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Zürcher Hochschule der Künste
Zurich University of the Arts

RELATIONAL MOVEMENT

With Dr. Liz Waterhouse
January 17–20, 2023, 14–19h
MA DANCE



Students improvising with *Duo* material. Day 4.

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7-Hour Publications – by Liz Waterhouse

*If you think of
movement as emerging
relationally, through
others, then how might
your practice of dance
develop?*



Students improvising with *Duo* material. Day 4.

Workshop Description:

In this workshop students will explore the choreographic work and working processes of William Forsythe, taught by former Forsythe dancer Elizabeth Waterhouse. The workshop will explore components from her dissertation, *Processing Choreography: Thinking with William Forsythe's Duo*. Students will learn principles of movement and improvisation practice important to the piece *Duo*, including the practices of relational movement and entrainment.

Biography of William Forsythe:¹

Raised in New York and initially trained in Florida with Nolan Dingman and Christa Long, Forsythe danced with the Joffrey Ballet and later the Stuttgart Ballet, where he was appointed Resident Choreographer in 1976. Over the next seven years, he created new works for the Stuttgart ensemble and ballet companies in Munich, The Hague, London, Basel, Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, Paris, New York, and San Francisco. In 1984, he began a 20-year tenure as director of the Ballet Frankfurt, where he created works such as *Artifact* (1984), *Impressing the Czar* (1988), *Limb's Theorem* (1990), *The Loss of Small Detail* (1991), *A L I E / N A(C)TION* (1992), *Eidos:Telos* (1995), *Endless House* (1999), *Kammer/Kammer* (2000), and *Decreation* (2003).

After the closure of the Ballet Frankfurt in 2004, Forsythe established a new ensemble, The Forsythe Company, which he directed from 2005 to 2015. Works produced with this ensemble include *Three Atmospheric Studies* (2005), *You made me a monster* (2005), *Human Writes* (2005), *Heterotopia* (2006), *The Defenders* (2007), *Yes we can't* (2008/2010), *I*

don't believe in outer space (2008), *The Returns* (2009) and *Sider* (2011). Forsythe's most recent works were developed and performed exclusively by The Forsythe Company, while his earlier pieces are prominently featured in the repertoire of virtually every major ballet company in the world, including the Mariinsky Ballet, New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, Semperoper Ballet Dresden, England's Royal Ballet and The Paris Opera Ballet.

Forsythe has been commissioned to produce architectural and performance installations by architect-artist Daniel Libeskind (Groningen, 1989), ARTANGEL (London, 1997), *Creative Time* (New York, 2005), and the SKD – Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (2013, 2014). These "Choreographic Objects", as Forsythe calls his installations, include among others *White Bouncy Castle* (1997), *City of Abstracts* (2000), *The Fact of Matter* (2009), *Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time No. 2* (2013) and *Black Flags* (2014). His installation and film works have been presented in numerous museums and exhibitions, including the Whitney Biennial (New York, 1997), Festival d'Avignon (2005, 2011), Louvre Museum (2006), Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich (2006), 21_21 Design Sight in Tokyo (2007), Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus (2009), Tate Modern (London, 2009), Hayward Gallery, (London 2010), MoMA (New York 2010), ICA Boston (2011), Venice Biennale (2005, 2009, 2012, 2014), MMK – Museum für Moderne Kunst (Frankfurt am Main, 2015) and the 20th Biennale of Sydney, 2016.

In collaboration with media specialists and educators, Forsythe has developed new approaches to dance documentation, research, and education. His 1994 computer application *Improvisation Technologies: A Tool for the Analytical Dance Eye*, developed with the ZKM / Zentrum

¹ Biography from William Forsythe's website:
<https://www.williamforsythe.com/biography.html>

für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, is used as a teaching tool by professional companies, dance conservatories, universities, postgraduate architecture programs, and secondary schools worldwide. 2009 marked the launch of *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced*, a digital online score developed with The Ohio State University that reveals the organizational principles of the choreography and demonstrates their possible application within other disciplines. Synchronous Objects was the pilot project for Forsythe's Motion Bank, a research platform focused on the creation and research of online digital scores in collaboration with guest choreographers.

As an educator, Forsythe is regularly invited to lecture and give workshops at universities and cultural institutions. In 2002, Forsythe was chosen as one the founding Dance Mentor for The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. Forsythe is an Honorary Fellow at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in London and holds an Honorary Doctorate from The Juilliard School in New York. Forsythe is a current Professor of Dance and Artistic Advisor for the Choreographic Institute at the University of Southern California Gloria Kaufman School of Dance.



At the Zhdk: Friederike and Liz. Day 3.

How do norms about power, mind/body, and control/discipline influence how we dance/teach/choreograph? What are the alternatives that we wish to embody?

Workshop Documentation

DAY #1

Soraya Leila Emery

17.01.2023

Timeline/Protocol

After welcoming all the students in the Probebühne, Liz shared with us a 30-minutes introduction of Yoga Narada™ practice which combined, through a somatic approach, sensory awareness of the physical body with breath work and brushes in seated position.

After that, we continued with a complete ballet warm up improvising using tables and chairs as barres. The ballet exercises were thought to prepare us physically to learning Forsythe's repertoire of *Duo*. During the ballet class, she gave detailed and precise correction underlying some important principles to further explore in the afternoon such as the rotation of the shoulder joint and hips, and the alignment of the spine.

After the warm up, we watched a compilation of excerpts of the work *Duo* by William Forsythe, ranging from the first version dated 1996 up to 2016 - which we then discussed our reactions and impressions. The last 2 hours of the day we learned in detail the beginning of the phrase 'Umpadump' from *Duo*, performing it in smaller groups in space.

A few concepts I remember clearly or caught my attention on the first day:

1. the notion of groove in the work of Forsythe and how it is directly linked to his dance background. As well as insights of how he worked in

the studio (warming up the dancers by grooving on pop music for example).

2. The notion of timing in the duet. Liz mentioned that one dancer was usually on beat, while the other was 'pulling time', which gave a certain groove to the work.

3. The notion of being 'in or out of relationship' in the duet and how the dancers, in the version performed by Riley Watts and Brigel Gjoka, enhanced this notion with their interpretation and fine listening.

4. The importance of breathing in the movement as a form of communication between the performers.

Reflection

The week of learning Forsythe's approach with and through Liz's expertise was tremendously stimulating and refreshing. As a choreographer, it first opened me to question the sustainability and evolution of a dance work through the years and the influence of diverse modification (performers, stage, music, ...) as a work can 'live', by allowing it to be shaped by the performers.

I also got inspired by the precision with which the movement unfolds and is thought, and yet how different it can look on each body. For my own practice, I retain the thoughtfulness of the movement in relation: how two bodies can play with different parameters to shape the choreography (counterpoint, break, solo, concurrent movement, scale, fragmentation, juxtaposition, unison, alignment, entrainment...). These are parameters to play with, to communicate between bodies as well as with the space, the audience and the music.

DAY #1

Ivana Balabanova
17.01.2023

Timeline / Protocol

The class on Tuesday started with a short calm warmup. As I remember it was a combination of yoga practices, that allowed us to slowly awaken our body. For me it was exactly what I needed, to be re-centered and grounded. Also, it was quite interesting to feel how when you put your awareness on particular body part, even if the movement is slow and gentle it still awakes those body parts. I immediately noticed that Elizabeth brings a very calm energy, that she is highly focused grasping every reaction of us as a group, unconsciously analysing our gestures and readjusting in accordance to them. I felt instantly safe in that environment, and excited to see what comes next.

Then, after the warm up, she asked us to sit in a circle and share a little bit about our background, as well as where would we want to be in 2 years from now. I don't know why, but even though we've done this with almost every teacher, I always get really excited to hear what everyone has to say and also a little bit nervous because I need to speak for myself. Instantly, my overthinking mind started to run in circles (because of incapacity to decide what I am supposed to say to capture the most important things in short), but then I reminded myself to listen to the others and allow whatever that comes for me at the moment to come. I liked the answers of the other people. A lot of them shared things such as: healthy body, peace, better contact with oneself, which brought another perspective on the topic, not only career or material or goal oriented, but more personal. I know I said that I want to be surrounded with good people and to not lose my voice while trying to establish myself on the scene, to which I agree even now. I remember that Soraya shared how difficult it is for her to share

personal stuff, to which Elizabeth said that it doesn't have to be personal. I was analysing both people's reactions at the moment, and it seemed quite interesting to me. Elizabeth shared a lot about her work on the book, and her interest. I remember thinking that it is impressive how long she stuck to it, and that she believed fully until the end. Also, it made me ask myself about the need of analysing somebody's work that thoroughly, and is it necessary, or why can it be useful? Since I haven't really thought about Forsythe much before, it made me curious to understand why would somebody be so interested in his work. (I know that he is respected by many people and for sure his works have been a huge work in the dance world, but I always find people more interesting through the personal experiences of others and their biographical analysis.) So I was wondering what kind of a person can drag such attention towards him? I know I asked how he was as a person. It was an unconscious analysis of Elizabeth's answer as well as if I am trying to understand what is her interested while at the same time learning about him.

Then we started watching an excerpt from Forsythe's *Duo* work. I remember that I was very inspired by the simple yet obviously difficult movement. Don't really remember much of what I was thinking/feeling at the moment, but given that we've watched multiple versions performed by different dancers, immediately a lot of questions came out such as: how can one piece live for so long? How much we disregard the value of some creations just because today we are living in an era of mass-production, over consumption, indifference, etc. These questions I've also shared and we have discussed a bit, but something that came later as a question in my head is: are we also creating such valuable things? And when does a thing become valuable? Who should acknowledge its value? Also how many good things passed unnoticed?

After the video, Elizabeth said that we will do ballet. I felt instantly stressed, as I always do when ballet is mentioned. I never really had a proper ballet training. But, we have this big table in the middle of the room, people holding on chairs and random things, so suddenly it feels nice and fun. I remember that Elizabeth was quite gentle with us and uplifting. Just what I need to not feel so insecure and to allow my lack of knowledge to result in having fun and laughing instead of stressing. I think it was the next day when she even mentioned something like: "It is okay, for someone it ends up with tears, for someone with laughter..." The class was an interesting combination of ballet and contemporary dance influence, allowing my body to move freely. I remember that she brought the idea of curves, as Forsythe would do in ballet class. She helped me correct my posture, more precisely the way I was using my standing leg and how to stabilize my core. I also remember that Diane who struggles with ballet as well suddenly shouted: "Oh, I actually love ballet!" (Because it really felt good).

Next thing, we started learning Forsythe's repertoire. I was a bit nervous because I know this as well is quite far from what I do. So, everything started shaky, but with time I started enjoying it. I remember having problem to concentrate at the beginning and I felt a little bit foggy in the mind. But as the class moved forward my focus sharpened and slowly I started catching little pieces of the puzzle. Arman was there with his generous presence (we call it: "panda bear father grounding") and he helped me solve some mysteries with the movement. Elizabeth was there with us, guiding us slowly step by step, by thoroughly explaining even little details. I remember that we spoke about the alignment of the arms. It seemed interesting when she mentioned "For example this position, I used to do it with a twisted arm, but now it doesn't really work for me like that, so I do it like this..." It stayed in my mind, mostly in terms of reminding me to accept my body and work as good as I can with what I have at the moment. I also

remember that there was a peak of interest from everybody and involvement, but after a while the energy started to fall a little bit. I think none of us was expecting for us to be dancing that much. Even though I have enjoyed it, I also asked myself what is the idea of the course and where is this leading us? Later on it made a lot of sense, but for a first day it was quite difficult to see. I don't really remember how we ended the class. I think that we had a short conversation and stretched.

Reflection

A lot of reflection on my personal experience I've shared in the first part. However, what stayed with me, not only after the first class, but in general is the approach of working with the people. The gentleness, the awareness of Elizabeth, the effort to be present and in contact with all of us, while still keeping clear roles and boundaries in the room. It was interesting to see that even with calm energy you can really motivate the people around you and inspire them. Specifically in the dancing parts, this way of working left space for the people to further engage themselves individually and to be devoted in what they are doing. Elizabeth was also very cautious in terms of the vocabulary she uses and always tried to understand what we are communicating with her, as well as reflect and reply as clear as possible, selecting carefully what is being said. She managed to develop individual relationship with all of us, while at the same time keeping the group dynamic. If I reflect only on the first class in terms of what I could use as a teacher/choreographer, definitely the way of communicating with the people. When meeting new people, I could definitely use the idea of asking them where they see themselves in two years. I think you can learn a lot for the people from that question. However, in the following days there were a lot of concepts and ideas that I have already written down and will use in my further work.

DAY #2

Maria Combi
18.01.2023

We started the day with a somatic warm up, where Elizabeth guided us through a body scan while we were lying on the floor. We proceeded to bring movement to our bodies in a gentle and careful manner and rolling from side to side until we reached the verticality.

We then paired ourselves in couples and lead one another across the floor, holding each other by the forearm. As we got more comfortable with the task, we were able to explore different speeds and levels until we could also blur the line between the leader and the follower. The second time the follower was resting their forearm and hand on top of the leader's forearm and hand.

We observed how these exercises require a high level of care from both parties, and especially for the leader who should be mindful to give clear instructions and directions to their partner. It is about mutual listening and synchronising through the body.

After this, we stayed in the couples but removed the contact, and then improvised with the task of staying connected to our partner: it was not necessary to keep a unison, but there should have always been a link to one another. This brought our awareness on principles like counterpoint, opposition, canon.

We went ahead and started rehearsing the material from *Duo*, learning some additional steps and cleaning in detail what we already knew from the previous day. It was interesting to notice how the warmup exercises influenced our performance of the piece: there was a

predisposition to be more in contact with our partner as we had trained this connection throughout the first part of the day.

At the end of the day, we watched the full performance from 2016 by the male dancers. It was interesting to recognise the movements we studied in the video, although I must admit they looked quite distant from the image I had of them the way we learnt them in class. I was also fascinated by how substantially different this version was from the original duet as performed by the two women, from the costumes to the structure of the piece itself, and particularly I noticed a certain lightness and humour in the men's version which is completely absent in the original. It made me reflect on how the same movement performed by different bodies assume a very different meaning. Does it mean that the value of movement is intrinsic not to the movement itself but to the looks of the body that execute it?



Andrei and Diane in unison, with Liz watching. Day 2.



Exploring a contact exercise. Day 2.

DAY #2

Andrei Cozlac

18.01.2023

Timeline/Protocol

- We started on the floor with a somatic warm up.
- We practised several exercises in relation with one another through guidance and contact improvisation.
- We discussed about the concept of William Forsythe for the choreography *Duo* and we learned and practised the first few phrases.

Reflection

In this course, on this day, I learned how to connect on a deeper level when dancing in relation with other dancers. I find it interesting because so many things can emerge from this concept and as a dancer it can be quite enjoyable to perform it. I like that everything is so precise. With the contact improvisation I had the most fun, there is so much further you can go. I can imagine working with this information in my teaching and have fun with my students, help them discover new things.

DAY #3

Arman Grigoryan
19.01.2023

Timeline/Protocol

3rd day of the workshop, the day started with ballet class, first at the barre and continuing at center, there were 3 exercises at the center, Adagio, diagonal cross and small jumps.

Exercises in the class prepared the body for the next part of the day, especially in the center. In adagio steps I could work on extensions and oppositions to open the joints and feel the stretch in the body, next exercise was about changing directions, moving in space and speed, I find all those were very helpful for the body coordination.

After the class we took small break and continued with practicing the *Duo*, choreography from William Forsythe, as it was the 3rd day, we have already learned a section called “umpadamp” and fixed couples to work with, the task was to clarify the steps to be similar, directions, movement quality, dynamic, breathing. In the end every couple practiced separately with Elizabeth where she gave her input.

After the practice there was a break of 30 minutes, to refresh and continue watching media.

One Flat Thing, reproduced

Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced

Entrainment Science

32 Metronome Synchronisation

Duo - Woman Version (1997)

Discussion about history of Forsythe company and when it was closed and what outcome it had after. How was the music composed with *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing*. How Forsythe used Counterpoint in dance, watching a fragment of the *Duo* to analyze it. Question about the meaning/differences about the word alignment and Alignment. Speaking about the statistics of *Duo*: how it changed with time, how it was rehearsed and how it was performed with live musicians.

Reflection

What was very good for me, is the structure of the day, and overall, the whole buildup of the workshop. Starting the day with warming up the body I find it was necessary for the practice, to be able achieve most possible results. To dive into choreographic aspect and the mindset. To explore the steps with different approaches. Most importantly I liked the clarity during the work, it created relaxed and creative atmosphere.

Media Links

Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced

<https://accad.osu.edu/research-gallery/synchronous-objects>

<https://vimeo.com/519570464>

<https://vimeo.com/719902383>

The Dance: One Flat Thing, reproduced

<https://vimeo.com/713715316>

Entrainment Science

<https://youtu.be/5v5eBf2KwF8>

<https://musicscience.net/projects/timing/iemp/what-is-musical-entrainment/>

<https://www.businessinsider.com/can-animals-keep-rhythm-brain-2016-3?r=US&IR=T>

Liz's Publications on Entrainment:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14794713.2021.1884803>

<http://dancelikething.org/DoingDuo.pdf>

Duo database:

<https://duo.motionbank.org/#/motion-together/changes>

*double click on any dot to open the videos



Vivianne and Soraya working on "Umpadump." Day 3.

DAY #3

Diane Gemsch
19.01.23

Timeline/Protocol

The class on Thursday started with a Ballet class, building on the class we had had on the first day of the course. With some little individual moments for alignment or improvement Liz guided through her class.

After moving through space and preparing the body for the style of Forsythe material, we moved to the “umpadam” phrase. In our pairs, we put focus on, finding a unisono approach, concerning timing, form. By putting the focus on breath, and listening/perceiving the other bodies my group found a great way of moving together. Observing another group, the feedback was given, to try without communicating through the mirror.

All 3 groups found their individual, own approach and presented their phrases in unison.

After a break, we continued with a theoretical part. We watched “one flat thing”, and were introduced to the “advanced computing centre” platform of the Ohio State University. Liz not only explained what research had been done on that piece, but could bring across other interesting details of background information, contributing to the work of William Forsythe. In a further step we looked at the scientific experiment of entrainment, which impressed all students. A small conversation followed to the topic of entrainment. Different thoughts were being shared.

It followed an entertaining round of looking to the capacity of animals learning/performing dance, by being in sync with a pulse. We received the list of links and Liz' writings on entrainment. And had another insight in her Motion Bank Visualizations, understanding “Duo”.

Reflection

On this day, I had a strong emotional reaction to the ballet class, which made it a special day for me personally.

Reflecting on that, I would want to mention, how rooms can influence a dance approach, and what is associated with it. We spent 2 days in Probebühne, a black box, that can be used as theatre stage. Moving to studio 6, meant moving into a ballet studio, bright, with mirror, and ballet barres. A studio that immediately transmits an atmosphere of vertical, upright bodies, training, discipline...

Even though the training at the barre was similar to Monday, it felt very different. We were not so tightly gathered together around an improvised table in the middle of the space, but traditionally, correctly spread in space at its side walls at the barre. A bit more on our own. Memories of dance education popped up and the question, how I had managed, what stress it had created inside my body. Stress of: fitting in that form, of perfectionism, of an attitude of correctness, of beauty. When moving to space, I had a blank mind, not being able to memorize anything of the adagio (not sure it was an adagio). I kept copying and by that creating a bit distance to my own body.

And when the part of moving through space came, which somehow, I would consider as something pleasurable to do, I still could not absorb

or memorize steps. I felt my colleagues finding joy in it, and felt the dissonance with my state, that was rather an overwhelmed one. When I felt a freeze, and stepped out, Liz could support me in a very empathetic way. Being there, understanding what was happening and giving me a feeling, that she understands and relates, helped me process, and calm down.

After a break, I was able to move back into the course and could find joy in dancing the repertoire material. Especially the last part inspired me. Watching the synchronization of metronomes had an effect on me.

Categories of Entrainment in Duo

Unison – partners performing the same movement synchronously

Break – the opposite of movement, such as a duration of inertia, holding a pose, resting, taking a break, or otherwise not performing motion. Importantly, the dancer might not rest in the sense of recuperate, as some still-acts may be strenuous to hold.

Counterpoint – partners performing different or related movement at the same time, while attuning to one another's rhythms

Solo – one dancer moves, while the other takes a movement-break or frames the foregrounded mover

Turn-taking – partners perform intermittent movement, alternating movement and rest, taking turns. These movements may be identical, related or different.

Day #4

Victor Araujo Mendes
20.01.2023

Timeline/Protocol

On the last day of the workshop Relational Movement, together with Elizabeth Waterhouse, the MA Dance students had the chance to warm up and prepare for an afternoon of work on their own. On that sunny, beautiful and cold day in Zurich, they were given time enough to get their bodies in motion and think through the material previously worked that week.

The MAs were asked to work in partners once more and find unison movements, breath, tempo and timing throughout the material created by William Forsythe. Once four couples were formed, they were challenged to focus on aspects of movement such as: Breaks, Solos, Counterpoint and Turn-taking.

The 4 couples had a few minutes to research on the terminology and asked to perform their ideas of what that represents. Aspects such as: source of motion, Forsythe's idea on how to move, initiate movements and terminology itself emerged through the process.

For the last task, it was suggested two sessions of improvisation in group. The dancers were encouraged to generate movement heat and collective gestures using the qualities and movement language worked during the week.



Diane and Andrei (above) and Arman and Maria (below). Day 4.

Reflection

My first thought on the experience on Relational Movement week is the privilege to work with an artists such as Elizabeth Waterhouse, a PhD in dance studies. As a MA student and researcher in movement myself, it is inspiring to see where I can go with my Brazilian Funk dance studies and how deep/far I can go with it. The physical and emotional approach are very much connected since we worked with a very challenging choreography's way of work and our own interpretation of it.

It definitely helped me confirmed the idea I have been working since the begging of my MA degree: Now Victor's MA Dance Teacher (2023) walks together hand and hand with Victor Dancer from 2013 (the year I started my dance studies).

Day #4

Vivianne Hummel

20.01.2023

Protocol

1. Warm-Up for ourselves for five minutes.
2. Direct transition to improvisation in a circular formation with tasks given by Elizabeth Waterhouse
 - ➔ Tasks are connected to movement material „hum-padump“.
 - ➔ Leading into a group improvisation
3. Recalling „hum-padump“
4. Learning a new part of this combination
5. Going again with partner together to make the new part unisono.
6. Still pared up: Everybody gets a different task on how to do the material together:
 - unisono and solo
 - unisono and breaks
 - unisono and counterpoint
 - unisono and turn-taking
7. 20 minutes group improvisation -> feedback talk
8. Again 20 minutes group impro with Liz who sometimes directs us -> talk

Reflection

The way Liz guided the classes made it a pleasure for us to come every day. She taught the lessons with a lot of empathy. For example, she asked us everyday before class how we are feeling. If necessary she changed her schedule accordingly.

She observed our bodies and how we moved and saw our strengths and weaknesses. Then she gave us tools how to work with our own body-type.

Sometimes when she gave us a task to work on, I wished she would have explained a bit more in detail what she wanted from us. But when we then asked some questions it was all clear again.



Students improvising with *Duo* material. Day 4.

Glossary of Practice Concepts

Excerpts from *Processing Choreography*. See online Bibliography for full references.

Alignment

Dance critic Roslyn Sulcas has observed: “Alignment is in fact a fundamental principle of Forsythe’s work; it is one of the ways that complex—even chaotic—activities on stage are rendered subtly comprehensible.” She defines alignments, after Forsythe, as “moments when the dancers’ movements echo one another in shape, direction or dynamic.”²

Counterpoint

Forsythe has defined choreographic counterpoint as “kinds of organization in time” and “a field of action in which the intermittent and irregular coincidence of attributes between organizational elements produces an ordered interplay.”³ Choreographic counterpoint may happen within a body, between bodies, and between bodies within a space that is organized. In my view, counterpoint is not only an aesthetic concept for developing a dance piece, but a “fractal” concept, in which “parts of a person, and people as parts of a community, may carry the same features as the whole.”⁴

Épaulement

Duo’s movement develops virtuosic and sensual *épaulement*. *Épaulement*, from the French for shoulders, is a term used to describe the positioning of the upper body in ballet. It describes how the shoulders move, related to how the upper body and arms extend—part of one’s carriage of the arms, or *port de bras*.

² Sulcas, *Watching the Ballett Frankfurt, 1988–2009*, p. 15.

³ William Forsythe cited in Sulcas, *Watching the Ballett Frankfurt, 1988–2009*; Forsythe cited in Shaw, *The Dance*.

⁴ See Fowler, *The Archaeology of Personhood*, p. 51.

⁵ Foster, *Why is There Always Enough Energy for Dancing?* p. 17.

Despite the emphasis upon the shoulders in the word *épaulement*, within Forsythe’s style one’s body is felt coherently, winding and unwinding, sheering and sequencing force, in relation to space and other dancers. Forsythe has described *épaulement* as a “perceptually gratifying state” that “synthesizes discrete parts of the body with multiple layers of torqued sensation that leads to the specific sense of a unified but counter-rotated whole.”⁵ In performing *Duo*, the dancers compared their experiences of sensation in *épaulement*, leading to a rich unison of inner experience and outer form/aesthetics.

Entrainment

William Forsythe has described entrainment as a way that music, movement and breath noises/vocal cues may relate or become organized in a choreographic piece.⁶ He initially encountered this concept through the book *The Dance of Life* by Edward Hall (1984). Hall described entrainment as “the process that occurs when two or more people become engaged in each other’s rhythms, when they synchronize.”⁷ From my experience as a dancer, I remember that Forsythe used the term intermittently in the studio, most frequently in rehearsals for the installation piece *Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time*; in this work, there is complex entrainment between the dancers, the audience, a field of mobile pendulums and a sound score by Thom Willems.

Entrainment has been studied across a wide range of fields: considering rhythmic systems (such as metronomes), animals, and human interplay (such as music/dance). The first recorded observation of this phenomenon was by Dutch Physicist Christiaan Huygens (1629–1695), who described this in a letter to the Royal Society of London (1665) as “an odd kind of sympathy” between

⁶ William Forsythe, pre-performance talk attended by the author at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on October 2, 2003.

⁷ William Condon, referenced in Hall, *The Dance of Life*, p. 177; see also Spier, *Engendering and Composing Movement*, p. 142.

two pendulums suspended on the same beam.⁸ The concept has migrated from physics, to the biological sciences, systems theory, sociology, psychology, ethnomusicology and dance. Entrainment has come to name the phenomenon whereby independent, coupled rhythmical oscillators interact and stabilize—producing synchronized or rhythmically related activity. Examples such as Forsythe and the dancers’ artistic research show a generative, aesthetic way of exploring entrainment—through the experimental setting of performing a choreographic organization in contact with an audience.

My initial research of entrainment in *Duo* focused on the perspective of dancer Riley Watts during his period learning and dancing *Duo* in 2012–2013. As a dance performed conversationally without orientation to a musical pulse, *Duo* contradict prior scientific understanding of entrainment in dance, which had defined entrainment as the capacity to move in time with an audio pulse. Rather, the dancers’ practice of ‘mutual entrainment’ was central to learning to dance *Duo*—entrainment understood as the coordinated and rhythmical interplay of motion *and* sound production by the two performers, as they enacted the choreographic progression of movements and breath. Moreover, as in jazz, this entrainment was flexible and playful—rich with affective factors.⁹

Was entrainment important as well in earlier, and/or later *Duo* performances? From studying videos of five performances of *Duo* between 1996 and 2016, as well as interviewing many of the dancers, I confirmed that the structure of the choreography consistently involved many modes of entrainment: unison, turn-taking, complementary action, cues, and alignments. The dancers increasingly improvised with set sequence, using unison as a practice for generating and sustaining rhythmical play and nuance.¹⁰ So yes, entrainment was vital to *Duo*—nuanced and important throughout the history of the project.

⁸ Huygens cited in Czolczynski et al., *Huygens’ odd sympathy experiment revisited*, p. 1.

⁹ Waterhouse, Watts, and Bläsing, *Doing Duo*.

¹⁰ Waterhouse et al., *I Gave that Cue*.

Improvisation

Forsythe developed a rich approach to improvisation with his ensembles Ballett Frankfurt (1984–2004) and The Forsythe Company (2005–2015). Many of the tasks developed during the first decade of the Ballett Frankfurt were based on spatial imagery. These are cataloged in the DVD-ROM *Improvisation Technologies: A Tool for the Analytic Dance Eye*, which today is available on youtube. In practice, the dancers called these: procedures, operations, tasks and modalities.¹¹ Forsythe also developed behavioral choreography and improvisation states, which synthesized more theatrical approaches to becoming ‘other’ and inventing movement behaviors. Improvisation modalities for relational and group improvisation were additionally focused upon in The Forsythe Company, where *Improvisation Technologies* were seldom the focus.

Relations

Relations are an increasingly important concept within dance studies and the field of dance practice. This turn is also manifest in visual art. Nicolas Bourriaud’s pivotal book, *Relational Aesthetics* (1998), describes relational art as: “an art form where the substrate is formed by intersubjectivity, and which places being-*together* as a central theme, the ‘encounter’ between beholder and picture, and the collective elaboration of meaning.”¹² Bourriaud’s text focuses on experimental visual art in the 1990’s. Noting the contradiction of these projects to modern art, Bourriaud defined relational art as “a set of practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private social space.”¹³ Dance scholars Kirsten Maar, Erin Manning as well as myself have designated relationality also as a key aspect of Forsythe’s aesthetic.

¹¹ Discussing “operation” and “procedures” see Caspersen, *It Starts from Any Point*, p. 27-28; and Kaiser, *Dance Geometry*, throughout. On “modality” see Vass-Rhee, *Audio-Visual Stress*, p. 25.

¹² Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, p. 15, emphasis (together) mine.

¹³ Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, p. 113.

Relational Movement

“Relational Movement” is a concept I draw from dancer/philosopher Erin Manning. In *Relationscapes* (2012), Manning reflects upon many examples of dance and art, including her own practice as a tango dancer, to illuminate her concept of relational movement.

Manning, who can both lead and follow in the tango writes: “I move not you but the interval out of which our movement emerges. We move time relationally as we create space: we move space as we create time.”¹⁴ This involves the dancers’ cooperative attunement to one another and time, sharing responsibility for the progress of the dance. When dancing in this way, Manning suggests that the ‘I’ and ‘other’ dissolve as individual subjects. The movement does not emerge from the leader, and get communicated to the follower, but comes from the betweenness captured in the concept of the “interval.” Dance scholar André Lepecki, drawing from his reading of Manning, calls the manner of moving without a prescribed leader and follower “leadingfollowing.”¹⁵

Not all movement is relational, nor is all relational movement dance. Without stressing the distinction, Manning clarifies that relational movement is different than customary motions in daily life (such as office work, or walking, or cooking) in which one moves without awareness through habits. For Manning, relational movement is a sort of dance—a dance that does not emphasize form and position. When dance is relational movement, virtual components become active, affective factors.

Choreographic movement is thus interlaced with relational potential. But for Manning, not all choreographers focus on this—Forsythe’s work, at large, does. In cases of reproduction of movement, she observes, the relational qualities prove challenging: “Relation must be reinvented. To dance relationally is not to *represent* movement but to *create* it.”¹⁶ When choreography engenders relational movement, that involves “bringing to expression the patterning of

incipient activity towards the definition of a movement event.”¹⁷ Choreography for Manning is not an organization of bodies in space and time, as the knowing ahead and prescriptive disciplining of outcomes and rules, but instead the speculation and activism that dynamically fields incipient movement—potentializing action.

Sensation

The panoply of sensation when practicing Forsythe’s style moves beyond the classic five sense model by involving heat, skin, balance, breath and proprioception. Generally, sensations overlap and relay between modes, mixing into the feeling of moving and being moved.¹⁸ They also involve sensing dancers and architecture around the body, typically foregrounding senses and other body parts than the eyes. The dancers’ practice involves attunement to peripheral and direct vision, sound location and timbre, the body’s orientation within gravity, proprioception, the intensity of skin sensation and stretch, the visceral sense of internal organs, the sensation of breath, the temperature of the room, the warmth and direction of theatrical light, the sensation of one’s clothes and the contact with the floor. The dancers develop their sensitivity in order to discern and act on subtle changes in perception.

¹⁴ Manning, *Relationscapes*, p. 17.

¹⁵ Drawing from Manning, see Lepecki, *From Partaking to Initiating*, p. 34.

¹⁶ Manning, *Relationscapes*, p. 28.

¹⁷ Manning, *Always More Than One*, p. 76.

¹⁸ Cf. Potter, *Sense of Motion, Senses of Self*. Vass-Rhee, *Audio-Visual Stress*.

Duo Dancers' Quotes

Dancer Riley Watts on *Duo*:

It was never boring! It's a much bigger idea of movement, that I think comes, came from The Forsythe Company: being able to think about dance as every moment. It's so Buddhist, you know? Like every moment is different from the last. And why would that not be true on stage?

It seems ridiculous to try to pretend like we're [on stage] in a studio, in rehearsal. Imagine being in front of more than 5000 people in the Herodion in Athens? Like, it's a very specific circumstance and the only way that you could practice this is just to be on stage.

We happen to have this *Duo* material, and also five plus years of working together in the Company, and also dancing with everybody else in the company, and working with Bill. That all collected as part of *who I am* and *who he is*. And then *together* we're on stage, wearing sweatpants (laughs). That's so, that's just... the *Duo* material is like secondary, almost!¹⁹

¹⁹ Interview with Riley Watts and Brigel Gjoka, *DUO2015 Workshop*, Bologna, October 2017. Quotes edited by LW for readability.

Dancer Brigel Gjoka on teaching *Duo*:

We are at a point now, that I have a certain compassion for my partner. I can trust him, and I can be myself *because* I can trust him. And while I lean my trust on him, he does the same to me. Everything merges and it is fresh. And every impression is fresh, and it's re-enforcing and it's welcomed.

When we're teaching *Duo*, we're *offering* to the students. We always say that the workshop is also, I think, a philosophy, an unspoken philosophy that Riley and I have developed. It's not forcing each other—not forcing—we *suggest* to each other. We don't oblige each other to do things. Even when we have arguments about—okay, how do we want to do things? or how things should look? —that drops off by itself. We don't even have to argue about it, because it doesn't stand. We just have to *listen*. So, it's this, that is the material. And I would say, what we are teaching to them is we're offering to them. We're offering a knowledge for sure—the phrases and combinations of course, that's what you do with material—but mostly *offering*, I would say. *Respect*, I would say. *Compassion*, also for themselves. How do they treat themselves? How are they *present*? How can they be present? And mostly important how they're present with each other?²⁰

²⁰ Ibid.



Students improvising with *Duo* material. Day 4.