

# Exploring the Performative Potential of Hands in the Context of Dance and Performance

Thinking – Making Through Hands

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*Hands Series - Untitled*  
Abidin Dino, 1984

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<p>My primary research quest is rooted in the search for meaningful connections in between the moving body, the thinking mind, and the speaking mouth. As part of the performing body, the <i>hand</i> opens a threshold between movement, thought and language, inviting the performer to explore its potentials and beyond. In this thesis, I trace and explore the hand within the context of dance and performance, focusing on hand's creative and performative presence.</p> <p>In the first chapter, I begin by warming up the reader to the world of hands through a movement score and a reflective text that shares why I am drawn to this topic. I then expand the perspective through Antonin Artaud's notions on the intersections of body, thought, language, and movement, and reflect on how these ideas resonate with my artistic thinking and making. This chapter also includes reflections on Asian traditional dances, where ritual, theatre, and dance merge, offering a deeper understanding of the hand's symbolic and expressive roles.</p> <p>The second chapter brings together brief analyses of selected films, dance pieces, and performances. I share my observations and reflections on the performative use of the hand; how it appears, how it is approached through different perspectives, and how these instances relate to my own practice and understanding of performative hand.</p> <p>The third chapter shifts into my personal artistic journey. Here, I focus on my solo performance project <i>A Handmade Red Collage (2023)</i> developed during my master's studies. Themes such as the autonomy of the hand, its relation to objects, gestures, micro-gestures, semi-gestures, suspension, in-betweenness, expression and de-expression, the transformation of idioms into movement, thinking-making, bridging text, hands and language form the core of this chapter.</p> <p>In the fourth chapter, I introduce <i>HANDBOOK</i>, a collection of movement scores I have created throughout my artistic process, centered on the performative use of the hand. Throughout the thesis, I refer to specific scores from this guide, highlighting relevant sections that the reader can look at, try out, and engage with.</p> <p>In the fifth and final chapter, I share an afterword as a personal closing to the journey.</p> <p>The aim of this thesis is to deepen our understanding of the expressive and creative presence of the hand in the context of dance and performance. Alongside <i>HANDBOOK</i>, I hope it can serve as an inspiration for performers and others curious about bodily experimentation, especially through the powerful and playfull potentials of the hands.</p>	
<b>KEYWORDS</b> dance, performance, theatre, film, performing arts, hands, performative hands, movement, gestures, language, text, body, limbs, score, movement score, creative scores, Antonin Artaud, Asian dances, thinking-making, alienation, poetics, objects, metaphors, experimental	

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# 1. INTRODUCING THE HAND AND ITS BEYOND

In this first chapter, I invite you to engage in a brief somatic exercise, gently awakening your body's presence as you begin this reading journey. I then share the background of my personal interests that led me to this research. From there, we will move into a broader discussion on the relationship between body and thought, explored through the perspective of artist and theorist Antonin Artaud. The chapter closes with a brief glimpse into selected Asian dance styles.

## 1.1 An Invitation

**Dear reader,**

Before you begin diving into my thesis, I would like to guide you through a simple task.

I imagine you are sitting somewhere, perhaps on a couch or a chair, maybe alone in your room or in a noisy, crowded house, or outside. Wherever you are, please don't change your environment. Keep your posture and your breathing rhythm just as they are. Keep your hands wherever they currently rest.

Now, I invite you to bring your focus to your hands, whatever *focus* means to you.

Maybe you look at them. Notice how they are positioned.

Maybe you simply feel their weight, the warmth of your palms.

You might close your eyes and visualize how your hands would look from the outside.

However it makes sense to you, let your attention settle there.

Then, gently place your hands somewhere on your body.

Perhaps one rests on your shoulder,

while the other sits on your lap.

Stay there.

Let your hands sink into the surfaces they touch.

With each breath, imagine your hands expanding and softening, settling into the surface, bonding with it.

You may repeat this a few more times,

choosing different surfaces on your body for your hands to land on.

Take your time.  
Then, whenever you're ready,  
you may return to the text,  
and continue reading,  
now with your hands as your companions.

## 1.2 From Curiosity to Practice: Tracing the Performative Hand

My interest in hands as a dancer, performer and maker began early. I first noticed this interest as an audience member. I have always been drawn to watching the performer's hands, whether in a dance piece, theater or any other type of performance. I find myself trying to figure out what the hands are expressing apart from the rest of the body. This intrigued reflection deepened when I would get distracted during a performance; I would instinctively focus on the performers' hand movements. Sometimes simply staring at them, other times analyzing and interpreting their movement patterns. Alongside this, I became captivated by the movement of smaller body parts, observed in isolation from the overall structure.

During my undergraduate education in Performing Arts at Istanbul Bilgi University, I realized that the curiosity I had as an audience member toward hands also began to emerge in my identity as a performer. As my studies progressed, I started to shift my focus in many classes toward the performative use of hands. I found myself thinking both physically and intellectually about limb awareness in motion, bodily integrity, and modes of expression. I became particularly drawn to the tangible aspects and physical characteristics of authentic hand movements; the unique nuances, gestures, and expressions that emerge through individual's use of their hands. This raised questions for me around authenticity: What makes a movement authentic? What is the materiality of the original? In trying to understand the corporeality of unique limbs, I began to think about how we perceive and respond to such specificity. Throughout this process, I developed artistic experiments, demonstrations, and performance works, either directly or indirectly focused on the performative use of the hand.

Similarly, during my master's studies in Dance Performance at the University of the Arts Helsinki, I continued to explore the role of the hands within the context of dance. I often worked with elements such as language, text and expressive tools that blurred the

boundaries between dance and theatre. Especially some of the workshops facilitated by the artists such as Mikko Niemistö, Elina Pirinen, Karolina Ginman and Maria Saivosalmi where I followed glimpses of the potential in what the hands can lead has been fruitful for me to spice up my artistic thinking and making.

I also received valuable input from Maija Hirvanen and Hanna Ahti, who accompanied me through the process of my first year solo artistic project.

In this thesis, I explore the movement of the hands within the context of dance, focusing on their creative and performative potential. Before diving into the hands in detail, I first examine the body, drawing on artist Antonin Artaud's perspective that highlights the profound connections between body, mind and language. This whole-part dynamic is essential to my approach; by shifting our attention to the broader body first, we establish a foundation for engaging with the hand in a more detailed, layered, and experimental way. From this point, I will introduce a reference to researcher Jukka O. Miettinen and proceed with a brief exploration of East Asia, where ritual, theatre, and dance are fused. I will specifically point out how this fusion is performatively articulated through hand movements.

The second chapter of the thesis will offer brief analyses of selected films, dance works, and performance pieces, presenting my observations and reflections on the performative use of the hand and examining how it is utilized, with which tools, and from which perspectives.

In the third chapter, following these evaluations, I will present my own artistic perspective, focusing on my solo performance project developed during my master's studies. I will reflect on the performative use of the hand through the lens of my creative process.

In the fourth chapter, I will share a portion of the guide I have created throughout my artistic process, which centers on the performative use of the hand. This guide may serve as a creative resource for performers and others interested in exploring performative experimentation with bodily limbs. Throughout the thesis, I will refer to specific scores from this guide, pointing out relevant sections where the reader can look at, try out, or engage with them. In this way, I hope to offer a bodily experience that complements the intellectual journey of the reader.

In the fifth chapter, I share an afterword as a personal closing of this journey.

I wish you an inspiring and enjoyable reading experience.

### 1.3 An Artaudian Approach to Body, Thought, Language and Movement

Antonin Artaud (1896 – 1948), a theorist and an artist; actor, director, playwright, poet and painter, is one of the most influential figures for me in terms of understanding the experimentation with body, language and movement. Even though Artaud's artistic presence in practice wasn't heavily marked in history and was mostly highlighted through his manifestos and theoretical contributions to surrealist and avant-garde theater, I find that the "tone" in his writings, scripts, and manifestos is, in itself, a form of art in practice. Therefore, while the notion of the body and mind, their interconnectedness and separation, is central to Artaud's writings and thoughts, my focus here is not to analyze what he conveys or argues from a philosophical standpoint. Instead, I approach it from the perspective of my own artistic identity, drawing interpretations based on his tone of artistic expression. This is not an attempt to dissect Artaud's philosophy on the body-mind relationship, but rather an exercise in meaning-making to shed light on my own artistic practice.

It all starts with pain. In the preface of *Suç Ortakları ve İşkenceler* (Accomplices and Tortures), Ahmet Soysal suggests that pain manifests both in thought and in the body within Artaud's world. We constantly revolve around Artaud's experience of pain, which affects both his intellectual and physical self. Soysal compares Artaud's writing to a battlefield where the body itself becomes an active participant (Artaud & Soysal 1992, 7). For me, this can be seen as an extension of the dynamism and action embedded in Artaud's writings, which extend to the body itself. However, this experience is always marked by an inability to think and act, an ongoing struggle between the mind and body that is both physically and intellectually stifling.

I believe, this state evokes a constant sense of incompleteness, an unfinished condition, an uncertainty about what should come next. It does not feel like full surrender but rather a state of being in the process of surrendering, something unresolved yet still active. Like a transparent, invisible surrender in the body and mind. I think the following quote from one of his letters sent to Jacques Riviere can reveal the state of mind that he has.

***“There is something which destroys my thought; something which does not prevent me from being what I might be, but which leaves me, so to speak, in suspension.” (Sontag 1988, 35)***

Following this, I perceive suspension as a potential that holds the world within it. It holds actively, not to preserve or contain, but to be ready to release what it holds when the moment arrives. The following quote from philosopher Erin Manning beautifully articulates the generative potential of suspension:

*“All of a sudden, a lingering. And so we are reminded that the suspension is everywhere speciously present, speculatively active at different velocities, notionally in different registers, relationally across every modality of experience. A lingering, a suspension of isolatable movement form, a suspension of language, as designation or narration, and also a suspension, within movement- moving, of its human characters, tuning to their elemental qualities, gesturing to dance’s capacity to hold dissonant times together in movement.”* (Manning & Massumi 2014, 57)

According to Artaud, the constructed organic body, language, and society; everything that is "established" is inherently corrupt. Among these, the “body” is one of his most intensely examined components. Artaud sees the body as unhealthy due to its weaknesses. However, he also argues that the body is not limited to its constructed form; it holds unused potentials, forces waiting to be discovered and experienced. The idea of a different or new body became an obsession for Artaud (Artaud & Soysal 1992, 7). I believe, this potential to create a new body, maybe which will transform the “pain” into something else can be the source of “*metaphysics of action*” that he suggests in *The Theater and Its Double* (Artaud 1958, 37). The key is making metaphysics out of language, gesture and attitudes by creating contact with time and movement. Albert Bermel highlights that for Artaud, metaphysical language composed of gestures, signs, postures, stage designs, objects, movements, and a vocal style made up of word-sounds and other noises, forming a kind of incantation can lead us back to the “*religious and mystic preference*” that western scene has already lost (Bermel 2008, 13). This incantation has the potential to bring action into language, has the potential to move it.

We can also see the similar potential of language in writer and critic Martin Esslin’s writings. Esslin mentions in his book *Artaud* that; from Artaud’s perspective, the poet’s emotions must be conveyed down to the physical level of bodily sensations. The poem becomes a means of transmitting his emotions, his physical suffering, exaltation, directly to the minds and bodies of others.

To achieve this kind of body-to-body communication, he believed that language, the verbal plane, needed to be “smashed.” Esslin describes this state with a powerful expression, referring to it as “*physically embodied poetry*” (Esslin 1999, 70).

I believe that the perspectives mentioned above form the basis of Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty, which opens a doorway from the pit of passive thought toward the artistic and performative possibilities of the active body. I interpret Artaud’s Theater of Cruelty as one of the most leading approaches that brings experimentation in theater, opening a space for movement in theater, for me creating a bridge between theater, literature and dance.

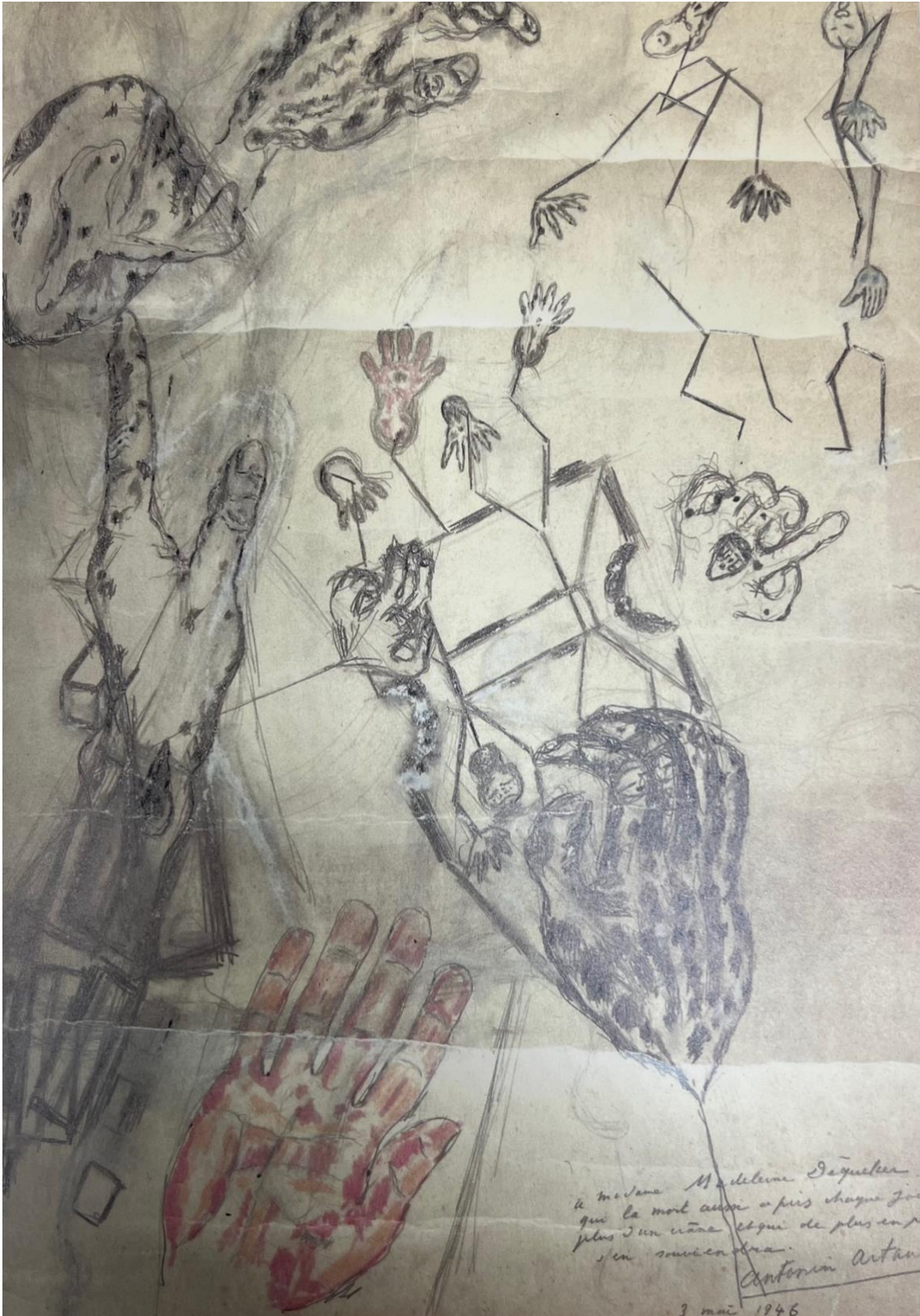
When we think about Theater of Cruelty, the first image that may come to mind is a staging filled with blood and violence. However, Artaud’s use of the term “cruelty” refers more to metaphorical understanding of violence. Intense, daring, staggering form of performance.

When he explains in his manifesto “*No more Masterpieces*”, he states that:

***“We are not free. And the sky can still fall on our heads. And the theater has been created to teach us, first of all, that.” (Artaud 1958, 79)***

While I do not argue that the purpose of art is to “teach”, I do agree that it serves to “remind.” Societies accustomed to the brightness and vastness of the sky, the privileged and the “fortunate”, must be reminded that they, too, can be crushed beneath that sky at any moment. Artaud’s sky metaphor in the “No more Masterpieces” (Artaud 1958, 79) perfectly encapsulates this idea of to remind as a political act of art.

Overall, the potential that language, body, and mind hold as articulated in Artaud’s world, has become one of the most significant sources of inspiration in my artistic work. Throughout my artistic process, a part of me has been in search of how Artaud’s writings might be embodied through the movement. The idea of creating a new kind of language “*half-way between gesture and thought*” (Artaud 1958, 83) along with the notion of suspension and in-betweenness between thought and action, has been particularly mesmerizing for me. These concepts led me to experiment such states through movement, with a particular focus on the hands. Over time, this exploration gradually evolved into a search for gestures and movements that are semi-formed, unfinished, or in-between, an inquiry I will further elaborate on in the third chapter of this thesis.



Earth's Bodies (Les Corps de terre), 1946  
 Artist: Antonin Artaud

## 1.4 The Poetics of Gesture in Asian Dance

The Balinese theater, which brings theater closer to dance and shifts narration from plain text to physicality, was a great source of inspiration for Artaud. This is because, unlike Western theater, Balinese theater embodies a more archaic and spiritual preverbal state. It is a form that chooses movement, dance, gestures, facial expressions, and music as its primary medium instead of words. Its fundamental component is not language but signs. The narrative does not unfold through conflicts of events or emotions or their branching complexities; rather, it develops through states of mind, which manifest and unravel through gestures and expressions (Artaud 1958, 53).

What Artaud finds fascinating is the self-propelling, restless movement of the eyes, the subtle curling of the lips, the neck gliding smoothly over the shoulders like oil, the micro-muscular movements of the face and hands, the ever-changing gestures of the fingers, and the fluidity of the wrist which all meticulously crafted and embedded into the body with precision. He describes the resulting structure of this craftsmanship as a form of "*spiritual architecture*" linking it not only to gesture and movement but also to the explosive power of rhythm, the finely woven musicality, and the fused harmony. (Artaud 1958, 55)

When we consider the perspective of the performer and performativity in Balinese theater, Artaud describes the precise structure of performance and the way performers detach from their personal identities to reach a heightened state of focus and state of mind as "*systematic depersonalization*" (Artaud 1958, 58). Performers who have undergone depersonalization engage in a more metaphysical state and performativity. In this sense, one could see this as a remnant, or an echo of the ceremonial essence and trance rituals deeply embedded in the roots of Eastern theater and dance.

Jukka O. Miettinen who is an expert researcher on Asian dance and theater traditions, has gathered precious information on Balinese dance and theater in his academic publications. What Artaud highlights as "*systematic depersonalization*" can be also found in a similar perspective in Miettinen's writings. Miettinen states that "***...the performer often tries to "weep out" his or her personality by, for example, fasting and meditating. The performer is often expected not to act the role of the god, spirit or mythological character, but rather to receive it to be able to serve as its embodiment (Miettinen, 2018).***"

I would like to highlight some specific dance styles in the light of Miettinen's writings which give us precious information about hands role in Asian theater and dance.

*Mudra* is an example of theatrical expression style based on symbolic hand gestures, which has mainly evolved from rituals. Mudra's sources are characteristic of Indian dance. It is assumed that they are developed from the ancient *Veda* ritual. As an audience, when I see those hand gestures being performed, a kind of fascination occurs which I think the reason lays down under both the performers skillful and precise craft as well as the archaic and ritualistic traces in the movements.

Another significant Indian dance style, *Abhinaya*, which means "*bringing the thing to the audience*," plays a crucial role in combining body language, hand gestures, facial expressions, and, specifically, the eyes. In *Abhinaya*, physical storytelling unfolds like a chain, where the eyes initiate the action and direct the gaze toward the hand movements. Meanwhile, the performer's facial expressions reveal the deeper meaning of the gestures. As Miettinen notes, the eyes, gaze, and face in general possess the power to impart various meanings and emphasize the hands and gestures (Miettinen 2018).

This connection is beautifully captured in the well-known dictum:

***"Where the hand goes, the eyes follow.***

***Where the eyes go, there the mood follows.***

***Where the mind goes, there arises the sentiment."***

As highlighted in *Abhinaya*, I find the connection between one's own gaze and gestures particularly resourceful in dance. This interplay between the eyes and the hands can be remarkably generative, offering the performer a rich space to explore and experiment with multiple possibilities. Inspired by the dictum, I developed a movement score that explores the potentials of one's own gaze and its dynamic relationship with hand gestures.

Please, see Chapter 4: *HANDBOOK*, Score 4, page 33.



Balinese Brahman priest performing tantric mudras  
Photographer: Jorden Runt, 1929

## 2. HANDS IN FOCUS: THE PERFORMATIVE PRESENCE OF HANDS IN DANCE, FILM AND PERFORMANCE

This chapter presents a selection of works from the performing arts in which the hand plays a central and multifaceted role. Each example offers a distinct perspective on how hands perform, signify, and extend meaning. We begin with an early surrealist short film, *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) where hands serve as threshold between reality and surreality, and act as powerful metaphor. From there, we shift to *Hand Movie* (1966), a short performance film that draws attention to the smallest movements of the hand. This is followed by the contemporary dance piece *Zero Degrees* (2005), where hands function in relation to language and spoken text. The chapter concludes with *Hands Made* (2024) a recent participatory performance that invites us to reflect on the hand's role in shared experience.

### 2.1 Un Chien Andalou

Recognized as a groundbreaking piece of surrealist cinema, *Un Chien Andalou* (*An Andalusian Dog*) (Buñuel & Dalí 1929) is a French silent short film directed by Luis Buñuel and co-written by Salvador Dalí. The film operates on dreamlike logic, echoing Freud's theory of free association, as its disjointed scenes unfold. There are abrupt changes in time, place and action. Time flows unpredictably, leaping from one time to another with no clear transition in events or characters.

According to Buñuel, the short film emerges from the fusion of two dreams: Dalí's vision of a hand covered in ants and Buñuel's own dream of a cloud slicing the moon in half. Through these two images, they decided to construct a film that defied any rational or cultural interpretation (*Un Chien Andalou (1929) and Surrealist Cinema* June 2023). However, the film is not a representation of a dream rather it contains the dynamics of a dream. There is no cause-and-effect logic that the audience can follow, instead there are many visual juxtapositions and associations which go over causation; series of dissolves happening graphically and visually rather than logically.

Despite the film's anti-narrative approach, I believe the seemingly random appearances of "hand" scenes guide the otherwise absent storyline. The first instance shows a man observing his own hand intently, yet his gaze suggests he perceives it not as a part of his own body but as something foreign, an unfamiliar "thing". Even before the camera reveals the palm, we sense that something uncanny lurks within. This moment conveys a sense of alienation from one's own body, particularly from one's own hand. When the camera finally reveals the palm, we see it transformed into an ant nest, swarming with dozens of ants. This imagery appears to metaphorically represent an ominous, sinister transformation. Immediately after this, we witness the male character engaging in disturbing and transgressive actions. Later, in a disconnected shift of time and space, a severed hand appears in the middle of the street. A chaotic crowd gathers around, trying to make sense of its presence, until a woman picks it up and locks it inside a box.



Bunuel & Dali, *Un Chien Andalou*, 1929  
(Screenshots taken at minutes 4:51, 5:35, 7:03, 11:24)

In both scenes, the hand is stripped of its anatomical and physiological functions and is recontextualized in a surreal concept as a metaphorical element. The film presents the hand not merely as a bodily extension but as a symbolic subject that shapes its fragmented narrative.

I developed a score, inspired by the ant scene and the performative potential that it opens. Please see Chapter 4: *HANDBOOK*, score 7, page 36.

## 2.2 Hand Movie

Rainer's first film, *Hand Movie (1966)*, was shot by fellow Judson artist William Davis. It is known that the film was made while Yvonne was confined to a hospital bed, recovering from surgery (Bukhari 2017). This short film focuses entirely on her hand, set against a plain grey background, as it moves through a series of subtle gestures and small movements.

At the beginning of the film, we see only a hand performing micro-movements. However, as these small movements repeat over time, the agile and flexible motions of all the joints in the fingers become more pronounced. Despite the repetition, the fingers move differently each time; curling, overlapping, sometimes rubbing against each other, giving the impression that they are conducting a choreography. This gradual shift causes us to slowly become alienated from the hand. In my view, this subtle and gradual alienation which does not feel unsettling or uncanny but rather mild, stems from three main reasons.

Firstly, we do not know the context in which this hand appears (assuming we are unaware of the conditions in which the film was shot). Whose hand, is this? From what angle is it filmed? What position is this person in? What posture is their body maintaining while the hand moves? In what kind of space or setting is this movement taking place? All these unknowns create a certain distance from the hand while simultaneously sparking curiosity.

Secondly, the hand does not attempt to communicate with us using familiar, universal gestures, signs or symbols. The micro-movements form a visual flow that cannot be immediately interpreted through the common mind. This unfamiliarity contributes to a sense of “strangeness” in the scene. As I watch this rapid, precise, and spontaneous movement, I find myself thinking, “If a hand were not an externally visible limb but rather an internal organ like a heart, it might move in this way.”

Thirdly, the way the fingers sometimes move together, and other times act independently, detached from the whole, makes me reflect on the part-whole relationship within limbs. The fact that different sections of the hand move autonomously, separate from the body's overall integrity, creates a sense of estrangement from both the hand itself and the body as a whole.

In chapter 3, on page 23, I elaborate on this perspective while discussing my research on hands and my solo project, using the phrase: "Body as whole, limbs as separate isles." I share my thoughts and experiments on the movements of limbs as independent fragments detached from the body. I see a similar phenomenon in *Hand Movie*. There are moments when the eye perceives the moving limb as disconnected from the body or the part to which it belongs, experiencing it as an autonomous entity, almost as if those pieces were another living being or thing.

Unlike in *Un Chien Andalou*, where an ant colony suddenly appears in a palm, here the hand continues to perform actions that are naturally possible for it. It remains anchored in its organic function, preserving its presence as a limb. That is why I believe that in this film, the hand creates a mild and gradual sense of alienation rather than evoking an eerie feeling of complete "otherness" as throughout the film, it retains its materiality and presence as a hand, an organ and a limb.



Yvonne Rainer, *Hand Movie*, 1966.  
Image: MoMA Collection

## 2.3 Zero Degrees

Now, we shift our focus from Rainer's micro hand movements to the role of hands in early 2000's contemporary dance, where macro-gestures of the hands primarily serve as conveyors of emotion within narrative frameworks.

*Zero Degrees* (2005), created and performed by Akram Khan and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, invites the audience to reflect on questions of identity and boundaries; ranging from national borders to the threshold between life and death. The theme of in-betweenness permeates every aspect of the work.

In the brief 2:45 minute opening scene, we see two performers sitting side by side at the edge of the stage. They quickly recount a journey in which Khan's passport is withheld at the Bangladesh-India border, gradually making us reflect on his loss of identity as the passport slips from his hands. In this scene, performers primarily convey the narrative through their hands, while the rest of their bodies remain relatively still. Both performers speak in perfect unison, delivering the text in synchrony. Their synchronization goes beyond just the words, extending to the choreographed gestures that perfectly align with the rhythm, pauses, punctuation, volume, tone, and even filler expressions such as "hmm," "well," and "ah." This precision of hand choreography and its integration with storytelling reminded me of the roots of Abhinaya, the Indian dance style I mentioned in the previous chapter, as well as the precise hand symbols, mudras. Similarly, writer Sabine Sörgel also sees these gestures and the focus on hands as contemporary mudras, used to convey thought and reflection (Sörgel 2015, 173).

This precise synchronicity creates the impression of a shared consciousness, where the audience does not witness a dialogue between two individuals, but rather the expression of a single internal voice delivered through two bodies. I think, the narrative, created through the extraordinary synchronization of the two bodies and the surprisingly intricate delivery of the text, forms a space where the hands are not merely gesturing to accompany the words, as if translating the story, but also, and more importantly, become essential carriers of subtext and emotion. Even though the text is delivered at a rapid pace and requires intense focus to follow the choreography, the relationship between hands and speech opens a space for connotations and layered meanings to emerge.



Zero Degrees (2005) Company: Akram Khan Company & Les Ballets C de la B.  
Image: Marquee TV

## 2.4 Hands Made

*Hands Made* (2024) is a recent artistic work conceptualized and directed by choreographer Begüm Erciyas, placing hands at its center.

In this performance, the primary component is participants' own hands. The setting consists of seats placed next to each other and a flat surface in front of them, where participants are expected to place their hands. The design ensures that two people share a surface, but at any given time, only one of their hands is visible on it, while the rest of their body remains in darkness. Throughout the performance, a guiding voice leads participants through various instructions, descriptions, questions, and tasks. The voice emphasizes: “What will happen is decided by your hands.”

First, I would like to point out how the participatory element functions in the piece, based on my experience of observing it through video documentation. Here, each hand becomes an artwork in itself; unique, observable on its own, in pairs, or as part of a larger collective. The guiding voice acts as a facilitator; supporting the participants instead of directing them. This positioning transforms each participant into a director, performer and observer simultaneously. The voice guides the hands by drawing awareness to their presence, gently preparing them for a journey. It prompts reflection on their anatomical and physiological structure, their appearance, how they feel in that moment, the

sensations on the skin, their volume and size, simple yet effective observations that help cultivate focus and awareness. I believe this also brings warmth and energy into the hands. Similarly, in my own research, I experiment with different ways of directing awareness to the hands, and I find that the beginning of *Hands Made* establishes a somatic foundation and an almost meditative entry point, an effective method for guiding attention to the hands. There is also a seamless transition from this gentle, somatic focus to a more direct, concrete, and expressive mode of thinking and moving as the performance progresses.

After focusing on the hands, the voice guides participants to move their hands through minimal and simple daily gestures that symbolize actions and objects. Later, participants who share the same desk are asked to copy each other's movements. Then, the voice instructs participants to work with an imaginary object, giving simple and clear directions on how to engage with it. This emphasizes the hands as "working hands", performing a given labor, which opens a critical space to reflect on the socio-political role of hands. At this point, I would like to guide you to chapter 3, page 24, where I discuss the relationship between hands and objects, along with one of my movement scores that explores absent and present objects in relation to the hands.

Next, the voice gently introduces one hand to the other through touch, after both hands have been warmed up using previous tools. This creates a smooth and natural transition into an intimate layer.

Finally, another layer emerges: the sensorial experience, the vibration that comes from surfaces. This highlights a trans-sensory, cross-sensational experience. There's also a creative and experimental suggestion that the fingertips can "hear" the sound through the platform, attributing unconventional senses to the limbs.

Overall, this entire journey creates a gradual experience in which the hands are "sharing presence." Two hands, belonging to different individuals, begin to feel as though they are part of a shared consciousness, listening and remembering together. As much as they are individual, they are equally collective.



*Hands Made (2024), Concept and Direction: Begüm Erciyas  
Photographer: Dirk Rose*

### 3. REFLECTIONS ON *A HANDMADE RED COLLAGE*

In this chapter, I reflect on my artistic research process during my master's studies, focusing primarily on my recent solo performance project, *A Handmade Red Collage*. The starting point for this work was an exploration of the movement of individual body parts or limbs and how these movements might enter dialogue or partnership with spoken text to form a narrative. Through this project, I aim to create a collage-like composition that weaves together movement, language and objects.

First, I will briefly introduce the core components of my project and summarize how I approached these artistic elements. The process began with observing and thinking about the limbs of the body. Viewing the body as a kind of topography, I considered limbs as distinct landscapes. From a part - whole perspective, I worked on themes of isolation, separation, complexity, and contrast among body parts. I focused particularly on the hands, examining their significance, movement across different contexts, physical and anatomical characteristics, and their expressive potential in a variety of situations. Gestures, together with idioms, offered a rich field for exploration. Through movement improvisations, I investigated the relationship between gesture and thought, and experimented with how gestures can clarify, complicate, or distort the connections between movement, thought and speech.

Regarding the use of text, my interest lay in discovering experimental ways of entering dialogue with language. Rather than focusing on content, I searched for a tone, one that is flexible yet daring, that can resonate with everyone and no one at once. I found this tone in the writings of playwright Samuel Beckett (1906 - 1989). In particular, *Stories and Texts for Nothing (1967)*, a piece I had already become familiar with during my undergraduate years, served as a significant source of inspiration. I selected resonant fragments from the text and incorporated them into my practice using self-generated scores and a kind of cut-up technique, creating new textual compositions from existing material.

### 3.1 Body as Whole, Limbs as Separate Isles

I have been contemplating the concepts of individuality and collectivity in relation to the body. There is one body that I inhabit, a whole made up of many parts, each distinct yet interconnected. I could easily see the limbs in my mind and in my imagination as separate and independent pieces. However, my experiments in terms of physicality and movement have led me to question whether this separation is truly possible in its entirety. In other words, could a finger move entirely independently of the body? Perhaps not. While it might seem physically impossible for body parts to be isolated or separate, the isolation that we perceive with our eyes can feel quite precarious. That's why I often engage in imaginative experiments to push these impossibilities further, connecting imagination with movement to explore how these impossibilities or possibilities manifest in the body, how they emerge, take shape and unfold through motion.

Let's say each part of the body is treated as a separate entity with its own physical form, characteristics, life and consciousness. For example, imagine the hands as a separate body, with the nails as the head, the fingers as the neck, and the palm as the torso. In this world, these autonomous parts not only move on their own but could also assume roles, either as supporting figures or authoritative presences. This perspective challenges conventional ideas of symmetry and asymmetry in the body, raising questions about the relationship between pairs of body parts and how these relationships influence movement. For instance, if two feet were to move completely independently, losing control and moving in stark contrast to one another, the resulting dualities and paradoxes would deeply affect the body's proprioception. Exploring how these parts speak to one another, claim their own authority, find paths of connection, or hover between being alive or inert, opens a space for thinking about autonomy, fragmentation and the boundaries of bodily perception.

Most importantly, this thinking challenges the very notion of what it means for these limbs to be considered as "things." The sense of strangeness, ambiguity, mystery, and eerie incomprehensibility that arises when a hand is no longer just a "*hand*" but is instead perceived as something else, a detached, autonomous "*thing*" emerges as the most significant point out of this practice of thinking and moving.

## 3.2 Objects on Limbs, Limbs on Objects

In *The Handmade Red Collage*, I experimented with many different objects throughout the artistic process. I believe objects create a vast and playful space for engaging in dialogue with hands. This is because in daily life, hands hold, grab, squeeze and engage with things through many more ways. For me, in the performance context it is interesting to see hands performing everyday actions with objects, as well as witnessing hands perform extraordinary actions with ordinary objects or ordinary actions with extraordinary objects. While exploring the relationship between props and limbs, I have found that working with different textures opens new possibilities. Thinking and moving through the placement of hands, on various textures and surfaces evokes multiple connotations. For instance, moving with bare hands or red boxing gloves, holding a firearm, immersing hands in mud, or covering them with play dough, all of these evoke distinct sensations and associations. This is because hands remember. They recall actions they have previously performed; they carry embedded narratives. Each variation introduces a different physicality, posture, and attitude to the body.

This inquiry examines how the environments in which limbs operate shape their narrative and influence sensory perception. Not only for the performer, but also for the witnessing eyes and minds, these actions generate metaphorical layers. When I consider the visuality of the stage in relation to sound and text, I always think through metaphors. That's why I find it essential to explore not only the harmony between text and movement, but also how objects visually reflect metaphorical meanings in the overall composition.

While the presence of objects is dominant in the performance context, their absence also holds significance. Research suggests that simulating an action with an image enhances the connection between the action and the mental representation of the object, potentially even more effectively than physically performing the action with the object. Additionally, human mirror system responds to empty-handed gestures, which are movements made in the air that simulate actions involving an object, even in the absence of the actual object. (Cartmill 2012, 138). I have developed a movement score that relates to this research, which explores the relationship between moving with an object and simulating its presence in its absence. Please see Chapter 4: *HANDBOOK*, score 6, page 35.

### 3.3 Thinking - Making Through Idioms

There are many idioms and proverbs that communicate meaning by referencing body parts, particularly the hands. Hand and its movements often serve to express a wide range of emotional and situational contexts. In my practice, I focused on exploring the relationship between hand-related idioms and their potential physical manifestations through movement experiments. Some of these expressions directly suggest a physical action. For example, the idiom “*slipped through one’s fingers*” evokes the sense of a lost opportunity or something valuable escaping one’s grasp. “*lend a hand*” suggests offering help or support, while “*my hands are tied*” expresses an inability to act or help due to external constraints. Slipping, lending, tying, each of these verbs conveys a distinct action.

Starting from this point, I focused on generating gestures from idiomatic phrases and explored how to expand, reverse, transform, and complexify them to discover what new meanings might emerge. Gestures eventually form the foundation of speech, spoken word, and language. They serve as a bridge between action and thought, either clarifying speech or adding layers of complexity (Cartmill 2012, 134). I believe this bridge between language and gesture is directly connected to thought and emotion. The transmission or breakdown between words, thoughts, and feelings becomes most apparent in the body, particularly in subtle gestures. This realization led me to experiment with disrupting gestures. The ambiguity and lack of clarity between emotions and thoughts what might be called the in-betweenness, prompted me to manifest these tensions through hand movements. Throughout this process, my artistic focus has been on pre-gestural and semi-gestural states, where gestures are interrupted, incomplete, or overlapping, revealing the gaps or dissonances between feeling and verbal articulation.

I developed a movement score based on idioms and how they manifest in the mind and language, how they sound, how they resonate and how becoming aware of these layers can inform physical expression and open further possibilities. Please see Chapter 4: *HANDBOOK*, score 9, page 38.

### 3.4 Thinking - Making Through Moving Language and Text

By exploring the incompleteness of gestures, I found myself navigating between states of expression and de-expression. This led me to the desire to support the movement structure I had developed with spoken word. In resonance with Erin Manning's reflections on the improvisational choreographic techniques of William Forsythe - particularly her thinking on the relationship between language and movement - the kind of composition I seek is one in which a dynamic interplay unfolds between the two. A back-and-forth rhythm where gesture gives rise to words, and words fold back into movement. Movement cuts into language; speaking interrupts the motion. At times, they collide; coinciding, overlapping, crashing into each other. Rhythm becomes both language and movement. At the edges of expression, language enters a rhythmic dialogue with movement, attuning itself to its cadence. In such moments, language offers itself as a kind of "*listening organ*"; receptive, resonant and attuned. As Manning states:

***"The paradox of disjunctive synthesis makes itself felt at each stage of commotion: language and movement are not one, and yet, at their limit, they flash up in a oneness of similarity."* (Manning & Massumi 2014, 32-33)**

I began searching for a text that could carry these resonances and would serve as a bridge between language and movement. Much like my approach to selecting objects, I approached this search metaphorically. Rather than seeking explicit meanings, I focused on sensations, understood here as connotations, atmospheres, or tonalities. In essence, I was attempting to uncover the "text" of this state, a metaphorical articulation of the interplay between vocal, language, and movement. With this in my mind, I decided to work on excerpts from Samuel Beckett's *Stories and Texts for Nothing* (1967) focusing on themes such as absence, the loss of senses, a narrator devoid of identity, the sensation of being expelled from home and shelter, longing for silence, indifference, contradictions, oppositions, and nothingness.

It is well known that even small changes in a sentence, such as word choice or punctuation, can alter its meaning. While some aspects of a sentence's meaning derive from linguistic rules, others serve to clarify and express our thoughts (Lakoff & Johnson 2017, 182). In my engagement with Beckett's texts, I experimented by making small changes to the original material, employing cut-up techniques, omitting words, and altering punctuation to produce layered interpretations and alternative deliveries. This became a way of questioning the stability of meaning and exploring whether words themselves are central or incidental to what is ultimately communicated. For the performance, I selected and recontextualized excerpts that resonated with the metaphors, movement patterns, and objects I was exploring.

### 3.5 Thinking - Making Through Multiple Identities

Lastly, I would like to emphasize the importance of thinking-making from different roles throughout the solo process. As a single creator, one must embody multiple identities; performer, choreographer, dramaturg, designer and more to fully grasp the project from various angles.

However, wearing all these hats at the same time can be tiring and misleading for the process. For instance, when I shift my perspective from choreographer to performer at a moment when I should be focusing on the structure of the choreography rather than performing it, I often realize that certain elements do not function as intended.

Similarly, when working on the delivery of a text, if I approach it as an editor rather than as a performer, I find myself caught in an endless cycle of deleting, rewriting, and refining.

This approach was first introduced to me during my undergraduate years at Istanbul Bilgi University by Fulya Peker, an artist and lecturer who emphasized the importance of, so to speak, killing certain roles at the right moment in the artistic process. Peker advises that once the text is complete, the author must step aside to allow the dramaturg to take over. If one clings to the authorial role throughout the entire process, the constant urge to modify, edit, and perfect can ultimately hinder the work especially if the aim is to arrive at a finished piece. This way of thinking and making continues to resonate with me, especially in solo artistic projects where authorship is central.

### 3.6 Photographs from A Handmade Red Collage



*A Handmade Red Collage*, 2023  
Photographer: Sanni Siira



*A Handmade Red Collage*, 2023  
Photographer: Sanni Siira



*A Handmade Red Collage, 2023*  
Photographer: Sanni Siira



*A Handmade Red Collage, 2023*  
Photographer: Sanni Siira

## 4. HANDBOOK

HANDBOOK is a small collection of movement scores that offer ways to trace the performative presence of the hand. Some of these scores have accompanied me for years; others came to life alongside the writing of this thesis. Each score is an invitation to explore, imagine, and respond. You might follow them closely or simply let them spark something that resonates with you.

### **How it works:**

The structure is simple. Every score is followed by a short studio note, a trace of my own experience performing it. Sometimes it's a reflection, sometimes just a fragment: a thought, a sensation, a moment that lingered.

The scores are arranged in a way that begins with more somatic explorations and gradually moves toward the imaginative and abstract. It's a kind of warm-up: body first, then mind, then something in-between.

### **How to use it?**

Read the score.

Try it out.

Just begin. The hand will know what to do.

## 4.1 Scores

### Score 1: Hand in Hand

The movement begins with the meeting of one hand with the other. It is this encounter that sets everything in motion. Please, move slowly, exploring the micro-dynamics of touch. Bring your fingertips together and let the movement unfold from there, gradually expanding across your entire body. Allow your hands to trace the surfaces of your body with awareness.

#### Notes

*“I sat on my knees. My shoulders slightly slumped forward. My head tilted down; eyes fixed on my hands resting in my lap. This is my starting position.*

*The movement begins at my fingertips. Very slow. The tips of my nails touch first, gradually moving into the hollows between my nails. Then the contact spreads to my finger joints, I linger here for a long time. Then, my palms and the backs of my hands intertwine, followed by my fingers gently grasping my wrists. My touch is soft. For now.*

*This flows continuously, sometimes so slow that it’s almost imperceptible. I am exploring the micro-world of the movement and contact. Letting touch unfold millimeter by millimeter.*

*After the slow beginning, touch moves from the elbows to the arms, then wherever the hands lead, upward to the face then downward to the chest and belly. I want to contact every surface of my body, even those I wouldn’t normally touch, like the inner curves of the ear, the underarms, or the soles of my feet.*

*This is a state of warming up both mentally and physically. It is a way of familiarizing the hands with the body, as if the hands are saying, “**I am here.**” while the surfaces they touch respond, “**Yes, and so am I.**” The touch brings warmth, presence, and a silent agreement between the hand and the rest of the body.”*

## Score 2: Hands on Head

Please choose a starting posture. Shape your hands into a position, then bring them to your head, face or neck. Stay there for a moment. Let your hands settle into the place where they've landed. If a movement emerges, let it unfold.

Release your hands and find a new starting posture. Choose a different hand position and bring them to the head area again. Notice where they want to go around your head this time - on your skull, eyelids, behind your ears... Where do they settle? Stay there for a moment and if a movement arises let it happen.

Repeat.

After enough repetitions for yourself, you can let your hands settle anywhere on your body. Let shifting postures and hand positions melt in each other through the flow.

## Notes

*First, the right hand settles on my right cheek, gradually taking an oval shape as it sinks in there. The left fingernails touch the neck and start scratching, as the right hand begins to caress the cheek.*

*Second, the right hand, straight and compact, places itself just under my chin, while the left makes a pinching gesture and grabs the ear. The right pushes the chin up, up, up—so the upper body starts to move backwards, as the left hand begins to pull the ear down towards the floor.*

*Third, both hands hold tension. The finger joints are alive and curled. They target my skull. They move like autonomous entities towards it. They grab the skull, making me round my back. Fingertips hang there with pressure, then slide down to my eyes, my nose, my lips. One of them tries to get into my mouth, but my teeth don't allow it...so they desperately move away.*

### Score 3: Take and Give and Give and Take...

Hands take. Hands give. They take in and give away things, feelings, thoughts, energies and more.

In this score, let's focus on these two simple actions- taking **in** and giving **away**.

Notice how these words resonate with you as you move your body.

#### Notes

*Take and give. Give and Take.*

*Take and take.*

*....Take.Take.Take.Take.Take.Take.....*

*.....Give.Give.Give.Give.....*

*Fingers tend to close while taking, palms tend to open.*

*Testing the other way around. Feels contrary to what I used to, a new mechanism which makes giving and taking blurry.*

*There are agreed moments when finger joints, palms, wrists, elbows, shoulders and back all together want to give, or, all together take in.*

*However, there are also some moments when fingers and palm don't agree. Fingers want to take; palms want to give away. How to do both?*

### Score 4: Where The Hand Goes, The Eyes Follow

Keep taking in and giving away. As you are moving, please play with your gaze;

First, follow your hand with your eyes.

Second, shift your gaze in the opposite direction of your hand's movement.

Third, keep your gaze fixed on a spot in the room or on someone.

Finally, let your gaze wander freely through the space.

#### Notes

*Eyes follow hands and so does my head.*

*The whole body becomes the shadow of the hand.*

*What it gives away, I see; what it takes in, yes, indeed, indeed.  
Close tracking, distant tracking, I'm following.*

*Then I break the agreement.  
I shift my focus completely in the opposite direction of where the hands go.  
I definitely use my mind first, before letting anything come naturally.  
The funny thing is, the more I try not to look at the hand, the more I end up focusing on it.*

*Like when you try not to look at something, and it becomes the only thing you see.*

*Just like that.*

*Then I fix my gaze on a single point, out the window.  
Tentatively, but actively, I sense the distance between where I'm looking and where I stand.*

*A triangle quietly appears, linking my posture, my focus point, and the space carved out by my hands.*

*My eyes begin to wander again.*

*And now, I feel the focus is me moving, and my hands moving,  
not hands moving anonymously, without a name.*

*They belong.*

## **Score 5: Where the River Meets the Rock**

Please imagine a quality, image, sound or texture that gives you the sensation of floating. Barrow that source for your hands, let that idea seep into them. Move through that sensation allowing it to expand gradually to your whole body.

Afterwards, let your hand meet a body part, hard like a rock. Drop the floating energy and instead **grab, squeeze, push** or **pull** the part that you've landed. Notice how this sudden shift resonates in your body. Observe how your hand, the part that it connects with and the rest of the body responds. Let this new energy move you. Allow any sounds or words that emerge from this position to come naturally.

At some point, you may let your hands float again, and land elsewhere to create a new kind of resistance.

**Notes:**

*My eyes are closed. I hear a lovely sound, like a warm wind. My body begins to float with the gentle push of that imaginary breeze, shifting its weight as the wind comes and goes. My fingers start to move with the flow, my arms rise. I expect them to feel as light as a feather, yet they feel heavy, still floating.*

*They land on my right knee. That is the rock. I start to squeeze and push at the same time. Instead of opposing or blocking the movement, I allow my knee to receive and accept the push. I find myself on the floor. My hands release the connection with the momentum. They continue to float, carried by the wind.*

---

**Score 6: Holding or Being Held**

Please choose an everyday object.

...a glass, a glove, a plant, a chair, a handful of mud...

Hold it as you normally would.

Let your hand perform the gesture it knows and start moving with it.

Now, remove the object.

Keep the movement. Let your hand remember. Let it perform the absent thing.

Notice what remains:

The pressure.

The weight.

The ghost of function.

Then, even let the ghost fade.

Let the object disappear through the inside of your hand.

Your hand is no longer holding, but *being held*.

Move with that.

**Notes**

*A chair. A stick. A coffee mug. Hmm, I'll go with the chair first.*

*It's heavy. A weird design. You can't just grab it, first, you have to plan, prepare.*

*Ready? And then lift. It takes two seconds, but still, it requires a kind of focus, a*

*concentration. Anyway, one can do a lot with a chair. I've seen many performances built around chairs, and I think...yes, there's a reason. It has potential, doesn't it? Suddenly, from instinct, I let it drop. It slides right out of my fingers and — boom! A loud crash. I look at my hands. They didn't move, not even a little. Still in the same position, as if they're holding the ghost of the chair. We stare at each other for a few seconds — me and the ghost.*

*I'm holding this large volume, a kind of space, between my hands. And when it's empty, it feels even bigger, even heavier. I begin to turn with it. Slowly. Then I find myself dancing — slow dancing — with the ghost. It seeps into my palms, under my skin, until suddenly, it's not me holding it anymore. It's the ghost that's holding me.*

*I find myself moving — voluminous, expanded, bony and metallic.*

---

## **Score 7: Ant Nest\***

Please, look into your palm.

Gaze deeply, as if you're trying to see through the skin, beyond flesh, into something unknown.

See? Your palm is becoming a void. A black hole.

Let it expand.

Suddenly, an ant crawls out. Then another. Then more.

That's a nest.

The ants begin to spread up to your wrist, your arm, your shoulder, your neck.

They reach your face, your spine, your legs.

Let the sensation of crawling take over your body.

Move as if your entire body is being invaded, carried by the ants.

To finish, you must lock your hand into a box - whatever that may mean to you.

## **Notes**

*The hand is lifted, palm wide open. Every line, every vein visible through the skin. The hand doesn't hide, it wants me to look inside. So I do. And when I do, I see it. It's there. It's here. Suspended in the air between us. It is present.*

*The space around me starts to blur. All I can see now is a single point. That must be the threshold of the ants' nest. One of them crawls out — it's purple. I've never seen a*

*purple ant before. Steps are itchy and sharp. Each movement feels like it's needling into my skin. They move fast. In a minute, they're everywhere — above, beneath... inside my skull. Crawling.*

*I need to find the box. Then it will stop.*

*It must be somewhere close, it can't be far, I think.*

*Where is it?*

*Cut, flicking, and rattling...*

*I find it, finally!*

*I clench my fist, tightly, not letting a single ant slip through.*

*Then, with full determination, I shove it into my armpit.*

*I close my elbow. Lock it in place.*

*And slowly,*

*purple fades away.*

*\*This score is inspired by the film "Un Chien Andalou" (1929).*

---

## **Score 8: Slippery Grounds, Gliding Hands**

Imagine your whole body as a slippery topography. The surface is unstable. Your hands need something to hold onto.

Let your hands explore this challenge- seeking grip where there is none.

### **Notes**

*I place my hands on my head.*

*They fall.*

*To my belly.*

*They slide.*

*Between my thighs,*

*I squeeze,*

*pressing hard.*

*I finally think,*

*they'll stay.*

*They'll hold onto something.*

*Somewhere.*



A. a .... Hand.Hand.Hand. A. hole. to. .Hold.

A.

Hand.

*A hand that holds on holes?*

*Here. A hand. Alive. With flesh and blood and bones and **WITHOUT** holes. Hey, why don't you hold on?*

*Limited edition. Never gets tired.*

*7/24 available. Warm, reliable, emotionally absorbent.*

*The most experienced one.*

*It has the maximum capacity to hold.*

*To hold things, to hold people.*

*It can even hold the world in it.*

*Why not nobody held onto it?*

## **Score 10: Shaky Gestures**

Please start shaking. Any kind of shaking will do, just make sure the resonance travels through your body. Release the pelvis and the jaw. Once you tune into it, begin to lift your arms. Notice how your hands respond to the shaking.

Now, you may start speaking freely while shaking. Share a memory or a short poem/text that lingers with you. Let your hands accompany your speech with gestures, moving with the shaky expression.

## **Notes**

*Danse Macabre is on loop for a while. Epic.*

*Shaking. Tuning. Finding it. No yet. Little more. Yes. It is coming. Release the jaw. Yes. More. That's it. Now I'm echoing the music with trembling murmurs, shaky rhythms from my throat. My hands feel like leeches, flung here and there, slapping, slipping, moving without pattern. I lift off the ground slightly, or at least it feels like it. And I speak. "Well, me... I mean, I... shhh-aaakk... actually, yy- NOW-hhhhh- while my hair is shhh-growinggg-hhhhh... ACTUALLY. No. What I... what I WANT to... aha...ğğğ... say is..." My mouth moves, but meaning slides away as gestures are not gesturing but dissolving into the shake.*

19 March 2025

This final score of the *HANDBOOK* is inspired by the resilient souls in Türkiye, who are currently reclaiming their democratic rights, standing tall with arms wide open, defying unlawfulness, injustice, violence, oppression, and tear gas.

I invite you to carry out this score, perhaps in a park, accompanied by wind and sunlight, or in the middle of a city square, in the streets, surrounded by others, in solidarity.

### **Score 11: Hands Resist**

Don't hesitate.

Take a few steps forward.

Stand tall.

Face forward.

Lift your arms to the sides.

Turn your palms forward, fingers spread.

Hold your head high.

Stay there.

With determination.

With your whole presence.

### **Notes: Turkish and English**

*“Buradayım. Karşıdayım. Duruyorum. Bakıyorum. Görüyorum. Nefes alıyorum.*

*Buradayım. Kollarım yana açık, avuç içlerim alev alev.*

*Buradayım. Ayaklarım yere köklenmiş, başım göğe uzanıyor. Karşıdayım.*

*Buradayım. Bana nasıl bakarsan sana öyle bakıyorum.*

*Buradayım. Avuç içlerimdeki alev kollarıma, karnıma, göğsüme, her yanıma yayılıyor.*

*Buradayım. Burnumun diğeri sızlıyor, çünkü hatırlıyorum.*

*Buradayım. Tüm benliğimle, hiç olmadığı kadar ve her an harekete hazırım.*

*Buradayım. Hareket etmeden koşuyorum.*

*Buradayım. Ağzımı açmadan çığlık atıyorum.*

*Buradayım. Hiç olmadığı kadar teslimim göğe ve yere ve hiç olmadığı kadar diriyim.*

*Buradayız. Her yanımız kalabalık.*

*Buradayız. Biz. Beraber. “*

*“I am here. Right in front of you. I stand. I look. I see. I breathe.*

*I am here. Arms stretched wide, palms burning.*

*I am here. My feet rooted to the ground, my head reaching toward the sky.*

*I am here. However you look at me, that is how I look back at you.*

*I am here. The fire in my palm’s spreads to my arms, my belly, my chest, to all of me.*

*I am here. The bridge of my nose aches, because I remember.*

*I am here. With all my being, more than ever before, ready to move at any moment.*

*I am here. Running without moving.*

*I am here. Screaming without opening my mouth.*

*I am here. Never have I surrendered so fully to the earth and the sky, and never have I felt more alive.*

*We are here. Surrounded.*

*We are here. Us. Together.”*

## 5. AFTERWORD

And so, this journey with the hand does not end, but slips quietly into the next gesture, the next thought, the next movement. What has been traced remains open, held somewhere between thinking and making. The hand continues to offer itself as a site of becoming: of language in motion, of thought touching form, of presence unfolding. I leave this thesis not with a conclusion, but with an active lingering, where the hand still moves, and asks: What lies beyond ?

When the ground beneath your feet is slippery,  
when your hands reach for grip and find nothing,  
can you hear what others are saying, as they are trembling?

When an ant crawls out of your palm,  
when your eyes turn away from what your hands are spoiling,  
you feel peaceful as if you are not holding invisible guns,  
as time lingers in between your palms,  
What do you hold?

When you're just about to raise your wrist,  
but find it tucked away in a locked box.  
When you stretch your arms to the sky,  
and realize there is still space between your head and the heavens.

When a finger shouts.  
When you close your eyes and open your arms wide,  
and your fingertips meet someone else's.

When the world is cold but your hands are on fire.

What lies beyond?

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