

FINAL REPORT
IN THE PURSUIT OF PEACE
TANZ+ RESIDENCY

19th July - 5th August 2022

Choreographer: Terence Kohler

Graphic & Immersive Design: Paul Putzar

Dancers: Lucie Horná, Ann-Katrin Adam, Doris Becker, Pablo Martínez

*The movement. The space. The sound. The human being. The intent. The moment.
The point of view. The technique. The algorithm. The point of view.
The moment. The intent. The human being. The sound. The space. The movement.*

Our Tanz+ Residency opened a new way to consider the generation of dance for each of the participants involved. Coming from state subventioned theatre structures with a strong focus on product oriented work, we began with formalised structures of analytic movement research. However, it wasn't long until our creative process evolved and we found ourselves swimming in unfamiliar territory.

We worked with a 10m long fixed ballet barre as a choreographic object. The ballet barre has been a stable partner in our daily practice for years and metaphorically has supported us through changes in our training, careers and personal lives. We found that using the fixed barre as a dependable object quickly unlocked deep subconscious experiences embedded within the dancer's bodies. The honesty was at times light and playful and at others highly personal and borderlining traumatic. Abandoning formal movement tasks early on, we adopted the usage of directed intention to allow for greater freedom in giving form to the material that was emerging of its own accord.

After a few days of working in this manner, we experienced that the dancers were no longer relying on their brains to execute movement but on their hearts to interpret and give space to their feelings and sensations. By doing this their bodies transformed into instruments of intuitive perception and the presence of flow encouraged each moment to seamlessly melt into the next. This was particularly evident in the group exercises where holding onto collective intentions created situations which forced them to respond to the changing environment between them.

Working with a consciously focussed usage of intention allowed us to investigate a wide range of situational contexts ranging from breathing scores, visual stimuli, semantic associations in words/lyrics/texts, emotions/feelings/sensations, focal projections in space, metaphorical embodiment, scales of opposition, gravity defying physics, scores and predefined structures, imaginative/surrealistic landscapes and relational contradictions only to name a few. One particular experiment saw the dancers interacting as a group while listening to separate playlists streamed directly to their wireless headphones.

Working with a collaborative playlist became a valuable tool to spark the intuitive impulses of the moment. Our eclectic soundtracks ranged from Gustav Mahler to Bob Marley to Marvin Gaye, from Astor Piazzolla to Disney Soundtracks to Paolo Nutini, from The Rolling Stones

to Franz Liszt to Nina Simone... there was no containment in the audible landscape that emerged from the group's own spontaneous volition. At the end of the residency our playlist contained over 11 hours of music.

Employing technology was also an important aspect of our research. Each day's research was filmed in 6K resolution and logged together with the respective intentions employed. Over 20 hours of footage was captured. Simultaneous to the choreographic research, we also experimented with realtime VFX and motion capture. A live feed from multiple capture devices was streamed through graphic simulation software to investigate an ongoing dialogue between man and machine. Through this approach, the motion of the dancers was continually transformed into representational spectra, similar to painting tools, which generated immersive and responsive art installations that accompanied the studio's movement in realtime. By the end of the residency there were over 40 different motion capture sketches logged in the archive.

The need to be together and share experiences through direct contact became an integral focus of the research. Often the group exercises would continue effortlessly for up to 60 minutes at a time - the strength of the dancers' ability to hold collective intention intensifying with each day that passed. By the end, the sensitivity of perceiving and responding to one another was such a highly-cultivated unspoken bond that words would no longer suffice to reflect or offer adequate reasoning to the experiences we were sharing.

What began as a formal research project quickly dissolved into a search for what it means to be awake and conscious in the present moment. The ballet barre, equipt with its abundance of subconscious connotations, opened spaces for the entrapment of energy in the dancers' body to emerge into conscious awareness and to be transformed through the power of flow.

Giving the body space to express and heal on its own accord was such an important and unpredictable motor that we asked ourselves: What does it mean to be a dancer, an artist or a human being and at what point do these aspects of self overlap? And while we didn't arrive at a definitive answer, we saw how the physicality of the classical vocabulary was a potent vehicle for the dancers to unlock their experiences - to be human and yet artistically transform their expression into the contemporaneity of the moment.

While at times it was not entirely clear what was going on, with conflicts and difficulties finding their way to the surface, we witnessed again and again, that in the most open hearted and vulnerable of ways, the group was always able to seek restitution amongst themselves in a deep and innate expression of love. Without a doubt it was the love that we all shared that drove the residency forward.

Without the pressure of having to produce a final product, we were able to utilise our time at the Tanz+ Residency to explore such a broad scope of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual material that reconfirmed our conviction that ballet has the potential to move beyond decorative technical feats or role-playing narrative structures and perhaps underpin the universality of what it means to be human. The urgency with which these expressions emerged has provided us with an archive of material that with further investigation will hopefully uncover the next steps in our journey as a group together.