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LIFE COULD BE A DREAM
Fascination of the physical interactions between art and viewer

Sabine Klaus

This report is dedicated to Birdie, a seven-year old cockatiel that we inherited from my fiancé's mother. Untamed when she first got here turning into a loving social bird, that preferred sleeping under my chair making gently squeaky noises in her dreams while I was writing.

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For all the time, understanding, caring and practical support a word of 'Thank you' to my fiancé Michael D. Kelman, my family and my work place.

DECLARATIONS

I declare that I, Sabine Klaus, am the sole author of this MSc Report; that, unless otherwise stated, all references have been consulted by me; that the work of which the MSc Report is a record has been done by me and that it has not been previously accepted for a higher degree.

ABSTRACT:

*"Once upon a time, I, Chuang Tzu,
dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither,
to all intents and purposes a butterfly.
I was conscious only of following my fancies as a butterfly,
and was unconscious of my individuality as a man.
Suddenly, I awoke, and there I lay, myself again.
Now I do not know
whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly,
or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming
that I am now a man."¹*

Primarily, people perceive their surroundings through their eyes but through their bodies, too. On a daily basis, people see and react to other moving humans in real life as well as on TV or theatre. My practical work is based on this concept, and therefore, the following report looks at the parallels between the physical empathy of the viewer to moving bodies on screen and live performances. Correspondingly, this report interlinks with my own personal artistic perception and why it is vital for it to be represented through live performance as well as through video with focus on the experience of the spectator.

Chuang Tzu's taoistic parable shall serve as a template for this report about my Master Degree work. This report looks at the contemporary context and viewpoints of the on-going collaborative project *The State of Play*² which I am part of and my installation piece *ProjectorDancers*. Both projects investigate into the performative and creative role of the artist and of the audience.

The objective of this report is to enrich knowledge of art forms that use the moving human body as their medium but it also put into question the roles of the spectator to the work of art.

This report is a continuation of my Postgraduate Diploma Report.

¹ <http://www.vibrationdata.com/tao.htm>

² initiated by Alexandra Ross as performative curator to develop the creative process within curatorship

INTRODUCTION:

A note in my diary on Sunday, 3rd September 2006, describes the following:

“‘Silent Screen’ was the name of a performance by Nederlands Dance Theatre II that I watched last night. I do not know if it is because I am a small person or intended by the choreographer, yet, I was not able to see the dancers’ feet when I realised that part of the performance was a video on a stage-covering projection and the other part showed real live dancers who melted in and out of the screen toying with the viewers’ perception. The movements of the dancers are still memorized by my own muscles which were flinching all the way throughout the performance. I felt like being part of the performance and not only viewing with my eyes but translating it into own body like my skin has its own way of perception. While still being amazed, the audience was showered in bits of paper, half the size of a business card, saying ‘LIFE COULD BE A DREAM’”

Performances like the described one by NDT II had literally a physical effect on me. I feel inspired by live art and dance performances; therefore, I tend to sketch the movements as they go along. The line drawings of little moving humans are inclined to show noticeable compositional structure of captured motion as well as my interpretation of the performance. A further source to satisfy my thirst for confining movement is found in still photography and paintings.

At the beginning of the Master of Science in Electronic Imaging course, the idea was to create a stage-based screen piece in which a female dancer is interacting with her own digital reflection. However, as the research progressed for it, I realised that physical empathy between moving bodies is not merely bound to dancers. Art critic Margaret Morse describes her first encounter with an art installation *as an element of surprise in the actual bodily experience of the visitor*³... *and a fresh orientation of the body in space and a reformulation of visual and kinaesthetic experience*⁴. The term

³ p.158, MORSE, M., 1998. *Virtualities – Television, Media Art and Cyberculture*
USA: Indiana University Press.

⁴ Ibid.

for Morse's occurrence is *metakinesis* which was coined by dance critic John Martin and it will be further explained in the following chapters.

This report illustrates my literal and practical research into the concept of metakinesis and how an audience can be a trigger or sensor in a live performance or in an art installation. The question is how much can or is the 'passive' spectator really actively involved within a work of art?

It also explains the background and contemporary context of the collaboration project *The State of Play* and my Master Degree work *ProjectorDancers* which is an interactive installation. For the latter one, I incorporate the software Max/Msp/Jitter and G-Vision⁵ to expand my horizon on technology. G-Vision is as a *gestural recognition software plug-in for augmented real-time analysis within interactive installation and performance scenarios*.⁶

⁵ invented by Nigel Johnson and Stephen McKenna

⁶ http://www.computing.dundee.ac.uk/ac_research/projectdetails.asp?id=160

MAIN REPORT

1. THE STATE OF PLAY –LIVING THE DREAM



I. Sabine Klaus & Ridade Al-Daghestani, Video Still (camera: Sam Spreckley), copyright The State of Play

The State of Play is a travelling ever-evolving⁷ exhibition that was initiated by Alexandra Ross as *performative curator*⁸ and as an attempt to *blur boundaries and occasionally erase preconceived titles attributed to the exhibition process: such as performer, artist, audience, curator and artwork*⁹. So far, the collaboration has consisted out of Ross, Arnar Lindal-Halldorsson as AV¹⁰ artist, freelance illustrator Ridade Al-Daghestani and me as performer for the events in Berlin, April 2007, and Dundee, June 2007. The theme *play* has been the key starting point of working together and how to push its various facets.

1.1. International Choices

The State of Play unites multiple nationalities through the choice of international locations as well as the participants: Lindal-Halldorsson comes from Iceland, Al-

⁷ performers and layout of individual performances do change according to requirements of the space and location

⁸ Alexandra Ross coined this term for herself

⁹ ROSS, A., 2007. *Master of Fine Art Dissertation*.

Dundee: unpublished.

¹⁰ audiovisual

Daghestani is Jordanian, Ross is Scottish and I am from Germany. The travelling exhibition started off in Berlin with a three hours long performance event at which a well interpreted concept of the nearly literal meaning of the various states of play was presented.

1.2. Becoming an active part

During both performance events, in Berlin and Dundee, Al-Daghestani and I playfully interacted with the audience to gain their trust, thus, they were willing to become an active part of the performance. Although nothing as dramatic happened as performance artist Marina Abramović¹¹ practices and who began her path as a performance artist in the early 1970s up to this date. Her thoughtful focus lays on the connections between performer and audience, the limits of the body, and the possibilities of the mind. The piece *Rhythm 0* was performed in 1974 and is probably one of her best-known works in which *she assigned a passive role to herself, with the public being the force which would act on her.*¹² The State of Play functions more in an interactive lighthearted way, yet, the inclusion of the audience is vital and inspirational; the theme of *play* becomes apparent as the photo below shows a member of the audience and me passing onto each other a silent and invisible message.

1.3 The reasons to act

The motivations behind those exhibitions are to gain knowledge through exposure and to present our projects to the public in a gallery space and out with the university protected studio setting. Additionally, to learn how to find the right locations and the various methods of sourcing finance and getting publicity.

After the performances, the members of the audience are asked to give feedback on layout, structure, clarity and duration; consequently we should to be able to continuously improve the work. At the Berlin venue, one spectator told me how moved he was by the performance, especially by my act of crawling which he said that he felt that way, yet, would not have been able to do it. Therefore, he got a sense of relief through watching and it was like me doing it for him.

¹¹ born 30 November 1946, in Belgrade, Yugoslavia

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marina_Abramovic

1.4 Experiencing an empathetic audience

To work with a live audience is always a challenge but at the same time exhilarating. The State of Play live events which took place in Berlin, the Lower Foyer Gallery and the City Function Suite in Dundee the reaction of the viewers – whether facially or gestural – steered the course and speed of performance. An audience that reacts back has usually a positive impact on the energy levels of the performers and enables them to do things beyond their capabilities and own inspirations. Thus, it is not only the observer that feels physical empathy with the performer but the other way round, too, which then can be reused between the performers. For example, in the case of Al-Daghestani and me during the performance in the Lower Foyer, suddenly Al-Daghestani took the hand of a member of the audience. Seconds later, I did the same action to an other viewer because I noticed a slight flinch in his hand, yet, that point during the performance I was not able to see Al-Daghestani. Only during the video edit while going through the footage of the two different cameras, I realised that my action was actually triggered by a minute motion of the audience.



II. *The State of Play*, Berlin 2007, photograph taken by Rene Rebe, copyright *The State of Play*

Professor Blackwood describes his experience at the Berlin event that:

*Nor are the spectators passive actors in the fast moving drama unfolding before them. Klaus and Al-Daghestani engage with the audience, involving them in cameo roles throughout their dramatic interpretation of the project. The audience functions as a malleable factor capable of being incorporated into this piece, with the performers as their guides, in a subtle inversion of the normal artist-spectator relationship.*¹³

The performance in Berlin was held in the large gallery space of the *Internationales Forum*¹⁴ of which Al-Daghestani and I am made full use of through creating new spaces and viewpoints for the audience through simply shifting them several times over the course of the performance.

Performance artist Dan Graham¹⁵'s work is described in the book *New Media Art*¹⁶ as an *intellectual involvement with architecture ... and issues of perception* because his presentations *engaged viewers directly focusing on their own position as viewers in a given space at a particular time.*

¹³ BLACKWOOD, J., 2007. *Article about The State of Play for press release.*
Dundee: unpublished.

¹⁴ www.internationalesforum.com

¹⁵ born 1942

¹⁶ p.63, RUSH, M., 2000. *New Media Art – New Edition.*
London: Thames & Hudson Ltd.

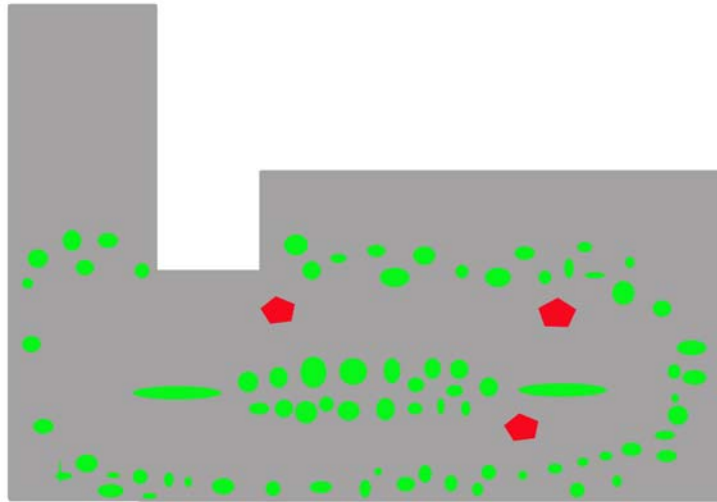
1.5 The audience in the middle



III.. *The State of Play* exhibition opening performance in Lower Foyer Gallery, members of the audience are sitting in the middle of the performance space; photograph taken by Steven Crichton, copyright *The State of Play*

The exhibition space in Dundee did not offer us the possibility to noticeably create new spaces with the audience; therefore, we played more with the notion of changing the roles between the spectator and the performer as well as including the curator Ross more as an active performer. The action to arrange members of the audience into the middle of the room facing back at the rest of the spectators was to change positions of *the observer and the observed*¹⁷.

¹⁷ Ibid.



IV. Floor plan of The Lower Foyer Gallery, green dots are the audience and the red dots are the performers

The graphic image VI. shows the floor plan of The Lower Foyer Gallery: the green dots are the audience standing at the side, in the middle and even lying on the floor. The performers are the red ones that freely move around the audience. This set up limited the audience's view, so they were only be able to look back at each other and left and right, and with it, their perception of the performance was narrowed down, too. The feedback was interesting in terms of how viewers only got parts of the performance and that they had to actively use their imagination to create a mental picture of what is happening outside their sight. Although, the audience mainly remained passive, the general comment was that they really felt becoming part of the performance and that they enjoyed the change of perspective.

1.6 Aggressive Reactions



V. *The State of Play*, Berlin 2007, *I am attacking Al-Daghestani*, Video Still (camera: B.E.M.)

Mankind's physical and emotional reactions to the moving image on screen and live have been well researched in the areas of action movies and live sporting competitions. In the book 'Why We Watch – the attractions of violent entertainment' by Jeffrey H. Goldstein writes about the effects and feedback of viewers to violence on screen and at a soccer match. For example, the '*alleged catharsis experienced by sports spectators...there is no support whatsoever for the catharsis theory. Indeed, the scores tended to show increased rather than diminished aggressiveness after the football game*¹⁸ as well as that children tend to have more '*empathy with the aggressor rather than to show empathic responses toward the hero or victim*'¹⁹.'

The video still 'V.' shows how I am suddenly picking a fight with Al-Daghestani during the event in Berlin. The mood had changed from light playfulness to tension. It is about the different facets of *play* of the performances that allows us to assume

¹⁸ p.19, GOLDSTEIN, J., 1998. *Why we watch – The Attractions of Violent Entertainment*. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹⁹ *ibid* p.99

character roles and to out act emotions for ourselves as well as for the audience. With my aggressive action, I wanted to test the two similar but different theories I read about action movies: one as mentioned earlier saying that *aggressiveness* are usually *increased* while another report stated that an action film like a Bruce Lee actually influences positively physical capabilities with added violence through *metakinesis and muscular sympathy*.²⁰ The feedback I received from my audience varied from telling me that the changes of moods made the performance exciting and gave shape to the characters of the performers, while other ones felt uncomfortable with it.

1.7 New media = old art?

The State of Play has got a feel of new media entertainment; Lindal-Halldorsson was live recording and remixing sounds and visuals of the performance, thus, digitally combing audience and performers in a new way. In a contemporary context, there is an analogy to a new media event like *Optronica*²¹ which was established by the AV artists *Addictive TV*²². Addictive TV is a duo made up by Graham Daniels and Tolly, that specializes in remixing movies and audio to create a new context. A known commercial piece they have done was the trailer for Antonio Banderas' *Take The Lead*²³ movie. The trailer is a rhythmic edit with split screens, a hiphop soundtrack and spoken words from the film which are remixed to create a new song. However, the tie to art is still apparent as Daniels puts it:

*“Although what we do is new because of the kind of content we create and remix, enabled by modern digital techniques and technologies, the actual idea behind the fusion of music and visuals go way back to early 20th century abstract artists and experimental filmmakers like Len Lyke or Oskar Fischinger. So, in that sense you could say it’s a really old idea.”*²⁴

²⁰ <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC42folder/anderson2/action2.html>

²¹ www.optronica.org

²² www.addictive.tv

²³ <http://youtube.com/watch?v=o7wese9BuEU>

²⁴ *Filmwaves – the magazine for independent filmmakers and audiences*, Issue No 32, Winter 2007
Published by Obraz Productions Ltd / editor & publisher Marco Zee-Jotti (ISSN 1460-4051)
Edgware/UK; www.filmwaves.co.uk

In the same way, *The State of Play* is a descendent of performance art similar to the one by Marina Abramović.

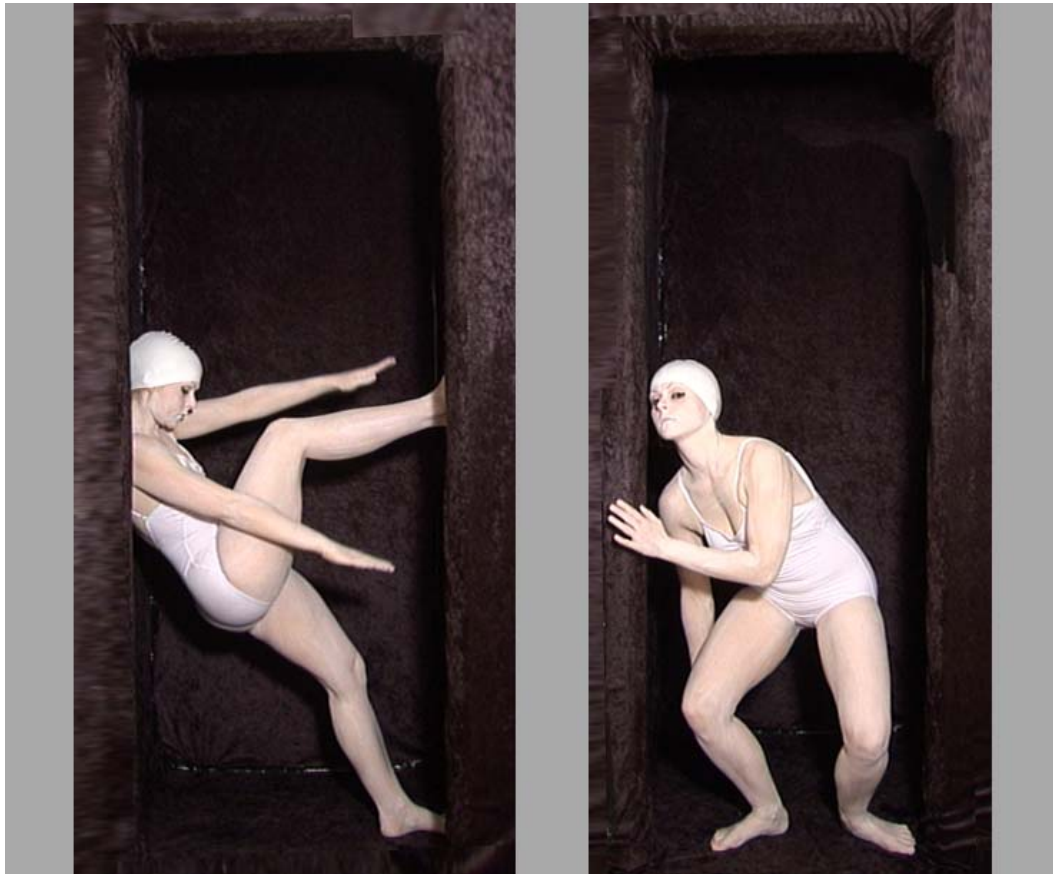
1.8 Observing Performer

The workshop with performance artist Richard Layzell has been an eye-opener on how in a simplistic but imaginative way you can incorporate an audience into your work. I used his idea on how much more an object, movement or person can be in a playful way. For example during the Act I of *The State of Play* event in Berlin, I drew an invisible thread out of an observer's garment and tied and knotted it around the spectators before I handed it to a five-year old girl who was surprised by being handed over such a 'power' as well as the 'tied up' adults suddenly felt like being held by the little girl.

As a performance artist, it is not only important to research one's own project and to present it to an audience; it is also vital to maintain a contenance of being a spectator oneself and to engage with other performance artists. The National Review of Life Art offers a great opportunity to engage with a diverse platform of performance art. Inspirational was the Belgian dance group *Rabbit Hole Collective* with their piece *Hopscotch* presenting a combination of live performance with 'interruptions' of video footage filmed in a German coal mine. On the *New Moves* website for the NRLA event, The Rabbit Hole Collective states that they '*propose it as a game for the spectator. Be active while being passive. Place things in order, then rearrange them*'.²⁵ This pregnant statement leads into the following chapter about my interactive screenwork *ProjectorDancers*.

²⁵ <http://www.newmoves.co.uk/rabbitholecollective.aspx>

2. PROJECTORDANCERS –DREAMING OF LIFE



VI. Sketch for *ProjectorDancers* showing the artist creating compositional lines with her body, copyright Sabine Klaus

Art critic Morse states that art installations that include video moved from the static sculpture toward ‘liveness’ that began in earnest in the 1960s²⁶, during a time that included happenings, performance, conceptual art, body art, earth works, and the larger category of installation art.²⁷

ProjectorDancers shows on two over-life sized projections a female figure covered in white paint and wearing a white leotard and white swim cap. Her all-over whiteness contrasts the black velvet box within she moves. The velvet box appears to be sunken into wall and thus being part of the exhibiting space while the pallid figure appears removed from the gallery visitors. Shot on eye-level²⁸ and direct lighting as it would be in the gallery space and viewed from the viewer’s perspective. Two two meter high plinths lead into the sensor space like to two large columns. Each plinth also serves

²⁶ p.158, op cit., MORSE

²⁷ ibid.

²⁸ based on the eye-level of the artist

the purpose of a stand for the projector and a 'hiding place' for each of the two mac computers which run the interactive software. The openness of the space is important so a viewer can naturally and instinctively approach the projections with the two plinths only giving a slight guidance. Currently, this piece is still work in progress.



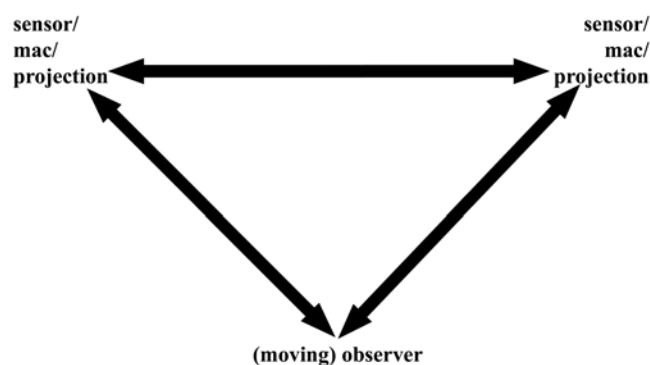
VII. Installation-sketch for the Kangaroo space, the red square indicates the sensor area of the hanging webcam

The audio is merely a rustling atmospheric sound to create some background noise because it should be the viewer's own sounds created through their movements in the exhibition space that predominate.

2.1 Question of Duration

The duration of the piece depends on the timing of the triggers: in the software programme MAX/MSP/Jitter, the interactive layout is scripted to create different ways for the projected dancers to interact with each other and the audience. After three minutes, a pause will happen whether to one of the projections or both depending on when they were triggered. The pause lasts for fifteen seconds before the work can be triggered again; during the pause the video resumes to a jittering movement rather than a freeze frame. The break is my artistic intervention to further

an understanding that the work is not solely reacting back but also has a mind of its own. The viewer will be able to scratch²⁹ the projected performer's movements through their own movements. It becomes 'a way of feeling and sensing spaces..., and so it's about inscription.'³⁰ The two projections independently run off two mac computers; the webcam is sensing an area divided into six squares. Each of the squares has a series of different trigger functions, two of them on either side are individual to each projection and 'unknown' to the other one. However, the two middle squares are shared by both projections. For instant, if a moving spectator steps into the left square that is further away from the left projection. Then the left projection will start moving while the 'untriggered' right projection remains in the jittery starting position. When the spectator steps straight ahead into the sensor square closer to the left projection, it will start to move more. However, if the viewer moves into one of the middle sensor squares both projections will start playing. The more the spectator or spectators engage with the sensor areas, and therefore, starting off more triggers the more movement sequences will be added to the projected dancer(s). From further away ProjectorDancers appears to be only a jittery projection similar to other interactive works that *require audience engagement* otherwise they will *not reveal their content at a glance*³¹. For example, Adam Chapman's interactive work *Fight/Dance*³², the screen is highly pixelated and only if the viewer is rocking back and forth in front of it he or she will be able to see a blurred image of the actual footage.



VIII. graph of interaction

²⁹ The viewer will be able to direct and control the dancers' movements through triggering different sensors in space.

³⁰ William Forsythe's CD-ROM on 'Improvisation Technologies

³¹ p.23, PAUL, C., 2003. *Digital Art*.

London: Thames & Hudson

³² www.adamchapmanart.com

Image VIII. illustrates the ways of interaction of the piece: there is not only an interaction between the observer and the projections but also between the projection. The reason for this is that each video independently runs on its own computer. I can script the way the software is triggered according to the observer's movements, yet, I cannot control the movement sequences that will happen between the two projected dancers.

2.2 Development of ProjectorDancers

In the first stage for ProjectorDancers, I worked with a dancer, however, for the final stage of this project, I use myself as the performer because of the way I translate movements from pictures and live performances into a sketch, and then reinterpret those sketches back into my own physicality. Another dancer would have represented a diluted version of my bodily translation of the movements. One of the objectives of ProjectorDancers is to draw my research for my Master Degree together.

Rather than being the sole 'creator' of a work of art' I decided to take on ' the role of a mediator or facilitator for audiences³³, interaction with and contribution to the artwork.' because while building my first MAX/MSP/Jitter projects I realised that my outcome would be only mediocre if I spread my strengths too much. *The creation process of digital art itself frequently relies on complex collaborations between artist and...programmers³⁴.* Therefore, I adopted the role of being the creative director on this project to be able to focus on the performance to camera and the aesthetics, and so, I took Andrew Cook on board as the software designer for this project.

2.3 Interactive Perception

The reason for using interactive software with ProjectorDancers is to alter perception, to find out how well an audience will react to the set up and to gain insight to find new ways to use the body in space, thus deepen physical understanding of humans. Examples of applied interactivity are documented by the workshop 'Dance and New Media'³⁵ undertaken by media artists, dancers and choreographers who explored the

³³ p.21, op cit, PAUL

³⁴ p.22, ibid.

³⁵ 2001, Choreographisches Zentrum NRW Zollverein under the artistic direction of Soelke Dinkla

possibilities of projections. The aim of 'ProjectorDancers' is to 'develop the physical sense of relationships between motions as well as - actually discover one's own ... passed on through visual exchange and imitation'³⁶. Additionally, the basis to video the piece on eye-level is the 'costruzione legitima' ... a means of including the viewer with its compositional system.³⁷

During a new media dance workshop, Maya Deren's video work *Ritual in Transfigured Time*³⁸ is shown in which Deren walks up a staircase that appears distorted through the camera and edit. The partakers 'felt physical twitches when' (p.178) viewing the video:

This visceral feeling is a movement identification or *Metakinesis*, a term coined by John Martin, is the identification or empathy of movement from the moving subject to an observer.

ProjectorDancers takes this idea further and presents the viewer an analysable set up. The restrictions of the body enforced upon it by the box ensures a framework for the movement. Similar to a framed painting within which a composition can be read into, the box allows the creation of a spatial relationship of the body and the frame and therefore enables us to study it.

2.4 Dialogue in Silence

Hopefully, the interacting spectator will experience a bodily response to ProjectorDancers, similar to the one I described about *Silent Screen* in my diary or *Ritual in Time*. The sensation is called *metakinesis*, as the term implies, is the process of transferring something through the medium of movement³⁹ or as Martin puts it:

³⁶ FORSYTHE, W., 1999. *Improvisation Technologies – A tool for the Analytical Dance Eye*. Ostfildern:Hatje Cantz Verlag.

³⁷ P.49, YUILL, S. D., 2002. *Image. Building. Word – A study of the digital artefact*. UK: unpublished, Duncan of Jordanstone Library

³⁸ p.176/8, DINKLA, S. & LEEKER, M. (eds), 2002, *Dance and Technology: Moving towards Media Productions*. Berlin: Alexander Verlag.

³⁹<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC42folder/anderson2/action2.html>

Movement, then, in and of itself is a medium for the transference of an aesthetic and emotional concept from the unconscious of one individual to that of another...Kinesis is the name they gave to physical movement; we find that there is correlated with kinesis a supposed psychic accompaniment called metakinesis, this correlation growing from the theory that the physical and the psychical are merely two aspects of a single underlying reality...It is extremely important, however, that we see in the dance the relation that exists between physical movement and mental — or psychical, if you will — intention." ⁴⁰

2.5 Empathetic compositional bodily gravity

A parallel can be drawn between compositional lines in paintings and lines we physically create with our bodies; both ways form an emotional or bodily response. In the similar way, Rudolf Laban's as well as choreographer William Forsythe's theories are based on geometric forms⁴¹ within the body itself and the body in space. Laban outlines the kinesphere through defining spaces⁴² around us, inspired by this I examined my physical capabilities in a box which references to the confining frame space of 'ProjectorDancers'.



IX. stills from video sketch 'BOX', May 2007

In May 2007, I started to collect footage of me in the box which is a stripped out coal cupboard. The video sketch *BOX* was created out of these still images and shown during the one month long exhibition for The State of Play in the Lower Foyer. Those framegrabs in the illustration IX. show the geometrical lines produced with my body within the restricted space of the box.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ Like circle, lines, planes and points

⁴² E.g. in forms of crystals

Another advantage of choosing a limited space is not only that it sets framework around the body but it also creates the option to rotate the box as illustrated below:



X. ideas sketch

A rotation of the video could be edited or scripted into the software and would be a nice trick on the spatial perception of the viewer. ProjectorDancers is still developing, yet, I enjoyed the way my sense of gravity was challenged watching Liz Aggiss performing in her video *Motion Capture* in a turning box and Michael Downing's *Corned* video the dancer Susanna Hood seemingly spins in a corner. Accordingly, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's book *The World of Perception*, he describes how we can get our surroundings through our bodies if we make them *the subject of perception*⁴³. My sense of gravity might have been affected by watching those videos, however, at the same time the awareness of my own body was heightened.

⁴³ p.10 MERLEAU-PONTY, M., 2004. *The World of Perception*. UK: Routledge.

3. The State of Dance and The Play of Projection – A shared dream



XI. illustration of compositional lines within the human body

A word to composition which has been an objective in both of the above mentioned works, although in *The State of Play* compositional lines are more fluidly applied and appeal more to the sub-consciousness of the audience while it is more visible in the static set up of *ProjectorDancers*. The image XI. on this page shows a detail of Michelangelo's *The Sistine Chapel*⁴⁴ (1.) of Adam receiving life by God and next to it there is Mikhail Baryshnikov in *Apollo*⁴⁵ (2.); both figures, Adam and Apollo, create

⁴⁴ scanned from *The Story of Art*, note the image is mirrored to keep the similarity obvious
GOMBRICH, E.H., 1995. *The Story of Art*, 15th edition
London: Phaidon Press Limited.

⁴⁵ BARYSHNIKOV, M., 2002. *Baryshnikov in black and white*,
London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

evident lines with their bodies. Their right arms are pointing up in a dynamic way, while their left arms create a sense of stability with a vertical line and a 90 degree to the shoulder and the floor. An acute triangle shown with one of their legs is evidence for the ability to get up and move while the other leg opposes this through an relaxed lying down horizontal contour. In *The Story of Art*, E. H. Gombrich illustrates how to break up a *rigid symmetry* of a painting and how to initiate *a sense of movement and counter-movement*⁴⁶. He adds that *wisdom of arrangement, geometrical patterns...and the human body in any position or movement could reflect the inner life of the figures represented*⁴⁷. This *wisdom of arrangement* is recreated in the performances for *The State of Play* in Berlin and Dundee (3.-6.) in a fluid manner as well as in a controlled scenario of the box in *ProjectorDancers* (7. & 8.)⁴⁸. I chose the moments of pointing with arm from the *The State of Play* video because it clearly indicates the lines and dynamics within the body as well as showing a directional structure of my arm and my eyes. This is called *Teleskopieren*⁴⁹ *Teleskopieren*⁵⁰ and will be explained further on in this chapter.

3.1 Awake the audience from dreaming!

Reflection on my diary entry in the introduction, choreographer Paul Lightfoot and his partner, the Spanish dancer Sol Leon⁵¹, created *Silent Screen* for the Nederlands Dans Theatre II. Martin Lenon writes about NDT II how they *redefined the limitations of the human body. The ecstatic audience was enchanted and delighted by 'Silent Screen' that blew 'the minds of their admirers'*⁵². With the statement 'Life Could Be Dream', its possible objective could be to remind the audience to rethink what they just have seen. What was real and what was not? What was live and what was recorded or could it also be a possible hint to the spectators to question their own position. Referring to Tao's famous dream of being a butterfly and his wondering if he might be a butterfly that dreams it is a human, if life is a dream could it be that the viewer is actually the performer. A special emphasis of this report lays on the

⁴⁶ p. 263, op cit., GOMBRICH.

⁴⁷ p.94, ibid.

⁴⁸ 7. is a video still of a rehearsal taken on 09/07/07 imitating the sketch done on 17/04/07; note both images are mirrored.

⁴⁹ p.126 SIEGMUND, G., 2004. *William Forsythe - Denken in Bewegung (- Thinking in Motion)*. Berlin: Henschelverlag.

⁵⁰ ibid.

⁵¹ http://www.ballet.co.uk/magazines/yr_06/sep06/interview_paul_lightfoot.htm

⁵² <http://www.edinburgh-festivals.com/reviews.cfm?id=1292972006>

following quote relating to John Martin's concept of metakinesis: '*Even if the dancing body is moving and we the seating body are watching, we are in constant movement to search and chase signs, parts, traces*⁵³.' In my own practice of performance art, I am trying to turn the tables as well as aiming to turn the viewers in my video installations into the actual performers.

3.2 The Presence in the Here-and-Now

Screen-based art installations offer to the spectators *a spatial here-and-now, enclosed within a construction that is grounded in actual (not illusionistic) space*⁵⁴. On the contrary a movie in the cinema or on TV actually creates a clear divide between the presence of the viewer and the film. ProjectorDancers' installation aims to merge into the wall of the gallery and with its black and white look, it is leaning on what Lightfoot is saying that he wanted to achieve by making *a live silent movie. It gives it that three-dimensional trompe l'oeil feel, where people feel like the film behind the dance is also live. It's kind of a fake reality.*⁵⁵

As mentioned earlier, during the performances of The State of Play it was important *to establish contact across spatial distances... "contact" can allow us to "widen"... "our 'presence' in space"*⁵⁶ and thus, the audience can feel being part of the art work and thus, being able to complete it. As a performer I am aware of this, similar to how *an actor can establish contact not only with other actors, but also with the audience*⁵⁷. In ProjectorDancers, a further goal is to translate this knowledge of live performance into the digital medium and to remove the performer. The question how will it change the experience of the spectators.

*"A picture is not thought and settled beforehand.
While it is being done it changes as one's thoughts change.
And when it is finished, it still goes on changing,
according to the state of mind
of whoever is looking at it."*

⁵³ <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC42folder/anderson2/action2.html>

⁵⁴ p.159, op cit., MORSE

⁵⁵ <http://www.edinburgh-festivals.com/reviews.cfm?id=1261262006&sid=12064>

⁵⁶ <http://donhanlonjohnson.com/newsite/syllabi/behnkebodyrelationality.html>

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

3.3 Total interactivity

In the beginning of 1990s, at SIGGRAPH⁵⁹, Loren and Rachel Carpenter revealed a new interactive game that allowed groups of people to participate it. It was "*chase*" game, *the left side of the audience controls the coyote and the right side controls the roadrunner*⁶⁰. The sensors were able to detect the participants' movements and the faster they moved, *the faster their character runs*⁶¹. Visually, the audience's involvement became apparent, and thus, gave them feedback on how well they were doing. The movement response of ProjectorDancers is more subtle to stimulate knowledge of composition as well as triggering a sub-conscious reaction.

The artist Bruce Nauman⁶² defines the physical space of his studio with his body and sees the body as sculptural material. Through the means of video, Nauman can create a *voyeuristic encounter between himself and the viewer*⁶³. With a background in fine art, he sees the usage of using video as only one other medium of his artistic practice, '*interested in what art can be, not just what painting can be*⁶⁴.'

An interactive installation needs audience interaction to work, to become a work of art in the participating viewer's mind; as the artist, I can even decide the duration and how much interactivity is required to experience the whole piece. German artist Wolf Vostell speaks of the *total* event of installation comprising noise, object, movement, colour and psychology. He also reflects the performance influence in video art, recognized that art takes place in a context.⁶⁵

Art critic Margaret Morse comments on Bruce Nauman's 'Live Taped Video Corridor' (1968 – 1970) and how she felt *unglued* within this particular art installation. She also outlines the '*sensorimotor experience, the contemplative level*

⁵⁸ p.495, FELDMAN, E.B., 1992. *Varieties of Visual Experience – Fourth Edition*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

⁵⁹ Special Interest Group for Computer GRAPHics is an annual conference on computer graphics

⁶⁰ <http://www.monzy.org/audience/>

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² p. 106, RUSH, M., 2000. *New Media Art – New Edition*. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd.

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ p.125, *ibid.*

and how the visitor becomes enveloped in images, textures and sounds⁶⁶, in art installations in general. The effect of the installation was so strong that she lost orientation in space⁶⁷.

3.4 Another silent approach

ProjectorDancers and The State of Play have a theatrical allusion; especially the latter one closely connects to the following:

The Japanese artist group Dumb Type was formed by students at Kyoto University in 1984, equally The State of Play collaboration has been a students project, yet, is planned to continue beyond the duration of the course. Dumb Type is known for its *highly theatrical video installations, which ... are expressively related to their practice of dance and theatre*⁶⁸. Their piece *Lovers* shows an interactive multi-media installation in a large darkened room, when entered the viewer is approached by silent naked men and women appearing and disappearing on the wall-covering black screen. The Butoh-infused artist group describes on their website about how to *develop an art/performance form to fill the gap between static visual art and performance dependent on dialogue*⁶⁹. The question is how a motionless art like painting and a verbal art like theatre can meet. The people emerging in and out the screen in *Lovers* step into a wordless conversation with the audience purely through their physical presence. ProjectorDancers purely lives off the dancers' movements and physicality while The State of Play uses words between the curator and the performers, yet, again a speechless dialogue guided by gestures is applied to make contact and to interact with the audience.

3.5 Analysing the view of the body

Creating compositions with the human body has been explored and described especially well through the *Laban Movement Analysis, LMA*, established by Rudolf Laban's students after his death. It puts the moving body in various categories like *Patterns of Total Body*⁷⁰. Personally, I have not been trained under LMA system, yet,

⁶⁶ p.156, cit op., MORSE

⁶⁷ p. 130, cit op., RUSH

⁶⁸ p.164, ibid.

⁶⁹ <http://dumbtype.com/intro/work.html>

⁷⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laban_Movement_Analysis

I found the idea logical and inspiring. My research on this subject is interpreted through my work, plus, I combine it with the *Improvisation Technologies* invented by choreographer William Forsythe. Prue Land, one of Forsythe's dancers, explains how she and her dance partner Richard developed Forsythe's improvisation techniques for themselves. She calls one of the additional methods *Teleskopieren*⁷¹ and the other one *Metaskopieren*⁷². The first one works with where the other dancer is looking or moving his or her arm to, while *Metaskopieren* reacts to the other ones movements. It has been used in the performance *Woolf Phrase*.

3.6 Presence within the architecture

Whether for an installation or a performance, the exhibiting space is important in this respect that an artist might feel inspired by its architecture or has to adapt his or her work for it. Both forms of art prove the presence of the artist. While a traditional framed painting can be hung, the artist actually needs to work with the space in forms of installing or performing within it. For instant, the differences between the two locations in Dundee: performing in the City Function Suite in Dundee for *The State of Play*, the floor was sticky so my turns on point were slowed down in contrast to the floor in the Lower Foyer which was slippy, and consequently, I had to do faster moves not to slide. Besides, the ceiling in the club as much lower than in the gallery, and as a result, it restricted the height of some jumps. Hence the expression of the movements changed. For *ProjectorDancers*, the layout plan of the installation had to be adapted according to the exhibition space and I am as the artist will be present to install it. Thus, for both pieces, my presence and working with the spaces are vital.

⁷¹ p.126, op cit., SIEGMUND.

⁷² Ibid.

CONCLUSION

The answer to the question *who is performing* depends on the degree of how much a viewer is willing to let themselves get involved with a work of art. A live performer can tease more out of the audience while an interactive installation is literally left to its own devices and requires the spectator's interest and patience. At the same time, it has the advantage of the being able to offer the viewers the opportunity to explore the work of art and its interactivity in their own time and to their own level of involvement.

Through my personal experiences of being a performer as well as an observer, I can confirm that even in minute forms and sub-consciously, humans tend to react to other moving bodies and that visceral empathy is naturally inherent to mankind. As Margaret Morse puts it in the beginning of this report that there is *an element of surprise in the actual bodily experience of the visitor*⁷³.

Personally, The State of Play and ProjectorDancers depend on each to enrich my horizon and own perception of moving art. They also challenge my understanding and awareness of the observer, and thus, enable me to see my work of art from another viewpoint other than my own. To find compositional structure, renaissance paintings to contemporary dance serve as templates and those findings prove that 'new' knowledge is actually 'old' knowledge which is merely represented in a different way. This provides a solid foundation for my research, and as a result, I will further explore the analytical lines of the body.

The 'inverted' view of the spectator, that was created through arranging half of the audience into the middle of the Lower Foyer, was a key moment for my investigation of the perception and behaviour of the observer. Basically, the roles were switched: the audience was forced to face each other rather than watching the performance. Through being put into the middle of the performance space, they were given the chance to get actively involved, for example through changing their position, or remaining passive as they all did, thus, become the performers' material.

⁷³ p.158, op cit., MORSE

Probably, all of them followed the gestured instructions of the performers because they were intrigued about what will happen next or intimidated by being put on the spot. However, the open layout of ProjectorDancers turns visitors of the exhibition into participants even without them knowing. There is no need to be consciously aware of the projections' reactions which will stimulate a sub-conscious physical response within the viewer. Thus, the installation allows a more genuine and intimate dialogue between the bodies on screen and the observer's one.

Last but not least, let us return to John Martin's concept of metakinesis: '*Even if the dancing body is moving and we the seating body are watching, we are in constant movement to search and chase signs, parts, traces*⁷⁴. Similarly to Chuang Tzu's renewed perception of life through his dream, could it be that the performer is a moving observer and that the audience is a seated performer? Maybe Lightfoot and Leon are right that *Life is a Dream* if we allow ourselves to be *enveloped* into the work of art whether it is a performance or an installation.

⁷⁴ <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC42folder/anderson2/action2.html>

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IV. *Floor plan of The Lower Foyer Gallery, green dots are the audience and the red dots are the performers, author's own*

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