

Scratching the Script

Sabina Holzer

Here, I would like to invite you to radically connect your dancing experience with writing. Let your writing be informed not only by verbal thinking but also by the intensities, sensations and liminal thoughts resonating from dancing, and get in contact with all that while tracing. In this way writing can become scribbling and/or drawing. It means to engage in momentum, care, pleasure, excitement – as we know from dancing.

Mallarmé claimed that dancing is something like a new way of writing, that the body of the dancer writes a poem which is free of any writing utensils; – therefore the term ‘choreo-graphy’ or ‘dance-writing’. A less known essay of Giorgio Agamben about dancing, with the title ‘Les corps a venir’ (The coming body), starts to object to this widespread metaphor. Dance here means not writing but reading. But the text that is read is missing, or it is unreadable. The Dancer, to use the beautiful image of Hofmannsthal “reads, what never has been written”.

— Sabina Holzer



— Jack Hauser, *M1+1*, Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, 2010. Photo by Maschek S.

Wang Dang Doodle? Doodling/Scribbling is a drawing made while a person’s attention is otherwise occupied. Doodles are *simple drawings that can have concrete representational meaning* or may just be composed of random and abstract lines, generally realised without ever lifting the drawing device off the paper – in which case they are usually called a ‘scribble’.

What could the essence of writing be? Just a humble sensation like a fluid trembling? A movement as such, invisible. An instant of rest causing an imprint, which is made coincidentally. Something which is left. Has the essence of an object something to do with its destruction? Not what remains after it has been used up, but what is thrown away. What is writing, which is futile and decipherable but not interpretable. A writing, which retains the gesture, not the product.

— Roland Barthes



— *Verschreibungen – Roots*. Artistic Research by S. Holzer in the frame of the project *Stoffwechsel*, 2016, produced by Im Flieger. Photo by S. Holzer

Doodling and scribbling are most often associated with young children and toddlers because the state of their hand-eye coordination is very loose. Despite this, it is not uncommon to see such behaviour with adults, in which case it generally is done jovially, out of boredom. Doodling can aid a person's memory by expending just enough energy to do a kind of daydreaming. Thus, it acts as a mediator within the spectrum of 'thinking too much' or 'thinking too little', and helps to focus on a current situation. In addition scribbling can help connecting to more sensorial state of mind and open to a trans-verbal condition where a pen is guided more directly by sensations. Connecting scribbling with the act of writing can open unexpected ways. Documenting this way can become like a graphical score to be reinterpreted either by yourself – connecting imaginary translations to your way of teaching your classes –, your students and your colleagues for exchange.

What is a gesture – 'a surplus of an action'?, the 'indeterminate and inexhaustible total of reasons, pulsions, indolences which surround the action'? The message, produces information, the sign, produces an intellection, the gesture, produces all the rest, the surplus.

— Eleanor Phillips



— *Never ending fire opening up unfinished – Scribbles 1*. Artistic Research by S. Holzer in the frame of the project *Stoffwechsel*, 2016, produced by Im Flieger. Photo by A. Lenz

Some Practices/Exercises

Drawing with Your Eyes Closed – a Way to Re-engage in Your Sensations Triggered While Dancing

Take a paper (or a material of your choice to write on) and a writing instrument. Take some breaths, close your eyes and connect to your dancing. Feel how you are holding the pen – there are many ways to do it. Let your hands do what they want. If you write with pen and paper, try to let the pen on the paper. You might want to play with the pressure of the pen touching the paper, might turn the paper around, might move around your pen. Give yourself time so that your tactile and kinesthetic senses can connect with the cognitive awareness. Watch and read your own impulses unfolding. This is the moment when the writing turns into a never-ending line.

- ⊗ You can either set timing for your drawing.
- ⊗ Draw as long as the impulse goes.
- ⊗ Draw as long, until you feel a word in your mind, rising, that you want to write down.

For me dancing and verbalizing are ways to document. Sometimes I know what I document, sometimes I can channel what to document, and sometimes I dive into the unknown and the things, issues I connect with appear and rise through dancing and verbalizing. I see writing, tracing as documenting (my) dancing, and dancing as documenting ways of writing with words, inner images and schemes.

Automatic Moving – Not Minding Style, Including all Your Impulses In Your Dance

Follow the pace of your impulses without censoring as much as possible. Include your face; breath, sound, songs, or speaking – even if it is just a line of a song or some words which are not a sentence yet. *Exhaust yourself* from your impulses, and after a while, start listening to them playfully. Silence and repetition in movement, and sound/words is always an option to welcome.

Automatic Talking – Including All Voices

Start talking (it can be whispering) with all the voices and sounds you have in your body. All the different voices, images, sensations and feelings: let them flow and modulate your speaking. Explore the manifolds of speakers, which is you. *Be playful and have fun.*

Re-weaving Text Through Movement

- ⊗ Read a text (poetry or theory) out loud, while another person is moving. The moving person is repeating just the words she/he likes or copying, varying the melody of the language.
- ⊗ Use a moving person's body as a surface to write.
- ⊗ Walk and write at the same time.

⊗ Dance and write at the same time – Move with a pencil in the hand, which sometimes meets the paper.

Textures

Put words and sentences (poetry, philosophy; written on papers in different sizes) in the space in different places to be seen and met by the dancers, like light or other things in the studio, as they move. Start with your dance and let it be influenced by action of reading and meeting the words. Do not interpret them. Let your body and dance digest and respond with your own texture of movement, voice and words.

Acting on the Base of the Trace – Letting Language Be Your Partner in Inspiring and Motivating Your Dance

For the following suggestions, you can *work alone or take another person* to work with. You can work from a list of words or a poem, or a monologue. Verbs are often more easy to engage with.

1. **Listen** to the language as you read the text out loud. Play with the rhythm and melody of the text. If it contains a rhythm, begin to move to the rhythm of the words. When you know the text better, you can play with when you want to do it more song like, or what is the important information to utter.
2. **Follow the music of the text with your whole body.** Decide to just follow with one body-part (with your leg, arm(s), head etc).
3. **Let the text travel through different body parts:** legs, hips, arms, head. Explore and play.
4. **Make an automatic writing session.** Read it and see if there is something which talks to you, touches you. Encircle that part and dance with it. Explore if it moves with you, if it transforms, or shies away immediately.

5. **Choose how you want to start informing a looping feedback:** with automatic writing, automatic talking, drawing with your eyes closed? Always bring it back to moving/dancing.



— Jack Hauser, *M1+1*, Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, 2010. Photo by Maschek S.

LITERATURE

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