I felt to start sharing the most vulnerable I felt. Was I really ready? How would I know if I would not start sharing? My friends Violeta Rodriguez and Julien Martinez have been of great support for me to start making these shared practices happen at Uniarts. Dialoguing with them helped me. Julien kept repeating the value he was seeing in the practice I was doing, encouraging me to affirm my way of sharing. Violeta helped me to define better what I wanted to share and also was the first person to participate in a practice I facilitated. How much ready should I be before sharing? What is the way to feel ready to share? How do I communicate about this practice to potential participants? What is this practice?

In March 2022, at TeaK, I started to invite other people to join me in the practice. At the beginning I used the name "shared practice" to call these moments of opening the practice. I explain later in the text why I changed the name "shared practice" into "open practice". I started it because I felt the need to make this practice happen with other practitioners. I felt I had been waiting a long time without activating a space where I could share with other people the practice I was involved in. I have been participating in

many workshops and with time I have been building a practice of my own. I still wonder why this need of sharing has been so strong? Is it something that came naturally after having myself participated in so many dance, improvisation and instant composition workshop? Where does the need to facilitate a place for practice come from? By sharing the practice I meant “inviting other people to experience the practice I am involved in”. I started the shared practices with this statement “I do not know how and what to share. I am going to share it and by doing it I will learn how to share”. I however knew that I wanted to share a way of working as a performer, as a dancer, as an artist, a way that I keep on defining. One thing that helped me has been to introduce the shared practice as a place where I am at work and other people are invited to join this place of work. I activate the practice for myself and when participants are joining I invite them to activate this specific practice for themselves. I wanted to implement a playground where this practice can go on, which any practitioner can visit, spend time, letting oneself going through it. It became that my practice is not only my practice or not only related to me as a person. Instead it is a work that I cultivate and that has its own independency. It is not me, it is my work, I relate with my work. It was during a conversation with Violeta Rodriguez that I first could identify and name this distinction between me and the work I am doing. Making distinction between me and the work I am doing allows a dialogue with this work, to have distance with the work, to look at it from various perspectives and also to allow it growing and meeting with other people than just me. At times this distinction is not easy to make. Performing a work can be so intimate and cathartic, so related to how I experience being alive.

4.2. Unfoldings

The activation of the open practice goes through saying tasks out loud which is an invitation for the participants to engage into movement. I invite myself to be in movement and by saying the tasks out loud I also invite other participants to be in movement. I am myself a participant in these open practices. I am both a participant and the facilitator of the open practice. At some point, the term “shared practice” felt not relevant for me. It is more about opening a space where I am practicing and for other people to join. In my understanding “sharing” rather refers to where everybody would share on the same level. By opening my own practice I take a specific position that is not the same than the position taken by the other participants. With this practice I set a frame for the participants to explore within it. I am defining how this space works and the participants know what kind of space they are entering when they choose to come and participate. I changed the name into “open practice” in March 2023. This open practice is a place where I learn how to facilitate my own practice, by facilitating. Being in a learning process allows me to make mistakes, to change path, to re-direct the

experience depending of what is happening in the moment. By repeating this open practice one week after another, I feel that performing the work and activating it through an open practice have a lot to do together. I enter performing states by practicing readiness. I could also enter the open practice by practicing readiness, and facilitate the practice from this place of readiness.

From one session to another, I unfold the open practice a bit differently. Week after week I accumulate experience and refine the way I facilitate the practice. The participants are bringing a lot through the way they involve in the practice. Their questions as well as what they word about their experience informs the way this open practice evolves and how I facilitate it.

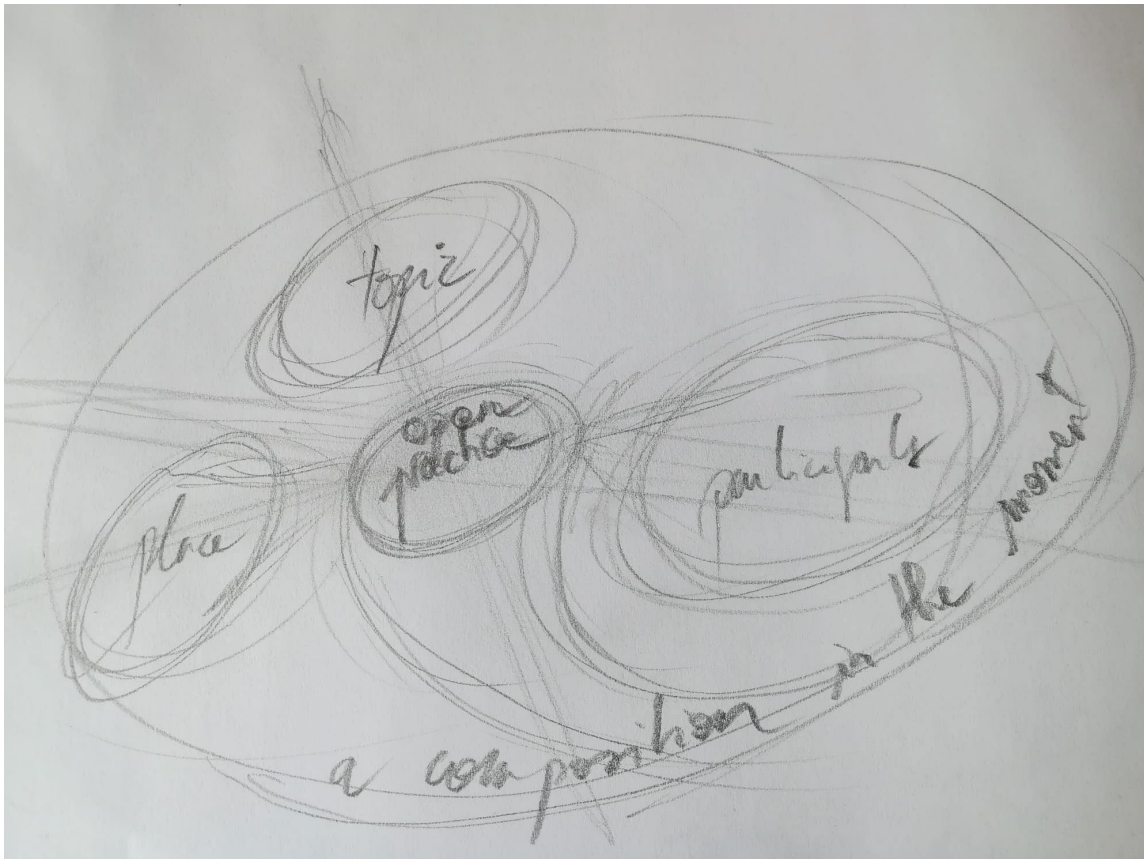
I nowadays identify five phases during the open practice session:

1. I host the participants; say a few words about the open practice, what it is, and my intentions relating to facilitating this space. I invite each participant to tell their name, pronouns, what is their practice at this moment and how they relate with the topic of the day;
2. I invite to dive into a somatic experience and start exploring the topic with our own body and senses. It is about activating thoughts in motion, inviting to think a topic in motion. I guide the practice by wording out loud possibilities to relate with our own body and the place;
3. I invite to share with words about the movement experience;
4. I give tasks for another experience, expanding from the first 3 phases, composing with what the participants shared and what I sensed during the first somatic experience. This time I don't speak during the experience;
5. I invite to gather in a circle and for each participant to share about what they just experienced and how they feel know in relation to their own practice.

Each time before and after a session, I write down my thoughts about the open practice. Before the open practice I write the possible directions that the practice could take. After the practice I attempt to recall what happened and highlight and reflect about what has been catching my attention, about what has been challenging me. I go on towards the next open practice, fed by what happened in the one that just took place.

From March 2023 on, I have been starting to announce topics for the upcoming week's open practice. "Writing" has been the first topic. It is essential for me in this open practice that I start from a topic that I feel close to at the moment I am facilitating, a topic I am already working on. I am currently writing a thesis. I go through struggles

and experiences related to writing. I start to facilitate the open practice from the way I relate to the specific topic that I bring. Another topic has been “inside/outside”. Inside/outside is one of the core themes I explore when performing, questioning the border between the inside and the outside of my body, playing with this border. With the arrival of spring, I have been drawn back towards practicing outdoor. The open practice starts at the crossroad between **a topic** that I bring (something I am currently working with when it comes to my artistic practice), **the place** (where we all stand together at this moment of the open practice) and **the practices that each participant brings** on that day. What I bring is a method of composing with these three elements.



Open practice, a composition of the moment: inviting to a state of practicing emerging at the crossroad between self, a place and a topic. April 2023. Photo: Raphaël Beau

This open practice is about setting a context for an experience, setting a playground for artists to process their own practice from the perspective I suggest: somatic practices, improvisation, instant composition. “Play and act from what is here” practice is informed by my experience as a social worker, facilitator of collective spaces, especially in public space, with people from diverse backgrounds and ages.

By facilitating this open practice, I have been working on building a method to facilitate the practice “play and act from what is here”. I have been refining an ever-changing

structure in which I can include various ways to explore the topics I work with. I have been building a method of composing with what each participant brings to this space. I have been encouraging them to go for what they need in the moment to process their own practice. During a session in April 2023, I have been inviting the participants, including myself, to process our own practices in relation with the topic inside-outside. After this first experience I suggested a second experience in which each of us, in turn, invites the others to enter each of our own practice. The format of sharing our own practices was free. Without planning it beforehand it happened on that day that the open practice became a space where the participants opened their own practices to the group. I was not the only one opening my practice to the group. I felt that in addition to facilitating a playground where participants can activate their own practices from the tools I suggest, I have been facilitating a playground where participants open their own practices to the group. This felt like what I wish as an evolution for the open practice.



Open practice "play and act from what is here" - an invitation to each other practices. April 2023. The Theatre Academy, Uniarts Helsinki. Photo: Raphaël Beau

I have been building a vocabulary around this practice, finding words to name the practice better and words to lead the experience. The vocabulary emerges from facilitating again and again the practice and going for the bodily explorations myself while facilitating with spoken words. I have been finding words by using words. And I

still feel that I have a lot to practice in order to refine the vocabulary of the practice. I look for saving words in order to go to the essence of what allows the body and thought to engage in movement. I have also been practicing holding a space for participants to practice without me giving prompts.

The Theatre Academy has been the ground that allowed me to build and cultivate this open practice. I have been using the facilities of the school to host participants in the practice every week. By studying at the Theatre Academy I met and built connections with other students. By participating in two joint courses with the Academy of Fine Arts allowed me to meet visual artists who later joined the open practice. I was offered to facilitate a course within the joint courses program at Uniarts. This course allowed me to reach out to students of the three academies of Uniarts: TeaK, Kuva and Siba.

By performing in some events inside and outside Uniarts (Spring demo within Dance Performance program , Siba open mic and open stage, Queer poetry night at Oranssi, Urbanapa events, among others) I met people from outside the university who later on joined the open practice. Students from Uniarts who came to the practice spread the word to their friends outside the university. I have been giving a lot of value to the fact that people from outside Uniarts could participate. It feels essential to me that this art education structure can host art practitioner from any background. And it also feels that the art education is made by the diversity of people who visit this place and make it be alive. The presence of people outside of Uniarts have been nourishing this practice. It gave me the opportunity to witness artists approaching artistic practices with perspectives that differ from the university approaches. In total 36 different persons have been participating in the open practice. In total there were 41 sessions with a total of 85 participants. The average participation was about 2 participants per session. There were sessions when I have been practicing on my own (no one joined) and sessions when they were up to 6 participants.

total of participants					
TeaK students	Siba students	Kuva students	alumni	outside Uniarts	total
24	7	22	9	23	85
different participants					
TeaK students	Siba students	Kuva students	alumni	outside Uniarts	total
12	4	7	5	8	36

Open practices "play and act from what is here" - record of participation - March 2022-April 2023.
The Theatre Academy, Uniarts Helsinki

4.3. Inspirations

In addition to Violeta Rodriguez and Julien Martinez, Alyssa Coffin, whom I met in *Walking Towards No Thing*, Kuva/TeaK joint course, has been a very inspiring dialogue partner along this year of open practice. She has been participating on a very regular basis to the open practice and helped me to process my thoughts about it. Each of us is engaged in artistic practices following their own pathways, but we found common driving forces and values in our respective works. She has been actively following and supporting my artistic process, both performances and open practices.

Maija Hirvanen, who has been my supervisor for the artistic part of the work, has also been closely following this practice. Through her insightful feedback and references about other artists involved in social choreography and open practices, she has been of great support to make this open practice space growing.

When it is about the content of the open practice (and the practice) I refer to artists coming from improvisation and instant composition such as Mark Tompkins, Vera Mantero, Joao Fiadeiro, among others. It is also essential for me to refer to Alice Chauchat's practice, which I met during a workshop at Impulstanz in 2022. Alice Chauchat writes about a space opened by Jennifer Lacey (that she later on joined in holding that space) at Impulstanz: "[it] was 'originally conceived as a place where artists who find themselves teaching could meet and explore the creative context of class and their continuing evolving relationship to the roles of student and teacher within the context of contemporary dance study and creation.'" (Chauchat 2018, 9). I have been experiencing this open practice as a space to experience a position of student-facilitator. I believe in this flexible role of teaching - studying where everyone can be teacher of their own practices. I believe we are the most skilled in the practices we are involved in. I am still at work with this open practice, still a student when it comes learn how to facilitate it. I also started to recognize, during a conversation with Simo Kellokumpu, that repeated struggles within my own practice were leading to develop skills in this same practice. Later on Chauchat refers to Lacey's workshop's description: "Each summer, Lacey convoked about ten peers for a week to 'focus on teaching as an artistic practice and a form of research, rather than the passing on of pre-existing knowledge'" (Chauchat 2018, 9). This open practice is now intimately integrated in my artistic practice. Both performing and facilitating the open practice nourish each other. I make them exist parallel, and that is what I wish for in the future.

Another space that is been inspiring and which allowed me to reflect about this open practice is Urbanapa one week-Toolbox in which I have been participating in February

2023. Everyday there was a different artist facilitating the space. We were the same group of participants during the whole week. This Toolbox has been a great example for me how learning goes both ways from facilitators to participants and in between participants themselves.

Sometimes I feel like I lose this practice and I lose its purpose. What if my mind loses the purpose? What helps me to find the practice again is to start moving again, writing, drawing, and being in contact with the place where I find myself by touching and seeing. I find ways to tune to my own body, other bodies and the space. I sometimes work on making all three the one and same body. I build a state for the body to be ready to practice. Building that state is already the practice itself. My body remembers easily about the practice. I wish sometimes for challenging it more, for it not to go through the same patterns.

I have been questioning the guidelines for this open practice. How do I proceed to set guidelines? How do I make this space as safe as possible for the participants to enter an experience that allows them to deepen and challenge their own practices? Do I set myself the guidelines of this space? Do I facilitate a moment with the participants to set the guidelines together? Up to now, at the beginning of each practice I speak out loud the intentions for the open practice: 1- it is a space where I learn to facilitate my practice by facilitating it; 2- this open practice aims to set a ground where the participants have space to process their own practices, through the tools I suggest. I go on with communicating that this space works under Uniarts Helsinki safer space rules.

I have also been questioning the ethic and ownerships of this practice. How do I deal with ownership? What is the specificity of this practice? Who owns it? How to acknowledge and credit what the participants bring to the practice and to the work I am making? How to let space for this practice to grow and be an inspiration for other artist and practitioners? How to make it happen in a sustainable and ethical way for everybody who gives time and energy for this practice to happen?

Even if I did not expect that at the beginning of my studies in MA Dance Performance, it came out today that the open practice is one of the main outcomes of my studies at The Theatre Academy, Uniarts Helsinki.

5. FROM NOW ON

I have the wish to move on. I am still at TeaK tori, at the exact same place I found myself almost one year ago, on the edge of the stage. As much as the wooden floor of this stage and the almost countless quantity of wooden paving stones in Tori have been hosting my presence here, I can give a last push into this solid and supporting wooden material and leave, from here. From here I can allow myself not knowing where I go. I can trust the sensation that what is important is pushing towards the here and now to get to know what comes afterwards and elsewhere. It is about finding inner resources to move on, trusting that the ground is here, within me and around me, within easy reach.

I need to leave the Theatre Academy. I need to expand, elsewhere, to leave the structure, to meet other structures, other forms and ways of working. The Theatre Academy has been very supporting for me. It brought me joy to meet known faces again and again, to be surrounded by people, to be stimulated by conversations and shared artistic experiences. To walk through the door of The Theatre Academy means meeting again with a community. It became my community in Helsinki, a community that is made of many different communities, a dispersed community, but centered in a common place. TeaK tori is this place. I can sit at TeaK tori, order a coffee, or a soup and look around. There will always be someone I know who will be present. We will acknowledge each other presence. What a gift to be acknowledged in its own presence.

The Theatre Academy has been the ground where I have been able to develop and refine my own artistic practice. It connected me with people and communities who allowed me to learn, to reflect about my background as a French white heterosexual cis man, to find ways to educate myself and be more aware of my privileges. It brought me new perspectives on the art field, and how ethics and art are interwoven. It allowed me to reflect what it means to make art from what I embody. It allowed me to trust more in my own capacities, to be responsible for my own change and responsible for how I want to be and act within the society I live in. I quit social work three years ago with the wish to dedicate to performance. I find myself today making performances that are much influenced by social work, with new perspectives compared to the ones I had when I was a social worker.

My last performances have been full of text. I overproduce text. I produce text not to say what words mean but rather to say what the flow of words mean. I let the flow of words say something. I let go of a resistance so that the words come out. When words come out, I can hear them, look at them, redirect them, let them space to expand. At

some point they take too much space, they overwhelm me. I would like to explore working without spoken words. What would remain in my body during the performance if there is no text? What texture the text would let inside and on my body? How text would still resonates in the silence? What if the next step of the practice would be made of no words? No words to let space for other entities. Or no more words of that type to let space for words of other types?

By writing this thesis I kept on learning how to write, how to find a voice. I am approaching this voice I wish for, though I feel still far away from it. It has been challenging for the artistic work to meet with the writing process. Their dialogue is still unsettled. I have been learning how to reference better my work, how to make it co-exist into a landscape of past and existing artworks. I am very grateful to my supervisor Simo Kellokumpu from whom I learnt a lot and who supported me along this process.

I wish to keep searching and defining what the practice I am involved in is about, as well as letting it freedom to expand and evolve. I wish for this practice to develop in multiple contexts, in the forms of workshops and performances, and reach diverse audiences. I wish to cultivate connections with other art practitioners and be involved in networks where art practices are at stake. I wish to let space for meeting points to emerge in between the work I am doing and other artists' works. I wish to find modes of collaboration that have space to grow and evolve. I wish to dare and push boundaries when it feels right to do so.

Two years ago I have been experiencing directing a piece in the context of my studies at Tanzfabrik Berlin. The experience I had in directing felt quite close to the one I have when performing. I found that I could connect with other performers on this specific place of what it is to perform. I wish to explore this place of directing, choreographing, with a group of performers, co-creating the work with me.

As I am myself getting opportunities to expand my own practice, I wish to create opportunities for other artists to perform and share their works and practices. I wish for creating more fluidity for receiving and giving.

I wish to move on, from now on. I am deeply grateful for all the people surrounding me, supporting me and my artistic processes to grow. I almost cannot write the last word. It seems that there is always something missing, always something unfinished, always something unsettled. The thesis ends, here, and now. I celebrate its existence as much as its weaknesses. And the work goes on.

REFERENCES

Chauchat, Alice. Not-knowing: mobility as a state of unrest. Published in Movement Research Performance Journal #51, 2018.

Cools, Guy. 2021. The dramaturg as witness, dialogue partner and editor. Accessed 17 March 2023. <http://www.dancedramaturgy.org/articles/E1.html>

Durning, Jeanine. 2023. choreography + performance. inging. Accessed 15 April 2023. http://www.jeaninedurning.com/?page_id=31

Heimonen, Kirsi. 2021. If only - writing through the spatiality of corporeality. Accessed 31 March 2023. <https://nivel.teak.fi/carpa7/if-only-writing-through-the-spatiality-of-corporeality/>

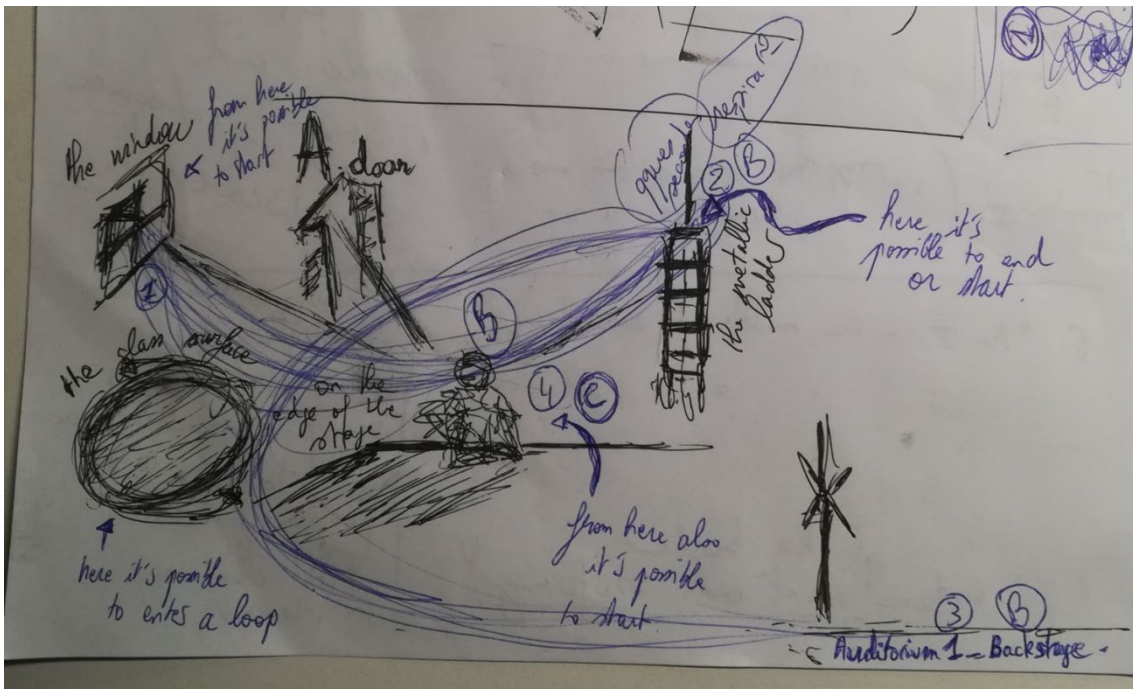
Kwon, Miwon. One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity. Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press, 2002.

Tompkins, Mark, Meg Stuart, and Gilles Tutevoix. One Shot: Dialogues Sur La Composition En Temps Réel = Dialogues on Real Time Composition. Paris: L'oeil d'or, 2022.

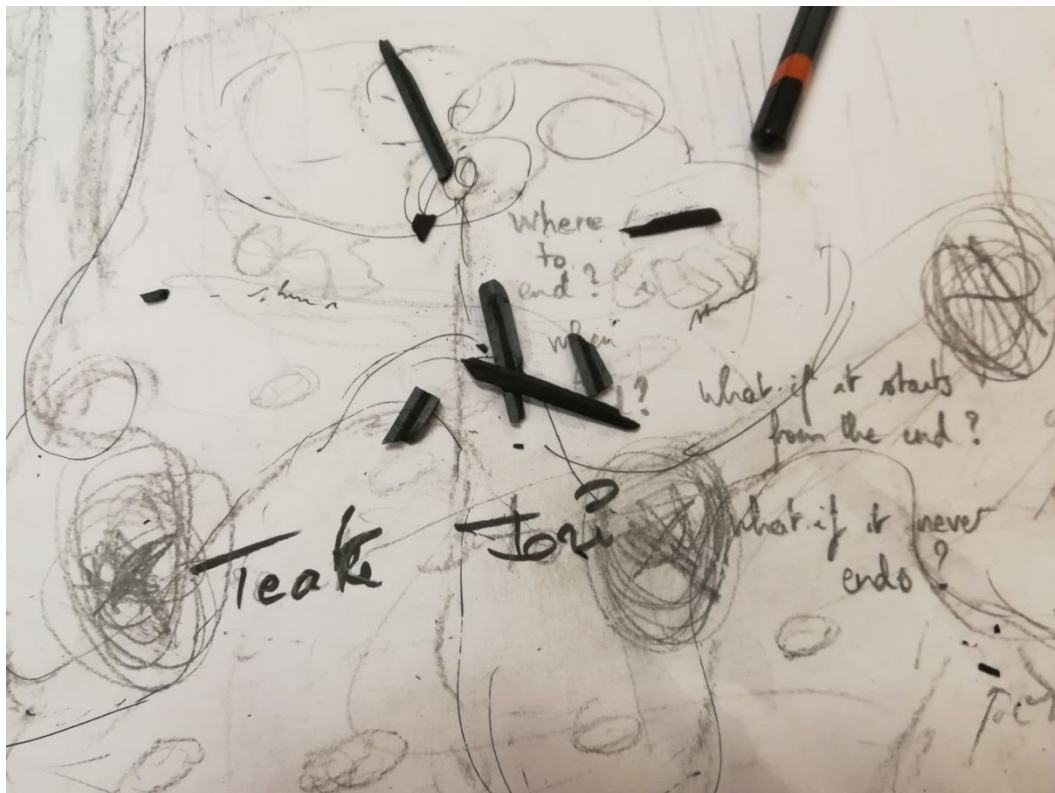
Tompkins, Mark, IDA. Current teaching. Accessed 16 April 2023. http://www.idamarktompkins.com/?q=en/current_teaching

APPENDICES

I. scores



score for performance at Opening ceremony Uniarts. Sept 15th, 2022. The Theatre Academy, Helsinki.
This is a precise score that offers possibility to change during the performance. I know that I will do and what I will do can change.



score for performance at ELIA conference Uniarts. Nov 25th, 2022. The Theatre Academy, Helsinki.
This is a score connecting me to the place. It opens possibilities. It asks questions.

II. Record of witness sessions

Witness sessions July-Nov 2022:

2022, Jul 23rd, witness: Morgane Guilloux, outdoor, Arsenal Courtyard, Impulstanz festival, Vienna.

2022, Jul 27th, witnesses: Morgane Guilloux and Frajda Natychmiast, outdoor, Arsenal Courtyard, Impulstanz festival, Vienna.

2022, Aug 19th, witness: Violeta Rodriguez, outdoor, Quai Général Durand, Sète

2022, Nov 3rd, witness: Yun-Chen Chang, indoor, Oodi library, Helsinki

Witness sessions Jan 2023 (master thesis artistic work):

week 1

2023, Jan 9th, witness: Vishnu Vardhani, outdoor, Hämeentie, Sörnäinen, Helsinki

2023, Jan 13th, witness: Sanni Kriikku, outdoor, Hämeentie, Sörnäinen, Helsinki

2023, Jan 14th, witness: Yun-Chen Chang, outdoor, Hämeentie, Sörnäinen, Helsinki

week 2

2023, Jan 16th, witness: Maija Hirvanen, indoor, Hämeentie, Sörnäinen, Helsinki

2023, Jan 17th, witness: Alyssa Coffin, indoor/outdoor, Hämeentie, Sörnäinen, Helsinki

2023, Jan 19th, witness: Maja Kalafatic and Ivan Mihailovic, indoor/outdoor, Hämeentie, Sörnäinen, Helsinki