

TREBUCHET

as body practice, research and performance

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Trebuchet. Photo: Daniel Motola

ABSTRACT

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<p>This written component of my Master's thesis is a tribute to <i>Trebuchet</i> as a body practice, an artistic research and a performance. I use writing as its reflective and exploratory companion and I engage in a process of articulating and understanding the methodology that emerged during the artistic part of my thesis. Rather than separating theory and practice, this thesis weaves them together, mirroring the integrated approach that shaped the development of <i>Trebuchet</i>. Central to the work is the formation of a body practice, an evolving methodology rooted in sensorial, experiential, and somatic research, which aims to center the intelligence of the moving body as both the origin and site of inquiry. Drawing on concepts such as enactive perception (Alva Noë), reversibility theory (Maurice Merleau-Ponty), haptic visuality (Laura U. Marks), affect theory (Brian Massumi), and philosophical writings by Diego Agulló, I investigate how movement propositions of <i>Trebuchet</i> body practice become tools for reflection, transformation, and creation and how theory, and body knowledge can intertwine and inform one another.</p> <p>The thesis is structured in three chapters: the first focuses on the approach of the body practice as a way of working, reflecting on the dynamic role of the choreographer as facilitator and emphasizing the idea of problem projection as a generator for movement and choreography; the second explores the content of the practice through two central movement propositions- 'Push and Sink In' and 'Charge and Throw'- tracing their development, tools, and conceptual and somatic influences; and the third examines how the body practice translates into performance, composition, and audience experience. Through this writing, I attempt not only to document, but to stay in conversation with the process, allowing the methodology to continue shifting and revealing itself through language.</p>	
KEYWORDS Body practice, embodied thinking, enactive perception, problem projection, movement research, multi- directionality, reversibility theory, bodily impulses, haptic visuality, affect	

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INTRODUCTION

Writing from a place of figuring out: I consider this written part of my thesis a way to understand a bit deeper the methodology I was working with the past month, finding time and space to reflect on it as a way to transform it and discover what is actually part of it and what perhaps it's a remanence of past habits and experiences. As I'm writing about it it's already changing.

My writing will closely conversate between the body practice and the conceptual framework instead of separating the two in two different sections as a tryout to follow the same ideology as the approach used throughout the process.

I find myself 6 days after the last performance of *Trebuchet* looking at a blank document waiting to be filled with reflections, analysis and conceptual frameworks of *Trebuchet* as a practice, a research and a performance. At a first glance when I think of what I gained from this process, I find that is far more than merely the end result, the performance, the work that reaches the eyes of an audience to be seen, felt, questioned, and affected. It most importantly gave me the first stepping stones to find a way of working that interests me and drives my creative self. One that focuses primarily on the practice of an embodied thinking, or what I will later call as the body practice, that along time wishes to collect experiences and somatic feedback from participants in order to gain more knowledge and develop different understandings of it. Through the process of *Trebuchet* me, and the rest of the working group oriented ourselves towards researching, rethinking, recalculating and exploring the proposed methodology, entering it day to day and “negotiating the frustration of change” as choreographer and dancer Anna- Maria Häkkinen, one of my supervisors, mentioned in one of our meetings.

Two years ago, at the beginning of my journey in the Master of Choreography, I believed that what I needed was to zoom out from the way I was already approaching the process of creating a choreographic work, towards a ‘what more ’? I remember being asked during the interview at the auditions what I was looking forward to expanding on,

or what I would like to explore during the Master. I answered that I was interested in exploring mediums other than the performer's body, and finding the choreography in between. I definitely managed to gain more knowledge and work much more closely with sound, light, and costumes as choreographic elements, mainly through the ACO process, during which, for the first time, I collaborated closely with a sound, light, and costume designer from early on, instead of involving them later in the process.

However, I found myself still reproducing very similar approaches to those I was used to. Coming from a fairly traditional Western dance background, I used to begin the creative process already thinking about the end result- what will be on stage, what will not- rushing through things and making decisions. But before I began working on my thesis project, and before I started building the body practice of *Trebuchet* and putting it into words, I asked myself: 'What is important to you?' Or even better, 'what is important to you now?' And: 'How do you want to work? What kind of choreographer do you want to be?'

I realized that what interested me most for this project were the process, the research, and the lived experience of the soma and psyche of the performers, the body in its wholeness. It became clear that what I needed wasn't to zoom out, but to zoom in, in, in, in order to go deeper to what is already there, what I'm already interested in. To start unfolding with care and delicacy the depth of what it means to have the privilege of working with sensuous, physical bodies. For me, and for the way I wish to work, the body is not merely a tool to represent, perform, or deliver ideas. While working as a dancer, I realized that I often felt irritated or disconnected from the material when the 'what' and the 'how' were too separated. When the conceptual feeling and the physical feeling weren't aligned and instead there was a performative layer placed on top of the actual felt experience, rather than growing from within it. This led me to think that I needed to find a different way of working, one that could override some of my past habits and expectations. What has become increasingly clear is that the theoretical frameworks and concepts I bring into the process are deeply interwoven with the body practice. I come to understand them through practice. Many of these concepts originate from philosophy, and although I don't have a formal theoretical background and I'm not a philosopher, I find that these ideas help me understand what I'm already experiencing

through the body. They give me the tools to articulate the work and, at the same time, enhance my creativity and unlock new pathways of thinking.

Only after I feel confident enough about what the body practice is and what it can do, even though I will never know what it can do since every participant brings something new and develops the practice, but once I grasp its core driving intentions, only then can I zoom out. Only then can I place it in the background and ask, once again, ‘what more?’ That said, it’s important to note that I have never denied the performative elements, the composition and the script of the final performance, which, at times, has been more fluid and at other times more specific. I don’t believe this is a matter of either/or. I believe one can focus on practice and research while still engaging in dialogue with composition and considering the audience. It’s simply a shift in focus and attention.

In the first chapter, I focus on the *Approach of Trebuchet Body Practice* which consists of the way of working and the outlines and guidelines of the project and process. Firstly, I go through Reflecting the Body Practice and I explain what is my idea of a body practice and what it consists of, its influences and main characteristics and values. Then, I expand on the concept of Enactive perception from the philosopher Alva Noë to enhance the ideology of the body practice as a system that has the ability to actively shift one’s perception and viewpoint since, it suggests that perception is something we do through our sensorimotor abilities and not something that passively happen to us. I also write about the Practice of director-choreographer which emphasizes my relationship and communication we had with the dancers and my role as the facilitator of the process. Later on, I focus on the Movement Research and Composing the Choreography which explores how I prompt the dancers to approach the movement research both during the process and during the choreographic work and at the end of this chapter I write about the Choreography and Body Practice as a Practice of Problem Projection. This involves the idea of problematizing both the body practice and later on the choreography as a tool to enhance our creative thinking and keep us engaged with the research.

In the second chapter, I write about the *Content of Trebuchet Body Practice*, meaning the two of the three main movement propositions and their conceptual influences and

references. I start with the proposition of Pushing and Sinking in and I track down how we practically approach this proposition in the studio. I initially go through the tuning in exercises, and then I unravel the importance of Sensorial Imagination through the body practice. Afterwards, I continue highlighting some of its important ideas and tools which are turning the focus towards space, and the Multi-directional orientation as Basis for the Emergence of Art which emphasizes the significance of multi-directionality and engagement with counter and conflictual or oppositional forces simultaneously. To finish the description of this movement proposition as if I order the Desert, I elaborate on the conceptual and theoretical framework of it that is based on Diego Agulló's writing in *Lucky Disasters* (2023) and Merleau-Ponty's Reversibility Theory and its activation in 'Push and Sink in' exercise. In the next part of the second chapter I focus on the movement proposition of Charge and Throw and again I use a similar methodology to describe it. Firstly I go through the tuning in exercises of the proposition including the essentiality of the discipline of Authentic Movement in 'Charge and Throw' and then I expand on the Main tools and ideas of this proposition and at the end, I order once again the Desert: 'Charge and Throw' as Benaster to unfold the influence of Agulló's writings in the body practice. To conclude this chapter I do A Comparison between 'Push and Sink in' and 'Charge and Throw' propositions in terms of Inhibiting and Sundering to bodily impulses or desires. This chapter clearly takes more space than the other two since from the beginning of the writing process my essential intention was to spend time in understanding the content of the body practice while working with my memory and going back to the studio to reflect on the actualization of it.

In the third and final chapter, I focus on the shift of *Trebuchet* from a body practice to a *Trebuchet as Performance*. I begin by examining its compositional elements and choreographic propositions, while turning my attention to the audience's experience. I explore Laura Marks' concept of Haptic Visuality as a key tool that informed the choreography and shaped its relationship with the spectator's engagement. I then introduce affect theory, primarily drawing on Brian Massumi's writings, and highlight specific aspects that influenced both the choreographic choices and the body practice itself. In particular, I reflect on Massumi's notion of the "missing half-second" (Massumi 1995, 89) as a way to approach affect. Finally, I discuss the role of

kinaesthetic transference as a crucial tool for affective choreographies and the audience's embodied response.

1. APPROACH OF *TREBUCHET* BODY PRACTICE

1.1. Reflecting the Body Practice

What I call the *Trebuchet* body practice is the overall package of the ‘what’ and the ‘how’, meaning it includes the content of the practice but also the approach. By the content, I mean the concepts, the ideas and the tools we were working with and by approach I mean the method of working on the one hand as individuals and on the other as a group. More specifically, this body practice consisted of three main movement propositions that I brought in, as a base of experimentation to ‘play’ with and discover what more comes up. These propositions are grounded in concepts introduced by researcher and artist Diego Agulló in his books *Dangerous Dances* (2015) and *Lucky Disasters* (2023), that triggered my creative thinking and I found relatable on what I was already exploring through the context of movement research and that is also why I refer to Agulló throughout the pages. The first one is called ‘Push and Sink in’, the second one ‘Charge and Throw’ and the third one that I will not expand upon through this writing was focusing on the concept of finding continuity through disruption. When I was bringing in the propositions I was also bringing in a variety of tools, in one respect as access points to approach those propositions, in another respect as ideas that hold the potential to generate new or different understandings. Ideas that are not bound to the body practice itself but, one can take with them and ponder about during their own movement research interests or even take with them outside the studio space completely.

The attention of the performers was not on reaching certain bodily forms or vocabulary but, to track down their experience and how it shifts on an everyday basis following the proposed tools. Also, to pay attention to how the body is internally perceived- from the first-person perspective and observed through one's own proprioceptive senses- embracing the idea that all bodily movements are created from the performer's understanding and interpreted from the perspective of the observer (Apostolou-Hölscher 2014, 79). Throughout the body practice I was proposing the tool of ‘acting and observing at the same time’, finding themselves in many places simultaneously, both in the actual place they are and in a state of suspension anywhere in the space or outside of

it. As if the happening and the understanding and observing of the happening, from multiple perspectives and angles work as parallel. On the one hand triggering the opening up of their perception, while being self-aware both internally and externally, and on the other hand focusing on the present and perceiving the practice from moment to moment.

I believe that through the body and the practice of an embodied thinking one can re-pattern and transform their way of perceiving and understanding information and situations. This re-evaluation is not something that can happen only through intellectualism and hence through the mind but, it can also happen through the body and the embodied mind. Emilyn Claid's- a choreographer, writer, director and teacher- book *Falling through Dance and Life* (2021) has been a great inspiration on how practice-led research can actively re-shape thinking and perception. It's a book focusing primarily on the conception of falling and a big part of it explores the negative connotations associated with it, within language and culture. Through the embodied experience of movement she wishes to begin undoing the conventional understanding of falling, since as she writes "Physically falling safely to the ground- as an intentional practice- can build resilience for psychological falls" (Claid 2021, 100). Repetitively engaging with the action of falling can work as a remedy for the fears it holds and even drive one to reconsider the values given to words such as up and down (Claid 2021, 20). Emotions emerge from physically experiencing the world and are further shaped by the language we use. Language "is not only a reflection of the experiences but it also creates them. Simply put, we say what we feel and we feel what we say" (Kovecses 2000, 192 in Claid 2021, 9). In turn, our physical condition affects how we perceive language in the same way that language holds the capacity to influence both our bodily sensations and mental state. Therefore, Claid's movement practice and research as an experiment, suggests the interrelationship between the body, language, culture and psychology. Just as our mental state impacts how we move and feel physically, the body also plays a role in shaping the mind. She introduces a movement research that relies on individuals' entering the process with their holistic intuition and personal views, instead of following established or formalized dance techniques, which is also related to the way I wish to approach the body practice of *Trebuchet*.

1.1.1. Body Practice and Enactive perception- Alva Noë

To further explore and support the idea that the body practice actively creates perceptions rather than merely reflecting them, which I also mentioned through the previous section, I will introduce Noë's enactive approach into my writing. In this view, perception is something we do through embodied engagement, which has the potential to shift or complicate our systems of categorization. Through the concept of enactive perception, particularly in Alva Noë's *Action in Perception* (2004), there is a continuous reference to the phenomenologies of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty (Bar 2020, 53). In this perspective, mental abilities such as perception, consciousness, and cognition do not arise solely from brain activity (Thompson 2007). Instead, our interaction between mind, body and environment allows for these mental capacities since "we enact our own world; we act it out, and by performing our experience we enact the environment" (Noë 2004 in Bar 2020, 55) and put it literally into effect. To perceive is to be able to understand how sensory input changes in response to our movements (Thompson 2007, 38). Enactive perception then, focuses on one's own movement and sensorimotor abilities and how these actively affect the perceptual experience. Noë refuses the idea of representation and believes that perceptual experience is not merely registered as a mental activity happening in the brain where things are perceived as external images. He supports that "neuronal activities and neuronal substrates are not sufficient for the determination of perception" (Noë 2004 in Bar 2020, 55) because other physical and bodily substrates like how one physically interacts and sensorily experiences the environment through their body plays a significant role in perceptual experience. In the enactive approach, perception isn't something that just happens to us; it's something we actively do. Perception is not merely a way to guide our actions, it is an action in itself: a reflective process of learning, re-learning, re-evaluating, and practicing. Through active bodily engagement, we can reshape our understanding of concepts and experiences.

A clear example of how this applies to the *Trebuchet* body practice- expanded in the chapter: *Content of Trebuchet body practice*- is the way in which intentional engagement with disorientation and unpredictability, particularly through the 'Charge and Throw' movement proposition, allows practitioners to develop a more positive and nuanced relationship with these typically unwanted sensations. Furthermore, by

working with the dynamics between the active doer, who controls and the passive follower, who relinquishes control, and through the ‘Push and Sink In’ proposition, where resistance is explored not only as the effort to push with tension, but also as the pleasure found in yielding, we begin to experience a state that exists between activity and passivity, without privileging one over the other.

Perception can't be viewed as passive ability, similar to taking a photograph, and thus rejects the notion that the objects themselves are directly able to trigger one's perception (Bar 2020, 55). In the same way, experiences, behaviors, notations, connotations and cognitive understanding can be actively transformed through the body. Noe's enactive approach was clearly influenced by Merleau- Ponty but it also has significant differences. On the one hand, Merleau-Ponty phenomenology also rejects representationalism as capturing through the brain an already established meaning with already known and unchangeable ways of understanding and perceiving something, as a conscious "apperception, or as a rational construction created by an immaterial spirit. Instead, he argues that perception should be understood from a bodily perspective, emphasizing that it is the lived experience of a subject, whose body is intertwined with the world" (Merleau- Ponty 2002, 154 in Bar 2020, 61). However, on the other hand Merleau Ponty's Reversibility Theory that I will unfold in more detail below, suggests that "bodily being in the world provides an account of our being in the world that is not one-sidedly activist" (Jenkinson 2017, 46). He does not claim that perception is happening only through an active doing but the body is at the same time actively perceiving the world around it and is passively receptive to it accepting to affect and be affected, meaning that consciousness is mutually informed both by the world and the body (Jenkinson 2017, 46). To perceive contains on the one hand an active way of being and doing, for instance to grasp in the sense of seize, reach and touch and a reactive way which is more passive, for instance to capture in the sense of take or catch (Bar 2020, 65).

1.2. Practice of director-choreographer

From early on I understood how important it is to encourage the dancers to deal with the propositions and tools I was giving, as questions to explore and find their own findings rather than as answers to be performed and delivered. For example, after the end of

every movement session we would discuss their own experiences and prompt them to talk about elements they found intriguing throughout whether closely related or not with the initial movement proposition. To give a bit more insight into the communication we had with the dancers, I'll share an example.

Before we began rehearsals with them, I was also engaging with the practice on my own. Very soon, I realized that the proposition of 'Charge and Throw', which I will elaborate on later, brought up a strong sense of disorientation. Disorientation became something I found myself increasingly interested in: how to embrace it and the uncertainty it brings, rather than trying to avoid or resolve it. So, both as a tool and as an idea to explore, I introduced the dancers to the question, 'what if my front is my back?' We had a discussion around this, and one of the dancers shared that the question made her imagine being observed from behind, which in turn brought awareness to her back space. This tool isn't only about accessing the movement proposition of 'Charge and Throw' but, it can extend beyond the studio and into everyday life, even in something as mundane as walking to the supermarket. The same goes for the idea of embracing disorientation and uncertainty. By practicing this in the studio, perhaps one can begin to shift their understanding of what disorientation is and how it feels. As mentioned earlier, we can actively reshape our perception of something through how we engage with it physically.

In moments when the dancers felt anxiety regarding how they should 'look like' I would constantly remind them that the body practice we are working with does not suggest an idealized and precise bodily image and conception and we are not working on it to make it fit that conception. Further, if for any reason, they felt that something doesn't work for them, instead of giving them any direct answers that would immediately release the stress they were feeling, on one hand, I would give some suggestions without giving them an answer that contains what they should do but, rather tools, that can translate to questions, on how they can approach any movement proposition. My wish was to see these tools as "domains of influence instead of submitting to already given domains" (Agulló 2015, 47) while keep trusting that something is never what it seems like but there is always hidden information and deeper layers to unravel. To construct and deconstruct continuously. (Agulló 2023, 85) On the other hand, there were times when I would open up the question to the group, implying

that I wasn't the only person they could turn to for answers. We were experiencing this body practice together, and the tools their co-dancers discovered were just as valuable as any tools I could offer. That said, it's important to note that I was moving with them, shifting the role of choreographer from one who guides and observes to one who guides and experiences in the same way as the dancers, bridging the gap between our roles. Even later in the process, as the performance date approached and I would sit outside and observe, I tried to offer feedback from the perspective of what I was experiencing as a witness, drawing from the Authentic Movement- a discipline I will elaborate on further later in my writing.

I was sharing my movement research but this movement research finds a place to develop and understand itself through the dancers' somatic feedbacks and findings. At the beginning of the process, I introduced the main conceptual references from Diego Agulló to explain the initial ideas that inspired me to create this body practice. However, the written texts both from Agulló and the other theoretical concepts that I will refer to later were present in the studio indirectly, both through the bodily experience and through our discussions. Sometimes I would even prompt them to come up with speculations on why they believe that something doesn't work, instead of the fact that it doesn't work, researching for the answer collaboratively and through this many times they found the answers they were looking for just by posing the question towards themselves. This way of working, I believe, requires qualities of patience and creative curiosity both of myself and the dancers to find the strength to move away from representing pre-constituted procedures, rushing to find answers in order to reach the end result, and experiencing habitual patterns as a given and towards uncertainty. How can we prehend a given environment, which in the case of *Trebuchet* refers to the propositions of the body practice and later on the compositional elements, as posing problems to be solved? (Apostolou-Hölscher 2014, 85) which requires being ready "to operate within a frame of tensions, controversy, discord and uncertainty" and willing to spend energy on resolving problems (Agulló 2015, 50).

1.3. Movement Research and Composing the Choreography

In our daily movement sessions with the performers, and with the intention of leaving space for transformation, questioning, and discovery, I often emphasized the tool of

‘observing how things are experienced in today’s body and throughout an ever-changing present.’ Following Alfred North Whitehead (1861 – 1947)- a British philosopher best known for his work in the areas of process philosophy and metaphysics- and his writings in *Process and Reality* (1978) “No prehension takes place twice” (Whitehead 1978, 22). This to me translates to the idea that even if certain forms, patterns, events or movement propositions happen to be repeated they are always different from themselves and therefore, always newly experienced and questioned. In the movement sessions and even in the happening of the performance the prehender, the prehended and even the observer continuously change. In other words “not only does an encounter between entities or an actual occasion not take place twice as an event, but also every single entity happens only once as an entity” (Apostolou-Hölscher 2014, 85). Similarly, Whitehead writes that “[e]ach actual entity is conceived as an act of experience arising out of data” (Whitehead 1978, 40). Any attempt to engage with the movement research practice was also an experiment in both moving and being moved. With each passing moment, we receive new or different information that continually updates and transforms the experience at every step. However, this is a challenging way to approach movement research, as “...at every step artists know they are exposed to the risk of betrayal, particularly when, through laziness, ease, impatience, or fear, they believe they can decide on the path, instead of capturing, step by step, the question posed to them at that step” (Stengers 2011, 216).

This approach, in the context of the body movement research practice, moves us away from pre-planning or rigid decision-making, focusing instead on listening to and following the bodily movement desires in the present moment. Passing through and tasting forms of the body but not aiming to reach or hold a form. Instead focusing on the experience as a whole, unfolding it moment by moment, “noting how the particular moments ‘hang together’ by pointing towards other possibilities of experience” (Cerbone 2006, 5). We aim to disorient ourselves from “the logic of maintenance” which ensures that things remain in their original state, protecting them from change and preventing external forces from having an impact (Agullo 2015, 74). The desire to preserve and represent bodily experience can often lead to a narrow perspective, especially when the aim is to suggest new ways of understanding. Rigid systems of organization tend to generate their own realms of unchanging power. In contrast, we can approach composition as “a continuous becoming of its components” (Apostolou-

Hölscher 2014, 84), rather than as a fixed, static choreography. In other words, how can we experience bodily movement in ways that generate new understandings, rather than merely representing it? Representation, according to Deleuze, is “a reductive model of thinking, because it subordinates difference to identity and thus never allows thought to begin anew, to create anything but the recognizable and the recognized” (Cvejić 2015, 36).

Towards the end of the process, as Sointu Saraste, one of the dancers, mentioned, it felt like a constant balancing act between the research and the performance. This feeling most likely stemmed from my concerns about how to create choreography and compose the practice alongside the light, sound, and costume without viewing it as a final answer that would close off its potential and undermine the ongoing nature of the research. After discussions about this I realized that perhaps it is about finding ways to bring these interests together, somehow discussing with each other instead of choosing one of the two or putting one on top of the other. Also, another thing I found important is to try and listen to how the practice is asked to be composed, while observing its values and characteristics and intensifying that. After all, composition is always already happening through the way the performers relate to each other and the space so my approach had to do with finding ways to amplify what is somehow already there.

1.4. Choreography and Body Practice as a Practice of Problem Projection

Dangerous Dances (2015) suggests that “To make a dance project is to project problems. The mission of articulating problems belongs intrinsically to the practice of choreography” (Agulló 2015, 48) and dance. It explores the strong interconnection between dance and philosophy under the ‘umbrella’ of problems and it also encourages the reader to view both dance and philosophy through the lens of ballistics presenting them as a form of the art of throwing. Through philosophy, problems are introduced into what is considered knowledge, and then philosophy choreographs these problems, producing a new kind of understanding. It disrupts what is typically accepted and trusted, challenging established certainties. In other words, philosophy can be seen as the “practice of choreographing the trajectories of problems”. (Agulló 2015, 58) The urge to philosophize often begins with a sense of doubt. A doubt that emerges from the

realization of not fully understanding something and not being able to properly support even the most fundamental beliefs (Agulló 2015, 60). The philosopher is both the source and the subject of the problem; they throw the problems against themselves and the act of thinking turns into a turmoil aimed at the thinker, and thinking itself becomes a problem. Thought is always at risk of questioning and complicating itself. (Agulló 2015, 65) In the same way a dancer and a choreographer self- problematize through movement and choreographic propositions. Through the body practice of *Trebuchet* one is invited to question already established knowledge, put themselves in a creative thinking process that examines not what is known but what is maybe hidden and under layered. It also involves questioning the already categorized feelings, emotions, and affects that a situation produces, in order to experience it anew and possibly differently. If we problematize what we already know there is also the potentiality to change our understanding of it.

If the word problem (pro- ballein) in ancient greek translates to a thing or a challenge thrown forward (Agulló 2015, 39) then, to express problems is to introduce questions, much like how bodies themselves can become questions (Agulló 2015, 48) both for the ones who experience it and for the viewers. Through bodily practices, these questions remain uncertain, open to interpretation, and constantly shifting. One could say that practicing choreography and dance can be seen as “the art of generating dilemmas” (ibid.) and on-going transformations on how the experience of the practice is perceived. This suggests that choreography and the art of problematizing are strongly inter-relatable, as a “set of practices that project problematic trajectories in space and time” (Agulló 2015, 47). Agulló asks the question “How to move in the catastrophe” and through *Dangerous Dances* (2015) attempts to “dance this problem and to reveal the secret affinity between *dance* and *danger*” (Agulló 2015, 10). He goes on with that towards the “Practice of Dancing the problem” (Agulló 2015, 14) where the body is exposed to challenging or problematic conditions. The goal is to inspire the embodiment of dance, turning negativity into a positive, affirming energy.

Bojana Cvejic´ in the book *Choreographing Problems. Expressive Concepts in European Contemporary Dance and Performance* (2015) as she writes investigates a range of practices that emerged in European contemporary choreography between 1998

and 2007. She examines these practices through the philosophical lens of problems, focusing on seven choreographic works that, as she argues, reveal a way of thinking that centers on problematizing key issues in contemporary dance. These issues include the relationship between body movement, expression, and form, as well as the dynamics of improvisational practices and how they relate to process. In particular, they use the method of posing problems as logic for creation that gives rise to propositions. (Cvejic´ 2015, 1-2) Problems in the sense they are proposed through *Choreographing Problems* (2015) offer us an insight on the parallel relationship of thought and the processes of creation, performance and experiencing a performance as an audience member. In order to enhance this idea among problems and creativity Cvejic´ writes: “the problems stem from the very process of creation, as they express the thought that guides the choreographers in their decisions; and the problems are also given by the performances, as they further provoke us” (Cvejic´ 2015, 2). Here it’s important to note that to me problems don’t only express the thought that guides the choreographers in their decisions but also the thought that guides the dancers in their different ways to experience any choreographic work or movement research practice. By recognizing these choreographic and body practices as capable of generating thought, it means they encourage a philosophical reexamination of the body, movement, time and space leading to the development and emergence of distinctive concepts of their own (ibid.).

Dancers hold the possibility to artistically direct themselves when performing the choreography (Orpana 2022, 35) but also, direct themselves through the body practice. A creative dancer is able to decide upon their succession of actions and have confidence in what they wish to do. They are called to re- evaluate the movement research practice itself, their own situation and eventually the choreographic work continuously. To be aware of what kind of feelings emerge, how is their perception of the body practice changing over time, what questions arise or otherwise how they problematize the practice, and which questions do they wish to follow? “The im-provisation in this case is at the same time questioning and unraveling meanings and creating them by dancing the constant renewal of the situation” (Orpana 2022, 52). “Self-renewal” (Orpana 2022, 79) occurs in all of the layers of the improvisational body practice. In this context, the agency of the dancer becomes particularly significant and complex and the body practice and eventually the choreographic work emerge from the dancer's situation. This

approach is much different and much more personal than representing a role outside of their own unique understanding. In short, “choreography as an agencement can be understood and defined through the dancer’s situation and agency” (Orpana 2022, 79). The body practice of *Trebuchet* is open and actively encourages the diverse responses of performers to the impulses and interests that emerge during improvisation. In this way, the practice becomes a series of personal expressions, shaped by who each performer is and how they respond to and engage with different situations. Therefore, “Choreographic agencement is a complex of experience that in itself cannot be mapped. What emerges choreographically is less an organization of bodies than a cartography of incipient tendencies, of force of form. In this sense, choreography is less about a body than about an ecology” (Manning 2013, 93).

Working with the idea of problems push thinking to explore the limits of our sensory experience, which can be understood not through representing, but through processing as an idea of expressing and dealing with the problem. *Difference and Repetition* (1994) introduces the idea of the problem as a key part of thought. The problem shapes how we connect sensibility and thought. Expression is what, according to Deleuze, explains the relationship between personal thoughts and extended entities as events occurring in parallel without having a direct cause-and-effect relationship. This parallelism shapes the relationship between thinking and doing, such as creating or performing, within performance practices, as they resonate with each other. (Cvejic’ 2015, 41) In Deleuze’s view, problems are seen as ideas that are not meant to represent the propositions as pre-existing ideas with already established meanings but to express them as actively manifesting ideas without trying to mirror or depict something directly. The process of experimenting with the idea of posing problems can be seen as a period of learning, where unlearning or breaking down existing knowledge is necessary to move beyond repeating old patterns and instead create new ways of relating to one’s own body during the practice and through the choreographic material. “Such learning implies ‘violent’ training without a general method, but with a dedication to the problem which according to Deleuze, demand[s] the very transformation of our body and our language” (Cvejic’ 2015, 49).

2. CONTENT OF ‘TREBUCHET’ BODY PRACTICE

2.1. Pushing and Sinking in

As a way to enter into *Trebuchet* body practice, I introduced the performers with the movement research proposition of ‘pushing and sinking in’. For the first 15 minutes, I would guide them through an exercise I called the ‘sinking pool’. We began by lying on the floor, focusing solely on our breathing and the subtle pushes and sinkings happening throughout our bodies, movements that happen involuntarily without the need to actively do something to produce them. I also prompted them, gently guiding their body awareness, to imagine the floor beneath them transforming from solid ground into a pool of slime into which they would sink with every exhale. By the end of the 15 minutes, we would find ourselves at the bottom of this imagined pool. Through this exercise we could focus on the micro-movements taking place internally or externally, dive into the imaginative landscape I had suggested, or shift our focus to whatever possibilities felt intriguing. As with all the movement propositions, the dancers were free to direct their attention where they found it most compelling. This along with another exercise I called ‘sinking sand’ were used as a warm up and a tuning into the body practice. The ‘sinking sand’ exercise carried very similar ideas. In this case, the performers were asked to choose a pathway and walk it very slowly, imagining that they were walking on sinking sand. With each step, we would sink further into it until we eventually reached the bottom. I was using the idea of the bottom as on the one hand, I found it a more accessible way to stay focused in the exercise, as it provided a purpose or end point for the journey. On the other hand, it felt important to me to experience the gradual shift, from the surface of the imaginative landscape to its bottom. As Sointu once described her journey during the ‘Sinking Sand’ exercise: moment by moment, as she sank into the sand, she noticed how the grains of sand were touching her skin, starting from her toes, moving up to her hips and chest, gradually covering her entire body. In the same way the sand gradually covered her body, she was gradually tuning into the body practice.

At the end of these exercises, once we found ourselves at the bottom of either the pool or the sand, I suggested that we keep engaging with movement while holding onto what we had discovered during the introductory journey but this time, without having to keep

lying on the floor or slowly walking. For the first few minutes, I didn't offer many additional suggestions beyond the tool of pushing, not just as physical resistance, but also as a resistance in time, in order to slow down and resist the urge to rush through things, instead allowing their movements to unfold gradually. It was about creating a sense of delayed action where the passage of time itself became a form of resistance, a shift in how time was perceived and experienced through movement, disrupting the usual flow of one's movement or perception. This allowed us to gain greater bodily and spatial awareness, receive information through slowness, and observe small details that we might typically overlook. In other words, the exercise was based on practicing listening. Awareness is a state of being attuned to the present moment. Without judgment, turning up the sensational experience to "practice cultivating a state of attention, a deep state of listening" (Bernsen 2022, 430). "Devotional attention counters and resists the speed of the information/digital age, slowing things down, stalling them" (Craig 2022, 412). This approach also gave us the opportunity to take a step back, delay our impulses, and perhaps question our bodily desires before acting on them, always holding the potential for change. Many of our movement sessions were quite long, between 45 minutes to an hour, insisting on the same movement proposition and we didn't stop to talk about our experiences until later. This allowed time for the experience to shift and transform, and for us to distance ourselves from our habitual patterns, thoughts, and questions.

2.1.1. Sensorial Imagination

Performers are given the possibility to use their imaginations to transform and shift their experience from what is concretely happening in the studio space or what their body seems to be doing in a descriptive way towards a broader range of sensorial experience. One can transit from one texture to another in a variety of ways and observe how this affects then their own somatic texture. Imagination requires being receptive, allowing ideas and information from diverse sources, whether from your surroundings or more abstract origins, to enter your body. It demands an open mind in which the boundaries between reality and fiction blur. Imagination equals transcendence. It holds the potentiality for one to go beyond one's knowledge, or what one knows as their knowledge and the limitations of their own imagination. What I'm proposing through the body practice is to find ways to access sensory imagination. For me one essential part of this kind of imagination is what the British philosopher Martin calls the

dependency thesis. The dependency thesis suggests that “to imagine sensorily $\alpha \varphi$ is to imagine experiencing $\alpha \varphi$ ” (Martin 2002, 404). For example, “to imagine a tiger is to imagine seeing a tiger, to imagine a tune is to imagine hearing a tune, to imagine a taste is to imagine experiencing that taste. The dependency thesis asserts a conceptual connection between perception and sensory imagination” (Smith 2006, 52). Therefore, to imagine sinking into a pool of slime is to imagine experiencing sinking into a pool of slime which immediately becomes a sensorial experience. Thus, to practice imagining a sensorial experience immediately translates to imagining this experience from the first-person perspective, taking place inside one’s own body. This leads to the dancer being attuned “on the phenomenological experience of the movement” because she actively interprets the movement through her imagination and explores unfamiliar motions that demand greater focus to perform (Mullis 2016, 65).



Trebuchet. Photo: Daniel Motola

2.1.2. Focus: Space

Throughout the days, we continued to engage with the ‘Push and Sink in’ proposition, and I would add new tools as access points to engage with the proposition which also have the potential to bring in new or different ideas. Again, the performers could focus

on what interests them. For example, we focused on exploring the dialogue between the inner and outer landscapes of the body and the surrounding space. The focus would shift from the inner space of the body to the outer and towards a more external approach, where the intention was to move the space or sink into it. This ‘inner space’ refers to the way the body feels and functions internally such as the Visceral Sensations which are the internal feelings related to organs and bodily systems, like the sensations in the stomach, lungs, heart, or intestines, the muscular tensions and the skeleton, the proprioceptive perceptions, breathing and awareness of one’s bodily impulse- such as sinking into the skeleton or initiating a push from the organs. The ‘outer space’ refers to the physical boundaries and external expression of the body that is visible and interacts with the environment, how we take up space, move within it, and influence it. As dance artist Orpana was focusing on what lies between the inner and outer space of the body he drew two circles that represent the idea of two spaces: “the inner space and the outer space and the field where these spaces overlap is the unity, I myself dancing my emotion, my thoughts, my situation and my world. The separation into two spaces is of course a rough-edged division” (Orpana 2022, 64). When one focuses on the inner space, soon enough realizes how difficult it is to separate it from the outer space. The inner space extends beyond the inside since it is mostly projected outside through one’s body and eventually through one’s movement, even if the urge to move is triggered internally. “....as the inside becomes blurred, the outside blurs too. Can I tell you that my outside is my skin? When I think and do this work on focusing on the idea of inside and outside, I suddenly become very aware that they are together. They are within each other, my inside and outside is my body” (Orpana 2022, 63- 64).

The idea of using this proposition as an opportunity to travel through different spaces also played a significant role as an idea that holds the potentiality to explore the interrelation between the experience of the body and the space. “A body is not separate from its milieu. Milieu, or the associated milieu, as Simondon calls it, is a relational field activated by the event in-forming. No event occurs in a vacuum - event and milieu are always cogenerative. This means that the milieu cannot be understood in spatial terms. It is an affective attunement more than a space, a field more than a form” (Manning 2013, 139). In addition to being aware of how our mind and body are connected, and the impact of the surrounding space, we are also constantly influenced by the sensations the world triggers in us. This includes the emotional and mental

responses to things like the news, our interactions with others, our own thoughts and memories, as well as how we react to the weather, temperature, and humidity. Additionally, our instincts are stirred by things like movement, sounds, and voices around us. The world encompasses not only our feelings toward the people present in the space with me but also those who are in our thoughts. We are constantly related to the world and we relate ourselves to the events echoing around us. (Orpana 2020, 73) “The body is the place where the world materializes, and it is different matter than ideas or consciousness” (Orpana 2020, 78).

Following these ideas regarding the concept of space on one hand, we questioned how far a push or pull could reach or how deeply we could sink in, in order to touch things far away from us, both inside and outside the actual space we were in, meaning inside the studio area, which was limited by the architecture of the space and outside of it. On the other hand, we used our imagination to transform our surroundings into thick textures that combined fluidity and resistance at the same time, like traveling through a pool of slime, then sinking into sand, which transforms into white paint, and finally becomes water. We tracked the sensorial shifts happening throughout, such as how these different textures felt on the skin or how our perception of temperature within these textures changed. We could travel through these surroundings, but also, imagine that these surroundings traveled within our bodies, evoking phrases like ‘pleasurable resistance’ or ‘effortless, fluid, or soft push’. As I reflect on some of the proposed tools, I can already see an underlying ideology: no part of the body is more important than another, and neither are we more important than the space surrounding us. We influence the space as much as we are influenced by it, a concept that is also apparent within Reversibility Theory which I will unravel below.

2.1.3. Multi- directional orientation as Basis for the Emergence of Art

After focusing for a while on the idea of ‘pushing and sinking in’ as two distinct entities with clear points of transition between them, and perhaps emphasizing the separation and difference between the two, I began to introduce the possibility of finding the push within the sinking in, and vice versa. The focus shifted to exploring what connects these two concepts. I also suggested propositions like ‘pushing as if we were sinking in’, or in

other words, while actively pushing, we maintain the sensation of sinking in, and vice versa.

We also paid attention to body parts pushing inwards or outwards, as if pushing towards the body, bringing the space in, or pushing away from the body, creating negative spaces. This idea of pushing away and pushing towards sparked much discussion about how we connect with verbs like ‘to push’ and ‘to sink in’, based on the memory associations we have with their forms. Normally, it wouldn’t make sense to say ‘pushing towards the body’, as this usually refers to pulling. Therefore, my proposition was to play with these counterforces and explore what it would feel like to push as if we were pulling, and to pull as if we were pushing, focusing on the experience of these verbs in terms of how they feel rather than how they look. Another tool I introduced was to approach the practice as if it were a mental push and a mental sinking in- so, what if I mentally sink in while I push, and vice versa? Additionally, we played with the tool of ‘What if my front is my back, and my right is my left?’ This led to an exploration of diverse orientation, multi-dimensionality, and traveling in different directions simultaneously- concepts we continued to explore in the other propositions.

2.1.4. Desert

One of the most important discussions we had with the dancers, and the initial idea behind the proposition of ‘pushing and sinking in’, was the paradoxical interplay between forces or actions that are perceived as opposites. We reached a point where there was no clear distinction between what constitutes a push, a pull, or a sink in. There was difficulty in separating them, and especially when it came to the notions of push and sink in, there was uncertainty about which the active action was and which the passive one was. To me, these ideas and findings carry a sense of re-patterning the brain, seeing something as a multiplicity of possibilities, and engaging with oppositions and conflicting forces in a non-binary way. It’s a way to come in contact with “The lucky unlucky star, the good bad fortune, the benevolent disaster in which something comes to an end but at the same time something begins which allows me to accept the coexistence of pain and beauty and recognize the significance of each” (Agulló 2023, 13). This approach was heavily influenced by Diego Agulló’s writing in *Lucky Disasters* (2023) where he writes: “Life’s deepest truths often emerge from the tension

between opposing forces. Paradoxes serve as portals to a heightened state of awareness, where the complexities of existence reveal themselves in all their splendor. [...] Art becomes a vessel through which the ineffable nature of paradox finds a voice, and its intricate patterns and hidden connections are illuminated” (Agulló 2023, 22-23). These paradoxical spaces within the body practice became a foundation for research and experimentation, looking for the creativity that arises from contradiction, unpredictability, and the clash of contrasting forces. By starting with these simple verbs- verbs that we immediately categorize based on past experiences- and finding ways to complicate, confuse, and blend them, we lost sight of what they originally were. Art possesses the power to challenge our usual ways of understanding, sensing, and perceiving. It challenges the status quo, urging us to reconsider our beliefs. Instead of simply mirroring our existing views, art has the power to lead us beyond the confines of the known. (Agulló 2023, 23- 24) It pushes us to move past easy answers and binary thinking, encouraging us to confront the complexity and contradictions that surround us. “In preserving an event’s complexity, we invite a multiplicity of perspectives and interpretations, and we recognize that our understanding is always partial and provisional” (Agulló, 2023, 105). Adopting this approach allows us to welcome new insights and unexpected connections. Trying to understand and work with something whether this is a movement proposition or a cooking recipe it’s the easiest and most tempting to look for easy and straightforward answers based on the already established categories. However, by letting go of what one already knows as true, the happening can maintain its depth and complexity, giving us the space and possibility to discover aspects that might otherwise be overlooked.

2.1.4.1. Merleau- Ponty’ s Reversibility Theory and its activation in Push and Sink in exercise

From the beginning of this practice and throughout some of our discussions, the Reversibility Theory emerged and indirectly influenced the practice then, and has become much more apparent now as I write about it. Although I didn't intentionally apply Reversibility Theory within the practice, I can now clearly identify the connections. Reversibility is immersed in Merleau-Ponty’s philosophical concepts, through the *Eye and Mind* (1964) and *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968). A concept undoubtedly enigmatic and perhaps easier to experience than to put into words.

Merleau-Ponty highlights an important aspect of perception: when we see something, we are also inherently beings who can be seen. As he writes "We are caught in the web of the visible, we are the visible, but at the same time we are the ones who see. [...] The body is both the subject and the object of perception" (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 142). Just as a front always has a back, the act of seeing involves a mutual relationship where the seer is also visible. This idea extends beyond just vision to include other senses like touch, where the toucher is also the one being touched. And to bring it a step closer to the practice we were busy with: 'when we push something it pushes us back' and 'when we sink into something it sinks back into us'. This reciprocal relationship between the one who perceives and what is perceived is, according to Merleau-Ponty, what signifies reversibility.

This idea resonates with a key concept in Phenomenology, where it is argued that we do not observe the world from an elevated, detached standpoint, like a transcendental subject. Instead, we are fundamentally immersed in the world, and the meaning we derive from it is not entirely created by us, but is already directed by and toward the world itself. Reversibility shifts the focus of his work from the individual perceiver to "being as a whole". (Morris 2010, 2- 3) In this view, perception arises not just from the perceiver but through the interaction between the perceiver and the perceived, which are interconnected as complementary aspects within being. While we actively touch, we simultaneously make ourselves open to being touched passively by objects. This creates a dynamic in which the hand, in its act of touching, can shift to being a passive object itself, and the thing being touched can shift to an active participant in the interaction. (Morris 2010, 3) In studio's words: 'To push and be receptive to other pushes. To pull and be receptive to other pulls. I inform the space and the space informs me.' This reversible relationship between the perceiver and the perceived is grounded in the ontological interplay of activity and passivity- two contrasting but interconnected states that can flip into one another.

With this Merleau-Ponty criticizes the binary between activity and passivity arguing that we need a more nuanced approach, where passivity and activity can coexist in a way that doesn't fall into either extreme, but nevertheless based upon the situation we could bring the one term to the forefront and keep the other to the background. He also brings up the notion of "passivity without passivism". (Merleau-Ponty 1968 in Morris

2010, 6) This concept describes “a passivity that would neither be utterly devoid of nor disconnected from activity” (Morris 2010, 6). A type of passivity that isn’t about being completely passive or inactive, but is still receptive and connected to activity. “Activity and passivity are not inseparable in the way of different points along one continuous scale” (Morris 2010, 8). As already mentioned previously passivity does not signify lack of activity, and activity is not just the absence of passivity. In studio words again: ‘Pushing is not the absence of sinking in and sinking in is not the absence of pushing’.

Also, another example is that you don't fall asleep by gradually reducing how much you are awake to zero; there is a shift to something entirely different. Similarly, waking up doesn't involve simply reducing your sleepiness to zero- it also involves a leap to a different state. (Morris 2010, 8) However, this shift isn't between entirely separate realms; it's a movement between two counterparts that, while distinct, remain interconnected and incongruent. Merleau-Ponty argues that perception is not simply passive, where our senses just receive information from the world. Instead, our body actively engages with the world, but this activity is always influenced by the world itself. For example, when we touch something we actively explore it, but the way we perceive it is also shaped by how the object interacts with us. So, perception is both active and passive, it’s a two-way relationship between the body and the world. The object guides our hand, and in this way, space is not just in you or outside you, it's a result of the interaction between the body and the world.

2.2. Charge and Throw

Through this section I will expand on another essential proposition of the practice I introduced to the performers, which is the idea of ‘charge and throw’. In order to warm up and tune into this proposition we went through two exercises.

For the first exercise I would scatter different objects in the space and invite them to walk in the space, take one of those objects and throw it in any direction, with any effort and with or without aiming somewhere. Then after they throw the object to wait until it reaches its ‘final’ destination, or at least the place where it stops expressing movement and then walk onto another object and repeat the same procedure. I prompt them to pay attention to what happens on their body before the actual throw happens, during the throw and while they anticipate the end of the throw. What happens in their body if

their throw is somehow disrupted or its trajectory changes because of the rest of the projectiles thrown in the space and how is it different when they aim towards a specific target from when they don't.

2.2.1. Authentic Movement in Charge and Throw

The second exercise was more focused on the 'how' of the proposition and it is influenced by Authentic Movement. Authentic Movement is a discipline developed in the 1950s by Mary Starks Whitehouse, a pioneer in dance and somatic practices. Whitehouse created Authentic Movement as a way to explore the connection between movement, consciousness, and the unconscious mind. It involves participants moving with their eyes closed, allowing their bodies to respond to inner impulses, often with a witness present to observe and support the process. (Whitehouse, 1999) For this exercise, one of the performers was invited to step into the space without knowing exactly what she would do or how she would move. There was no right or wrong movement. When the mover was ready, I recommended that she closes her eyes to disconnect from the external visual stimuli, as in Authentic Movement, and focus on listening inwardly (Adler 2002, 9). She was to listen to her bodily impulses and move according to them, saying 'yes' to every little invitation without questioning them, simply accepting them. The key difference between this approach and Authentic Movement is that in Authentic Movement, there is also the potential to deny an impulse, whereas here, the focus was primarily on surrendering to it. What was important to me in this exercise was the possibility to "Learn how to distinguish performing and moving from an impulse, discovering authentic movement" (Adler 2002, under *In Gratitude to Mary Whitehouse 1911- 1979*). To experience the difference of moving from within themselves in contrast to moving because they wanted to follow an image they had in their heads of what they wished to do. As Whitehouse states "The reality of impulse and movement come from such a different place in oneself that when it is experienced, the person comes to know when it is there and when it isn't, and then she can stop cheating. What I call 'cheating' would be the personal arrangement of movement on many levels" (Whitehouse 1999, 23). It also involves cultivating a state of being internally aware and open in order to embrace the ability to listen to oneself, which can only be achieved through concentration, trust, patience and confidence. It's a discipline that ultimately

supports and embraces a conscious mover. Through this exercise, I also wanted to support the idea of “‘I am moved’ [that]... is a moment when the ego gives up control... allowing the Self to take over moving the physical body as it will. It is a moment of unpremeditated surrender that cannot be explained, repeated exactly... The core of the movement experience is the sensation of moving and being moved...” (Whitehouse, in Adler 2002 under *In Gratitude to Mary Whitehouse 1911- 1979*). The other performer was invited to sit in stillness at the side of the space as a witness and protector of the mover. On one hand, she was tasked with tracking how the mover is physically moving in the space while raising awareness upon her own thoughts, emotions and sensations (Adler 2002, XVII). On the other hand, she was responsible for safeguarding the mover, who had her eyes closed, to avoid any possible collisions. The witness’s role was to start from the simple idea of observing what was present exactly as it was, without inserting any commentary, interpretation, judgment, or conclusion—simply witnessing. (D.T. Suzuki, in Adler 2002, 65). Initially, the silent witness may feel overwhelmed by judgments, projections, and interpretations. She must examine how she experiences her own projections while observing the one moving in space. Judgment typically arises from projecting adjectives such as pretty, excited, bored, or at ease onto the mover. Therefore, when talking about judgment we both refer to positive and negative interpretations. The key question the observer must ask herself is: "How do I feel in the presence of someone I name as frantic?". (Adler 2002, 69) Through this exercise, the witness works on becoming aware of her projections, which become clearly evident through the quiet observation of the mover and wishes to hold this awareness within the mover’s practice and judgment of oneself. After 25 minutes, the performers would exchange roles and start again.

2.2.2. Main tools and ideas

Holding this exercise as an important basis on how to approach the proposition of ‘Charge and Throw’ we went through an improvisational session of navigating between charging as a way to listen, and throwing one’s own body into movement and with movement as a way to follow an impulse in the form of a throw and thus, express a bodily desire. Influenced by the values of a throw and its associated memories regarding effort, bodily functionality, and sensation, we engaged with the notion of the throw as a driving force for movement. In this context, the body holds the potential to act as a

projectile or catapult, following various trajectories. “The body becomes the projectile that traces a trajectory in space and time, containing a principle of self-propulsion” (Agulló 2015, 36). The practice invited us to impulsively decide where and when a throw begins, then let the body lead, finding the balance between guiding a throw and letting the throw guide us. We also observed how different ways of throwing affected the experience of the follower. Along the way we were engaging with this practice we were discussing our findings throughout, as different focus points that one could turn their attention to. One of the themes that emerged was the play of agency, which exists in the space between initiating something and following it. “One cannot escape the notion of agency and its entanglement with unpredictable forces” (Agulló 2023, 94). We constantly navigate between control and surrender, moving through the interplay of chaos and order and finding joy in the unexpected. Just as chance works, this practice invites us “to explore the tension between what we can control and what we cannot, between the involuntary and the voluntary” (Agulló 2023, 54). During some of our movement sessions, we also discussed the inherent danger of letting go of control and losing all sense of direction. We reflected on how to practice finding pleasure in allowing ourselves to lose orientation in the act of throwing, while understanding when to regain control. Learning “to navigate across chaos and order” and questioning “How much chaos are we capable of producing? How much disorder can we tolerate?” (Agulló 2023, 14) all while ensuring we do so in a safe way. In the realm of embracing disorientation and losing sense of direction I proposed two more tools which I called ‘Head banging’ and ‘Oppositional throwing’.

The head is one of the most important body parts when it comes to orienting ourselves. It plays a key role in balance, spatial awareness, and directing attention. The head, along with the eyes and inner ear (which helps with balance), provides vital information about the body’s position in space. Also, it’s the home for four out of our five main senses—sight, hearing, taste and smell. So, in terms of physical and sensory orientation, the head is crucial. Therefore, the tool of ‘Head banging’ was questioning what happens when we focus on initiating a throw from the head, imagining the head merely as a ball with no back or front. The ‘Oppositional throwing’ consisted of tools of throwing up as if we throw down or throw down as if we throw up, throw right as if we throw left and so on which brings us back to the tool of ‘What if my front is my back, and my right is my left?’ mentioned in the ‘Push and Sink in’ proposition.

Another important finding was the kind of presence and attention that ‘Charge and Throw’ brought to the ‘now’. On one hand, by focusing on listening to our bodily impulses and immediately acting upon them, while on the other hand, it required us to be alert enough to follow what is happening through the turbulence of a throw. At one point, I asked the dancers about their understanding of this ‘nowness’ or the ‘right moment,’ and one answer that stood out as essential to the practice by Sointu was: “to do before realizing that I’m about to do something, to act before the thought comes to mind”. To me, this translates to following a bodily impulse before we question it, which is quite the opposite of what happens in the ‘Push and Sink in’ proposition. I also find these lost fractions of a second between the body and cognitive interpretation to be particularly interesting.

Additionally, the concept of charging emerged as a crucial element in the practice. Charging not only served as a way to consciously listen and prepare ourselves to express bodily impulses in the form of a throw, as mentioned earlier, but also as a means to track the resonance of these events. The key questions were: ‘How does the throw resonate in the body afterward?’ and ‘How does our body prepare for and anticipate such an agile, tense, and unpredictable event, while also allowing time for its realization?’ In the beginning, charging took the form of slow, suspended, stretched movements, similar to the sensation of ‘pushing as if we sink in’. Over time, it also started taking other forms, such as stillness, repetitive actions, walking, and running. After several sessions of this practice, and when we had already experienced the idea of only surrendering to bodily impulses, I also opened the door to the possibility of choosing either to deny a bodily impulse, allowing ourselves to continue charging, or to move towards ‘hyperbole’ and keep throwing the body into movement without waiting for an impulse to do so. The term ‘hyperbole’ literally translates from ancient Greek as “to throw beyond. A hyperbole is an exaggeration, an excess, or, in other words, a hyperdance (hiperballein). An extravagant statement or assertion not intended to be understood literally, but to produce an impact” (Agulló 2015, 22). Influenced by Authentic Movement, I found important that one turns the attention towards the concept of choice. Either moving by choice or moving because of an impulse and even when an impulse emerges one can choose whether to instantly follow it or deny it. More important than the choice itself is the freedom to choose deliberately, which nurtures a growing awareness and understanding of one’s own inner experience. (Adler 2002, 9)



Trebuchet. Photo: Daniel Motola

2.2.3. Desert: Charge and Throw as Benaster

The ‘Charge and Throw’ proposition was initiated from my desire to explore ideas from Diego Agulló’s *Lucky Disasters* (2023) and *Dangerous Dances* (2015). In *Lucky Disasters* (2023) he introduces the concept of disasters as "sudden unpredictable events that alter the regular order of things, bringing chaos and change of luck into our lives" (Agulló 2023, 10). He distinguishes between two types of disasters- Benaster and Melaster- to highlight the differing effects they can have. Benaster (bene + star) is a disaster with creative effects that invite us to view disasters as transformative forces that can bring about positive change while giving birth to a new beginning, releasing new life. In contrast, Melaster is a disaster with destructive effects, marking the end of a process or cycle. (Agulló 2023, 12) In the *Dangerous Dances* (2015) he connects as already mentioned, the art of ballistics (=the art of throwing) with the art of Dance mentioning also that “Dance comes from ballizein: literally to throw one’s own body” (Agulló 2015, 36). He also points out the inherent randomness of a throw, noting that the trajectory could unpredictably intersect and be disrupted or disrupt another trajectory or face an obstacle. As a result, some trajectories are impossible to predict or control, ending up to the anticipation of an uncertain outcome. (Agulló 2015, 28)

Influenced by the concept of Benaster as the potential to embrace the positive, creative side of disorder and the idea of a throw as an unpredictable event that disrupts the order of things, I continued developing the practice of ‘Charge and Throw’. A proposition aimed at reframing the negative connotations of unpredictability and disorientation, instead viewing them as transformative forces that foster resilience. He also refers a lot to a notion called “Disastrology” as an artistic practice that implies “training oneself in responding to and intervening in a disastrous event creatively” (Agulló 2023, 14) which can lead to discovering new possibilities within disorder.

In the realm of embracing instability while drawing strength from the uncertain Agulló prompts us to “Imagine that every night, as twilight descends, the stars and planets would reorganize their positions in the sky.... ephemeral and elusive, defying any sense of predictability or pattern” (Agulló 2023, 18). If constellations were always moving, always changing, our sense of identity might become more fluid, blurring the line between the individual and the world. We wouldn’t have to adjust to an already fixed universe and hence fixate ourselves within it. This disruption of order, would unravel limitless ways to interpret our existence, urging us to embrace the constant flux of life. In such a world, where everything is in a state of perpetual renewal, we would come to understand the ephemerality of everything. Living in uncertainty would push us to be more present, trying to grasp the uniqueness of each moment, just as each night’s sky would be different from the last. (Agulló 2023, 19- 20) How would this state of irregularity and unpredictability look in the ‘suit’ of dance? A dance as an “an untamed embodiment of uncontrollable forces” (Agulló 2023, 25). This dance would demand a complete surrender to the materiality of it, dismantling traditional ways of interpreting, leaving no room for judgment or time for analysis. It would be a dance in tune with chance, where the body moves unpredictably, spontaneously, and without a set sequence. It would break free from conventional patterns, with sudden shifts, rapid changes in direction, and unexpected transitions. The dancers would give in to the pure, instinctive sensations of their bodies, fully engaging in the present without letting go of conscious control or analytical thought. (Agulló 2023, 26- 27) In both this case and in the context of the ‘Charge and Throw’ proposition, we come to realize that surrendering and accepting what is beyond our control can prove to be resilient. In fact, it can open us to a multitude of possibilities. It is within the unknown that new opportunities for self-renewal arise (Agulló 2023, 38). Of course in many circumstances this is not the

case and losing control could be catastrophic but, there are other contexts that this kind of thinking can embrace creativity within the anxiety of not knowing and within the anxiety of an upcoming, stressful event that hasn't been actualized yet.

When complexity transitions from an abstract concept to a somatic and experiential phenomenon, it ceases to be merely an intellectual challenge and begins to affect how we feel, how we act and interact and how we follow our impulses. In this state, complexity is not simply conceptualized, but actively experienced. Engaging with complexity in this way isn't just a mental exercise; it calls for emotional literacy, mindfulness, and the fortitude to navigate uncertainty. This approach to complexity means facing and making space for the bodily tension and the lack of clear answers. (Agulló 2023, 107- 108)

This brings me to the notion of ambiguity as a concept that is negatively perceived in everyday thinking as it is closely related with uncertainty, lack of clear direction and confusion. “In a world that values order; predictability, and logical coherence, confusion is seen as a disruption to the status quo”. (Agulló 2023, 47) It pushes us to confront the limits of our knowledge and understanding revealing the vast scale of forces beyond our control. Yet, when seen through a “philosophical and aesthetic lens”, this seemingly unwanted state can become very compelling as it reflects the gray areas between things, ourselves and the world, where contradictory forces work together in a multilayered environment (Agulló 2023, 44). Also, facing uncertainty with curiosity demands a mindset open to change, capable of adapting to the unknown and letting go of fixed expectations and familiar patterns. Approaching unpredictability with openness rather than criticism “we can navigate the complexity of life as if it were a playground for research and exploration of new possibilities within the paradoxes that surround us” (Agulló 2023, 101). When we are unable to fully grasp something, the above ideas suggest that rather than forcing it into pre-existing categories, we should approach it with receptivity and openness. Embracing its multiple meanings instead of seeking simplistic explanations.

2.3. Inhibition and Surrendering: A Comparison between “Push and Sink in” and “Charge and Throw”

One of the main differences between this proposition and the previous one, ‘Push and Sink In’, is the temporality, and consequently, the way we engage with bodily impulses. In the ‘Charge and Throw’ proposition, instead of delaying or questioning and inhibiting the impulses through resisting time, the aim was to fully follow them, sliding towards them with as little delay as possible. While the ‘push and sink in’ proposition is what prompts one to carefully understand and feel control, ‘charge and throw’ proposition prompts one to abruptly lose control. Through these different approaches one can practice engaging with making choices in a very different temporality and perception.

On the one hand by inhibiting our bodily impulses through the proposition of ‘Pushing and Sinking in’ we expand the potential for conscious choice and hence, mindful movement. “Mindful movement involves a ‘suspension’ of automatization” (Fitch and Rebecca 2024, 1) and is used and known through somatic education, which is a field that consists of movement practices that intentionally incorporate acting mindfully and consciously (Eddy 2016 in Fitch and Rebecca 2024, 3). Even when engaging with improvisational practices one is slowly cultivating habitual patterns.

Over time automatization and overlearning take place, leading to a gradual reduction in conscious awareness. Once a movement pattern becomes overlearned and habitual, it operates mostly on autopilot, only becoming conscious when errors or unexpected results arise. When mindfully practicing movement, this effect is reversed or paused, bringing previously automatic or unnoticed aspects of movement into conscious awareness and allowing for a fresh, focused attention on these details that are typically ignored. (Fitch and Rebecca 2024) Mindfulness is “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience” (Kabat-Zinn 2003, 145). Also, as we explore the situation of only saying ‘Yes’ and only instantly following our bodily impulses through the ‘Charge and Throw’ proposition we come to realize that this inability to refuse can feel like an obligation rather than a choice. “Obligated to say Yes we find ourselves caught in a

relentless cycle where we feel compelled to accept everything that comes our way” (Agulló 2023, 99).

However on the other hand, overanalyzing and hesitating can keep individuals trapped in their comfort zones, limiting their potential for change. In contrast, embracing the unknown allows for greater spontaneity and openness to possibilities. This “suggests that in the absence of overthinking, individuals tap into the boundless potential of their innate creativity and resourcefulness” (Agulló 2023, 100). The more we grew up, the more we were taught to control our immediate responses and unconsciously imitated how the people around us moved or behaved. By the time we reached our teenage years, it was integrated to us that we need to move with intention, focusing on isolating our motions (Whitehouse 1999, 33- 34). “Through the centuries, in the name of progress and civilization, mind and body were split apart...The instinctive body was seen as a threat because it represents the ‘lower,’ animal aspects of human nature” (Chodorow 1999, 267). However, the practice of ‘instantly following’ one’s bodily impulses through the ‘Charge and Throw’ proposition, wishes to get us to the place where we feel comfortable and confident enough to not plan our actions as a way to keep ourselves safe from mistakes, free ourselves from judgment and follow what’s coming as if we are falling towards it. As Whitehouse is saying “work toward the moment when you will have so much trust in your own inner relation to what you see and be willing to be wrong that what you do comes then in the moment and only then” (Whitehouse 1999, 31). Understanding this aspect of the body practice as a state of ‘no inhibitions or restrictions’ can free individuals from the things that hold them back, allowing them to work with the unconscious. “Dance is the most immediate, powerful way to give form to unconscious contents” (Chodorow 1999, 268). Only after something is physically actualized do the dancers partially become consciously aware of what it was.

In certain situations, overthinking can negatively impact the quality of decisions, suggesting that it may be more effective to rely on the unconscious mind and unconscious choice for guidance. For example, Dijksterhuis, a social psychologist, and colleagues believe that people who are distracted from deliberate thinking often perform just as well, and sometimes even better, compared to individuals who thoughtfully consider their choices before making a decision. (e.g., de Vries et al., 2010; Dijksterhuis et al., 2010 found in Ashby, J S, Glöckner and Dickert 2011) They suggest that when

one needs to perform a complicated choice, it is better to avoid interfering with thoughtfully processing the information and weighing the situation but instead trust unconscious thought. Two key beliefs of UTT- which translates to the Unconscious Thought Theory, are “the capacity principle (i.e., unconscious thought (UT) has the capacity to integrate .more information than conscious thought) and the appropriate weighting principle (i.e., UT assigns more appropriate to attributes or cues than conscious thought)” (Ashby, J S, Glöckner and Dickert 2011, 1).

“Improvisation practices raise a curious long-standing question: Do we, as humans, just respond to stimuli, or control our actions and destiny?” (Miyahara and Mirfin-Veitch 2023, 173) Recognizing when to say Yes or when to say No based on personal desires, wishes, inner values and the potential outcomes of our choices, it’s a whole realm on its own. By engaging in honest self-reflection, gaining clarity about what we truly need, and being willing to sit with uncertainty, we’re able to make intentional decisions and navigate the unknown with greater confidence. (Agulló 2023, 98) Having these two perspectives into the body practice in which the one consists of saying ‘Maybe’ towards bodily impulses and consciously deciding when it’s a ‘Yes’ and when it’s a ‘No’ and the other consists of only saying ‘Yes’ to them, is also a way to consider the delicate balance between the intensity of surrendering to bodily desires and the sustainability of delaying them. Through these movement propositions one is practicing decision-making in very different temporality and approach, learning to trust it either way.

3. *TREBUCHET AS PERFORMANCE*

How to put the body practice into a performative setting? What kind of choreographic propositions seem fit? And what is the role of the audience during the performance? In the beginning of the process I have to admit that I was almost scared to ask these questions. Because how to approach compositional elements without ‘cheating’ on the body practice? However, after discussions mainly with both of my supervisors- dance artists Anna- Maria Haakkinen and Maria Saivosalmi- I came to realize that it’s not an either/or choice. As long as we stay faithful to movement research in any performance, and in any compositional framework no matter how specific or how open it is, then the ‘essence’ of the body practice is still to the forefront. In order to compose the choreography, I had two main questions in mind. Firstly, how is the practice asking to be composed? And secondly- on which I will elaborate a bit more about, how to invite the audience to touch with vision following the concept of Haptic Visuality developed by the philosopher and scholar of new media and film Laura U. Marks. For me these guiding questions facilitated the emergence of a choreographic form from an entangled and unstructured state.

I realized how important it was to carefully listen and follow the already existing values and characteristics the body practice held. To amplify through the composition and the atmosphere the already existing aspects of the body practice and hold onto what has been found meaningful and significant for it. Both in terms of the moving performers but also, in terms of the costume, the sound and the light. The body practice became both the material and the method to build the choreography. To give an example for the above, when I started composing the choreography I tried to have for a moment the ‘Push and Sink in’ proposition in a line and it immediately felt that it wasn’t working. Then, while thinking about it, trying to figure out why, it became very clear to me. How could I put a proposition that clearly suggests ‘What if my front is my back’ and plays with multi- directionality, trying to merge counter- forces, in a line? I mean of course I can. Every movement proposition can be applied in any spatial direction. On spot, in a diagonal, close to the rest of the dancers or further, and it can still work and still maintain its values, even though every decision affects differently. However, for me at

that moment it didn't feel organic in a way or to better put it into words I felt that this line was taking more space and attention both from the perspective of spectators and from the dancers. The focus wasn't anymore the movement proposition itself but, the line and its two- dimensionality. Therefore, it was then clear that this proposition but also the 'Charge and Throw' proposition needed a wider landscape to support their characteristics.

In order to create an improvised choreography that would achieve some kind of consistency or coherence the choreography and its 'script' contained both a multiplicity of possibilities and a premeditated structure. It was constructed in a way that even though most of the choreographic material was improvised there were some more specific parts and others with only a few core principles or constraints.



Trebuchet. Photo: Daniel Motola

3.1. Haptic Visuality

Sensation, intensity and affect were the elements that drove the choreography which ended up taking a non- representational and non- linguistic form. The dramaturg of the choreographic work Juti Saari is always asking what are the instructions and the tools we provide the audience to gain information on how to read the performance. Therefore, thinking of that, and in order to invite the audience to 'touch' the work with their vision

and to bodily sense the choreography instead of merely looking at it I had to find a way to trigger first their other senses before the visual part comes into play. While the audience enter the theatre space there is an already existing atmosphere that feels like a suspended 'bubble' due to the light, the haze, the one performer in the middle of the space slowly moving through the 'Push and Sink in' movement proposition and the audience setting that was a podium around the space. After the audience sits on their seats the lights very slowly fade out and the dancer is lost in darkness and smoke. This embodied anticipation that the pre- beginning of the performance suggested is continuing and gradually developing even when the lights are out. While in darkness the one performer continues what she has been doing and the other two performers start to slowly walk- going through the 'Sinking Sand' exercise- from the corners of the studio where they have been standing still when the audience was entering the space, towards the centre of the space. This introductory phase is a tuning into the body practice and the performance both for the performers, the audience and the designers. Through this walking the one of the two performers was dragging with her an air pump and due to the darkness and silence the audience would become overly aware of the sound produced by it and by the performers' bodies and costumes. They were invited to bodily feel the performers since they were almost not able to see them. After they reached the center of the space, one of the three performers began pumping a balloon at an almost meditative tempo. At this moment, in darkness and with the repeated motion of pumping the balloon, the transfer and peak of embodied anticipation takes place.

Kinesthetic empathy and Embodied Anticipation are strongly related (Reason and Reynolds 2010). In this case and in the way the choreography was evolving, kinesthetic responses involved embodied sensations similar to anticipation which are related to the effects of suspense. The audience instinctively and automatically anticipates the explosion of the balloon as a succession to the repeated pumping which can affect their breathing and muscular tension and can be characterized as empathetic and be kinesthetically transmitted. Starting with such an embodied engagement with the choreographic work I want to follow Mark's haptic visibility philosophical concept and suggest a performance that does not merely communicate through visual signs but it's experienced through the whole body, also after the lights fade in and the performers are visible.

Through haptic visuality Marks wants to consider the possibility that vision and touch are not entirely separate senses, but can merge with each other at times, offering a synaesthetic experience so that seeing can take on a tactile quality. In haptic visuality the eyes behave as if they were skin able to feel the sense of touch. With this Marks highlights the interrelation of multiple senses in the act of perceiving in which all the senses are involved. (Marks 2000) Even though she focuses on film and cinema, I believe that it is also relatable in the art of live performance. The optical realm of visuality is usually predominant and considered a more valuable way of perceiving an image, and in this case the performance, but Marks suggests a shift from the optical realm of visuality to the haptic which goes beyond cognition. She offers an embodied approach to visual experience that reconsiders our imitative connection with the world (Marks 2000), shifting the relationship between the viewer and the image from a subject- object hierarchical relationship to one of mutuality. Instead of objectifying and separating from the self what is seen, haptic visuality invites a sense of openness towards the image in which one can both affect and be affected. This idea strongly resonates with Merleau-Ponty's approach that frames perception through the sense of touch instead of sight suggesting being engaged with the world in an embodied manner. In the context of the performance of *Trebuchet* the choreography wishes to bring the viewer closer to the happenings and bodily move them than offering images that one can cognitively understand transforming seeing into sensing. Therefore, haptic visuality requires a viewer that is actively engaged in the present moment, "Seeing with the whole body" (Grotenfelt 2022, 30) rather than just with the eyes.

The dim light, the smoke and the focus on the materiality of the movement suggests turning the attention towards the texture of the viewed rather than the symbolization of it. It's a choreography that doesn't focus on the surface or the outlines of the image but it goes deeper into the materiality of it. Detailed images can drive the viewer to look closer and hence, get in touch with the texture of the subject/ object as much as the image that it produces (Marks 2000). To go a bit further with the performance when the lights slowly fade in the performers start moving going through the 'Push and Sink in' proposition. A proposition that suggests focusing on overlooked details as mentioned in the 'Pushing and Sinking in' section. This attention and awareness of detail relate not only to how the performers approach movement and their environment but also, to how the audience receives information. The audience is invited to notice the subtle shifts and

changes that occur over a stretched timeline, encouraging a deeper engagement with what initially is perceived as a viewed image toward a more tactile, haptic experience. Another way to approach haptic visuality is by gradually uncovering what an image is or how it functions, rather than immediately being able to recognize it and having the tools to read it (Marks 2020). This mode of engagement is similarly reflected in the performance of *Trebuchet*, where the viewer is initially unable to determine the nature of what is being presented or the dynamics unfolding within the piece. Instead, time is needed to begin unraveling the means of access, to follow the happenings and, perhaps gradually, to form associations or develop a felt sense of what is being seen. However, one is interpreting the material not in a representational way but, in a sensational and hence haptic way.

In the same way as by superimposing the fabric's folds, one begins to see with a sensitivity that feels like touching (Morris 2010, 8) since the focus shifts on the texture of the fabric rather than its form, superimposing the materiality of the movement and the bodily texture rather than the representation of an image, can lead the audience towards what I refer here as haptic visuality. This kind of attention is extremely interrelated to affect theory. How I see it haptic visuality cannot escape affect theory and the potency for affective choreography.

3.3. Affect Theory

Aiming for affective choreographies to me translates as aiming for choreographic works that resonate first and foremost to the body of the spectators prior to creating a meaning that relies to the mental capacities of the audience. "Shifting from a language based understanding to a bodily sensation-based transfer" (Ingvartsen 2007). I'm mostly drawing from Canadian philosopher and social theorist Massumi's perspective on affect theory in which he sees affect as an autonomous intensity taking place on the body and more specifically on the skin of the body (Massumi 1995, 85). This intensity is not necessarily bound to the consciousness of oneself but, is happening in the unconscious or otherwise pre-conscious, before something becomes graspable and cognitively understandable. It's a pure potentiality. It's not yet formed or structured, and is not yet attached to a narrative explanation of what it actually is or how it feels. (Shouse 2005) As human bodies we are exposed to a variety of different stimuli that are registered as

intensity. This intensity finds itself in- between perception and action. The moment after we are exposed to something and before is actualized in consciousness. This intensity is what Massumi refers to as affect. Affect in this context is not yet labeled as an already known and recognizable emotion or feeling (Ingvarsen 2007). After this intensity becomes conscious- if it does- it instantly enters the realm of language where is qualified as emotion. This relation between intensity- the not yet nameable sensation- and qualification- how we describe or label that sensation isn't always in sync as direct translation. Instead, they affect each other in more complex ways, holding the possibility to intensify the effect of one another or weaken it. Thus, this transition between affect and emotion is one that interrupts the status quo to "register a state actually re-register an already felt state [since] for the skin is faster than the word". (Massumi 1995, 86)

3.3.1. The missing half- second

One of the most intriguing parts for me in relation to affect theory and *Trebuchet* body practice and performance is "the mystery of the missing half- second" (Massumi 1995, 89). In the *Autonomy of Affect* (1995) Massumi lays down some scientific experiments that were performed and amplified affect theory as he describes it. Through one of the experiments, he came to realize the gap between a triggered sensation on the skin until it becomes a felt sensation. The transfer from the unconscious experience to the conscious. This half a second is the shortest amount of time the brain needs to notice it after it bodily occurs. Even when brain and skin are stimulated at the same time the skin still overcomes the brain and one notices it as if it comes first from the skin. The body is completely open and exposed to its surroundings, taking in sensations faster than we can consciously notice them. Another experiment indicated the gap between brain activity and us becoming consciously aware of it. Hence, the delay between the body starting an action and us becoming aware of it and actively expressing it. (Massumi 1995, 89- 90)

On the one hand, this missing half- second to me strongly relates to the 'Charge and Throw' proposition and how it's experienced by the performers. Particularly, the idea of instantly acting upon bodily impulses without questioning them and following their 'nowness' which as mentioned in the 'Charge and Throw' section of this written part

was translated as doing before one realizes that is about to do something. The last part of the performance consists of the ‘Charge and Throw’ proposition in which the performers are spread out around the space abruptly shifting and changing between charging and throwing oneself into movement and with movement based on their own desires. There is a constant travelling between unconscious bodily choice and action and conscious thought where one is already expressing movement before they realize in thought the decision. This in a way represents the way Massumi understands affect, as a bodily reaction or a sudden rush of intensity which occurs before we become fully aware of it or are able to express it in words. As an experience that is firstly shaped by sensation and later on by language and meaning.

3.3.2. Kinaesthetic transference

Another essential connection between affect theory and *Trebuchet* performance is my interest on transferring the choreographic work first to the bodies of the spectators before it becomes cognitively interpreted, which is also an idea extremely related to the section of ‘Haptic Visuality’. Choreographer Ingri Midgard Fiksdal while focusing on the audience’s embodied cognition, how their sensory and motor systems contribute to their perception and understanding of the performance, she developed certain choreographic principles that inherently hold the potential for affect to occur (Fiksdal, 2022). I will further discuss one of them - Kinaesthetic transference - that I find relatable in the case of *Trebuchet*. Kinaesthetic transference as both a physical and affective phenomenon, suggests that a viewer may somatically register and feel a performer’s movement within her own body, despite being seated. This capacity arises from the understanding that spectators possess embodied, kinaesthetic awareness. The act of observing, listening, and empathizing with the performer’s movement is not solely visual but also a corporeal experience. Even though the potential for kinaesthetic transference exists in all choreographies that consist bodily movement it seems to be more effective both through quotidian movements as they are instantly recognizable and the audience already holds a sort of kinaesthetic access to them, and through repetition. (Fiksdal 2022, 35) *Trebuchet* performance works a lot with repetition as a tool to intensify the bodily responses of the audience. The movement propositions are introduced and then sustained and repeated over an extended duration, providing the audience enough time to perceive its nuances and gradually attune themselves to it.

Extended repetition creates a temporal space in which the audience can shift from passive observation to active sensory engagement, allowing embodied perception to emerge. These “kinaesthetically tingling features” (Grotenfelt 2022, 31) invite the audience to focus more on how something feels like rather than what it means through language.

CONCLUSION

Writing the conclusion, both as a conclusion for the reader but also, as a conclusion toward the process of this written component, has been one of the chapters I've most avoided. As I reflect on this hesitation and try to understand the source of my anxiety, I realize it mirrors a similar feeling I experienced with the performance of *Trebuchet*. Both the conclusion of this written work and the performance, which served as the conclusion of the artistic process, function as a kind of ending, marking the closure of a journey, the final stage of a process, or the end result. Because of this, both inherit a sense of expectation, as if reaching these points is akin to reaching the top of a pyramid, reflecting on the power dynamic between a question and its answer. One could say that the conclusion and the performance act as answers to a question. However, I didn't approach the performance in that way; instead, I aimed to emphasize its quality as ongoing research, highlighting its potential rather than presenting it as a final statement. In the same spirit, I will not treat the conclusion of the written component as a definitive ending either.

When I began writing, there were things I already knew I wanted to explore, others that emerged throughout the process, and some I initially expected to spend more time with but didn't, as new threads began to unfold. My initial aim was, as I stated at the very beginning, to figure out, reflect on, and gain a deeper understanding of the body practice of *Trebuchet*, the methodology I was working with during the artistic part of the thesis, which eventually transformed into the performance.

At the start of the writing process, I focused on writing in a fluid way, without worrying about structure, titles, or subtitles, simply following what arose, or perhaps more accurately, what felt important to express in the aftermath of *Trebuchet*. Now, as I write this, it's becoming clear to me- firstly, how closely interrelated the working methods have been in both this written component and the performance; and secondly, how writing itself allows connections to surface, often appearing almost by accident, rather than through deliberate searching.

The titles and subtitles in the written part became a helpful way for me to later connect ideas from different aspects of the body practice, whether in terms of its content or its

approach to working and collaborating. Through the writing process, I began to understand more clearly what I mean by the notion of *body practice* and why I find it essential to continue working in this way, actively shaping perception through the body. I also began to reflect on the role of the *problem* in my practice: how it functions as a generator of movement and choreography, and how I relate to the gap between the embodied practice and the surrounding theoretical or conceptual frameworks.

As the content of the *Trebuchet* body practice unfolded, the importance of the relationship between the inner and outer landscapes- the body and its surroundings- became increasingly clear. Alongside this, the idea of *multi-directionality* emerged, especially in how I engage with conflicting forces in a non-binary way. This includes embracing disorientation and uncontrollability, and moving fluidly between initiating and receiving, following or giving in to information, as a kind of commentary on the tension between the notions of an active doer and a passive receptor. Another significant aspect that surfaced was the question of how to act upon bodily impulses, and how different temporalities influence the choices made within the practice.

The overall thesis process- through both the writing and the artistic components- has been deeply significant for my personal artistic development, shaping my interests and understanding of choreography and practice in ways that will undoubtedly influence my future working processes. As Benaster signifies a constant circularity between ends and beginnings making sure that the process remains open-ended and without a definitive conclusion (Agulló 2023, 12) I approach this conclusion not as a closure, but as a continuation, an interlude within an ongoing movement of inquiry, reflection, and transformation.

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