

Rose Breuss,
Damián Cortés Alberti
and Marcela Mariana
López Morales

Atlas of Smooth Spaces, Notating, Communicating and Composing Spaces in Audio-Corporeal Practices

¹ *Off Verticality Dance Company* was founded by a group of dancers and choreographers in Linz and Vienna. The ensemble works on choreographies, which include specific orphaned, fascinating and migratory archival and notational materials. Innovative and research-oriented working methods situate the ensemble beyond conventional production practices of dancers and choreographers. See: <http://www.rosebreuss.com>

This study on the artistic dance research project *Atlas of Smooth Spaces, Notating, Communicating and Composing Spaces in Audio-Corporeal Practices* comprises three parts by three authors, and shows a joint work on Dorothee Günther's drawn exercise series from three different praxeological approaches.

In part one Rose Breuss describes the project in brief, outlines its notation-theoretical background, and presents a series of notational compositions.

In part two Damián Cortés Alberti exposes praxeological procedures, using diffraction and transmediation as a research method—applied in his doctoral dance research—and its transfer to the artistic creations of the *Off Verticality Dance Company*.¹

In part three Marcela Mariana López Morales presents selected aspects of her doctoral research, which focuses on historically informed creation processes and their modes of appropriation, transformation, documentation, and re-signification in dance practices.

PART 1

Dancing Notations about Spatial Constructs By Rose Breuss

A Notation and Dance Practice (assumptions)

Dance/movement notations and scores reflect each specific dancer's praxeological knowledge and possibly hidden methodological potentials in the creative processes of "doing dance." The notational study described here is conducted within the artistic research project *Atlas of Smooth Spaces, Notating, Communicating and Composing Spaces in Audio-Corporeal Practices*, funded through PEEK-FWF, Austrian Science Fund.

We intend to find models of working beyond the binary, conventional, and in practice insufficient division between coded/canonized dance repertoires and somatic body practices. We also question practices in their manifold of mutual exchange between "code and experience" through the usage of dance notations and descriptive scorings of experiential tasks.

Dancers instrumentalize canonical techniques and repertoires to enable their artistic work. The mastering of the required wide range of such dance and movement repertoires can limit dancers in creative processes to its re-production and automatic usage, not allowing them to expand the codes. In contrast, somatic body techniques are seen as individual and subjective. They dissolve the canonical repertoires in the experiential horizons of creation processes and make personal, physical-incarnate spectra perceivable. And yet: in the so called "open" somatic research processes, coded repertoires re-appear through the usage of the physical archives of dancers, which are at stake in navigating through the subjective experience and technical skills of dancers. Their routines assert themselves in the openness of subjective responses and in the consumption of dancers' subjective physical repertoires. Contemporary dance practitioners investigate these phenomena and find working methods of dissolving, reversing, highlighting, and stressing the binary and limited systematization of dancers' practices between code and experience. This study considers the manifold translations and media transfers of "doing dance," and looks at notational practices as operations between pre- and postproduction of dances.

What if we look at any kind of medialized notations—the different kind of texts, drawings, scores, dance notation, films—dancers and choreographers produce? What if we study their diagrammatic possibilities and investigate the potentials and praxeological transfers? Not simply looking at them, but using them, doing something with them, and thus looking for inscriptions of the motor dimension of dancing and the agency of dancers.

Specific notations do not only contain concrete movement repertoires and a wide spectrum of motor gestures. In the reading and interpretation processes of the dancers, structures and grammars of the body-space-time-related actions and their variables open up. Simultaneously these working processes reveal dancers' knowledge with its apparatus of skills and personal body archives.

In the specific research display elaborated and discussed here, interdisciplinarity functions as a catalyst for notational issues. It searches for methodological starting points and frames "micro-studies." The assumption is that a display of specific interfaces allows to studying and rehearsing between codes and experience, material and dance, dance and music, mathematics

and methodological compositions, and transcends conventional interdisciplinary practices. In the following description of our research project, these interfaces and their specific material assemblage are based on the mathematically defined “null-spaces.”

B Smooth Spaces and “null spaces” (theoretical transfers)

Together with colleagues from the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, we created the PEEK project *Atlas of Smooth Spaces, Notating, Communicating and Composing Spaces in Audio-Corporeal Practices*, which was positively evaluated in 2021. This project is funded as a three-year praxeological research project. The program is supported by the Austrian Science Fund for Arts-based Research and the target group is any person engaged in arts-based research who has the necessary qualifications. Artistic research is integral to the inquiry. The productive output of the research is artistic work and its notational constructs. The team of co-researchers consists of:

University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw)

Hanne Pilgrim – Rhythmics

Johannes Hiemetsberger – Choral Conducting

Institute of Dance Arts/Anton Bruckner Private University Linz

Rose Breuss – Dance

Dancers/Co-researchers: Damián Cortés Alberti, Kai Chun Chuang, Marcela López Morales, Maria Shurkhal

Complexity Science HUB Vienna

Leonhard Horstmeyer – Mathematics/Physics

We explore how to notate, communicate, and compose space phenomena across audio-corporeal artistic practices by investigating these in four disciplines: Dance, Rhythmics, Choral Conducting, and Direct Sound. They share awareness for a certain tacit knowledge about space. Rather than communicating merely the metric measures of spaces without the performer, we are concerned instead with emergent spatial qualities of smooth spaces that complement the performer, that exist outside of—but not without—the performer. We conduct experiments during which a smooth space phenomenon is first distilled and condensed into a clear spatial expression. This we call the null-space. It is the starting point for our investigations and experiments, which are co-created in an iterative process by the performers. We foresee a recursive pipeline that divides the work into individual, collision, and co-production modes. We also foresee a role fluidity; the roles of performer, experimenter, and documenter are not attached to individuals, allowing for a change of perspective.

B/a Null-Spaces (intersubjective and consensual)

Smoothness in mathematics is a notion that extends the idea of continuity. In analysis, a field of mathematics, the motion of a body is considered continuous, loosely speaking, whenever one can trace its path without pencil-lifting, or in other words, whenever there are no abrupt jumps.

Configurations in smooth spaces that are the least unexpected are called “null spaces” in mathematics. Of course, what is expected and what is not is highly subjective. A null-space is therefore not unique and not objective, but *intersubjective* and *consensual*. The display of null-spaces with its manifold of possible interfaces seems to be suitable in our context. It allows to scan and explore interdisciplinarity beyond canonized practices between dance and music, movement and sound.

B/b Smooth and Striated Space (continuous variations, manifolds)

The theoretical inspiration for the project's title came from a specific contextualization of smooth spaces, which Frédéric Pouillaude developed in *Un-working* Choreography (Pouillaude 2017) and his specific research on music and dance notations. We question the concept of smoothness when applying it to the re-configurations of repertoire and somatic experimentations through notational/scoring and music-related practices. Is the theoretical thought figure of smooth spaces promising in moving beyond a dichotomy of code and experience? Four borrowed quotes from Frédéric Pouillaude, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Erwin Straus outline distinct features of the smooth space concept. Set into practice, we develop experiments with interfacing and materializing notational sets, with stabilizing codes developed in the rehearsal processes of the materials. The space where this search takes place is the smooth space of music, a penetrating space, where spatial order is not strictly bound to the optical, kinesthetic and tactile spheres. In B/b I outline a shortcut for framing and understanding the philosophical conceptualization of smooth and striated spaces. Does a closer viewing allow a critical usage of space concepts in dance practice and notation, expanding and re-iterating euclidean space models of coded dances versus “inside” experiential spaces of the somatic practices?

B/b/I To dance is also to construct new spaces. (Pouillaude 2017: 32)

Pouillaude argues, partially along the lines of Paul Valéry, that through the act of dancing one escapes the striated, defined, privileged spaces constructed by the objects of daily life. We gain access to a smooth space, with no pre-given directions—a space which is dominated by the presence of the body to itself. Pouillaude borrows the concept of smooth and striated space “freely” (as he writes) from Deleuze/Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Deleuze/Guattari 2005). Brian Massumi mentions in the foreword of this book that the two authors recommend reading the book as you would listen to a record.

“When you buy a record there are always cuts that leave you cold. You skip them. You don't approach a record as a closed book that you have to take or leave. Other cuts you may listen to over and over again. They follow you. You find yourself humming them under your breath as you go about your daily business.” (Deleuze/Guattari 2005: 14)

They also invite the reader to “incarnate it to a foreign medium, whether it be painting or politics” (2005: 16). Or dance? Is a comparison—in this case of the smoothness of experiential/somatic dance practices and of the striated quality

of coded dance repertoires—useful for a better understanding of diverse artistic practices? The following illustration of an excerpt emerged from a repeated reading (or better a humming?) of certain passages in the chapter about the smooth and the striated.

Smooth Space	Striated Space
is open, irregular desert, sea	is subject to an order
is directional come into being through points of standstill and trajectories For Example: the nomad performs localised operations with changes of direction	is dimensional, metric
unlimited in all directions, nomadic	sedentary, instituted by the State apparatus
is an affect space	is a space of possessions
materials refer to forces	shapes/forms organise a matter
intensive space	extensive space
corresponds more to felt – entanglement of fibres comes about through pressing	is a fabric, according to Plato the paradigm for „the kingly science“ - weaving of threads, horizontal – vertical
and patchwork has themes, symmetries, resonan- ces	
occupied by intensities, winds and sounds, tactile and sonic forces, and qualities	covered by the sky as a scale and the resulting measurable visual qualities
spreads a continuous variation	events are plannable and predic- table
haptic	visual
acoustic, presentic space – pre- sentic no history of smooth space – is a pure presence without memory	optico-practical space – historical hallmark of history and contingency
local perception	total perspective, able to perceive many other places from one point of view.

Ill. 1: (Deleuze/Guattari 2005: 496–522)

The concept of the smooth and the striated spaces elucidates and emphasizes transitions and passages, because they do not form a simple opposition. They are not imaginable like the local or the global. A space can be incessantly striated under the action of forces. But in the midst of indentations and striatization, new smooth spaces can also emerge. Slow or fast movements are enough to create a smooth space again. The continuous variation between smooth and striated spaces forms a multiplicity.

“It marked the end of dialectics and the beginning of a typology and topology of multiplicities. Each multiplicity was defined by determinations; sometimes the determinations were independent of the situation, and sometimes they depended upon it. For example, the magnitude of a vertical line between two points can be compared to the magnitude of a horizontal line between two other points: it is clear that the multiplicity in this case is metric, that it allows itself to be striated, and that its determinations are magnitudes. On the other hand, two sounds of equal pitch and different intensity cannot be compared to two sounds of equal intensity and different pitch; in this case, two determinations can be compared only ‘if one is a part of the other and if we restrict ourselves to the judgment that the latter is smaller than the former, without being able to say by how much.’ Multiplicities of this second kind are not metric and allow themselves to be striated and measured only by indirect means, which they always resist. They are anexact yet rigorous.” (Deleuze/Guattari 2005: 483)

A multiplicity of spatial concepts seems to correlate with the usage of space practices in dancing, confronting codes and experiences and finding passages, alternations, and superpositions. The specific agencies and agentialities of dancers, which are indivisibly connected to space phenomena, allow to (re-) activate or re-iterate relations to elements, time-spaces, rhizomes, planes of composition, relations as modes of becoming, vectors crossing territories, and stages of de-territorialization.

B/b/II *Music is dance’s condition of possibility because it establishes the only space that could be adequate to dancing: an acoustic space.*
(Pouillaude 2017: 33)

The movements of our daily routines and activities are regulated and defined by the visible, tangible, and audible objects of bodies’ environments. Directions become perceivable within an optico-practical space in a system of references between bodies and objects. We move within the references of our privileged places, our routines, and vital orientations—such as home, working place, outdoor activities, cultural places and so on. It is possible that, even if we take steps forward physically, we define our direction as back, because we might moving toward home or our hotel, and home or hotel could mean moving back. Dance suspends the practical relationship to environments. This also applies to sound. Sound and tone point to the object. We can identify and indicate it. But musical tone cancels all directions; it fills space and renders it completely open. Acoustical spaces are without direction and place.

"Even though we may describe the direction of the sound source as indeterminate, we still maintain that it is determinable – i.e., we state that it must be in this direction, that direction, or a third direction. But the tone itself does not extend in a single direction; rather it approaches us, penetrating, filling and homogenizing space. Thus, the tone is not confined to a single spatial position." (Pouillaude 2017: 39–40)

B/b/III *Sound has no hidden side. (Nancy 2010: 22)*

According to Erwin Straus, a German-American neurologist, psychiatrist, and philosopher, the essential connection between dance and music is a spatial one and cannot be set aside arbitrarily (Straus 1956). The spatial tie between music and dance seems to contradict the idea about the autonomy of dance and its independence from music as one of the main liberatory concept of the body through Modern dancers, as Bojana Kunst writes (Kunst 2014). It also contradicts the common concept that spatial order is bound to the optical, kinesthetic, and tactile spheres. *The smooth space* is a presentist space, a mode of being present, being suspended from achieving goals in an optical (and heterogeneous, historical) space, where "nothing is held now at a distance, where everything is affectively there, without division: present" (Pouillaude 2017: 46).

C Notational Preproduction (Experiments)

C/a Practise Chains by Dorothee Günther

The first source material or null-space of the PEEK project comprised experiments with practice chain drawings by Dorothee Günther. In 1926 she published the booklet *Gymnastische Grundübungen nach System Mensendieck, im Bewegungsablauf* dargestellt. (Günther 1926). The work on the drawings, photos, writings, sketches, and films by and about Dorothee Günther came about in the Carl Orff Year 2020. Claudia Jeschke and I attempted to subject the documents and files handed down in the Orff-Zentrum München² to a praxeological investigation. Due to the entanglement with the National Socialists and the close connection to National Socialist cultural policy, a reconstruction of a reference seems impossible from the outset. However, Dorothee Günther's creative phase before the National Socialists came to power was astonishingly innovative, avant-garde, and bold in terms of the independence of her pedagogical enterprise, musical compositions, and instrumentation for dance. It is therefore of interest for a study of the "spatial tie between dance and music" (see *B/b/III*), the strengthening of women's issues in relation to body image and behavior, and the structural elaboration of an independent body and movement and composition technique. The question that needs to be asked is why the artistic-gymnastic genealogies are not, or not very, present in contemporary dance or in dance studies. The modernism of the Weimar Republic is largely equated with German Ausdruckstanz. Could the praxeological treatment of such problematic, historical material be of any use? In points C/b and C/c, I try to describe our work with the material as an experimental chain of notations in excerpts.

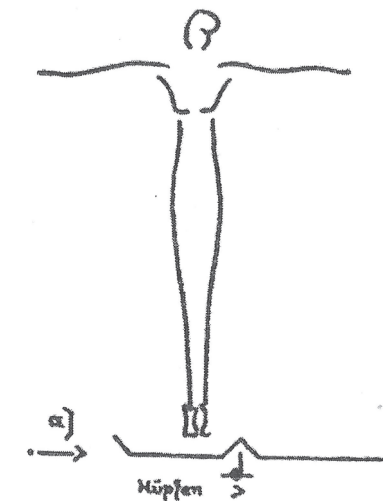
2 As part of the Master programme Movement Research at the Anton Bruckner Private University Linz, Claudia Jeschke and I worked out a series of case studies with historical notations in cooperation with master's students. We were concerned with questions about methodologies of re-enactments through historical reference sources in the context of contemporary dance practices. We were able to use the material made available by the Orff-Zentrum München for studies at the Anton Bruckner Private University. (Orff-Zentrum München owns a partial estate of D. Günther) Yet we decided to work with the published exercise books by D. Günther in order to be able to experiment with our methodological approaches without bias.

C/b Dancing Notations

The notations/scores shown in C/b/1a-d and C/b/2 are chosen to give a brief insight into the praxeological work. They give analytical accesses, speculations on body image, motor characteristics, and linear continuations. A „multiplicity" (page..) of motor reservoirs emerges from „relations of elements as a modus of becoming." (see list page..) The material labelled here is diagrammatic, it is deciphered and transposed as a guide to physical action and concrete gesture. (see also Damian page...)

C/b/1 Dancing Motoricity of Dorothee Günther

C/b/1a *What concept of the body emerges in the stencil-like stick figures? (excerpt)*



III. 2: **Example 7a (Günther 1927)**

Example 7a shows that a front view of the head does not exist; the head is always slightly tilted. Alignments of the head are indicated by the "nose profile." The scheme makes rotations, inclinations of the head visible. The pelvis is integrated into the leg line. The legs start under the ribcage or under the (female) chest. The use of a high relevé is striking, very often drawn on the back of the toes and not on the whole ball of the foot. The arms are either rounded as a whole, or bent 2, 3, or 4 times in the shoulders, elbows, wrists, in the middle of the hands.

C/b/1/b What do the stick figures store?

Apart from the positions/poses readable at first glance, articulations of joints, the forms of swing marked by strokes and dashes, and a rhythmic musical notation, step and movement repertoires are mentioned: walking, striding, swinging, hopping, jumping, tilting, translating, among others. (Spatial) directions become particularly conspicuous as, on the one hand, alignments, spatial positions of body parts, and on the other hand—and this is what I find remarkable—as tensions within defined vectors that pass through body sections.

3 Eigene Übersetzung:
Der vollständige Titel der
Zeichnung lautet:

SPANNUNG/ Beispiel der
Anwendung einer Vor-hoch
und Tief-rück Spannung/
in Fortbewegung/
Beliebig/in Raumweg und
Spannungstyp variieren



Ill. 3: **Example 25 (Günther 1927)**

„Application of a forward-high and low-back tension“³

Tension vectors capture adjacent body parts and play with displacements within a defined vector, which strictly speaking does not exist with Euclidean precision in the sense of Laban's choreutics. (Laban 1991). Direction is tendency, vector, and intensity.



Ill. 4: **Example 26 (Günther 1927)**

In „Applying a side-high-low tension“ head, shoulder, chest tend in the same direction. The excerpt captures an interesting interplay of tension direction and counter-tension. These tension directions/vectors create a constant negotiation of the physical balance, bring the moving body out of the stable body axis, and intervene intensively in the muscular interplay. In this way, body positions become asymmetrical, are held out of the axis line, and require specific counter-tensions in reaching and holding the positions.

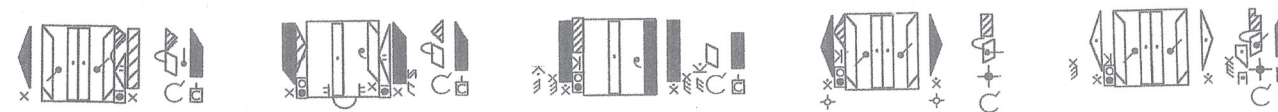
C/b/1/c What is the result of transferring the stroke details into Labanotation?

Labanotation captures unique joint positions, body part directions, body orientation, spatial positions and metric movement components. After viewing the drawings in initial samples, they had a rather decorative (albeit attractive) effect. It was only the study-like transfer of the poses and sequences into Labanotation that revealed surprising and extraordinarily interesting details. The precise analysis of the positions and their connections, which the „grammar“ of Labanotation demands for correct notation, locates what is not written from the perspective of notation. Above all, it highlights the fictive potential of the movements. Anatomically unambiguous strokes alternate with anatomically unassignable parts. In the interpretation of the a-anatomical strokes (e.g., the leg stroke starting under the ribs and rounding over the hips, the gaps, the undefined), the spaces in between and empty spaces become the theme.



Ill. 5: **Example 15a (Günther 1927)**

E.g. in example 15a the question arises as to whether the direction of the rounding of the arm and leg lines defines the turning in and out of the arms and legs. Do the rounded arms point backwards and the 2nd position, in which the palms seem to point forwards, show a turning out of the forearms?



Ill. 6: **Example 22 (Günther 1927) „arm guidance“ (Positions 1–5) in Labanotation**

C/b/2 Notational Compositions

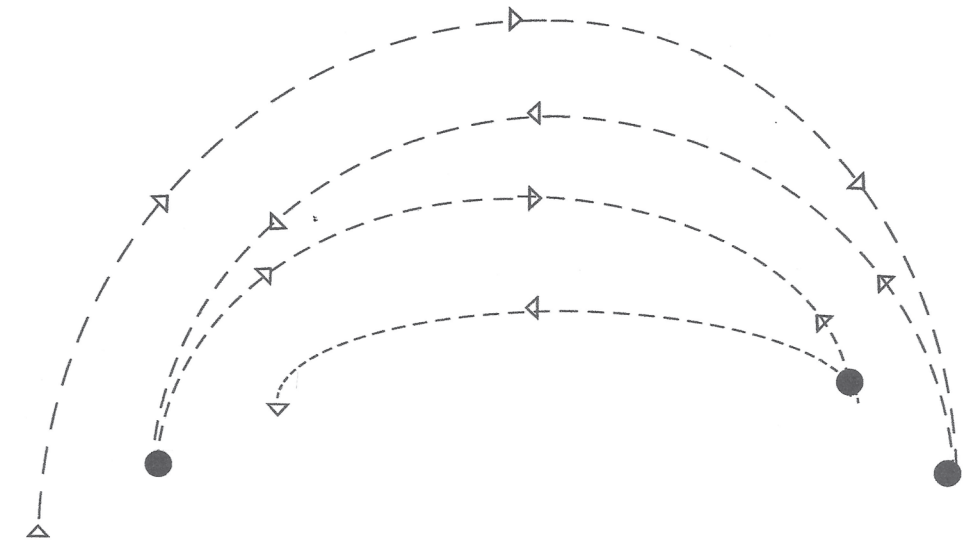
My notational sketches start with the swing drawings by Dorothee Günther. What caught my eye is the unusual subdivision and rhythmicity of the swings. For example, paths are interrupted, restarted and brought back in the same direction, which creates an additional idiosyncratic feathering and gesticulating in the swings.⁴

The strokes that mark a swing, or more generally a (movement) course, are—once excerpted from the striated—Euclidically conceived body space—ambiguous. They can be many things: grazing traces on body sections, traces on surrounding bodies and objects, on areas of skin that trigger a reaction (i.e., produce an adjacent, triggering and completely different kind of movement in the touch); they can shape micro-spaces, for example, in that joints with small spaces of movement (e.g., atlas vertebrae) attempt oscillating lines and create expression rather than movement; they can create complex co-ordinations by dividing the lines between two or more body parts that synchronize different traces; the web of lines can also become a surrounding space to be imagined asynchronously; in complex coordination, the traces can be extended in space or closely intertwined so that the lines mark crossings and the directions of the crossings (in front of, behind) and much more.

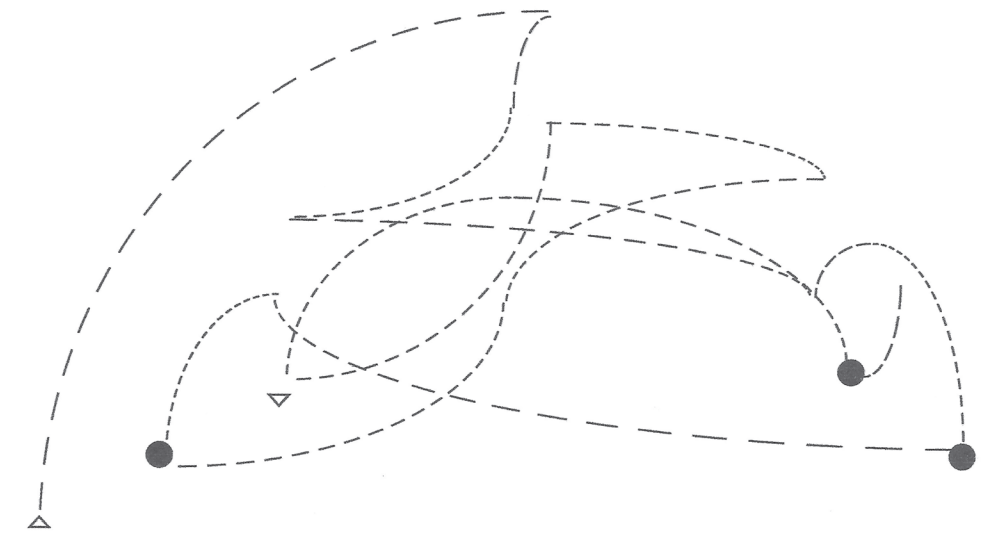
The following notations design such spatial variation processes and transitions, deviated from swinging back and forth.

4 Ann Hutchinson published *Advanced Labanotation, Issue 2, Shape, Design, Trace Patterns* in 1991, in which she systematizes trace shapes as drawn lines. Strictly speaking, Labanotation can represent the linear and energetic progressions of swings as a sequence of directions (90, 45, 30 degree angles and less) scaled more or less precisely in space, provided with metric indications and accents. Trace patterns occur in an amalgamation of precise body position, trace shape and plane onto which it is projected. This notation shifts conceptually between striated and smooth. The spatial size and the exact volume of the projected trace remains undefined, but not the defined spatial position of the body. The notation here combines different spatial references.

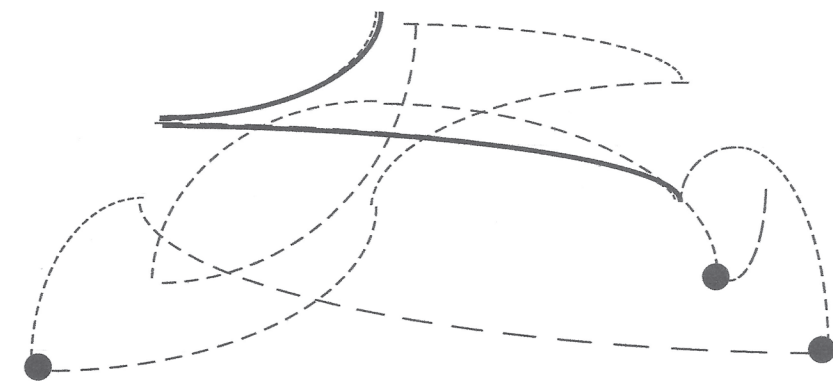
Back and Forth Swings



Cuts

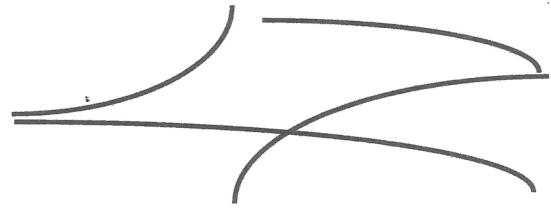


Emphasis



III. 7-1: Back and Forth Pathways, Cuts, Emphasis notated by Rose Breuss

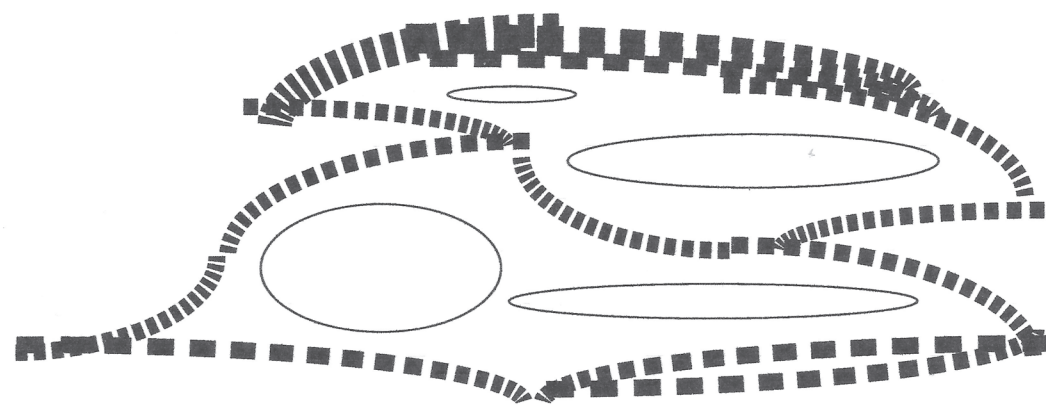
Crossing



Web

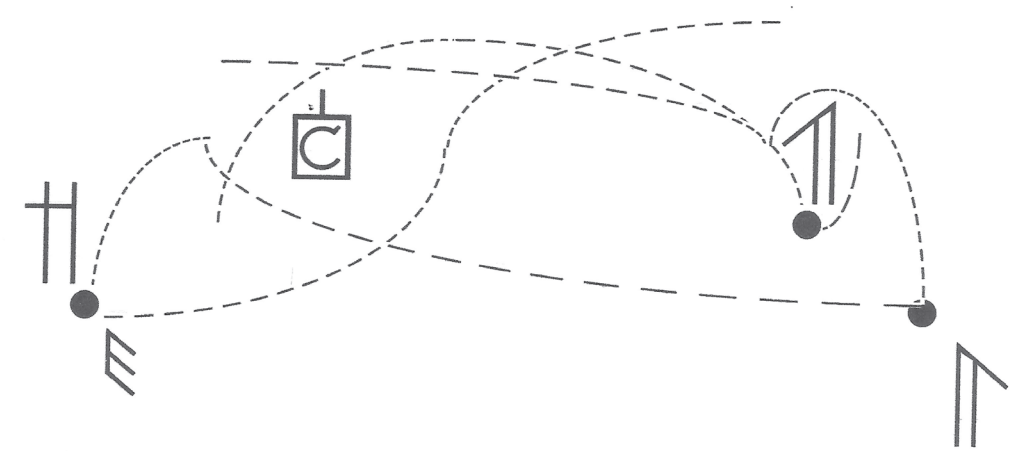


Areas

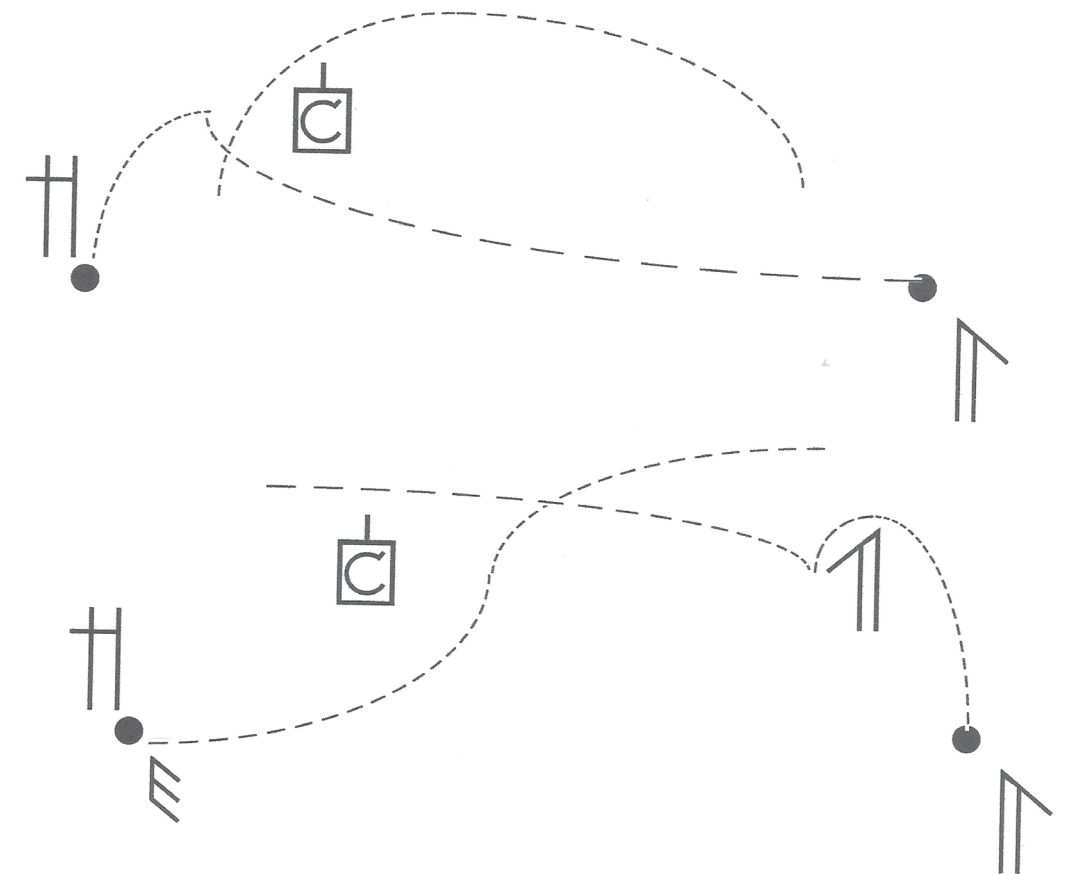


III. 7-2: Crossing, Web, Areas notated by Rose Breuss

Crossing Limbs



A/Synchronicity



III. 7-3: Crossing Limbs, Synchronized or Successions notated by Rose Breuss

PART 2

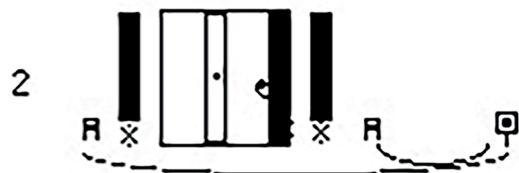
De-Coding Günther, A Case of Thick Description in Dance Praxeology By **Damián Cortés Alberti**

The PEEK project *Atlas of Smooth Spaces, Notating, Communicating and Composing Spaces in Audio-Corporeal Practices* provides an ideal space for developing exhaustive experiments related to the questions I posed as a base for my PhD project. Likewise, my research offers a particular perspective on the relationship between space, score, and dancer, which will be explained below.

My doctoral research (titled: *Scores, an Autoethnographic-Diffractive Apparatus of Affect and Understanding*) addresses the multiple connections between movement design, execution, interpretation, expression, and notation systems, as well as the significance of scoring systems in the understanding and study of dance history. My interest in scores is anchored in their usefulness as a qualitative research instrument within dance praxeology. Here I will analyze a specific case study to develop additional ways to understand "the dancer's role as an agential researcher of/in/through dance" (Jeschke 2017: 1). My approach reformulates the use of Labanotation and different historical documents related to dance (scores) in order to adapt them to the practice of autoethnography and diffraction as an essential methodological procedure for research in the development of dance praxeology. In this context, autoethnography is understood as "an observational data-driven phenomenological method of narrative research and writing that aims to offer tales of human social and cultural life that are compelling, striking, and evocative" (Poulos 2021: 5). Concerning this definition, I regard dance scores, repertoires, and dance performance as the ideal material for such methodology.

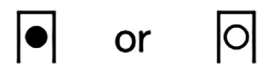
On April 20th, 2021, Rose Breuss and I conducted a workshop on movement research and notational practices within the Master Studies of the Dance Department (IDA) at the Anton Bruckner Privatuniversität Linz (ABPU). This workshop, called *Practice/Discourses/Notation on Günther*, focused on decoding and embodying movement sketches from *Gymnastische Grundübungen nach System Mensendieck* (Günther 1926). The selection of sketches served as an entry point for understanding dance praxeology as a method of approaching movement research, historical documents, and theoretical analysis. In the seminar, we also introduced the students to the same material previously transcribed into Labanotation (LN) by Rose Breuss.

The day began with a talk about the material and how we planned to approach it; without further ado, we began analyzing the charts created by Rose Breuss, and Günther's original drawings. We started by decoding and analyzing the transcription into LN of the chart shown in Illustration 8.

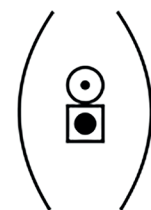


In broad terms, it consists of three body poses in an upright position with minor differences in support and alignment, with a side note that clarifies the position of the head by specifying the gaze; it also indicates that the pelvis resumes its natural position; therefore, there is no pelvis information in the third notation.

The dancers stood facing the wall in an upright position and in an attitude of alertness and readiness with the attention directed to the same focal point. This dynamic attitude of openness and engagement is something that dancers access every day when learning movement, but I could detect something different. This time, the dancers were confronted with something that they did not immediately recognize; there was not a body of reference from which to withdraw information. "[...T]he segmentation of the body in LN is not congruent with the segmentation of the physical body. This means, there is no match in the outline of the human body and the graphic symbols on the staff" (Jola and Hagar 2005: 3). Therefore, the gaze starts to wander, trying to organize the reading process.



Facing looks like far
front down
not narrow on the spot

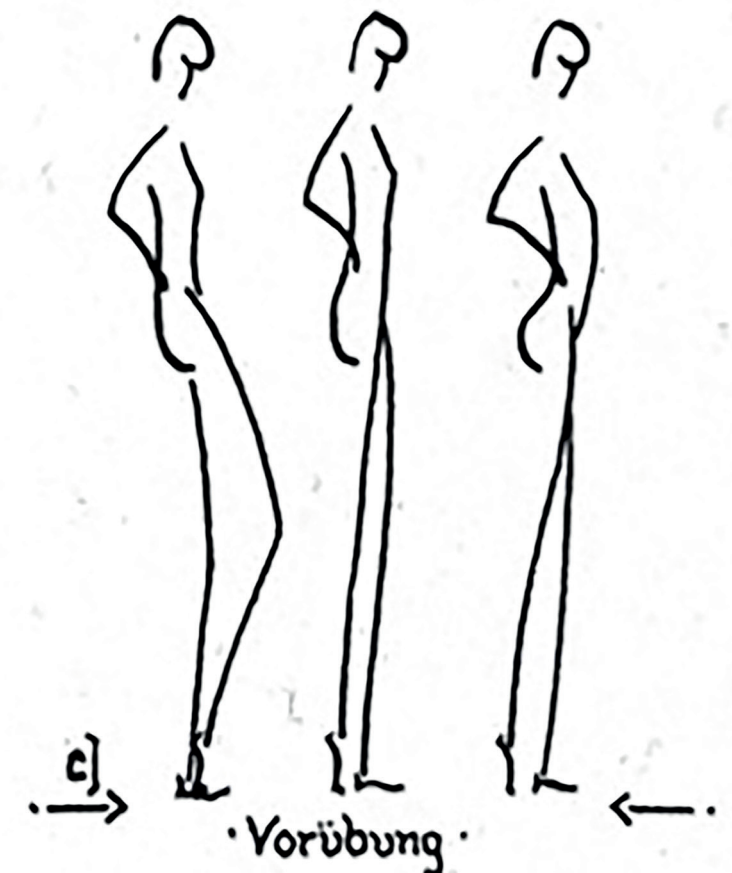


Ill. 8: Charts depicting three body poses by Günther notated in Labanotation by Rose Breuss (Breuss 2022).

At first, this situation seems to detach or distance the subject-object connection. Nevertheless, I soon perceived how the dancers' bodies were engaged in a dialectical relationship with the image projected on the wall, trying to corpo-realize the abstract symbols, shifting the dancers' bodies out of their routines and reproducing mode to a movement research modus. Rose Breuss describes that "[in Movement Research practices], the dancer makes use of movement and dance techniques he can activate and actualise. The movement repertory saved and available in the dancer's body is not used in a (merely) re-producing fashion. It is used in the research processes as an analytical apparatus referring to the dancing body itself" (Breuss 2017: 1).

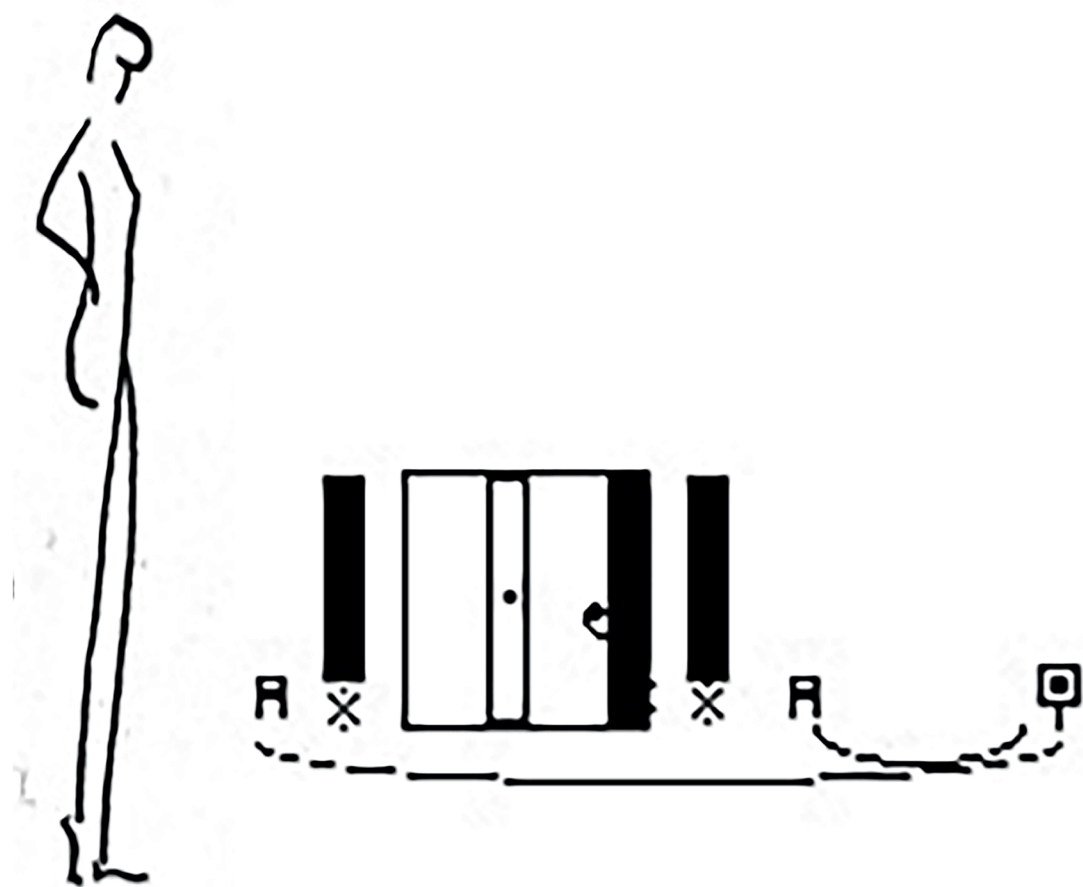
The reading of Labanotation scores entails a very particular process, in which I need to access my dancing body in a totally different way than usual. This procedure begins with observing on the staff a sign that indicates duration, direction, level, and part of the body that performs the action; I immediately start searching in the space defined by my front (the direction in which I am facing) how to perform these indications. I chose and emphasized the word perform because it entails movement rather than position. As I mentioned before, the lack of an isomorphic representation of the human body and the first-person perspective of LN forces me to search within myself for the realization of a code that refers strictly to myself, activating my proprioceptive mechanisms in a structural, somatic, technical, and conceptual way.

Once the three poses had been studied, we proceeded to observe and examine the original Dorothee Günther drawing that the Labanotation corresponded to. It is worth mentioning that the dancers previously had access to Günther's charts, so the poses were not foreign to them; on the contrary, the material had been carefully reviewed on several occasions.



Ill. 9: Right profile view of three schematic figures (Günther 1926).

The drawing shows three schematic human figures in the right profile, in addition to the legend "Vorübung" (pre-exercise) and two arrows on each side indicating right and left. When this second projection appeared, the students quickly went through the sequence without major qualms about details, moving from one to the other creating a continuous fluent movement. This was not a surprise since they were familiar with the drawings and had just performed the same poses extracted from the LN a few minutes before. However, one very important detail was omitted by the four students. This caught my attention, so we stopped to analyze together this event that Rose Breuss had already detected as uncertain or debatable while transcribing the Günther sketches. This detail is located in the right hip of the second pose and demands a very specific way of performing this position.



If we were to try to raise the right heel in a position where the ball of the right foot is at the height of the left heel without modifying the perpendicular or vertical axis of the pelvis, we would inevitably have to bend the knee. The four dancers thus solved the position by bending the knee when I asked them to perform the second figure of the sequence. However, Günther's drawing clearly depicts that the right knee must be fully extended, and according to the length of the torso of the three figures we deciphered, by comparative analysis of the sizes, that there is no modification of the transverse or vertical axis of the pelvis in the drawing. What was first perceived as an error by Günther in making the sketches, later prompted us to look for a solution to the proposal in our own bodies.

Ill. 10: **Right profile body pose chart by Günther (1926) and corresponding notation by Rose Breuss (2022).**

After a few moments of discussion and testing, we discovered a way to perform the figure without compromising any element of the sketch. If we transfer most of the weight to the right leg and at the same time activate the abdominal muscles (the external obliques, the internal obliques, the transversus abdominis, and the rectus abdominis) by elongating the waist and we activate the anteroposterior musculature of the thigh and the calves, we can achieve (with a coordinated effort of trunk and legs) the elevation of the right heel without the need to modify the vertical or transverse axis of the pelvis. This finding or inference led us to think of the title of the exercise book to which the drawings belong. We quickly connected the idea of gymnastics with the muscular effort necessary to perform the positions correctly and, in turn, linked us with a much larger domain, the irruption of gymnastics in the field of strength development of female bodies introduced by Bess Mensendieck and her significant influence on the evolution of dance in the 1920s in Central Europe.

From this experience, I highlighted the usefulness of remediation as a diffractive method for movement research and dance historiography. As Jenkins et al. point out, "an established concept within the physical sciences, diffraction refers to the disruption of wave-based systems as they encounter obstacles, so as to create an observable pattern of interference" (Jenkins et al 2021: 978). Donna Haraway further develops this concept, stating that "[diffraction] is an optical metaphor for the effort to make a difference in the world [...] with an interference pattern, not with a reflection of the same displaced elsewhere" (Haraway 2018: 16). Diffraction patterns record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement and difference. Haraway "draws on the optical phenomenon of diffraction as a metaphor and a method for knowledge production because diffractions crucially differ from [reflections, whereas] reflection is bound to "repeating the Sacred Image of the Same" (Sehgal 2014: 188).

My proposition, in this case, is to consider the interference created by the juxtaposition of two or more different media representing the same phenomenon as a generator of specific knowledge that reveals non-evident aspects of the initial phenomenon. This scape or shift from the perspective of reflection is what gives this proposition a place in the contemporary discourse, as in terms of Haraway "[reflexivity], like reflection, only displaces the same elsewhere, setting up the worries about copy and original and the search for the authentic and really real" (Haraway 2018: 16). Using diffraction and transmediation as a research method in dance during the seminar helped us avoid obsolete discussions about the implications of reconstruction and re-enactment on originality and fidelity; this opened a direction of inquiry that reflects the specificity of the researcher agency on the research process.

The use of this material was not limited to the research experience in the studio; on the contrary, the performative potential of this material was activated in the creation of the piece *Présence*, choreographed by Rose Breuss on the homonymous music by Bernd Alois Zimmermann, played by The Altenberg Trio Wien and premiered on November 11th 2021 at Minoriten Wels. All the choreographic material utilized was derived from 36 charts of Günther's book configuring the score of the piece. Then, this choreographic material was shifted and adjusted to a different set up, in the context of the piece *Calling the Spirit* with music by Alexander Scriabin in cooperation with Anika Vavič on piano and Christoph Bochdansky performing puppet theater, which premiered at the festival *Imago Dei* 2022 in Krems. The work methodology was based on the intensive study of the notation, its transfer to specific positions and the creation of movement sequences exploring the multiplicities and nuances of interpreta-

tion of the four performers. The difficulty imposed by the frame-like characteristics of the notation, as opposed to the flowing reality of the body, activated sensory-perceptual mechanisms that shift us from our re-producing mode to a dialectical process of engaging with the score. This process allowed a very particular choreographic dynamic in which the logic of articulating the dance steps was not decided randomly but according to parameters which include both the specificity of Günther's diagrams and the particularities of the lived experience of the four interpreters/researchers.

The choreography, here considered as a syncretic construct of the multiple sediments of experience available to the dancer (repertoire, archive, routines, etc.), plus the information available in the score, highlights the capacity of the notation to activate circuits of associations that catalyze the construction of meaning (referring in this case to meaning as kinetic logic that orders the actions of the body) associated with the object of study, in this case the Günther material. The parameters we had previously relied on to observe Günther's drawings were exponentially expanded after passing them through the diffracting prism of transmediation. According to Scott deLahunta, this type of approach belongs to "a novel domain of context and reference, one that explores non-linguistic forms of description and collateral knowledge relations drawn together by dance" and "represent the contemporary plurality of how dance practitioners approach dance practices" (deLahunta 2013: 1).

PART 3

Upcycling Gestures: Dorothee Günther as a case study By Marcela Mariana López Morales

My PhD research proposal entitled *Decolonial pivots in dance: Historically informed creation processes and now a days adaptations* is based on the study of modes of appropriation, transformation, documentation and resignification in dance practices. This includes an analysis of processes of media transformation, that is, the exploration of archival modes in dance and repertoire in order to reflect on the relationship between archive and embodiment, and at the same time question our imaginary and historical construction around dance. My interest has to do with the methodologies applied in the processes of approaching dance scores for current artistic creation. The use of scores is not only understood as a potential—or unrealized potential (Breuss 2017)—but also as a technical-analytical tool for research in dance praxeology; such consideration serves both as a support for theoretical-practical-critical research, as well as for dance-specific documentation.

The ways of documenting dance have dynamically changed throughout history and reflect a complex relationship between dance, language and writing (Franko 2011). Such complexity between dance and writing enables us to reflect on how dance knowledge is retrieved, organized, recorded, and received (Carter 2004). Myriam Van Imschoot (2005) reflects on the logic with which the archive operates in Western culture. On the one hand, she criticizes the global process of rationalization in Western culture, questioning the universality of notation systems. On the other hand, she also challenges the position in which the dance arts are conceived. That is to say: they are predominantly seen as second-hand art in that they remain condemned to a permanent loss since, under the same prevailing logic, dance did not establish a universal and unifying notation system. However, it is precisely in this unstable terrain of perpetual recreation and mimetic desire—understood as a fundamental mode of knowledge transmission in dance practices—that we can find an opening to think about other types of archives. Thus, the ways of storing and transmitting knowledge are many and mixed. As Diana Taylor suggests:

“Embodied expression has participated and will probably continue to participate in the transmission of social knowledge, memory, and identity pre- and post writing. By shifting the focus from written to embodied culture, from the discursive to the performatic, we need to shift our methodologies. Instead of focusing on patterns of cultural expression in terms of texts and narratives, we might think about them as scenarios that do not reduce gestures and embodied practices to narrative description. This shift necessarily alters what academic disciplines regard as appropriate canons, and might extend the traditional disciplinary boundaries to include practices previously outside their purview.” (Taylor 2003: 16)

The approach to scores proposed here is developed from a critical and historiographical perspective that is of interest as a starting point for an exercise in critical understanding of contemporary artistic creation. The interaction with scores is not based on an extractive position (archive-as-source), but rather on an ethnographic one (archive-as-subject); in this case a score is not considered as a means of knowledge retrieval, but as a means of knowledge production (Stoler 2010). This approach not only requires the dancer to reflect on the making of the dance and on its historicity, but also invites the dancer to “break through divisions of the contemporary and historical, to observe the appearance of history in contemporary bodies as much as to observe historical bodies as having been involved in a quotidian body practice” (Jeschke 2017: 1). In general, the concept of being a contemporary dancer “creates a

5 More information on the artistic projects can be found at <http://rosebreuss.com/index.htm>

strong sense of dance in the here-and-now [...] that aims to produce versatile artists familiar with latest developments in contemporary (European) art dance” (Järvinen 2016: 248). This way of self-definition not only carries the danger of reproducing and thus re-establishing a single valid way of understanding dance, but also reaffirms the idea that history refers exclusively to the past. Therefore, my proposal not only allows questions to arise such as: how the history of your own art form is constructed, when, where, and by whom (Järvinen 2016), but also invites for a reflection on the relation between archives and embodiment (Manning/Ross/Schneider 2020), emphasizing the recognition of how embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge (Taylor 2003).

As a contribution to previous works, I will develop an overview of the research process involved in contemporary artistic creation in relation to the different negotiations with the scores. The artistic work is in essence research and it demands both the experience and practice of embodied knowledge, as well as the reflection and theorization of those practices. Our research was based on the historical-current reference: *Gymnastische Grundübungen nach System Mensendieck* (Günther 1926). The study of Günther's material went hand in hand with the artistic creation of three different dance pieces over more than a year of work⁵:

1. *Présence* (music composition by Bernd Alois Zimmermann, 1961) in cooperation with *Altenberg Trio Wien*. Choreography by Rose Breuss. With the support of Off Verticality Dance Company and FWF Peek Projekt AR 640. Premiere November 11th, 2021, at Minoriten Wels, Wels.
2. *Calling the Spirit, Skrjabin Mysterium* (music composition by Alexander Scriabin, 1872-1915) in cooperation with Anika Vavić (piano) and Christoph Bochdansky (puppet theatre). Choreography by Rose Breuss. With the support of Off Verticality Dance Company and FWF PEEK project AR 640. Premiere March 19th, 2022, at Klangraum Krems Minoritenkirche under *Imago Dei Festival 2022*, Krems.
3. *Lost in Translation, für Streichquartett und Tänzer* in cooperation with Elisabeth Naske (composer), Hanna Naske (stage designer) and Off Verticality Dance Company. Premiere April 21st, 2022, at *Das Muth*, Vienna.

The German theorist of movement education Dorothee Günther (1896–1975) published *Gymnastische Grundübungen nach System Mensendieck, im Bewegungsablauf dargestellt, zum Gebrauch in Schulen und zum Selbstunterricht* in 1926. In that work, Günther made her own drawings and designed a collection of “elementary movement categories” (Günther 1962; Toepfer 2005). The approach to the historical material was based on a methodology that can be divided into two complementary stages: “reading process” and “transfer process” of information.

READING PROCESS: The selected material retains and registers specific vocabulary that can be seen by a “direct transition” of information. The direct transition has to do with a direct recognition between observation and motor experience in reading the image, ergo the so called “kinesic intelligence”. Ellen Spolksky defines kinesic intelligence “as our human capacity to discern and interpret body movements, body postures, gestures, and facial expressions in

real situations as well as in our reception of visual art" (Bolens 2012: 1). As a methodology for the reading process, we carried out an analysis of "motoric identity" that helps to find other possibilities of understanding the scores. The motoric identity⁶ refers to the search for motor rules, that is, the search for internal models that can be identified by analyzing historical archives. The identification of motor rules and internal models in the score is based on the consideration of the performers as "mobile body-archives" (Van Imschoot 2005), which requires the dancer-researcher's body to function simultaneously as subject and object of research. This proposal demands the use of one's own embodied knowledge to visually identify the taxonomies in the drawings and, in parallel, to articulate one's own embodied knowledge to analyze these features and understand them in each body.

In relation to Günther's drawings, we developed the following movement inventory based on the proposal of *Inventarisierung von Bewegung* (IVB) by Claudia Jeschke in collaboration with Cary Rick (1999):

- 1) **Mobilization:** which parts of the body are active and which parts of the body are relaxed or less active. This has to be with the "tension" (mentioned above by Rose Breuss).
- 2) **Articulation:** which parts of the body are bending, turning, rotating, inclining. As Rose Breuss mentioned: "alignments."
- 3) **Segmentation:** describes the portion of a body part delimited by two points.
- 4) **Fragmentation:** refers to a minimum portion of the body that was divided or fractured.
- 5) **Relation to the axis:** refers to the support of the body and the degree of gravity participation. Relation with the weight, also with "tension".
- 6) **Space composition:** as a regulation of spatial retention and spatial directions. Body internal spaces as well as external spaces (environment).
- 7) **Observation:** refers to the way of analyzing the drawings, whether in a specific or overall way. Drawing as *posé* or drawing as part of movement composition. It also refers to the degree of relation between the figures. Also related to the position of the reader: how do I embody the score? From first-person perspective, in mirror view, upper view, etc.

TRANSFER PROCESS: Implies a negotiation and a search for possibilities of re-reading and re-interpreting of codified languages for the creation of a new identity/identification. This actualization process enables a transformation of (pre)established information into a new context that integrates individual characteristics of those who update such information: the dancers. The transfer process not only articulates complementary modes of approach to reading, analysis, and possible actualizations of the scores, but also demands a "sensorial attention to the relation between bodies and language[s] that normally goes unremarked in more traditional educational settings" (Nicely 2021: 13). This process emphasizes the dancer's agency, which refers not only to the

6 As coined by Claudia Jeschke, as part of this Movement Research studies with Master Students of the Institute for Dance Arts at Anton Bruckner Private University in Linz.

action of observing, reading, or analyzing dance (a primarily visual action), but to the possession of the motor representation of an observed action. The transfer process emphasizes the role of specific experience and training as a tool of and for research. In other words, it stresses the importance of embodied knowledge, body memory and performed acts.

In this case study, each new dance piece provided us with a new context in which to work. During the creation of the three dance works, the objective was to return to the source-archive-score as the basis of the research and as the basis in the development of movement material. This approach not only provides the possibility to generate and sustain repertoire, but also highlights the importance of the environment around us as a reality that determines us. Therefore, if we understand the environment around us, then it is possible to work with and transform our reality (Gerhardt 1993). The dance material retains its foundations, but not in isolation from the new context. Perhaps this estimation contradicts the fundamental principles of Günther's ideology, according to which her "movement education had little to do with the development of unique personalities and much to do with the creation of unique group identities governed by the subordination of bodies to a typological or 'elementary' (as she called it) system of signification" (Toepfer 2005: 157). Nonetheless, there is a correlation with principles proposed by Günther in that "the great advantage of the system is that it gives its users tremendous freedom to construct very complex narratives through a process of combining elementary movement forms" (Toepfer 2005: 162). Although our first approach to the drawings was in chronological order (i.e., we followed the order of the book from figure 1 to figure 50), it was during the different creative processes that we did not keep the chronological order proposed in *Gymnastische Grundübungen nach System Mensendieck*. This decomposition or abstraction in the order of the poses/positions/movements provided a plurality of possibilities regarding the combination of the elementary forms. Thus, the elementary movement categories gave the possibility of multiple constructions, of diverse narratives, and of unimaginable combinations that became more complex through group work and in relation to each new context.

To conclude, the score provides fragmentary information that invites the reader to delve into its own bodily experience. The score can be perceived as a possible unrealized potential to be re-signified or upcycled in its actualization. The approach proposed here not only uses historical material for artistic creation in contemporary dance, but also attempts to de-centralize pre-established canons in modes of knowledge transmission that formulate a certain binarism between opposing assumptions: archive/corporeality; theory/practice; past/present; artistic/scientific. The utilization of historical material in dance and its repercussions on the processes of analysis, reading, transfer and media translation provides an opportunity for different movement materials and a plurality of possibilities to emerge. In my perspective, this process of transformation-actualization is of interest when it takes place under a resonance of heterogeneity, giving rise to a plurality of voices that speak of a common history and of several histories at the same time.

References

Bolens, Guillemette (2012): *The Style of Gestures: Embodiment and Cognition in Literary Narrative*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Bolter, Jay D./ Grusin, Richard (1999): *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. MIT Press. Breuss, Rose (2017): "(Dance) Movements – Lines, Routes and Routines, Traces and Black Spots", in: Rose Breuss/Claudia Jeschke (Ed.), *De-archiving movement #2*. München: epodium. [online] <https://www.epodium.de/e-zine> [last accessed 20.10.2019].

Carter, Alexandra (2004): *Rethinking dance history: a reader*, London: Routledge.

deLahunta, Scott (2014): "Publishing Choreographic Ideas: Discourse from Practice", in *Mobile Notate, Tanz&Archiv. ForschungsReisen*, Heft 5, München: epodium, pp. 14–21.

Franko, Mark (2011): "Writing for the Body: Notation, Reconstruction, and Reinvention in Dance", in *Common Knowledge*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 321–334, [online] <https://doi.org/10.1215/0961754X-1188004> [last accessed 12.09.2022].

Geertz, Clifford (1973): *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York: Basic Books.

Gerhardt, Heinz-Peter (1993): "PAULO FREIRE (1921–1997)", in *Perspectivas: revista trimestral de educación comparada*, Vol. 23 No. 3–4, Paris, UNESCO: Oficina Internacional de Educación, pp.463–484.

Gilles Deleuze/Felix Guattari (2005): *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press.

Günther, Dorothee (1926): *Gymnastische Grundübungen nach System Mensendieck: Im Bewegungsablauf dargestellt von Dorothee Günther. Zum Gebrauch in Schulen und zum Selbstunterricht*, München: Delphin-Verlag.

Günther, Dorothee (1962): *Der Tanz als Bewegungsphänomen. Wesen und Werden*, Hamburg: Rowohlt.

Haraway, Donna (2018): *Second_Millennium. FimaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse*, New York: Routledge.

Hutchinson Guest, Ann (2005): *Labanotation: The System of Analyzing and Recording Movement*, New York: Routledge.

Hutchinson-Guest, Ann/van Haarst, Rob (2011): "Shape, Design, Trace Patterns", in *Advanced Labanotation*, Issue 2, Hampshire: Dance Books Ltd.

Järvinen, Hanna (2016): "Corporeal Memories: A Historian's Practice", in Thomas F.

DeFrantz/Philipa Rothfield (Ed.), *Choreography and Corporeality: relay in Motion*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 247–259.

Jenkins, Nicholas/Ritchie, Louise/Quinn, Sam (2021): *From reflection to diffraction: Exploring the use of vignettes within post-humanist and multi-species research*, (= Qualitative Research, 21(6)), pp. 975–989, DOI <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794120920258>.

Jeschke, Claudia (1999): *Tanz als Bewegungstext: Analysen zum Verhältnis von Tanztheater und Gesellschaftstanz (1910-1965)*, Berlin: De Gruyter.

Jeschke, Claudia (2017): *Corporeal Scores as Non-Discrete Historiographies*. (unpublished manuscript).

Jola, C./Haggard, P. (2005): "In-between notation and dance: cognitive processes in reading Labanotation", (= Proceedings of the Twenty-fourth Biennial Conference, Vol. 2) *International Council of Kinetography Laban*, pp. 145–155. [online] http://ickl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Proceedings_2005_2_OCR.pdf [last accessed 31.05.2020].

Kunst, Bojana (2014): "Subversion and the Dancing Body, Autonomy at display", *Performance Research*, 8(2), pp. 61–68.

Laban, Rudolph von (1991): *Choreutik, Grundlagen der Raum-Harmonielehre des Tanzes*, Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag.

Manning, Susan/Ross, Janice/Schneider, Rebecca (2020): *Futures of Dance Studies*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Nancy, Jean Luc (2010): *Zum Gehör*, Zürich-Berlin: diaphanes.

Nicely, Megan (2021): "Protean Knowledge: On Researching while Studying with Sherwood Chen", in *PARTake: The Journal of Performance as Research*, Vol. 3 No. 2, [online] <https://doi.org/10.33011/partake.v3i2.539> [last accessed 12.09.2022].

Pouillaude, Frédéric (2017): *Unworking Choreography: The Notion of the Work in Dance*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Poulos, Christopher N. (2021): *Essentials of Autoethnography*, Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Schneider, Birgit/Ernst, Christoph/Wöbking, Jan (Ed.) (2016): *Diagrammatik-Reader, Grundlegende Texte aus Theorie und Geschichte*, Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter.

Sehgal, Melanie. (2014): "Diffractive Propositions: Reading Alfred North Whitehead with

Donna Haraway and Karen Barad", (= *Parallax* Vol 20:3), in *Parallax*, pp. 188–201.

Stoler, Ann Laura (2010): "Archivos coloniales y el arte de gobernar", in *Revista Colombiana de Antropología*, Vol. 46 No. 2, Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, pp. 465–496.

Stoler, Ann Laura (2015): "On archival labor. Recrafting colonial history", *Diálogo Andino*, No. 46, [online] <http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0719-26812015000100012> [last accessed 12.09.2022].

Straus, Erwin (1956): *Vom Sinn der Sinne, ein Beitrag zur Grundlegung der Psychologie*, Berlin: Springer.

Toepfer, Karl (2005): "The Aristocratic City: The Dance Aesthetic of Dorothee Gunther and the Political Legacy of Francois Delsarte", in *Mime Journal*, Vol. 23 No. 10, pp.152–183, [online] <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/mimejournal/vol23/iss1/10> [last accessed 12.09.2022].

Taylor, Diana (2003): *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. London: Duke University Press.

Van Imschoot, Myriam (2005): "Rests in Pieces: On Scores, Notation and the Trace in Dance", *Multitudes: revue politique, artistique, philosophique*, No. 21, pp. 107–116 [online] <https://www.multitudes.net/Rests-in-pieces/> [last accessed 12.09.2022].