

# RECIPROCAL DRAWING

BODIES' CO-DEPENDENCE  
AND DIRECT CONTACT  
IN PERFORMANCE  
DRAWING

AGNIESZKA KARASCH

**A!**

Aalto University  
School of Arts, Design  
and Architecture

# **RECIPROCAL DRAWING**

**Bodies' Co-dependence and Direct Contact  
in Performance Drawing**

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# Abstract

**Keywords:** performance drawing, partnering strategies, score, Laban Movement Analysis, postconsensual collaboration, physicality, resistance, artistic research, phenomenology, embodiment

Reciprocal Drawing is an original method of collaborative practice situated within the field of *performance drawing*. In Reciprocal Drawing, two collaborators draw in the frame of reciprocal partnering strategy, which imposes *uninterrupted co-dependence and contact between their bodies*. The practice is carried out within two additional frames: *the repertoire of actions* and *the score (rules and diagrams)*. Although these frames have been applied before, this research further jointly develops them to tackle challenges emerging from application of reciprocal strategies in drawing. The combination of frames facilitates co-exploration of reciprocal strategies' potential for the medium. Supported by the frames, the collaborators devise complex reciprocal processes resulting in products that reflect ambiguous and nuanced human relations.

The developed Reciprocal Drawing aims to extend conventional drawing by underlining the medium's bodily-reciprocal, social potential. As an *artistic research*, the study focuses on Reciprocal Drawing processes and products as sources of embodied knowledge and explores the opportunities which they bring for drawing. As a *phenomenological research*, the study explores the embodied, relational-social dimension of Reciprocal Drawing. This is done by discussing the drawing-based experimentation conducted first solo by the researcher and then in duo form with collaborating artists. In the solo phase, the repertoire of actions was formed based on Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), a system of codified vocabulary used in understanding human movement. LMA helped the researcher to systemize and adapt body actions to the conditions of drawing in contact with the two-dimensional horizontal plane. In the collaborative phase, two strategies were identified as establishing the bodies' co-dependence: *rope-binding*, originally used by Tehching Hsieh in his *One Year Performance. Rope Piece* (1983–84) and *point-of-contact*, the principle of Contact Improvisation dance. The use of rules and diagrams in the co-experiments links them to the 1970s practices of the Fluxus artists. In the reflection following the experimentation, LMA was also utilized to establish links between the complex reciprocal dynamics, the finalized drawings, and the mental *states* that accompanied their co-production. This aided the evaluation of the emerging opportunities.

Phenomenological research theoretically guided the project allowing description, analysis, and thematic interpretation of the artist-researcher's experience of the process to be verbalized. Following Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, the embodied, expressive and dialogic character of Reciprocal Drawing is underlined as is its products' capacity to be a source of self-knowledge for the creators.

Additionally, with a support of theoretical perspectives in art and performance Reciprocal Drawing is identified as enabling co-exploration of *physicality*. Further, Reciprocal Drawing processes are presented as finely reflecting the social and relational aspect of human life: Defined as *play*, Reciprocal Drawing reveals its subversive, transformative and solidifying function, it renders possible learning new approaches to drawing. Finally, in this thesis Reciprocal Drawing is recognized as a *postconsensual* practice, where the engaged artists deliberately generate embodied conflict and co-explore its benefits without posing a threat to each other's integrity. This is supported with the ethics derived from Jean-Luc Nancy's and Emmanuel Levinas' philosophies whose thinking is also employed to acknowledge Reciprocal Drawing as evoking loss, self-limitation and responsibility for the other.



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*Adaś, this book is for you.*

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The starting point for this research was the need for a more systematic investigation into an *embodied reciprocal approach to collaborative drawing* – the one assuming the two bodies marking while remaining in a strict interdependency and uninterrupted contact with each other. In the years 2012–2013, when laying out the initial research directions, I speculated about the activity of drawing being a form of direct communication in which two persons touch and impact each other while their gestures, lines, textures, shapes, and tonal planes constitute mutually sent messages (Karasch, 2014). In those speculations I turned to the broad field of *performance* as its practitioners—performers, actors and dancers—have developed multiple codes for non-verbal communication in the form of different partnering strategies. Most of these strategies, however, assume absence or discontinuity of contact as well as relative distance in time between action and reaction. Importantly, I also missed the broader epistemological frame, or simply put, the “what about” of the reciprocity-oriented communication in drawing.

At that time, particularly intriguing for me were the theories of Konstantin Stanislavski – the theater practitioner and the writings of Jerzy Grotowski – the Polish innovator of experimental theater. Stanislavski had developed his “physical actions method” (Stanislavski, as cited in Richards, 1995/2003, p. 15). He claimed that an actor, before practicing a role, should prepare him/herself an exact line of *simple physical actions*. In this way, the results in the form of feelings, *mental states* and forms will naturally come into being (Stanislavski, as in Adamiccka–Sitek et al., 2012). Interestingly, he compared the physical actions to elementary means of expression in visual arts such as a line. He assumed that the actions must be practiced analogically by an actor as a line is practiced by a visual artist to enhance authenticity and power of expression (Toporkov, 1950/2007). This analogy strongly resonated with my reciprocity-oriented vision of joint movement and drawing. Based on his statement, I was then reasoning by inversion and more directly, I was thinking about a line potentially being practiced in the ways similar to how an actor practices the physical actions. Moreover, Stanislavski also stressed that behind the physical actions there must an *aiming* at a certain goal, and this aiming constitutes the actor’s main creative material. In this vein, he pointed to the potential of real interaction between the practicing actors to produce this logic of motions. To create the logic, an actor—instead of concentrating on him/herself—should attentively listen to the partner, observe him, penetrate his thoughts and impressions. Finally, Stanislavski paid attention to what he called “internal monologues and dialogues” (Stanislavski, as cited in Adamiccka–Sitek et al., 2012, p. 21) which this type of organic contact with another was supposed to produce and based on which the actions were to be conducted (Stanislavski, as cited in Adamiccka–Sitek et al., 2012). Used and expanded by Grotowski in the 1960s, Stanislavski’s method became a base for the “body’s alphabet” (Campo & Molik, 2010/2016, p. 97), also known as the “*plastiques*” (Baniewicz, 2012, p. 87). Created for the actors of his Laboratory Theater, the training is a combination of yoga, kathakali and martial arts, amongst others. In the training, actors practice meticulously structured body movements, first solo and eventually in duo form. The specific co-movement is focused on the immediacy of action–reaction and/or action–action. It also serves as means to establish a relationship with another person. The continuous interdependence of the two bodies ascertained in the training

induces various feelings and desires in the partners<sup>1</sup> (Adamięcka-Sitek et al., 2012; Baniewicz, 2012; Campo & Molik, 2010/2016; Richards, 1995/2003).

In 2014, in the months preceding the preparation of my first research plan, I practiced the *plastiques* in various workshops. Although I later abandoned Grotowski's training as a strategy for my collaborative experimentation with drawing, his theories were important as they shaped my vision of Reciprocal Drawing and paved the way for a more consistent investigation process leading to the formulation of my method. His theories and methods made me realize that in order to evoke the logic of gestures and marks between myself and the collaborator, I first needed a pre-defined set of actions that we could use in the conditions of the two-dimensional paper plane. There is then an analogy between Grotowski's body alphabet and my *repertoire of actions* (or *motifs*) developed in this research. Also, much like in his trainings, in my experimentation the actions had been practiced first solo and then collaboratively. Also, there had been a similar thinking about the spatial aiming of the collaborators, for which I used the *diagrams*. I also understand the collaborators' feelings, expectations, desires and aesthetic preferences as a driving force of the Reciprocal Drawing practice. Additionally, what Grotowski identified as internal monologues and dialogues had been an important base for my phenomenological analysis process. Finally, at a descriptive-interpretive level, attention was drawn to the generative force of mental states evoked by Reciprocal Drawing and their influence on the studied medium of drawing.

My reading of Grotowski's theories brought back the memories of how some artists-professors at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw used to intervene in my work by drawing without prior notice on my half-developed images. They did that to nonverbally communicate ideas regarding composition, proportions or manners of drawing. I first perceived those actions as invasive because the teacher's marks seemed not to integrate with what was already drawn. Additionally, their perceived roughness was laden with what seemed like an unspoken message of negation aiming at blighting the chances of my complacent success. Yet, I quickly learned to separate my harsh feelings from the one who provoked them and started to enjoy watching how the person confidently trespassed my comfort zone. Their bold movements first nestled in my body and then integrated into my own manners of visual practice. I also gained distance towards my own work, became better synced with my instinct and so got rid of the fear of an empty page. Although there was no direct contact between us, I used to replay those interventions in my mind imagining how I could have reciprocated the professor's impact, had there been an established code available for drawing, like Grotowski's code for actors.

The last year of my studies (2001–2002) was also crucial as far as the background of my research is concerned. At that time, I conducted personal interviews with Boris Nieslony and Zygmunt Piotrowski – independent performance artists and members of the collective Black Market International (BMI)<sup>2</sup>. Although not being a direct incentive for this research, the talks influenced my then forming view of art and myself in it, which is visible in my *values* manifesting during the research experimentation. In our talk Nieslony spoke of his belief in a utopian artistic system in which performers—like multiple streams of energy with different electric charges joining in one—aim at equalizing the positions and strive to establish such a distance so that a separate form is created.

<sup>1</sup> The value of this type of approach in theater is that once on stage the actor does not rely on changeable moods in creation of a role, but rather generates them from the recalled physical activity with a partner.

<sup>2</sup> Black Market International (BMI) is a collective of performance artists who also practice their art independently from each other. The group was founded by Boris Nieslony (Germany), Zygmunt Piotrowski (Poland), Tomas Ruller (Czech Republic) and Jürgen Fritz (Germany) in Poznan (Poland) in 1985.

While Nieslony still performs with BMI, Piotrowski, Ruller and Fritz are the group's past members.

When using the word “distance,” Nieslony meant the adaptation of one’s own creative invention during collaborative performance so as to neither dominate nor disappear in the sum of actions<sup>3</sup>. With the above in mind, essential for the development of the processes described in this thesis were:

- My attachment to the concept of harmony, which Nieslony spoke of as seeking neither domination nor submission in the collaborative act.
- Attentiveness understood as undivided concentration of physical and mental energy on one task, both in art and life in general (Z. Piotrowski, personal communication, October 8, 2001).
- Preference for a systemic approach to artistic (co-)creation, for a logic that binds individual activities into one consistent whole, including conscious breaking of these logics (Z. Piotrowski, personal communication, October 8, 2001).

The above described memories combined with learning about Stanislavski’s and Grotowski’s method and my speculations on drawing as a form of communication had pushed me towards experiencing of various partnering strategies. Besides the actor’s training, I went to multiple contact improvisation jams, contemporary dance workshops including Laban and Forsythe movement labs. I also attended a practical Laban Movement Analysis course. All those experiences expanded my bodily knowledge and rooted me in performance as my method. Eventually, the beginning of 2015 marked the start of my systematic artistic investigation.

## 1.2 Context, Aims, Object, Methods, Research Question, Experiments and Data

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This doctoral research took place in the years 2014–2023 in the cities of Warsaw (Poland) and Helsinki (Finland). As a Polish-born and Warsaw-based practicing artist and educator, I travelled between these cities, successfully combining my doctoral studies, artistic and professional work, writing of the manuscript and personal consultations with my advisors. While I was associated with Aalto University as my main academic institution that provided me with substantive support for my project, I also used the educational offer of other institutions such as University of the Arts in Helsinki, University of Warsaw as well as The Polish Academy of Sciences. In the years 2016–2019, when conducting the research-related collaborative experiments, I extensively travelled to different places in Europe and the United States.

Although sometimes difficult to implement due to the geographic distance, the choice of Finland as the site of this research came from my determination to go beyond what was well known. Equally important for me was to defend my doctoral degree at an institution that promoted experimentality and multidisciplinary in research. Further, while my investigations were located within the scope of artistic research which expands bodily knowledge, I also expected from my chosen institution to hold high standards in relation to how this knowledge is conceptually framed and articulated. The Department of Art and Media at Aalto University, with its additional emphasis on written explication and contextualization of my research findings, well corresponded with these expectations. I think of my study primarily as artistic research – a mode of research which accepts intuitive and personal motivations as a guiding force for the research process. I chose artistic research because I identify as a professional artist and an art school graduate to

<sup>3</sup> For Nieslony, this was to occur through attentive observation of the partner and avoiding interpretation of their actions. Essential for Nieslony’s artistic activities was Martin Buber and his philosophy of dialogue. My entire interview with Nieslony (in German) is accessible on my research website:

<https://art-methods.com/category/boris-nieslony/>.

whom an MFA diploma was given based on a training in artistic media and processes. In this sense, I feel more comfortable manifesting my knowledge with materials, my body and movement, rather than with abstracted theories.

The aim of this investigation is to transform my artistic practice towards a *collaborative, performance-based, and reciprocal* formula – the one which assures the two bodies' continuous physical contact and co-dependence during the process of drawing, but also more broadly to contribute to the development of drawing as a discipline of art. I argue that reciprocal strategies—as the most complex forms of partnered movement—pose stylistic, technical and coordination-related challenges when applied in drawing. My research responds to these challenges thus allowing greater complexity of the drawing process and coherence of the drawn form. With the advancement of the process and form, the relational and social nature of human existence can be lived and explicated in more nuanced ways.

Holistically, the artistic process of my research, including the solo and duo experiments as well as the performances, will be referred to as Reciprocal Drawing. At the same time, this is not intended to imply that I have discovered a completely new method for drawing applicable to other contexts. Rather, this refers to the specific collaborative practice formulated during the research.

My main research question is: *What can the practice of drawing gain from partnering and reciprocal strategies of performance when considered through Laban Movement Analysis and phenomenologically oriented artistic research?* With these aims and the question in mind, I attempt to:

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1. create a *repertoire of actions* relevant for Reciprocal Drawing (based on Laban Movement Analysis and its categories of *body* and *effort*);
2. adapt the reciprocal partnering strategies of *binding* and *point-of-contact* to drawing;
3. formulate *the rules* and *a diagram* for each co-experimentation;
4. provide an overview of my research method in the context of research defined as artistic research with phenomenological orientation;
5. create a theoretical foundation for analysis and discussion on the central research elements within the Reciprocal Drawing practice;
6. describe the individual phases of the (co-)experimentation based on my memories and the research data – the videos and photographs from the experimentation;
7. reflectively interpret and determine the nature of Reciprocal Drawing by identifying different *states* and *drives* evoked by this co-practice thereby establishing links between its diverse co-dynamics and their respective visual records (with the help of Laban Movement Analysis and its categories of *body, effort, shape, and space*);
8. reflectively evaluate the co-experimentation in terms of the opportunities it brings for drawing;
9. examine the written content according to the general themes emerging from it, and finally

10. to re-address the research question and the emergent opportunities within the context of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of embodiment, selected concepts from the theory of performance drawing and collaboration, and the ethical aspects of Jean-Luc Nancy's and Emmanuel Levinas' philosophies.

The object of this research is my own and my collaborators' artistic process of drawing. The drawn images emerging directly from the experiments are considered the results of the research. However, the border between object and result has never been clear for me due to the cyclical nature of my experimentation. My more in-depth justification for this correlation can be found in chapter 3 of "Methodology and Methods" part of this thesis.

The process was structured into two phases. In the first phase I acted solo and in my studio, while in the second phase I collaborated with separate artists, either in the studios or in the public galleries. As the project consisted of both solo and collaborative activities, the prefixes "co-" and "inter" in the parentheses are used throughout this dissertation to write about both the solo and the collaborative without my extensive listing of separate events. This mainly happens when using nouns such as: "(co-)experimentation," "(co-)practice," "(co-)movement," "(co-)creation," "(co-)action," (co-)development, (inter)action, (inter)play, or adjectives such as (co-)embodied and (inter)subjective. If, however, exclusively my solo practice is referenced, the prefix is omitted. And analogously, when referencing only the collaborative, the prefix without the parentheses appears (e.g., co-practice, interaction, etc.). Additionally, words such as co-action, co-practice, interaction, interplay, or exchange are used interchangeably to replace the word "collaboration" and thus diversify my writing.

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Artistic research employs a *bricolage* of methods. This means that the researcher uses a broad range of methods that are considered to serve the aims of the research (Barrett & Bolt, 2010). My investigations were rooted in "performance drawing" (Foá et al., 2022, p. 1) as the main genre of experimentation. After participating in numerous practical workshops, I decided to adopt the following fundamental tools and strategies to guide my experimentation with drawing:

1. In the solo phase, I employed *Laban Movement Analysis* (LMA) (Studd & Cox, 2013) to first identify and systemize the body's physical actions into the *repertoire of actions* upon which the collaborative experiments were designed and developed. LMA is a comprehensive system used in understanding multiple aspects of human movement patterns. It incorporates a broad theoretical framework and codified vocabulary to identify both functional and expressive content of movement (Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). When adopted in the solo drawing, the LMA-derived body category constituted a lens through which I related to the formal visual aspects such as shapes and sizes of lines, planes, and textures as well as the image composition. Further, through the LMA category of effort, with its variable factors of speed, pressure, space and flow, I related to the quality of lines, saturation of tonal values and density of textures but also to attitudes, intents or bodily energy preserved in a drawing.
2. In the collaborative phase, I adopted *the reciprocal partnering strategy of rope-binding*, explored by the Taiwanese artist Tehching Hsieh and the American artist Linda Montano in their *Art/Life One Year Performance 1983-1984 (Rope Piece)* (Kim, 2017); and
3. *the reciprocal partnering strategy of point-of-contact* (Liberato, 2015), one of the principles of Contact Improvisation (CI), a way of improvised dancing developed



since the 1970s (Blom & Chaplin, 1988). More to the subject of artistic research and methods utilized in this study can be found in chapter 3.

Further, in my theoretical reflections following the experimentation, LMA offered the vocabulary and tools to precisely describe and interpret reciprocal movement and the related mental states or “levels of consciousness” (Maletic, 1987, p. 100) accompanying Reciprocal Drawing. Chapter 7 is devoted to description of Laban Movement Analysis and its main principles. Finally, when the entire experimentation was considered finished, I utilized *reflection-in-action* (Schön, 1983) method to structure my written account of the experimentation process. The detailed description of this instrument can be found in section 3.2 of the “Artistic Research” chapter.

From among the total nine conducted experiments, the following six were included in this thesis:

1. Solo systematization of the LMA body actions along with the record of their traces on paper; solo studio practice by Agnieszka Karasch, Warsaw (PL), 2015.
2. *BINDING/ROTATIONS*, a performative experiment by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik, collaborative studio practice, Warsaw (PL), 2014.
3. *BINDING/ROTATIONS BIPOLAR*, a performative experiment by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha, “Draw to Perform” Symposium, Crows Nest Gallery, London (UK), 2016.
4. *BINDING/ROTATIONS CENTRIC*, a performative experiment by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha, “Draw to Perform” Symposium, Crows Nest Gallery, London (UK), 201
5. *POINT-OF-CONTACT/EXTENSIONS-FLEXIONS BIPOLAR*, a performative experiment by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna, collaborative studio practice, New York (NY), 2017<sup>4</sup>
6. *POINT-OF-CONTACT/EXTENSIONS-FLEXIONS CENTRIC*, a performative experiment by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna, collaborative studio practice, New York (NY), 2017.

The above-listed practical experiments produced data such as a rich video documentation of the processes and photographic documentation of the small and large size drawings. The structure of my experimentation is discussed in detail in chapter 3.

### 1.3 Theoretical Frame, Analysis and Thematic Interpretation

In addition to being characterized as artistic research, my research assumes a phenomenological orientation. As a style of thought or a method of inquiry rather than a doctrine or a philosophical school, phenomenology is not concerned with establishing any universal paradigms. Instead, it implies that the world is described through multiple individual accounts or varying and diverse perspectives. Further, it understands human consciousness as a merging of rational mind, memories, intuition, and impulses com-

<sup>4</sup>This collaborative studio practice was a test preceding our performance piece under the same title at the Itinerant Festival, curated by Hector Canonge, The Bronx Museum of Arts, New York (NY), May the 15th, 2017.

ing from and towards the body (Farina, 2014; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2012; Hass, 2008; Langer, 1989; Moran, 2000). More to the subject of phenomenology can be found in chapter 4.

Mainly phenomenological research but also relational phenomenological research guided the theoretical part of my investigations. In these modes of research, experiences are first described. The description is followed by the analysis which leads to identification of general themes that touch upon the essence of the phenomenon (synthesis). In the case of relational phenomenological research, data emerges out of researcher/co-researcher relationship as they both impact each other in the process (Dahlberg et al., 2008; Evans & Gilbert, 2005; Finlay, 2009a, 2009b). In chapter 4, the problematic of these two approaches is elaborated on in more detail.

In accordance with the above-mentioned premises, the analysis and thematic interpretation of the research data ran in three separate stages. First, based on my memories, the video- and photographic documentation, I described the (co-)experimentation process by considering the six (co-)experiments listed down earlier. Since the experiments were separated by periods of reflection, the description already includes the ways in which I interpreted and evaluated the artistic experiences, and consequently, the opportunities and challenges linked with Reciprocal Drawing. The writing took place after all the experiments were completed. Additionally, at the writing stage I noticed how the completed process had fit with the structure of *reflection-in-action* (Schön, 1983), the instrument of action research. As mentioned, this helped me to better structure my writing about the process. In the second stage, I re-read and categorized the entire written material according to the general themes emerging there. In the third stage, I situated the general themes within phenomenological framework and theory of art and performance, which allowed me to give the reader a more encompassing understanding of the Reciprocal Drawing practice. I delve into the details of each stage in sections 4.1–4.3 of the “Methodology and Methods” part.

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When referring to thematic interpretation, I wish to specifically point out the influence of the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty and his philosophy of embodiment, which helped me better explain the unique, reciprocal character of the experiments with drawing. According to Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968, 1945/2012), the whole world is built of one flesh within which we are immersed and of which we are an inherent part. Like we experience our own bodies as one with the mind, so we perceive ourselves as interconnected with other people and objects. Therefore, we can comprehend other peoples’ movement already within and through ourselves. The vector is reversible which means that we are also understood by others based on the same attunement they have in relation to us. Exactly this reciprocal quality of our “being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1927/2010, p. 53) allowed my collaborator and me to grasp the intentions of our actions and, thus, establish a unique common spatial context, or the aiming I spoke about earlier, within the paper surface. Once continually linked with one another, we were able to synchronize in drawing without making any complicated rational operations and/or prior explanations about how we should do that. The philosophy with its background and specific concepts is described in chapter 8.

Identification of the above body- and movement-related aspects during the analysis of the written account made it possible to explain the experiments in the categories of *performance drawing*, that is as an event in which the artists’ embodied presence, haptic engagement, liveliness and action become of central importance (Foá et al., 2022). In performance-related contexts, there is a focus on creators’ body actions and gestures (Fischer-Lichte, 2004/2008; Wachowski, 2011), the processuality and interaction (Crease, 1993; Kaprow, 1995, 2003). In this light, supported with the concepts of *framing* and *keying* (Goffman, 1956, 1974/1986), Reciprocal Drawing is additionally conceptualized as *play* (Caillois, 1958/2001; Sutton-Smith, 1972), *social drama* (Turner, 1969/2011)

and *aesthetic drama* (Schechner, 2002/2006). What's more, inviting other artists into my creative process placed our respective interactions in the context of collaboration, specifically the one focused on *creativity* (Erdély, 2020), but also collaboration of "postconsensual" (Ruhsam, 2016, p. 75) kind. The latter allows to discuss our exchange through Jean-Luc Nancy's (1983/1991, 1996/2000) concepts of *being-with* and ethical aspect of Emmanuel Levinas' (1974/1991) philosophy. The research followed corporeal and artistic paths that were not tied into any external political or ideological trajectories other than through the strategies and concepts that guided the processes and their analysis. The specific theories and concepts mentioned here are discussed in chapters 9, 10 and 11.

## 1.4 Collaborating Artists

Collaboration was an important part of the entire project. After the solo phase, I invited each collaborator separately to try out the selected actions and one chosen reciprocal partnering strategy (respectively binding and the point-of-contact). In this way, collaboration provided me with a vast material for reflection on the Reciprocal drawing practice.

Among artists who contributed to this project were (in chronological order of the collaborative experiments) Ola Piechnik, a Polish dancer and sports-psychologist, Ram Samocha, a London-based Israeli curator, visual and performance artist, and Jaanika Peerna, a New York-based, Estonian artist working mainly with drawing. As mentioned earlier, the collaborative experimentations happened both in our private studios as well as in public galleries of London and New York. Our presence in the galleries involved reception from audiences. More detailed presentation of my collaborators' profiles along with the selection criteria and division of roles in this project is included in chapter 5 and the relevant section of chapter 6.

The artists who also contributed to the development of my experimentation were Mailo Štern<sup>5</sup>, a Latvian performance artist and activist and Sophie Hörmann<sup>6</sup>, an Austrian dancer. However important, my last two experiments conducted separately with each of them, were eventually not included at the subsequent, writing stage of this research since the material gathered during the first five co-actions (listed down earlier) turned out to show the main features and opportunities of Reciprocal Drawing clearly enough. Based on the initial analysis of the materials, my continuing with the detailed analysis was predicted to add repetition and redundancy.

## 1.5 Ethics

My research has been conducted in an ethical manner as articulated in the guidelines *Responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland* by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (Krista et al., 2012), detailed information can be found under this link: [https://tenk.fi/sites/tenk.fi/files/HTK\\_ohje\\_2012.pdf](https://tenk.fi/sites/tenk.fi/files/HTK_ohje_2012.pdf). While addressing ethical dimensions, I was confronted with the following issues that emerged during the process: (a) unexpected bodily reactions and behaviors resulting from adopting the binding which, as a strategy of Reciprocal Drawing, released intense emotions and provoked competitiveness and conflict; (b) existen-

<sup>5</sup> BINDING/SCATTERING-GATHERING\_1, a performative experiment by Agnieszka Karasch and Mailo Štern, Performance Festival Starptelpa - In Between, curated by Laine Kristberga, Riga (LV), June the 16th, 2019; total time 40 min.

<sup>6</sup> DYSHOMEOSTASIS, a performative experiment by Agnieszka Karasch and Sophie Hörmann, Ausstellungsfestival Unselect, curated by Liz Stumpf and Polina Kokotov, Kleine Humboldt Galerie, Berlin (GER), July the 12th, 2019, total time 30 min.

tial issues both represented and lived through the Reciprocal Drawing practice such as control versus submission or leading versus following.

At this point it must be clearly stated that all participants were artists and professionals who knew the intent of the research and their age and experience were comparable with mine. During our conversations preceding the experimentation, they gave their voluntary approval to practically contribute to this research. Additionally, the participants approved at different stages of our experimentation as well as before the descriptive stage of the research to my use of the video and photographs documenting our artistic processes and products.

Additionally, the two issues enumerated above were looked at through the ethical aspects of the philosophy of the French thinker Emmanuel Levinas (1974/1991) and the writing of the phenomenologists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999). Their specific concepts and approaches are described chapter 11. Finally, the last chapter of the “Methodology and Methods” part presents how integrity and ethical sensitivity of my research were ensured.

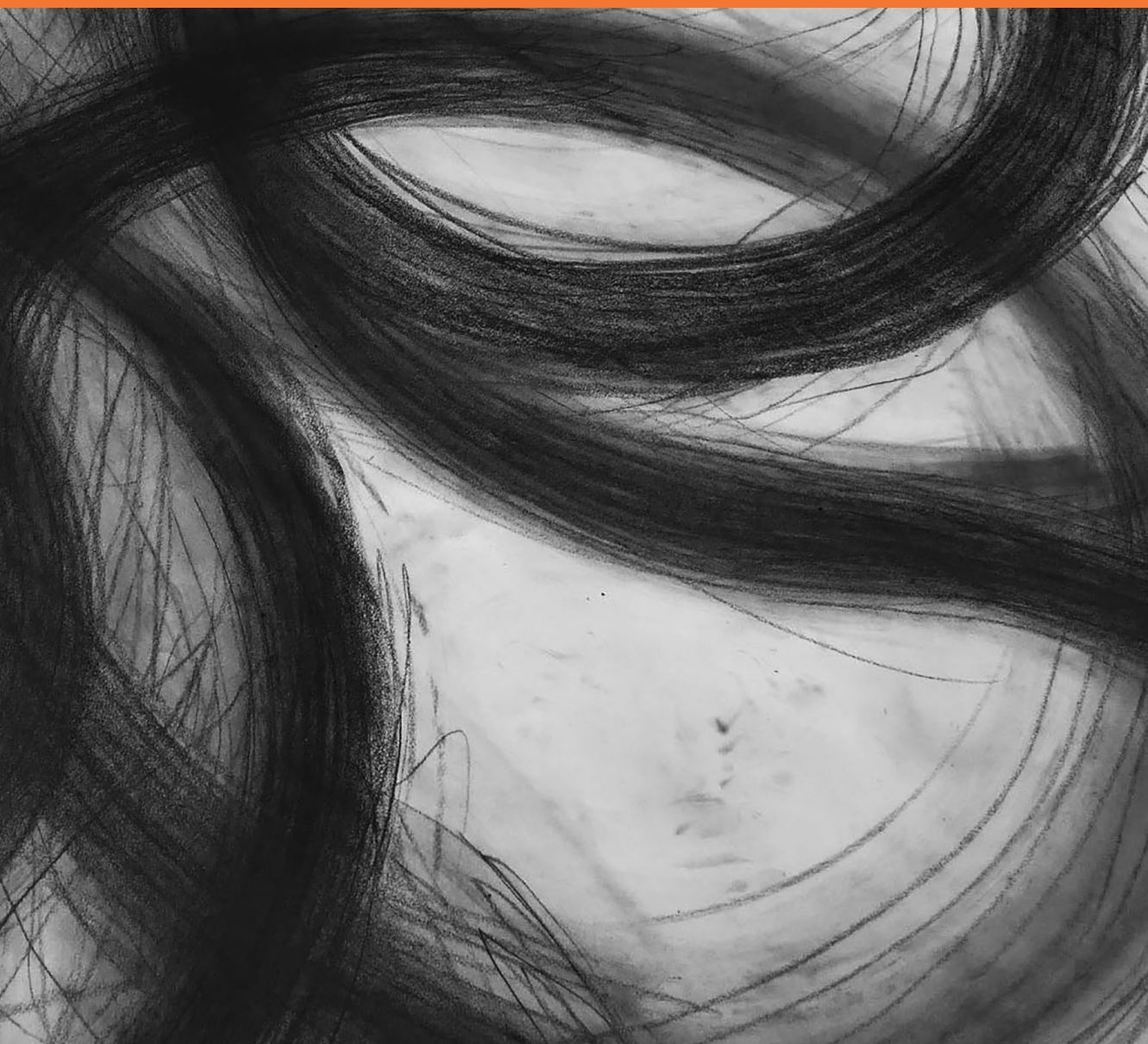
## **1.6 Structure of the Dissertation**

The structure of this dissertation consists of the following: Part One describes the methodology in terms of artistic research with the phenomenological orientation. Part Two offers literature and practice review with the particular focus on Laban Movement Analysis, Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of embodiment, and the field of performance drawing. This part also presents selected concepts from the contemporary theory of collaboration along with the specific ethics thereof. Rich in photographic material, Part Three contains my written account of the entire experimentation process including the ways in which I evaluated the respective experiments. Part Four offers a broad discussion on and interpretation of the general themes emerging from the account. In this way I further respond to the research question by situating my reflections from Part Three in the context of the philosophy and theories presented in the “Literature and Practice Review” (Part Two). In the final chapter of Part Four, I summarize my research aims and re-address the opportunities and challenges coming from Reciprocal Drawing. There, I also focus on the open issues and propose new questions for further consideration. The dissertation contains significant amount of videos and photographs presenting me and/or my collaborators in action as well as my/our large scale and smaller drawings. In the text and captions, my collaborators’ identities are fully disclosed.

# METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The aim of Part One is to present the methodological framework that lays the foundation for research methods applied in this investigation. In what follows, I first discuss the nature of bodily knowledge – the type of knowledge this research pursues. Then, I provide an overview of artistic research as my chosen mode of inquiry. Therein, I explain how it relates to this artistic project, thus classifying my art practice as an academic inquiry. In the same chapter, I define *reflection-in-action* and demonstrate how the artistic process discussed in this thesis fits with this instrument's concepts. After that, I characterize phenomenological research and identify it as the additional methodology that guides the theoretical part of my research. This is followed by a presentation of my collaborators – research participants and the co-authors of artistic processes and products of this study. The final chapter is an overview of ethical discussion related to the selected aspects of artistic research. The concise version of Part One appears in the introduction to this monograph.

## PART 1





## 2. Bodily Knowledge

This chapter discusses bodily knowledge as the type of knowledge my research pursues. In the first section, I provide an epistemological background to discern two types of knowledge. In the next four sections, I focus on the specific concepts that underlie the definition of bodily knowledge such as: *bodily reflectivity*, *the living body*, *bodily-felt distinctions*, *body schema*, and *kinaesthetic empathy*. As the discussion develops, I situate the activity of drawing in relation to these concepts.

### 2.1 Twofold Nature of Knowledge

In the 20th century analytical philosophers such as Gilbert Ryle and Michael Polanyi abolished the centuries-long opposition between propositional knowledge, now commonly defined as knowledge of facts (the Aristotelian *episteme*), and practical knowledge (*techne*) understood as skill or knowing how to make, act and/or perform (Borgdorff, 2012). The first type, which Ryle (1949) described as *knowing that*, is an equivalent of propositional knowledge. It denotes being in possession of concrete pieces of information that are conveyable to others with spoken language, written texts and/or numbers. The second type—the *knowing how*—does not easily lend itself to logical explanations. For example, one can know how to draw a portrait, play an instrument or do a front flip without being able to explain what exactly it is that one knows. Polanyi (1966), in turn, differentiated between knowledge about the object in focus and knowledge that exists as a background to what is in focus. He described the first kind as focal and the second kind as tacit, implicit and unspecifiable knowledge. As scholar Karl Sveiby (in Parviainen, 2002) illustrates, when one reads a text and concentrates on the meaning of it, the focal knowledge is formed, and the particular words and grammar rules operate as subsidiary, tacit knowledge. Polanyi argued that both dimensions are complementary (Parviainen, 2002) and epistemologically relevant (Sanders, 1988).

The concept of bodily knowledge is important for my project as I engage bodily movement in favor of the new drawing practices. Although articulating something that only happens in bodily awareness may seem a paradox (Parviainen, 2002), the philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, to name a few, have made it possible to address the issue in writing. In her important publication *The Primacy of Movement*, scholar Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (2011) presents movement as something that reflects “fundamental creative patterning of thought” or “kinetic bodily logos” (p. 426). In her view, the logos is most visible in improvisational dance. The author claims that epistemologically, movement is foundational in the process of cognition. Movement is prior in relation to “the I that moves” (p. 119) in the sense that movement forms “the I that moves” and not vice versa. My turning to movement and its analysis in clarifying the essences of Reciprocal Drawing is based on the same conviction. I understand all modes of mark-making, including the symbol-based ones, as inherently linked with our corporeal life. As Sheet-Johnston (2019) insists, “*animation is the bedrock of aesthetic performance . . . painting, composing, choreographing, acting and writing – all rest upon movement*” (pp. 51–52). In support of this assertion, the author comes up with an example of an infant who intuitively knows, solely based on its tactile-kinaesthetic experience, and without access to propositional and linguistic knowing nor to specified object of attention. By focusing on experiencing its own body the infant has a “manner” or “style” of cognition which the author refers to as “physical knowledge” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011, p. 270) – a nonpropositional and nonlinguistic knowing in and through movement.

Referencing dance as the area where bodily knowledge manifests itself clearly, phenomenologist Jaana Parviainen (2002) speaks of our “corporeal intellect” (p. 20). She

situates bodily knowledge on equal footing with conceptual knowledge and argues that the only difference between these two is the medium with which both types of knowledge are expressed. Although knowing in dancing engages words to a certain extent, it is primarily non-verbal and concerned with bodily awareness and motility. Consequently, what the performer copes with when trying to capture the complexity of the moving form are the “sensations and images of movement, its meaning, quality, shapes and textures” (p. 13).

## 2.2 Bodily Reflectivity

Drawing on Polanyi’s (1958, 1966) epistemology, Parviainen (2002) advocates an expanded definition of skill by pointing to *bodily reflectivity* defined by her as the body’s predisposition to turn back towards what it can do before the body actually does something. She recalls the example of a pianist whose bodily knowledge manifests not as a mere technique—a simple act equal with that of chopping wood or typing—but as a complex act of playing an instrument when the pianist realizes of “his or her living body’s movement ability to push and release fingers on key with a certain intensity and rhythm to produce the sound the piece demands” (p. 19). For Parviainen (2002), bodily knowledge—as influenced by the bodily reflectivity—appears, therefore, as the body’s innate considering of the possibility of doing<sup>7</sup>. The body chooses the most adequate movement. It happens not automatically but through bodily reflection, indeed by the body’s continuous considering of factors such as space and time and by adapting or modifying of movement according to the changing conditions.

The same can be said in relation to drawing solo and in collaboration. It is not merely a skill of leaving marks or arranging planes in more or less elaborate patterns, but it is primarily a reflective, bodily practice in which I/we first realize of my/our bodily ability to decide on the adequate quality and shape of marks, lines, planes and compositional structures. It is not some external adequacy but the unique, (inter-)subjective, individual as well as shared sense of appropriateness that decides about the originality of our drawing.

## 2.3 Lived Knowledge, Lived Body and the Living Body

The formulation *lived knowledge* is equivalent to bodily knowledge (Parviainen, 2002). The attribute “lived” points to the distinction lived/living introduced by Husserl (1936/1970) to write about *Leib* or the body given to me in perception as my own, as a phenomenon, not a thing. Consequently, as Parviainen (2002) explains, there is a body-object and the body-subject differentiation. Scholar Sondra Fraleigh (1987) clarifies that the body-object can be known once the body becomes the object of our investigation, whereas the body-subject can only be lived; actively experienced by the knower from within. In my understanding, the attribute “lived” is about the experiential side of our being, while “living” includes the physical body in addition to the “lived” or experienced body. Since I incorporate materials to my body, such as drawing tools, the rope I tie between myself and the collaborator, or the paper I touch with my entire skin surface, I have decided to use the more encompassing term “the living body” throughout this thesis.

<sup>7</sup> In her epistemological reflections, Parviainen (2002) defines bodily knowledge as thinking in and through the body. Addressing the concept of bodily knowledge, the author largely relies on Polanyi’s (1966) distinction between focal and tacit knowledge. Although for her Polanyi’s tacit knowing comes close to Rylean (1949) *knowing how*, she criticizes and ultimately discredits the latter’s reasoning due to his rejection of an expert’s ability to reflect on the rules involved in his/her own performance and his emphasis on skill understood in an epistemologically traditional way, that is as knowing how to perform a muscular act.

## 2.4 Bodily Awareness and Bodily-Felt Distinctions

Another notion influencing the concept of bodily knowledge is what Parviainen (2002) describes as “bodily awareness” (p. 16) which she explains as our ability to “listen” (p. 16) to our own movement and distinguish its direction, speed, range or tension. In other words, as knowing bodies, we are able to feel our moving bodies’ particular “*qualia*” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011, p. 49) such as swiftness, smoothness, slowness, clumsiness, brusqueness, tightness, looseness, etc. Bodily knowledge, therefore, allows performers to make “bodily-felt distinctions” (p. 49) in motion, that is discern between various kinetic “bodily feelings” (p. 51) or qualities of body actions.

In Parviainen’s (2002) view, making such distinctions is a matter of the body’s “epistemic sensitivity” (p. 16). It is a process of “categorizing elements of movement” (p. 20). Indeed, through the effort of categorizing movement, the body becomes receptive to its own motility. Connecting to Parviainen’s (2002) discussion on skill from the perspective of the body’s specific inner receptivity, bodily knowledge has less to do with a correct performance and more with the bodily ability to find a proper balance and quality of movement in given circumstances. For me, drawing is an activity that starts from within the body, that is from identifying various bodily qualities that dominate in my body at a given moment and looking for ways to express them on paper. In this sense, the phrase such as “proper,” “adequate” or “appropriate,” which I use to describe the shape, tone or saturation of marks, does not refer to any ultimately correct or perfect pattern, but rather to a mark that best reflects my bodily-felt distinctions. In collaborative practice, my search for proper balance is about careful listening to my own movement as being affected by the other as well as attempting to find a mark that best expresses the constantly changing external factors with which my body is confronted with.

## 2.5 Bodily Schema and Kinaesthetic Empathy

Separate problematics constitutes the question of how bodily knowledge is gained. According to Polanyi (1966), the best way to acquire and transmit this knowledge is through learning-by-doing, imitation, and identification. Once explained through the lens of his distinction, the process of acquiring a new skill is about continuous switching between the focal and tacit knowing, that is between the deeply sedimented, general and “indwelling” (p. 16) bodily awareness and that which is currently in focus. I will return to this distinction while discussing Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of embodiment and his concepts of *habit body* and *personal body* (in “Twofold dynamics of movement” subsection of chapter 8).

While referring to how one knows through the body, two important notions come into play – the *body schema* and *kinaesthetic empathy*. The body schema is the body’s particular topography allowing the body to function as a unity in relation to its tasks and environments but also as an innate manner of doing something, a mode of acting (Casey, 1996; Parviainen, 2002). And so, when acquiring a new skill, the body does not simply keep on performing a pattern of actions but is rather engaged in the dynamic process of reviving and reshaping of its own schema (Parviainen, 2002). The concept finds its application in the practices presented in this thesis as the testing and developing of new approaches to drawing did not simply assume our schematic repetition of the LMA body actions and/or direct adaptation of what had been learned before. Instead, my collaborator and I were performing complex operations in unique circumstances. Sometimes the process was smooth and fluent. It happened when, supported by the body schema, we were able to adapt our previously acquired knowledge of drawing

and dance to the new frames set for the experimentation. Other times, the demand to fit with these frames produced volatile and tension-laden dynamics, and synchronization of our bodies took some time. That more demanding experimentation process was a part of learning, reviving and reshaping of our body schemas. The concept is further elaborated on in 8.2.1 subsection of chapter 8, where I explain the interconnected insights from Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*.

Kinaesthetic empathy is the human's complex ability to perceive and feel the motion of other lived bodies. It is directly related to bodily schema as it is through comprehension of our own movement that we can connect to and capture the nature of the other's movement (Parviainen, 2002). Examining the concept, Parviainen (2003) states that kinaesthetic empathy entails:

re-living and an epistemological placing of us "inside" the other's kinaesthetic experience. It makes it possible to understand the non-verbal kinetic experiences through which we may acquire knowledge of the other's bodily movements on the basis of our own body topography. (p. 161)

The author stresses the importance of kinaesthetic empathic act in the study of the other's bodily movement. Through empathic projection we make sense of the other's experience of movement, and reciprocally, of our own movement as we place ourselves empathically in the other's point of view. Using the term kinaesthetic empathy, Parviainen (2002, 2003) relies on Edith Stein's (1917/1964) concept of *empathy*. In my experimentation leading to development of the Reciprocal Drawing method, kinaesthetic empathy has played a crucial role. As my body's innate ability, it allowed for comprehension and, to some extent, also written explanation of my collaborator's movement decisions, intentions and specific sensations from our co-experimentation. These explanations can be found in the written account of the co-experiments of this research (see Part Three). What's more, based on our empathic projection, we could co-develop new complex visual compositions without having to rely on verbal communication. By reading the other's movement I also already "felt" the quality of the other's marks on paper. In Reciprocal Drawing, kinaesthetic empathy broadens my own approach to drawing, through direct and uninterrupted contact with the collaborator I immediately comprehend within myself and reiterate the effects of the other's actions.

This chapter offered an overview of concepts that relate to the problematics of bodily knowledge. The concepts addressed included: *bodily reflectivity*, *the living body*, *bodily-felt distinctions*, *body schema*, and *kinaesthetic empathy*. They are used throughout this publication in reference to drawing solo and in collaboration. In the next two chapters, I focus on the methodology and methods with which bodily knowledge was researched in this doctoral project.

### 3. Artistic Research

The next two chapters provide a framework through which I address the methods and methodology of my research. Artist and theorist Graeme Sullivan (2005) explains the difference between methods and methodology of practice-based research. Methods appertain to the artist-researcher's chosen modes of practice while methodology involves philosophical and theoretical premises upon which the project builds. In this chapter, I first offer an overview of artistic research along with a specification of my research aim and object, the artistic methods implemented, and questions posed. In the next section, the structure of my experimentation is outlined with its two main phases – the solo and collaborative phase. There, I also list down the specific artistic experiments carried out. The same section contains references to *reflection-in-action*, an instrument which makes the development of the experimentation better transparent for the reader. After that, I reveal the ways in which I evaluated the experiments. In the final section, I provide technical information on the materials produced as well as the ways I documented the process and edited its documentation.

Holistically, the solo and duo experiments of my research will be referred to as Reciprocal Drawing. At the same time, the formulation does not imply that I claim universality of this new method for drawing. Rather, the term refers to the specific collaborative practice developed during the research.

#### 3.1 Aims, Object, Methods and Question

The alignment of theoretical and practical knowledge<sup>8</sup> raised questions regarding methodologies and methods with which the practical knowledge could be researched. My chosen mode of inquiry is artistic research and the methodology from which I partially draw is known as phenomenological research – both capable of producing bodily knowledge. In this chapter, I focus on artistic research, while phenomenological research is described in the next chapter.

For scholars Anniina Suominen and Mira Kallio-Tavin (2017), artistic research (AR) denotes research that engages artistic practices, processes and products as crucial parts of its methodology. The knowledge produced through this research sprouts from artistic, visual and multisensorial realms of human experience and is, therefore, “intuitive, sensorial, felt, aesthetic and embodied” (p. 105). As such, it manifests itself through the materials used along the process of discovery.

Borgdorff (2012) defines artistic research as “an endeavour in which the production of art is itself a fundamental part of the research process and whereby art is partly a result of research” (p. 31). He comes up with a more precise definition when he describes this research as:

[the practice of which] purpose is to expand our knowledge and understanding by conducting an original investigation in and through art objects and creative processes. Art research begins by addressing questions that are pertinent in the research context and in the art world. Researchers employ experimental and hermeneutic methods that reveal and articulate the tacit knowledge that is situated and embodied in specific artworks and artistic processes. Research processes and outcomes are documented and disseminated in an appropriate manner to the research community and the wider public. (p. 53)

<sup>8</sup> Also described as the “practice turn” in contemporary theory (Schatzki et al., 2001).



A researcher's individual, autobiographical and emotional motivations stand at the core of artistic research. They suggest the choice of the ways in which the project is conducted, analyzed and interpreted (Barrett & Bolt, 2010). Alongside the subjective grounds, specific problems related to artworld and/or art-politics may become an incentive for artistic research (L. Rouhiainen personal communication, June 6, 2021). Oftentimes the artist-researcher's own art practice in the studio is a "motivating factor" (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 146). In reference to studio work, Sullivan (2005) notes:

Studio art experiences are inclusive of the full range of ideas and images that inform individual, and cultural actions. These may spark inquiries into issues that subsequently take place within the orbit of the art world or at the institutional level and these can investigate quite different areas and directions. (p. 81)

One point of contention is whether art-making can be identified as research (e.g., Borgdorff, 2012; Sullivan, 2005). In support of a standardized approach to artistic practice within academia Borgdorff (2012) proposes eight criteria which situate art practice in the context of academic research and by the same token draw a border between art practice and artistic research. These are: (a) intent, (b) research questions, (c) methods, (d) knowledge and understanding, (e) originality (f) context, (g) documentation, and (h) dissemination<sup>9</sup>. In the following paragraphs I present theoretical positions related to these criteria to then explain how my (co-)experimentation responds these criteria.

As a systematic inquiry, the research starts with a well formulated question which may, at times, change as the project develops (Cobussen, 2014a, 2014b). Further, Borgdorff (2012) reveals that the object (subject matter) of investigation is the artistic process or the artwork itself. When, for example, the process is the focal point, then the result is the work of art: an image, installation or performance. The process is equivalent with the making, creating, developing (of images, scenarios, scores, etc.), testing, trying out of concepts, producing performances. To name a few examples, the artefact can be an image, a composition, a performance, a material, a dramatic structure, a scenario, a score or a stage setup.

As for the methods, philosopher and scholar Juha Varto (2018) clarifies that the postmodern discourse on methods of representation has proven that anything can constitute an artistic method as long as an artist adopts and masters it. At professional skill level these methods (or modes of practice) are perceived by others as "clear, consistent and conscious" (Varto, 2018, p. 67). And so, it can be inferred from Varto's discussion that among the possible methods of artistic research are all artistic disciplines with their specific forms, techniques and/or genres. Additionally, an artistic method can be a particular "mixture of means, attitudes [and] activities" (Varto, 2018, p. 63), which brings to mind the postmodern practices where skill is connected to the social and/or political domain. Some of the contemporary art methods include performance art, improvisation, intervention, contradiction, juxtaposition, repetition, parallel writing, misplacing, projection, and documentation (P. Kaverma, personal communication, November 22, 2019). Artistic research also adapts scientific methods. A number of scholars speak of "methodological pluralism" (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 147; Suominen et al., 2017, p. 104), "methodological abundance" (Hannula et al., 2005, p. 37), or bricolage of qualitative methods appropriated from the humanities and social sciences (Barrett & Bolt, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Order of the criteria has been changed by me for the purpose of text organization. In the original source, the criteria are set in the following order: 1. intent, 2. originality, 3. knowledge and understanding, 4. research questions, 5. context, 6. methods, 7. documentation, and 8. dissemination (cf. Borgdorff 2012, p. 43).

Borgdorff (2012) elaborates on the specific kind of theory artistic research is interested in. He situates artistic practice in relation to four existing (and mutually non-exclusive) research perspectives: instrumental, interpretive, performative, and immanent<sup>10</sup>. According to Borgdorff (2012), the *instrumental perspective* (or *research for the arts*) promotes a strictly applied approach to art practice. It assumes that theory serves the artistic process. Here the word “theory” is understood as professional knowledge needed to practice an artist-researcher’s chosen craft(s). From among the possible examples the author selects: Stanislavsky’s technique in theater, theory of film editing, theory of harmony or counterpoint in music. From this standpoint, artistic research focuses on how theory, as defined here, applies to the practice it is concerned with. Moreover, the same perspective initiates research on ways in which specific materials may be used. This sort of artistic research is most frequently conducted in professional art schools, art spaces and residencies.

The *interpretive perspective* (or *research on the arts*) suggests that theory is a starting point for reflection, knowledge and understanding of artistic practices and products. Theory is then used as a tool which helps the artist-researcher gain distance towards his/her own artistic practice/products and the ones of others. In this way theory contextualizes one’s own art-making, makes it into an intellectual task and facilitates reception of the artistic production by others. Here, the term “theory” raises above the craft itself in the direction of philosophy understood as science and pertains to the “grand theories of the humanities” (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 19). The interpretive approach in artistic research has its roots in academic disciplines such as art theory, theater studies, and/or musicology.

The *performative perspective* (*research in the arts*) holds that both theory as discussed in the previous example and the craft-related theory can be used as a starting point for a new type of art practice. In this sense theory already shapes the practice, or simply “*theory itself is a practice*” (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 20, italics by Borgdorff). The author explains this approach when he says:

Whether we are dealing with the theory of linear perspective, classical rhetoric, the twelve-tone technique, set theory in serial music, or insights into the cultural meanings and societal functions of art, the performative power of theory not only alters the way we look at art and the world, but it makes these into what they are. (p. 20)

The *immanent perspective* (*research in the arts*)<sup>11</sup> highlights phenomenological understanding of the world. This perspective holds that there is no one true and ultimate form of art and that all art practices, materials and tools emanate with individual experiences, beliefs, and histories. While, as the author contends, all forms of artistic endeavors concretize concepts and theories in one way or another, the knowledge and experience embodied in the artist-researcher’s medium can remain elusive and vague, and thus escape logical and discursive explanation. Nevertheless, the knowledge originating from artistic processes shapes the world in sensory (visual, tactile and/or auditory) ways. I situate my research in the light of all the above perspectives, the rationale of which is discussed in detail in the later paragraphs of this section.

Responding to the questions posed by a scholar Eliot Eisner (2008) related to possible tensions which may arise from lack of clear references and different interpretations of the research material, Suominen et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of honesty and ethical responsibility of an artist-researcher. For them, this honesty and respon-

<sup>10</sup> Similar specification was put together by Sullivan (cf. 2005) who identifies interpretive, empirical and critical perspectives on art practice. In defining my research methodology, I limit myself to Borgdorff’s enumeration.

<sup>11</sup> Borgdorff (2012) refers to the performative and immanent perspectives with the same equivalent term “research in the arts” (p. 19).

sibility mean a devoted and respectful attitude towards a studied topic but also an ongoing ethical inspection of the choices made throughout the entire process.

Consideration of inspection brings to mind reflexivity of the research in question. Borgdorff (2012) argues that the current developments in the art world demand that artists contemplate and contextualize their work by themselves. The tendency to theorize one's own artmaking, as observed in conceptual art for example, has also expanded onto productions and receptions of more pre-reflective and tacit character. In this sense, artistic research gives an opportunity to distance oneself from the pressure of art market, it creates a space for more fundamental reflection on one's own practice and development as an artist as well as on the development of the discipline(s) with which one is affiliated.

The research presented in this thesis sees the practice of drawing as a form of bodily (inter)action. It, therefore, relies upon and continues to develop the bodily knowledge. My chosen mode of inquiry with which I articulate this knowledge is artistic research. The aim of this study is to *transform my artistic practice of drawing towards a collaborative and performance-based, partnered and reciprocal formula and, thus, contribute to the field of drawing, its practices and artistic productions.*

The object of my investigation is the bodily process of drawing by myself (solo) and in collaboration (duo form) and the results are the drawn images emerging during this process. In my experience, the object (the process) and the results (the artefacts) were interconnected because when I transformed the very ways in which I was present while drawing (the physical actions I conducted to leave traces on paper), the very artefact still remained in focus. First, while in action, I did not suddenly start ignoring the ways the artefact (the drawn image) was developing. Second, the relationship between the object and the results had been reciprocal. This means that the tested ways of shared moving/drawing had been reflected upon based on their results (the drawn images or visual compositions). Since this reflection happened after each experiment, it eventually conditioned subsequent visual compositions we had in mind when initiating next experiment. In other words, these imagined visual structures largely influenced our movement decisions when in co-action. In this sense, the results are also a part of the process and, consequently the object of my consideration. Borgdorff (2012) acknowledges that object, process, and result may merge in some artists' experiences, and such has been also my impression<sup>12</sup>. The cyclical nature of my artistic process becomes more clear in the subsequent two sections of this chapter, where I discuss the structure of the experimentation.

The drawn images resulting from our interaction are "embodied" and "performative" (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 45) because the process of their co-creation engaged us in moving and responding in relation to the images and to each other. The ways in which we moved, but equally the shapes appearing within the image surface, defined our choices during the dynamic co-action. Besides, the elements of the studied process point to broader theoretical contexts and, in this sense, make my object "hermeneutic" (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 45). Further, the process and the image are "aesthetic" (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 45). The ways in which I/we moved on paper relate to my/our felt sense of

<sup>12</sup> Similar argumentation is provided by artists-researchers Nikolaus Gansterer, Emma Cocker and Mariella Greil (2017) in relation to their collaborative project engaging drawing and performance when they note: "[T]he performing of figures invariably affects and modifies the conditions of the aesthetic exploration itself, producing new shifts of affordance, giving rise to new experiences of figuring" (p. 75). Or by artist-scholar John McNorton (2003) who states: "The drawing . . . is the predominant form which holds all other things together. It is why the drawing has always been as important as the process and why the research has avoided choosing between either the process (choreographic action) and the product (the drawing)" (p. 122).

the body of which I spoke earlier in the context of bodily knowledge. Specifically, when drawing together we tried to find a proper balance and quality of co-movement (“proper” in the sense of the intersubjective feeling of appropriateness I wrote about earlier) and through it generate a certain quality of marks adequate in given circumstances. Finally, the individual as well as collaborative process along with the drawn images are throughout “emotive” (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 45). For the bodily (inter)actions triggered emotions with the same strength as the very developments on paper.

My methods were grounded in performance. Equally important was drawing as my primary visual method to guide and record the movement-based experimentation. The method of drawing derives from my professional artistic education and experience as a visual artist. In the first phase of experimentation (the one in which I focused on solo practice), I used Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), and specifically his theory of space described by a renowned dance scholar and LMA expert Vera Maletic (1987), to identify various body actions and gestures relevant for the drawing practice taking place on a two-dimensional, horizontal plane of paper as well as to organize my whole body’s movement on paper. What’s more, Laban’s theory of expression (Maletic, 1987) made it possible for me to consciously explore the qualitative dependencies between the actions and their traces on paper. Precise description of the system can be found in chapter 7 “Overview of Laban Movement Analysis.” For now, it is sufficient to note that LMA is a comprehensive system created by dancer and choreographer Rudolf Laban. It is used in understanding multiple aspects of human movement patterns as it incorporates a broad theoretical framework and codified vocabulary to identify both functional and expressive content of movement (Studd & Cox, 2013).

In the second phase of experimentation (focused on the collaborative practice), the reciprocal partnering strategies of *binding* and *point-of-contact* were adopted to guide the artistic process of shared drawing. Partnering strategies are traditionally used by performers, dancers and actors to stimulate attention, apply rigor, release emotion, enhance their bodily expression and/or spatial orientation (Grotowski Institute, 2018). The strategies selected for in-depth experimentation have a *reciprocal* character – they enable the two bodies’ direct contact and uninterrupted co-dependence. Rope-binding strategy was applied by Tehching Hsieh, the New York-based Taiwanese artist in his *Art/Life One Year Performance 1983–1984 (Rope Piece)* (Kim, 2017). In the series of life performances, each lasting exactly one year, Tehching imposed different forms of rigor. To conduct the *Rope Piece*, he signed a legal contract with the performance artist Linda Montano. They lived together remaining tied to each other between the 4th of July 1983 and the same day of 1984 (Araujo, 2022; Kim, 2017). “Point-of-contact” (Liberato, 2015) was appropriated by me from Contact Improvisation (CI) – a form of improvised dancing initiated by the choreographer Steve Paxton and developed since 1970s. In short, CI involves examination of one’s own body by sharing its weight with others (Banes, 1987; Blom & Chaplin, 1988) and point-of-contact is about exploring different qualities of touch by rolling, sliding, pivoting or pushing at the point in which the partners’ bodies connect (Liberato, 2015; Novack, 1990).

Considering the above-mentioned movement theory and the strategies, the main research question I have sought to answer is: *What can artistic practice of drawing gain from the collaborative and reciprocal strategies of binding and point-of-contact when considered through Laban Movement Analysis and phenomenologically oriented artistic research?* In the solo phase of my research I asked: *Which LMA body actions can be used by the collaborators in their reciprocal exchange and how should they be modified to facilitate the joint marking in direct contact within the two-dimensional horizontal plane?*

As far as scientific methods are concerned, I treat *reflection-in-action* (Schön, 1983) as an instrument that helps me better demonstrate how the artistic project was structured. The description of the instrument and structure of the research can be found in the next section. From among the scientific approaches, I also employ *phenomenological research* (Finlay, 2009b) to produce research materials to further study the problematics of Reciprocal Drawing. This research is addressed broadly in the next chapter.

My project is substantiated as “research in the arts,” or as research assuming “performative perspective” (p. 20) of which Borgdorff (2012) writes as adopting a theory as a starting point for a new type of art practice. Respectively, I employed Laban Movement Analysis – a part of his movement theory, as a point of departure for my body-based experimentation with drawing. In this sense, Laban’s theory of movement (Maletic, 1987) shaped my solo drawing practice and ultimately also the collaborative practice of the second phase experimentation, because the former constituted the base for the latter. Additionally, I acknowledge the “immanent perspective” (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 20) because the collaborative art practices described here are not ejected from larger contexts but are shaped by my own and my collaborators’ life experiences, preferences, histories and identities as artists, curators, teachers, students, parents and/or spouses. Finally, my project comes to the fore as “research on the arts” (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 24), because in Part Four of this thesis I explain the (co-)creative process through the lens of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of embodiment and distance myself towards the object under study through engaging in theoretical and critical discussion with the selected voices of contemporary art theory. The specific fields and concepts I turn towards are explored in chapters 8 to 11 of the “Literature and Practice Review” part.

My research is original. It responds to stylistic, technical and coordination-related challenges ensuing from application of the collaborative reciprocal strategies of performance in drawing. It does so by uniquely combining the additional frames such as the repertoire of actions and the score (the rules and a diagram). In this way, the collaborators may conduct qualitatively complex and spatially advanced processes and products of embodied drawing which reflect the social nature of human existence in far more nuanced ways than it has been done so far. More to this subject can be found in chapter 9 “Performance Drawing.”

When considering documentation of the artistic processes presented here, I point to the traces left on paper (the drawn images) because they prove that the unique, context- and collaboration-specific interactions had taken place. The documentation of the research and artistic processes also includes photographic close-ups of the drawings, video recordings of the respective experiments, clips from the recordings, and photographs capturing selected moments of the (co-)experimentation.

### 3.2 Structure of the Experimentation

The artistic practice described in this thesis mirrors the structure of “reflection-in-action” (Schön, 1983, p. 128), a mode of practice in which practitioner thinks about what she is doing while she is doing it but also after or in-between the episodes of work. And although my research largely based on bodily experiencing, the thinking-while-doing and thinking in-between the moments of practice facilitated the bodies’ interaction in each subsequent (co-)experiment.

To describe the structure of reflection-in-action, philosopher and scientist Donald Schön (1983) uses scientific terms such as “problem setting” (p. 133), “hypothesis” (p. 143), “frame” (p. 131), “order” (p. 163), “system” (p. 135), “overarching theory” (p. 318),

“experiment” (p. 141), “rigor” (p. 141), or “evaluation” (p. 133) – terms which are at odds with my understanding of artistic processes and productions. Therefore, it must be clearly underlined that I do not see experience of art, with its enigmatic and indeterminacy, fully aligning with these logic-oriented terms. Moreover, I did not have Schön’s instrument in mind prior to and at any point during the creative endeavors presented here. Nevertheless, as I discovered this framework in the aftermath of the artistic process, Schön’s theoretical stance seemed to well capture the logic of my separate work episodes and their development as well as my understanding of the collaborative process as something that I and my collaborators actively shape according to our sometimes contradictory values and expectations. In the same vein, artist and writer Stephen Scrivener (2000) notes that although artistic process cannot be reduced to logical calculations, Schön’s (1983) “theory . . . provides us with concepts which help to characterize creative production” (p. 10). Similar observations about inspirational character of reflection-in-action have been made by some (artists-)scholars in relation to a number of art, design and music projects (Candy, 2020; Frayling, 2021; Gray & Malins, 2016; Lee Gray, 2014).

Some of Scrivener’s (2000) observations regarding the similarities between Schön’s framework and artistic practice well articulate my own impressions. For instance, the point of departure for Schön (1983) is the problem-setting as a response to uniqueness and singularity of the task in hand. In the case of this project it was indeed the dilemma—a sense of stagnation and alienation from my own artistic-pedagogical process—that prompted my explorations. Further, Schön (1983) elevates individual past experience and doubts the power of generalized theories and standard solutions, which goes hand in hand with the phenomenological stance this research accepts. Indeed, all standard solutions seemed inadequate for my problem of stagnation, because they often assumed separation of art and pedagogy in time and space (studio vs. classroom), which for me, then a mother of small children, was unfeasible. During investigation, the pedagogical concerns have been suspended and what came forth as fundamentally uncertain was *the embodied drawing of reciprocal nature*, the collaborative drawing in which two persons remain in an uninterrupted, direct physical contact in the same space and time. To develop this “unique and uncertain” (Schön, 1983, p. 130) kind of drawing I had to start from what was familiar and valued to me and then “reframe” (Schön, 1983, p. 131) it as the experimentation developed. Reflective practice described in this thesis ran in two successive and interconnected phases. First in the individual (solo) and then in the collaborative (duo) form. The first phase served the second in that it developed a “springboard” (Schön, 1983, p. 317) for the subsequent collaborative experimentation.

### 3.2.1 Solo phase

In the first (solo) phase, the problematic situation which my artistic process aimed at exploring was the embodied drawing itself, whereas the “overarching theory” (Schön, 1983, p. 318) was Laban Movement Analysis (LMA). Through the LMA’s concept of body actions and gestures, I reshaped the drawing activity in that I systematized the otherwise spontaneous and/or unconscious actions of the mark-making body into a well-defined *repertoire of actions* for Reciprocal Drawing. In selecting the repertoire’s actions, I was guided by the *values* of my personal drawing practice, or what Schön (1983) identifies as the practitioner’s own “appreciative system” (p. 135). Additionally, the LMA’s concept of effort helped me consciously navigate the qualitative dependencies between the motions and their traces on paper.



Schön (1983) lists down three kinds of experiments that jointly construct the reflective “on-the-spot-experiment” (p. 141) :

- the exploratory (testing happens without predictions or expectations),
- the move-testing<sup>13</sup> (the result is expected),
- the hypotheses testing (actions are undertaken to confirm or refute expectations (pp. 145–146).

The solo phase mainly had the character of move-testing experimentation because in most cases I had expected the results to be specific sensations, particular shaping of my body and the interrelated traces appearing on paper. Here, I affirmed the actions that were consistent with my values and discarded the actions inconsistent with them. The initial experimentation also qualifies as exploratory as it allowed to “get a feel” (Schön, 1983, p. 145) for the new kind of drawing. At the end of the solo phase, the repertoire of actions became a “new whole idea which sets criteria for further designing” (Schön, 1983, p. 132) of movement during the collaborative phase.

Over 30 short move-testing experiments constituted a closed thread of my solo experimentation. Most of the experiments were numbered with the “FW”<sup>14</sup> preceding the number. From among the 30 experiments, 23 were selected and described in chapter 12 “Solo Phase. Development of the Repertoire of Actions for Reciprocal Drawing.” These are:

FW1 gathering-scattering > (total real time: 2:09 min.)  
FW2 gathering-scattering > (2:08 min.)  
FW3 gathering-scattering > (1:31 min.)  
FW4 extension-flexion > (1:18 min.)  
FW5 extension-flexion > (1:16 min.)  
FW6 extension-flexion > (1:19 min.)  
FW8 jump > (00:52 min.)  
FW7 rotation > (1:09 min.)  
FW9 rotation > (1:10 min.)  
FW10 rotation > (3:04 min.)  
FW11 rotation > (3:15 min.)  
FW2 combined with travelling > (10:00 min.)  
FW1 combined with travelling > (04:41 min.)  
FW4 combined with travelling > (06:12 min.)  
Change of level support  
Pressing > (01:00 min.)  
Flicking > (01:21 min.)  
Wringing > (01:47 min.)  
Dabbing > (01:47 min.)  
Slashing > (01:17 min.)  
Gliding > (01:08 min.)  
Punching > (01:09 min.)  
Floating > (01:56 min.)

<sup>13</sup> The word “move” in move-testing denotes action taken not only in the bodily but also in the more general, strategic sense.

<sup>14</sup> FW is the abbreviation from floorwork.

### 3.2.2 Collaborative phase

In the second, collaborative (duo) phase, the uncertain element to be explored became the reciprocal embodied drawing in duo. In this phase, I imposed on the collaborators a set of relatively constant elements known to me from my previous professional experience. Schön (1983) describes them with the term “frame” (p. 135) because these elements are supposed to impose a discipline on the situation in flux. In that respect, as he explains, the improvising practitioner is never completely disoriented but handles the unknown from a certain perspective available to her. The frames were:

- The specific actions (or *motifs of exchange*) chosen from the repertoire of actions. As motifs of exchange, they allowed us collaborators to assume a certain bodily logic in our joint moving and eliminate the initial disorientation.
- The reciprocal strategies of *binding* and *point-of-contact*. They served as established modes of partnered movement to which we attempted to adapt our marking on the horizontal plane of paper.
- The basic *rules of exchange*. They assured consistency of joint movement with the above strategies.
- A *diagram* referring to my solo drawing prepared earlier in the studio for the purpose of each co-experiment. The diagram presented basic principles of visual composition applied in the solo drawing. Its arrows and positioning of basic elements dictated the initial direction of our movement on paper. Each time, the diagram suggested yet not imposed the dynamics and the visual result of our interaction.

Because we would start from the familiar, we pushed our initially chaotic ways of moving and drawing towards a relatively consistent mode of Reciprocal Drawing enabling our communication and joint interpretation of bodily actions. Depending on the imposed combination of frames, some experiments produced “unintended changes” (Schön, 1983, p. 131) along with new problems calling for new solutions. In such cases, the co-experiment entered a new level in which further adjustments were imposed to facilitate the co-practice. Other experiments revealed changes that were overall satisfactory and opportunities which could readily be utilized as fresh know-how. If this came about, the experimentation was finished.

The experiments of the second phase were exploratory in nature. Additionally, some distinguished themselves as move-testing (result is expected). This happened when the experimentation was already advancing. For then, I could foresee specific dynamics between us, concrete developments on paper, but also results of my deliberately introduced modifications. If the modification(s) produced expected changes, then the new ways of co-movement were affirmed. If not, then they were negated. Just as well though, our (co-)action produced turns beyond my expectations. Finally, all the co-experiments of the second phase were about testing of hypotheses (actions are undertaken to confirm or refute expectations), with the exception that I always strived for confirmation of my expectations. When I imposed the frames or introduced modifications, I expected them to facilitate the joint practice and trigger coherency in our interaction. Undertaking steps to prove my expectations false would have been illogical and at variance with the assumptions of this study. Instead of stressing avoidance of bias, reflective practice recognizes the researcher’s subjective orientation, her personal interest in transforming the uncertain situation into something she prefers. Schön (1983) contends that the practitioner remains fully engaged in the subject and acts to make the hypothesis come true. By doing this I violate “the canon of controlled experiment, which calls for objectivity and distance” (p. 149). As Schön (1983) explains, reflective practice recognizes the researcher’s personal interest in transforming the uncertain situation into something

she prefers. The practitioner's "relation to the situation is transactional. He shapes the situation [according to his models, appreciations] but in conversation with it, so that his own models and appreciations are also shaped by the situation. The phenomena that he seeks to understand are partly of his own making" (pp. 150–151). When co-engaging in "reciprocal reflection-in-action" (p. 304), the practitioners enter the "reflective contract" (p. 302) with each other: They both admit uncertainty, yet since each one brings in his/her own vision, neither of them is wholly dependent on the other, they both exercise "some control" (p. 302) over the process, and enjoy their own and the other's excitement of discovery. Therefore, the collaborative process in which the practitioners do not rely on their individual strivings and/or rules is associated by Schön (1983) as posing a risk of inequality and by Piotrowski (personal communication, October 8, 2001) and artist-researcher John McNorton (2003) as missing coherency and direction. Scholar Brad Hase-man's description of artistic practice connects to Schön's insights when he speaks of the process as being "both ongoing and persistent; practitioners-researchers do not merely 'think' their way through or out of a problem, but rather they 'practice' to a resolution" (Hase-man, as cited in Barrett & Bolt, 2010, p. 147). Unlike controlled experiments, the co-experiments of the second phase are not reproducible.

The collaborative phase comprised of multiple experiments. This dissertation presents five of these experiments divided into two separate threads of experimentation, each thread related to one reciprocal partnering strategy. I found these two threads decidedly different from each other, and thus exemplifying two divergent approaches to Reciprocal Practice. The chosen experiments also provided enough material to make my phenomenological analysis and the final thematic interpretation more in-depth.

The first, binding-related thread of the collaborative phase consisted of three experiments conducted in the order as presented below:

1. *BINDING/ROTATIONS*,

a performative experiment by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik, studio practice, Warsaw (PL), November 16, 2014, total real time 18 min.

2. *BINDING/ROTATIONS BIPOLAR*,

a performative experiment by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha, "Draw to Perform" Symposium curated by Ram Samocha, Crows Nest Gallery, London (UK), August 8, 2016, total real time 26 min.

3. *BINDING/ROTATIONS CENTRIC*,

a performative experiment by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha "Draw to Perform" Symposium curated by Ram Samocha, Crows Nest Gallery, London (UK), August 8, 2016, total real time 23 min.

The second thread, related to the point-of-contact, consisted of two following experiments:

1. *POINT-OF-CONTACT/EXTENSIONS-FLEXIONS BIPOLAR*,

a performative experiment by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna, studio practice, New York (NY), May 9, 2017, total real time 90 min. The experiment was a test preceding a performance piece by A. Karasch and J. Peerna under the same title, conducted at the Itinerant Festival and curated by Hector Canonge, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (NY), May 15, 2017, total real time 60 min.

2. *POINT-OF-CONTACT/EXTENSIONS-FLEXIONS CENTRIC*, a performative experiment by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna, studio practice, New York (NY), May 9, 2017, total real time 50 min.

The above experiments are described in chapters 13 and 14 of this dissertation.

### 3.3 Evaluation of the Experiments

Schön's (1983) approach requires a certain kind of rigor, which I connect with Varto's (2018) deliberations on consistency and coherence necessary in artistic research. This rigor manifested at moments of evaluation happening in-between the experiments. Schön (1983) suggests evaluating an "on-the-spot-experiment" (p. 141) by asking the following questions:

1. Has the experienced situation been consistent with the practitioner's fundamental theories and values? (quality related)
2. Does the experienced situation promise further congruent investigation? (direction related)

When I judged each experiment, I considered the above questions in relation to:

- (a) the general dynamics of the joint movement and
- (b) the drawing component of the situation.

The consideration of the quality of the joint movement (1a - a combination of the evaluative question #1 and the subquestion a) made me ponder if and to what extent the new type of bodily interaction that had taken place was consistent with my LMA-based repertoire of actions from the first phase and with the chosen partnering strategy. For example, I inspected how the quality of my own gesture had gotten modified by the duo practice or I compared the new dynamics of the joint action with the dynamics of the strategy as I knew it from the past. Clearly, my new gestures were not identical with the ones I made in the solo practice and the new dynamic was not to be a duplicate of the ones I experienced before. Moreover, I did not expect them to be so. However, for my body to conceive of Reciprocal Drawing, I needed to sense that the uncertain had intercepted at least some part of that tacit logic inherent in the familiar.

As for the quality of the drawing component (1b), I evaluated the experiment by asking if or how far the newly emerged visual layer was congruent with the diagram and its related solo drawing. Thinking in the categories of the reflective practitioner's "appreciative system" (Schön, 1983, p. 135), I inspected if the new variation of the drawing (produced collaboratively) looked in any way familiar, yet enticing and/or intriguing in its difference. Using Schön's (1983) language, I did not try to subsume the newly emerged drawing under the familiar principles of the original one but rather wished to see the new one "as both similar and different from" (Schön, 1983, p. 138) the original. Finally, I evaluated each experiment separately through the lens of the quality of the overall reciprocal experience on paper as a generator of specific emotions between me and the collaborator.

When evaluation with regards to the direction of an experiment took place (2a), I asked if the surprises and tensions that emerged between our moving bodies necessitated more tests. Further, judging the drawing component of the situation in terms of the direction (2b) it promised would have meant that I treated the drawn image from

the latest co-action as a frame for the next co-action. Yet, this one image had now become merely a record of the unique exchange. And as the second-phase experiments are not reproducible, neither are their records on paper. Therefore, evaluation of the experiment in terms of the direction the new drawing points could only be done by asking if that drawing can be utilized during the solo practice (for example, later in the studio). Sometimes though, the final drawing served as an entry to movement dynamics between us. In this case, it highlighted problems in the interaction and respectively pointed the directions for further experimentation. My specific reflective thinking is described in the “Evaluation” subsections 13.1.3, 13.2.3, 13.3.3, and 14.1.3, respectively under each co-experiment.

### 3.4 Materials and Documentation of the Experimentation

The list below specifies the video and visual material resulting from the entire experimentation process, and not only from the experiments selected for presentation in this thesis. The solo phase of experimentation produced a total of:

- 28 sketches: charcoal, graphite, eraser on paper; average dimensions per sketch: 2 x 4 m (39 x 157 in.);
- 13 drawn images resulting from the experiments: charcoal, graphite, eraser on paper, average dimensions per image: 3,5 x 3,5 m (137,5 x 137,5 in.);
- 44 films documenting the experiments, length between 1 min–4 hr, medium GoPro HERO4 Silver, Sony HDR-CX260 29,8 mm, Panasonic DMC-GX7 14–42 mm; film credit: A. Karasch;
- 20 photographs documenting the drawn images and sketches, photo credit: A. Karasch, medium as above.

The collaborative phase of experimentation produced the total of:

- 28 sketches: charcoal, graphite, eraser on paper; average dimensions per sketch: 21 x 29,7 cm;
- 14 drawn images resulting from the experiments: charcoal, graphite, eraser on paper; average dimensions per image: 3,5 x 3,5 m (137,5 x 137,5 in.);
- 21 films documenting the experiments, length between 1 min–1:30 hr, medium: GoPro HERO4 Silver, Sony HDR-CX260 29,8 mm, Panasonic DMC-GX7 14–42 mm; film credit: A. Karasch;
- 533 photographs documenting the experiments, performances and drawn images; photo credit: M. Berardi, Cathy MK, A. Karasch, M. Karasch, R. Küpers, L. Logina, A. Maskava, Nuria, J. Peerna, J. Sponholz, N. Waxman.

While I preserved the real time of the recordings selected for analysis, the electronic version of this thesis presents their edited, shortened versions so the viewer may gain a general impression of the presented activities. In reference to editing of time-based documentation of performances engaging drawing, Foá and her colleagues (2022) recommend clear capturing the beginning, middle and end of the process but also an artist’s engagement with materials. My edited versions reflect the chronological order of the events. The edition of the short 1–4-minute recordings did not disturb the continuity of actions much. For this reason, the edited videos reflect the real time of an experiment almost completely. Editing the recordings of the longer experiments (between 18 to 26 minutes in length) and the durational experiments (up to 90 minutes) included elimination of lengthy fragments and repetitions. This way, the total time of these recordings was shortened to a maximum of 17 minutes. As a result, each

piece of the edited footage presents to the reader one experiment, its decisive turning points, and the most characteristic dynamics of the partnering strategy being tested in several dozen consecutive clips, each lasting roughly between 2 to 60 seconds. The edition process was completed with the help of Adobe Premiere Pro editing software. The concrete pieces that supported the analysis and interpretation of the experimental process are enumerated in the “Descriptive Writing” section 4.1 of the next chapter.

## 4. Phenomenological Research

My project, although artistic and practice-based, is also theoretically inclined and takes on phenomenological orientation. In this chapter, I discuss the methodology of phenomenological research and reveal how its premises influenced the analysis of my research materials and the development its theoretical part. After giving the general overview of phenomenology and the interrelated research orientations, I specify in three separate sections the ways in which the written account was constructed, analyzed and thematically interpreted.

Many scholars point to the philosophy of phenomenology and phenomenological research as paradigms keenly interested in non-conceptual and tacit understanding of the world (Borgdorff, 2012; Finlay, 2009b; Kozel, 2015; Suominen et al., 2017; van Manen, 2007). As an alternative to research methodologies of natural sciences, artistic research in Finland has taken a strong phenomenological orientation (Hannula et al., 2005, 2014). At Aalto University where my research was conducted, many doctoral projects—as Suominen and Kallio-Tavin (2017) reveal—are theoretically oriented towards the phenomenology of embodiment. This phenomenology that grew out of insights of Maurice Merleau-Ponty also conceptually feeds my experimentation, specifically the selected concepts from his *Phenomenology of Perception* such as *reciprocity* (*chiasm* or *reversibility* of the body and world) and the body's *intentionality*, *motility* and *spatiality*. This philosophy and the concepts are discussed in detail in chapter 8 of the thesis.

Phenomenological research derives from phenomenology, a complex discipline and a method of inquiry which studies phenomena—things, problems, or events—exactly as they appear to a human being in an individual experience (Moran, 2000)<sup>15</sup>. Consequently, phenomenological research is concerned with generating meaning based on rich and complex description of a phenomenon as it is directly lived by a person (Finlay, 2009b). With the meaning of things, phenomenologists bring the notion of *intentionality* into play. When analysing our ways of existence, our “being-in-the-world” (p. 183) (*Dasein*), the philosopher Martin Heidegger (1927/2010) argues that humans tend to give priority to practical concerns of life over theoretical wondering. Consequently, what interests him is an intention we assign to things, events or other living beings. Since the world as we perceive it is “saturated by practical references of use” (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2012, p. 71), our engagement with things constitutes a better base for any abstract explanations, if such were to follow at all. Specifically, by engagement Heidegger (1927/2010) means handling things, testing their susceptibility to manipulation and/or resistance in use. Objects or tools have either practical, emotional, aesthetic, or personal value (meaning) to us. This value, in turn, is dictated by a particular personal, social, and natural milieu we live in. Heidegger (1927/2010) describes this particular environment through the concept of *lifeworld* (*Lebenswelt*), a physical and social context that shapes our intentions and gives unique meaning to things. As Gallagher and Zahavi (2012) explain, the way we use objects is guided by norms and influenced by how we have seen others use them and what other people expect us to do with them. The concept of intentionality is further discussed in chapter 8 in the light of phenomenology of embodiment.

Phenomenology has given rise to many methodological orientations. In my research, the experiences from the artistic experiments are described to reveal their meaning. For this purpose, I choose what scholar and phenomenologist Linda Finlay (2009b)

<sup>15</sup> As a style of thought rather than a doctrine or a philosophical school, phenomenology developed in opposition to the well-grounded *rationalism* of modern age, but also to *empiricism*, a theory treating sensory experience as the measurable and primary source of knowledge (Hass, 2008).



refers to as the mediated *ideographic* and *general* approach. Specifically, this approach combines description of individual experience with explorations of the experience as it is lived or shared by many. Finlay (2009b) proposes the thorough description of lived situation(s) to be followed by the analysis that consists of two levels: (a) at first the researcher pays attention to details (*idiographic* approach) and then (b) identifies general themes that touch upon the “essence” (p. 10) of the phenomenon (*synthesis*). The general insight may also be pursued in relation to individual experience because “single cases may offer insight into individual essences (as opposed to typical or universal essences)” (p. 10). Phenomenological analysis, as Finlay (2009b) contends, must “go beyond surface expressions or explicit meanings to read between the lines so as to access implicit dimensions” (p. 10). According to scholar Steen Halling (2008), this progression is open in the sense that a researcher may shift the focus back and forth between living the situation and reflection, specificity of an experience and abstraction.

The analysis and interpretation in my research took place in three separate stages. Each stage is described in detail in the respective sections of this chapter.

1. The aim of the first stage was to come up with a condensed written articulation of my experience of drawing solo and in collaboration. This was the *descriptive writing stage*. Although descriptive, the stage was partially imbued with an interpretive element because the experienced process and its products were raising personal associations filled with meanings and because I occasionally used the language of Laban Movement Analysis.
2. The second stage constituted the *analysis of the personal accounts from the previous stage*. The process ran on two levels: (a) I first carefully re-read the entire descriptive content. (b) Then, I categorized the content according to the general themes emerging there. This was the descriptive reading level of the analysis and is not reported in this dissertation.
3. The third stage constituted *thematic interpretation of the general themes* through the lens of phenomenological framework and theory of art and performance.

The interpretive component appearing at the writing stage makes my research both *descriptive* and *interpretive*. As noted earlier, all phenomenology is descriptive rather than explanatory. However, from the mediated viewpoint, as Finlay (2009b) states, a researcher “initially stay[s] close to what is given” (p. 10), reveals the essence of the phenomenon and then builds upon “our embeddedness in the world of language and social relationships, and the unescapable historicity of all understanding” (p. 11). Also referred to by Finlay (2009b) as “hermeneutic” (p. 10), this interpretive component of the methodology was stressed by Heidegger (1927/2010) who claimed that interpretation is not just an additional but an inherent part of phenomenological description because humans experience things as something that has previously been already interpreted. In this vein, the phenomenologist Max van Manen (1990) notes that once description is accompanied by nonverbal forms such as actions or artworks, an interpretive element is especially involved. However, there still exists the distinction between interpreting as pointing to something and interpreting as imposing the meaning that comes from external interpretations of pre-existent theories. Phenomenology essentially avoids the latter.

In my description I largely focus on the bodies’ movement. For Sheets-Johnstone (2019), the study of movement demands the researcher’s “kinaesthetic” and “kinetic awareness” (p. 42) in self-movement. Specifically, the rigorous description and *bracketing* of one’s movement experience takes into consideration: the “interior” (p. 42) experience of self-movement (kinaesthesia), the interlinked inherent dynamics

of movement, and integral *coordination dynamics* (Kelso, 1995). Further, as Sheets–Johnstone (2019) claims, for the analysis to be socially relevant and aesthetically significant—whereby social reality is understood as *intersubjective* and *intercorporeal* phenomenon—the analysis has to additionally focus on the elements in the description exposing the “exterior” (p. 42) of self–movement, that is the visual (seen) and tactile (felt) kinetic reality of movement. In this way, the “foundational dynamic qualities” (p. 41) of movement are brought to the surface. These dynamics anchor both personal and interpersonal experiences of movement. They constitute the first and “historically foundational sensory modality . . . to be neurologically developed . . . the same spatio–temporal–energetic ‘stuff’” (p. 41). In this kind of study of movement, phenomenological analysis and LMA are complementary (Sheets–Johnstone, 2019; Youngerman, 1992). The notions of intersubjectivity and intercorporeality are further explained in the next paragraphs.

Next to being idiographic and general, descriptive and interpretive, my mediated approach is *subjective* and *open*. Finlay (2008, 2009b) Halling and his colleagues (2006) and other contributors to phenomenological methodology, such as Paul Colaizzi (1973) and Amadeo Giorgi (1994) prioritize subjectivity which is about bringing to the foreground one’s own beliefs, preferences and interests. Instead of their elimination, Giorgi (1994) postulates defining the ways in which one is present in the research process. Responding to his call, I reveal that my subjective stance influenced the design of the research and its experiments as well as their evaluation, choice of collaborators (with whom I interacted on an emotional and physical level), my written articulation, and interpretations of the experiments. In all these phases, I was fully committed to the success of my vision, stayed focused on the solutions, connected with my values, preferences, and existing professional experience.

Importantly, for Giorgi (1994) and Finlay (2009b) the researcher’s subjective stance is correlated with *bracketing* – an “open phenomenological attitude” (p. 8) by which the researcher refrains from importing any external frameworks, past understanding, judgements and knowledge when looking at the phenomenon. Bracketing may be attempted either at the descriptive stage or throughout the entire research process. Elsewhere, Finlay (2003) writes of the researcher’s reflexivity – a continual “reflecting upon our interpretations of both our experience and the phenomena being studied so as to move beyond the partiality of our previous understandings” (p. 108).

This being said, Finlay (2009b) warns against “navel gazing” (p. 13) – the researcher’s excessive preoccupation with her own emotions as it may lead to giving priority to one’s own self–development over “the phenomenon in its appearing” (p. 13). As a solution, Finlay and her colleague Ken Evans (2009a; 2009) propose *relational phenomenological research* which bases on the predicament that “[d]ata is seen to emerge out of the researcher/co–researcher relationship and is mutually co–created in this encounter as each touches and impacts on the other”<sup>16</sup> (Finlay, 2009a, p. 1). Considering the above, on the basis of my first–person encounters and experiences with the collaborators, I aimed at an “intersubjective” (Borgdorff, 2012, p. 165; Finlay, 2009a, p. 2; Sheets–Johnstone, 2019, p. 41; Sullivan, 2005, p. 43) and “intercorporeal” (Sheets–Johnstone, 2019, p. 41), more objective and third person viewpoint on Reciprocal Drawing. Firstly, the intersubjective aspect of my research was reflected in the experience which was embodied and enacted together with

<sup>16</sup> Relational phenomenological research builds on the concept of “open presence” (Finlay, 2009a, p. 9) which assumes that the researcher remains in touch with her own impressions yet shows deep empathy towards these of the other (Evans & Gilbert, 2005) and patiently waits for the unpredicted possibilities to come to the fore (Dahlberg et al., 2008). The concept builds directly on Husserl’s (1936/1970) *epoché*—suspension of judgement—whereby, as Finlay (2009a) clarifies, “the researcher attempts to put aside his or her own understandings, to patiently hold open possibilities, in order to see the world afresh” (p. 5).

the collaborators as moving and co-experiencing subjects. Apart from the very experimentation process, in which we touched and impacted each other physically, emotionally and mentally, I had also developed a history and professional and personal relationships with each of them before the experimentation started. Secondly, I entered the shared realm through conversing with fellow researchers and presenting the documentation of my experimentation during numerous seminars. Through this I confronted the meaning the co-experimentation had for me with other researchers' articulated ways of understanding it. Moreover, I started describing the experience two years after the co-experimentation was finished, which ensured recollection of the most essential impressions and turning points of the co-experimentation, thus enabling the open attitude and reflexivity that Finlay and Giorgi bring up. Additionally, my writing and analysis were facilitated by my watching the video documentation of the co-movement multiple times and utilizing Laban Movement Analysis along with its terminology in establishing useful knowledge about *states* and *drives* co-experienced in Reciprocal Drawing. Finally, I expanded upon my subjective horizon in the final stage of thematic interpretation by engaging in critical theoretical dialogue with philosophical thought of Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968, 1945/2012), Nancy (1983/1991, 1996/2000), Levinas (1974/1991) and the selected writings of many art and performance theorists (Caillois, 1958/2001; Erdély, 2020; Goffman, 1956, 1974/1986; Miessen, 2010/2013; Schechner, 2002/2006; Sutton-Smith, 1972; Turner, 1969/2011). In this way I broadened my understanding and established a defensible and trustworthy knowledge base.

On the final note, the mediated phenomenological approach accepts the intertwining of art with science. The products of Reciprocal Drawing can be identified with textural and structural forms of art which scholar Les Todres (2000, 2007) writes as enhancing the process of communicating the aesthetic realm of human experience. Van Manen (1990, 2007) compares phenomenology to poetry because they both strive to find shape for "evocative ways of speaking," "an original singing of the world" (van Manen, 1990, p. 13). In his view, phenomenological research includes, ideally, writing mixed up with artistic components because this form of communication "stir[s] our pedagogical, psychological or professional sensibilities" (van Manen, 2007, p. 25). Finlay (2009b) sees art as a method through which researchers "retain their concrete, mooded, sensed, imaginative, and embodied nature" (p. 14).

#### 4.1 Descriptive Writing

As mentioned earlier, in the first, descriptive writing stage, I came up with a rich description of the experimentation process as it was lived by me. Here, I based on my memories, the photographic and video documentation of the experiments and their products. This account can be found in Part Three of this thesis. The artistic productions presented there were a part of the experimentation process and, thus, an inherent part of the experience and its description. Part Three is divided into three chapters, each addressing a separate thread of experiments.

The first thread, presented in chapter 12, relates to my solo experimentation in the studio. Within a number of 40 pages I recollect how I employed Laban Movement Analysis as the "frame" (Schön, 1983, p. 135) enabling the formation of the *repertoire of actions* to be explored in the next, collaborative phase of experimentation. The documentation supporting this account consists of 30 photographic images and 23 video-recordings varying from 1 to 10 minutes per recording.

The second thread, presented in chapter 13, closes within 63 pages and addresses three (3) consecutive collaborative experiments in which I imposed the repertoire's actions as *motifs of exchange* and the strategy of *binding* as the frame for Reciprocal Drawing. Each subsequent co-experiment was a result of the possibilities and/or problems emerging in the previous one. The first experiment was carried out with Ola Piechnik and the next two with Ram Samocha. The material supporting this description includes 55 photographic images and three video-recordings, each between 18 to 30 minutes.

The third thread, presented in chapter 14, covers two (2) collaborative experiments. On a total of 32 pages, I recollect my experience of Reciprocal Drawing resulting from the imposition of the repertoire's actions and the *point-of-contact* strategy. Here, the collaborating artist was Jaanika Peerna. The material which aided this account consists of 42 photographic images and two edited videos, each 16 to 17:34 minutes in length.

The description of my experience from the collaborative phase was led by the unedited video-recordings documenting the experiments in their real time. However, in recollecting of the durational experiments presented in chapter 14 (the ones lasting up to 90 minutes) I based on the edited, shortened versions of the real-time recordings. These edited videos present the most relevant moments in less than 18 minutes.

My narration has a linear structure. It evolves according to the actual sequence of events taking place in each experiment. The linearity was important to me from the viewpoint of phenomenological research. I did not want to create redundant meanings, which could have been the case if the order of events had been reversed. Therefore, in the description of each collaborative experiment the paragraphs are marked with the start and end time of the sequence currently discussed. Additionally, the edited videos are placed at the beginning of each experiment's description. They can be accessed either through a direct link or after scanning the QR code. The videos present decisive turning points of an experiment and the most characteristic dynamics of the tested reciprocal strategy. Finally, for the reader to better follow the developments, the narration contains photographs of actions and drawings, including frames (i.e., screenshots) from the unedited recordings. On some photographs and screenshots, the progression of movement is indicated with arrows. Other times, it is illustrated with more than one image. In this way, readers may follow the events in text without necessarily first watching the entire edited video.

The descriptive writing stage includes my thoughts, intentions, emotions, associations, assumptions, and explanations of my decisions, but also fragments of informal conversations with my collaborators as I memorized them. Although the description of events happened after the experimentation was finished, I deliberately use present tense to make my memories more vivid and draw the reader into the mood of the process. The adopted style is that of everyday language, avoiding generalizations and intellectual formulations. Since the narration is directly connected to the experience of movement, I also employ the language of Laban Movement Analysis to precisely articulate the complex dynamics of the moving body(-ies). What's more, I am prone to the use metaphors and similes to everyday life or comparisons to processes and products of other artists. The subjective associations and opinions I had about the final drawings are also verbalized in the account. This mix of styles is additionally enriched with a creative nonfiction – a poem and a memoir. These two forms focus on the concrete rather than on the imaginary. The poem entitled “Crow's Nest,” placed between the paragraphs of the “*Binding/Rotations Centric*” section of chapter 13, was written by me after the experimentation with Ram. It enhances the description of the bodily sensitivities.

The memoir entitled “A jump rope” emerged organically as a result of my free association with the strategy of binding. It can be found at the beginning of section 16.3 of the Thematic Interpretation part. In the next section of this chapter, I briefly explain what I aimed to convey through the memoir in conjunction with the analysis. I believe that the inclusion of such responses is justified, as they are also an essential part of the evolving artistic processes natural to artistic research orientation.

As van Manen (1990) underlines, the expressive content makes the process of writing the account particularly prone to interpretation. This is observable in each section devoted to separate experiment. More specifically, in the Description subsections where, next to everyday language, I also utilize the LMA language to articulate the specific (co-)movement and apply professional terms to characterize the developing traces.

In the Interpretation subsections, my descriptive writing merges with the interpretive style and orientation, after I have re-read my description of a co-experiment and checked which “effort factors” (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 137) (speed, space, pressure, and flow) dominate in the narration. Based on this frequency, I establish the dominant “states” (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 139) and/or “drives” (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 140) and thus interpret the collaborators’ specific reciprocal interplay as co-experiencing in decision making, thinking, sensing, and/or intuiting to various degrees. Maletic (1987) describes these dispositions as “levels of consciousness” (p. 100). In the same Interpretation subsections, I identify the “shape quality” (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 148) of the moving bodies (advancing, retreating, spreading, or enclosing), and so determine how (dis-)engaged the collaborators are in their Reciprocal Drawing and how far they succeed in reaching their spatial-visual aims. At the descriptive writing stage, my recognition of the collaborator’s aims is also achieved based on my kinaesthetic empathic insight, the essentiality of which I highlighted in section 2.5 of the “Bodily Knowledge” chapter. The exact description of the above-mentioned LMA concepts can be found in the chapter 7.

In the same way, interpretation is an inherent part of the description when I articulate the visuality of a finalized reciprocal drawing resulting from each co-experiment. Some repetitions in my narration in relation to formal components point to the general character of a drawing. Similarly to analysts Studd and Cox (2013), who interpret movement by going beyond one specific scheme, I interpret each drawing by expressing its general “feel” (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 137). Eventually, *the LMA-enhanced interpretation of reciprocal movement helps me establish clear links between the dynamics of a tested reciprocal strategy, the collaborators’ co-experienced mental states, and specific visual, expressive record of these dynamics and states. In this way, Reciprocal Drawing becomes identified as a complex practice which influences its practitioners and products in specific ways.*

Finally, the interdependence of the descriptive and interpretive function inevitably transpires in the Evaluation subsections. This is visible when I recall my personal judgments about the dynamics and quality of each interaction and its respective finalized drawing, and when I compare my solo drawing (pre-designed for each co-action) with a jointly drawn image. Through this reflection, *the opportunities and challenges of Reciprocal Drawing come to the fore, by which I respond to the main research question.* The exact questions I asked when evaluating the co-experiments can be found in section 3.3 of the “Artistic Research” chapter.

## 4.2 Analysis

The second stage constituted the analysis leading to thematic interpretation (stage three). Here, the aim was to categorize the entire written material according to the general themes emerging from it. Following Finlay’s (2009b) phenomenological method,

I first paid attention to the details in the material. This process is called ideographic analysis. Consequently, I identified the emerging general themes touching upon the essences of Reciprocal Drawing. This procedure is called synthesis. In practice, I based my analysis of the entire written content on Leena Rouhiainen's (2003) practical measures facilitating her analysis of interviews with her research participants and presented in her doctoral dissertation *Living Transformative Lives. Finnish Freelance Dance Artists Brought into Dialogue with Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology*.

The goals of Rouhiainen's (2003) phenomenological research and my artistic and phenomenologically oriented research are fundamentally different. While she strives to illuminate the "lifeworld" (Finlay, 2009b, p. 8) of a group of people within a larger geographical area, I am more concerned with gaining insight into the "individual essences" (Finlay, 2009b, p. 10) of the Reciprocal Drawing practice. Despite different epistemological aims and various degrees of universality perused in both research projects, Rouhiainen's (2003) seven-step procedure seemed flexible enough to be adopted for my purposes. Therefore, I modified her procedure by extending it to include my own written accounts. As the second stage is not revealed in this thesis, the following paragraphs disclose six of her total of seven steps and my own corresponding steps:

1. At a start of the analysis Rouhiainen (2003) set her preconceptions aside by "simply reading [her] interview material as open-mindedly as possible" and focusing on the meanings "categorically expressed" (p. 74). In the same way I had read my entire written content. For me, as the author of the analyzed material and the co-participant of events presented in it, the bracketing was not always possible. What proved helpful in reaching the state of "relative openness" (Giorgi, 1994, p. 212) was returning to my material after some time and listening to its contents on text-to-voice applications. In this way my own "categorically expressed" (Rouhiainen, 2003, p. 74) came to the fore.

2. In the second step, Rouhiainen (2003) re-read her material and outlined the issues that seemed paramount in the discussions with her interviewees. Following her move, my aim at that point was to discern the general themes appearing in my account of Reciprocal Practice. The themes were identified in the broadest possible manner as the ones appearing in the entire description. After completing this reading, I listed down the following themes: (a) the drawing body, (b) conflict, (c) play, (d) synergy, (e) introspection, and (f) partnership.

3. Rouhiainen's third step dealt with distinguishing the meaning units within her transcripts. She did it by marking the beginning and end of each meaningful passage of text with a slash (/) (Rouhiainen, 2003). Referencing scholar Juha Perttula (1995), Rouhiainen (2003) defines meaning units as "portions of the text that can be regarded as meaningful by themselves even if they are defined and seen in relation to the whole material" (p. 75). In this procedure, the slashes are supposed to bring individual topics out from the body of text and the decision where to insert them was made intuitively by Rouhiainen. Here, I similarly decided to separate the meaning units according to the issues I identified in the personal narration. When searching for the meaning units, crucial was my own experience as an artist and performer. Equally important at that point was my practical knowledge of drawing as a medium.

4. With the general themes and the meaning units delineated, Rouhiainen (2003) transformed the meaning units into the language of the discipline under which her research was carried out in order to express ideas contained in them. The transformed content was articulated in a simple and transparent language. I chose to utilize this step and slightly re-described my account. For example, concrete names of my collaborators were replaced by the pronouns "she," "he," "they" or by general words such as "collaborator" or



“person.” As in Rouhiainen’s (2003) analysis, my re-descriptions presented themselves as oscillating between the descriptive and interpretive function.

5. The fifth step by Rouhiainen (2003) was a technical one. It assumed placing each transformed meaning unit from the transcripts under a classifying theme. In the same way, I situated each transformed meaning unit from the personal accounts under a classifying theme. In this way the meaning units with similar referents were collected under one theme. If some themes were addressed simultaneously in more than one unit then the issue was placed under several themes.

6. The sixth step dealt with setting together the meaning units collected under each classifying theme to create a meaning network. Here, in my understanding, Rouhiainen (2003) proceeded from one topic to another and successively checked how the units could relate to each other to ultimately form a condensed network of meaning. A similar ordering process was conducted in reference to my transformed meaning units gathered under the respective themes.

### 4.3 Thematic Interpretation

At this stage, the handling of my completed meaning networks was also inspired by Rouhiainen’s (2003) procedures. She identifies this stage as the “final thematic interpretation”<sup>17</sup> (p. 78). Here, meaning units from under the general themes were re-organized, that is categorized in accordance with what the researcher intuitively acknowledged as “the most relevant topics of discussion” (p. 78). Again, once some meaning units related to more than one topic, they were placed under additional headings.

The reading of my completed meaning networks (classified under their respective themes in step six of the analysis) allowed to discern *two important broader thematic areas* towards which the meaning networks seemed to point. These were:

1. *the nature of Reciprocal Drawing as a (co-)embodied act* and
2. *the relationships embodied through drawing.*

Eventually, the material of the completed meaning networks was decomposed and its fragments re-organized under the respective broader thematic areas. Discerning these areas was intuitive, largely influenced by what I co-experienced as foundational for the Reciprocal Drawing process. When discerning the broader thematic areas, I also considered the relevance of Merleau-Ponty’s (1964/1968, 1945/2012) philosophy of embodiment for these areas. Particular emphasis was put on his complex understanding of “spatiality” and “motility” and the interrelated concepts of the body’s “intentionality,” “reciprocity” (“chiasm” or “reversibility” of the body and world), but also Edith Stein’s (1917/1964) understanding of empathy and her concept of “reiterated empathy” (p. 58) closely interlinked with Merleau-Ponty’s theories. The additional framework I bared in mind when outlining the areas was theory of art and performance by the authors listed down in the next paragraph.

The discussion focusing on the two broader thematic areas is presented in chapters 15 and 16 of Part Four of this thesis. Instead of imposing external interpretations on the experience of Reciprocal Drawing, I rather point to the similarities with other already described phenomena. Apart from the embodiment-related concepts, the specific theories and notions I turn to are:

<sup>17</sup> This stage is also called the “phenomenological-theoretical reading” (Rouhiainen, 2003, p. 78).

- performance as “imagined ideal” (Bauman, 1989; as cited in Carlson, 2018, p. 4), as “restored behavior” (Schechner, 1985, p. 35), as “social drama” (Turner, 1969/2011), as well as the concepts of “framing” and “keying” in performance (Goffman, 1956, 1974/1986);
- the concept of “physicality” (Foá et al., 2022, p. 45) and “resistance” (Foá et al., 2022, p. 47);
- theory of play as described by the sociologists Roger Caillois (1958/2001) and Brian Sutton-Smith (1972);
- the concepts of “being-with” of the French thinker Jean-Luc Nancy (1983/1991, 1996/2000), the positions of “crossbench practitioner” (Miessen, 2010/2013, p. 243) and “complicity” (Ziemer, 2016, p. 15);
- the theoretical work of artist and pedagogue Miklós Erdély (2020) and his understanding of creativity; and
- ethical aspects drawn from the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas (1974/1991), and the writing of contemporary phenomenologists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999).

In the ethical discussion of the Thematic Interpretation part (see p. 264), I also place the memoir I wrote about earlier. There, Levinas’ (1974/1991) philosophy and Lakoff and Johnson’s (1999) deliberations contextualize a story recalled from my preschool times, when my carefree and spontaneous outdoor fun was interrupted by an unexpected punishment by an educator. This painful experience is highlighted as my first realization about self-limitation for the other. However, the discussion which follows that memory no longer refers back to it. Instead, I leave any additional interpretations to the reader.

The last two chapters focused on the methodology and methods of my research. In the previous chapter, the premises of artistic research as my mode of investigation were explained and the aim, object, artistic methods, and questions of this research presented. After a brief introduction of *reflection-in-action*, the structure of the experimentation with its two main phases, the solo and the collaborative phase, was specified. This was followed by revealing how I evaluated the experiments and how I produced, documented and edited the materials from the experimentation. In this chapter, phenomenological research was identified as the one guiding the written part of this doctoral project. In three separate sections, I delineated the distinctive stages of analysis and interpretation of my personal account from the experiments. The chapter ended with a list of the embodiment-related concepts and the specific concepts selected from the theory of art and performance. They constitute the basis for discussion in Thematic Interpretation part.

## 5. The Collaborators

This chapter presents the artistic profiles of my collaborators and the criteria that I considered while searching for them. From among six artists who contributed to the formulation of the Reciprocal Drawing method, three artists are presented in this chapter: Ola Piechnik, Ram Samocha, and Jaanika Peerna<sup>18</sup>. The experiments co-performed with them and presented in this thesis generated enough material and proved to best convey the complex dynamics of Reciprocal Drawing.

At the beginning phase of my research, when I was learning about the partnering-based interactions, I opened myself up to experiencing different strategies of moving in duo such as Contact Improvisation, actor's physical training, and other modes of making connection selected from contemporary dance and martial arts. At that time, my main criterion of selection was a person's experience with different forms of partnered movement coupled with a good physical condition, mobility and high cardiac endurance. Besides, I was looking for a confident person, enthusiastic and inventive in movement. For I did not want to always play the leading role in a setting of which I was already the initiator. In my direct interactions with participants of the various dance workshops, I observed, or better say, sensed who disposed of the above-mentioned traits. This is how I chose my first collaborator, Ola Piechnik, an experienced dancer and sports psychologist from Poland. Furthermore, important were the age and artistic experience. I looked for adults with relatively good practical knowledge of performance art. Drawing skills and/or experience of performative drawing was beneficial but not necessary. As mentioned earlier, at the initial stages of the research I redirected my focus from art pedagogy towards artistic co-practice. This was to assure discovery and risk-oriented collaboration grounded on equality of experience and interests and to eliminate master-student dynamics from the relationship. The final criterion was the candidate's willingness to fully engage in cooperation by devoting their energy and time to this project.

As the research developed, I looked for other collaborators. For that I used social media and/or different websites. In my search important source was the "Draw to Perform," a Facebook page documenting the annual symposium by the same name. The page along with the website ([www.drawtoperform.com](http://www.drawtoperform.com)) are run by Ram Samocha, an Israeli artist and a curator. Both sources present a wide range of most recent practices situated at an intersection of drawing, movement and performance as well as connect the community of artists engaged with these media.

If meeting in person was impossible and I liked their profile, as was the case with Ram and Estonian artist Jaanika Peerna, I travelled to their place of residence. In the meetings, I described my ideas and proposed participation in my project. Except for Ola Piechnik, my collaborators came from different parts of the world. Just like the choice of the university where I conducted this research, my search for candidates outside of my home country was dictated by the desire to go beyond the familiar and expected.

Artists and professionals listed below, also described as my collaborators and the co-authors of the second-phase experiments and artistic products presented in this thesis, met the criteria mentioned earlier and responded to my invitation. Before everything else, they showed great commitment, interest and support for this project. Further, they all agreed to their identity being disclosed in the thesis. Specifically, they granted me a permission to use their names and artistic/professional profiles along with their photographs and recordings from our co-experiments for the purpose of

<sup>18</sup> in chronological order of the co-experiments

carrying out and presenting this thesis and the resulting publications. Their profiles are presented in an alphabetical order:

Jaanika Peerna (b. 1971) is an Estonian-born artist and educator living and working in New York (NY). She gained her MFA in Intermedia Design from SUNY New Patz in New York and her Master's in Art Education from Tallinn Pedagogical University (EST). Exhibited and performed internationally, Jaanika's "work encompasses drawing, installation, and performance, often dealing with the theme of transitions in light, air, water and other natural phenomena. For her performances she often involves the audience in participatory reflection on the current climate meltdown. Her art practice stems from the corporeal experience of our existence and reaches towards enhanced awareness of the fragility, interconnectedness and wonder of all life." (Artist Website 2021). As a spectator, I sensed her ways of moving in her own creative processes as highly refined, meditative, and subtle. Intriguing and distinct were to me the bodily sensuousness and receptiveness in her makings. Jaanika's specific projects and works can be viewed within her website: <http://www.jaanikapeerne.net/>.

Ola Piechnik (b. 1981) is a certified sports psychologist of the Polish Psychological Association, an MA graduate in Psychology from the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (PL) and in Sports Psychology from the University of Physical Education in Warsaw (PL). Her professional domains are consulting and cooperation with athletes and coaches of various Olympic and Paralympic disciplines, which she does for the FLOW Foundation in Warsaw and where she also serves as a board member. Privately, Ola is a skiing instructor, a devoted dancer and climber. Participation in contemporary dance-related projects, as she says, brings her joy and fulfillment. More about Ola's profession can be read through under this link (in Polish): <https://fundacjaflow.weebly.com/--wi281cej-o-oli.html>

Ram Samocha (b. 1966) is a UK-based Israeli artist and curator. He is a graduate of Bezalel Academy of Arts in Jerusalem (ISR) and holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Waterloo, Canada. Ram's vast multidisciplinary oeuvre combines drawing, performance, video, sound, and animation. Among the multitude of media, Ram considers drawing a seminal element of his practice allowing him to dynamically process various personal issues. What drew me to him (because of likeness as I believe) was his energetic and expressive manner of acting in the performative process of drawing. Ram's work has been internationally recognized. Along with his artistic projects, he has been developing the "Draw to Perform" (DtP) – a dynamic platform for artists to gather, collaborate and exchange ideas about performative drawing at DtP festivals, events, workshops and residencies. More details about Ram's rich artistic and curatorial activity can be found here: <http://www.samocha.com/>.

## 6. Ethics of Artistic Research

This chapter focuses on ethics of artistic research. In the introduction, two extreme perspectives on these ethics are presented and the third, more balanced one towards which my research is inclined. The first section presents detailed specification pertaining to integrity and division of roles between the collaborating artists and me. The second section groups my reading related to the problematics of intense emotions and risk. Additionally, a separate ethics-related chapter of the “Literature and Practice Review” part (see chapt. 11) constitutes the basis for my reflection arising from the co-experiments. This is because these ethical contemplations, presented in the “Thematic Interpretation” part, deserve a longer theoretical introduction, much beyond the typical statement clarifying the ethics of the presented research.

Calling upon the Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans (2003), Nils-Eric Sahlin (2017), professor of Medical Ethics at Lund University, argues that artistic research—although different from scientific research in terms of its methods—should undergo an ethical review in the same manner as the latter. He justifies this position by pointing out that artists functioning outside of university context often use their freedom by giving themselves the right to provoke, change, embellish or distort reality as they take risk or affect their subjects physically or mentally. Therefore, for the “artistic license” (Sahlin, 2017, p. 11) to work within the academia, artists and participants have to form a tacit agreement that an experienced situation is a construct. By this the author seems to emphasize the importance of informed consent – a practice in which a researcher discloses all relevant aspects of the project to participants before they decide to become a part of it. This ensures the participants’ autonomy, privacy and confidentiality (Kohonen et al., 2019).

Sinziana Ravini (2017), a curator and critic, sees ethical aspects of artistic research from an opposite point of view. Advocating for artworks’ greatest possible freedom in the sphere of academic research, she first insists that “[t]he ethical requirements . . . applied to research in general cannot be applied to art, because artistic freedom is the cornerstone of a democratic and free society, and art cannot always be ‘good’” (p. 32). Calling artists-researchers art’s “*enfants terribles*” (p. 32), the author suggests that their ethics, aimed at social improvement and attempting to be always “good,” have resulted in their artworks never taking risk and becoming pathetic. That said, she reveals the existence of unwritten ethics in artistic research, which assures the “radical practitioners” (p. 32) their respected positions within the academic community. The author gives many examples of ethically challenging artistic research projects to highlight their strength emerging from a well-grounded problematization of power relations between the researchers and their study subjects.

Scholars Barbara Bolt and Robert Vincs (2015) present the view that ethical requirements of academic protocols are fundamentally in conflict with practice-led research. They introduce statements by various practitioners confirming that the protocols limit the development of studio-based research and kill experimentation and spontaneity. Secondly, for fear of their losing an ethics approval, artists-researchers are prone to self-censorship and avoidance of confrontation with ethically difficult issues, which ultimately may diminish courage in a broader social context. Self-censorship can also be exacerbated by one’s conviction that art in academia deviates from practices of the outside world. Consequently, the artworks produced may turn out to be harmful to their authors, but also irrelevant in the more general, historical and social perspective. In the light of the above, Bolt and Vincs (2015) advocate for supervisors of artistic research to (a) set the tone for engagement with research ethics, and (b) develop strategies within the institution to enhance a “buy-in” (p. 1310) to ethics at a philosophical and institutional level, and (c) to further expand the solutions by rejecting rigid ethic

protocols in favor of various events on ethics enabling an in-depth dialogue between supervisors and their students.

Among these multiple voices there is a third, more balanced perspective<sup>19</sup> with which my thinking is aligned. Its authors are reluctant towards ethical review becoming a “prescriptive mechanism” (Blackstone et al., 2008, p. 3) that in any way limits or censors the impact of the arts on research subjects, that is individuals whose “personal information, likeness or presence . . . is the immediate focus of inquiry” (Blackstone et al., 2008, p. 5). Nevertheless, they have also noticed how most practitioners whose approach is human-oriented take the responsibility upon themselves by combining their studies with a thorough ethical reflection around various ethical challenges that emerge in their individual projects. Consequently, rather than imposing they recommend consideration of the following criteria: (a) remuneration and working conditions of research subjects and participants, (b) their safety, (c) public credit, and (d) ownership of creative as well as intellectual property (Blackstone et al., 2008).

For clarity, next to the research subjects, the authors discern research participants – assistants, performers, models and all those whose role is to “facilitate or watch the realization of the work of art” (p. 6) and thus enable exploration of a particular question or hypothesis. For example, a performer’s physical presence and even personal resources may facilitate the art project, but the very presence and resources will not constitute our immediate focus, thus making the individual not a research subject. In many collaborative approaches to art and performance engaged people often play the role of research subjects and participants (Blackstone et al., 2008), which is also the case of my research.

Referencing informed consent, processes wherein research subjects as collaborators participate equally with the artist-researcher, consent forms are inadvisable. For this is believed to imply a hierarchical relationship with respect to research design and direction, knowledge and power, and responsibility for an ownership of creative outcomes. With that in mind, the nature of creative project may sometimes necessitate the establishment of a relationship with a participant which exceeds the timeframe of the project itself (Blackstone et al., 2008).

## 6.1 Integrity and Division of Roles

In my artistic research I chose the third, more balanced perspective, proposed by Blackstone and her colleagues (2008), by responsibly planning each collaboration from the very beginning, anticipating and eliminating the possibility of physical pain already at the initial stage as well as during the artistic process. Additionally, the collaborators were credited as contributors to this research and ownership of creative as well as intellectual property was clearly established. To preserve integrity of the research participants and to ensure high ethical artistic and research practices, I chose to cooperate in such ways that I would not have to conceal anything or feel guilty at any moment of our exchange. Our collaboration was based on mutual trust, respect, transparency, accountability, and fairness. For these values to prevail, I first made sure we got to know each other before the actual experimentation began. In some cases, the contact developed for a couple of days, in others it formed over months and turned into a friendship. To guarantee transparency, the collaborators were informed that their participation in experiments and performances was a part of an academic and artistic research process

<sup>19</sup> The author is the Canadian governmental organization, Panel on Research Ethics (PRE). The panel produced a chapter on research involving creative practices. The material was submitted by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Special Working Committee (SSHWC) (Blackstone et al., 2008).



of which I was the initiator. After that, they became acquainted with the main premises of the project, including the frames (the repertoire, strategies, rules, etc.) from which our respective experiments were to initiate. Further, the timeframe for experimentation was determined individually with each collaborator. Except for Ola who prolonged her participation as our experimentation developed, each collaboration closed within a predetermined time. Finally, based on our discussions preceding the respective experiments, the persons became aware of the roles played in this research project. Confirmed in a relevant email correspondence was the following. The collaborators were:

- co-participants and collaborators in our studio experiments and co-authors of the public performances described and presented in my thesis,
- co-authors and co-creators of the drawn images resulting from these studio experiments and public performances,
- facilitators of the experiments and public performances in terms of space provision (Ram Samocha represented our two public experiments as their curator and Jaanika Peerna made her studio available for one week).

Additionally, the collaborators knew of my role and responsibilities in our exchange being as follows:

- establishing the design of the research that relates to experimenting and transformation of my artistic practice;
- initiating, planning and organization of the experiments, and/or their public presentations;
- facilitating the production in terms of space provision;
- financing and transportation of all materials;
- production and edition of video- and photographic documentation of the events;
- archiving of the artworks resulting from the experiments;
- gaining sole authorship of the thesis resulting from the research and presenting the results in a form of publications and presentations.

The documentation of the experiments was sent to each collaborator, and we mutually agreed to give each other the right to use the documentations for our own artistic and promotional purposes with the mention that the names of both parties would be published in the description of the works.

## 6.2 Intense Emotions and Risk

Performance art is a field where emotion-laden situations and experiences happen equally to artists as to their audiences. For scholar Kieran Cashell (2009), intense emotions like shame, outrage, repulsion or confusion belong to the aesthetic experience of an artwork. Artist-researcher Lisa Erdman (2019) views improvisation and performance art as fields of unpredictability, risk and artistic provocation releasing emotional and ethical responses that eventually contribute to one's personal catharsis and a greater societal awareness.

Referring to the concept of dialogue coming from the philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin<sup>20</sup>, scholars Gary Morson and Caryl Emerson (2000; 1990) argue that artistic dialogue

<sup>20</sup> Bakhtin (1929/1984) explained dialogue as "the single adequate form for verbally expressing authentic human life" (p. 293). He rejected the assumption that human interaction arose from some predetermined model. The philosopher drew an analogy between events which do not exhibit any transcendent structure and remain diverse in their nature, and human dialogue which does not correlate with any pre-existing set of rules. Instead, arguably for Bakhtin, dialogue is saturated with a context and significance (Morson & Emerson, 1990). The concept of dialogue in Bakhtin's theory came

based solely on empathy, beauty or consolation implies a never-ending re-making of what already exists. In that vein, Emerson (2000) views suffering or increased vulnerability as generators of a new creative understanding. Another scholar, Rachel Pollard (2011) defines Bakhtin's dialogism as the intersubjective creation of meaning at the intersection of different and often contradictory points of view. My independent ethical reflection referring to the identified intense emotions broadly appears in respective "Evaluation" subsections under each experiment and later in section 16.3 of "The Relationships Embodied Through Drawing" chapter.

Considering an academic study, some authors notice how artistic research—unlike scientific research—changes the meaning of the term "risk" by endowing it with positive associations of imaginary, play, surprise, discovery, transformation, or even deception. Its subjects and/or participants are motivated and inspired by the promise of emotional stimulation, insight and entertainment all happening under the unwritten consensus. And once the stimuli exceed the participants' threshold of patience, they can leave the space of art without any consequences. In conclusion, the main criterion of participants' and subjects' integrity would be their capacity to self-regulate when faced with risk but also to control the collaborative, performative process (Blackstone et al., 2008).

In this chapter, I first described two opposing perspectives on ethics and the third, more balanced one towards which my research is inclined. The representatives of this position encourage artists-researchers to take the ethical responsibility upon themselves by integrating ethical reflection into their study. In that respect, I offered detailed explanation how the issues of integrity of the research participants were tackled and how our responsibilities and roles were divided. Finally, it was emphasized that performance-based experimentation, including the one presented in this research, can be laden with intense emotions and risk. These components often constitute an indispensable part of a new creative understanding.

This chapter closes Part One of the thesis. In this part, I first characterized bodily knowledge as the type of knowing this research relies on and produces through experimentation with direct bodily interaction and drawing. Then, I described the methods and methodology of my research within the scope of artistic research as my main paradigm of inquiry. In that context, *reflection-in-action*, an instrument of action research, was explored to demonstrate how my development of Reciprocal Drawing fits the concepts such *problem-setting*, *frame*, *experiment*, *hypothesis*, or *evaluation*. Additionally, the phenomenological orientation of this research was emphasized. Along with it my personal account of the experimentation process was presented as the additional source of data about Reciprocal Drawing. It was reported how the experiences from the experimentation were analyzed and interpreted from the viewpoint of the mediated and relational phenomenological research. Next, artistic and professional profiles of my collaborators—Ola Piechnik, Ram Samocha, and Jaanika Peerna<sup>21</sup>—were presented. Finally, different approaches to ethics of artistic research were reviewed and commented upon.

from his literary and linguistic orientation. He thought that a word understood as a singular entity but also broadly as words, utterances and speech acts, never existed in isolation. According to him, a word always pertains to words and contexts in which it was used before, thus containing a "dialogic potential," a prospect of infinite answers to earlier literary pieces and voices (Bakhtin et al., 1981).

<sup>21</sup> in chronological order of the co-experiments

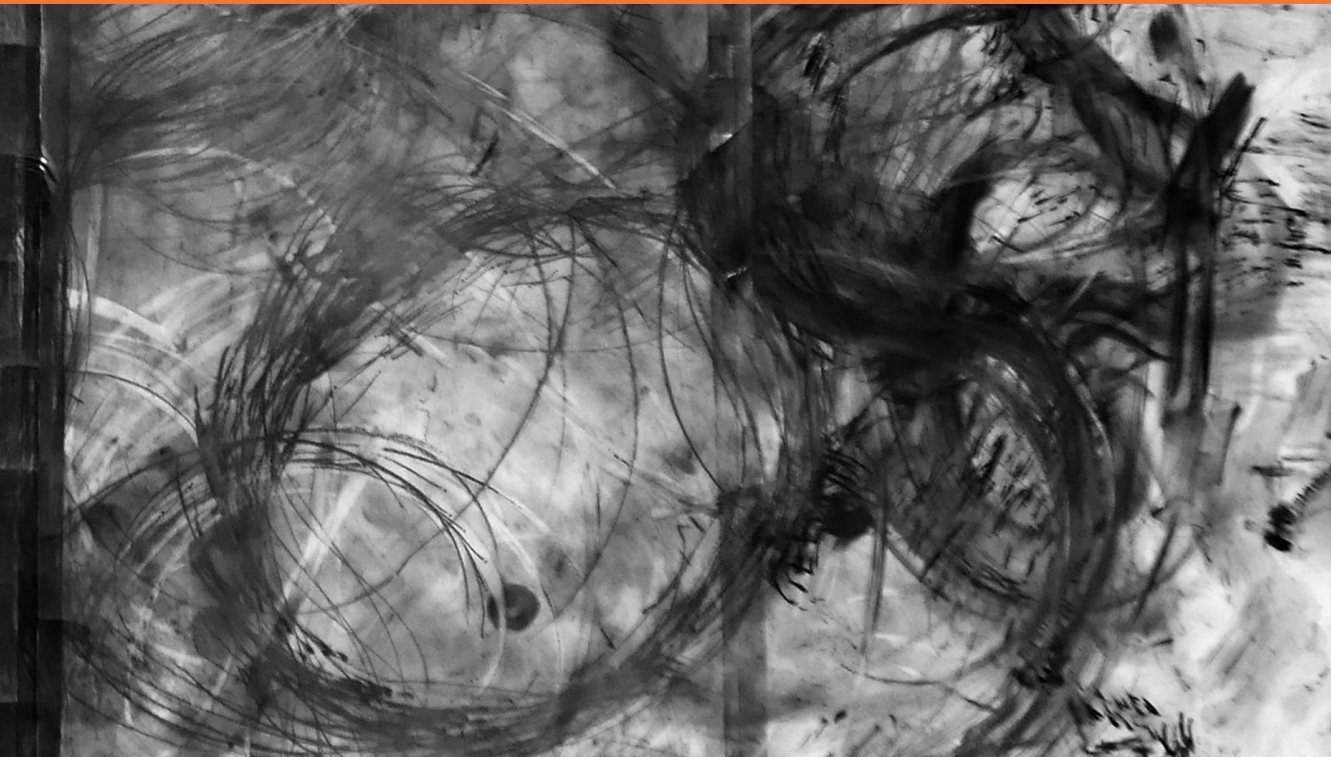


## LITERATURE AND PRACTICE REVIEW

In Part Two of the thesis, I review the main practical and theoretical premises which constituted a base for my experimentation and the subsequent theoretical discussion of Part Four. First, I briefly explain the principles behind Laban Movement Analysis and delve into the very system with its four categories of movement. Then, I proceed with an overview of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1964/1968, 1945/2012) philosophy of embodiment. After this, I reveal multiple, selected insights from the theories of performance and artistic collaboration. Finally, in the last chapter of this part, I present the chosen phenomenological perspectives on ethics and their meaning for ethical conduct in the art of performance.

**PART**

**2**



## 7. Overview of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA)

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the complexities of Laban Movement Analysis (hereafter LMA). Its category of body, described in the first section, formed the foundation for the repertoire of actions (or motifs) applied later in the co-experiments of the collaborative phase. The remaining LMA categories of effort, space and shape are described in the next three sections. All categories helped me understand different dimensions of bodily movement and thus allowed me to better direct the process of the co-experimentation. LMA as a tool for analysis proved helpful in establishing links between the collaborative drawings presented in chapters 13 and 14 and different states and drives accompanying their production. Identification of these states was possible because in our respective movement interactions we used the LMA-based motifs from the repertoire. A summary of LMA in the form of a chart at the end of this chapter serves as a map for the compound and interrelated concepts described here.

Rudolf Laban was the dance artist and theorist, he experimented with movement on the verge on the 19th and 20th century. His was the idea of *free dance* of which the fundamental means of expression would be determined by an authentic bodily movement (Connolly & Lathrop, 1997; Dörr, 2008; Maletic, 1987). Laban realized that a simple and transparent theory was needed for a work of art to be conceived in a coherent way. Therefore, he developed his dance theory along with the famous notation system also known as “Kinestography,” or “Labanotation” (Maletic, 1987, p. 115) in the United States. Labanotation allowed, by means of simple graphic symbols (like notes in music), a record and subsequent rendering of most advanced choreographies (Maletic, 1987). In my research I did not use Labanotation. Instead, I utilized exclusively LMA with its four descriptive categories described in the following sections.

According to authors Karen Studd and Laura Cox (2013), LMA is “the comprehensive system used in understanding multiple aspects of human movement patterns” (p. 129). It is a tool with which human movement, understood as a change of position, can be precisely described, analyzed and interpreted. Specifically, movement can be investigated from the perspective of LMA’s four primary categories. These are: 1) *body*, 2) *effort*, 3) *space*, and 4) *shape*. The categories of body, space and shape pertain to function, while the category of effort relates to expression and specific psychology of movement (Snell, 1926, as in Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). Although it is possible to analyze movement from the perspective of individual category, it is also important to remember that they are experienced by us as interwoven. During my solo experimentation I mainly used the body category and to some extent also the effort category. The specific body actions and gestures contained within the body category helped me to prepare the repertoire of actions for the collaborative phase experimentation. Additionally, when I was describing the solo and collaborative experiments of my research, I used the specific language offered by all four categories. During the interpretation of the (co)-experimentation (see relevant subsections of Part Three), I used the questions specific for each category to identify the character of Reciprocal Drawing.

### 7.1 Body

The body category of LMA comprises the basic human anatomy in relation to movement. In other words, this is the “what” of movement. Here one can ask which body parts are engaged and/or which ones are blocked. It can also be observed which parts of the body stay in relation to each other and whether the selected parts move simul-

taneously or successively relative to each other. Importantly, within the body category nine basic *body actions* are specified. Some of them appear in the opposition-based pairs. These are:

- extension–flexion,
- gathering–scattering,
- rotation,
- travelling,
- change of level support,
- jump, and
- gesture.

*Gesture*, defined as an action of a single body part that does not change the body’s position to a new place (Studd & Cox, 2013), can be further specified by eight following *action verbs*:

- press,
- flick,
- wring,
- dab,
- slash,
- glide,
- punch, and
- float.

Finally, the body category of LMA reveals which specific actions or gestures a moving person prefers (e.g., rotations, extensions or a floating gesture) and which ones they tend to avoid. When considered in various movement practices, this category extends the body’s awareness while also facilitating the change of individual *movement patterns* (Sokołowska, 2014; Studd & Cox, 2013). This rule concerns everyday life movement habits including these developed in one’s drawing practice. In the solo phase of my research I extensively used the category of body. My goal was to formulate the repertoire of actions for Reciprocal Drawing and the collaborative experimentation leading to the method’s formulation. One by one, I freely interpreted each body action and gesture by moving my entire body and marking with my hands within the horizontal plane of paper. I asked which body actions and gestures can be fluently performed against the plane and which of them leave clear and possibly longest record. I also wanted to identify what sensations each performance brings about to eliminate the possibility of pain or dizziness. The body actions/gestures selected for the repertoire served as *motifs* of embodied exchange in the subsequent collaborative phase of the research. The application of the body category in my research can be found in the description of my solo experimentation, chapter 12.

## 7.2 Effort

While the body category focuses on the “what,” the *effort*<sup>22</sup> relates to the “how” of movement. Laban maintained that initiation of movement with specific effort in focus can become a way we express our mind through the body (Sokołowska, 2014). LMA specifies four dynamic qualities of movement defined as *effort factors*. These are:

<sup>22</sup> Effort category (Germ. *Antrieb*) is also translated as *quality*.



1. speed (also referred to as “time” in professional literature),
2. space,
3. pressure (weight, force), and
4. flow.

The above four factors can be also understood as regulators of movement intensity. Therefore, they are described by a rich vocabulary located between the extremes of fast/slow in relation to speed, one/multidirectional in relation to space, weak/strong in relation to pressure, and rigid/mobile in relation to flow (Maletic, 1987). The juxtaposed attributes form two tendencies of experiencing effort which is either the indulging/decreasing tendency or condensing/increasing tendency (Sokołowska, 2014). In one’s practice, the diversified muscular tension and alternation between increasing and decreasing speed, pressure, flow, etc. are necessary to avoid mechanical and lifeless action (Maletic, 1987). When performing the singular body actions in my solo experimentation, I focused on one effort factor at a time – mainly on speed and pressure. However, it should again be emphasized that movement can only be understood as a mutual interdependency of all four factors, “the sequentiality of time, strength of force, and extension of space” (Maletic, 1987, p. 179) and “ongoingness” (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 137) of flow. This means that the first factor gains its clarity and meaning through the consideration of the other. For example, to observe how fast or slow my hand moves (speed factor) on a paper surface I already inspect how much pressure (pressure factor) is engaged in the gesture as the latter influences the former. This fusion directly affects the quality of lines or textures.

Secondly, the four effort factors are associated with corresponding “*levels of consciousness*” (Maletic, 1987, p. 100). And so,

- (a) experience of speed correlates with commitment, intuition and decision making;
  - (b) awareness of space enhances attention and thinking;
  - (c) pressure is associated with intension, impact, sensing, and sense of existence;
  - (d) flow with progression and emotional feeling.
- (Maletic, 1987; Sokołowska, 2014; Studd & Cox, 2013)

Consequently, the above outlined effort factors and their corresponding “*levels of consciousness*” (Maletic, 1987, p. 100) form six *states* and four *drives*. States are combinations of two effort factors and can be perceived as inner attitudes. They are collated in the following three oppositional pairs:

- dream (pressure/flow) – awake (speed/space),
  - near (pressure/speed) – remote (space/flow),
  - mobile (speed/flow) – stable (pressure/space),
- (Studd & Cox, 2013)

Drives are combinations of three effort factors. Each drive can be also defined by an effort factor that missing from each combination. They are:

- action (pressure/speed/space) – flowless, not-emotional, practical actions;
  - spell (flow/pressure/space) – timeless, trance-like, hypnotic, spellbound;
  - vision (flow/speed/space) – weightless, out-of-body, other worldly, non-physical;
  - passion (flow/pressure/speed) – spaceless, absence of focus, no rational thought;
- (Longstaff, n.d.; Studd & Cox, 2013)



Finally, the category of effort includes specification of four *phrasing types*. For their better understanding, a brief introduction should highlight the occurrence of what Laban defined as *phrases* and the *basic patterns of movement*. Phrases are the sequences completed in time which form the larger patterns. The patterns are recognizable through the process of repetition (walking, rotating, etc.). Like in speech or music, phrases in movement contain their emphasized part which influences the ultimate expression and meaning of the closed form:

- an impulsive phrase places an emphasis on the beginning, which gives an explosive feel;
- swing phrase emphasizes the middle, which creates a swing and a suspension;
- impactive phrase emphasizes the end and builds to a climax; and
- even phrase contains no emphasis, which brings calmness or restores order after a volatile situation (Longstaff, n.d.; Studd & Cox, 2013).

In a nutshell, the category of effort describes the four effort factors of movement: speed, space, pressure, and flow. Each of these factors can be experienced within the scale ranging from indulging/decreasing to condensing/increasing elements. The effort category also exposes the qualitative aspects of movement; its general feel, specific “texture” and “color” (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 137). Effort category is a key to understanding the performer’s inner intent. The constitutive part of this understanding is the identification of different levels of consciousness released by the experience of each effort factor. When combined, the effort factors evoke six states and four drives. Phrases, as smaller movement units, form larger patterns of movement. In my solo experimentation, conducting the body actions/gestures with a specific qualitative change of effort in mind, allowed me to consciously explore the quality of lines, saturation of tonal values, and density of textures. Additionally, I used the formulations proposed by this category to describe the joint movement so that identification of the specific states and/or drives accompanying the Reciprocal Drawing practice was possible during the analysis and interpretation.

### 7.3 Space

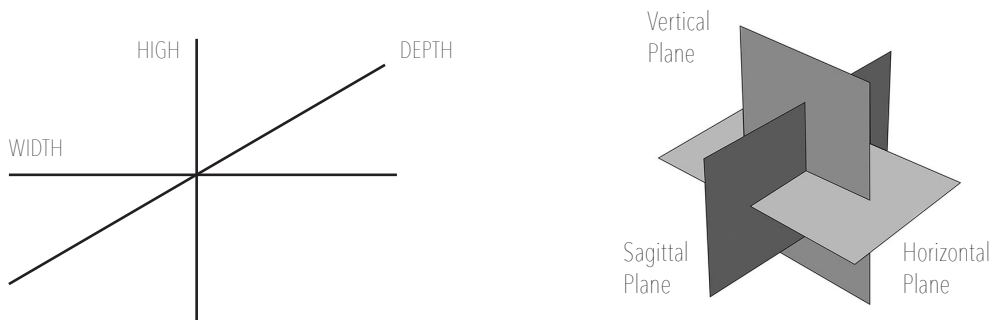
In the context of the *space* category, it must first be noted that Laban’s model, similarly to Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/2012) *spatiality*, designates space from the perspective of the moving person. In the context of a performance, space as a stage is always described from the performers’ and not the spectators’ perspective. The body’s physiognomy determines the ways in which we experience the world. With its upright posture, adjusted to the pull of gravity, with its bilateral symmetry and location of eyes and ears, the body defines the positioning of things. In brief, what is up, down, right, left, above, under, in front, or behind is determined relative to the body. In the study of movement, this rule applies equally to vertical as to horizontal positions. For example, when standing with our feet on the ground, the ceiling is above, and the floor is underneath us. Yet, when we change the position to lay down with our back on the ground, the ceiling will be in front of us and “up” will mean toward the head rather than toward the ceiling (Studd & Cox, 2013). Therefore, the space category makes us sensitive to the way we use the language when communicating about movement. This logic applies in my description of the experimentation.

As the above has been established, I proceed with the description of *space* as the third category of LMA. First, the body’s personal space is defined as *kinesphere*<sup>23</sup>,

<sup>23</sup> *kinesphere* (from Greek *kinesis* - movement, and *sphaira* - ball) (Maletic, 2005, Kinesphere and Directional Orientation section, para. 1)

a realm that we can access without taking a step to a new place, a “reach space” (Maletic, 2005, Kinesphere and Directional Orientation section, para. 1) or a globe of which the radius is determined by the length of our hands’ reach. Additionally, this inner space is divided into near-, mid- and far-reach (Studd & Cox, 2013).

Second, Laban saw the body’s directedness, its “towards” orientation in space as the principal element of bodily movement. He spoke of the “innumerable directions [which] radiate from the center of our body and its kinesphere into infinite space.” (Laban 1966, p. 17, as in Maletic, 1987, p. 59). By discerning the body’s 12 main and 14 additional directions, he managed to simplify this complexity. Being the combinations of the three basic spatial dimensions (height, width, depth), the directions take place within human’s vertical, horizontal, and sagittal plane. Among the total of 26 directions and three planes, three additional levels of movement are discerned: high, middle and low (Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013).



**Figure 1.** Cross of dimensional axes (left) and three planes of movement (right). Adapted from *Everybody is a Body* (p. 145), by K. Studd and L. Cox, 2013, Dog Ear Publishing. Copyright 2013 by K. Studd and L. Cox. Adapted with permission.

Summarizing, order and organization come to the fore as one of the main features characterizing the *space* component. Through the complex geometric configurations, Laban highlighted an organization constitutive of the body’s movement but also synchronization of this movement’s sequences with the organization of outside space.

## 7.4 Shape

As discussed above, when in movement the body aims in many directions on its spatial path. In doing this it takes various shapes defined by its anatomical structure. As can be noticed from our own experience, there is always an affinity between the body’s shape and space. For example, bending forward and stretching down creates first an angular and then a rounded shape, while additional turning sideways combines the previous two with a twisted shape. Produced successively, shapes form *shape flow*, which can be observed in all self-referential adjustments such as shifting weight, repositioning, etc. (Laban 1966, as in Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). Additionally, Laban distinguished five still shape forms characteristic of body carriage such as one-dimensional (pin-like), two-dimensional or flat (wall-like), rounded (ball-like), twisted (screw-like), or triangular (tetrahedron-like) (Maletic, 1987; Sokołowska, 2014).

Equally with postural shapes and actions of attending to itself, the body adopts various shapes in reference to the outside world, either to cross over to the environment (like in the case of directional movements of reaching or pointing), or to accommodate to something or someone else. In this way, the body molds and adopts its form in a mutual relationship with the world. These so called “bridging movements” (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 97) are a crucial part of communication and collaboration (Studd & Cox, 2013).

The category of shape also suggests that various accommodated body shapes give associations with particular perceptual qualities. And so, the body forming a straight line contains stillness, bending suggests an initiation of movement and a curved shape embodies speed (Maletic, 1987). Another source specifies six qualities characteristic of various body shapes such as: rising/sinking, advancing/retreating and spreading/enclosing (Studd & Cox, 2013). The emphasis on the intent of shape is important because it brings out the unity of mind–body participation in a performance (Maletic, 1987). In other words, body shapes are laden with purpose and, therefore, promise something relevant to emerge for the performer, collaborators and recipients equally. With all of this in consideration, in an interpretation of any movement dynamics there should always be an attempt to look beyond one specific scheme. This is because the advancing body may simultaneously have a retreating or sinking quality to it (Studd & Cox, 2013).

Next to *body* and *effort*, the categories of *space* and *shape* enhanced my conscious description and the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the (co-)experimentation process. In substance, there is a phenomenological and metaphoric relation between the evidenced order present in our bodies' anatomy, movement, synergistic relation with space and our meaning-oriented existence in the world. The process of the body's taking shapes in movement corresponds with our tendency to shape our lives, or putting it more directly, to influence our existence and, therefore, see our activities as a reflection of a certain order or inner plan (Maletic, 1987). Laban's theory resonates with Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of embodiment that is the subject of the next chapter in that both men resisted narrow definitions of movement and committed to the body as the primary site of knowing (Connolly & Lathrop, 1997).

## SUMMARY OF LABAN MOVEMENT ANALYSIS

BODY	EFFORT	SPACE	SHAPE
<b>Basic anatomy</b> as it relates to movement <b>Body Parts</b>  <b>Basic Body Actions:</b> 1. Extension-Flexion 2. Gathering-Scattering 3. Rotation 4. Travelling, 5. Change of Level support 6. Jump 7. Gesture  <b>Action Drives:</b> 1. Press 2. Flick 3. Wring 4. Dub 5. Slash 6. Glide 7. Punch 8. Float	<b>Effort Factors:</b> 1. Time Commitment/Deciding 2. Space Attention/Thinking 3. Weight Intension/Sensing 4. Flow Progression/Feeling  <b>Effort Elements:</b> 1. fast-slow (Time) 2. one-multidirectional (Space) 3. weak-strong (Weight) 4. rigid-mobile (Flow)  <b>Phrasing Types:</b> 1. Impulsive Phrase - emphasis at the beginning 2. Swing Phrase - emphasis the middle 3. Impactive Phrase - emphasis at the end 4. Even Phrase - no emphasis	<b>Kinesphere Reach Space:</b> 1. Near-reach 2. Mid-reach 3. Far-reach  <b>Kinesphere and Pathways:</b> 1. Central 2. Peripheral 3. Transverse  <b>Planes:</b> 1. Vertical/Door Plane up-down, left-right 2. Horizontal/Table Plane left-right/forward-backward 3. Sagittal Plane/Wheel Plane forward-backward, up-down  <b>Levels:</b> 1. High 2. Middle 3. Low  <b>26 Directions from Place Middle:</b> 6 Dimensional Directions 12 Planal Directions 8 Diagonal Directions	<b>Modes of Shape Change:</b> 1. Shape Flow 2. Directional Movement >Spoke-like >Arc-like 3. Shaping  <b>Still Shape Forms:</b> 1. Wall 2. Ball 3. Pin 4. Screw 5. Tetrahedron  <b>Shape Qualities:</b> 1. Rising-Sinking 2. Advancing-Retreating 3. Spreading-Enclosing

## 8. The Body's Spatial Existence. Insights from Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*.

In the following chapter, I describe the body's spatial existence based on the philosophy of the French thinker Maurice Merleau-Ponty. To approach this compound subject, I focus on the two research-relevant concepts of *spatiality* and *motility*. In the section referencing spatiality, I discuss the underlying concepts and notions of *reciprocity*, *synaesthesia*, the concept of *figure and differentiating field*, and *intentionality*. In the section on *motility*, I introduce the notion of *pre-reflective movement* and *body schema*, describe *concrete movement* and *abstract movement* along with the interconnected concepts of *habit body* and *personal body*, *habit acquisition*, *conflict*, and *repression*. This rich discussion is utilized in chapter 15 of "Thematic Interpretation" part, where I conceptualize Reciprocal Drawing as a (co-)embodied act.

### 8.1 Spatiality

In his most important book *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) goes to great lengths to remove certain "conceptual veils" (Hass, 2008, p. 8) by developing argumentation about the perception and the body in opposition to the rationalist and empiricist concept of objective space dominant in his times. The concept presupposes that the body is just another object in the world. This leads to a logical, physics and geometry-based understanding of the body of which parts are "laid out side by side [like a] mosaic of spatial values" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p. 100). As a result, the rationalist concept of space imposes artificial segmentation of the body, its estrangement from the very space it is an inherent part of. However, if one stops to think about how one perceives and moves, the rational experience of the body as an "assemblage" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p. 100) of parts is completely foreign to them. In fact, holds Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012), we experience our body as an "indivisible possession" (p. 100) and its parts as available to us at an instant and without our prior logical calculations about these parts' positioning in space. Therefore, as the philosopher argues, rather than turning towards objectively pre-existing space to understand the body, it is necessary to explore the living body's unique understanding of space. With this claim he redirects our attention to *spatiality* which, in most general terms, means space delineated from the perspective of the body. This space of "incarnate intentionality" (Langer, 1989, p. 40) is shaped by our individual plans, projects or imaginings, and reversely, plays an important part in defining the character of these very projects. Intentionality of space will be discussed in detail later in this section.

The concept of *spatiality* is essential in explanation of Reciprocal Drawing. For these new ways of drawing cannot be theoretically approached in purely logical terms, by physics-oriented consideration of each body part and/or mathematical description of these parts' displacement, distance, velocity, acceleration, speed, or time. In the same way, the developed products cannot be looked at in isolation from bodily movement and their creators' emotions and intentions. Reciprocal Drawing is fundamentally a phenomenal, embodied, spatial-intentional activity, an activity in which movement and drawn image are shaped by the collaborators' individual imaginings and experiences but also their expectations towards each other.

### 8.1.1 Reciprocity of space

What is then the character of our bodies' spatial existence? The answer to this question leads through an understanding of Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2012) conviction that what we experience as "I" is not separated from the body. In other words, the body and consciousness of self are fundamentally one and the same. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) perceives the body as a main constituent and a condition of knowing. The consciousness is entwined with the living and perceiving body without which the former could not exist. Furthermore, in *The Visible and the Invisible* (1964/1968) Merleau-Ponty claims that the embodied "self" is never ejected from the surrounding space. Instead, it is actively involved with others and things. Such interconnectedness, of subject and object, self and body, body and world, is described by him as *reciprocity*. Developing a rich vocabulary to allow deeper awareness of this symbiosis, when describing "reciprocity" (p. 261), he also uses words such as "reversibility" (p. 263), "intertwining" (p. 130), or "chiasm" (p. 214). He stresses that reciprocity is best reflected in the human bodies' anatomy. With our sensory systems on the outside, we remain open, receptive and ready to involve with the world. Our bodies stay naturally attuned to and synchronized with the stimuli coming from the exterior space.

Merleau-Ponty's concept of reciprocity has a twofold meaning in this thesis. First, in most general terms, it relates to the drawing activity which becomes reciprocal when my body actions are oriented towards the two-dimensional plane of paper and the involved materials such as charcoal, graphite, rope, eraser, or duct tape. At those crucial moments the character of these materials affects my behaviours, movement decisions and, consequently, the development of the entire experimentation process. In Thematic Interpretation part I argue that because of this reciprocal relationship with the materials and products of my actions I get to know myself. Second, in my research reciprocity is also attributed to the ways collaborative drawing is approached. Emphasized in the title of this publication, *Reciprocal Drawing assumes that besides relating to the paper plane and materials, both collaborators relate to each other, and their individual actions are highly transformed because of their bodies' uninterrupted, direct contact and strict co-dependence*. This understanding of Merleau-Ponty's reciprocity is further explained in sections 9.3 and 9.4 of the "Performance Drawing" chapter, where I reveal practical manifestations of the concept by considering the two partnering strategies that enable the reciprocal experience. Later, in "Thematic Interpretation" part, the philosophical dimension of Reciprocal Drawing is reflected upon. Reciprocity of the bodies was considered by Merleau-Ponty in the light of "reiterated empathy" (p. 58) – the concept developed by the philosopher Edith Stein (1917/1964) and additionally explained by me in the relevant discussion.

### 8.1.2 From perceptual complexity to Gestalt character of space

Once it has been established that the body's spatial existence is of reciprocal character and its central position defines all the spatial relations, I next attempt to explain the complex and synergistic character of space. Merleau-Ponty's "perceptual realism" (Hass, 2008, p. 37) assumes that sensations always exist in relation to each other. Therefore, instead of writing of separated sensations—as the rationalist-empiricist tradition would suggest—Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) prefers the more holistic term "the sensible" (p. 221), simultaneous seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching integrated in one spatiotemporal experience. With this he brings out the notion of *synaesthesia*, a condition in which the senses are "indiscernible, like monocular images in binocular vision" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p. 239). And so, we remain open to space with all of our "sensory modalities" (Gallagher, 2005, p. 5) overlapping and informing

one another. The basic experience of holding a charcoal illustrates that well. We are able to perceive it simultaneously as cold, smooth and hard (touch), black (vision), bitter and earthy (taste and smell), and possibly giving a sound if pressed (hearing).

“Synergistic life” (Hass, 2008, p. 37) in space is also full of moments when that what might seem as one element affects us in a more general way: powdered, smooth charcoal on the white plane of paper may calm us, dotted texture brings arousal and so on. Hass (2008) confirms that the way humans describe things prove that “inter-related” and “inter-sensorial” (p. 55) character of our perception. For him, our language testifies this “synaesthetic richness” (Hass, 2008, p. 70). For example, when describing the experimentation, I write of seeing the heaviness, ephemerality or volatility of a visual form, although these are qualities usually ascribed to senses other than vision.

With the sensible Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) also draws attention to perceptual complexity in which we exist and which influences the way we perceive single elements in space. Calling upon the studies of Gestalt psychology<sup>24</sup>, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) refers to the concept of *figure and differentiating field*. In gestalt manner, a figure emerges from a larger and less determinate background just to recede to it when the focus is redirected towards another figure within the same configuration. In everyday life, such perceptual complexity happens when, for example, a color is seen against its background and a sound is discerned within a context of relative silence, hum, or noise. Furthermore, these perceptions are always relational. That is, their qualities such as volume of a sound or saturation of a color can only be estimated in relation to all their respective audio-visual factors. And so, temperature on skin is felt in relation to the warmth of wind, water, worn cloths and so on. What once appears to be calming, like momentary peace breaking the noise of a pneumatic drill, can at other times have an unnerving effect, such as an endless silence of confinement extended by a rhythmic ticking of a clock.

Some authors explain that the lived experience of space, similarly to our perception, has gestalt character (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2012; Langer, 1989). Like sounds in a melody or shapes in a composition, objects in space are organized into a figure-background structure where each figure accentuates the existence of a larger area endlessly. A chair in front of me points to a room, a room points to the larger space of a building, the larger space of a building points to the surrounding gardens, which again point to a neighbourhood, which points to a district and beyond.

### 8.1.3 Intentionality of embodied space

In the previous section, I highlighted the figure-background relation of the body’s spatial experience. Hass (2008) explains that with form spatiality encompasses its content. Space is therefore *intentional*, meaning that the figures and their ever-expansive backgrounds are laden with *sense*, wherein “sense” denotes a meaningful connection of human perception to outside things. The difference between traditionally understood space and spatiality is that the former is geometrically measurable, characterized by substantiality, materiality and extension, while the latter reveals itself as a network of meaning.

<sup>24</sup> Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) made numerous references in favor of Gestalt psychology, for example while explaining the concepts of figure and differentiating field referenced in this chapter. The German term *Gestalt* (a figure) comes from Gestalt psychology. The term relates to figures building patterns or configurations. The emergence of Gestalt psychology is dated back to 1912/1913. Its representatives referenced the famous Aristotelian adage that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (World Encyclopedia, 2014). They believed that because of humans’ inclination to better understand objects in entire structures (rather than as separated elements), consciousness should be viewed as an organized whole, and not described through its detailed aspects (Sternberg & Sternberg, 2012).

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, to objects pointing to ever wider spatial configurations, ever larger meanings are connected. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) expresses this idea through the notion of *intentional arc*, a “zone” (p. 165), or a “virtual space” (p. 118) encompassing the living body that exists there as a central pole around which “possibilities galvanize” (Hass, 2008, p. 82). As Langer (1989) notes, “intentional arc is . . . inseparably vision, comprehension and motion” (p. 46) all emanating from the living body.

Moreover, this spatial perception of things is *ambiguous*, which means we tend to shift our focus among objects or from an object to a larger configuration and then back to an object, depending on the purpose of our action. Attention paid to objects in space shifts from indeterminacy to configuration and back to indeterminacy. In such a way we tend to reduce the tension, the potential effect of our opening to all stimuli flowing from diverse space (Hass, 2008). Our attention is, then, never total because we tend to “pick out” objects while moving through space. Things are coming at us in excess. For this abundance to be bearable, we tend to focus on one thing, on something chosen from this meaningful flow according to its relevance to us at a given moment. Because of its “perceptual complexity” (Hass, 2008, p. 31), spatiality does not relate to any ultimately describable and homogeneous space. Instead, as Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) proposes, multiple and different phenomena or perceptions are joined “one after the other to the real” (p. 41). They are various aspects of the same space surrounding us. In that sense, spatiality is not objectively explainable, as rationalist tradition would claim, but descriptive as we jointly and continuously watch, discuss and negotiate its form.

## 8.2 Motility

In the previous section, I have shown that the idea of spatiality is prompted by a conviction that “self,” the body and the surrounding world co-exist and influence each other. Besides, with the introduction of Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/2012) term *the sensible*, I have explained that the body perceives natural space as complex, relational and synergistic. Also, it is now clear that the space is intentional and has *gestalt* character. Things emerge in front of us because they signify something important to us. Finally, this space is not homogenous but describable from many perspectives.

With these deliberations, I hope to have raised associations with the body’s movement. To highlight the uniqueness of human movement, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) uses the term *motility*. As is the case with spatiality, which assumes the body’s central position in description of space, the term motility places an emphasis on the body’s particular motoric capabilities that make human actions different from all other types of movement. As Langer (1989) suggests, this phenomenological notion highlights the body’s immediate self-awareness in space, a synchronization of all limbs as one’s body simultaneously “*projects* itself towards the world of its tasks” (p. 41). She concludes that spatiality and motility are inseparable because the analysis of the latter already elucidates the body’s spatial existence.

### 8.2.1 Pre-reflective movement and body schema

When the body is central in organization of space, things emerge for us from the “world-field” (Hass, 2008, p. 57) at an optimal distance and within a zone of maximum visibility. According to Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012), this happens because we are involved with things, and there is always a point in our moving towards objects. As a result of this meaningful connection, we assure ourselves the best possible position to handle things efficiently. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) notes that we do this imme-



diately and prereflectively, which means that our body knows the distances without any rational thought on our part. To give an example, one is able to estimate different distances in relation to a chair right away depending on whether my aim is to inspect it, sit on it, lift it, get on it, treat it as support, or to throw with it. One can confidently kick a ball with a suitable force in accordance with their intention of how far or high it should go. This is done without any prior measuring of distances.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) emphasizes that such a spontaneity would not be possible without the presence of *body schema*<sup>25</sup>, a “global awareness of one’s posture in the intersensory world” (Hass, 2008, p. 81). Gallagher (2005) explains that “body schema” (p. 24) constitutes such motor abilities and habits that enable and constrain movement, thus assuring maintenance of posture. Using the previous example with the ball, when one prepares to kick it, the whole body takes up a well-coordinated position by itself, the torso leans forward while all limbs balance out its weight instantly. The complexity of this pose is high, yet the body knows how to collect its limbs at a start. As Hass (2008) explains, this knowledge within the body range itself about positioning of body parts to each other not only renders us capable of acting and reacting without the strenuous intellectual determining of length, width of height, but also makes the synaesthetic perception possible, guarantees stability and immediate orientation in space. A good example of the body’s intelligence would be a situation in which one carries an item of formidable dimensions, such as a wooden plank, through the building’s corridors without having to first calculate whether the plank fits with the width of the gateways. In far more complicated settings being the subject of this research, such as drawing together while being bound to one another, numerical estimation of exterior space is completely redundant. In short, without *body schema* my collaborator and I would be forced to go about our collaborative experimentation like robots, forced to locate our limb(s) prior to performing any action.

## 8.2.2 Twofold dynamics of movement

Based on the above considerations, I account for the existence of two types of movement that Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) describes as *concrete movement* and *abstract movement* as well as the two interconnected concepts of the *habit body* and the *personal body*. Both types of movement along with the two concepts of the body are important because they are helpful in conceptualizing the Reciprocal Drawing as an embodied practice.

With its “stable organs and preestablished circuits” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p. 89), the habit body possesses the “impersonal” (p. 86), “sedimented” (p. 363) and “organic” character of “biological existence” (p. 87). Intertwined with the organic is the personal body which Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) additionally describes as the “intentional” (p. 74), “existential” (p. 88), and Hass (2008) identifies as “projective,” or “intending” (p. 90). The personal body modifies the habit body through its life tasks and situations. Langer (1989) interprets the habit body as the one experienced in the past, attached to what is familiar and opposing the personal body which is living in the present time. For Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012), the two described modalities of the body are inseparable and complementary.

The above distinction prompts me to introduce the notion of *habit acquisition*, also referred to by Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) as “incorporation” (p. 145), since habit ac-

<sup>25</sup> *Body schema* (or *corporeal schema*) - the concept first appeared in literature already in the early 1880s, when some scientists attempted to explain the body’s immediate spatial orientation and spontaneous organization of multiple somatosensory signals and sensations (e.g., pressure, pain or warmth) in an uninterrupted movement (Gallagher, 2005).

quisition concretizes when we incorporate new movements and/or instruments into our body's sedimented structures. As long as the impersonal does not counteract against the intending, their distinctive relation flows. With time, new behaviors develop and become fused with the organic. As a result, one tends to spontaneously initiate new personal projects (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012). Reciprocal Drawing developed in this research assumes habit acquisition and incorporation of new tools and objects. While the newly integrated movements denote new possibilities, so do the new tools or "auxiliaries" (Hass, 2008, p. 90), such as a rope, different paper sizes, new types of graphite and charcoal sticks, different scales of erasers as well as new ways of attaching and holding them. These "inanimate things" (Hass, 2008, p. 79) are incorporated into the living bodies and with time become a part of *body schema*, which helps the drawing collaborators expand their bodily space. As Langer (1989) points out citing Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2012) words, "to learn to type or play an instrument, to become accustomed to a vehicle or a cane or a feathered hat, 'is to be transplanted into them, or conversely, to incorporate them into the bulk of the body itself'" (p. 47).

Oftentimes *conflict* between the personal and habit body comes to the fore. Hass (2008) recalls how this is usually evident in one's confrontation with new stimuli. The personal, projective modality of the body continues as we are immersed in our aspirations, yet the habitual and impersonal stubbornly resists. The conflict lasts for a relative time until the sudden shock subdues and the personal sublimates the habitual into a new situation. As we can notice based on our own experience, such a conflict constitutes an indispensable part of human learning. Efficient handling of tools, incorporation of new gestures in drawing, and fluent participation in Reciprocal Drawing imply the phase of resistance. The discrepancy between the body's habitual and intentional sphere in the initial phase of learning may manifest in a lack of coordination and general uncertainty and awkwardness of movements.

Moreover, as Hass (2008) underlines, the conflict induces *repression* of the habitual body's possibilities. It happens when one's commitment to a certain project or course of action is accompanied by the unwillingness to accept something that could interrupt the project. A good example is a hand injury or challenge from an authority. A person becomes so committed or fixated on a certain behavior pattern that (s)he must at some point repress that what was before habitual in order to adopt, to learn or, as Hass (2008) puts it, "to pass from a potentiality to an actuality" (p. 90). In this respect, continues Hass (2008), repression is an inherent part of the living body's experience. The author concludes that this twofold dynamic of the living body is one of the most important constituents in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. In the artistic contexts described in this thesis, repression was necessary at some moments during the joint practice, when my body pre-reflectively aimed at formerly habituated actions and behaviors, or when I was fixated on my previously imagined solutions for movement and final visual result. Without repression my collaborator and I would not have been able to reach any constructive form of bodily interaction on paper.

Having highlighted the above correlations, I proceed to discuss the meaning of *concrete movement* and *abstract movement*. Reciprocal Drawing strongly correlates with these two types of movement. As suggested earlier, they directly arise from the habitual/personal distinction. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) clarifies *concrete movement* as lacking intention and projective properties. It can be characterized as a pre-reflective mobilization of the body. Determined by the biological, concrete actions are situated outside of any spatial and temporal context and hence do not promise anything beyond here and now. When performing them a person does not feel as an initiator or an active agent in space. Instead, one is there in service of a situation, with one's body being "triggered" (p. 80) by a habit. At this instance, concrete movement can be located within the realm of the non-conscious, subpersonal, tacit, and automatic.

Through *abstract movement*, as Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) further elaborates, we experience our body as a “motor-project” (p. 114). The body naturally accommodates to our projection of an action. Instead of being a “vehicle of movement,” the body becomes a “goal of movement” (p. 114). By converting an idea of action into a real action, we experience ourselves as powerful and effective in shaping the space around us. Through the experience of their own “motor intentionality” (p. 112), a healthy person appropriates the surrounding space as a “horizon of possibilities” (Langer, 1989, p. 44). In this way, we transcend the existing status quo and structure our world according to how we want it to become. Our connection to things makes our actions towards objects meaningful, that is laden with aiming and directness in space. What’s more, instead of being induced by the impersonal sphere, abstract movements are spurred by the imaginary. A particular visualization of a unique gesture can be then put into practice at request but also developed later into something more elaborate once the body stays in sync with the imagined. In fact, being one with the thought, the body is already imaginative as it moves freely through its creative project. Also, abstract actions are rooted in time and, therefore, promise meaningful results beyond here and now. Finally, abstract actions belong to the sphere of the conscious, explicit, and willed (Langer, 1989). In Reciprocal Drawing, the difference between abstract and concrete movement traverses across a number of distinctions, such as a conscious gesture aimed at leaving a specifically shaped trace versus non-conscious gesture of which trace is accidental, willed reaction versus automatic reaction to the stimuli evoked by the embodied exchange, or joint monitoring of the drawing’s development versus accidental accomplishment of the drawn image.

To summarize, phenomenological approach to movement, including the Reciprocal Drawing which bases on bodily movement, eludes traditional perspectives. Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/2012) *motility* is not understood based on intellectual analysis. In the same way, my (co-)embodied experiments elude intellectual analysis and its products should never be perceived as “mechanical recording of impressions” (Langer, 1989, p. 47). Instead, Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/2012) approach assumes that knowledge about movement is primordial and at our disposal as long as we live. Equipped with *body schema*, with our bodies dynamic from the inside out and all limbs perfectly synchronized, we already know our way through space. Such is also the case when my collaborator and I draw together. Additionally, we spontaneously synchronize our bodies and enjoy the freedom of *abstract movement* rooted in our intention and imagination. The character of *concrete* and *abstract movement* corresponds, respectively, with the *habit body* and the *personal body*. Through *habit acquisition*, we integrate new actions into our bodies’ sedimented structures, thus expanding our personal space of possibilities in drawing practice. When doing this, we are sometimes exposed to internal *conflict* between what is familiar and what is new or desired for our practice. Yet oftentimes our bodies overcome this conflict by the power of *repression*. Exploring all these concepts in chapter 15 of this thesis, I delve into the problematics of embodiment in Reciprocal Drawing.

## 9. Performance Drawing

In this chapter, I highlight the distinctive theoretical and practical aspects of *performance drawing* which influenced the artistic component of my research. This discussion also addresses the issue of originality which Borgdorff (2012) situates among the main criteria of artistic research. I open by clarifying the concept of *performance* and the field of *performance art*. Following this, I briefly define the disciplines of *drawing* to then delve into the complexities of *performance drawing*, the genre in which my Reciprocal Drawing praxis is rooted. Specifically, I situate the three frames applied in my co-experimentation—a reciprocal partnering strategy, the repertoire of actions, and the score (the rules and diagrams)—in relation to the historical and current works of artists who have also included these frames. Within this rich context, the *reciprocal partnering strategies* of binding and point-of-contact are explained as complex forms of collaborative movement. Based on this, different challenges ensuing from their application in drawing are identified. Responding to these challenges, Reciprocal Drawing developed through this research is distinguished as an original and unprecedented approach to the medium. In the next section, I introduce the interrelated concepts of *physicality* and *resistance* explored in the field of performance drawing and explain how my research expands understanding of these concepts. In the final section, I present the field of practice-based research engaging collaborative drawing along with its core thematic areas and unresolved issues. This is done to clarify how my project responds to these issues and how it further expands the relevant knowledge.

### 9.1 Performance and Performance Art: Introduction of Basic Concepts

Experiments of this research are identified as “cultural performances” (Singer, 1959, as cited in Carlson, 2018, p. 11; McKenzie, 2001, p. 7) for they are rooted in the cultural and not business or technological realm: They possess a clearly specified time, place, and occasion, a set of performers, and an audience (Singer, 1959). In general terms, *performance* means an action or behavior that has a demonstration of a skill as its goal. This action is usually compared by a person executing it with an “imagined ideal” or “a remembered original model” (Bauman, 1989; as cited in Carlson, 2018, p. 4) of the same action. Theorist Richard Schechner (1985) proposes a definition of performance as “restored behavior” (p. 35) or a behavior that must be reinvented in a “constancy of transmission” (p. 36). As authors Marvin Carlson (2018) and Robert Crease (1993) note, this restoration follows some pre-existing pattern, a script or scheme. This suggests—as Carlson (2018) clarifies—that all performances are about pretending to be somebody or something else and thus evoke a “consciousness of doubleness” (p. 5) accompanied by a self-imposed “mental standard” (p. 5) that is usually strengthened by the existence of a validating external observer: an audience, a jury, a teacher, etc. The (co-)experiments described in this thesis gained this performative quality because they were enacted in front of audiences. The same applies to the experiments conducted in the studios because, as some authors confirm, when recorded with a camera an activity of drawing happens as if in anticipation of an observer (Foá et al., 2022). Additionally, the reciprocal partnering strategies, the repertoire of actions as well as the rules and diagrams were the pre-existing patterns which my collaborator and I tried to restore. Importantly, Schechner (2002/2006) explains *performance studies* as not interested in what is being done or created but rather in the process – the very act of doing something. Applying this reasoning to the experiments of my research, the difference between an ordinary action of drawing and drawing performatively is that the latter is marked by self-consciousness: the collaborator’s and my thinking of doing the drawing, moving in relation to it and to each other at the very moment of doing it.

This focus on praxis, action, spatiality, perception of movement and on different processes—embodied, situated and/or relational—is what makes performance close to phenomenology (Bleeker et al., 2015). Therefore, as many authors confirm, phenomenological “style” (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. lxxi) of thinking finds its vast application in performance studies and performance-focused artistic research (Bleeker et al., 2015; Garner, 2019; Grant, 2019; Johnston, 2017; Kozel, 2015). For clarity, in this thesis the word “performative” is used in relation to performance and performance art, and not to *performativity* in the Austinian, linguistic sense, that is as a form of social action evoked by utterances (Austin, 1962/1975).

The following concepts and theories developed by the famous sociologists of the 20th century are relevant for performance: the concepts of *framing* and *keying* formulated by Erving Goffman (1956, 1974/1986), the theory of *play* developed by Roger Caillois (1958/2001), and the play-related notion of *disorder* used by Brian Sutton-Smith (1972), and finally the concept of *social drama* developed by Victor Turner (1969/2011). Goffman’s “framing” assumes that there is always a cultural or natural setting which facilitates communication and interpretation. Within this setting people frame, that is perceive, identify and label occurrences. And so, spaces such as a theater or gallery function as frames or “intentional spaces” (States, 1987, p. 35), where actions and objects gain significance by being “uplifted to the view” (Shakespeare, as cited in States, 1987, p. 37). The whole essence of Goffman’s performance is then about “keying,” fitting or adopting of one’s expression to peoples’ existing frame of reference. Carlson (2018) summarizes that keying is about redoing or transforming: With a change of frame an activity previously imbued with some meaning becomes recontextualized and so gains a completely different significance. In chapter 16 of the “Thematic Interpretation” part, I use the concepts of framing and keying to discuss how Reciprocal Drawing gains a whole different meaning when placed within a public context. This is done to lay foundations for the broad discussion in which I identify Reciprocal Drawing as a form of play.

Anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972/1987) employed the notion of frame to explore differences between seriousness and *play*. According to him, for play to occur participants must be able to metacommunicate, that is encode and decode their messages within a broader “psychological frame” (p. 192) which denies all mutual interaction the basic premises of seriousness. Caillois (1958/2001) identified six essential qualities of play as being: not obligatory, circumscribed in time and space, undetermined, materially unproductive, rule-based, and concerned with alternate reality. He also discerned spontaneous manifestations of play (“*paidia*”) (p. 13) and rule-based plays (“*ludus*”) (p. 13). With his many classifications Caillois drew attention to different social functions of play. One of them was the subversive function revealing in games aiming at a change of status quo between the players. Referring to this function, Sutton-Smith (1972) spoke of the experience of “disorderly” (Sutton-Smith, as cited in Carlson, 2018, p. 17) quality of play which enables learning and establishing a new order. His thinking was closely related to Turner’s theories. For example, Turner’s (1969/2011) concept of “social drama” assumed that social processes take up a pattern starting with a breach in an established norm and ending with recognition of new order or separation. Turner (1969/2011) liked to compare all such transitional activities in society or an individual to “anti-structure” (as cited in Carlson, 2018, p. 17), rare moments to think about alternative propositions to “cultural codes” (Carlson, 2018, p. 17). Turner’s theories are visible in Schechner’s (2002/2006) chart illustrating strict and unceasing complementarity of social life and performance (see p. 96). Based on the analysis of my descriptive accounts, in Thematic Interpretation part I argue that the co-experiments of this research gain characteristics of play. Imbued with playful quality, Reciprocal Drawing has a potential to reflect societal and relational tensions.

Play-related qualities referenced above introduced the essential distinction between performances deriving from specific context of spectators' reception (i.e., play-related), and performances deriving from particular activities of their authors (i.e., seriousness-related) (Carlson, 2018). The distinction corresponds with what theorist Erika Fischer-Lichte (2004/2008) describes as the two models of reception in performance, dominated by representation and dominated by presence. In the first model, a receiver is focused on signs that relate to established interpretative formulas, while in the second model attention is drawn to the real, unreferenced actions of a performer (Wachowski, 2011). This model points to *performance art*, "live art" in the UK, or simply "performance" (Carlson, 2018, p. 91), a relatively new genre within which the experiments of this research are located. Although originating from cultural performance, performance art constitutes a separate artistic field (McKenzie, 2001) due to this art's connectedness to real life, personal stories of its practitioners and to specific corporeality that engages physiological, affective, energetic, cognitive, and motoric reactions of all participants including audiences (Fischer-Lichte, 2004/2008; Wachowski, 2011). In the collaborative-performative experiments presented in this thesis, we move back and forth between the scripted (composed) and unchoreographed movement. The first type of movement refers to the pre-established partnering strategies, pre-choreographed LMA body actions contained in the repertoire, and to the rules and diagrams. The second type of movement connects to the collaborators' habitual reactions, behaviours, and personal stories. In this way, the co-developed drawings sometimes appear to me as familiar because they raise associations with my solo drawings pre-developed for the purpose of each collaboration. Other times, the co-developed drawings seem to be linked exclusively to a particular reciprocal dynamic of movement enacted by my collaborator and me.

The artistic practices presented in my thesis are rooted in drawing, yet they borrow from performance art of which some authors write as dealing with the qualities of the body, its actions and gestures, movement, dance, embodied communication, play and spontaneity (Goldberg, 1979/1988; Stern & Henderson, 1993). Equally relevant is the orientation towards the process, which Schechner (2002/2006) stresses. However, my focus is never fully processual since the finalized drawings remain important for me. Finally, some scholars point to the anarchistic tendencies or political and social critique typical of performance art (Stern & Henderson, 1993). In my approach, I never aim at testing my collaborators' or my own limits or opposing anybody's values. Although there is an intense physical contact, it is always with the consent of both parties and within the performative frame of play that denies this contact any undertone of straightforward assault. Equally, social or political critique is not the goal of my practices.

## 9.2 The Concept and Field of Performance Drawing

*Performance drawing* is an experimental field of practices that link performance with drawing in distinctive ways. For centuries *drawing* has been conceived as an exploratory, preparatory and/or private activity assuming mediation between the drafter's vision and the object of their observation. Its role has been to uncover hidden relationships, direct attention, inspect the material world, and/or provide a plan of action (Grennan, 2022; Harty, 2012; Stout, 2014). In terms of implementation, drawing has been associated with material permanence (Butler, as cited in The Museum of Modern Art, 2007) and marking with dry materials within the two-dimensional surfaces (Foá et al., 2022). Writer and curator Katharine Stout (2014) notes that a drawn mark "bears an indexical trace of its making, . . . [and] remains visible" (p. 14) because, unlike in the case of painting, it is almost impossible to eradicate its trace. Despite much debate on



what drawing is now, many theorists and practitioners are unanimous about its three basic properties: intimacy, immediacy, and capacity to record the trace of drafter's movement (Butler & de Zegher, 2010; Farthing, 2008; Fisher, 2003; Marden, as cited in Garrels, 2006; Harty, 2012; Petherbridge, 2008). Alongside the above qualities, many authors point to drawing's close connection to thinking (Bailey, 1982; Fisher, 2003; Kantrowitz, 2022; Newman & de Zegher, 2003a; Stout, 2014; A. Taylor, 2008)<sup>26</sup>. Some authors further this consensual discussion by considering drawing a phenomenological process (Bailey, 1982; Crowther, 2017; Harty, 2012; Newman & de Zegher, 2003a; Rosand, 2016). Calling upon Merleau-Ponty's conviction that the body is the mediator between the self and the world, artist-researcher Deborah Harty (2012) points to the epistemological dimension of drawing, it being another means through which we gain understanding of space, ourselves and others in the world. In this vein, scholar Paul Crowther (2017) draws attention to the gestural and bodily origins of drawing and its development conditioned by our unique relation to space. For him, "the physical gestures marked on the surface exemplify key aspect of how embodied subjects inhabit space" (p. 11). Crowther's reasoning aligns with that of psychoanalyst Serge Tisseron (1994) who notes that earliest drawings were guided not by rational understanding of space<sup>27</sup> but by exploration of movement. Further, artist Avis Newman (2003b) argues that through these gestural attempts to mark space we are experiencing ourselves more wholly. Even more so, when looking at another's drawing activity for that "momentarily binds that aspect of us that is eternally fragmented . . . [I]n so doing we can see our own experience as separate" (p. 13). In Thematic Interpretation part of this thesis, I also point to that self-knowledge and perceptual complexity which for me comes from directly sensing another's act of marking, and reversely, from the sensation of being touched by another leaving the mark. My research investigates this kind of *reciprocity* in drawing through the phenomenological lens by identifying performance-based, reciprocal partnering strategies that assume *the bodies' direct contact and high interdependence* and by testing these strategies in drawing to find out what opportunities their adaptation brings for the practice.

The contemporary field of *performance drawing* explores the body- and movement-related aspect of drawing. Therefore, I locate my research within this artistic area. In their book *Performance Drawing. New Practices since 1945*, artists and scholars Maryclare Foá, Jane Grisewood, Birgitta Hosea, and Carali McCall (2022) use this term to refer to the broad range of cross-disciplinary practices involving primary haptic engagement and influence of dance and movement, but also moving images, sound, and technology<sup>28</sup>. Important feature of drawing in performative contexts is its processuality (Butler, 1999). Hosea (2012) notes that a performance drawing is developed in front of a live audience in real time, thus revealing "its process of being made to others as [the drawing] is being drawn" (p. 124). This directly corresponds with Schechner's (2002/2006) distinction referenced earlier between the *how* and *what* of doing something.

Within the vast spectrum of practices that fall under the category of performance drawing, *line* is understood as a record, "trace," "leftover" (Lee, 1999, p. 31) or "relic" (Schmidlin, 2020, p. 47) of the body's movement in time and space. In my thesis I use all these terms interchangeably. Line aroused revived interest between the 1950s and

<sup>26</sup> Drawing is close to the thinking process in the sense of thought's evidence of formulation at the very moment it translates itself into an image, and not in the sense of thought's transcript as in writing (Fisher, 2003).

<sup>27</sup> Rational understanding of space meaning the rational identification of what we perceive with our eyes.

<sup>28</sup> Definition of performance drawing comes close but should not be mistaken with what the art-historian RoseLee Goldberg (2007) identifies as "visual performance art" (p. 15) or "visual performance" (A. Tajber, personal communication, March 7, 2014, <http://agakarasch.com/artur-tajber/>), broadly understood by Goldberg (2007) as a combination of the new visual media and technologies (film, video, installation, surround-sound) with music, dance, historic reconstruction or performative lecture, conducted live in front of the audience.



1970s, specifically among artists representing the conceptualism<sup>29</sup> emerging at that time, for it enabled them to easily expose concepts of space and movement, among many others (Foá et al., 2022). The conceptual shift converged with the rise of performance art, which additionally enabled consideration of the act of drawing in performative categories, and so shifted the focus from the end-product towards the very action of drawing<sup>30</sup>. In this research, focusing on the process translates into practical questions, such as: how is the mark being left in space by the two bodies moving in reciprocal connection or how is then the compositional structure developed.

Foá (2011) reports that the notion of “performance drawing” was coined by the curator and art historian Catherine de Zegher. It appeared in the title of de Zegher’s (2001) *Drawing Papers 20: Performance Drawings*, a volume accompanying a set of exhibitions curated by this author and organized by The Drawing Center in New York in 2001. Although words “performance” and “performative” had been used in reference to drawing already throughout the 1960s and 1970s, it was de Zegher who first detected the specificity of drawing’s merging with performance, which for her manifested in the immediacy and ephemerality of the process and its products (Foá et al., 2022). Foá and her colleagues (2022) recognize performance drawing as a subjective process where each action of mark-making is an act of thinking through the body, an act imbued with a particular intention. While performance drawing exceeds observational representation, medium-specific methods, surfaces or materials, it is also temporal and accessible mostly only during live events or through documentation.

Tracing the beginnings of performance drawing, Foá et al. (2022) point to the late 1940s and Jackson Pollock, who first challenged conventions within visual art by engaging the whole body in the painting process. Alongside Pollock’s decisive for the development of performance drawing were, among many others<sup>31</sup>, the Fluxus group but also specific works such as Tom Marioni’s *Drawing a Line As Far As I Can Reach* (1972), Carolee Schneemann’s *Tracking or Up to and Including her Limits* (1973–76), Hilka Nordhausen’s *Untersuchungen zur Handreichweite* (1974), or Tehching Hsieh’s *One Year Performances* (1978–1986) (Foá et al., 2022; Schmidlin, 2020). Considering the historical engagements between dance and visual arts, Foá et al. (2022) and scholar Erin Brannigan (2022) draw attention to the “second-wave dance avant-garde” (Brannigan, 2022, p. 2) of the 1960s and 1970s and especially to Trisha Brown and her experimental choreographies developed based on drawing.

For de Zegher (2010), drawing is characterized by a mark and a line. Being the smallest constituents in a drawing, marks form line, line forms contour and contour forms image. Line is the “leading principle” (p. 23) that defines the figure’s contour, while marks, in their shaping, shading and tonal gradations, imbue a drawing with form, depth and volume thus suggesting “a degree of spatiality and an impression of tactility” (p. 23). In performance, where we only have movement and the body in constant transition, are these subtle properties of drawing relevant anymore? In my research, line is defined as a trace, relic or record of the body(-ies) (co-)movement. However, unlike with many process-oriented drawings, our co-movement is never devoid of basic frames that organize it, that is the pre-defined partnering strategies, rules, diagrams, and specific body actions chosen from the repertoire. Consequently, each finalized drawing resulting from our co-movement is what art historian Laurence Schmidlin (2020) explains as

<sup>29</sup> Conceptualism or conceptual art: Art in which the idea of concept is the most important aspect of the work. Here, the planning and decisions are made beforehand, and the concept may not be changed in the process of execution that oftentimes is less important than the planning phase. This art is not theoretical or illustrative but intuitive, mental, and purposeless. Further, it is free from dependence on skill or craftsmanship (Lewitt, 1999).

<sup>30</sup> Conceptual artist Piero Manzoni defined the “act of making a Line ... as a performance, whether conducted in the solitude of the studio or before an audience in the street or in a printing house, where the production of the Lines was collaborative” (Manzoni, as cited in Osaki, 1998, p. 147).

<sup>31</sup> in chronological order

“both a relic and an autonomous drawing” (p. 47). As relics, the drawings refer to the unique dynamics of our reciprocal movement and to my unplanned, habitual reactions exposed during our performance. As autonomous drawings, they recall the drawing-specific properties (contour, form, texture, composition, etc.) and the controlled ways I moved and marked while developing my solo drawings and the interrelated diagrams for the co-experiments of the second phase.

My experiments of the solo phase, echo the “brainy” (Eeley, 2014, n.p.) approaches to movement represented by Trisha Brown, specifically her inspiration with Laban’s theory of movement and what curator Peter Eleey (2014) describes as her fixation on a singular action in relation to its trace. Eleey (2014) notes that Brown’s performances engaging full body and marking were directly anticipated by Carolee Schneemann’s *Tracking*, a series of works in which the artist, using the rope connected to the ceiling, “held a chalk in one hand extended, so that changes in weight, position, and movement were charted by the free motion of the hand on the perimeter of the walls and floor it touched” (Schneemann, 1979, p. 227). Although historically significant, this piece does not constitute my point of reference since there is too much freedom in Schneemann’s motions and too little spatial orientation, control and attention to the process and outcome. As Eleey (2014) explains, for Schneemann the body was in the center and the resulting drawing became secondary, while Brown was more interested in movement and its potential for drawing. I expand Brown’s thinking by applying my solo experiments with drawing in the collaborative contexts and searching for the opportunities this brings for my medium. Additionally, my solo experiments resonate with the earlier mentioned works of the classics such as Tom Marioni and Hilka Nordhausen and these artists’ task-based approach to marks. I return to Brown’s, Marioni’s and Nordhausen’s experimentation in the next section, where I contextualize my repertoire of actions for Reciprocal Drawing. Moreover, the collaborative experiments of the second phase, in which I test the reciprocal strategies of performance, are linked to the historical lineage set by Tehching Hsieh. They are additionally contextualized within the Fluxus tradition, because of my application of rules and diagrams. The related discussion also appears the following section.

### 9.3 Reciprocal Drawing in Context

In my research, I apply the following three performative frames in drawing:

- a reciprocal partnering strategy,
- the repertoire of actions (or motifs of exchange) developed based on Laban Movement Analysis, and
- the rules and diagrams (score).

Although these frames have been utilized in collaborative performance drawing before, they have been explored separately. In my research, I first develop them rigorously and then set them together to establish the complex, reciprocal interaction of the two bodies in drawing. Additionally, I argue that from among many partnering strategies of performance, the reciprocal strategies—due to their multidirectionality and qualitative complexity of co-movement—have been the least explored ones in terms of their potential for drawing. In this thesis, a *reciprocal partnering strategy* is understood as a mode of partnered movement in which the two bodies remain in an uninterrupted physical contact and strict interdependence of actions. In this section, I focus on the specificity of Reciprocal Drawing by placing its three distinctive frames as presented above, in the context of different artistic practices. Here, I also further explain why the co-experimentation of my research is unprecedented and how it contributes to the field of performance drawing.

### 9.3.1 Reciprocal partnering strategies

Reciprocal Drawing engages *reciprocal partnering strategies* of binding and point-of-contact which function as foundational frames for the collaborators' exchange on paper. There are multiple strategies of performance utilized in collaborative drawing. Most of them are simply collaborative (like joint accumulating of motifs on surface/s), many are partnering-based, and only a few are partnering-based and reciprocal. Partnering strategies appear in dance and performance, but also in actor's training or martial arts. They assume that the moving partners remain in some form of physical relation to one another. In collaborative drawing, the most commonly applied partnering strategies are mirroring and mimicking, moving in unison, and synchronized movement. In these strategies, the collaborators maintain physical distance from each other. Once utilized in drawing, these strategies are always more challenging than joint accumulating of motifs because the bodies, apart from relating to the drawn traces and chosen surface(s), must also remain in a meaningful relation to each other. In an interview with artist-researcher Brooke Carlson (2017), de Zegher points out how performative contexts may make collaborative drawing a "very challenging and difficult task." (p. 59).

Reciprocal partnering strategies additionally include *the bodies' uninterrupted, direct physical contact and strict interdependence of actions*. The strategies of binding and point-of-contact, tested in my co-experimentation with Ola, Ram and Jaanika, fulfill the criterion of reciprocity. In collaborative drawing, the reciprocity creates dynamic conditions in which one person's action/trace immediately and unconditionally affects the action/trace of the other because of the established continual and tensed contact and/or connection between the marking bodies. Also, certain intimacy that already exists in partnering-based forms of drawing, here is compounded by the presence of the rope and constancy of joint touch. Therefore, the reciprocity adds physical and emotional complexity to the exchange on paper. There is a tangible contrast between just interacting at a distance while drawing (the partnering strategies mentioned above) and drawing in a continuous and strict interdependence of actions (a partnering reciprocal strategy). Both collaborative contexts are performance- and partnering-based, both require divided focus. However, while the former one allows for a large degree of the bodies' autonomy, thus leaving the collaborator's respective traces indirectly affected by another's movement decisions, the reciprocal kind aims at a total interconnectedness and intermeshing of bodily energies and drawing competences of the two people. Once utilized in drawing, the reciprocal strategies demand divided focus, good coordination, awareness of joint spatial aiming and the ways efforts (speed, space, pressure, flow) are exchanged. Therefore, I argue that in the context of drawing, reciprocal strategies are most complex of all partnering strategies and thus require additional framing. Generating, sustaining and understanding the reciprocity in collaborative drawing warrants separate artistic research.

Table 1 (see pp. 78–80, below) is helpful in understanding where Reciprocal Drawing, with its strategies of binding and point-of-contact, is located in relation to other collaborative modes of drawing. The left column lists different performance-based strategies of collaboration applied in drawing. Under the name of each strategy a short description can be found. The middle column presents exemplary works within the field of performance drawing. In the two columns on the right, the headings "P" (partnering) and "R" (reciprocal) make it possible to classify a given strategy respectively. In the table I also divided all listed strategies into three groups according to the time and space relationship within which the collaborative work develops.

Taking this division into account, in the co-experimentation presented in this thesis the collaborator's and my simultaneous effort were being directed at one and the same piece of work (see Tab. 1, group I "Simultaneous Effort / Near Presence"). In the table, the word "space" is understood as the space of the drawn work and not the location. The artistic works exemplifying the strategies are presented in chronological order. The groups and strategies included in the table are by no means exhaustive.

**Table 1.** Classification of performance-based strategies of collaboration in drawing. The table does not present strategies in which collaborative work develops in different time and different space (Consecutive Effort / Remote Presence). These are, for example: sequential drawing, when collaborators draw by progressing through pages of a sketchbook, or passing of work, when collaborators draw between longer time intervals on their separate surfaces, or (re)construction, when collaborators draw on separate works and within individual time to later form new works, archives, maps, etc. With the increase of distance and time between the collaborators' individual actions, their collaborative drawing seems to lose its liveliness and spontaneity characteristic for performance and gains a more conceptual character.

PERFORMANCE-BASED STRATEGIES OF COLLABORATION IN DRAWING	EXAMPLES	P	R
<b>I. A Work Develops Within the Same Time and Space (Simultaneous Effort / Near Presence)</b>			
<b>accumulating/subtracting of motifs</b> within the same work (including real-time drawing aided by technologies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sky vs SKYPE</i> (2011), Maryclare Foá, Jane Grisewood, Birgitta Hosea and Carali McCall: <a href="http://www.birgittahosea.co.uk/pages/Papay.html">http://www.birgittahosea.co.uk/pages/Papay.html</a></li> <li>• <i>Draftmen's Congress</i> (2012), Paweł Althammer: <a href="https://artmuseum.pl/en/archiwum/archiwum-7-berlin-biennale/2056">https://artmuseum.pl/en/archiwum/archiwum-7-berlin-biennale/2056</a></li> <li>• <i>reveal/conceal</i> (2014), Jane Grisewood and Carali McCall: <a href="https://janegrisewood.wordpress.com/2014/11/26/continuations-tbc/">https://janegrisewood.wordpress.com/2014/11/26/continuations-tbc/</a></li> <li>• <i>Eight</i> (2017), Nicole Wendel and Lea Pischke: (<a href="https://www.nicolewendel.de/performance/eight/">https://www.nicolewendel.de/performance/eight/</a>)</li> <li>• <i>(tele)consequences</i> (2018), Paul Sermon and Jeremy Radvan: <a href="https://vimeo.com/261026303">https://vimeo.com/261026303</a></li> <li>• <i>Pollock Re-Enacted</i> (2021), M.Lohrum: <a href="https://www.mlohrum.com/pollock-re-enacted">https://www.mlohrum.com/pollock-re-enacted</a></li> </ul>		
<b>sensory drawing:</b> collaborators draw each other's faces while blindfolded based on the sensation of touch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sensory Dialogues</i> (2016), Kimbal Bumstead: <a href="https://www.kimbalbumstead.com/projects/sensorydrawing">https://www.kimbalbumstead.com/projects/sensorydrawing</a></li> </ul>	√	

<p><b>mirroring:</b> drawing collaborator's motifs as if in a mirror reflection within the same work (including <b>drawing in unison:</b> collaborators perform the same memorized movements)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>what remains and is to come</i> (2012–now), Katrina Brown and Rosanna Irvine (selected moments): <a href="https://www.rosannairvine.com/projects/what-remains-and-is-to-come/">https://www.rosannairvine.com/projects/what-remains-and-is-to-come/</a></li> <li>• <i>The Marks, from The ImpressAbility Project</i> (2013), Kiera O'Toole: <a href="https://vimeo.com/kieraotoole">https://vimeo.com/kieraotoole</a></li> </ul>	✓	
<p><b>synchronized drawing:</b> collaborators draw by adjusting their speed, direction and/or rhythm relative to each other to avoid colliding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Konger action</i> (1984), Artur Tajber and Władysław Kaźmierzak</li> <li>• <i>Line Dialogue</i> series (2007-2019), Jane Grisewood and Carali McCall: <a href="https://www.caralimccall.com/work-no-2-line-drawing">https://www.caralimccall.com/work-no-2-line-drawing</a></li> <li>• <i>Painting by Deconstruction</i> (2013), Vera Martins and Beatriz Tomaz: <a href="https://www.veramartins.net/performances">https://www.veramartins.net/performances</a></li> <li>• <i>Synchronicity/Gathering–Scattering</i> (2016), Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik: <a href="https://agakarasch.com/home/pressure_1/">https://agakarasch.com/home/pressure_1/</a></li> <li>• <i>Corhythm</i> (2018), Nicole Wendel and Audrey Rose Burden: <a href="https://www.nicolewendel.de/performance/corhythm/">https://www.nicolewendel.de/performance/corhythm/</a></li> </ul>	✓	
<p><b>clashing:</b> momentarily, often confrontational coming to contact, collaborators collide with each other on their respective paths</p>	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/>	✓	
<p><b>binding:</b> collaborators draw while being tied to one another with a rope or an elastic band</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sem Titulo (Untitled)</i> (2010), Helena Almeida and Arturo Rosa: <a href="https://vimeopro.com/loopfair/videocloop/video/39822668">https://vimeopro.com/loopfair/videocloop/video/39822668</a></li> <li>• <i>Binding/Rotations</i> series, Agnieszka Karasch and respectively Ola Piechnik (2014) and Ram Samocha (2016): <a href="https://agakarasch.com/home/pressure_1/">https://agakarasch.com/home/pressure_1/</a></li> <li>• <i>Binding/Gathering–Scattering</i> (2019), Agnieszka Karasch and Mailo Štern: <a href="https://agakarasch.com/home/pressure_1/">https://agakarasch.com/home/pressure_1/</a></li> <li>• <i>6 Feet</i> (2021, 2022), M.Lohrum: <a href="https://www.mlohrum.com/6-feet">https://www.mlohrum.com/6-feet</a></li> </ul>	✓	✓
<p><b>point-of-contact:</b> collaborators draw while continually touching each other and exchanging speed, pressure, and/or flow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Point-of–Contact/Extensions–Flexions</i> series (2017) by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna: <a href="https://art-methods.com/home/pressure_1/">https://art-methods.com/home/pressure_1/</a></li> </ul>	✓	✓

PERFORMANCE-BASED STRATEGIES OF COLLABORATION IN DRAWING	EXAMPLES	P	R
<b>II. A Work Develops Within the Same Time and Different Space (Simultaneous Effort / Remote Presence)</b>			
<p><b>accumulating/subtracting of motifs</b> within separate works that constitute components of the whole (including real-time drawing aided by technologies)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>what remains and is to come</i> (2012–now), Katrina Brown and Rosanna Irvine (selected moments): <a href="https://www.rosannairvine.com/projects/what-remains-and-is-to-come/">https://www.rosannairvine.com/projects/what-remains-and-is-to-come/</a></li> <li>• <i>The Drawing Space</i> (2013), Luc Courchesne: <a href="https://vimeo.com/73977108">https://vimeo.com/73977108</a></li> <li>• <i>Sonic</i> (2016), Nava Waxman and Ram Samocha: <a href="https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5eiqxhr9uy4s9yc/AABRcXhNfSOL5Ah1n2Jlpt9Ga?dl=0">https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5eiqxhr9uy4s9yc/AABRcXhNfSOL5Ah1n2Jlpt9Ga?dl=0</a></li> <li>• <i>Chalk Dialogue</i> (2016), Brooke Leigh and Kimvi Nguyen</li> </ul>		
<p><b>mirroring:</b> drawing collaborator's motifs as if in a mirror reflection within separate work that constitutes the component of the whole (including <b>drawing in unison</b>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Live Transmission</i> series (1981–now), Morgan O'Hara: <a href="https://www.morganohara.art/performance">https://www.morganohara.art/performance</a></li> <li>• <i>Mapping Blindfold Slip</i> series (2010), Jane Grisewood and Philip Lee: <a href="https://janegrisewood.wordpress.com/2013/03/01/do-you-remember-it-or-werent-you-there/">https://janegrisewood.wordpress.com/2013/03/01/do-you-remember-it-or-werent-you-there/</a></li> </ul>	✓	
<p><b>binding:</b> collaborators draw while being tied to one another with a rope or elastic band within separate works that constitute the components of the whole</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Drawing Event</i> (1977), Max Dean and Dennis Evans (Schmidlin, 2020)</li> </ul>	✓	✓
<b>III. A Work Develops Within Different Time and the Same Space (Consecutive Effort / Near Presence)</b>			
<p><b>conversation-like drawing:</b> collaborators draw within the same work by taking quick turns (including <b>mimicking:</b> when the motif is imitated)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Drawing Conversations</i> series (2005–2007), Angela Rogers (selected encounters): <a href="https://www.angelarogers.net/work.html">https://www.angelarogers.net/work.html</a></li> <li>• <i>Zirkel 2.0</i> series (2012–ongoing), Vanessa Enriquez and Ilya Noé: <a href="http://www.ilyanoec.com/zirkel2/">http://www.ilyanoec.com/zirkel2/</a></li> </ul>	✓	

I now continue by situating the reciprocal strategies of binding and point-of-contact within their respective historical contexts, comparing the ways other artists have applied them in drawing with the ways I was doing it in this research, and identifying different challenges which these two strategies pose and which my research takes into consideration. Based on this argumentation, the Reciprocal Drawing method is recognized as original and unprecedented. The specific works recalled in this discussion can be viewed in relevant links placed in Table 1 (see pp. 78–80).

As already noted, binding is reciprocal since it imposes the bodies' high interdependence and physical contact. The strategy was famously adopted by Tehching Hsieh and his collaborator Linda Montano in their *Rope Piece* (1983–84), when both artists lived in one apartment for an entire year, tied to each other around the waist with an eight-foot rope. Along with this one, Hsieh realized four other one-year-long performances. In each of them, he conformed to self-imposed rules and limitations<sup>32</sup> (Hsieh, 2021). Although drawing from the *Rope Piece*, my *Binding/Rotations* (2014, 2016) series, described in chapters 13 and 14, were not a direct replay of Hsieh and Montano's strategy. My exchange with Ola and later with Ram took no longer than 30 minutes. Because I wanted to explore the rope's direct influence on our marks, we were connected by our wrists and not waists, and we mainly occupied the horizontal plane. In that respect, we had to work out different ways of moving than those experienced by Hsieh and Montano. Further, along with reciprocity of the bodies observed in Hsieh's piece, I also valued the existential dimension embedded in his rule-based approach and his non-obvious interpretation of life as a form of constraint<sup>33</sup>. In my reception, this best transpires in the *Rope Piece* because, next to life understood as being physically or socially limiting, the piece suggests constraint as an integral element of partnership (Heathfield, 2008). However, it also carries along hope, which makes it closer to how we really experience life and relationships. In our two experiments with Ram, the limitation was re-enacted not only on the corporeal but also on a visual plane. Additionally, the strategy revealed itself to me as the one demanding putting restrictions on one's own omnipotence.

The same strategy appeared in *Drawing Event* from 1977 by artists Max Dean and Dennis Evans, that is six years before Hsieh's famous *Rope Piece*. In that event binding was directly utilized in marking. Connected to each other by their waists with a rope that passed through the gallery wall, both men simultaneously targeted their respective sheets of paper attached to the opposite walls, trying to execute a drawing (Schmidlin, 2020). Besides different duration, plane of movement and points of fixing the rope on the body, my co-experiments with Ola and Ram modify Dean and Evans' utilization of the strategy in twofold ways. Firstly, while Dean and Evans' simulations effort was directed at two different drawings – respectively at *Fine Line* (1977) and *Untitled* (1977), our simultaneous effort was directed at one and the same drawing. This locates Dean and Evans' adaptation of binding and our application thereof in drawing in two different groups of strategies. Theirs in group II "Simultaneous Effort / Remote Presence" and ours in group I "Simultaneous Effort / Near Presence" (cf. Tab. 1, p. 78–80). Secondly, since Dean and Evans' rope was too short to enable each artist reaching his wall, the marking continued for six hours in a tug-of-war type of confrontation leading to exhaustion. In my co-experiments, the rope was handled in ways enabling both collaborators' regeneration and access to the drawing's surface. This modification eased the conflict and harnessed the tensions, thus enabling co-development of a more nuanced form, both in terms of meaning and expression.

<sup>32</sup> These limitations were: solitary confinement in a cell-room, no talking, writing, reading or listening to anybody (*Cage Piece*, 1978–79), punching time cards into an industrial time-clock every day on the hour (*Time Clock Piece*, 1980–81), living without a shelter (*Outdoor Piece*, 1981–82), and full abstinence from art (*No Art Piece*, 1985–86) (Heathfield, 2008; Hsieh, 2021).

<sup>33</sup> Along direct referencing the experience of time and sense of loss caused by impermanence of things, Hsieh speaks of life in terms of limitation, of life as a "life-sentence" (Hsieh, as in VernissageTV, 2017, 1:16 min). For him, the only area where true freedom is possible is the domain of thinking (VernissageTV, 2017).



Hsieh and Montano's strategy strongly resounds in the *Untitled* (2010), a work by another classic of performance art, Helena Almeida. The video documentation shows the artist and her husband Arturo Rosa tied by a plastic-coated wire wrapped around their contacting and adjacent legs. Almeida and Rosa travel back and forth, dragging their bodies between the wall and a video camera for about 20 minutes. The rhythmic and heavy shuffling of their shoes leaves a strip of white strokes, reminiscent of sandpaper scuffs densely laid on the floor. A much more optimistic manifestation of binding could be observed in the important collaborative drawing performance entitled *6 Feet*<sup>34</sup> (2021, 2022), conceived by artist M.Lohrum. In this work, ten participants divided by ten pieces of paper were sitting in a circle and facing towards the outside. They were joined by their wrists with wooden sticks that determined the stable six-foot distance between them. Positioned in this way, the participants were marking the paper as far as they could reach, each driving their neighbour but also letting themselves be driven by them (Strancari, 2022). While M.Lohrum's participants resembled a stable, internally "expanding and contracting" (Strancari, 2022, n.p.) form, Almeida and Rosa's co-movement was internally rigid and one directional. In both cases, however, the strategy was adapted in such ways that it did not allow the participants to influence each other with greater complexity in both spatial and effort-qualitative sense. The records—besides reflecting that qualitative minimalism—were being continually repeated, did not build up to more advanced textures and compositions, and thus carried a rather one-sided perspective on union as a sublime but never-ending torment. Yet another adaptation of binding can be identified in one of the workshops by artist-researcher John McNorton's (2003), when the wrists of his two participants were being tied short and one of them was marking with a pencil along the vertical plane. However, the dynamics which the two participants could have independently worked out in relation to each other and the trace, was being instigated by the choreographer from the outside (see in McNorton, 2003, pp. 55, 59). Taking the above into account, Hsieh's strategy of binding constitutes itself as complex yet still insufficiently tested in terms of its application in drawing.

Point-of-contact, as one of the principles of Contact Improvisation (CI), emerged during the 1970s. Within the performative realm, it facilitated a centreless devising process (Novack, 1990). Nancy Stark Smith (2021), one of the first CI practitioners, compares such negotiations to the dynamics of duet formations such as embracing, wrestling or martial arts. The main contributor to CI, Steve Paxton (1979) so describes its fine character:

[A] mode of movement . . . is relaxed, constantly aware and prepared, and onflowing. . . . [T]he dancers remain in physical touch, mutually supportive and innovative, meditating upon the physical laws relating to their masses: gravity, momentum, inertia, and friction. They do not strive to achieve results, but rather, to meet the constantly changing physical reality with appropriate placement and energy. (p. 26)

Point-of-contact can be identified as a strategy but also more broadly as a principle. It is associated with CI, but similar logic of interaction appears in Grotowski's actor training described in the "Introduction" chapter or some ballroom dances in which the joint moving is about maintaining *tension* between the two partners' hands. As the most nuanced of all the partnering strategies considered in Table 1 (pp. 78–80), point-of-contact

<sup>34</sup> *6 Feet* (2022) by M.Lohrum was shortlisted for the Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize 2022 and the ING Discerning Eye Exhibition 2021. The work was first performed in Santa Cruz de Tenerife in 2021 and then re-performed at the Trinity Buoy Wharf in London in 2022. It was performed during the Covid-19 global pandemic and alluded to the phenomenon of social distancing. It questioned the notion of authorship and the individualistic attitude by emphasizing the value of collectivity (M.Lohrum, 2022).

requires of its practitioners a relatively constant staying in touch, high directional and qualitative complexity of shared movement as well as uninterrupted sensitivity to diverse signals coming from the partner's body. Distantly echoing point-of-contact is the "active-passive drawing,"<sup>35</sup> one of the *Creativity Exercises* by two artists and pedagogues, Dóra Maurer and Miklós Erdély who led an experimental drawing course under the same name in Budapest in the 1970s. In this exercise, many participants would sit next to each other, each directly holding and leading their partner's marking hand by the wrist while letting the partner be held/led by them. Applications of point-of-contact in drawing seen by me so far—primarily in simplified, pedagogical settings—resemble the active-passive drawing promoted by Maurer and Erdély. And similarly to the marks elicited by their students, these applications reflect only partial understanding of the strategy. The marks, unrefined in shape and quality, often mechanical and reduced to many repetitions within a relatively narrow spatial range, hardly ever undergo transformation or amass more complex records. This relative poverty has its source in the absence of the additional frames – the pre-defined gestural motif(s) which the collaborators could jointly interpret and/or the score (the rules and diagrams) which could suggest the collaborators' spatial aiming and so imbue their movement relation with sense. In improvised partnered movement, the motif is like a subject in a discussion and the spatial aiming like the discussion's purpose. Once these components are missing from reciprocal moving and drawing, the interaction may feel pointless and its records uninspiring. Further, what comes forth as equally troubling in the applications of point-of-contact seen by me so far is the collaborators' lack of understanding of the strategy's "core movement values" (Novack, 1990, p. 115). Without this understanding the co-marking has no organization typical of the strategy-specific style. To clarify, point-of-contact is not as simple as one person being active by holding another by the wrist and another passively surrendering. Instead, as author Cynthia Novack (1990) explains, the yielding partner remains continually alert and ultra-sensitive to the leading partner's motions by changing the point of touch, counterbalancing, supporting and giving the effort back to them to generate the movement-propelling *tension* between the bodies. As Laban pointed out, this tension is experienced in the body as self-movement that is consciously guided and controlled, usually evolving on a straight line and aiming at an increased precision of form (Gleisner and Ullman, as in Maletic, 1987). What's more, the passivity—if occurring—is never constant like in an inanimate object. Rather, it is a transitional component of the "overarching duality" (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 130) of part/whole characteristic of human movement. In that respect, passivity is experienced within one's body as a release – the initial spatial contraction of the body, gathering of its energy towards the center in order to prepare (*Anschwung*) for a subsequent exertion (*Ausschwung*) in a form of lashing, swinging, thrusting or gliding (Studd & Cox, 2013). Without practitioners' understanding of these core movement values, achieved based on "kin-aesthetic empathy" (Parviainen, 2003, p. 151) and heightened "bodily awareness" (Parviainen, 2002, p. 16), point-of-contact loses its dialogic potential in drawing. It misses that inventiveness referenced by Paxton (1979), which in shared drawing translates to poverty of marks. For, the yielding hand—if conventionally passive—eventually always puts a mental and physical strain on the leading person's actions, thus numbing the quality, shape and spatial range of the trace. Laban explained that strain as a stress resulting from one-sidedness of experienced effort factors. For him, movement is ideally experienced as a synthesis of antithetic factors, which is reflected in the overall harmony of the moving form (Connolly & Lathrop, 1997; Maletic, 1987). As Foá and her colleagues (2022) confirm, in effort-oriented drawing processes the body is never

<sup>35</sup> Name and description of the exercise is retrieved from the exhibition *Creativity Exercises*, curated by Dóra Hegyi and Zsuzsa László at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Warsaw (Poland) in 2016, <https://artmuseum.pl/en/wystawy/cwiczenia-z-kreatywnosci>

completely passive. Instead, the artist displays their own agency in relation to the work. Finally, equally underexplored in collaborative drawing is the strategy-specific immediate bodily response enabled by pivoting of hands around each other, flowing through segments of another's arm, gaining momentum, or feeling the movement from the inside. The influence of these co-operations on marks had been explored by me in the *Point-of-contact/Extensions-Flexions* series (2017), co-performed with Jaanika Peerna and described in chapter 14 of the "Description of the Experimentation" part III of the thesis.

Unless line is highly conceptualized, as in the work by Carali McCall and Jane Grisewood in which the artists were connected by ten meters of latex band but nothing was visibly drawn<sup>36</sup>, or when partners mark in conventional ways by the table and on small formats, adaptation of reciprocal strategies to drawing constitutes a challenge for the minds and bodies. This is because here partners are constantly dependant on one another and move within all levels and planes, which results with complex operations of shaping the bodies, rolling, passing, and evading each other. Once coordination is already a challenge, an additional focus on marks may seem pointless to the collaborators and, once attempted, their actions may result with what Trisha Brown describes referencing unstructured movement as "all these strange marks that [don't] add up to anything" (Brown, as cited in Désirens, 1998, p. 30).

Artist and researcher Angela Rogers (2008), author of the collaborative Drawing Encounters method, practically knows the principles of Contact Improvisation and so describes her impressions from CI dance-workshops: "I had to put a lot of effort into not falling over which made spontaneous movement difficult and left me feeling very tired" (p. 58). One of Rogers' (2008) encounters developed according to CI. However, in her thesis the uninterrupted contact between the hands, typical of the CI movement, is neither documented nor precisely described for the reader to identify the dependencies between the application of point-of-contact and the resultant drawing. In her research findings, Rogers (2008) acknowledges the necessity of a more complex approach to CI-based exchange in drawing and more in-depth consideration of its principles with research participants. In my research, I respond to the demands set by Rogers (2008) by establishing the appropriate criteria in my choice of the collaborators and by developing suitable frames – the LMA-based repertoire of actions and the score (rules and diagrams) that facilitate the reciprocal exchange. These frames not only reduce the coordination-related challenges described in this paragraph, but also eliminate the earlier discussed problems such as absence of spatial aiming and lack of awareness as to the ways effort is exchanged.

### 9.3.2 The repertoire of actions for Reciprocal Drawing

In the solo phase of my experimentation, I focused on developing the *repertoire of actions* (or *motifs*) for the Reciprocal Drawing co-experiments of the subsequent phase. I based on the descriptive body category of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA). When reviewing the LMA actions and their corresponding traces, I attempted to adopt each of them to the two-dimensional horizontal plane. I also employed the LMA effort category to consider how my effort in movement recorded on paper. This thinking about interdependence between line, space and the body's movement was strongly visible in

<sup>36</sup> Radical conceptual approach can be observed in the work by Carali McCall and Jane Grisewood, performed at the Drawing Research Network Conference in Lisbon in 2011. The artists moved through space while being connected to each other by 10 metres of latex band tied around their waists. They mimicked the movements of drawing on the ancient tiles, yet nothing was being visibly drawn (<https://drawtogether.wordpress.com/2011/10/14/pictures-from-the-sense-of-drawing-an-approach-to-drawing-marking-and-experiencing-time/>).

the 19070's works of the conceptual artist Tom Marioni (Foá et al., 2022). His was the Zen-inspired idea of drawing circles with the whole arm stretched, so frequently reproduced in contemporary performance drawing. Besides arm rotations, Marioni also traced his arm's extensions or thrusting movements while sitting, crouching, walking, running, or jumping<sup>37</sup> (Guggenheim Museum, 2016; Tanner, 2007). When testing the LMA actions, I imposed a fixed time limit and photographed myself from above like the artist Hilka Nordhausen who documented her *Untersuchungen zur Handreichweite*<sup>38</sup> (1974) in similar ways (Schmidlin, 2020). This photographing documented the specific sequencing of each single action and the phases of its trace's emergence (see chapter 12 of Part Three). My developed repertoire contains selected actions from which the collaborators may co-develop complex sequences of drawn records. The repertoire can be found in Table 2 on pages 144–145.

My adaptation of Laban's movement theory links my research to early experiments with drawing conducted by Trisha Brown in the 1960s and 1970s. Eeley (2014) notes that it is then that Brown turned to Labanotation. She compared gestures with letters: Just as letters can be used to form words and sentences, for her gestures constituted a "corporeal vocabulary" (n.p.) from which she composed an entire phrase of movement. In her first notebooks from 1973, she tried to identify her "primary structures" (Eeley, 2014, n.p.) of simple lines and shapes corresponding with motions, while her quadrant drawings were like an exhaustive review of "every schematic possibility in a given form" (Eeley, 2014, n.p.). In the *Locus* notebook (1975), Brown drew Labanotation-inspired diagrams depicting trajectories and accrual of the body's actions to better explain her choreography and perform it with other dancers in three dimensions (Eeley, 2014; Goldberg, 1979/1988)<sup>39</sup>. As writer Susan Rosenberg (2016) clarifies, this rigour and systematicity allowed Brown to develop serial production of "memorized improvisations" on stage (Brown, as cited in Rosenberg, 2016, p. 183). Although Laban Movement Analysis and Labanotation are not the same tools, my interest in LMA's body category has the same roots as Brown's interest in Labanotation. For both of us they were instruments that organized our actions and allowed methodical building of spontaneous yet consistent improvisations. However, our practices also differ. While Brown treated her drawn primary structures and quadrant drawings as a preparation for and an extension of her solo and group stage-dances (Eeley, 2014), my LMA-based repertoire and the diagrams served to generate the collaboratively moved and drawn form. Eeley (2014) points out that it was not until the 1990s that Brown began to consider the direct relationship of the entire body to the plane of paper and thus steer away from the functionality of her drawing towards it being in focus. In these later works, including *It's a Draw/Live Feed*, Labanotation ceased to be the direct base for her practice. However, there still exists that mixture of spontaneity and "limitation in the structure" (Brown, as cited in Banes, 1993, p. 20) which I value in the artistic process.

Conscious application of movement theories by artists trained in the disciplines of visual arts had not been so common as the application of drawing by trained dancers (Branigan, 2022), such as Brown. Dancer and scholar, John Harries (1975) attempted to formulate a universal notation system for visual arts. In his view, such a system should provide the means for describing visual aspects of a work, facilitate communication, formulation and execution of concepts, and permit their recording and transmission.

<sup>37</sup> At that time in Europe similar experiments were undertaken by the classic of Polish performance art Zbigniew Warpechowski in his *Drawing in the Corner* from 1971 (Warpechowski, 1998). However, due to their strong political underpinning they are not considered in this research.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.hilkanordhausen.de/index-q=node-151.html>

<sup>39</sup> In the 1970s, drawn notations were also utilized by other dancers and choreographers to devise stage performances, among them Laura Dean (*Circle Dance*, 1972) or Lucinda Childs (*Congeries on Edges for 20 Obliques*, 1975) (Goldberg, 1979/1988).

Although similar in terms of definition, my repertoire has different foundations than Harries' notation system. In comparison, I have developed the repertoire to facilitate the Reciprocal Drawing method and not to claim the repertoire's universality. Besides that, when developing the repertoire I did not base—like Harries—on notations, that is specific shapes reflecting motions, offered by Labanotation or the analogous EWMN<sup>40</sup>. Instead, I employed the LMA's descriptive category of body and worked towards interpreting its separate actions by marking within the two-dimensional plane. Since my repertoire operates with LMA-derived verbs rather than Labanotation shapes, it better correlates with drawing's performative dimension.

Currently, artists trained in visual art disciplines are more likely to employ movement theories for their solo drawing projects. Within the field of performance drawing, clear examples are Nicolas Gansterer's *Embodied Diagrams* series<sup>41</sup> (2014–2018), Nava Waxman's *Green Polyphonies* (2016) and *Blue Gestures*<sup>42</sup> (2020), or Nicole Wendel's *Space Notation* series<sup>43</sup> (2018). Also, the singular body actions as LMA describes them have been freely interpreted and recorded on paper by many performers for their specific reasons. However, it is not clear to what extent, if at all, have these performers been drawing upon LMA or any other movement theory. Among numerous examples are, listed here by the singular LMA actions: (a) gathering–scattering: M.Lohrum's *Lunar Eclipse* from *Tracing Out* series<sup>44</sup> (2018), Kimvi Nguyen's *Drawing Posture* (2015/2018), Ram Samocha's *No Peace*<sup>45</sup> series (2009); (b) extensions–flexions: Shoshanah Ciechanowski's *Mynameis*<sup>46</sup> (2014–now), Rachel Grant's *Draw the Line*<sup>47</sup> (2016), Marega Palser's *Extracts* (2016), Jaanika Peerna's *Glacier Elegy* series<sup>48</sup> (2016–now), Ram Samocha's *Blood Work*<sup>49</sup> (2010); (c) jump: Tony Orrico's *Penwald: 6: project, recoil*<sup>50</sup> (2016); Ram Samocha's *Temple* (2017); (d) rotations: Nicole Collins' *Giotto's O*<sup>51</sup> (2013), Vanessa Enriquez and her Zen-inspired exercises of clearing the mind from 2015, Carali McCall's *Work no. 1 Circle Drawing*<sup>52</sup> (2004–2022), Syed M. Zakir's *Kplxtn, summer, 2886* (2018); (e) travelling: Katrina Brown's *3 Em[bed]ding Circle*<sup>53</sup> (2014–now), John Court's *Untitled*<sup>54</sup> (2016), Jane Grisewood's *Mourning Lines*<sup>55</sup> (2005–now), M.Lohrum's *Long Jump, Blind Monkey's Buff*<sup>56</sup> (2017), Didier Morelli's *White men making white smoke: more or less*<sup>57</sup> (2012), Ulay's *Invisible Opponent* (2016); (f) change of level support: Matěj Frank's *Spaces*<sup>58</sup> (2015, 2018), or River Lin's *Long River Walk* (2016).

<sup>40</sup> For his system, Harries (1975) adopted the Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation (EWMN). Specifically, he generated a range of planar shapes by directly flattening the EWMN's 3-dimensional forms and 2-dimensional shapes onto the paper.

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.gansterer.org/choreo-graphic\\_figures\\_embodied-diagrams/?n=5](http://www.gansterer.org/choreo-graphic_figures_embodied-diagrams/?n=5)

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.navawaxman.com/installation/polyphony-2016>, <https://www.navawaxman.com/installation/variations-on-blue-gestures>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.nicolewendel.de/drawing/space-notation/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.mlohrum.com/2018>

<sup>45</sup> [http://www.samocho.com/art/performance/no\\_peace.html](http://www.samocho.com/art/performance/no_peace.html)

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.shoshici.com/mynameis>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.vanessarosalialarsen.com/Drawing-Through-Process-1>

<sup>48</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctZBVurg9yU&list=PL51OzmohasQ4k2hN7SIH7JV\\_k\\_nn6iim0&index=10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctZBVurg9yU&list=PL51OzmohasQ4k2hN7SIH7JV_k_nn6iim0&index=10)

<sup>49</sup> [http://www.samocho.com/art/performance/blood\\_work.html](http://www.samocho.com/art/performance/blood_work.html)

<sup>50</sup> <https://tonyorrico.com/penwald-drawings/archive/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://ago.ca/exhibitions/nicole-collins-giottos-o>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.caralimccall.com/work-no-1-circle-drawing>

<sup>53</sup> <https://katrinabrown.net/project/3-embedding-circle/>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.johncourtnow.com/2017-2013.html>

<sup>55</sup> <https://janegrisewood.wordpress.com/2014/03/16/mourning-lines/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.mlohrum.com/2017>

<sup>57</sup> <https://didiermorelli.com/White-men-making-white-smoke-more-or-less>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.matejfrank.com/indoor>

Explorations of the combined body actions are detectable in all the geometrical solo works of Heather Hansen, for example *The Value of a Line*<sup>59</sup> (2013) and in Tony Orrico's performances, for example *Penwald* series<sup>60</sup> (2009–13).

Considering the above works, I do not claim innovation or originality when testing the singular LMA actions in drawing. Much like Brown's primary structures for her dancers or Grotowski's body's alphabet for his actors, the singular actions of my repertoire are ordinary actions explored in performance drawing. It is rather the purpose of contact-imposing Reciprocal Drawing that makes my repertoire unique. When selected from the repertoire, the actions are like motifs in a discussion, they imbue the reciprocal drawn interaction with sense and purpose. My accomplishment then lies not in "vernacularization" (Eleey, 2014, n.p.) of drawing but in a belief that drawing and the most complex forms of partnered movement can co-exist. Additionally, this happens for both collaborators in the same space and time. In comparison, Vanessa Enriquez and Ilya Noé employ a selected Labanotation shape in their collaborative work *Zirkel*<sup>61</sup> (2012), yet they assume a partnering strategy which Rogers (2008) compares to casual conversation (see group III "Consecutive Effort / Near Presence," Tab. 1, pp. 78–80): The artists take turns drawing, thus never coming to contact to simultaneously co-interpret the motif.

### 9.3.3 Score – the rules and diagrams

Now that the reciprocal partnering strategies and the repertoire of actions have been clarified, I situate the third frame of Reciprocal Drawing, the *score* in its practical and theoretical context. Each collaborative action of my research was initiated according to a set of rules accompanied by a diagram. These were not stylistic rules but rather proposed a general development of the co-action. This instruction-based orientation in performance art is derived from the conceptualist tradition established by the Fluxus, a loose community of artists active in the 1960s and 1970s. In the Fluxus tradition, the rules for performance have been called a score since similarly to musical score they were meant to be loosely reinterpreted by other members of the group (Järvinen, 2017). The rules constituted "a conceptual scaffolding that provided focus and direction to a given performative work" (Helguera, 2016, n.p.). Score was usually presented in the form of texts, drawings, graphic notations, and/or diagrams (Foá et al., 2022; Johnson, 2020). Artist and scholar Tero Nauha (2017) describes such a task-oriented performing as a process of confusion and modulation, understood as oppositional to molding. For him, a reiterated performance aims at difference and repetition at the same time.

Referencing the development of performative co-practices involving drawing, Foá, Grisewood, Hosea, and McCall (2022) highlight the importance of score-based method of production, specifically the scores of the Fluxus members John Cage – *Untitled Black Mountain Piece* (1952) and *4'33"* (1952), George Brecht – *Event Scores* (1959–1962), Alison Knowles – *#5 Street Piece* (1962), Yoko Ono – *22 Instructions for Paintings* (late 1950s and 60s), Cornelius Cardew – *Treatise* (1963–67), La Monte Young – *Composition 1960* series, or Nam June Paik – *Zen for Head*<sup>62</sup> (1962). An example involving drawing and referring directly to Fluxus tradition is the ARC: *I draw for you*<sup>63</sup> (2010) by Foá, Grisewood, Hosea, and McCall. In this work, the instructions were conceived by many

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.heatherhansen.net/film>

<sup>60</sup> <https://tonyorrico.com/penwald-drawings/archive/>

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.ilyano.com/zirkel/>

<sup>62</sup> Nam June Paik's *Zen for Head* was an interpretation of Young's score.

<sup>63</sup> ARC is an abbreviation for "Action Relayed Collaboration" (Foá et al., 2022, p. 92).



international artists and prior to the performance. During the action, the four artists responded to these instructions independently by combing charcoal and graphite mark-making with light, sound and animation. At moments, also the audience members were invited to participate and some of them came up with unexpected interpretations.

The recent revival of instruction-based artworks is attributed by curator Miwon Kwon (2003) to the social need of experiencing the logic of what she calls “the gift economy” (p. 85). In these experiences the artwork functions as “a mechanism to investigate social . . . interactions that specifically put into motion a circuit of obligation and reciprocity, typically involved in giving, receiving or accepting, and giving in return” (Kwon, p. 85). In such conditions, authorship is actively shaped by the artist and participant on the way of mutual balancing of each other’s roles during the creative process. In section “Drawing the Limits of Freedom” of the “Thematic Interpretation” part, I elaborate on this logic in relation to the Reciprocal drawing act. Along with authorship, authenticity of the marks in a score-based artwork should be considered. Referencing drawings, Foá and her colleagues (2022) make a distinction between the autographic and the allographic. The first one is characteristic of a work in which a personal, signature style of its author’s hand is clearly visible. The second one is specific to works that have been designed or scored to be made by another. This distinction has been originally highlighted by the philosopher Nelson Goodman (1968) in relation to painting as being “autographic” and music and performance as being “allographic” (p. 113), whereby the main criterion of distinction is the possibility of the artwork’s forgery. Since my collaborator’s actions were not attempts to accurately reproduce my solo drawings but referred to the diagram (the score), the marks drawn by him/her had an allographic, performative quality and therefore are authentic.

Drawing attention to *ARC: I draw for you* and other Fluxus-inspired performative practices, Foá and her colleagues (2022) turn to Stuart Hall’s (1999) model of communication and explain collaborative performance drawing as a specific communicative exchange open to a variety of interpretations. Hall (1999) developed his model to describe the complex, four-stages process of broadcasting information through mass media. In this process, the separate stages take place in different time and/or space, and the receiver’s interpretation of messages is never fully determined by the producer due to the former’s access to multiple social and cultural contexts. In this vein, Foá et al. (2022) highlight the unique order of some collaborative drawing processes where one artist, as the conceiver of an idea, encodes their intention in a score but withdraws from its interpretation nor does s/he physically intervene in the participant’s conduct, by which the conceiver stays open to a variety of (mis-)interpretations.

Each co-experimentation of my research involves a score in form of text-based rules that propose the initiating action from the repertoire and define our ways of moving but also of handling the involved materials. Additionally, a diagram proposes our starting locations and the general directional aiming. These diagrams are drawn from my large-scale solo drawings prepared in advance for the purpose of each collaboration. Unlike most Fluxus members or the artists involved in *ARC: I draw for you*, I as the author of the score aim at what Hall (1999) describes as the effective translation of the decoded messages into the social practice. Further, when in co-action, I both physically engage in my score’s interpretation and utilize my collaborator’s understanding thereof. These operations are not separated in time but happen almost simultaneously, which in principle brings Reciprocal Drawing closer to the musical compositions of Cornelius Cardew whose scores, encoded in abstract shapes, were meant to be loosely interpreted by more than one person in unity of time, place and medium. As I explained in the subsection 9.3.1 referencing the strategies, such a unity was also



my intention in relation to collaborative drawing. Much like I did, Cardew aspired to a certain logic within his scores which, when followed by more than one individual at once, would enable merging of the many musical improvisations into one coherent structure (Foá et al., 2022). In this way, individual participants related to each other instead of remaining a collection of unrelated solos. Additionally, my approach to the diagram has some similarity to La Monte Young's approach, since he also performed his own scores in a solo manner. Different is, however, that I later re-performed my diagram with the collaborator.

An interesting approach to the rules is represented by performance artist Zygmunt Piotrowski, a co-founder of the collective Black Market International. For him, collaborative performance is above everything else about performers' consciousness of the rules, their joint engagement in the game, and intelligent fight for seizing the initiative within the conditions of the established rules. This includes their conscious breaking (Piotrowski, 1989; Z. Piotrowski, personal communication, October 8, 2001). In the Evaluation subsections under the binding-related performative co-experiments, I use Piotrowski's logic to reflect about the dynamics between Ram and I in terms of gaining the upper hand over the developments on paper. Piotrowski concludes that success in collaborative actions happens when a performer acts to benefit the sum of the others' actions despite drawing the audience's attention to himself. To make this logic more understandable, he speaks of one's playing in relation to the *foreground*. In my co-experimentation, the foreground was constituted by my collaborator and the structures developing within the paper plane. Importantly, Piotrowski is not concerned with the intensity of actions in the sphere of bodily expression but with acting from "the level of emanation" (Z. Piotrowski, personal communication, October 8, 2001). As he explains, the point is to subtly minimize one's own physical activity to direct one's mental focus outward (not to be confused with meditation which is about inward focus). In my case, acting from the level of emanation was impossible due to the physical co-dependency and coercion to take action, imposed by the reciprocal strategy. Despite the differences, I value Piotrowski's reasoning as it stresses the agency of the collaborators, their individual capacity to shape the collaborative process according to their own preferences while being able to maintain meaningful relations, which counterposes the idea of withdrawal from the score's interpretation described earlier. My entire conversation with Piotrowski (in Polish) is published under this link: <https://agakarasch.com/category/zygmunt-piotrowski/>.

Considering the above differences, perhaps most appropriate for explaining Reciprocal Drawing is the "transactional model of communication" (p. 47) introduced by the scholar Dean Barnlund (2008). From its perspective, both drawers-collaborators are *simultaneously* involved in sending and receiving messages to one another. In that respect, they are both communicators rather than a sender and a receiver. In transactional communication there is little time for reflection. The interaction is dynamic and continuous, and the meaning is produced in response to internal cues (sensations, emotions, thoughts) and external cues (actions, gestures, expressions, distance, etc.) (Lapum et al., 2020; Narula, 2006). Additionally, unlike in most Fluxus-related practices, both collaborators are responsible for the effectiveness and effect and of this process, because the aim of transactional exchange—as some scholars report—is to reduce uncertainty, develop self-understanding and form relationship (Lapum et al., 2020).

Nine years ago, in my essay entitled *Performative Drawing. A Form of Communication*<sup>64</sup> (2014), I used Barnlund's (2008) model to signal the possibility of such an immediacy of communication in drawing. I based on a couple examples that came as close as possible

<sup>64</sup> Original title: *Performatives Zeichnen. Eine Form der Kommunikation* (2014).

to this model, one of them being the collaborative *Line Dialogue VI*<sup>65</sup> (2013), a durational live performance by Grisewood and McCall. Moving towards each other from the opposite directions along the wall, the two artists recorded their respective trajectories. While McCall's task was to move with her arm outreached and mark with a graphite at her utmost height, Grisewood was repeating her last line drawn and extending it downwards using charcoal. To pass each other without taking their hands off the paper, McCall was fully stretching her body and Grisewood curling up (Foá et al., 2022). These both operations were happening in the same moment (see synchronized movement in group I "Simultaneous Effort / Near Presence," Tab. 1, pp. 78–80). In that respect, my co-experimentation aligns with Grisewood and McCall's performance because in both cases what came into play was an action–action rather than action–reaction mode of collaborative drawing. Transactional drawing fills the interaction with dramatism and unpredictability making the lines, textures and compositional structures prone to unplanned fluctuations. The reciprocal partnering strategies of binding and point-of-contact, selected by me for the co-experimentation, facilitate transactional drawing but also add fierceness and conflict to the exchange due to the bodies' co-dependence of actions. This may have a destructive influence on the visual structures.

#### 9.4 Physicality and Resistance in Reciprocal Drawing

Among the many partnering strategies applied in drawing, the reciprocal ones allow to explore the concept of *resistance*. It is closely linked to the overarching concept of "physicality" (p. 45) highlighted by Foá and her colleagues (2022) as one of the main areas of inquiry within the field of performance drawing. Exemplifying physicality, they point to the works in which performing subject's physical and mental challenge, effort, resistance, endurance and/or conditioning provide a context for the marking process. Importantly, this orientation has developed due to the incorporation of sports and physically challenging discipline of dance into the field of drawing. Therefore, physicality-oriented artistic processes may also include struggle and pain<sup>66</sup>. Among the works historically important for this perspective have been Tehching Hsieh's *One Year Performances* (1978–1986) including his collaborative *Rope Piece* (1983–84), for its conduct demanded from the engaged artists mental and physical endurance (Foá et al., 2022). Another way of experiencing resistance can be observed in Matthew Barney's solo series *Drawing Restraint 1–6* (1987–1989). In these works, Barney built elaborate structures consisting of props and ramps that he climbed to make contact with the walls. He frequently overcame these routes while being fastened by harness or bungee cord to the floor, which had a limiting function (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2010) and "frustrate[ed] the ease of drawing" (Foá et al., 2022, p. 49). In performance drawing, other exemplary works of this kind of orientation are *DRAWN* (2016) by Stuart Brisley, *Work no. 1 Circle Drawing* series (2004–2022) by Carali McCall, or *Two-Legged Idleness, Untaped* (2013–14) by Robert Luzar. In the last piece, physicality is approached from a different angle – as a method that elicits "a quietness and stillness, as well as inner sensibility" (Foá et al., 2022, p. 46). I return to these works in the "Thematic Interpretation" part.

The presence of the taut rope, the resistance-oriented approach and readiness for a challenge establish links between Barney's *Drawing Restraint* series and my co-experiments with the strategy of binding. The difference between Barney's and my approach rests in the very nature of resistance. While in his actions resistance is static

<sup>65</sup> <https://drawntogether.wordpress.com/2019/07/24/line-dialogue-vi-2013/>

<sup>66</sup> As Foá et al. (2022) note, physicality-oriented works are distinct from "body art" as the field that elicits bodily materials and the artist's ability to suffer flesh-like pain.

and controllable, in my co-experiments, resistance has a reversible character – it changes dynamically according to the bodies’ determination in reaching their individual goals in space. Taking the above difference into account, the challenge in Reciprocal Drawing is not about reaching the target in spite of the rope’s restraint, as in Barney’s series, or executing one’s own drawing at the expense of another’s drawing, as in Dean and Evans’ *Drawing Event* (1977) described earlier, but about creating the best collaborative dynamic to execute the spatial directives of the diagram while also responding to one’s own projection thereof. This sometimes involves mental effort and stress.

In Reciprocal Drawing, resistance is closely related in function to the earlier mentioned tension, which Novack (1990) brings up when describing point-of-contact. Both resistance and tension are actively and consciously generated by the collaborators to propel their co-movement. As physical properties, they both transpire in diverse ways through the expansive visual structures emanating in all directions of the paper plane. In section “The Reversible Resistance” of the “Thematic Interpretation” part, this specific kind of resistance is identified as such. The term “reversible” is derived from Merleau-Ponty’s (1964/1968) concept of “reversibility” (p. 263) of the body and the world, which is synonymous with *reciprocity*.

As Foá et al. (2022) reveal, in many physicality-oriented projects the artist identifies themselves as an “athlete” (Barney, as in San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2010, 1:32 min) and recognizes the importance of training to facilitate the artistic process. Also, the adaptation of the reciprocal strategies to drawing does not occur effortlessly. Especially the binding exposed itself as demanding repeated training towards greater mobility and fluency of the jointly moved and drawn form. Therefore, the strategy is accessible mainly to those who, like Ola and Ram, welcome high physical exertion. In addition to the heightened awareness of the exchanged efforts, the collaborators engaged in Reciprocal Drawing are expected to have good cardiac endurance, be well-coordinated and prepared to experience mental and physical struggle on paper.

## 9.5 Studies Engaging Collaborative Drawing

In this section I explain how my research is linked with other research projects engaging collaborative drawing. For the last 20 years collaborative drawing, understood as a joint effort engaging drawing, a state of having shared interests, or the activity of a number of persons who individually contribute towards the efficiency of the drawing-based project, has been broadly researched. One of the prominent initiatives within this field is the *Drawing Conversations* (2015, 2018), held at the Coventry University. The symposium’s discussions highlighted the potential of collaborative drawing to capture social narratives and histories (Gørrill et al., 2020; Journeaux & Gørrill, 2017). Based on the publications following both symposiums as well as other relevant sources, I identified some core thematic areas around which the research on collaborative drawing evolves. These are: issues of dialogue and communication, authorship and ownership, and an individual in a society or partnership (Brew & Journeaux, 2017; Harty & Sawdon, 2016; McNorton, 2003) with a spotlight on tensions, including conflict, control, and ego shifts (Baker & Foster, 2017; McNorton, 2003; Rogers, 2008)<sup>67</sup>. In this vein, Angela Rogers (2008) highlights anxieties expressed by her participants about the loss of control over the process as well as a power struggle to dominate the developments on paper. My co-experiments with the reciprocal strategies also exposed tensions, conflict and fight for control over the process and, much like Rogers,

<sup>67</sup> Other projects acknowledge joint drawing as a communal, cultural, political (Shepley, 2017; Stokes, 2017), or medical (Wright, 2017) experience.

Drawing in collaboration has also proven an incentive to tackle problems pertaining to decolonization (Renwick, 2006) or design tasks (Gedenryd, 1998).

I link these anxieties to a broader relational–societal dimension. Yet, unlike her, in my research I utilize the collaborative drawings resulting from the co–creative processes to visualize these tensions. In contrast to Rogers, academics and artists Catherine Baker and Kimberley Foster (2017) deliberately harness conflict as a driving force of their drawing–based exchange, and their productions visibly retain “the uncomfortable nature of impact” (p. 141). However, Baker and Foster (2017) achieve this effect through exchanging individual works by post – a rather conceptual than performance–based, embodied strategy that my research takes into account (compare the strategies in Tab. 1, pp. 78–80). Therefore, in an unprecedented way my LMA–based analysis followed by phenomenological analysis of my co–experiments reveal the bodily roots of tensions accompanying collaborative drawing. In “Thematic Interpretation,” they are explained as an opportunity, that is the integral, empowering component of the social, collaborative, “postconsensual” (Ruhsam, 2016, p. 75) practice. In the same part of the thesis, the tensions are discussed from an ethical angle. In this way, my research significantly expands understanding of these tensions as presented by the above research projects. Furthermore, when my study points to the potential of collaborative drawing to break through one’s habitual behaviours and formal mannerisms and to enhance one’s expressive capacities, it aligns with Rogers’ (2008) but also John McNorton’s (2003) research. With this, the study directs attention to the bodies’ joint movement and direct physical contact as a source of these opportunities and links them to a broader concept of “creativity” (Erdély, 2020, p. 100) that is lived collaboratively through visuality. Next, what is unprecedented about my investigation is the scrutiny with which I develop the frames and the specific ways in which the collaborators move to mark in strict co–dependence. This need for scrutiny of the collaborative process is evident in the *Drawing Conversations* symposium discussions. The editors and co–authors of the publications following the symposium conclude that while research in the field treats collaborative drawing as an element to open social dialogue, the “need for further research into the approaches that individuals use to negotiate and create collaborative drawings” (Journeaux & Gørrill, 2017, p. 5) is still not sufficiently satisfied. My observation is similar. Most projects utilize collaborative drawing and its products to refer to the “internal,” social, philosophical or political phenomena and approach the “external” (Zimna, 2010, p. 94) practical aspect, that is the very strategies that evoke certain effects and bring the drawings to life, with insufficient rigour. My artistic research vitally concerns this deficiency.

In considering the external, practical aspect of collaborative drawing, I most align with Rogers’ (2008) and McNorton’s (2003) practice–led investigations. Rogers (2008) explores the dialogic potential of her “Drawing Encounters”<sup>68</sup> (p. 1) method. In this method, a connection between strangers is facilitated by drawing rather than speech. Much like me, Rogers (2008) pays attention to the frames of the collaborative process – the strategies, motifs and “rules of engagement” (Rogers, 2008, p. 79). However, the main difference between Rogers’ development of Drawing Encounters and my development of Reciprocal Drawing is that Rogers (2008) engineered her encounters based on the symbolic “visual representations of connection” (p. 80) (e.g., the “u” or “v” mark, dotting or other forms of decoration), while I preserved the body, its movement and Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) as foundational in designing my co–experiments. My inclusion of LMA as the basis for the gestural motifs enabled to establish links between the collaborative movement that consisted of these motives, the finalized drawings, and the “levels of consciousness” (Maletic, 1987, p. 100) – different *states*

<sup>68</sup> Elsewhere, Rogers (2006) calls her method “Drawing Conversation” (p. 1), because in her method two persons’ interaction on paper is about taking turns, like in a casual talk. Also, see Table 1 “Classification of performance–based strategies of collaboration in drawing,” group III “Consecutive Effort / Near Presence,” on pages 78–80.

and *drives* that accompanied their production. In her research findings, Rogers (2008) admits that she hoped to evidence this direct relationship “between the appearance of a completed drawing and the nature of the encounter that produced it”<sup>69</sup> (p. 83), but she missed the tools for analysis and interpretation of her collaborative works other than shared reflection.

In his thesis *Choreography of Drawing*<sup>70</sup>, McNorton (2003) straightforwardly identifies joint drawing as a physical act and demands from his participants “coherence in the temporal aspects of body movement” (p. 6), which aligns with my preference for framing the collaborative process. Similarly to me, McNorton (2003) searches for a “vocabulary or repertoire” coming from “3D space” to be interpreted “in the 2D space of drawing” (p. 221), and expects his scores and diagrams to extend the “collaborative performative drawing action” (p. 223). He also wants his participants to evoke “synchronicity,” or “counter-action” (p. 221), which corresponds with my thorough consideration of the partnering strategies. In practice, however, McNorton’s (2003) and my development process took completely different trajectories, because in his research the physical contact among his participants was avoided. What’s more, despite of the frames McNorton (2003) consistently choreographed his participants from the outside and/or personally intervened in their process to assure the valued coherency of their joint movement.

In summary, *performance* is an action of which goal is a display of skills or repetition according to some mental standard. Performances are also actions carried out with heightened awareness of self or those conducted in the presence of viewers or a camera. In this thesis, the broad concept of *cultural performance* is used to contextualize my experiments as artistic performances. The underlying concepts of *framing*, *keying* and *play* help me identify my experiments as works of *performance art* in which the pre-choreographed movement coexists with our habitual behaviors, and the rules coexist with spontaneity. Further, *drawing* with its immediacy and capacity to record movement, is an essential component of my experimentation. This connection of primary haptic engagement, bodily movement and the collaborative strategies of performance situates Reciprocal Drawing, along with the experimentation leading to its formulation, within the field of *performance drawing*. As a separate genre, it has its roots in the 1970s’ experimental practices of the classics of conceptualism, performance art, and the second-wave dance avantgarde. In performance drawing, the artistic process or the “how” of drawing come to the fore, and line is understood as a trace or record of this process. In my research, the traces from the process constitute autonomous drawings.

Moreover, I highlighted the importance of the three frames according to which each co-experiment in my research develops: a *reciprocal partnering strategy*, the *repertoire of actions*, and the *score* consisting of *rules and a diagram*. Supported by the classification of performance-based collaborative strategies applied in drawing, I located my chosen strategies of binding and point-of-contact within the narrow group of *partnering-based reciprocal strategies*. Here the collaborators, apart from remaining in relation to one another and the drawn traces, aim at uninterrupted contact and their actions’ strict co-dependence. When applied in drawing, this kind of reciprocity is difficult to convey both in movement-stylistic and technical sense. Therefore, in my research I thoroughly consider the motif and spatial aiming of the co-movement, but

<sup>69</sup> By “nature of the encounter” Rogers (2008) means “the felt-sense of an interaction” (p. 83), for example tense, playful, contemplative or abrasive quality.

<sup>70</sup> The strategies of collaboration proposed by McNorton (2003) were specific, they alluded to writing and repetitive movement: the participants were expected to repeat certain actions while marking along the horizontal and/or vertical planes and moving in four pre-defined directions and within three ranges of speed. In these strategies, there was no reciprocity of actions, which means that the direct contact and the bodies’ interdependence was not the main goal.

also the strategies-specific “core values” (Novack, 1990, p. 115) that address the ways in which effort is exchanged, and finally the coordination-related issues. All this allows the collaborators to retain the reciprocal dynamics and harness it in favour of spatial-qualitative differentiation of marks and complexity of visual forms, which eventually reflects the social aspect of human life in more nuanced ways.

The second frame – the repertoire of actions is developed in the solo phase of my experimentation and bases on the LMA body category. My interest in movement theory links my repertoire with Trisha Brown’s drawn vocabulary of singular actions developed based on Labanotation. While Brown treated her vocabulary as containing the basic elements of her stage-choreographies, I consider my repertoire as containing motifs from which the jointly moved and drawn form develops. My repertoire does not have a universal application in collaborative performance drawing. Rather, it facilitates the conduct of Reciprocal Drawing.

Score as the third component of my method comprises of rules and a diagram. The score-based approach to performance is derived from the tradition of Fluxus. Its members composed scores in form of instructions that were supposed to be loosely interpreted by other artists. The difference between theirs and my approach is that I fully co-engage in the interpretation of my score and aim at the effectiveness of the artistic exchange, while the Fluxus-affiliated authors withdrew from interpretation of their scores. The delay in space and time between formulating the score and its interpretation coupled with the variety of interpretive contexts makes the co-practices of Fluxus fit Hall’s (1999) model of communication. My score-based drawing with the collaborator can be better explained with Barnlund’s (2008) transactional model that assumes simultaneity of sending and receiving of messages and formation of meaning based on internal and external cues.

In the next section I explained how *physicality*, *resistance* and the marking subject’s effort come to the fore within the field of performance drawing. My research further expands the concept of resistance towards its reciprocal, reversible and chiasmatic understanding by creating the conditions in which the two living bodies, connected by the rope, mutually generate resistance in each other to maintain co-movement and develop a drawing. When imbued with reciprocal component, resistance fluctuates in the bodies, which continually exhausts and regenerates them on their paths. The challenge is then to jointly carry out the diagram while also responding to one’s own projection thereof. The bodies’ ongoing co-dependence adds mental effort and stress to the process.

In the last section I discussed how this shared quality of my experimentation links my research with other academic projects engaging collaborative drawing. Situating my research among them, I argued that most research projects focus on the social or philosophical potential of collaborative drawing, while only few explore the interdependence between the practical ways in which the collaboration is engineered and the effects that the specific approach brings to life. Additionally, focusing on the two research projects of which authors also pay attention to the practical aspects of their collaborations, I pointed to the differences between mine and their respective methods. And so, unlike Rogers’ (2008) *Drawing Encounters*, *Reciprocal Drawing* bases on the bodies’ movement. This makes it possible to use Laban Movement Analysis, design the interactions on paper, and establish links between the collaborative drawings and the movement-evoked mental *states* and *drives* that accompany their co-production. McNorton’s (2003) method, although building on the body and its movement, requires directing the drawers from the outside and/or intervening in their process. Finally, neither Rogers’ nor McNorton’s method provides conditions for the physical contact between the collaborators.

## 10. Collaboration

In this chapter, I present an overview of selected threads from the theory of artistic collaboration. These threads constitute a lens through which I further interpret the *general themes* identified during the analysis of my personal accounts from the co-experimentation. And so, in the first section I elaborate on *creativity* as understood by Miklós Erdély (2020). Here, I give an example of *Creativity Exercises*, a drawing course from the 1970s to which my Reciprocal Drawing can be linked and which this practice expands. In the second section, I explore the most recent tendency of “postconsensual” (Ruhsam, 2016, p. 75) collaboration along with its philosophical grounding – the concept of *being-with* developed by the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (1983/1991, 1996/2000).

### 10.1 Creativity of Collaborative Practice

With the rise of postmodernism and experimental, democratic communities in the 1980s and 1990s, interest in creativity-oriented collaboration was being taken. This resounded especially in the pedagogical realm. New methodologies were focusing on students’ creativity understood as intelligence, problem solving and productivity. Up to the present day, this way of defining creativity has remained formative for educational systems all over the world (László, 2014). However, creativity has been more than just an ability to produce. The exhibition *Creativity Exercises*, curated by Dóra Hegyi and Zsuzsa László and organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Warsaw in 2016, demonstrated how numerous co-creative initiatives fuelled the imagination over the last 70 years<sup>71</sup>. One such project was the titular *Creativity Exercises*, already mentioned briefly in the previous chapter where I discussed different partnering strategies applied in drawing. As a regular course led by artists and pedagogues Dóra Maurer and Miklós Erdély in Budapest in the 1970s, it promoted “creativity” (Erdély, 2020, p. 100) understood as self-awareness, open-mindedness, responsiveness, and the ability to perceive things from a broader perspective. That creative disposition was being evoked through movement-based interactions engaging drawing. The linking of the individual experiences with fluctuations in a group lead to breaking through one’s habitual ways of seeing to observe objects, individuals and actions more accurately (Duvoisin et al., 2014; Hegyi et al., 2020). Since drawing was used as a medium reflecting and recording these interactions, Maurer and Erdély’s method also contributed to formulation of new conceptual approaches to the very medium (Maurer, as in Sándor & Szóke, 2008). Correspondences between the *Creativity Exercises* and my Reciprocal Drawing method enabled discussion, in the “Thematic Interpretation” part of the thesis, on how my method can contribute to exploration of creativity through drawing.

### 10.2 Postconsensual Collaboration and Jean-Luc Nancy’s Concept of *Being-with*

Our dwelling in commitment and conflict simultaneously, which my joint drawing with Ola and Ram revealed, allows me to situate the binding-related co-experiments of my research in the sphere of “postconsensual” (Ruhsam, 2016, p. 75) collaboration.

<sup>71</sup> The exhibition traced many examples. Among them were: Oskar Hansen and his Open Form Studio and Grzegorz Kowalski’s exercise *Collective Space / Individual Space* (Sienkiewicz, 2011) – both at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Bauhaus and The Situationists International in Europe, Black Mountain College in the United States, or self-organized study circles of the 1970s and 1980s (Creativity exercises, 2016). More to the contents of the exhibition can be found on: <https://artmuseum.pl/en/wystawy/cwiczenia-z-kreatywnosci>



The extreme popularity of participatory practices in the early 1990s triggered numerous critical voices of the phenomenon. For example, scholars Rudi Laermans (2012) and Martina Ruhsam (2016) note that the previous tendency to maintain solidarity and common vision within a group of artists led to enforced harmony and avoidance of conflict at all costs. According to Laermans (2012) and scholar Kathryn Syssoyeva (2013), the developments of the 1980s started a “postutopic wave” (Syssoyeva, 2013, p. 8) – the veering away of many artistic collaborations from ideological towards ethical and practical concerns and rejecting the “romantic rhetoric” in favor of “social authenticity” (Laermans, 2012, p. 94). Therefore, new models of collaboration have been theorized underscoring its subversive and empowering potential. Scholar Alexandra Kolb (2016) describes these most recent tendencies as rejecting consensus, accepting individual differences and interpersonal distance, and purposefully creating spaces in which “conflicts, tensions and incompleteness . . . are not perceived as threats to freedom and stability” (p. 68) but an opportunity to establish one’s own autonomy.

In his book *The Nightmare of Participation. Crossbench Praxis as a Mode of Criticality*, architect and writer Marcus Miessen (2010/2013) shifts attention from the romanticized understanding of collaboration as inclusion and joint decision-making towards collaboration as practice driven by complex realities. He initially outlines the downsides of participatory practices based on deliberation, inclusiveness and consensus, such as: political correctness, watering down of initiative, avoidance of sincerity, conflict and responsibility, and decrease in interaction leading to stagnation. He then proposes a new approach by first highlighting an overlooked definition of collaboration as cooperation with instrumentality with which one is not immediately connected. Miessen’s vision of collaboration suggests the conditions of war in which a person lends their free assistance to an enemy. Based on that parallel, the author prompts a recognition of the opposing forces working within each close interaction. Alluding to curator Florian Schneider (2006) and the philosophy of Chantal Mouffe (2013), he fosters “agonistic” (Mouffe, 2013, p. 41) model of collaboration, the one which rejects consensus at all costs and prepares foundations for a productive struggle. Miessen (2010/2013) claims that instead of synchronization, postconsensual collaborative practice encourages an attitude of critical distance and conscious, non-violent generating and revealing of different interests and intentions. Consequently, he introduces a position of a “crossbench practitioner” (p. 243), an outsider who purposefully stirs up disagreement within the already existing structures of knowledge. Miessen’s crossbench practitioner resembles Mouffe’s (2013) “adversary” (p. 18) who rejects a classical friend-enemy relation and designates common symbolic space within which the innocence of collaboration is disenchanted and replaced by critical engagement. In the “Thematic Interpretation” part of this thesis I describe how Reciprocal Drawing can become means to reveal, discover and/or simply live tensions and how the collaborators can become crossbench practitioners who bring change to the existing structures of their professional knowledge.

Similar to Miessen’s understanding of collaboration is the reasoning of cultural theorist Gesa Ziemer (2016) who uses the term “complicity” (p. 15) to describe new subversive forms of working together. While the author examines complexity of human social, cultural and political relationships, I utilize Ziemer’s concept to describe the specific dynamics evoked during the Reciprocal Drawing practice. Like in the case of Miessen’s point of departure, Ziemer’s concept at first raises pejorative associations. Yet similarly, her aim is not to address ethical or unethical consequences of co-action but to underscore a specific “productive tactic” (Ruhsam, 2016, p. 84). For Ziemer (2006), “complicities” are groups of people who maintain close relationships, yet they are not friends because they know each other only superficially. While they seem to be loners, they never act alone. They initiate projects more eagerly than members of the previously

formed collectives because their goal is to profit from each other's complementary expertise. Therefore, as some authors claim, complicity opens a chance of mutual benefit and rejects gain at the cost of a single party (Notroff et al., 2007; Ziemer, 2016).

As suggested above, postconsensual collaboration allows confrontation in a form of non-violent discourse. It also presupposes "a communal way of working while the singular participants simultaneously claim a certain autonomy from within the collaborative configuration" (Ruhsam, 2016, p. 77). Ruhsam (2016) reveals that a broader conceptual framework for this type of joint practice in performance grows from the philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy (1983/1991) and his understanding of *being-with*. Nancy (1983/1991) theorized by opposing the communitarian thinking expressed in the works of the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre<sup>72</sup>. According to Nancy (1983/1991), the disconnection from community is first and foremost impossible since the kind of ideal, tradition- and authority-oriented community MacIntyre (1981) longs to restore has never existed. This means that the longing for an ideal and all-conditioning bond is not a reference to any real period in the past but merely a dream never to be realized. Western history, argues Nancy (1983/1991), begins with a conflict – a "rupture" (p. 10) denoted by the departure of mythical Ulysses and the onset of dissension and rivalry in his palace and with Penelope who ever since "reweaves the fabric of intimacy without ever managing to complete it" (p. 10). When concluding, the philosopher warns against succumbing to illusions of harmonious co-existence with other human beings.

Scholar Szymon Wróbel (2016) notes that it was of utmost importance for Nancy to rethink community without transforming "we" into any substantial and finite identity, without "the recourse to the promise of organic communion, organic unity or fully transparent communication" (p. 230)<sup>73</sup>. For Nancy (1983/1991), community is not subject to an exterior or pre-existent definition and for this reason, should not impose its presumed identity upon an individual. At the same time, the with-or-without, dualistic way of looking at any union should be transgressed because the very fact of being in the world already implies being a part of a group. "Community is given to us with being and as being, well in advance of all our projects, desires, and undertakings. At bottom, it is impossible for us to lose it" (p. 35), thus there is no sense in treating community as some kind of work to be done or produced. In other words, being in the world with other human beings determines us before we can even grasp the division between ourselves and others.

Wróbel (2016) notes that the kind of language Nancy uses, there is a tangible Heideggerian influence. Nancy's answer to the question of community leads through Heidegger's (1927/2010) notion of *Mitsein*, that is "being-with" (p. 121) interpreted as a mutual exposure, a state in which the "I" is always inseparable from "we." In Nancy's (1983/1991) view, there is no "being-in-the-world" (Heidegger, 1927/2010, p. 121) or *Dasein* without "being-with," which means that "I" does not come before "we" and that one's own existence is always in relation to the existence of others. At the same

<sup>72</sup> Unlike Nancy, MacIntyre (1981) invoked community to serve as an antidote to loneliness and isolation of individuals condemned to search for meaning in a liberal and fragmented society. In his famous *After Virtue*, he asserted that morality and community are inseparably bound together, the collapse of the former leads to the fall of the latter. In consequence, the fall of community gives birth to the culture of emotivism wherein ethical and value judgments are being merely expressions of feelings, attitudes or preferences rather than assertions of anything. In his view, predominance of emotivist attitudes contributes to formation of social relations based on manipulation and to treating others not as valued and important entities but as useful means to achieving own aims. Based on this argumentation, MacIntyre (1981) proposes a practice (artistic, professional, political, etc.) that always relates to a creator's community in that the premises underlying his or her practice assume compliance with rules, acceptance of authority, respect for external standards of excellence as well as awareness of tradition.

<sup>73</sup> Understandably, Nancy's ideas flourished on the verge of 1980s and 1990s, that is in the wake of the collapse of communism and socialism in the former Eastern Bloc. Expressing his "fin-du-siècle disenchantment" (Critchley, 1999, p. 241) with both community in general, but also with the idea of liberal individualism, he developed a new language to talk about community, the one that does not easily lend itself to contamination with any ideology.

time, implicit in *Mitsein* is our separation, distance and solitude. They are inevitable states, yet they guarantee our freedom. Paradoxically, concludes Nancy (1996/2000), the very distance prevents us from being lost and therefore is “the condition for all understanding” (p. 90). Invoking Nancy’s reasoning in the “Thematic Interpretation” part, I acknowledge Reciprocal Drawing as a practice in which collaborative work is complemented by solitary practice. Any deviation from this equilibrium results either with a sense of pointlessness of my artistic endeavors or with a tendency to lose myself in sacrificial efforts.

In this chapter, I offered a brief description of some topics selected from the theory of artistic collaboration. These topics feed the “Thematic Interpretation” part of the thesis. In the first section, I presented the collaborative approach to drawing which aims at creativity understood, after Maurer and Erdély (2020), as an ability to see the task from a broader perspective. In the second section, I discussed “postconsensual” (Ruhsam, 2016, p. 75) collaboration which stresses differences and conflicts and, therefore, well aligns with the bidding-related co-experiments of my research. Postconsensual collaboration acknowledges the concepts of “crossbench practitioner” (Miessen, 2010/2013, p. 243) and “complicity” (Ziemer, 2016, p. 15) both of which allow me to define the collaborators’ roles in the Reciprocal Drawing practice. Final paragraphs of this chapter were devoted to the presentation of Jean-Luc Nancy’s (1983/1991, 1996/2000) understanding of community and his concept of *being-with* – the philosophical premises on which contemporary postconsensual practices base and which Reciprocal Drawing also builds upon.

## 11. Phenomenological Perspective on Ethics

This chapter presents phenomenological perspective of ethics represented by the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1974/1991) and scholars George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999). Their theories help the reader gain better understanding of the decisions and behaviors observed in the Reciprocal Drawing practice. These ethical positions are presented separately from the problematics of ethics in artistic research (see chapter 6), because the former directly underlie thematic interpretation of my co-experimentation.

The French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas was one of the major figures who contributed to the development of ethical orientation within the phenomenological movement. Levinas (1974/1991) perceived traditional ethics as grounded in egoism, in constant relating to “myself” as a way to comprehend and define all other relations in the world. Such an approach was counterposed with an argumentation that it is one’s own responsibility towards the other that provides grounds for ethically justifiable social positions. With the ethical question: “How does my being justify itself?”, Levinas makes the presence of the other person into a core of both ethical and philosophical considerations. While rejecting the traditional ethics that focuses on justifying certain attitudes and behaviors, his philosophy is concerned with various ways in which the presence of the other intervenes in actions, subverts attempts to provide ready and universal explanations, and transforms understanding of the world (Moran, 2000). This “philosophy of alterity”<sup>74</sup> (p. 320) poses an ethical demand to explore the limits of one’s freedom and sense of omnipotence.

Furthermore, Levinasian philosophy includes both prescriptive and descriptive elements. The descriptive (or directive) elements regarding various modes of behavior are fused with neutral descriptions of how people behave, which makes the two seemingly contradictory approaches integrated into a one, mystical and poetic philosophy (Moran, 2000). Philosopher Dermot Moran (2000) confirms that the style of Levinas’ writing is full of metaphors that make his argumentation often difficult to unpack (p. 322). He concludes that in Levinas’ (1974/1991) understanding we are in contact with the other’s otherness through our body and senses.

In their vast study, contemporary phenomenologists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999) highlight a different meaning of metaphors and their direct linking to the sphere of ethics. They first stress that moral ideals such as justice, fairness, compassion, tolerance, freedom, and so on, are grounded primarily in the nature of our bodies and social experiences. They further reveal that these concepts are structured metaphorically, which means that the figures of speech used for evoking various ideals are mostly based on what people across all cultures and over history perceived as supportive for their physical and social well-being. Pointing to the power of cognitive semantics, the science that makes it possible to analyze human language, they support these claims by revealing the internal logic of words such as health, wealth, strength, light, purity (of breathed air, consumed food and water), freedom of movement, uprightness, or balance of body posture, etc., and their direct connection with abstract concepts of ethics. Based on that logic, they infer that all morality is experiential and metaphoric. For example, according to the “moral accounting” metaphor, justice is defined as “settling of accounts” or “balancing of moral books” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 296). Moral accounting metaphor is reflected in a complexity of various basic moral schemes that people tend to adopt to, such as: reciprocation (owing, repaying, balancing of goodness or moral debts), retribution and revenge, restitution, altruism, turning the other cheek, karma as moral accounting with the Universe, or fairness and rights (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

<sup>74</sup> Translated from the French word *alterité* or the Latin *alter*, meaning alternative or alter ego.

Interplay of Levinasian philosophy of alterity and Lakoff and Johnson's body- and metaphor-oriented perspective allows me to reflect on the collaborators' specific behaviors observable during the Reciprocal Drawing practice from the ethical point of view. This is done in a separate section of Thematic Interpretation part of the thesis. This reflection escapes transcendental and fixed rules. Otherwise, it would limit my unique collaborative experience to a state of reproducing and justifying my own values. It would present Reciprocal Drawing as an extension of what had already been singularly experienced and the collaborator as a tool in the implementation of my own artistic visions and expectations. And although always eventually returning to my personal perspective, my ethical reflection on Reciprocal Drawing is deeply contextual. I also believe that juxtaposing the context of Reciprocal Drawing with life-context, and especially with one's personal life in a relationship, can help gain a broader, unique point of view on the problematics of relationships. For me, the co-experiments described here became a tool to rehearse, visually represent, analyze and better understand various intersubjective tensions which I experience when interacting with others.

In Part Two, I addressed multiple practical and theoretical concepts which formed the foundation for the artistic practices of drawing described in this thesis, but also for thematic interpretation and critical discussion following these practices. First, LMA with its four main categories was outlined. Particular emphasis was put on the category of body and effort as well as on different mental states and drives evoked by the combinations of the specific effort factors. Second, two complex, body- and movement-related concepts of *motility* and *spatiality* were explained based on the reading of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*. Third, the compound concept of *performance drawing* was defined and selected views and positions on the current modes of artistic collaboration were presented. This part ended with a separate chapter discussing phenomenological perspective on ethics. In the next part, I thoroughly describe the artistic experience being the focus of this research, including the solo and then the collaborative phase of drawing.





## DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIMENTATION

In Part Three of the thesis, I describe the process of artistic experimentation being in focus of this research. The description encompasses two separate phases, the solo and the collaborative one. The solo phase is presented in chapter 12. Here, I recall how I utilized Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) and its body and effort categories to perform different body actions and gestures on the horizontal plane of paper and eventually come up with the *repertoire of actions* or *motifs* for Reciprocal Drawing. Thus, depending on the group of actions being tested, each section of chapter 12 is titled with names derived from the LMA. The collaborative phase to which Ola Piechnik, Ram Samocho and Jaanika Peerna contributed (in order of time) is reported in chapters 13 and 14. Chapter 13 focuses on the first thread of experimentation which developed around the strategy of *binding*, and chapter 14 refers to the second thread which developed around *point-of-contact*. Each section of chapter 13 and 14 constitutes a description of one separate co-experiment. Every time, I first recollect my impressions from a co-experiment. Here, the language is mostly relaxed and devoid of abstract formulations,

## PART 3



occasionally enriched with the LMA vocabulary to make the description more accurate and enable the subsequent analysis of the joint dynamics. I also use the present tense to make the recalled experience more vivid. Then, I interpret the co-experiment through the lens of LMA, thus pointing at different *states* and/or *drives* accompanying the Reciprocal Drawing practice. Since the respective drawings resulting from the co-experiments are the records of LMA actions, the drawings represent the *states* and *drives* that accompanied their production. Finally, I evaluate the co-experiment in reference to the opportunities and challenges that Reciprocal Drawing reveals. For the record, “Interpretation” subsections are directly linked to LMA’s concepts and not to the remaining concepts introduced in Part Two “Literature and Practice Review.” These are reflected upon in “Thematic Interpretation” Part Four of the thesis. Exact ways in which I structured, evaluated and described the experimentation are outlined respectively in sections 3.2, 3.3 and 4.1 of the “Methodology and Methods” part.



## 12. Solo Phase.

# Development of the Repertoire of Actions for Reciprocal Drawing.

In this chapter, I describe my experience of drawing solo on the large-scale sheets of paper placed on the floor of my studio. Throughout this experimentation, I am guided by the LMA category of body, therefore the separate sections of this chapter are titled after this category's actions. The purpose of this phase is to identify which actions and gestures can be included in the *repertoire of actions* or *motifs* and so facilitate the next, collaborative experimentation reported in the next two chapters. My final reflection on the solo experimentation is presented in 12.8 "Evaluation of the Solo Phase" section of this chapter. There, I reveal my main values or expectations towards Reciprocal Drawing. These values constituted important criteria in formulation of the repertoire and influenced the development of the next, collaborative experimentation.

### 12.1 Gathering-Scattering

FW1<sup>75</sup>

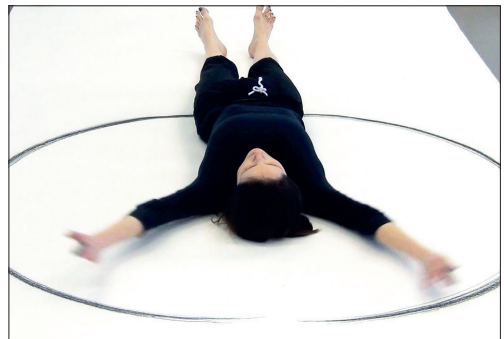
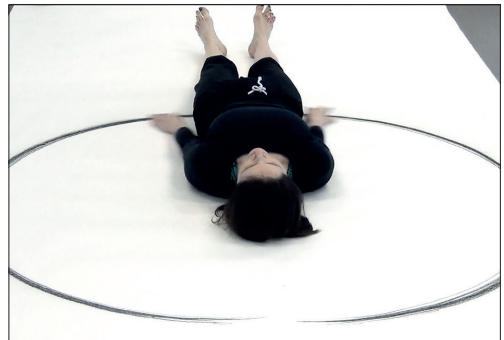
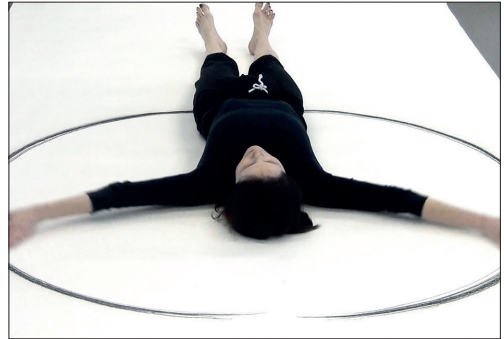
For the arm's range to completely record on paper the gathering and scattering need to be "flattened out" against the floor or wall. This happens at the cost of the freedom with which these oppositional actions manifest themselves in three-dimensional space. Yet, I consciously eliminate vertical and sagittal planes of movement to only engage the horizontal plane. I perform the actions lying flat, with my back on the floor, both arms stretched out, waving up and down as if I were doing a star angel on the snow (Fig. 2).

I spread my arms within my far-reach. The direction of their movement is tangibly upwards, as if up there was the target of the toss. While the upper body remains upright, the bottom stays relaxed shaking up and down lightly in the rhythm of the moving arms. I want my arms to move steadily, yet eventually I always accelerate. Then, my arms start bouncing off when clashing with the sides of my thighs. The clash gives the impetus to throw them back upwards.

As the action is performed with both arms simultaneously, two regular and identical half-circles emerge on the sides of my body. Their circuits, when drawn with a soft graphite or a solid piece of charcoal, quickly saturate towards a deep and meaty black. The blackness gets into the flesh of paper equally quickly as the paper burns the skin on my hands. After a while my arm girdles feel oddly flexible and my arms' weight, although bearable, gets more and more tangible. At that point I continue with performing the gathering only (downward movement) to spare myself the pain by lifting both arms during the upward motion. In this way, the thrusting downward comes to the fore and the emphasis is at the end of the phrase.

When I am done, I think of ways to perform the FW1 simultaneously with another person. The first strategy that comes to mind is the synchronized movement – syncing of our trajectories and frequencies and evading each other for the rest of the show. Yet, this approach does not allow reciprocity of contact.

<sup>75</sup> FW is an abbreviation from "floor work"



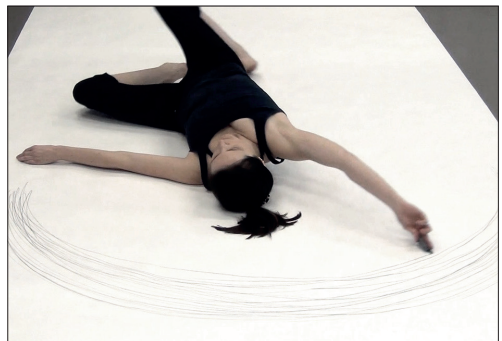
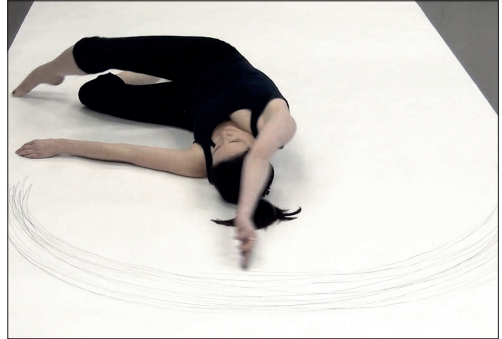
**Figure 2.** Scattering-gathering, testing of the FW1 body action for drawing in the low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw (Poland), April 2015. Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m. Frames from a 1-minute videoclip: EXTENSION-FLEXION FW1 by A. Karasch.

In a lying position, with my back and both feet on the floor (both knees bent), I first drop my left knee to the side. My right arm and right leg then follow in a swinging circular movement. I repeat the same series of motions to the other side (Fig. 3). In this way, I gather and scatter with my arms and legs, once to the left, and then to the right side of the paper plane. The left and right halves of the body activate and deactivate alternately depending on which side I turn my body towards. This not only gives the whole body a nice swing sideways but also eases the increasing pressure from the upper body. Time and flow decrease when the gathering happens and increase once I open up my body to perform the oppositional scattering action.

I notice that my knees in the air accentuate the middle level of movement. I work within my far-reach. The phrase remains impactful as I aim towards the foot and then relax in an opening thrust to the other side. When the direction of movement is to the side, the edge of the paper re-emerges like a target, rhythmically before me with each swing. Space feels more accessible. The shape of the movement is visibly directional and arc-like. I discover that the whole sequence releases an experience of focus alternating with distraction.

The arch forming over my head is built out of many separated, thin and, at moments, transparent lines. These lines gain intensity on the gathering side where I concentrate to observe the trace and exert more pressure to control the positioning of my hand on paper. I have no connection to the scattering side of the arch as I don't turn my head towards the moving hand when in an opening motion. The upper leg, when activated, pulls me down with each swing. Then, the arch "follows" me, its form thickens and extends downwards with each subsequent swing. The form marks the direction and distance by which the body has shifted. After a while the swinging also pulls me towards the side and the arch then displaces even more. Finally, I can see it almost touching the right edge of the paper. As I see the arch displacing, I start feeling discomfort raising in my body. Like the inappropriateness of falling out of bed, there is an instant need to return to the previous location. So, I shift back up to where I started. When doing this, I try to thrust my body upwards with each scattering motion to regain a relative symmetry of the entire form. At these moments the body's flow and space decrease abruptly and the pressure becomes exaggerated.

I keep wondering how I could use FW2 as a *motif* in a collaborative setting and perform it with another in a shared time. For now, however, there are not too many projections as to the ways we could directly influence each other's motions without pointlessly kicking, poking and clashing with each other. Another option is the synchronized movement. Yet again, this plan assumes a fairly rigid, contactless development of the co-action.



**Figure 3.** Scattering-gathering, testing of the FW2 body action for drawing in the low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.

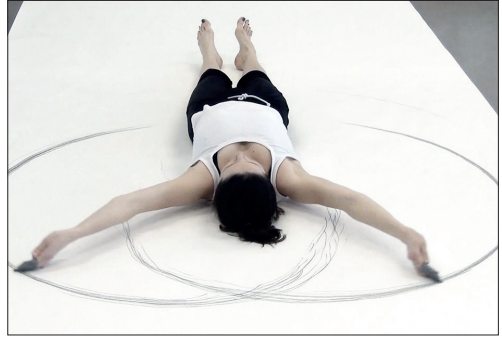
### FW3

Like in the case of the previous actions, the FW3 interpretation of scattering-gathering (Fig. 4) is performed when lying on my back with my face towards the ceiling. I remain within the horizontal plane and low level of movement. My legs and the body-core remain still. My body easily accommodates to the flatness of the floor, with a tendency to take up the shape of a pin. I try to perform the gathering action by lifting my arms slightly above my body, crossing them at the height of my hips and shifting them up along the body and towards my face. I then perform the scattering by spreading my arms wide over my head in an unlocking gesture.

Depending on their position within the phrase my arms expose different effort qualities. When in an upward movement, their flow changes from easy to an inhibited quality, pressure increases only slightly when my arms slide along my face. Immediately after overcoming this resistance, they rapidly speed up in the oppositional scattering action and then their pressure grows strong and energetic. The moment of impact is visibly and audibly at the end of the phrase, when my arms slide down towards my hips.

The accumulating thick lines on my sides resemble the trace of the FW1 except that the two arches now cross over my head and are both closer to my body. The entire trace of the FW3 looks like a laurel wreath – heavier and expanded at the base where my arms speed up and pressure increases, and lighter and delicate at the top where my arms slow down and the pressure eases off.

When performed multiple times, the FW3 feels like taking off too tight a dress. There is a sense of frustration and claustrophobia mixed with a release and desire to escape. Additionally, the action irritates the skin on my face. I am not considering this action as a potential motif for collaboration and proceed to the next group of actions.



**Figure 4.** Scattering-gathering, testing of the FW3 body action for drawing in the low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw (PL), April 2015. Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.

## 12.2 Extensions–Flexions

### FW4

When in FW4, I stay within the horizontal plane and low level of movement. I begin the phrase lying on the side in a curled-up position with my arms bent and elbows touching my knees. Then, I move my arms jointly up and legs down in an extending oppositional motion. When doing this, I flip onto my back. After I've reached the maximum of the body extension, I turn to the other side and close the phrase by flexing my whole body to the starting position (Fig. 5). This is repeated several times. All my body parts are engaged and excessively mobile. Shape flow is preserved as I change from a ball to a pin shape and back by continuously repositioning and shifting the body weight.

The alternate extending and flexing energizes me from the inside. The intention of movement feels decisively upwards. The accumulation of energy in a curled-up position gives both arms a considerable thrust and directivity in a subsequent stretching action. Then again, pulling my back towards the knees relaxes me. Very quickly, the flow changes from the condensing towards the indulging side of its spectrum. After a while, it becomes uncontrolled. The pressure is tangible only shortly when my body is at its greatest stretch. This phrase of movement lets itself be experienced as impulsive because the emphasis is at the beginning of the action series.

FW4 leaves a curve-shaped line on the paper. It resembles an arc of a fully taut bow. The lines appear to undulate and disconnect freely on the sides of the curve while at the top—where the body's (ex)tension is at its highest—they merge to form a thick cord. Acceleration of the actions results in the body's shifting up and sideways. Finally, the trace cannot be monitored, the arch displaces and stratifies, its field broadens and shape becomes unrecognizable. I correct my speed to strengthen the initial trace.

I sense something promising in the FW4 for the later collaborative explorations. The shape is engaging, and its multiplication on paper promises interesting dynamics of joint moving/drawing. However, at this stage I still have no clue how I could directly connect with the collaborator other than by synchronizing our respective actions. Different forms of improvisational clashing cross my mind again.





**Figure 5.** Extension-flexion, testing of the FW4 body action for drawing in the low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.

## FW5

To begin the FW5 I am lying with my back on the floor. The horizontal plane and low level of movement are again emphasized. My body core is flattened out and stabilized, and my arms and legs stretched out in four directions in a spoke-like manner. I start the phrase from the horizontal upright position. I first extend my whole body to one side as much as possible. Then, at the point of maximum extension, my body “snaps back” energetically as if it wanted to retrieve its straight position (Fig. 6). I use this impetus to extend my body to the other side.

Rhythmic extending and flexing in the right/left patterning feels like being on a side swing and so the impact is felt in the middle. Compared to the previous example (FW4), the sequence gives an impression of relative stability. After a while, though, it gets to be exhausting and the flow becomes inhibited. This is due to my rubbing with my entire body against the rough surface of the paper. In this way, the growing pressure and decreasing speed also come to the fore.

The trace is a half-circle consisting of two partially overlapping arches. There are no differences in saturation along the entire length. The half-circle on the left tilts asymmetrically towards the paper edge. The action sets me in a slightly calmer mood. Yet, once I perform the sequence too slowly, I become impatient and immediately accelerate. The line then becomes more decisive, saturating fast and the graphite on my fingers wears off quickly resulting in a pleasant, rhythmic humming sound. Anyhow, I don't intend to include this action in the repertoire. It seems to be a repeat of what has already been explored, so the trace and the positioning start to bore me.



**Figure 6.** Extension-flexion, testing of the FW5 body action for drawing in the low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.

## FW6

The FW6 sequence is also played out within the horizontal plane and low level. I lay flat on my back and begin by pushing myself with my feet lightly off the floor to turn the whole body to the side. Simultaneously, I extend my upper hand in the direction of the turn, while the other hand straightens out for a while to finally push my body back to the other side (Fig. 7). I repeat the action multiple times. The entire body is engaged. In this directional, arc-like motion, my body takes up a shape of a screw. Flow becomes easy and free. Speed feels neither urgent nor delayed. The impetus to reach out comes from rolling the body from one side to the other, so the combined actions feel like a swinging phrase as the impact is in the middle.

Unlike the previous actions, the FW6 is quite enjoyable when performed slowly. Once moving too fast, I get distracted and dizzy. The neutral rhythm evokes feelings of safety, intimacy and focus. I suppose it has to do with the positioning of my arms. Once extending them over my head, like in the previous examples, I feel like I possess the space around me. Yet at the same time, I am not fully in contact with the trace. I can check it only after I am finished. Access to space is then mixed with lack of insight into the dynamics of the lines. The strokes accumulate in a bottom-up order like two carpets unfolding on my sides. The upper strokes are longer and more decisive while the bottom strokes are shorter and indistinct. The direction of movement is then sideways and only slightly upwards.

Although the FW6 intensifies the sense of mobility and space, its trace doesn't evolve, and its development is foreseeable and unengaging. Yet, with this action an idea comes to mind that my hands could be bound to my collaborator's hands with a stretching band. In this way we could affect each other's speed, space and pressure, and with it the qualities of our marking hands. But then again, I'm imagining how the swinging would cause loosening of the band at moments when the bodies were out of sync. And after a while the bodies' adjusting to each other would become cumbersome. In this case, the synchronized movement, again, seems like the only alternative for connection.



**Figure 7.** Extension-flexion, testing of the FW6 body action for drawing in the low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.

### 12.3 Jump

The next action in the LMA body category is a jump<sup>76</sup>. Close to the corner of the room, positioned flat on the floor and with my back against the paper plane, I rest my feet firmly up against the wall. My knees in the air reaching the middle level of movement. My arms are positioned close to the floor, spread symmetrically on both sides of my body. I keep them bent upwards so that my fingers can touch the paper. From this position, I push myself off the wall with my feet as hard as possible (Fig. 8). To repeat this action, I either get up or shift my body down towards the wall.

In this interpretation of jump, my legs do the entire work while the hips, body core and arms are blocked. The major effort comes from shifting my body upwards. The increasing pressure can therefore be sensed at the beginning, when I try to overcome the resistance of the floor. Once the effort is done, the pressure suddenly decreases. The direction of movement is upwards, and the emphasis is at the beginning. I sense how my body is shaping and molding to the corner and then changing shapes while readjusting to the floor.

The marking hands leave two long, faint and slightly wavy strokes on the sides of the body. The work feels arduous and unrewarding. There is no compatibility between the action and its trace. And I contemplate if the trace would better reflect the effort if I were to mark the jump with my lower back instead of my hands.

Jumping along the horizontal plane is challenging. First, there must be a stable vertical surface close by, preferably a wall from which I can push myself off. Secondly, since it's impossible to perform this action continuously, its traces cannot be fluently developed without clumsy readjustments of the body. Therefore, I decide not to include this action in the repertoire.

<sup>76</sup> I decide to give this action a try on the horizontal plane but do not assign it a number since I am almost sure there won't be more than one interpretation of this action.



**Figure 8.** Jump, testing of the body action for drawing in the low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.



## 12.4 Rotations

### FW9

Unlike in the case of all the previous actions, rotary actions make it possible to continue a sequence fluently. To fully perform the FW9, I raise my body to the middle level and work within the vertical and horizontal planes. I kneel to first lean forward and then distribute my weight between my bent legs and the left supporting arm. In this position, the body parts are blocked except for the right marking hand that dangles loosely like a pendulum under the impact of gravity (Fig. 9). Although the body core stays tense, such a starting position is gratifying. I initiate a full rotation forward by displacing my whole arm backwards from the previous resting state. Then, I add some force. The hand accelerates rapidly in the opposite direction only to slow down a little when pointing up and finally tip over and swing all the way around. I continue in this way a few times.

The FW9 has a swinging character but once repeated the moment of impact seems to blend with the end, and so the phrase is sensed as impulsive and impactful at once. The speed of the rotating hand changes from an expectant towards sudden and staccato-like quality. The sticks of graphite attached to my fingers brush against the paper ever more loudly with each repetition. Blood starts running down towards the palm of my hand. It collects at the fingertips. After completing the pathway five times my hand feels extremely heavy. This sensation starts about halfway through the whole process. It's pleasant at the beginning and unbearable at the end. Before I start in the opposite direction, I restore my equilibrium by enjoying the relaxing and lightly bouncing motion of my arm.

When testing of the FW9, I give up my resolution to stick exclusively to the actions that allow to be fully recorded on paper. This is because the resolution feels limiting and the selection of the rotary actions too small. What is marked when performing the FW9 is only the point of transition of the swinging arm through the horizontal plane. The resulting strand of lines looks like whips or lashes, each stroke filled with sharp dots arranged at intervals (Fig. 10). The dots signal that the speeding fingers are subject to microscopic jolts. It is virtually impossible to achieve such an acuteness of trace without the proper speed and without working from within the body core. As much as I like the FW9, I decide I won't use it in the collaborative phase. The pain that comes from the spinning and hitting with my hand against the floor is disturbing. Also, I don't see how two persons could connect via this motif without hitting each other.



**Figure 10.** A trace of a high speed proximal rotation (FW3). Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.



**Figure 9.** Rotation, testing of the FW9 body action for drawing in the low and mid-levels, horizontal and vertical planes of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.

## FW7

In the FW7 action the rotation of my arm is combined with extension and flexion. I remain within the vertical and horizontal planes, in low and middle levels of movement. Sitting on my heels, with thighs apart, I lean forward and support my body on my left arm. I start by rotating my arm along its vertical axis so that the action resembles a screwing motion. The direction of movement is forward. I first touch the paper plane with my fingertip and then twist the marking hand to the left. The body parts activate successively, first the wrist, then the forearm, shoulder, and partially the body core. When the rotation/extension reaches its peak and my arm cannot twist and extend any further, I retreat and restart the action (Fig. 11). I also try continuing the twist along the spine, through the pelvis and along my legs.

Like in the case of FW9, there is no possibility to perform this rotation continuously. Yet, I appreciate the new elements introduced. It comes out as a complex experience, especially once performed with the decreasing flow and the whole body's increasing pressure focused on the marking hand. The action brings out connection with my own body. It's not only my hand that touches and marks the plane but the entire body mass. Unlike working on my back, I don't have to wait until the progression is finished to inspect its trace. It is a single and tonally differentiated vertical line that slightly vibrates, twists and turns to the sides. Drawing it with a thick and soft charcoal or black oil pastel is particularly pleasant. The charcoal breaks and spatters every now and then and the oil pastel dissolves and enfolds the line in fine gray smudges.

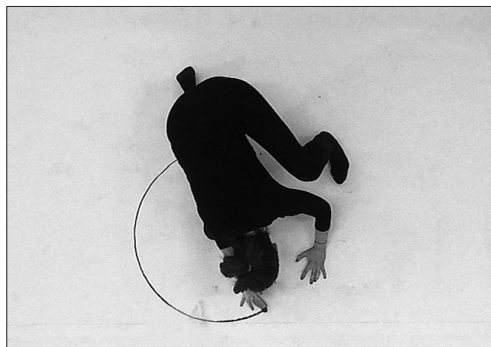


**Figure 11.** Rotation, testing of the FW7 body action for drawing in the low and mid-levels, horizontal and vertical planes of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Charcoal on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.

## FW10

To begin the FW10, I get down on all fours, my one elbow rests firmly on the floor and supports the marking hand while my upper arm functions as a steady leg of a compass. My body is positioned firmly within the middle and low levels. The supporting bent arm is stable within the vertical plane. I start by travelling on my knees to the right and around the point where the elbow rests (Fig. 12). In this way, I emphasize the horizontal plane of movement. The body weight is transferred onto the elbow and, unlike in the previous action, the pressure at the marking fingertips increases and decreases imperceptibly. There is a tangible directivity with all body parts encapsulated in an imaginary cylinder, as if following a well-defined, predictable pathway. Sense of speed changes from barely moving towards an expectant quality. I could continue circling around the middle point, which would make the phrase even, but I decide to stop where I started, and so the emphasis is at the end.

The circle emerges slowly. Its perimeter is marked with a single and tonally balanced line. The action enables fairly good control over the symmetry of the outcome. This is because I can track the record of movement all the way through, utilizing the body's stability in this position. The action evokes a sense constancy and persistence, a feeling of strength and control over my body, the drawing and outside space.



**Figure 12.** Rotation, testing of the FW10 body action for drawing in the low and mid-levels, horizontal and sagittal planes of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.

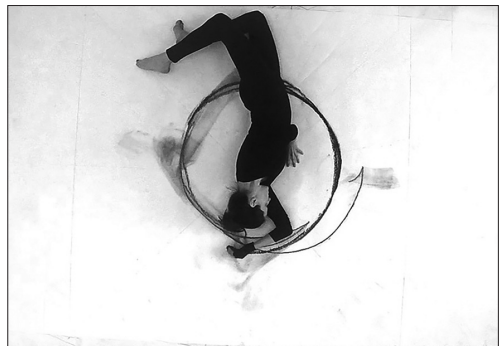
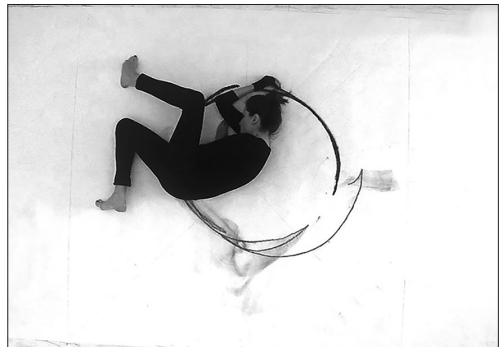
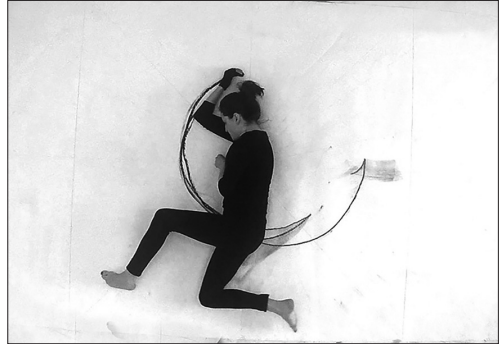
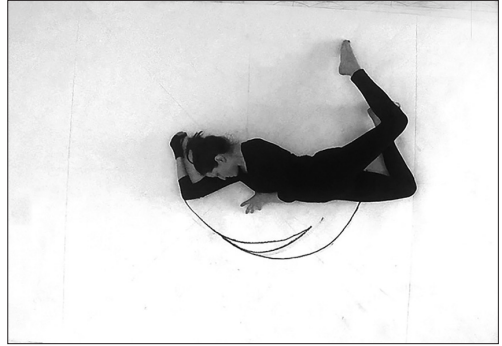
## FW11

Returning to the horizontal plane, low level of movement, I begin the FW11 by laying on my right side. The right hand, positioned closer to the floor, is in front of my face and bent under my head. There is a thick and smudgy piece of charcoal attached to it. The hand is to stay locked and immobile all the way through the progression. From this position, I start travelling forward around the point established by my right arm's girdle. To progress, I first extend my body core backwards and then rapidly thrust it forward only to end up in a fetal position. First, while bending backwards, my legs stick firmly to the paper plane so that I can extend the core as far as possible. Then, with the forward bend I help myself by taking a couple of forward leg movements (Fig. 13).

What comes to the fore is a thrusting movement initiated from the hips and the body's shape alternating between concave and convex. Preparation precedes impact. One action is compensated with the other. Like a cannon at work. Sometimes the accent is in the middle, other times at the end. The body's pressure fluctuates between stubbornly exaggerated and strong, and the speed effort changes from an expectant to impulsive quality. The body's flow modifies from a free and easy (around the feet) to a bound quality (around the arm girdle area). Both the closing and opening actions stimulate and energize me. The short break in between them allows for quick restoration and accumulation of new energy.

The FW11 rotation results in a circle composed of two thick and overlapping lines interwoven with curve-shaped smudges. Stabilizing the shoulder and blocking the arm aids a trace of a relatively regular a circle. FW10 and FW11 could also be categorized as travelling actions but here I classify them as rotations since the actions, when repeated multiple times, do not leave any new visual structures but only intensify the same circular form. Looking at the trace is only possible after the sequence is completed.





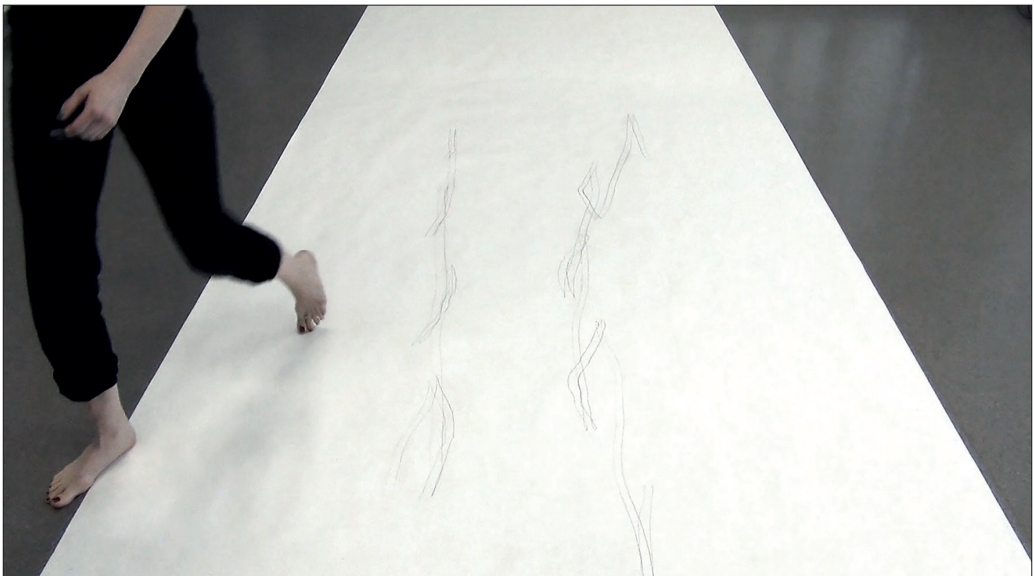
**Figure 13.** Rotation, testing of the FW11 body action for drawing in the low and mid-levels, horizontal and sagittal planes of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.

## 12.5 Travelling

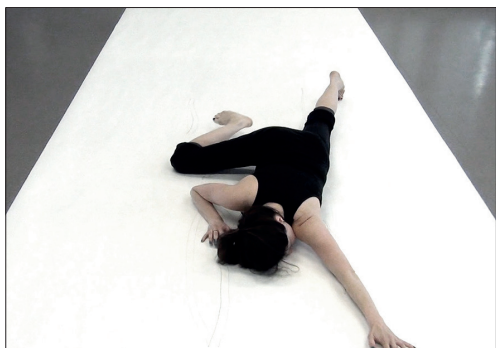
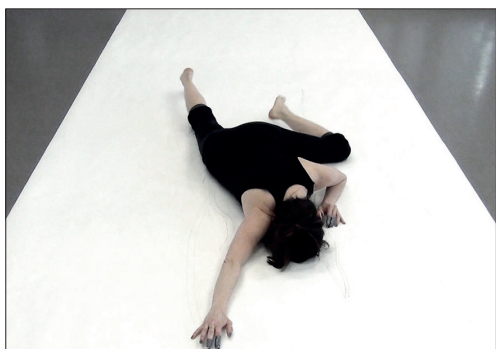
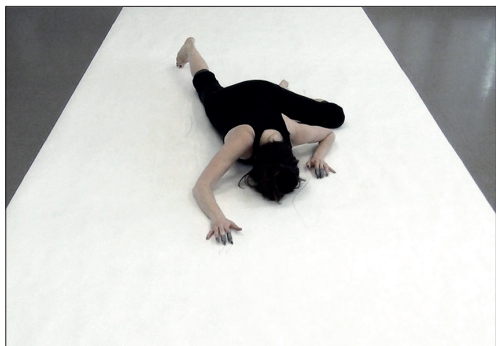
It's difficult to record travelling along the horizontal plane from a lying position. Such progressions resemble movement patterns of animals – gecko-like crawling (Fig. 14) (right/left pattern) or snake-like squirming (head/tail pattern). I decide to try out the first option. I get down to the low level and lay flat on my stomach, my body is clinging tightly and reflecting the floor plane. I start from the shorter side of the paper and aim towards the opposite edge. All my body parts become mobilized. The motion feels like climbing. With each pull upwards the pressure grows abruptly and the flow becomes controlled. With my face towards the floor, I can neither see nor imagine the trace of this action. To observe it, I have to hold my head up. This causes tension in my neck and the sense of connection to the drawing is being lost. Inspection of the record can be done when I'm finished.

Before me two perpendicular and undulating threads (Fig. 15). They seem self-sufficient as if ready to be exposed as they are. But then when I look at the scale of the paper, their sole existence there feels unjustified. As if the proportions between the body's effort and the result were upset. As if there were no context or reason for them to occupy so much space unless they were a result of something more meaningful. Later, I watch myself performing the FW10 on a video recording and notice how my whole body covers up the emerging lines. The viewer in me gets discouraged. Besides, in an improvised exchange the motif would probably evolve towards something else as there would be a need for the collaborators to rise to the mid-level to better interact.

After this test different variations of rolling the body sideways also come to mind. I decide to integrate the FW4 with the rolling to generate another form of travelling. And this brings me to the realization that the ways in which I can move my whole body from point A to point B on the paper surface may be integrated with some of the previously tested actions. To travel and mark, I should then first see which of the actions offer this possibility.



**Figure 15.** A trace of travelling in a left/right pattern (close-up). Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m, April 2015.

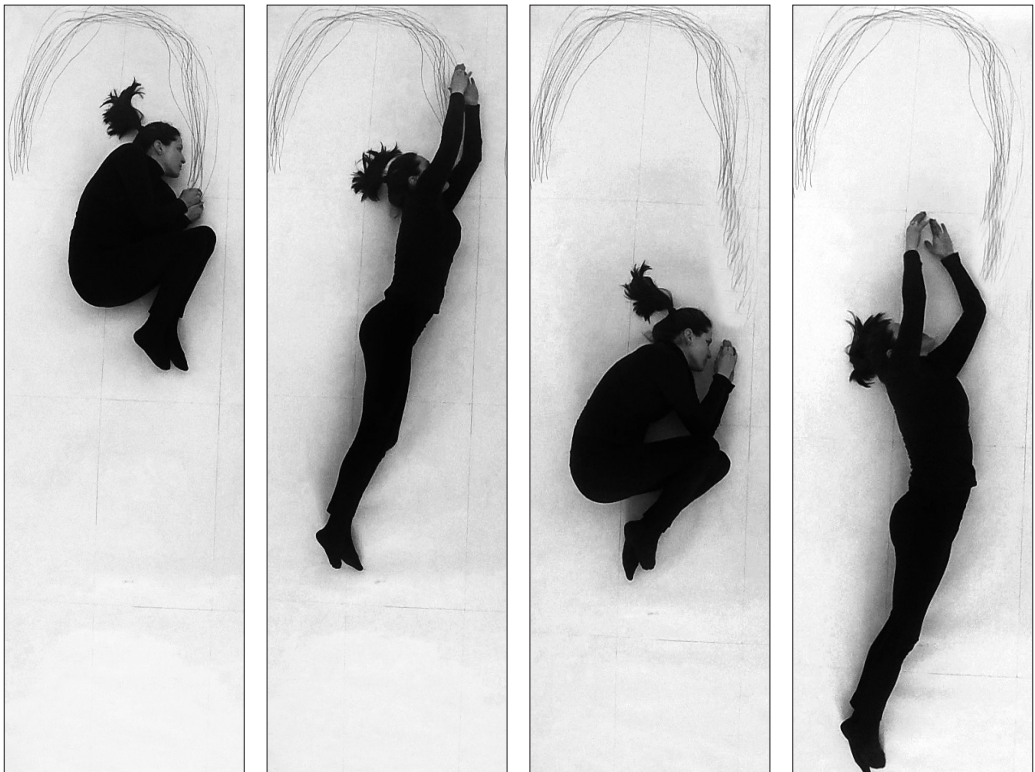


**Figure 14.** Testing of travelling in a left/right pattern, low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.

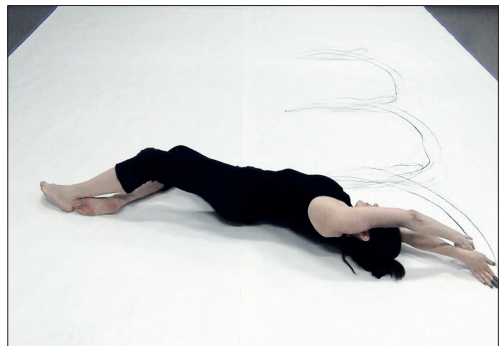
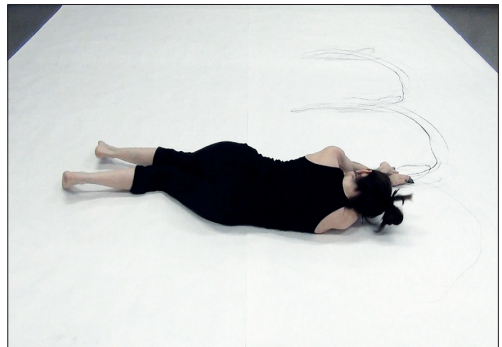
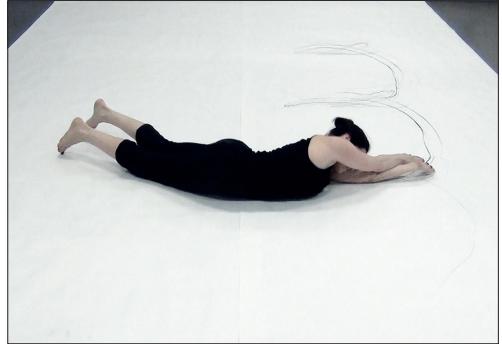
I chose the FW4 for a start and intend to find out how it can be combined with rolling of my body sideways. Instead of swinging to the sides, I now continue the swing in the same direction several times. I travel like this from the left to the right of the paper, along its longer edge. While the FW4 previously left a single saturated arch over my head, this time it forms an arcade (Fig. 16). By performing the FW4, I can also travel down the plane. This time the shifting is brought on by the repeated curling up and straightening of my legs. The body's downward slide is supported by the additional rhythmic and energetic flexing and extending of the entire body core accompanied by pressing of both arms against the paper surface (Fig. 17).

It has become clear that travelling highlights the space intent of my movement. While I've been so far preoccupied with the variety of body actions, their quality and different shapes they leave on paper, with this experiment I start thinking about directions, measurements and larger compositional structures that these actions build. I also realize I want my pathways to be less instinctive and more defined, so I start using the paper plane itself as means of orientation. During my planning and sketching I also realize that there are four main spatial intents for the marking body:

- the sagittal intent (left and right),
- vertical intent (upward and downward)
- circular intent (clockwise and counterclockwise), and
- diagonal intent



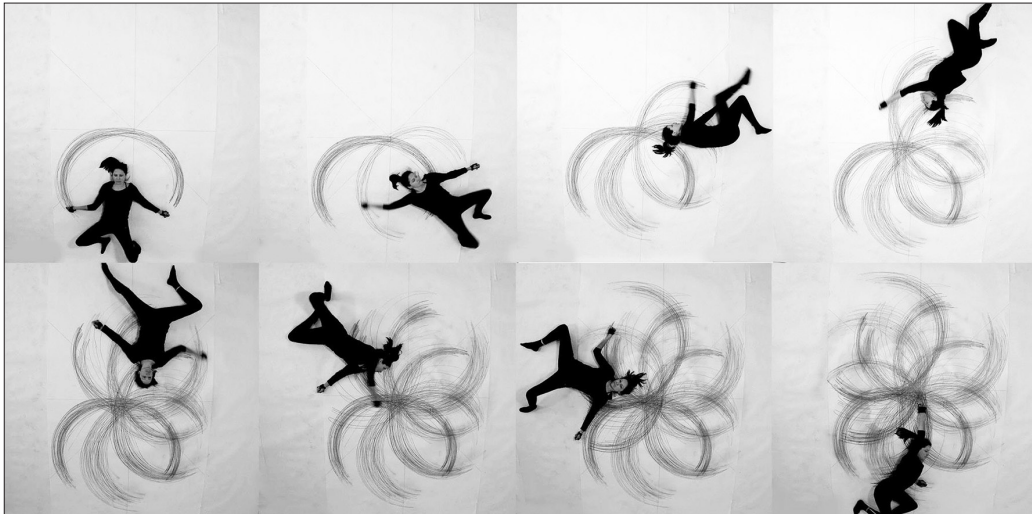
**Figure 17.** Testing of the FW4 body action and travelling with a vertical intent; low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Charcoal on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.



**Figure 16.** Testing of the FW4 body action and travelling with a sagittal intent; low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Charcoal on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.



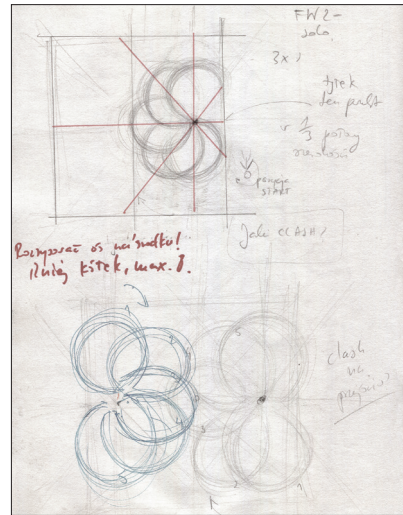
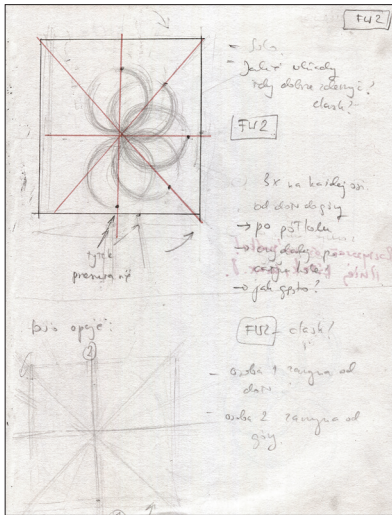
Before trying out the *circular intent*, as shown below (Fig. 18), I did some planning and sketching (Fig. 19). The progression I planned for this combination of FW2 action (presented earlier) and travelling was to occur along the imaginary circle inscribed in a square. I first calculated the dimensions of the square based on the length of my body and the width of the single arc resulting from the FW2 action. Then, in my sketchbook, I considered different movement variants within an image according to circular intent. Based on that, I prepared a format of which the sides were almost twice the size of my body height. There, I drew four symmetry lines intersecting in the center. I drew them lightly and using a flat board so that they could be straight and visible only when up close. This gave me nine main points of orientation for movement: the middle of the image (the point of intersection) and eight lines radiating from the middle and placed at even distances from each other. The spot in the middle was supposed to be the point of orientation for the FW2 action. Now, when performing the entire sequence of FW2 actions on my path, this spot is where my marking arm is reaching towards with each swing. The respective lines are like axes with which my body aligns to rest between performing the FW2. Finally, the lines are like horizons towards which I aim to travel a full circle.



**Figure 18.** Testing of the FW2 body action and travelling with a circular intent; low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, January 2016. Charcoal on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.

A trace that emerges from integrating the FW2 with travelling and a circular intent is a structure of an eight-petal flower on which a geometrical figure of an octagon can be drawn (see again Fig. 18). The respective arches characteristic of the FW2 differ from each other. The ones that appear contrasted and thinner highlight the moments of more focused, slowed down and impactful action, while the thicker ones and consisting of many distinct lines point at the body's hesitation, searching for the orientation point, shifting up and down along the radius and not being sure of its location within the image plane.

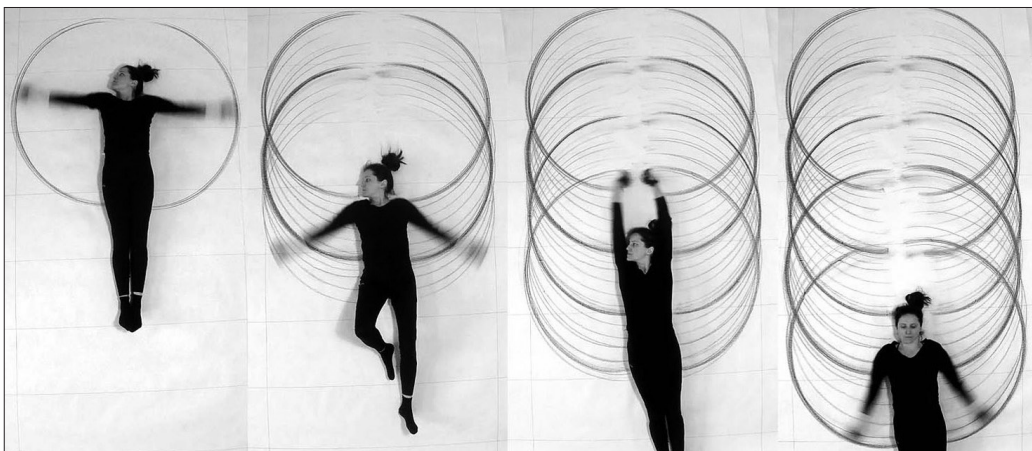
*Vertical intent* generated by the exemplary combination of FW1 body action and downward/upward movement (Fig. 20) creates significantly less difficulty. The planning hints at a rectangle as an appropriate paper shape. While the horizontal edge of paper must be just slightly longer than the width of my arms extended to the sides, the vertical edge must be at least 2,5 meters long to fit a few steps and pushes up and down. The longer edge of the rectangle then serves as a means for orientation in space.



**Figure 19.** Preparation sketches, consideration of different compositional variants of an image according to the body's circular intent. Fragments from my sketchbook. Pencil and ballpoint pen on paper, 21,6 x 27,9 cm, 2016.

To experiment with the vertical intent, I begin at the top by marking the FW1 four times in the same spot, with my arms reaching towards the first threshold. This time, the paper plane seems too broad to be inspected with one glance. The edges, margins and thresholds help me navigate through the image plane. When sliding down, I look to one side and check the distance of my whole body from the edge of paper. In this way, I correct my body's deflections from the chosen path as well as control the development of the form being drawn. I also look up and search for the thresholds above my head. They mark the intervals during which I again perform the FW1 more times in one spot. With my hands and feet I can feel if I am approaching the limits of the available space.

The overall length of the final, cylinder-like form shows the distance my body has travelled and the number of repetitions I've made between the stops. The arches have a nice contrast and clear exposition, which proves my body's control over the progression and my relative awareness of the surrounding space. The moments of stability and decreasing speed effort are signaled by the saturated half arches on my sides, while free flow, mobility and increasing speed are indicated by the thinner lines placed at regular intervals.



**Figure 20.** Testing of the FW1 body action and travelling with a vertical intent (downwards); low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, January 2016. Charcoal on paper, 2,8 x 4 m.



During the experiment, I again recognize my body's tendency to rush. Excitement appears between the intervals and there the drawing gains on contrast at the cost of fluency of the whole progression. With the body's accelerating the form shifts left and right, saturates at random points. Besides, speeding up often causes pain or exhaustion and eventually I am forced to slow down anyway. Using a metronome helps me control the rhythm of movement. Eventually, I replace the metronome with a simple counting.

Before performing the travelling along the *diagonal* of the paper there is no sketching, no preparations, and no drawing of the orientation lines. I start the progression from the bottom right corner of the image, use my legs and body core to move up, and perform the FW4 action alternately to the right and to the left of the diagonal (Fig. 21). By introducing this opposition, I avoid one-sidedness and monotony. With each extending action, I only have the upper left corner in perspective, which is just enough to complete the whole pathway.

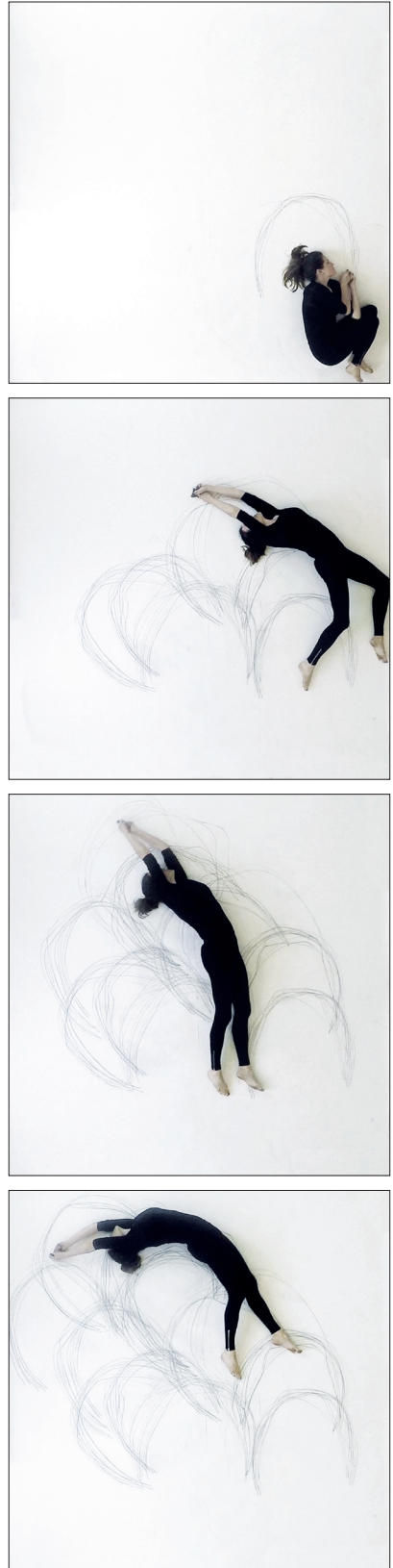
The sureness and relaxation bordering with carelessness accompany me throughout this entire progression. This can be seen by the way the single arches are distributed – loosely and seemingly chaotically with their lines of symmetry pointing each in a slightly different direction. There are no sure points within the paper plane, emergence of the structure is not predetermined by geometry, measuring or counting. Yet, the resultant trace on paper shows one definite directivity of movement.

After experimenting with travelling and defining the four basic intents of my marking body, I realize that travelling and marking within these vast planes demands long preparations. It consists of “dry tests”<sup>77</sup>, calculating the distances the body travels, determining the locations for the symmetry axes and thresholds, sketching them on a small format, and finally plotting them on paper in 1:1 scale. Such an approach allows me to finish the experiment after one attempt. In this sense, it guarantees a resource-efficient, large-scale drawing process. Most importantly, however, preparation makes it possible to *project* my movement, accumulation of its trace, and the final visual composition. With the pre-imagined I feel more confident when working within a big scale paper and immersion in the bodily sensations seems easier. This controlled approach comes from my desire for purposefulness of any bodily effort. I prefer that my physical strain translates into attainment of some goal in movement. Otherwise, my effort seems limited to the review of different shapes and their expressive alternatives. These observations are important for the next, collaborative phase since they make me aware of my basic values in the Reciprocal Drawing act. With this understanding, I can also already *project* possible dynamics of my future interactions on paper and my behaviors towards the collaborator.

## 12.6 Change of Level Support

To continue with the review of LMA actions of body category, I reflect on the next action which LMA identifies as change of level support (Studd & Cox, 2013). Here again I decide not to designate any number to the action for, at this phase, I doubt if I want it in my repertoire at all. Change of level is experienced by the human body when getting up and down. Consequently, this change can be traced efficiently within the vertical plane of movement. Considering some instances that engage the horizontal plane, the change of level could happen, for example, if I got up to the mid- or high level to lean forward and draw in a standing position. However, if such were the case then the very change of level wouldn't be recorded on paper at all, thus having more of a functional role in my experimentation. In the collaborative experimentation, the change of level

<sup>77</sup> “Dry test” – testing an action in movement only and without marking.



**Figure 21.** Testing of the FW4 body action and travelling with a diagonal intent; low level, horizontal plane of movement. Private studio, Warsaw, August 2019. Graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m.

support will be experienced by us at different occasions, and so my attitude to this action will have to be more defined. For now, I decide not to test it but only reflect on the action.

## 12.7 Gestures

All the previous experiments have focused on full body actions, thus forming a separate series culminating with travelling which, when performed in combination with another FW action, created basic visual structures within the paper plane. Besides these basic body actions, LMA body category identifies a set of gestures which I now aim to explore. When proceeding to gestures, I sense how the character of the experimentation suddenly changes. Since gestures are motions that don't demand a shift of the body weight nor any major postural change, the experimentation resembles a more traditional approach to drawing in terms of the body's positioning, its effort and connection to its trace. Like in the former actions, I mostly attach a few tools to my fingers with a duct tape. This time, I do this to be able to accumulate more marks with one gesture. Considering all this, the description of movement and its trace becomes less complex.

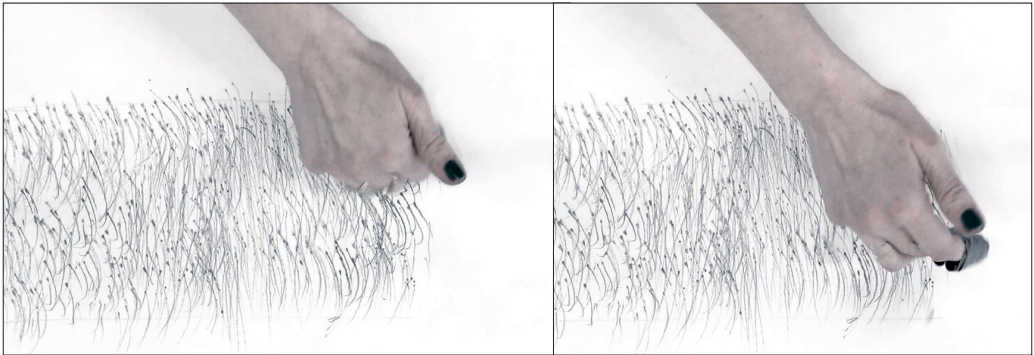
### *Pressing*



**Figure 22.** Testing of the pressing gesture and its effort qualities for drawing. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 30 x 70 cm.

In a pressing gesture performed against the horizontal paper surface, my hand stays flat. Its speed and flow decrease and pressure increases. Otherwise, my hand doesn't leave too many visible marks. Longer exploration of this gesture on paper bores me and exhausts my mind.

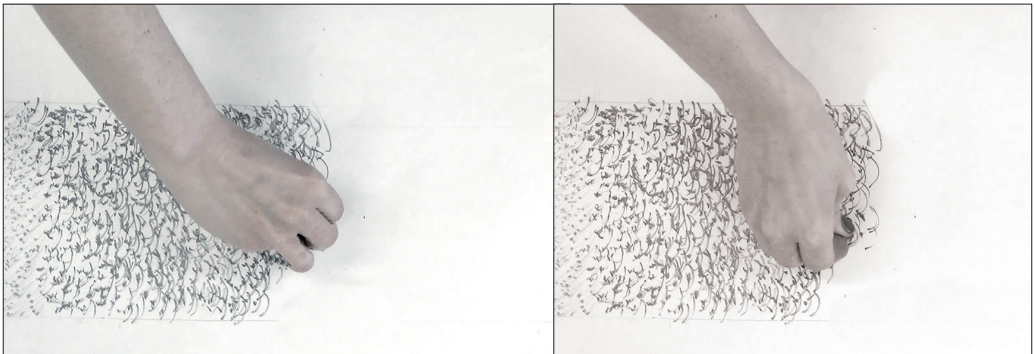
## *Flicking*



**Figure 23.** Testing of the flicking gesture and its effort qualities for drawing. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 30 x 70 cm.

In a single flicking gesture, pressure in my fingers increases and then suddenly eases off, flow is rather restrained, while speed increases with each next gesture. There is always a characteristic, rhythmic sound of the tool hitting against the paper plane. My hand's shape changes from a loose ball to a semi-open form. Flicking excites my body and stimulates my mind. I like to observe how the fine lines initiate from sharp dots at their bases.

## *Wringing*



**Figure 24.** Testing of the wringing gesture and its effort qualities for drawing. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 30 x 70 cm.

When performing the wringing on paper, it is the wrist that stays mobile, while all five fingers are locked around the drawing tools. There is a tendency to focus on the range of the twist, as if with an intention to prolong the trace of the gesture. Wringing enhances the experience of pressure. Flow decreases constantly with each twist and speed fluctuates depending on the exhaustion of the wrist. The records accumulate slowly but their inspection brings pleasure.



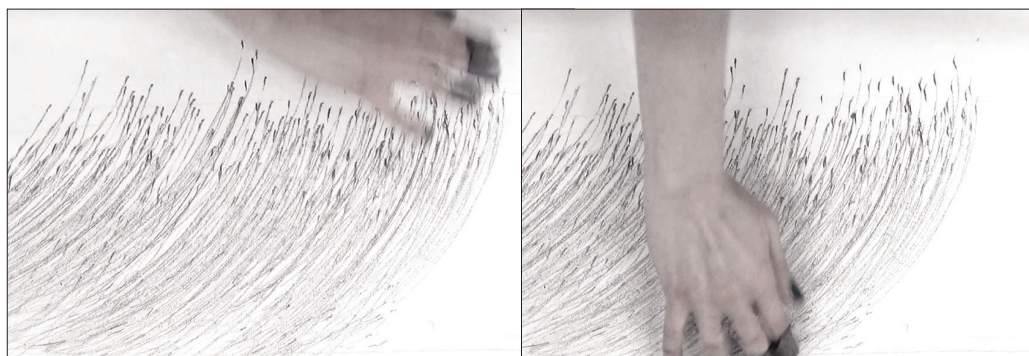
## Dabbing



**Figure 25.** Testing of the dabbing gesture and its effort qualities for drawing. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 30 x 70 cm.

Much like when performing the pressing, in a dabbing gesture my hand adopts to the flatness of the paper and doesn't change its shape. Only this time, my fingers are loosely splayed apart. Speed, pressure and flow neither increase nor decrease noticeably. Marks accumulate very slowly and lots of patience is needed to appreciate the final, duckweed-like effect on paper.

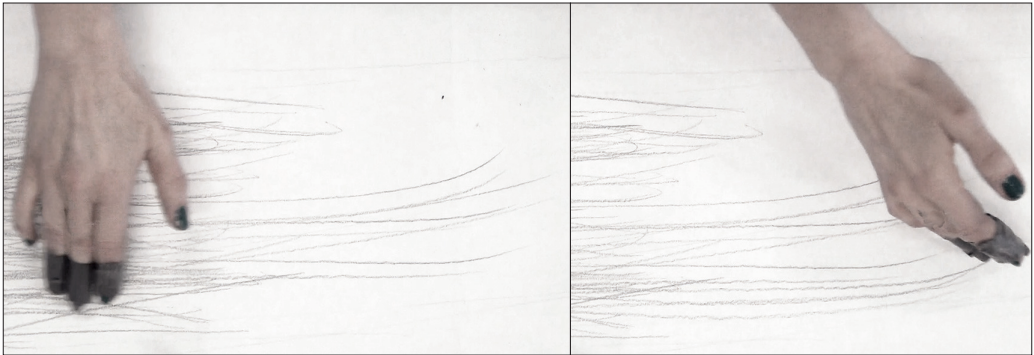
## Slashing



**Figure 26.** Testing of the slashing gesture and its effort qualities for drawing. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 30 x 70 cm.

When preparing to perform slashing, I first raise my hand towards my chest and position it flat and parallel to the paper surface. Then, I gather my energy and release it against the paper with my hand. I abruptly increase its speed and pressure to ease off at the end of each single action. At the same time, my palm and fingers stay relatively loose. Each subsequent gesture is performed faster, up to a complete exhaustion of my wrist. Slashing seems to be the most space-engaging gesture among all the gestures made so far. I already know it is my favorite one, both in terms of the accompanying sensation and the result on paper.

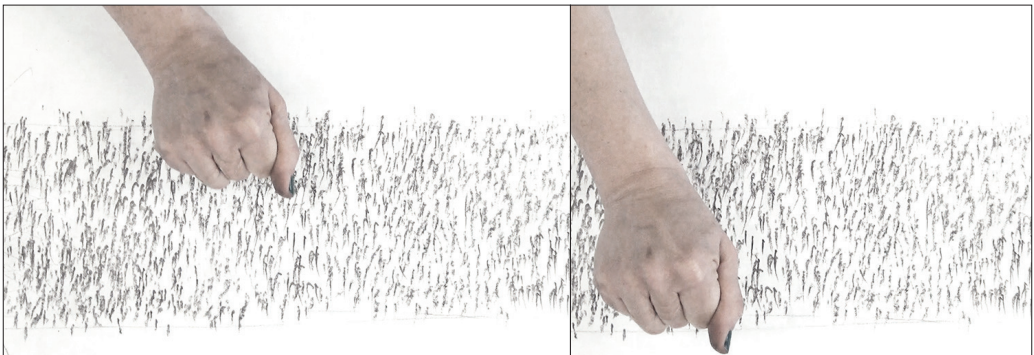
## Gliding



**Figure 27.** Testing of the gliding gesture and its effort qualities for drawing. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 30 x 70 cm.

Gliding is a one-directional gesture, so when performing it, I brush with my fingers against the paper from the right to the left. With this, I leave a hair-like, unsaturated line that curves down gently towards its end. Then, I twist my wrist gently, lift my hand slightly over the paper surface and return to the starting position. Repeating the gesture doesn't encourage me to increase pressure. Here, I rather stay within the middle range of all effort factors. I think of gliding as a gesture frequently used in conventional drawing.

## Punching

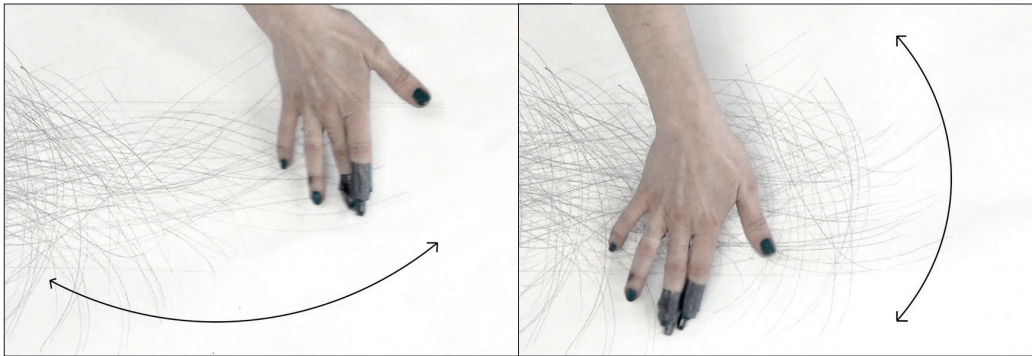


**Figure 28.** Testing of the punching gesture and its effort qualities for drawing. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 30 x 70 cm.

I perform punching with a fist. The shape of my hand doesn't change throughout the experiment. I hit the paper surface rhythmically, with a relatively balanced flow and pressure. Towards the end of the third minute, when I discover the emerging texture, I concentrate to increase pressure of the punch. Slight pain in the wrist appears but it's controllable. This experience of intermittent increase in pressure invigorates me and I enjoy looking at the fluctuations in tonality of the marks.



## Floating



**Figure 29.** Testing of the floating gesture and its effort qualities for drawing. Private studio, Warsaw, April 2015. Graphite on paper, 30 x 70 cm.

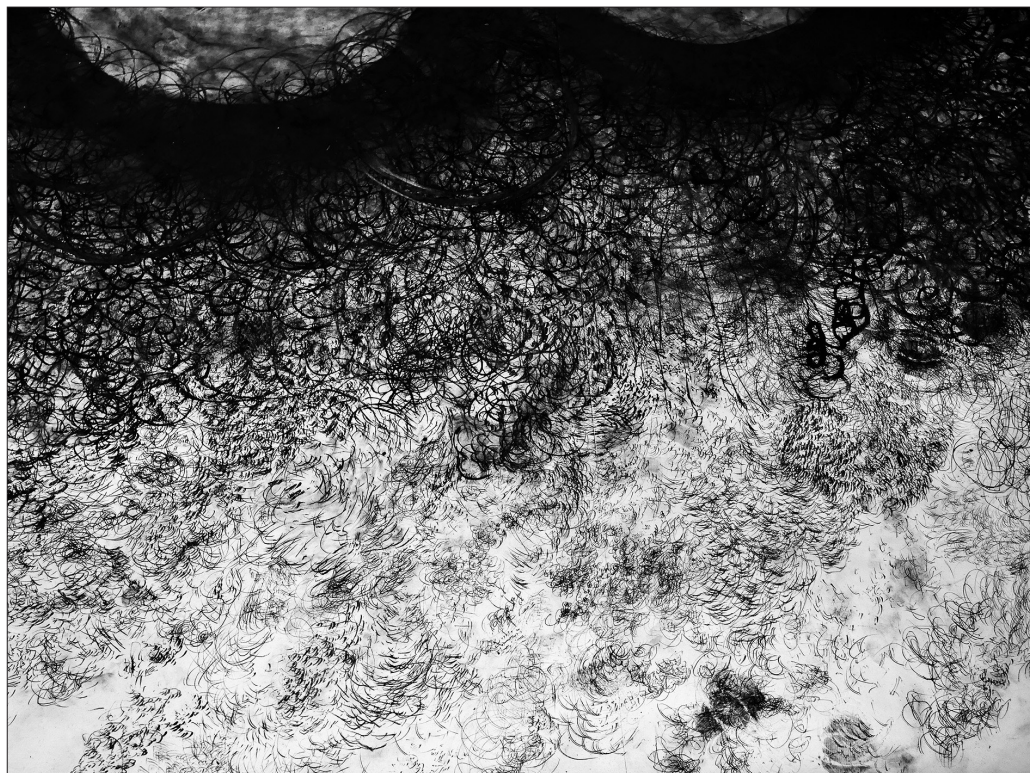
Floating is a multidirectional gesture. I first perform a set of sagittal gestures and then another set of vertical gestures. This time, however, there is continuity in the movement as I don't raise my hand to repeat the action, and so never lose touch with the paper. Similarly to gliding, at the beginning the shape of my hand adopts to the shape of the paper plane and my fingers stay slightly apart. Flow stays also comparable. With each repeated gesture, however, there is more stiffness and pressure in my hand. Speed and space increase and the shape of my hand changes from flat to concave. Like gliding, floating reminds me of traditional approach to drawing.

After the gestural experiments described above, I utilize the previously drawn compositions resulting from the combination of travelling with the FW-actions. I use them as a scaffolding for the gestural activity. I first strengthen the existent structures—arches and/or half-circles—with gliding and floating gestures, so that they saturate and connect better. Then, kneeling or sitting on paper, I explore the gestures either directly at points where the structures interconnect or within the empty spaces between them. I include up to four gestures among which I freely switch. After the previous, somewhat lavish but also rigorous approach to the FW series and travelling, this fast transiting between gestures feels refreshing. Since the body and mind are stable, I better focus on the LMA effort factors such as speed, pressure, flow, and space of my marking hand. Depending on the chosen efforts, a gesture transforms its shape constantly. For example, wringing changes to multiplicity of distal rotations when I focus on the hand's speed and pressure. With this approach, also the original trace (Fig. 24) slowly changes into variety of different wringing-based marks (Fig. 30 and 31). Besides, due to the disengagement of most body parts, the gestural mode of work does not evoke the former excitability. What's more, there is a sense of pleasure and attentional awareness of being present in that moment, watching while fully experiencing different qualities of movement and materials. This possibility to continuously relate to the developments on paper, known to me from my conventional practice, is irreplaceable for me. Finally, I feel no need to prepare, measure or calculate anything in the manner that became meaningful for the earlier experimentation.

After hours of such effort-oriented explorations, complex textural planes emerge (Fig. 32 and 33). Their layering becomes dense and impenetrable at places. Next to the textures and layers, there is a pronounced tonality<sup>78</sup> originating from this type of work. When seen in mass, the records of the gestures—densely accumulated dots,

<sup>78</sup> Tonicity is a degree of saturation of black.

finer strokes and marks—trigger in me associations with the world of living organisms, schools of fish, swarms of insects, anthills, grass, duckweed or algae. These internally pulsating surfaces intertwine with smudges and hands' imprints that have not been classified previously. This is because, during the process, I sometimes shift my body weight against the paper to relax or change locations. Looking at the drawing, I perceive the imprints as foreign elements. Especially at the fringes of the textural planes, where there is more untouched white surface, they stick out as foreign matter. They are like remnants of functional or supportive actions which are only indirectly related to the drawing process. Because I want to get rid of them, I start using different sizes of erasers and explore increasing and decreasing pressure or speed through the punching and gliding gestures.



**Figure 30.** A fragment of *Rotations/Bipolar Solo* by Agnieszka Karasch. Durational effort intent within the FW11- and travelling-based compositional structure: rotary gestures mixed with wringing, slashing, punching and flicking. Graphite and charcoal on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m, January 2016.



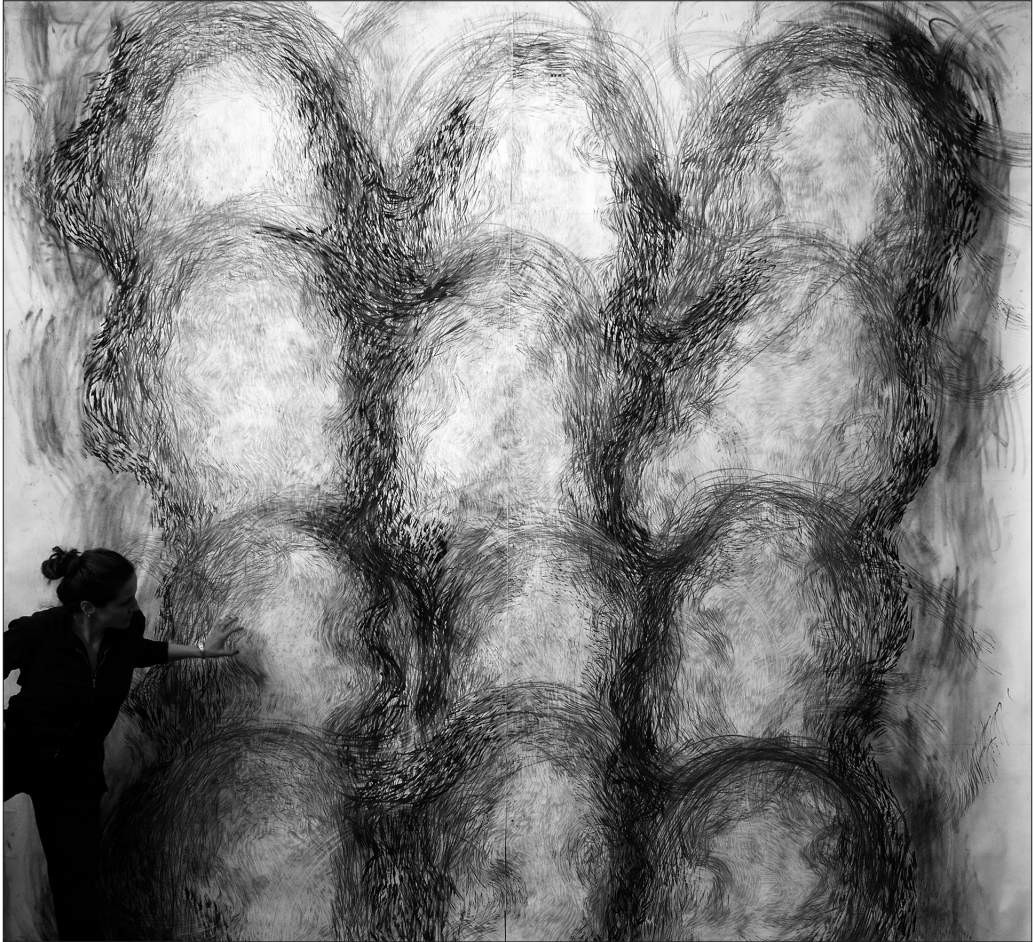


**Figure 31.** A fragment of *Rotations/Bipolar Solo* by Agnieszka Karasch. Durational effort intent within the FW11- and travelling-based compositional structure: rotary gestures mixed with wringing, slashing, punching and flicking. Graphite and charcoal on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m, January 2016.



**Figure 33.** A fragment of *Extensions-Flexions 3 Solo* by Agnieszka Karasch. Durational effort intent within the FW4- and travelling-based compositional structure: gliding, floating, punching, wringing and flicking gestures. Graphite, charcoal, eraser on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m, February 2016.





**Figure 32.** Extensions-Flexions 3 Solo by Agnieszka Karasch. Durational effort intent within the FW4 - and travelling-based compositional structure: gliding, floating, punching, wringing and flicking gestures. Graphite, charcoal, eraser on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m, February 2016.



**Figure 34.** Extensions-Flexions 4 Solo by Agnieszka Karasch. Durational effort intent within the FW4- and travelling-based compositional structure: Gliding and floating gestures. Graphite, charcoal on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m, April 2016.



**Figure 35.** A fragment of Extensions-Flexions 4 Solo by Agnieszka Karasch. Durational effort intent within the FW4- and travelling-based compositional structure: gliding, floating, slashing and punching gestures. Graphite, charcoal, eraser on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m, April 2016.



## 12.8 Evaluation of the Solo Phase

In the solo experimentation, my experience of LMA body category (body actions and gestures) correlates with shape of a trace, compositional structures and planning of the drawing. LMA category of effort, experienced mainly through gestures, correlates with quality of a mark, its tone, contrast and saturation. Additionally, when performed in a durational approach, gestures leave textures and layers and the work evokes timeless, meditative state of mind. Pausing to evaluate the solo phase, my preferences and impressions from the process can be gathered under the four main *values*:

(a, b) *Mobility* of all body parts and *clarity* of my movement's record on paper.

These two values manifested in the following rules I had set for myself at the start:

- body actions must be recordable on a two-dimensional paper surface,
- the actions must record within a horizontal plane of movement,
- the actions will be marked only with my hands.

(c) *Purposefulness* of the act:

- performance of the body action makes it possible to build visual compositional structures.

(d) *Attentiveness* of the act:

- performance of the body action allows continuous or at least frequent observation of the generated trace;
- when in the act, there is a sense of unity between the body action and its trace reflected in the timeless, meditative state of mind; this may manifest as differentiated tonality and/or complex textuality in a drawing;
- shape and quality of the trace reflect the physical effort invested in their production;
- performance of the body action does not cause any physical pain.

The above *values* set the conditions for my movement-based drawing practice and shape the ways I plan the subsequent experimentation with partnered drawing. Body actions which can be performed in accordance with these values can be further explored through drawing and its visual means of expression such as mark, line, texture, tonality, saturation and/or composition. All the body actions interpreted in the solo experimentation have been listed down in Table 2 at the end of this chapter (p. 144–145). The actions marked orange are the ones of which conduct is consistent with my values. Therefore, they have been selected to constitute my *repertoire of actions* for the subsequent co-experimentation leading to the formulation of the Reciprocal Drawing method. The repertoire's actions constitute the *motifs* of embodied exchange, that is the basic material from which the two collaborators, like partners in an improvised dance, co-initiate their unique interaction on paper<sup>79</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> On a final note, a brief reflection on the practical aspects of the solo experimentation focuses on the changes that the external space has undergone. With my large paper planes attached to the floor, I always needed a regular, open space. Besides, particular properties of the floor, such as smoothness and uniformity were necessary to avoid an injury or frottage effect on paper. Also, quick access to a washroom was needed. In this regard, for the solo experimentation to take place a thorough rearrangement, adaptation or even a change of the studio were necessary. Judging by the specificity and amounts of materials as well as the character of the required space, considerable financial expenses seem to constitute the main practical challenge. Unless the right conditions are assured by external sources, the practice is an investment. In my case, the longer solo experimentation was possible because I adopted old industrial space. My price for low rent, unlimited space, high ceilings, and natural light has been a long journey to the facility, little security, working in very low temperatures, dampness, and poor sanitary conditions.



## 12.9 Summary

My initial concern for adaptation of the body to the two-dimensional paper plane, for the position(s) I should take to leave a possibly longest trace and for the relation between an action and its trace emphasized my *shape intent* in movement. At the time of solo experimentation, I transited between the states of tending to myself (*sensing* my body) and concentrating on emergent lines and basic shapes they form.

When exploring travelling, I started moving along the horizontal plane in different directions. I suddenly had doubts about the purpose of a singular action and sense of its trace on paper. The travelling, therefore, shifted my intent towards the goal in space. Consequently, it got me engaged in thinking and planning. I started experiencing my whole body (its proportions and location) in relation to the shape, size, distances and directions of the entire paper plane. I started controlling the overall movement progression and development of visual structures. Therefore, the *space intent* is for me closely connected to compositional issues in drawing.

Towards the end of the solo experimentation, *effort intent* came to the fore. I recorded all the LMA gestures on paper, picked up the ones I enjoyed the most and immersed myself in durational exploring of the gestures' speed, pressure, space and flow through drawing. There were feelings of stillness, timelessness, intimacy and pleasure coming from being here and now and in touch with the materials, from observing the variety of new lines. Effort intent in movement accentuated the qualitative value of lines and planes, their textuality, tonality and saturation.

During the evaluation of the first phase, I defined four main values for the embodied drawing practice: the mobility, clarity of trace, purposefulness and attentiveness of the embodied drawing act. These values became the conditions for the solo practice and for the initial moments of the collaborative experimentation. The body actions that fulfill these conditions constitute my *repertoire of actions* for Reciprocal Drawing, thus becoming the *motifs* for the partnered movement of the second phase.

**Table 2.** Summary of FW actions conducted in the solo experimentation. The actions marked orange constitute the repertoire of actions for Reciprocal Drawing co-developed in the second phase of experimentation.

	PURPOSEFULNESS	ATTENTIVENESS	PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT	Creates opportunities for further experimentation
<b>GATHERING-SCATTERING</b>				
<b>FW1</b>	yes, builds structures / horizontal intent	yes, trace reflects effort	no	<b>yes</b>
<b>FW2</b>	yes, builds structures / circular, sagittal intent	yes, allows frequent observation, trace reflects effort	no	<b>yes</b>
FW3	yes, builds structures / horizontal intent	no	yes	no
<b>EXTENSIONS-FLEXIONS</b>				
<b>FW4</b>	yes, builds structures / all intents	yes, allows frequent observation, trace reflects effort	no	<b>yes</b>

FW5	no	no	yes	no
FW6	no	yes, allows frequent observation, unity between action and trace	no	no
jump	no	no	no	no
ROTATIONS				
FW9	no	yes, allows continuous observation	yes	no
FW7	no	yes, allows continuous observation	no	yes
FW10	yes, builds structures / all intents	yes, allows continuous observation, trace reflects effort	no	yes
FW11	yes, builds structures / all intents	yes, trace reflects effort	no	yes
GESTURES				
pressing	no	yes, allows continuous observation, trace reflects effort	yes	no
wringing	no	yes, allows continuous observation, unity between action and trace, trace reflects effort	no	yes
dabbing	no	yes, allows continuous observation, trace reflects effort	yes	no
slashing	no	yes, allows continuous observation, unity between action and trace, trace reflects effort	no	yes
sliding	no	yes, allows continuous observation, unity between action and trace, trace reflects effort	no	yes
punching	no	yes, allows continuous observation, unity between action and trace, trace reflects effort	no	yes
floating	no	yes, allows continuous observation, unity between action and trace, trace reflects effort	no	yes

## 13. Collaborative Phase, Binding as a Strategy for Reciprocal Drawing.

With my *values* and the *repertoire of body actions* identified in the solo phase, I now proceed to testing these actions (also typified as *motifs of exchange*) in the collaborative contexts of the second phase. For this purpose, I impose two *reciprocal partnering strategies* on the moving and marking bodies: first the *binding* and then the *point-of-contact*. Each of these two strategies will be combined with the motifs preselected from the repertoire. The strategies will be tested separately, thus forming two distinct threads of experiments. The following chapter is devoted to the strategy of binding and contains the description of three interconnected experiments. In section 13.1, I recall my co-experimentation with Ola Piechnik, and in sections 13.2 and 13.3 with Ram Samochoa.

The origin and character of these strategies is described in subsection 9.3.1 of the “Performance Drawing” chapter, while the repertoire can be previewed in a “Summary” section of chapter 12 (see p. 144–145). Its historical context is explained in subsection 9.3.2 of the “Performance Drawing” chapter. The experimentation of the solo phase is described in detail in chapter 12. My values can be found in section 12.8. The detailed description of Laban Movement Analysis along with its categories of body, effort, space and shape as well as the LMA-derived terminology used throughout this account can be found in chapter 7.


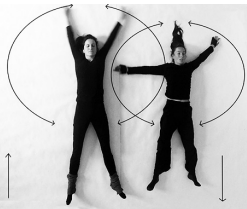




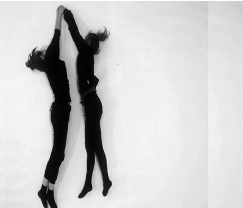

Before the decision was made in relation to the two strategies and their allocated motifs, there was a short but significant episode of picking different actions from the repertoire and combining them with different partnering strategies to eliminate the combinations leading to co-movement dynamics incongruent with the principle of reciprocity – the bodies’ continuous and uninterrupted contact. During the episode, I worked with Ola Piechnik whose profile is described in chapter 5. We conducted multiple “dry tests”<sup>80</sup> on the studio floor. Although this episode was significant, it is not described in detail as the many combinations proved irrelevant for the reciprocal approach developed in this research. As discussed in section 9.3 of the “Performance Drawing” chapter, most of the strategies do not allow the bodies’ direct contact and continuous interdependence. The logic of this elimination process is therefore only concisely presented in Table 3 (see p. 147). The left column presents exemplary floor work (FW) body actions/motifs from the repertoire. The next three columns identify the partnering strategies of which the last two had been chosen for further experimentation. Each FW motif from the left column was then mapped against each strategy, which is exemplified when following a horizontal order of cells. Looking at the next three columns and following the vertical order of their cells, respectively under each strategy, one can see that synchronized movement combined well with most of the selected motifs, point-of-contact with only some of these motifs, while binding with only one motif – the FW7 rotation.

As a result of the episode outlined above, in the collaborative phase:

1. the strategy of binding will be explored in combination with the FW7 rotation (described in section 12.4 on p. 120) and wringing gesture (12.7, p. 135); and
2. the point-of-contact strategy will be explored in combination with the FW4 extension-flexion (12.2, p. 110) and the gestures of floating and gliding (12.7, pp. 137, 138).

<sup>80</sup> “Dry test” – testing an action in movement only, without marking.

**Table 3.** Preliminary mapping of the selected FW body actions with the partnering strategies. Fragments from a working episode, Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. Private studio, Warsaw, November 2015.

FW-BODY ACTIONS	SYNCHRONIZED MOVEMENT	POINT-OF-CONTACT	BINDING
<p>gathering-scattering FW1</p> 	<p>FW1 in synced movement</p> 	<p>FW1 and point-of-contact</p> 	<p>FW1 and binding - abandoned</p>
<p>gathering-scattering FW2</p> 	<p>FW2 in synced movement</p> 	<p>FW2 and point-of-contact - abandoned</p>	<p>FW2 and binding - abandoned</p>
<p>extensions-flexions FW4</p> 	<p>FW4 in synced movement</p> 	<p>FW4 and point-of-contact</p> 	<p>FW4 and binding - abandoned</p>
<p>rotations FW7</p> 	<p>FW7 in synced movement - abandoned</p>	<p>FW7 and point-of-contact - abandoned</p>	<p>FW7 and binding</p> 

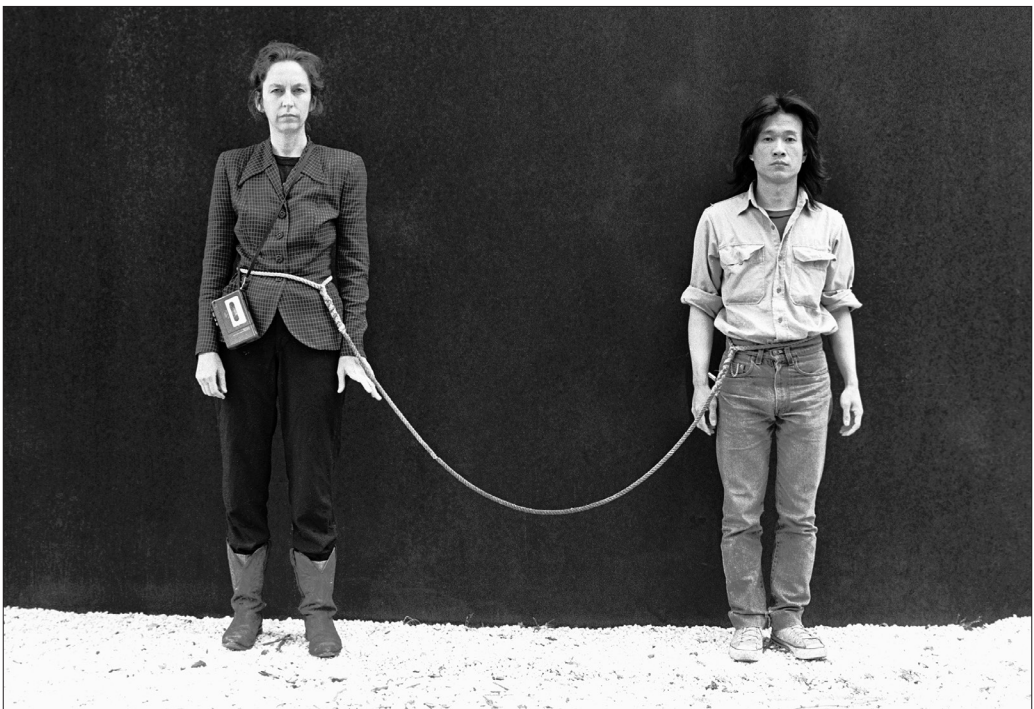
The key factors in choosing these combinations of strategies and motifs were:

- *reciprocity* of actions – high and continuous interdependence of the partners in movement (basic aim of the research);
- increased *mobility* of both of us;
- continuous contact of our moving arms with the floor, hence assumed *clarity* of our traces on paper; and
- facilitated observation of the developments between us and on the floor as well as absence of pain, which connects to my value of *attentiveness* in the drawing act.

### 13.1 *Binding/Rotations*

#### 13.1.1 Description

Inspired by the collaborative strategy adopted by Tehching Hsieh and Linda Montano (Fig. 36) for the needs of their *Art/Life One Year Performance 1983–1984 (Rope Piece)*, described in subsection 9.3.1 of the “Performance Drawing” chapter, I co-explore the dynamics of a collaborative setting in which Ola Piechnik and I directly and continuously affect each other while drawing together on the sheet of paper spread out on the floor.



**Figure 36.** Tehching Hsieh, Linda Montano *Art/Life One Year Performance 1983-1984. Life image.* Copyright © 1983 Tehching Hsieh, Linda Montano. Courtesy of the artists.

A 15-minute edited video documenting our co-experimentation can be accessed after scanning the QR code below or under the following link: [https://player.vimeo.com/video/147625385?app\\_id=122963](https://player.vimeo.com/video/147625385?app_id=122963).

Total real time of the co-experiment – 18 minutes.



**SCAN ME**

It's late fall 2015. Ola and I find ourselves on the floor of my studio (Fig. 37). We are being connected to each other with a rope tied around our wrists. Each of us has a thick piece of charcoal or a block of graphite wrapped tightly around our fingers with a heavy-duty adhesive tape. We get down on the paper and I explain the rules of our interaction:

- Our hands will initiate from the FW7 motif of rotation, yet subsequent
- rotations depend on the development of the dynamics and our individual
- movement needs.
- The 10-meter rope (ca. 390 in.) is to be wrapped around our right wrists.
- The rope must always stay tight between us to ensure tension, momentum and dependence of the two bodies in movement.
- The distance between us is irrelevant as long as the rope stays tight.
- We will not exceed the area designated by the 3,5 x 3,5 meters (137 x 137 in.) paper size.

clip 1, 00:08–00:29 min



**Figure 37.** *Binding/Rotations* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. A frame from a 15-minute edited video by A. Karasch. Exploration of rotations and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m. Private studio, Warsaw, November 2015.



We wrap the rope around our wrists a few times by which we shorten the distance between us. We start from a position in which we are sitting on our heels next to each other. Our right arms rotate left and right in sync, following their respective axes. The rope between us is winding and unwinding rhythmically around our wrists. To enable myself and Ola the broadest possible range of arm-rotation, I tilt gently to both sides in a swinging motion. She does the same. In this sequence, the two bodies' common space and pressure come to the fore. With regards to speed (or time), an anticipative quality is tangible in our bodies. I feel how this process brings us into a stable and slightly dreamy state. The similarity of our motions is a result of us trying to keep the same distance between each other and of our abstaining from individual decisions about the speed or direction of rotations. Such a uniformity in movement evokes a feeling of closeness with the other person. The co-action releases a set of serpentine, lightly jagged and identical lines on paper (Fig. 38).

**clip 2, 00:30–1:37 min**

After a while, I decide to change the direction of movement away from Ola. For this to happen, I start unwinding the rope. This immediately affects the character of my gesture as I am forced to switch from the whole arm rotations to wrist rotations which now become wide, bold, overly flexible and thrusting in half circles. The decision to breach our constancy also influences the speed of my gesture. It gets abrupt, staccato-like, and excessively repetitive. My “escape” is marked by the six gradually enlarging half-circles placed at one axis and at even distances from each other.

A moment later, my body strives to occupy the left half of the paper plane. All parts move with directivity, first up and to the left, and then down along the edge of paper. The decision to move downwards leaves one solid, bold, and continuous line that reflects my body's direct effort and equally distributed weight (Fig. 38). At this moment Ola cannot continue with our initial motif of rotation. Her actions become fragmentary and inhibited. She gets visibly disoriented, which can be seen by her hand's and its traces' now more controlled flow and heavier pressure.



**Figure 38.** *Binding/Rotations* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. A frame from a 15-minute edited video by A. Karasch. Exploration of rotations and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m. Private studio, Warsaw, November 2015.

She only manages to leave two thick and contrastive half-arches and later loses touch with the paper plane. Her body is unable to stay focused. She is trying to adapt to my speed. At moments her arm is dragged by mine by which she adds to my own arm's pressure. At the end she manages to catch up with my new location. Now, supporting herself on her knees and left arm, she appears determined and rapidly accelerates her rotary motion as if to make up for her lost focus. In this position, she harnesses my resistance and succeeds to accumulate a range of deep black circular strokes interwoven with lengthy smudges. Their rhythm results from her visibly conscious and heavy rotary work of the wrist and all five fingers.

**clip 3, 1:53–2:53 min**

We instinctively migrate to the right side of the plane as if expecting that the paper, still clean and unmarked by our motion, will bring some new dynamics between us. There, I again experience momentary synchrony of our joint movement. This time Ola initiates the sequence by locking her arm at the elbow and completely stopping her gestural rotations. I comply with her and fix my arm at the point of satisfactory tension signalled by the rope. As before, the rope's unchanging length guarantees consistence of our moving together. We start to travel unanimously up and down the paper surface. With our right arms locked and their flow restrained, we attempt to keep rotating by spinning our whole bodies (Fig. 39). For me the rope becomes an obstacle to be crossed so I activate my legs and my body core to step over it while Ola, on her buttocks and knees, chooses to spin away from me and back towards her fixed arm. We manage to travel together like this for a while, preserving the same space and relatively evenly distributed weight between us.

The experienced, alternately enlarging and contracting flow opens us up to the surrounding space, which sets us in a slightly more energized mood, playfulness and enthusiasm. Yet again, due to speeding up, we lose control. We achieve this higher mobility at the cost of the drawing in a sense that the new markings hardly appear, and the previous shapes get rubbed in, disturbed or crossed out. The textures also lose contrast or become wiped out at places because of our bodies' shifting and pressing against the paper.



**Figure 39.** *Binding/Rotations* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. A frame from a 15-minute edited video by A. Karasch. Exploration of rotations and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m. Private studio, Warsaw, November 2015.

**clip 4, 3:05–3:35 min**

The excessive mobility, but also the gradually increasing familiarity with the new dynamics of binding introduces the need for rest. So, I drag us down to the low level of movement, abandon the former “C” shape, and stretch out my body. This spinal patterning lets me roll from one side to the other and back. Ola accompanies me to the floor and after a while she raises to the mid-level and onto her knees. She chooses to shorten the distance of the rope. Approaching me in this manner, she is finally leaning over me heavily with her whole body. Cornered, I sense the urge to escape. Yet, due to the previous idleness, I decide to remain in the lying position. Only my arm rushes away from her, stretching itself excessively and enjoying the last moments of now reluctantly accelerating wrists rotations. It feels like a chase. I force myself onto my knees with the intention to confront her. Ola’s hand is now spinning and the range of her gesture is getting visibly smaller. She succeeds in fully reducing the length of the rope which brings not only our bodies but also our hands to a complete lockdown. Their pressure becomes exaggerated and the motion crude. Observing the video documentation, it seems we are sensing each other strongly and holding obsessively to one point in space. Our immobilized fingers constitute one, sturdy and inertly vibrating mark-making tool (Fig. 40). Observed in retrospect, the area bears the trace of our force (or pressure), a conglomerate of saturated black spots and loops boring into the paper and heavily contrasting against the gray textural background.



**Figure 40.** *Binding/Rotations* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. A frame from a 15-minute edited video by A. Karasch. Exploration of rotations and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m. Private studio, Warsaw, November 2015.

**clip 5, 3:47–4:55 min**

After that peaking moment, I unwind the rope and return to the low level in the same spot to continue with the previous gestural rotations. At the same time, Ola proceeds towards the cleaner area in the upper half of the paper surface. In doing this, she visibly loses her speed as if she didn't know what to do there. Then, my body wants to use the growing distance between us. I get up to the mid-level again and manage to focus on one spot that now reveals the intensifying and compacting arch-like strokes. A need appears in me to develop this texture independently, so I instinctively disconnect from Ola by stretching out my leg towards her and putting my foot on the rope section near her. I'm doing this to keep her at a distance and to simultaneously preserve the rope tight for her. That trick catches her attention. Instead of continuing her search for new ideas for movement, she stops in her tracks, turns back and aims towards my foot, with her hand rotating askew and her arm shifting to the sides. As if to inspect my foot, as if the foot was a separate unit imposing new rules of exchange. She then uses the rope as an anchor against which she stabilizes her arm and my foot as a pole around which she performs her rotary gestures (Fig. 41). Her now intense focus takes away from mine and I get distracted in my seemingly independent activity. Her actions get me ever more curious, so I replace my foot with my free left hand to continue the rotating, and at the same time, to be able to observe Ola's struggles. Once close to each other again, I treat my hand holding the rope as a lens through which I compare the speed of our gestures.

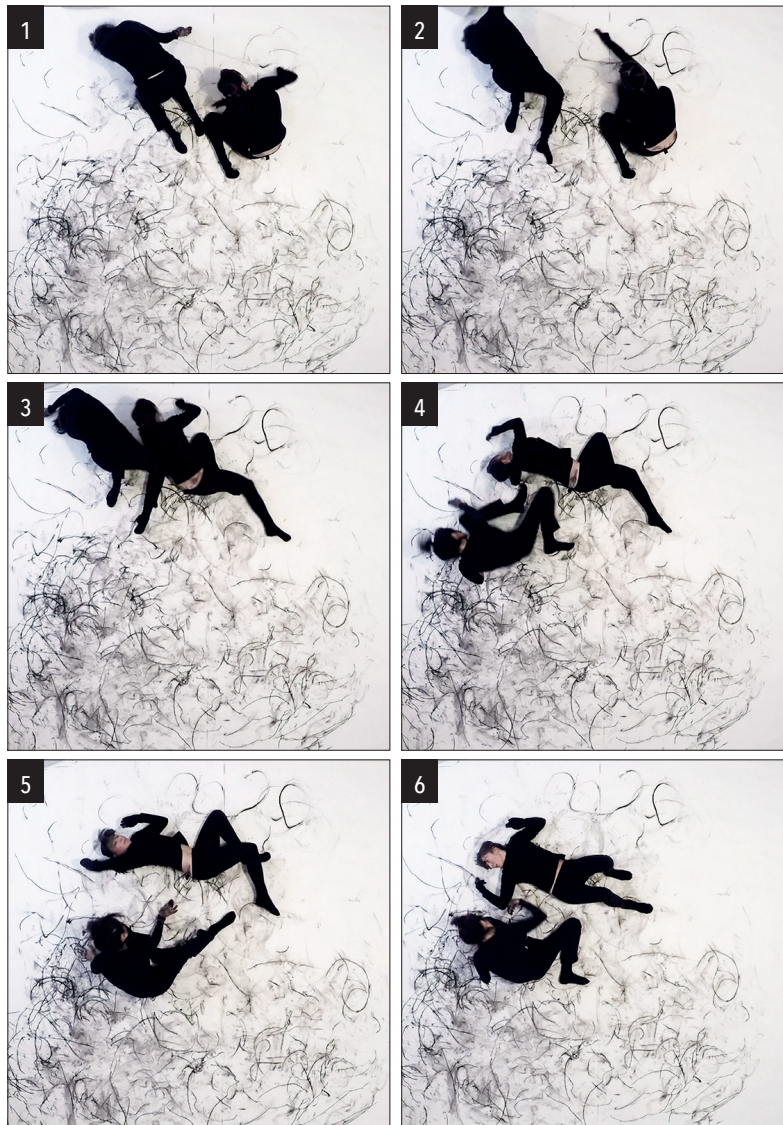


**Figure 41.** *Binding/Rotations* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. A frame from a 15-minute edited video by A. Karasch. Exploration of rotations and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m. Private studio, Warsaw, November 2015.



clip 6, 4:56–5:25 min

To my repositioning, Ola ceases her activity and resumes the previous directness of her whole body towards the fresh grounds in the upper right corner. This time, I follow her at a distance keeping the rope tight. I can clearly see her movement intention and the way her new traces integrate with the already existing traces. Once there, she expands her body's space by first boldly twisting her hand, and then the whole arm, to finally fall onto the floor by rolling her whole body. I support her in this exuberant taking control of the new territory by rotating in tune with her bound flow and accelerating speed and by controlling the range of my gestural rotations (Fig. 42). The slightly increasing pressure in my arm balances out the setting. I apply pressure increasingly, not to stop her or force her to my mode of action, but to let her feel at the wrist the adequacy of her own intention. As a result, her movement sequence reads as a set of seven clearly shaped and consecutive loops that nicely contrast against the white sheet of paper.



**Figure 42.** *Binding/Rotations* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. A set of consecutive frames from a 15-minute edited video by A. Karasch. Exploration of rotations and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m. Private studio, Warsaw, November 2015.

**clip 7, 5:38–7:08 min**

Ola begins by changing the tool. From experience I know that the 2B block of graphite, although heavier, feels slippery against the paper. She explores wrist and arm rotations, to which I withhold from moving. The necessity to sustain the tightness of the rope on her side makes her speed up her rotations excessively. I kinaesthetically empathize with how her hand's pressure becomes too light and superficial, its space so flexible that the hand goes astray from its spinning course and the very action changes from rotation to gliding and floating. If not for its sound, the tool wouldn't leave any trace of existence. I sense irritation rising in me caused by the etherealness of that empathically felt motion. So I tighten the rope to the extreme by first winding it around my body core and then by moving in the opposite direction with the intention to induce a more defined action on her part. She, however, doesn't oppose and so the almost imperceptible gliding continues in my direction with a decreasing pressure. I try the previous trick with stepping on the rope to disconnect from her for a moment, which makes her arm swing lightly like a pendulum. And only my unexpected reduction of the rope's length between us, my direct catching hold of her hand, locking it within mine, and finally extending it to our furthest reach gives a closure to this sequence (Fig. 43).



**Figure 43.** *Binding/Rotations* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. A frame from a 15-minute edited video by A. Karasch. Exploration of rotations and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m. Private studio, Warsaw, November 2015.



clip 8, 7:21–8:32 min

We return to the low-level and lay parallel to each other for a while recreating some previous rotations of a more harmonized dynamics. Then, I roll away from and back to her with an explicit reeling and unreeling of the rope around my wrist and forearm.

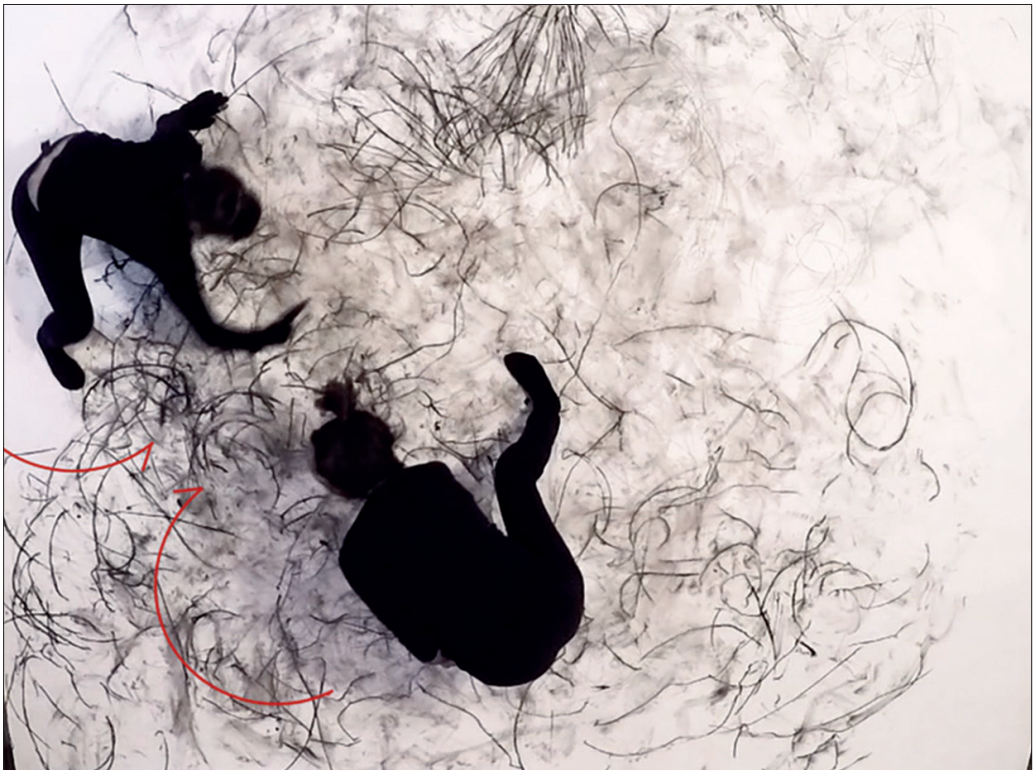


**Figure 44.** *Binding/Rotations* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. A frame from a 15-minute edited video by A. Karasch. Exploration of rotations and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m. Private studio, Warsaw, November 2015.

The rolling of the body on the floor encourages me to hold my arm in the air. For the first time my right hand loses touch with the paper. I intend to check how the pulling perpendicular to the horizontal surface will affect Ola's trace. She evades this intention. Instead, she uses the momentum, raises onto her knees and rotates in and out of sync with my ever more thrusting hand (Fig. 44). Her reaction is like trying to tame an unleashed creature. Finally, she reduces my free flow by shortening the rope length between us and pulling me over to the middle of the scene. In this part, hastiness of our arms' movement happens mainly in the mid-level. Hence, our co-action doesn't leave any trace except for additional obliteration of the already blurred textures. In this way varied tonality emerges and opaqueness of the image increases at places.

**clip 9, 8:53–10:05 min**

At some point we discover a new configuration in which we manage to move consensually together despite the rope being long and tense between us. Normally the spread of form would provoke fierceness resulting from an extreme acceleration of our gestural rotations. This time, we are detecting that by a change of level support (getting up on our feet) and by shifting the body weight from one foot to another, we are able to spin in rhythm, each around her own body-axis, and travel up, down and across the paper surface as one form (Fig. 45). By doing this we regain awareness of each other and of our connected bodies working as one in space. To mark, we need to lean forward and stretch our arms towards the floor. The increasing pressure that previously has powered up the intensity of the arches, loops and circles is now in our bent and heavily thumping legs. Marking in this position is fragmentary.



**Figure 45.** *Binding/Rotations* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. A frame from a 15-minute edited video by A. Karasch. Exploration of rotations and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m. Private studio, Warsaw, November 2015.

It is rather a light brushing of the fingers against the paper surface reflecting the quality of our relaxed and passively dangling arms. The pulling of the rope feels lighter too. The necessary support of an arm leaves a distinct wringing-like lengthy smudge here and there. Ola disrupts the sequence by getting back to the floor and trying to use our impetus, yet I do not follow and so the tension between us rises again.



clip 10, 10:07-12:36 min

Before the end we observe the directivity of our connected bodies, a short-lived and hasty chase between our rotating fingers, which starts at the bottom left and ends in the upper left side of the plane. We mimic each other in proximity and nervously exchange each other's inhibited flow and increasing pressure. Space between us stays the same. This energetic yet stable co-action only thickens and reinforces the entanglement of strokes visible on the left side of the paper. When reaching the top of the drawing I roll onto my back to terminate my activity by unfolding the rope. From now on I let Ola explore on her own. She is drifting away from me, proceeds towards the peripheries of our designated space, left alone with her FW7 action – the simultaneous extending, contracting and rotating of an arm (Fig. 46). In this final moment she seems to be adding substance to the right side of the drawing. Ultimately, my disengagement becomes a background to her solitary action. The desired tension disappears, she doesn't try to get me moving and so the contract between us dissolves. I perceive her activity becoming pointless. She gets down to the lowest level and rests on her side, far enough from me for the line to stay tight.



**Figure 46.** *Binding/Rotations* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. A frame from a 15-minute edited video by A. Karasch. Exploration of rotations and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m. Private studio, Warsaw, November 2015.

### 13.1.2 Interpretation

The broad space delineated by the paper urged us to experience the near-, mid- and far-reach of our kinespheres<sup>81</sup>. The paper placed on the floor inspired movement mainly within the horizontal and sagittal planes of the body. Additionally, we limited ourselves to the middle and low levels of movement. This gave us a chance to sense our own and each other's body pressure and observe how that sensing affects our traces on paper.

At the beginning we used a fairly limited field. As time passed, we expanded to all four sections of the paper. With an increasing distance between us, we engaged more body parts and our own rotations became more spacious. The requirement to keep the rope tight gave our bodies' shaping primarily advancing and spreading qualities. Staying overtly mobile and far away from each other for longer than 30 seconds, made us disperse our energies, lose concentration and get overstimulated motorically and emotionally.

When reading the description of the co-action, what comes to the fore is the opposition of the *stable* and *mobile states* with a distinct tendency towards the latter. While being in the mobile state, we tend to engage most of our limbs and move in random directions, away from and then again towards each other, which makes us similar to one gigantic and overactive octopus. Further, according to LMA, in the mobile state qualities of *speed* and *flow* come to the fore. In this co-experiment speed either rapidly accelerates or slows down for both of us. The bodies' flow violently fluctuates between the free and bound quality. For Laban, the experience of speed (or time) connects to commitment and our capacity to make decisions (as in Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). In our Reciprocal Drawing, there is a sense of urgency to catch up with the collaborator, to make it before the rope loosens up, to enable the other to finish a sequence of strokes without losing one's own balance. The rushing gets interrupted by moments of lingering, which does not mean that the sense of urgency disappears. On the contrary, although tired or sensing emerging resistance, I still want Ola to continue with her mark-making, but I feel that the change in her actions can only be provoked by my passivity. Further, in LMA high amplitudes in experiencing the body flow are associated with progression (Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). Since I follow the rules and pay attention to the developments on paper simultaneously, for me the stronger emphasis on flow is connected to an aspect of control. Less or more bound quality of flow serves me to keep the co-action going. Finally, in reference to the marks made in the mobile state, one collaborator's trace transforms visibly with each consecutive gesture, while the other is hardly leaving any traces. For example, in the second clip my jagged line suddenly develops to a curved-up stroke, to a wavy line and then to a group of smudges and so on, while Ola leaves just two small traces behind. Or I am able to transform the radius and saturation of my drawn curve from one gesture to another, while at the same time Ola's gestural activity is being reduced to random scattering of dots and/or smudges around my expansive form. This evokes association with asymmetrical composition in a picture where agglomeration of forms on one side is counterposed with empty space on the other. Here, I also think of dominant-versus-subordinate (or dominant-versus-accent) type of compositions wherein the largest expanse of visual form is counterposed with the smallest relative area within the image plane.

When I refer to stable state, I mean the type of dynamics showing in the clips 1, 3, 9 or 10 and best described as a parallel or analogous performing of the actions. The stable state, although infrequent in this co-experiment, is visible when the distance between

<sup>81</sup> Kinesphere – a space delineated by our individual body.

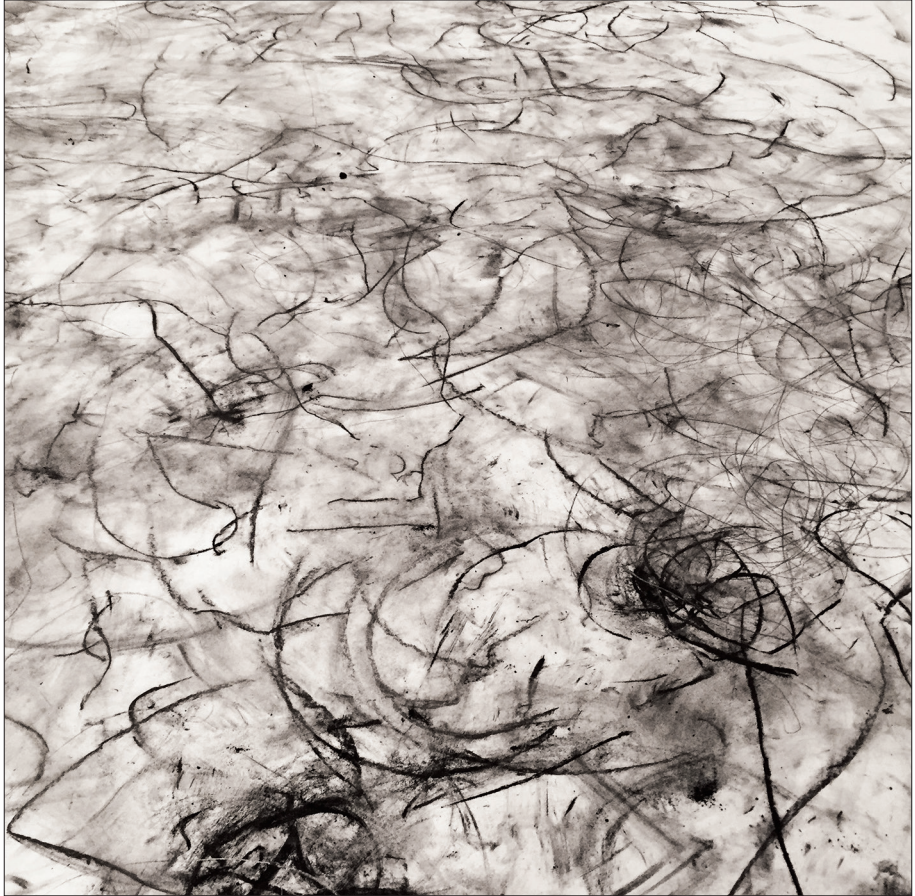
us does not change in time during the process (when the rope length stays the same as we move) and when we distribute the pressure evenly between us (the rope's tension does not change). According to LMA, stable state correlates with the heightened experience of space and pressure. These, in turn, are linked respectively to attention (thinking) and sensing (impact produced) (Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). Indeed, when moving unanimously with Ola I can focus outward and inward at the same time, I easily determine the location of our bodies in relation to each other as well as within the drawing, and I can foresee the direction of our pathway. Whatever the distance between us, I can also better sense the rhythm of my collaborator's movement. Ola's muscular tightness, swiftness, coordination and automatism now become more tangible. As if wired through the rope, these "qualia" (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011, p. 49) flow directly from her body towards mine. Bound together and constantly in motion we rarely reach that state. Yet, once we happen to achieve it, we move unanimously in any direction. The experience of the stable state makes us into an integrated form that seems to be carrying along a line of symmetry built into itself. The symmetry is visible in the way the traces accumulate on paper. They either build up fast in one spot once we are close to one another, or form two distinct and symmetrically placed groups of shapes when we are further away from each other. In either case, the shapes are almost identical, forming either serpentine, jagged lines or bold, curved up strokes and/or smudges.

As time passes we engage in the involuntary recording and erasing of the traces with our bodies. Our marks become transient and elusive. The rich layering gives off a deep texture. In fact, the self-forming texture and layering, as if independent from its makers, comes to be the intrinsic characteristics of the strategy's visual outcome. Watching this process on the video, I think of William Kentridge performing his drawn animations (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkKzEKg5Wwo>, 0:10–0:20 min). Much like in his works, while the most recently formed shapes transform and reconfigure under our constantly operating hands, the past shapes constitute one cumulative and hardly inspectable mass.



**Figure 47.** Records from the collaborative experiment *Binding/Rotations* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m, November 2015. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch.





**Figure 48.** Records from the collaborative experiment *Binding/Rotations* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ola Piechnik. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m, November 2015. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch.

The final drawing (Fig. 47, 48) presents an expansive and amorphous circular form consisting of two, at places, three layers. The bottom layer appears to be made of tonal patches and smudges. The tonality has a rather constant value of gray and only in the lower left corner of the picture the gray slightly increases towards black. Such is the background for the surface layer, where the disordered dots, thin loops and arches are scattered all over the drawing surface. They get more pronounced in the lower left corner. The further away from there the more they disintegrate or merge with the bottom stratum. When looking at the drawing I think of weather maps on which moving clouds dynamically overlap with winds, air motion and other weather phenomena.

### 13.1.3 Evaluation

Since the experiment has come to an end, I reflect on the quality of the co-practice and the ensuing opportunities for the drawing process. I also take a closer look at various problems and, based on their nature, point the direction for further experimentation. For a start, the experienced situation was consistent with my original value of clarity of the trace. Although torn between the mobile and stable states, the dynamics released by the strategy enabled us to fluently mark with our hands and record our movement. In many ways, our interaction has also been consistent with the rules we contracted upon. We moved within the designated boundaries, managed to keep the rope tense and bound around our wrists. Further, we initiated from the FW7 action and, as expected,



the motif was being modified by the presence of the collaborator in terms of its character and quality. One person's alteration in the direction or level of movement transformed the other's initial motif to variety of body actions including extensions, flexions, rotations, smaller rotary gestures, pressing, wringing, gliding or floating. This mutual influence made it possible for us to release a wide array of new, less controlled lines forming unexpected and irregular shapes. Next, by continuously changing our movement's speed, space, pressure, and flow we were affecting each other's gestures in terms of their quality. In this way the new lines and shapes expressed a whole spectrum of bodily attitudes embedded in our interaction such as: rapidity, urgency, impulsiveness, randomness, impatience but also tightness, control or leisurely attitude. Such an expressive richness in mark-making was not achievable for me neither in my solo experimentation nor in my former more traditional drawing practice. It was because now I was in a position of continuous, intentional acting and re-acting to the other's presence. I conclude from this that the reciprocal strategy of binding reinforces intentionality of my actions and builds my physical spontaneity by which it enriches the shape and quality of a drawn line.

Additionally, the co-movement had instantaneously put me in the state of attentiveness, which I had appreciated during the solo experimentation. However, there I achieved this condition after about 15 minutes of uninterrupted focus. This time, attentiveness of the Reciprocal Drawing act manifested itself in an uninterrupted intense concentration and the feeling of merging with the other artist, the traces and the paper. Undoubtedly, it was also Ola who contributed to me feeling like this. From the moment we met, moving with her made me confident and enabled complete immersion in bodily sensations without unnecessary caution or excessive thinking about psychological intricacies of this new relation. Moreover, the ways of moving imposed by the strategy of binding, although dynamic and impulsive, made it possible for me to observe and appreciate the developments on paper. Also, when collaborating with Ola, I mostly felt there was compatibility between the amount of physical effort generated and what was being produced on paper. And this feeling grew proportionally to the expansion of the marks within the image surface. Likewise, an impression of general adequacy accompanied me when I inspected the drawing in the aftermath. I enjoyed returning to my studio and contemplating the dimmed, nebulous form that reminded me of this exciting experience. From this I draw that the collaborative strategy of binding strengthens the connection between my perceptive intentional body and the means of drawing. It is also beneficial when the collaborator has some practical experience with partnering in movement.

Next to the opportunities there are a few challenges that emerged during the co-action. The first challenge—the mutually enforced incessant coercion to make motor decisions—directly results from the contracted rule to keep the rope tight. Since we agreed to this, there was not a slightest chance to individually recuperate or temporarily continue on one's own. This is also why the moments of fatigue or irritability made me instinctively block the rope with a foot or a free arm. The maneuver turned out to be a rather short-lived solution. Besides, the blocking could also be qualified as breaking of the rules. Clearly, I could have resisted coercion by a complete loosening the rope, yet this would have equated with eliminating myself from the game. In this sense, the strategy of binding brings in an either-or type of dynamics to the collaboration. It is a binary, highly engaging and transformative reciprocal strategy that does not allow the collaborators to stay in more neutral ranges of physical effort for more than a few seconds. To assure greater flexibility in the next action, I consider replacing the rope made of cotton string with an elastic band. I also consider changing the initial motif to other floor work (FW) action.

Oddly enough, further challenges result from my earlier emphasis on full mobility. In binding the heightened mobility sets in immediately. Even the slightest change of direction or level of movement on one side, but also tightening or loosening up of the rope, instantly dynamizes the entire configuration from within. The predominance of this status quo sometimes made me perceive myself in opposition to Ola. This is, for example, visible in the clips number 2 and 6 (pp. 150, 154). As soon as an individual decision was made by one person, the other was forced to react instantaneously. At moments of one partner's breaking away from the stability, the other had an alternative to either be a supporter or an opponent, to lend her own effort or to preserve the effort to herself and by the same token raise tension. Thinking back, I realize that my frequent compulsion to choose the position of the supporter was a result of my trying to preserve the harmony of the whole. I may try to compile my actions into a meaningful "syntaxis" (PioTroski, 1989, n.p.), yet doing that I automatically introduce confusion to the other's order. My will becomes the other's chaos and reversely, the other's will results in my chaos. Eventually—as performance artist Zygmunt Piotrowski (personal communication, October 8, 2001) would say—one person performs alternately to the other in the foreground. In this sense, the exaggerated mobility sets us into defined positions of a leader versus supporter, user versus facilitator. Considering this, greater flexibility is needed.

The rapid and unexpected transitions between the mobile and stable states brought restlessness into our exchange. The enforced and volatile character of the encounter prevented us from longer contemplation and elaboration of any section, all the more from its planning and completion. The drawn shapes kept appearing and disappearing as we moved. That is why the traces became less and less relevant to us as the mark-making progressed. I wonder to what extent the restlessness wasn't a result of our temperaments combined. Well-coordinated and strong, Ola missed the bodily qualities that unfit people possess: the fatigue, clumsiness or even direct passivity. I suppose these perceived shortcomings would have brought along an atmosphere of expectant hesitation mixed with puzzlement into our play. Additionally, she had never had a deeper experience with drawing, which she emphasized a few times when we planned the collaboration. I suppose her inexperience as well as the overall athletic predisposition made her follow the rules without questioning them too much. In the breaks we talked about trivial or project-unrelated stuff. In these talks, Ola neither suggested anything directly referring to our work nor offered too many ideas of how we could develop the strategy together. She rather waited for my epiphanies, then agreed and executed them. Her attitude to our collaboration suggested she treated it as some form of fun and physical exercise. I assume that the same actions, strategy and rules, once played out with a different personality and different body, would have brought about radically different dynamics and a product altogether. Regardless of the possible scenarios, the collaborators' concentration on a specific task within the paper plane is needed to stabilize the interchange.

The traces from this encounter accentuated the most important challenge of all, the inconsistency of the co-action with my value of purposefulness. The lack of purpose is identifiable by the rich textuality and absence of broader visual structure in the drawing. These features correlate with the absence of a goal in our use of space and with this our broader perspective for movement. We moved mostly in the left bottom quarter as the drawing reveals. However, this as well as any other positioning of our bodies was not a result of any prior intention. Instead, one person's individual movement was being defined by the other person as a continuously changing point of reference. This led to our mutual bouncing back and forth against each other. Exciting as it was, it felt like riding a perpetuum mobile or navigating in the outer space of little or zero gravity. In this way, my energy fluctuated and ideas depleted quickly.

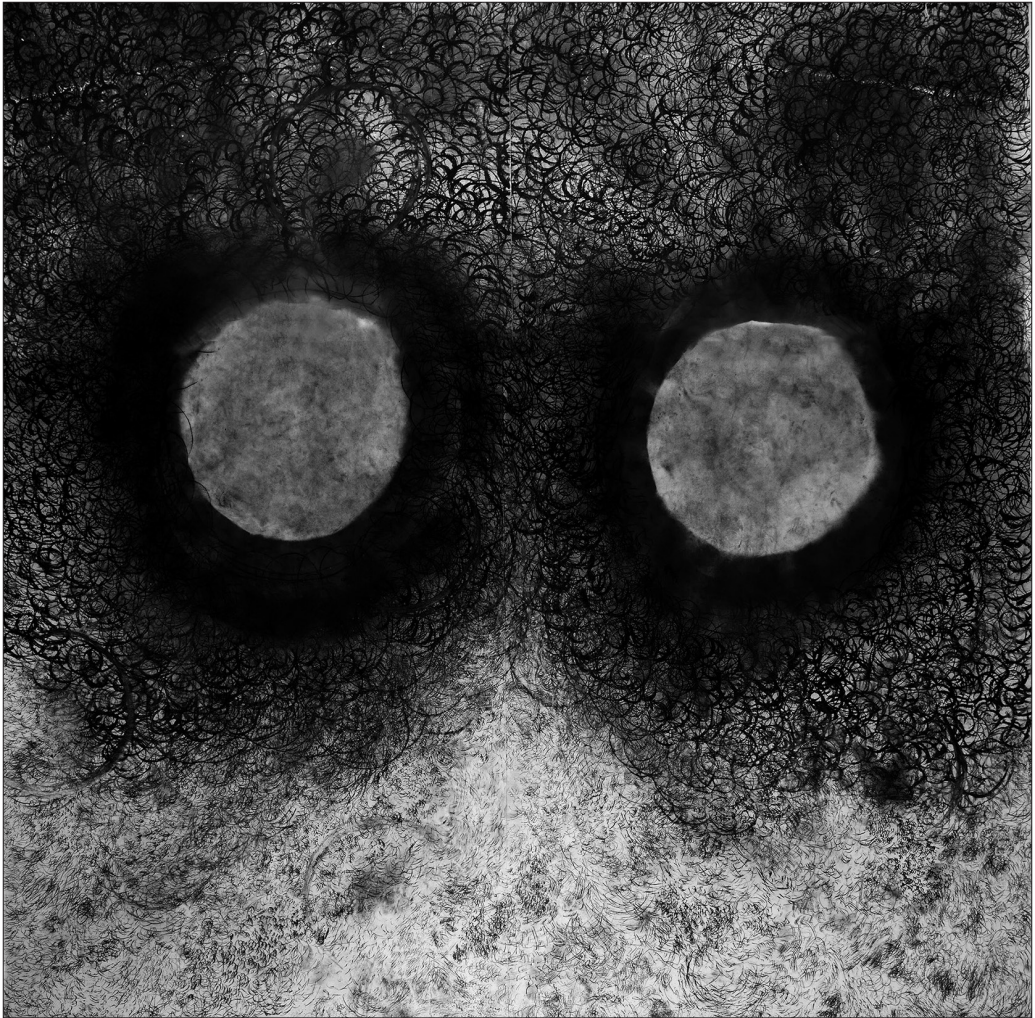
I presume that a solution to this problem will be a clear goal for each of us separately that will fuel our individual partitive decisions in the strive for the whole. Therefore, next to the repertoire's motif, rules and the partnering strategy, a visual structure and the interrelated *diagram* are needed. I expect the diagram to be like a script which the collaborators internally follow and which anchors their actions in something beyond their bodies' mere interdependence. In this way, the simple (re-)acting is expected to be replaced by a deliberate action. I also assume that the grounding character of the diagram will eliminate the previously observed challenges such as restlessness of motions or mutability and transience of traces.

### 13.2 *Binding/Rotations Bipolar*

In the previous experiment, Ola Piechnik and I tested the dynamics of binding as a reciprocal strategy for drawing. In the reflections pertaining to the nature of our interaction, I pointed towards physical spontaneity and authenticity which enriched the qualities of our marks. I also emphasized the value of uninterrupted focus and merging with the collaborator and the traces. The tonally balanced, textural mass resulting from our interplay comprised a whole that was full of elegant power, which gave me a sense of being constantly in touch with that exciting experience.

In my evaluation, I also alluded to restlessness and compulsion as the strategy's characteristic traits, its high capacity to force the other's movement and to generate polarization of roles. Next to deep layering and intense texture, the drawing revealed lack of structure. This feature let me infer as to the absence of an outside goal in our moving together, it let me point out incoherence of the co-practice with my value of purposefulness. To ground the process in something beyond the bodies' sole reciprocity, I decided to introduce a *diagram* based on which the collaborators can justify their spatial decisions and thus make the co-movement more purposeful. As a result, next to a reciprocal strategy and chosen motif (see Tab. 2, p. 144-145), all the subsequent co-experiments base on a diagram linked to my solo drawing. A historical background for the rules and diagrams (score) can be described in subsection 9.3.3 of the "Performance Drawing" chapter.

To comply with the third point, for the purpose of the upcoming co-experiment, I go back to my studio to prepare a large-scale drawing composed of the rotary actions forming two circles placed symmetrically next to each other (Fig. 49). In the co-action, the circles are recommended to be recreated by the collaborators simultaneously as a result of our performing of the FW7 and FW11 actions (described in section 12.4, p. 120 and p. 124). The directions of the collaborators' activity are suggested by the arrangement of arrows shown on the related diagram (Fig. 50).



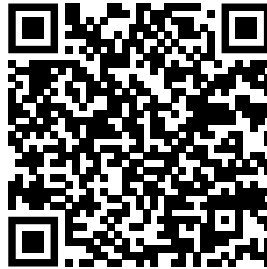
**Figure 49.** *Rotations Bipolar Solo* by Agnieszka Karasch, a solo drawing as a frame for the collaborative performance *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by A. Karasch and R. Samocha. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m, January 2016. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch.



### 13.2.1 Description

Further inspired by the collaborative strategy adopted by Tehching Hsieh and Linda Montano in their *Art/Life One Year Performance 1983–1984 (Rope Piece)*, described in subsection 9.3.1, I continue to explore the dynamics of a collaborative setting in which Ram Samocha and I affect each other by drawing together on the sheet of paper spread out on the floor. The profile of Ram with whom I will conduct the two forthcoming, binding-related experiments is described in chapter 5. A 7-minute edited video documenting our co-experimentation can be accessed after scanning the QR code below or under the following link: [https://player.vimeo.com/video/188406618?h=9f38b-7d7e8&app\\_id=122963](https://player.vimeo.com/video/188406618?h=9f38b-7d7e8&app_id=122963).

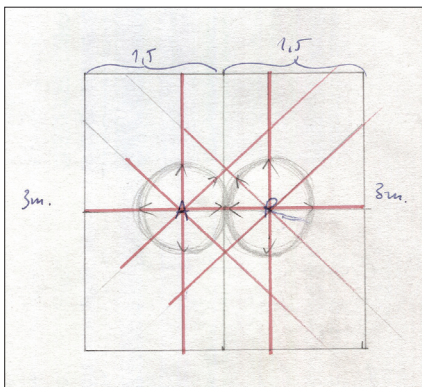
Total real time of the co-experiment – 26 minutes.



SCAN ME

It's the end of summer 2016. Crows Nest Gallery is an alternative art space in London. The gallery hosts the annual "Draw to Perform" Symposium of which Ram Samocha is an organizer, curator and a participant. Ram is understandably busy and fortunately we don't have a chance to make any longer preparations. Ten minutes before the start of our performance we get together at the back of the gallery and I briefly remind him the rules of our interaction:

- The basic structure will be drawn with the FW11 and FW7 motifs, yet the subsequent rotations depend on the dynamics of our exchange.
- The 10-meter rope (ca. 393 in.) is to be tied around our wrists.
- The rope must stay tight between us.
- The distance between us is irrelevant as long as the rope stays tight.
- We will not exceed the area designated by the 3 x 3 meter (118 x 118 in.) paper size.
- We will try to follow the diagram (Fig. 50) related to my drawing entitled *Rotations Bipolar Solo* (Fig. 49):



**Figure 50.** A diagram based on the *Rotations Bipolar Solo* drawing, presenting the suggested direction of movement progression and gestural activity for the partners. A – Agnieszka's starting position, R – Ram's starting position. August 30, 2016.



Ram likes the simplicity of the diagram. At the back of the gallery space we quickly test the dynamics of binding without any marking. He gets the point right away and instantly suggests that we change the initiating motif from the FW11 (rotation of the whole body) to FW10 (circle-like rotation of the forearm, as presented in section 12.4, p. 122). I agree to this. Additionally, we decide that in the starting moments, when performing the FW10, one will signal individual progression to the other by counting and not by the rope's tension. I am fond of his initiative as it makes us equal and adds energy to our going "on stage."

**clip 1, 00:00–04:10 min**

We go out into the gallery space. The audience is gathering on the side. The clean paper is attached to the floor and ready for us to enter. After fixing the rope we get down onto our knees and position our elbows on the paper. We start designating our respective centers by moving our marking forearms to the left. While doing this I count from one to four, one such count for each quarter of a circle. Ram listens and follows. Then, we repeat the sequence with him doing the counting and me the following. The rope between us is loose at this point. Only listening to each other's count off gives us information about the other's speed and development of the drawn shape. In this way we progress unanimously and come up with the two identical circles situated symmetrically next to each other (Fig. 51).



**Figure 51.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.



**Figure 52.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. A frame from a 30-minute video by A. Karasch. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016.

Shortening of the rope between us and stepping into the positions marks the beginning of our interdependence. We start working from the two polarized areas in the image space, each of us trying to complete their first full set of rotary gestures along the circular path (Fig. 52). Positioned in the middle of my ring, I realize that we'll soon be entering each other's kinespheres for the first time. A thought appears that if I look at him, he might take it as an encouragement to take more definite action. So, I am tending to myself and hoping to prolong our attentive disposition. My body space becomes limited and flow rather bound. I focus on the narrow area and start drawing circles with my arm extended and partially blocked at the elbow. My arm feels like a big and unwieldy shovel (Fig. 53) because I cannot relax. I keep observing my trace. The black loops are continuous although I sense something dull about them. Together, they look like a coiled wire being stretched in a harmonica-like manner, much too identical and monotonous. I then compare my mode to his and it is the willingness to compare myself to him that opens me up. Out of the corner of my eye, I can see him becoming ever more alert and agile. With his attention wandering back and forth between my marking hand and his own trace, he manages to adapt to the speed and directions of my arm. His moves become quicker and more efficient. One time inside, another time outside of his circle, once closer, then further away from me. His weight is distributed evenly between his arms and legs, and his body core is rising and descending, shifting left and right over the paper surface (Fig. 54). At this moment he is also the one looking out for the rope to stay tight and for the distance to remain the same. With his attention channelled, he leaves behind swift and curvy strokes that seem to me much more diverse and fluent than mine.

After a while his strokes form puffy, cloud-like shapes and invade my half of paper. I cannot reach that ease with which he's marking. Yet, I realize that his growing ease and mobility are correlated with my body's decreasing flow. My body remembers this correlation from the previous co-experiment with Ola when I learned that if I relax to move more gracefully then the other would be forced to jump around me in a much less coordinated manner. Thus, I'm unable to loosen up now, for I speculate that my relaxation will dislodge what I interpret to be Ram's forming self-confidence in relation to the strategy of binding.



**Figure 53.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.



**Figure 54.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: M. Neta.



clip 2, 4:10–7:55 min

I try to open up so that he identifies my approachability and feels the connection. We then manage to synchronize with each other for a split second. Our bodies' flow now becomes equally dense and our arms rotate continuously with the same condensing pressure. With each turn of a wrist, we both manage to throw off a piece of a rope while moving away from each other at the same speed. In this way the rope remains constantly taut and each of us develops an independent sequence of arches and loops. Their vectors point in different directions. At this very moment I sense how our bodies discover the best in the strategy. From now on, Ram starts moving with even more confidence. He gets visibly focused on developing his section and all body parts mobilized towards his own task. The rope seems not to hinder his progression anymore and I feel that he's losing me as the winding and unwinding rather invigorate than disturb him. While he's expanding his spatial range, I again stick to the same spot as before. Although with my back turned to him, I still feel his swiftness and agility behind me. I'm becoming absent-minded in my mark-making. My body inclines towards the task, yet my attention is fully out there where he is.



**Figure 55.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. A frame from a 30-minute video by A. Karasch. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016.

With my ever-growing awareness of his successful results, his mobility, focus and clarity of his traces, I suddenly get irritated by the co-dependence with which he's been dealing so well. I get annoyed with my concern for him and the resulting distraction from my own goal. So, I try to stir my body into action by getting up on my feet (Fig. 55), turning towards him and the audience and then returning to the low level of movement.

By this postural change and by drawing bolder circles, I slow him down and catch his attention. The turnabout on my side has visibly taken him off the course, and he decides to secure his freedom by stepping with his foot on the rope. I suppose he knows the move because I have already done it a couple of times. A rushed exchange of gestures in the air follows like a short-lived tug of war (Fig. 56). This, in turn, automatically introduces the well-known fierceness and frantic pulling at the opposite ends of the rope.

We then keep stepping on it, each one to ensure the further development of our parts of the composition. The ever-growing focus on one's own area and the fierceness make the charcoals slip out from between our fingers. We have to take breaks

to re-fasten the tools. Ram uses my pauses to accelerate and/or change from rotations to short and hasty gliding gestures, while I use his breaks to freely develop the wringing gesture. We suddenly start to inform each other verbally about these short breaks by saying “stop,” “wait,” “hold on,” “now,” “go,” which reintroduces some basic cooperation.



**Figure 56.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.

With the previously mentioned change in my attitude, the dynamic of our co-movement visibly changes. My concentration wanders back to my task. With the increase of my body's speed and pressure, my gestures become more decisive. Ram reacts to this instantly by suspending from his own marking. He turns towards me and starts pulling on the rope in the air from afar and in sync with my own motions. This adds to my speed yet at the same time eases pressure, so the gesture feels like aided by an exoskeleton (Fig. 57).



**Figure 57.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.



The pleasure of it grows smaller though when I suddenly feel my arm being pulled over by Ram onto his side of the plane. To this move, I respond by stepping on the rope, which gives a halt to the pulling. From then on, we drift away from each other, in my interpretation both in space and in our minds. The foot ensures that we draw the loops independently, each one of us in our own position, rhythm, and effort. The disconnection eases off the tension between us. After some time, our bodies mutually adjust. On hands and knees, with our backs leaning against each other and the rope running under our bodies like a stabilizer, we are leaning over our respective parts of the drawing (Fig. 58).



**Figure 58.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. A frame from a 30-minute video by A. Karasch. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016.

### clip 3, 11:02–12:47 min

Ram's decision to get up on his feet and advance with the core extended towards the floor reduces the recurring fierceness within our setup. Although we continue to concentrate on our individual pieces, his changing the level support initiates our calmer and more harmonized interplay. I'm now travelling on my knees over to his side. While preserving the same rhythm between our arms, I pull his body to my side for us to continue with the rotations there. Then again, he takes me back to his place of origin. And so we keep shifting back and forth for a few seconds (Fig. 59).

At one point Ram gets back to his own half, yet I do not follow. From my territory and with my whole body turned towards him I continue working on his part at a distance. I do this by imitating that what he offered me before – the supportive pull on the rope which counterposes the pressure in the partner's marking hand. Performing this at the cost of my own mark-making I can feel that he is now easily submitting to the movement quality suggested by my arm. His rotary gestures are voluminous and bold against the paper as he adapts to my hurried and highly energetic tugs. With the tugs becoming slower and shorter, Ram's arm relaxes, his marking hand feels much less resistant, and the circular motions finally dissolve into light dabbing gestures. Then again, through the rope I suggest that he mimics my rotations, and he doesn't oppose (Fig. 60). I attempt to use these dynamics and try to pull him over to my side, my arm reaches out high into the air in a series of forceful jostles. However, his knees stay within the range of his own circle and only his core extends to leave quite a few lengthy strokes within my zone. I find these traces visibly crossing out my previous work and creating discord in my cluster of loops.



**Figure 59.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.



**Figure 60.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.



**clip 4, 12:47–15:00 min**

My support given at a distance tightened the rope severely on my wrist. I stop and free myself from the rope for a moment. This resets the dynamics between us. We both reach out for new tools and then get down to our respective starting positions. I attempt to restore the equilibrium we had at the very start. This time, however, the rope is around our wrists and instead of the FW10 action, we perform gestural rotations as we progress along our previously outlined circuits. My counting aloud suggests the speed and ensures continuity of the entire sequence. Halfway through the circuit, we display a growing mutual attunement. Our bodies, leaning towards our own traces, simultaneously turn towards each other and our focus is evenly divided between the drawing and the partner's movement (Fig. 61). Only now and then the fluency gets interrupted by quick adjustments of the rope's length. Thereupon, I put my left hand on the rope to better attune to Ram's motion. I try to extend the counting to the maximum, but he suddenly takes charge of the counting and speeds up with the rotations. Soon after, he returns to his hasty and short gliding gestures. This takes me by surprise. I perceive these strokes as totally incompatible with the accumulated dense record of our activity. Besides, in my opinion the strokes introduce dissonance with what I project as a result of our performance.



**Figure 61.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.

**clip 5, 15:00–16:30 min**

When I attempt to join Ram on his half, he unexpectedly reacts with crawling over to my territory. The switch of positions is followed by him speeding up his gestural activity on my part of the drawing. Transferred through the rope, the pressure of his hand now feels strong and stubborn. Additionally, all his body parts get activated as he starts turning around in circles. His marking arm spins vividly while his legs kick back when crossing over the rope. He seems to move as if he doesn't care about how I'll react. I start spinning around in a similar fashion, but I feel as if I'm being pulled into a vortex. When trying to regain my orientation, I notice how his traces, now wide and crude loops drawn with a thick and undifferentiated line, build up on top of my

drawing. Additionally, the rushed movement of his feet creates smudges and slowly erases my part. Thousand guesses run through my head: Is he trying to make my piece look like his? Is he going to restructure everything? Or perhaps intending to destroy my record completely? So I stop marking, lower my body down and lay my arm flat on the paper surface. I do this partly to manifest my objection and partly to change his behavior (Fig. 62). My abruptly condensing flow slows him down a bit, yet he doesn't stop in his tracks. He continues by walking across the drawing and performing gliding gestures from an upright position (Fig. 63). Once he's reached the bottom left corner of the paper, he blocks me off with the foot, says "stop" and untangles his wrist. As a result of his interference, the two halves of the image become similar to each other. Additionally, ten blunt thick strokes stand out against the pure white of the paper.



**Figure 62.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.



**Figure 63.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. A frame from a 30-minute video by A. Karasch. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016.



**clip 6, 16:50–21:20 min**

Awakened by the previous events, I place my circles decisively and mindlessly, feel less attracted to detail and my attachment to the original vision of the drawing slowly dissolves. My line emanates relaxation mixed with recklessness. I don't care so much anymore. As if I had crossed some critical point, the space of the image around opens and expands. The directions merge into one. I am not looking at Ram. The rope, however, remains tight because we've begun to habitually wind it up, throw it off our wrists and regulate the distance between our bodies.

Suddenly, I get entangled in the rope. To this, Ram stops marking, gets up on his feet and initiates the supportive pull of the rope on my wrist. His body is leaning backwards, which adds pressure and loftiness to my arm and changes my rotations to bouncy dabs (Fig. 64). The charcoal falls out of my hand, and I start marking with my dirty fingers. The co-action adds transparency and freshness to the smudges. I recognize his style in my movement. While performing his support Ram walks around me. We exchange looks and smile at each other. Finally, he exceeds the area designated by the paper and enters the gallery space.



**Figure 64.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.

After a while the roles exchange. This time, I decide to minimize any effort on my part. I just follow him on my knees with my arm bouncing back and forth, put in motion by Ram's movement initiative. I observe how he enters the relatively indeterminate bottom part of the paper and hallmarks it with the same strokes I disapproved of previously. Then again, he audaciously enters my circle and starts smudging my traces with both of his hands flat against the paper. Once more, I observe how all my efforts disappear in an instant. The hissing, rhythmic sound of his erasure brings me immediately to a boiling point. By the time he wipes off half of the form, I manage to completely reduce the distance between us and lock his hand in mine. On my hands and knees and with my whole force, I am pressing against his body to push him off my spot. Our flow stifles and we almost come to a full stop. At the same time, I try to force his hand onto the remnants of his own actions so that we can also destroy them together (Fig. 65).



I succeed for a moment but then he pushes me back, quickly unwinds the rope, activates his second hand, and finally completes the full annihilation of my entire rotary work.

We've come so far, yet I realize that the pleasure of inspecting the overall effect of our co-action is being taken away from me. Somehow, I presume, it's also being taken away from the audience. The drawing suddenly seems like an epitome of chaos. There'll be nothing left, not even the slightest subtlety to inspect. At best, there'll be traces of wrestling contest. At worst, a record of fury and revenge. My anger is reflected in my last effort to stop him from going any step further. So, I support myself on my arm and legs and, with my entire body, I pull him up and away from the paper surface (Fig. 66). The selected gestures, the composition, basically all the rules have long ago become of secondary importance. I fully mobilize to settle our score and use the moment when his raid eases off to pull him over to me and finish off with erasing of his piece. Meanwhile, he's laughing. He seems to submit, but still uses his free hand to wipe out all the finer elements sticking out from under the dust.



**Figure 65.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.



**Figure 66.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. A frame from a 30-minute video by A. Karasch. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016.

**clip 7, 21:52–22:44 min**

We both return to our starting positions. I decide to restore the drawing in an inversed tonality. For a while, I am fond of the fact that the sight of dreck awakens new ideas. I attempt to redo my part with a thick eraser (Fig. 67). We initiate by rotating our bodies to the left in a FW10 action. While Ram continues with the smudging on his side, I am exerting higher pressure and moving my arm in the rhythm of his short, energetic, oppositional gliding gestures. Progressing along my circular track, I finally break through the layers of charcoal and see a thick white line emerging against the gray background. When I'm halfway through, Ram's gliding appears ever more useful as it adds to my hand's speed.

His gestural activity turns out to be only briefly helpful. On his knees and with his arms stretched out in front of him on the paper, he glides past me and aims beyond our common realm and towards some distant point in the gallery. I see how the charcoal-covered palm of his hand is crossing the image borders and invades the gray surface of the floor. He's encouraging me to exceed the paper plane by pulling me gently behind him. Yet, I see no point in augmenting our dynamics like this. I perceive this ejection from the common plane as excessive and signal my reluctance by pulling him back in my direction. This moment makes us relax. We sit for a while, him outside and me inside of the paper, smiling at each other and enjoying the break. It feels as if there were no people around (Fig. 68).





**Figure 67.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.



**Figure 68.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.

**clip 8, 24:00–26:20 min**

We get up on our feet and inspect the drawing together. A short exchange of comments follows during which we decide about the finale of our co-action. I get down to the spot occupied previously and proceed with my vision. Ram accompanies me in this process. With bold, broad rotary gestures we accumulate a set of thick loops, I from the inside and he from the outside of the circular shape. There is a “biphasic rhythm” (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 27) reflected in the bilateral symmetry of our motions. There is fluency and verve in our arms’ rotary work which now resembles a locomotive’s mechanism with our wrists being the driving wheels and the rope a coupling rod. As in the beginning, my body tends to hold on to one area of space and it takes up an enclosing and slightly retreating shape, while Ram’s body extends, travels and spreads in different directions of the plane (Fig. 69).

We move on to the second half of the drawing. There, we manage to complete one full circle of new traces when the rope suddenly breaks. We unanimously take this unexpected twist as a sign to end this action. When we are done, I feel happy and relieved. There is excitement and great satisfaction coming from the possibility to experience such emotional diversity and intensity through this particular relation. There is also appreciation for Ram’s initiative, especially his uncompromising attitude which I took as a challenge, as a form of checking out different alternatives and testing the rules. I also feel pleasure derived from interacting with an artist who came out as inexhaustibly agile and inventive in movement.

When the chatter subsides, I take a quick glance at the remnants, roll up the sheet and put it away in the corner of the gallery space. Eventually, I decide not to take it back with me to my studio in Warsaw. And I am not sure if this is because there is no space for it on the plane or I just know I won’t be looking at it too often.





**Figure 69.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.



**Figure 70.** *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Manja Williams.



### 13.2.2 Interpretation

Even though the broad paper plane encouraged us to experience all the three ranges of our body space, which was especially noticeable in Ram's case, the urge to concentrate on one's own section worked as a limiting factor. Therefore, our bodies mostly moved within their respective mid- and near-reach. Furthermore, there was a need to use all three planes and all three levels of movement. Also here, it was Ram who explored the greater range more often.

As far as the outside space is concerned, we mostly revolved around the two circles designated by the diagram. With time, there was a tendency to keep switching between the circles and/or extend the distance from their centers. Towards the end, Ram kept exceeding the paper plane by which the space of our interaction grew exponentially. During the performance, our bodies shaped and adapted in different ways to ever new contexts. My body's shaping had mostly a retreating and defensive quality, while Ram's was prevalently advancing, rising and spreading.

Due to the effort factors of space and flow which dominate in the account, it is the *remote state* that distinguishes itself as the most characteristic in this co-experiment. Consequently, thinking (space) and emotional feeling (flow) (Studd & Cox, 2013) are the dominant dispositions in this co-experimentation. Understandably, our sense of space became enhanced by the introduction of the diagram – the two circles placed at a fixed distance from each other. This spatial setup made our intentional actions unequivocally related to our respective locations in the space. Sometimes, there was an exchange of locations. Other times, both of us worked together on a single element. In all cases, we functioned as the two separated bodies, securing our individual positions with the other acting from a distance. Sporadic closeness was a rather short-lived interlude. In this regard, the prevailing, fixed directivity of movement alternated with deviations from one's own, individually chosen pathways. This tendency is reflected in the arrangement of the finalized drawing. The thick belts of charcoal dust, the strands of bright lines, the rhythmic strokes or smudges scattered here and there all circulate around the two distinctive brighter middles.

For Laban, the heightened experience of space connects to thinking and/or attention (Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). The co-action is full of examples of different mental activities. Among them are: my speculating about Ram's potential change of location, hypothesizing about his motives, movement decisions and plans for our co-action (clips 1, 6, 7), my observing of our traces, comparing and giving value to them (clip 1), my heightened concentration on the task versus my absent-mindedness in spite of the body's visible directivity (clip 2), our frequent coming up with new ideas for the drawing (clip 6), and finally our introducing speech into the exchange to inform the other about one's progression, intentions or to talk over the plan of action (clips 1, 2, 8).

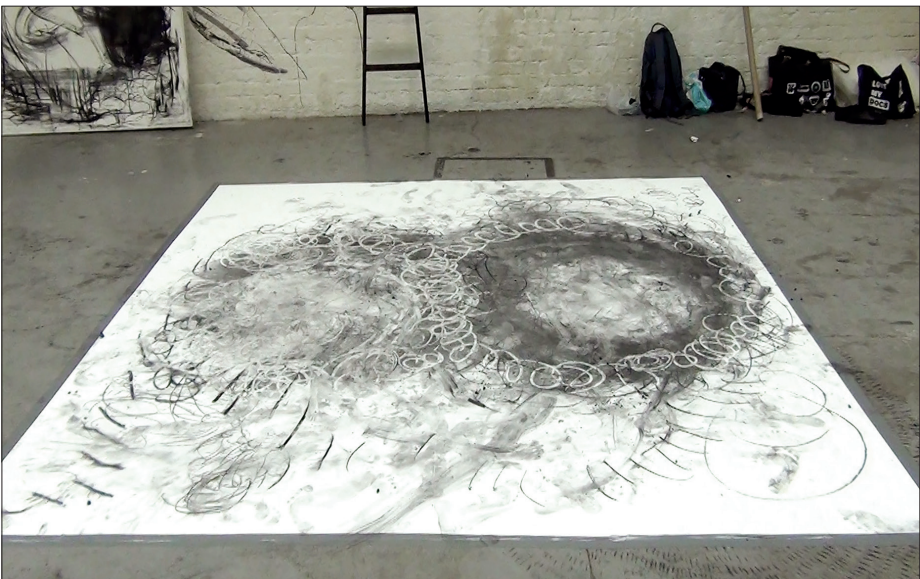
Apart from space, flow comes to the fore in our dynamics. When explaining the LMA's concept of flow, Studd and Cox (2013) speak of it from micro and macro perspective. The macro perspective refers to flow as a whole (e.g., the flow of a river, the flow of cars) and the micro perspective considers it with respect to how we modulate our personal flow. Additionally, Studd and Cox connect the body's flow with progression. In the dynamics released by the binding, we represented the two opposite units (micro perspective) which together constituted one flowing whole (macro perspective). For this entirety to move continuously together, the individual ends of the form must have constantly modulated their own flow. In my perception flow was decreasing on my side of the rope at the same rate as it was increasing on Ram's side. Since I experienced Ram's flow to be fluctuating between normal and extremely free, a great deal of flow control on my side was necessary for Reciprocal Drawing to sustain within the established frames.

These rather extreme differences in our individual flow effort transpired in the ways the two halves of the drawing were developing. Especially, up until the 15th minute (the moment we switched the locations), my thick and uniform loops were accumulating densely and within a limited directivity. At the same time, Ram's textures were spreading thinly in all directions. His strokes were lively, finer and more diversified in their shape.

Apart from the "inner dispositions" (Maletic, 1987, p. 10) such as space-related thinking and attention, experience of remote state brings the flow-related aspect of feeling to the fore (Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). In this context significant is the critical moment described in the clip 6, when I suddenly transition from the state of holding on to my rules and values to the state of total abandonment of these concerns. This is accompanied by my transition from controlled emotionality into experiencing various intense, sometimes contradictory emotions leading to letting go and easing into the relationship. This shift immediately reflected in the quality of my marks. My former attempts at precision and compliance with the repertoire's motif get replaced by my rather nonchalant and lavish style.

In the 20th minute of the recording the drawing presents two symmetrically arranged, circular, grayish spots of varied tonality (Fig. 71). Their boundaries are not sharp since the tonal planes gently underpin the surrounding textures. The textures expand concentrically from the circles' middles and simultaneously revolve around the circles' peripheries. There apparent motion within the drawing has an explosive quality. The lines constituting the textural substance on the right side are light and lofty, while those on the left are fleshy, cramped and densely laid. Additionally, the footprints, scattered charcoal or elongated smudges display a fair amount of spatial determination.

Worth noting is the game-changing episode between the 20th and 22nd minute (clip 6) when we engaged in deliberate (for Ram) and revengeful (for me) erasing of each other's work. There was a stubborn pulling, pushing and holding back, which made us use different force (pressure). The use of force took place along a continuum, with one extreme being an increase in pressure (when one advanced either to transform or protect the drawn shapes) and the other extreme being a decrease in pressure (when



**Figure 71.** Remnants from the collaborative performance *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. A frame from a 30-minute video by A. Karasch. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016.

one surrendered and agreed to the changes in the drawing). In Laban’s theory, experience of pressure is related to intention and/or impact produced by a person (as in Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). Indeed, in these seconds we took definitive action and exerted our will. When the body pressure distinguishes itself and joins space and flow, they together form the *spell drive* of which Laban said is a timeless, trans-like, hypnotic and spellbound state of consciousness (Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013)<sup>82</sup>. In our drawing act, the spell drive manifested itself in an uncompromising and almost thorough upheaval directed against our own creation. The turnabout is analogous with irreversible artistic processes such as priming an old canvas or crossing out some poorly drawn fragments of one’s work. Therefore, the remnants from our performance bear the mark of spell drive. A non-transparent, gray plain flattens out the previously developed textural differentiations and the occasionally emerging depth. Against the dull plain are the thick lines which cut into it. The plain and the lines do not trigger any associations. When looking at them, I see pure matter – processed paper and crushed coal. The only component that holds it together is the reminiscent of the diagram.

### 13.2.3 Evaluation

After the co-experiment new reflection emerges and next opportunities for drawing practice crystalize. Firstly, my attitude to the values such as mobility and clarity of a trace changes. Along with this changes my approach to the rule that prohibits us from exceeding the designated area. Introduction of the grounding element in the form of the diagram fixed us in our positions. Thus, for the mobility to last we made minor adjustments and/or postural shifts engaging additional levels and planes of movement. We also extended and flexed from kneeling positions or travelled to (ex)change locations. These new actions did not leave any clear traces apart from footprints, formless splotches or barely noticeable gray smudges. During the solo experimentation, it was precisely this type of randomness that I cared to exclude from Reciprocal Drawing. Yet now, it seems that the much valued freedom to move the whole body automatically reduces the trace’s clarity. At some point, at least one of the collaborators must lose manual contact with the floor so that the reciprocal dynamics may sustain. Consequently, if full mobility is to last, then all the non-marking actions must be accepted as part of the Reciprocal Drawing practice. Table 4 (see below) identifies three groups of such actions.

**Table 4.** The non-marking actions

<b>THE NON-MARKING ACTIONS</b>
<b>Movement-related actions</b> – performed by both collaborators to ensure the two bodies’ continuous mobility.
<b>Drawing-related actions</b> – performed by one of the collaborators to influence the quality of the other’s traces. These actions have a supportive role. In these moments, one person’s supportive role excludes his/her possibility of marking. For example, one person’s rhythmic pulling on the rope from a sitting, kneeling or standing position.
<b>Collaborator-related actions</b> – performed by both collaborators and resulting from the need to communicate. For example, changing of level support or pressing against the other to stop them from acting in a certain way, pulling on the rope in the air to signal various intents, travelling within and/or beyond the plane of paper to provoke a reaction, manifest something or to test the partner, or sitting, gesticulating to relax and enjoy each other’s presence.

<sup>82</sup> In LMA spell drive is a combination of 3 effort factors. It refers to heightened experience of space, flow and pressure. Mental thought (space), emotional feeling (flow) and intention/will power (pressure) exclude intuition, decision-making (time).

Recognition of the non-marking actions (especially the drawing-related, supportive actions) eliminates, to certain extent, my previous concerns about the role division of user vs. facilitator. In this regard, I still wish the flow was more balanced between us so that none of us had to restrain it for the sake of the other's moving efficiently and harmoniously. At this moment though, apart from the introduction of a flexible band, greater individual awareness of mutual balancing of time and roles is needed.

Rather than to be seen as inconsistent with my values and rules, all the non-marking actions are acknowledged as opportunities in Reciprocal Drawing. Although by performing them at least one collaborator temporarily excludes themselves from the marking process, their conduct allows to keep the interaction going, modify the other's trace and/or better understand the other. In this way the collaborators create extra contexts. These contexts ultimately serve the co-practice in that they reinforce the intentionality of the marking gesture and contribute to qualitative diversification of trace.

In reference to the rules, the diagram grounded co-movement did not restrain us from mutually influencing the character and quality of our traces. Apart from a rich variety of rotary gestures, our interdependence released additional gestures such as pressing, wringing, gliding, and dabbing. And since the co-action was, from my end, laden with intense emotions of reluctance, self-control, doubt, annoyance, revenge, joy, hope, surprise, freedom, relaxation or release, the qualitative diversity of lines, shapes and planes was even more visible than in the previous experiment. The traces ranged from subtle, fine and lofty through nonchalant and lavish, to rhythmic, full of verve, destructive, and/or dull. Introduction of the diagram did not make it too difficult for us to keep the rope tight. Although the rope was stepped on a few times, our circular moving around the assigned points made us better in manipulating it. This included the frequent walking over the rope or the swift winding it in turns so that each of us could draw despite the other's change-generating presence.

Further, throughout this artistic research process, the attentive approach to drawing practice has been important for me. If attentiveness means that the trace reflects the effort put in generating it, then I have found our co-action consistent with the value. What's more, pain—although tangible in the moments of abrupt increase in pressure—was bearable and handled on the spot. With the same value in view, slightly problematic was the distance we maintained. While I was able to frequently observe my own traces, I could only presume about the character of Ram's marks based on my kinaesthetic understanding of his motions. This tuning-in to my collaborator's body made me sometimes absent-minded. That is why I saw my own trace unfolding but did not truly connect with it. Instead, my attention wandered off and I excessively evaluated and compared myself. Also, the occasional breaking of the rules, Ram's unexpected introduction of new gestures as well as our annihilation of the record, knocked me off for a while. Having said that, as a whole our performance appears to me as an adventure in which I was engrossed to the point of losing the sense of time and place. Therefore, I conclude that application of binding to drawing may still strengthen the connection between my intentional body and the means of drawing. Helpful may be the reduction of distance between the collaborators and change of directions assured by a different diagram.

Referencing the appreciated purposefulness, introducing the diagram proved successful in that it eliminated the previously problematic lack of outside purpose and direction for movement. It shifted my concentration from the collaborator's moving in space towards the drawing itself. As a result, the formerly identified frantic transitions between the mobile and stable states were less tangible for me. We both knew where our individual anchors existed, so we consciously stabilized/mobilized the co-action. Besides, our motions became more striving and purposeful, both in the constructive and destructive sense.

As far as the constructive aspect is concerned, the diagram strengthened our intention. It was aimed at one's own part of the drawing and indirectly at the collaborator who, paradoxically, became an indispensable obstacle in achieving the individual goals. The collaborator's body, with his/her differing ranges of flow and pressure, became a tool for constructing one's own fragments. The constructive aspect is evident up to the 20th minute. Had the experiment ended then, the record of our co-action would have reminded me of its prototype—my solo drawing—and yet constituted its looser and less self-conscious variant (cf. Fig. 49 and Fig. 71). The final product would not be aspiring to demonstrate a skill or impress, it would not have been so bound with my ego as the solo drawing is. Had we not engaged in destroying the record in the last seven minutes, we would have come up with a wild, instinctual yet tamed creation.

The opportunities for drawing practice that emerge from this co-experiment allow the collaborators to transform the drawing's structure. This transformation can be achieved on the assumption that they can envision this structure before they start the co-action and continuously relate to it when in action. If such is the case, the new version of the drawing can function as an independent artistic product, ready to be handled according to the rights of drawing as a separate and independent medium. For example, partners can continue to work on the drawing separately, it can be critiqued, diversely interpreted or exhibited to raise associations and memories. However, in my reception, the transformation can also be so radical that the final piece remains forever fused with the specific movement experience and is referenced exclusively in the categories of movement (e.g., "movement signature" (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 105)), records or remnants from an event). If latter is the case, the finalized product underlines the specific ways the repertoire's actions and the strategy of binding inscribe in the body's memory of movement.

As mentioned, the specificity of the diagram also affected our interaction in a destructive way. The fact that Ram and I were supposed to work on two separate elements in space raised competitiveness between us—a struggle for the existence of one's own piece within the larger whole. Undoubtedly, the public context of the encounter also influenced our attitudes. Very often it felt as if the individual survival or success was measured by the spatial expansion of one's own section. This resulted in teasing and provocation at best, or jealousy and revenge at worst. Sometimes, there were attempts to balance the tension out by compensating to the other in a form of the supportive actions and/or joint reconstruction of the destroyed parts. The closer we were to the end, the more the drawing seemed to fall apart and serve as a catalyst for specific behaviors.

Considering the above, I conclude that the clear division of the compositional masses in two strengthened the polarization of roles in the binding-based action. However, this time—recalling Piotrowski's (personal communication, October 8, 2001) words—the polarization was not so much of vertical character (one playing alternately to the other in the foreground) but rather of horizontal character (both parties attempted to play simultaneously in the foreground).

I anticipate that the competitiveness and even the polarization are problematic for the binding in the long run. For, they push the co-movement in the direction of fighting rink, thus creating excess of violence and/or sexually related associations and contexts. To reduce this tendency, I realized that next time a composition based on one circle is needed. One circle as a single, non-differentiating spatial component contains the promise of working together, of being contained in the same space and/or striving towards the same goal. Also, the solution reduces the distance between us, which will hopefully enhance the valued attentive way of marking.



From the current perspective, the challenges which manifested themselves in the previous two experiments may also be seen as presenting opportunities, although not the ones directly related to drawing. The identified problems have revealed certain aspects of my own nature as an artist and a person. I have wondered if the dramatic role division did not result from my pursuit of the full autonomy counterposed with the compulsion to sacrifice myself for the other. To go a step further, perhaps all this research, with its autobiographical history of burnout in pedagogical work and with its quest for mutually inspiring artistic practice, was initiated because I have found it hard to balance the needs of the “I” with the rights of “we.” As if I were unable to give without a fear of losing myself as well as function independently without concluding that what I produce is utterly futile unless created for the other’s benefit. Prior to this performance, I had only intuited such was the case, but the collaborative artistic events brought it up into my consciousness.

What I have also understood about myself is that my goal is usually singular and far-reaching, my hopes are related to the end-product, and my thinking formed by future perfect tense. When in the action, I have my rules in the back of my mind and imagine the final product being a certain way. Each time Ram’s actions contradicted these expectations, the link to the end-result appeared broken, and so in my mind I failed. This was reflected in the body’s shape quality as it became defensive and retreating during the performance. Judging from Ram’s ways of moving, his goals were temporary and changed from one moment to another. Surely, he circled around single elements of the drawing but then stopped to test different variants of our exchange, to destroy (clip 6), to take over (clips 2, 5), to tease me (clip 5), and to contradict himself (clip 7). Despite or perhaps with the help of the rules, he had acted all these possible variants spontaneously out. In this sense, he succeeded in reaching his goals, and it shows in advancing and spreading qualities of his body shaping. In the same way, I succeeded when I crossed the threshold between attachment and indifference, and when I became pleasantly relieved by the “scandal” of the perceived abrupt dynamics. Although later abandoned, the final drawing constitutes something of a more personal value than anything else. It is a record of conflict that is both external and internal. The experience of Reciprocal Drawing, as presented here, seems to provide me with an opportunity for continuous introspection and furthered self-understanding.

### **13.3 *Binding/Rotations Centric***

My concerns related to the previous experiment, described in the Evaluation subsection above, referred to escalation of struggle for dominance and for the leading role in the performative process. I identified these issues as problematic and concluded that it was the binary, two circles-based character of the diagram which made the first performance competitive in nature. Therefore, a one circle-based diagram appeared to be a solution as it promised a co-movement aimed at a joint goal in space. The solo composition, prepared by me in the studio and presented below (Fig. 72, 73), constitutes a reference for the new diagram.



**Figure 72.** *Rotations Centric Solo* by Agnieszka Karasch, a solo drawing as a frame for the collaborative performance *Binding/Rotations Centric* by A. Karasch and R. Samocho. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m, January 2016. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch.



**Figure 73.** *Rotations Centric Solo* (a fragment) by Agnieszka Karasch, a solo drawing as a frame for the collaborative performance *Binding/Rotations Centric* by A. Karasch and R. Samocho. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m, January 2016. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch.



### 13.3.1 Description

A 5-minute edited video documenting our co-experimentation can be accessed after scanning the QR code below or under this link: [https://player.vimeo.com/video/188406092?h=b1dd4d8e2c&app\\_id=122963](https://player.vimeo.com/video/188406092?h=b1dd4d8e2c&app_id=122963).

Total real time of the co-experiment – 23 minutes.

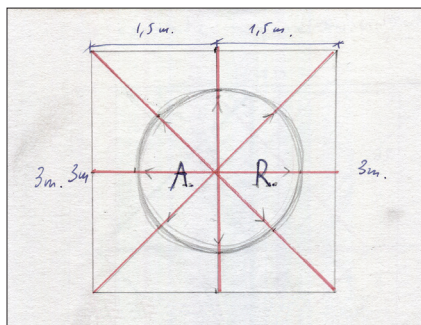


SCAN ME

The performance takes place in the Crows Nest Gallery in London, on the same day of August 2016. Before the start, we agree that most of the rules stay the same as before:

- The basic structure will be drawn with the FW11 motif. Initial motifs include all rotary gestures included in the repertoire, yet the character of the subsequent body actions depends on the dynamics of our movement relationship.
- The 10-meter rope (ca. 393 in.) is to be wound around our wrists.
- The rope must stay tight between us.
- The distance between us is irrelevant as long as the rope stays tight.
- We will not exceed the area designated by the 3 x 3-meter (118 x 118 in.) paper size.

We will try to recreate the diagram (Fig. 74) related to my compositional variant *Rotations Centric Solo* (Fig. 72, 73).



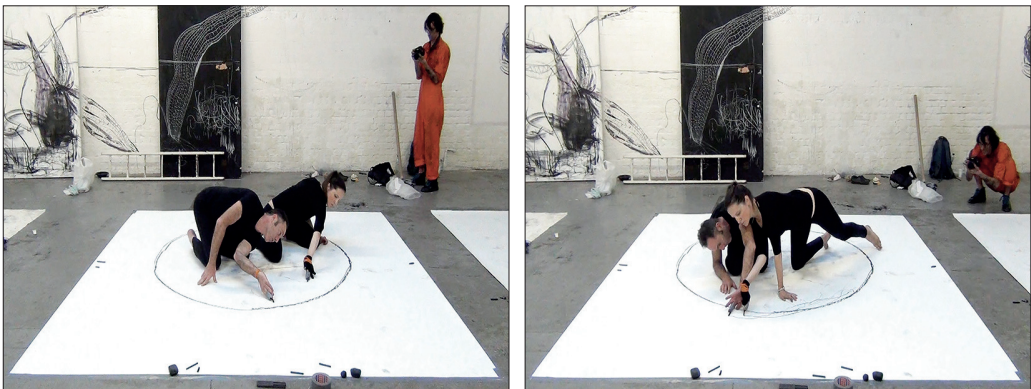
**Figure 74.** A diagram based on the *Rotations Centric Solo* drawing, presenting the suggested direction of movement progression and gestural activity for the partners. A – Agnieszka's starting position, R – Ram's starting position. August 30, 2016.

A few minutes before the start I change my clothing from a sleeveless top to a long-sleeve black shirt. Ram sees me walking out like this and responds: "I don't want to be more masculine than you are!" After a while he returns dressed in a regular T-shirt which covers his arms. We decide to use a stronger rope so that it doesn't break like it did previously. Ram points out how we should try to make it "more collaborative" this time.

**clip 1, 00:00–05:35 min**

I'm alone in the middle of the square-shaped paper plane. Ram is standing outside of it. The rope between us stays loose. I'm sitting on my heels, face down. My right hand is extended forward while the left one to the side. From this position, I start turning slowly to the right in the rhythm of my counting. A single big circle emerges. After that I get up and leave the spot for him. He strengthens the outline by working from the same position but in the opposite direction. Then, I sit down next to him in the middle of the circle. First, we twist our arms together in a FW7 action emphasizing its left and right extremes (Fig. 75). The familiar, jagged lines appear. Again, I have something different in mind but I adapt to his motions to test grounds, to feel the movement and to avoid clashes. Instead of accelerating and provoking change, I try to extend the moment and go into the situation slowly, giving us time to enjoy the togetherness.

While continuously swaying our bodies, we both instinctively aim forward and towards the circle's peripheries. Once there, Ram pulls my hand gently to the side. I realize he intends to lead us along the circle. To follow, I extend my whole body and support its weight on my left leg and left arm. I also lean with my shoulder against his side (Fig. 76). There is closeness between us and full concentration on our marking hands. The rope gets wrapped around our wrists entirely and the distance gets completely reduced. To progress, we are now gliding along the designated circuit. The gliding is combined with the occasional rotary gestures. Yet these are fragmentary because our joined wrists can turn only halfway. In this way, instead of the interconnected loops and arches, delicate undulating and lengthy lines appear along the main circle. They envelop the circle so that it loses its contrastive effect on paper. It's difficult to identify their authorship.



**Figure 75, 76.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Frames from a 26-minute video by A. Karasch. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016.



**clip 2, 05:35–6:30 min**

After one quarter of the circuit, Ram's hand still leading, starts deviating slightly from the main outline. He manages to fully twist his wrist a couple of times so his wavy line now forms an additional set of finer, differentiated rings placed at various distances from one another. The distance between our bodies and hands barely changes. With my hand I track his hand attentively. Although my arm is more constrained and my loops smaller and less spacious—as I pull back slightly when following—my trace meanders slowly right underneath his.

Giving it a time would calm us down. With this intention, I start to feel the speed of our progression better and sense we won't be drifting away from each other anytime soon. When he is still on his hands and knees, I get down and fully stretch out on the floor. This change of position relaxes me, and I let myself dwell in the mood for a while. Ram joins me. For a few seconds we lie in the middle of the circle, facing each other (Fig. 77). Our arms are above our heads move back and forth between us like one instrument marking continuously within decreasing speed and indulging ranges of pressure. There is a heightened concentration as we both give ourselves a chance to stay focused on each other and on the accumulating tinier circles resulting from our minimal motions.



**Figure 77.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. A frame from a 26-minute video by A. Karasch. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016.

**clip 3, 6:30–7:30 min**

Ram breaks away from this momentary intimacy by rolling swiftly onto his back and away from me. From now on, time seems to speed up. I try to keep up with him by rolling in the opposite direction and shifting my body weight towards the circumference. When doing this, I support myself with my marking arm. In this way, I squeeze my hand heavily into the paper, leaving one dotted, deeply black spot. We both successfully transition to the outside of the circle. As we are closing in on our first full round, I find myself constantly following him. His rotary gestures now seem vivid, stable, and unremitting, his drawing activity controlled, focused, and continuous. Looking at my hand, I see it making more local and discontinuous wringing gestures. I sense growing irritation which I try to tame. When attempting to figure out the roots of this sensation, I realize that I could and perhaps should take the lead, but I have no idea where I could take us. Yet, I do not want to follow him neither. This constant compromise gets tiring and numbs me.

**Crow's Nest**

your company, the most craved for  
as you screw your wrist gently  
into

the transmission  
blood flowing through the high voltage wire  
between us, deep into the Fabriano

your closeness irritable  
your body too sensual, too complacent  
pulling gladly by the umbilical cord  
I bear you

Because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot,  
I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth.  
Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise.  
Be zealous therefore....

A. Karasch, September 30, 2019, Helsinki.

clip 4, 8:06–17:55 min

For the next ten minutes we engage in constructive acts of collaboration. We co-mark along the circle's peripheries (Fig. 78) or around the circle's middle (Fig. 79, 80). This is alternated with the configuration resembling a spinning hand of a clock in which I stabilize the setup from the circle's center and Ram travels along its outer ranges. The clock-resembling variation releases different adaptations. Sometimes, I kneel or sit on my heels and perform the rotary motifs concentrically along the circle's radiuses, while Ram, bent forward, walks around me making gentle, broad and energetic floating and/or dabbing gestures (Fig. 81). Other times, I operate from the horizontal level trying to catch up with him changing locations by shaping my body, bending backwards, rolling and spinning around (Fig. 82). Additionally, we manage to co-perform rhythmic wringing gestures in a manner similar to a circle's rotating diameter of which the opposite ends simultaneously mark the surface (Fig. 83). Also, we successfully employ the solutions that we already discovered during the first experiment such as one person's supportive pulling of the rope to influence the other's work on paper (Fig. 84, 85).

Between the 14th and 15th minute, Ram smudges out our previous traces accumulated along the circle's perimeter. There is a transient feeling of regret. Despite that, I track him performing quick wringing gestures. I make them with my fingers splayed wide apart to add finer substance on top of the now darkening form.

I don't think we are consciously coming up with all these solutions. It feels like the bodies gradually adapt to each other and to the imposed frames. However, I sense the growing impatience. It brings my body to the point in which I instinctively break out from the cooperation to search for new variations of shared movement.



**Figure 78.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Co-marking around the circle's middle. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Marco Berardi.



**Figure 79.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Co-marking around the circle's middle. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Marco Berardi.





**Figure 80.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Co-marking around the circle's middle. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Marco Berardi.



**Figure 81.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Co-marking around the circle's middle. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Marco Berardi.





**Figure 82.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Co-marking around the circle's middle. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Marco Berardi.



**Figure 83.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Co-marking around the circle's middle. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Marco Berardi.





**Figure 84.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Co-marking around the circle's middle. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Marco Berardi.



**Figure 85.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Co-marking around the circle's middle. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Marco Berardi.



**clip 5, 18:00–23:50 min**

With me standing outside of the circle and performing the supportive actions, Ram unexpectedly changes from the familiar rotary work to a new kind of extension and flexion. In this way he introduces extreme changes within the drawing. Kneeling in the circle's center, he places both of his hands flat on the floor and spreads the existing dense charcoal textures concentrically out towards the bottom left corner of the paper (Fig. 86). When within his far reach, the pressure in his straight arms increases and speed visibly decreases. A set of thick, ray-like, transparent strands emerges. I am slightly bewildered. I know where it's all going, yet I see no role for me in this scene. Standing behind him, I feel the rope is soon to be hanging loose. In my head, I start searching for ways to justifiably partake in his act, so I start making some pointless motions in the air – my right arm mimicking the speed of his actions and something in this fashion. All these attempts come across as awkward. Then he stops and frees the spot for me to enter. It seems he'd like me to continue with the smudging. I enter the space but decide not to prolong his initiative. Besides, the situation is not in line with my perused reciprocity of actions. Also, the experienced pointless standing and watching doesn't fit to any group of my previously classified non-marking actions, as the standing neither supports the other's marking, nor ensures our mobility, nor communicates anything.



**Figure 86.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Marco Berardi.



**Figure 87.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Marco Berardi.

We continue with the accustomed interdependence. After some time, I decide to return to the low level and position myself so that my body's shape reflects the basic figure of the composition (Fig. 87). Lying on my side, I hold my marking arm above my head and enjoy being in touch with the paper. There is minimal attention to the outside world, my collaborator included. My arm is almost motionless, so it stabilizes and adds pressure to Ram's quickly advancing backwards movement along the circumference. With one continuous gliding gesture he's leaving a thick and irregular stroke that nicely echoes yet softens the fleshy circular form (Fig. 88). The stroke also seems to reflect my body's shaping. The growing pressure on my wrist signals that he's reached the furthest point away from me so, for him to fluently proceed onto the other side of the circle, I slowly twist my wrist, shift my arm behind my head and push the rope back with my leg. In this way he successfully completes the outline.



**Figure 88.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. A frame from a 26-minute video by A. Karasch. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016.



clip 7, 20:37–23:45 min

Ram's serpentine stroke expanded the ranges of our form significantly. The pattern presents itself as something to be further developed so we start looking for the optimal positioning of our bodies. The mutual adjusting feels too long. Eventually, we sit close to each other on the inside of the circle and begin filling in the brighter strip with heavy, spoke-like strokes. As time passes, it gets harder for me to adjust. I sense the urge to work in the opposite direction. It feels like Ram senses it and disapproves of my resistance.

All of a sudden, I see him getting up, releasing his hand from the string and leaving the scene (Fig. 89). I give myself some time to continue in full independence. But after a while, I stop and look around to recon the situation. I feel perplexed. Why did he stop and leave? Did he get hurt? Did he take offence? Didn't my actions fit his version of "more collaborative?" Wasn't I agreeable enough? (Fig. 90). Meanwhile, I figure that the rope isn't needed anymore so I take it off and throw it beyond the paper. The only reasonable option seems to keep on performing solo and to come up with an idea for a closure.



**Figure 89, 90.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. Ram's unexpected leaving the paper in the middle of our performance. Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: M. Neta.



**Figure 91.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. Exploration of the rotary actions and the strategy of binding for collaborative drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: M. Neta.



**Figure 92.** *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocho. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016. Photo credit: Marco Berardi.

However, I start sensing the inadequacy of this circumstance. The presence of the public becomes clearly felt, the mood is getting infected with the outside reality. Also, the solo exposure doesn't match with the collaboration theme of the symposium nor with the aims of my research.

When Ram comes back I feel relieved and happy, ready to restart. But he is evidently not intending on continuing. With his back directed towards mine he slowly pressures me towards the floor. After a while, I find it impossible to move, so I carefully slip from under his body and let him passively slide onto the floor behind me (Fig. 91). Once there, he lays on his back with his arms spread out flat to the sides. I take the same position and we lay like this, together forming a symmetrical figure connecting the opposite corners of the drawing along its diagonal (Fig. 92). This feels good. This symmetrical arrangement feels like an instinctive, natural closure. After it all ends, I feel excited and connected to him, we sit together on the paper and take pictures. Later that evening, we sit next to each other in a circle of fellow artists – participants of the symposium. Ram and I don't talk much about what's happened. On my way back I meet him and his family at the metro station. He says: "I enjoyed it! I thought you would be strict. But it was fun!"

### 13.3.2 Interpretation

The strategy of binding along with the projected one-circle composition made us interact within all the planes and levels of movement. Additionally, my prolonged engagement within the horizontal plane and low level enabled full release of pressure resulting with relaxation. My then short dubbing, flicking and/or floating gestures were slow and rather sluggish. The line resulting from the relaxation was random and fragmented. Its shape unspecified. During those moments, there was no distinct goal for me in space. In the low level, my hand's occasionally decreasing pressure and my body's slightly growing speed were dictated by my collaborator's movement, rather than my own initiative. The general passivity on my side added light pressure to Ram's own gestures. Also, due to this passivity, Ram was able to anchor his movement and proceed in accordance with his projection. His movement was fast, uninterrupted, developing along the chosen pathway, and expanding the spatial range of the basic structure, as shown in the clips 4 and 6.

Our bodies' concentration on one major shape made us operate largely within our near-reach and partially mid-reach. Far-reach was not explored at all. The focus on one and single form also made us choose central and peripheral pathways. The directions of co-movement were mainly dictated by the properties of the circle, by the radiuses (multiple directions from the central point) and the circumference (forward and backward movement around the circle). This is evident in the final drawing that shows the characteristic radial spokes, the intense darkening of textures along the circle's perimeter as well as traces of hands and feet imprinted parallel to the perimeter.

The exchange of locations during this performance was more controlled in a sense that there had always been some point close at hand for us to stick to and mark purposefully while remaining in sync with each other. Simply put, the switches of positions didn't mess up our progression. Neither did they disintegrate our simultaneous intentional drawing. Consequently, the process of saturating the drawing's surface was more balanced and the final effect more compact. With reference to the bodies' shape, I sometimes liked to fully adapt to the flat surface as well as to the circular shape of the main compositional mass. Other than that, we both mostly preserved similar body shaping, as if the relatively synchronized movement within and around the circle required this.

References to pressure and speed prevailing in my narration are symptomatic of the *near state*. In LMA, near state refers to heightened experience of time (or speed) and pressure. Near, physically present quality is the opposite of the remote, distant quality. In this state, enhanced intention, will power, and sensing (pressure-related) coincide with decision making, intuition, and commitment (speed-related) (Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). In our interplay, all these inner predispositions were present. Through experiencing them, we were prone to a more constructive and symbiotic Reciprocal Drawing process (particularly visible in clips 1, 2, 4, 5).

In LMA, states can also be described by what is missing from movement. In that respect, exemplification of the *near state* is more accurate if I highlight the minimal experience of space and flow. The reduction of space-related challenges (such as the switching of locations, deviation from the chosen path and/or securing one's own position) necessarily contributed to the alleviation of excessive mental speculations on my side. The exception that proves this rule may be Ram's momentaneous absence (clip 7). It was then that the spatial interrelations between us were suddenly in focus and triggered my thinking. Moreover, our bodies' flow was not mentioned at all in my account. The body's decreased sensitivity to flow may be correlated with the quieting my emotions. Again, there were some exceptions to this rule, for example when I sensed the growing irritation caused by our prolonged compliance, or when there was resistance



against Ram's smudging of our traces (clips 3, 4). But even then, the emotions were transient and did not influence our progression. Undoubtedly, the amplitudes of all the effort factors were generally small. Therefore, the character of the co-movement can be described in rather neutral terms such as balancing between the expectant and vibrant, fluid and controlled, sensitive and decisive, or flexible and purposeful.

The final drawing shows a relatively compact and circular form pulsating from the inside with various interpenetrating tones of gray (Fig. 93). Further away from the center, the gray tones turn into complex black. This complexity is there because of the accumulation of different movement phrases, each phrase performed with slightly different gestures. The further out from the center, the lighter the form. Its edges are defined by a transparent skeleton composed of rhythmic straight lines and an undulating contour. However closed, the form contains a breach composed of eight thick, transparent streaks radiating concentrically towards the left bottom quarter. Although the breach is not a record of my concealed tensions, in my understanding they represent that which remained unmarked during the co-action. Inspecting the drawing rather classic associations emerge: a volcanic eruption, geyser or gaping swamp.



**Figure 93.** Records from the collaborative performance *Binding/Rotations Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Ram Samocha. A frame from a 26-minute video by A. Karasch. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), Crows Nest Gallery, London, August 30, 2016.

### 13.3.3 Evaluation

My previous approval of the non-marking actions allowed me to relax. At times, I lay almost passively on paper and let my hand be guided by my collaborator's dynamic motions. Additionally, this more holistic approach in which I did not value the marking over the non-marking actions made it possible for us to work out a few co-movement patterns that turned out to be generally effective components of the Reciprocal Drawing method (clip 4). Also, some of the patterns that already appeared in the previous experiment were now spontaneously picked up and expanded by us.

From all this I conclude that with the recognition of the body's spontaneity—its various actions not limited by the demand of trace's clarity—binding allows for the development of new forms of co-movement. These forms generate opportunities to produce various solutions within the realm of drawing. Particularly useful for the medium is the binding-released, enhanced experience of *near state* – of speed and pressure and the interlinked dispositions such as commitment, intention and sensing. With this combination of factors, the risk of self-reinforcing tensions in Reciprocal Drawing is reduced, mutual attunement increased, and the final product presents a more concise form.

With the predetermined actions, rules and diagram in mind, we managed to mutually modify our gestures and their traces. The common focus on one form seems to have made the process run smoother than before. Predictably, the initial motif developed into a variety of rotations but also to gliding, floating, wringing, dabbing, flicking, and their different combinations. When combined, the rotary gestures changed from continuous to fragmentary. For example, while following Ram in a gliding gesture, I could twist my wrist to half of its possible range of motion. This made my trace striving yet delicately fluctuating, complemented by irregularly spaced and tonally diversified loops and notches. These lines would build up quickly to immediately counterbalance the more static and heavier background. Besides, the whole-body actions, such as the slower rolling and spinning in the horizontal plane, only slightly dissolved the previous records. In this way, the actions rather served to create a subtle base for the next layers. Moreover, the perceived passivity of my gesture, characteristic for the horizontal body position, saturated the traces with randomness and minimalism. In this way, my passive and heavy hand became a relatively stable point of orientation for Ram's movement. What's more, because we were drawing in the *near state*, the loops and arches were generally smaller and densely drawn, while the broader ones became more compact. Also, there was our more conscious development of the entire form, when we were expanding it in ways different than those suggested by the diagram. Instead of progressing outwards from the center, we were mainly laying rhythms of strokes concentrically along the circumference. Finally, concentrating on a common goal made it easier for us to keep the rope tight. Therefore, this time neither of us was forced to cut the other off by stepping on the rope. The very few moves which qualified as going against the rules will be addressed later.

The existence of the diagram enabled us to mark purposefully and achieve the effect of the greater visual mass of a well-defined shape. As explained in section 12.8 of the previous chapter, I understand the act of purposeful drawing as the possibility of building larger visual structures. Additionally, our spatial focus on a single circle eliminated the oppositional character of our intentions. Since Ram became an integral part of the developing form, my concentration was evenly distributed between these two entities. By sensitizing myself to Ram's movement within the form, the form and the partner became one anchor in space for me. Although some moments were undeniably demanding, I was generally less concerned with the overall harmony and thus less troubled by the issue of subjection. Piotrowski's term "concord" (PioTroski, 1989, n.p.)



best describes our configuration. In this vein, using Piotrowski's (personal communication, October 8, 2001) reasoning, instead of polarization and the interrelated performing alternately or simultaneously to each other, we performed *parallel* to each other in the foreground. Resultantly, the dynamizing and at times destructive potential of the vertical and/or horizontal setup had been minimized. In this way, the structure of my solo composition (represented by the diagram) has been transformed, but not to a state where the finalized drawing does not resemble it at all. That is why the remnants from our collaboration appear to me as an independent artistic product. My reflections pertaining to the interdependencies between co-movement and its record can be found in 13.2.3 "Evaluation" subsection.

The latest co-practice has revealed that the experienced competitiveness and polarization of roles can be described from the perspective of movement as an imbalance between giving and taking or following and leading in partnering. In the previous experiment, we were missing the sense of these proportions. It ensued from our prolonged remaining in the extreme ranges of speed and flow to maintain the kinetic relation. Such a tie-in is not always tantamount with the advantageous position of the collaborator who moves faster. For it may happen that one person's prolonged indulging in the decreasing ranges forces the other to perpetually increase his/her own speed/flow for the sake of the overall progression. In any case, with the imbalance exists a compulsion to yield, to commit to the other and/or to refrain from one's own initiatives in favor of an overall harmony. Such an interdependence creates tension-laden situations in Reciprocal Drawing.

Ram's suggestion to try to make our second attempt "more collaborative" prompted us to redirect attention to speed (also typified as time effort by LMA). In Laban's view, intensified experience of time effort correlates with decision-making and commitment (as in Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). Indeed, such an approach facilitated our decisiveness and triggered shared commitment to the task of putting the vision down on paper. It also allowed each of us individually to better estimate the right moment to take the initiative or to pass it on to the other.

As it became clear, one of the possible ways to level out the give-and-take proportions was the spatial reduction of the compositional structure. When in co-practice, we could then draw relatively close to each other. In this way, the somewhat disturbing mental functions related to space effort (e.g., my thinking, comparing, talking, guessing, etc.) were reduced. Consequently, for most of the time, I could experience the attentive marking, the specific being-in-the-moment during the drawing act. Additionally, staying close to the collaborator gave each of us an opportunity to experience greater spectrum of pressure elements. Then, as if in substitution for the cerebral operations, decisions were made based on gut feeling (sensing). This experience is then congruent with the classifications of LMA, according to which enhanced experience of pressure effort is linked to sensing, intention, and impact produced (Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). Finally, our working within a smaller area decreased our bodies' flow. With this, also emotions became more tempered (in my experience). In LMA, enhanced experience of flow effort triggers emotional feeling and intuiting (Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013). Therefore, in this evaluation I use this linkage to implicate through negation that less attention to flow equals less emotional action, as was exemplified in this performance. With the conflict-generating character of binding, this adjustment seems necessary.

The compulsion to make motor decisions, mentioned in the Evaluation subsection of the first collaborative experiment with Ola, became less tangible in the second performance with Ram, and almost fully eliminated in this one. Although constantly bound to each other, we did not hesitate to stretch out on paper or significantly slow down.

In this case, it was also our co-movement in the *near state* and focus on one form that allowed us to take breaks without dynamizing the entire constellation.

The experiment from this thread contained some smaller-scale tensions and misunderstandings, including my impatience caused by our prolonged compliance and expressed in the poem (see p. 193). Tension was also visible for me in Ram's unexpected untangling from the rope and leaving the scene. During this performance, we were acting while being tied to one another. Under these conditions and considering the rules, it is only partially possible to come up with a consistent movement code. One of the improvements which could alleviate these minor tensions might be replacing the rope with an elastic band<sup>83</sup>. I also suppose it would be reasonable to repeat this last experiment several times and according to the same set of frames. Such an approach would have a character of training and mastering by repetition. I suppose it would bring better mutual sensitization and new solutions for drawing. There is also another, more fundamental formula suggested by Ram in our conversations following the co-experience: the testing of the same set of frames with other collaborators – people of different temperaments, body structures, movement qualities, and/or different artistic experience. This approach, however, would be tantamount to probing an endless number of variables, and such precise knowledge does not seem useful at this stage of my research process. To sum up, despite the strategy's emotionally and physically demanding character, I believe we managed to overcome the challenges of the previous two experiments and transform the unknown ways of drawing into a compelling and impactful mode of reciprocal practice.

In this chapter, I described the first thread of the collaborative phase consisting of three separate performative experiments. In each of them, my collaborator and I tried to adapt the new situation on paper to the reciprocal strategy of binding. The first co-experiment (with Ola Piechnik) revealed new opportunities: the strategy proved to reinforce intentionality of my actions and build my physical spontaneity by which it enriched the shape and quality of a drawn line. The strategy also strengthened the connection between my intentional body and the means of drawing – it allowed me to get a better feel for the lines, tones, textures, and composition while in action. However, these opportunities brought new problems that required new solutions. Among the problems were: the compulsion to make motor decisions but also restlessness and lack of outside purpose for the joint movement. At that point, I invited Ram Samocha with whom I replicated the same strategy and rules. Yet this time the diagram was added for us to manage the previous problems. During that second co-experiment next opportunities came about such as a radical transformation of the solo composition or creating extra contexts by accepting the actions that do not directly serve the development of the trace. Similarly as before, the opportunities induced tensions and problems, this time related to competitiveness of our exchange. These problems, in turn, were tackled in the third co-experiment. Here, some adjustments in the diagram were introduced and our slower, more attentive and self-limiting approach initiated. The first thread terminated because I found the changes in reciprocal movement overall satisfactory. In the next chapter, I describe the second thread of the collaborative phase. It consists of two experiments in which Jaanika Peerna and I test the point-of-contact strategy for drawing.

<sup>83</sup> I tested the flexible connection with a Latvian artist Mailo Štern during our performative experiment *Biding/Scattering-Gathering\_1* in Riga (LV) on June the 16th, 2019 (Performance Festival Starptelpa - In Between). In the experiment, the initiating motif had been changed from rotations to FW1 action and the compositional frame was different. The experiment is not reported in this thread.

## 14. Collaborative Phase, Point-of-Contact as a Strategy for Reciprocal Drawing.

This chapter contains my account of the second thread co-experimentation of the collaborative phase. Here, I focus on the point-of-contact strategy and clarify what opportunities this type of reciprocal movement brings for drawing practice. For this purpose, I choose different motifs from the repertoire for the collaborators to initiate the exchange. The co-practice is divided into two interconnected co-experiments described in two separate sections. Section 14.1 contains text and photographic documentation while section 14.2 bases exclusively on photographic documentation. Both co-experiments were conducted with Jaanika Peerna whose artistic profile can be found in chapter 5. Point-of-contact is one of the principles of Contact Improvisation (CI), a form of improvised dancing. Through point-of-contact, partners co-explore different efforts between their bodies by means of touch. More to this mode of exchange can be read in subsection 9.3.1 of the “Performance Drawing” chapter. My repertoire of motifs for the Reciprocal Drawing practice can be previewed on page 144–145.

### 14.1 *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar*

#### 14.1.1 Description

Jaanika Peerna allocated a week’s time and offered her studio in New York City as a site for our collaboration. When in her studio, we conducted two durational experiments for the camera. The moments between work we relaxed over coffee, talked about our art projects and about our professional and private lives. She often spoke about how she appreciated beauty and balance – both in art and in nature. She also recollected her experiences of living in Estonia and the U.S. I found many commonalities between us, one of them being our rather conservative artistic education in the former Eastern Bloc. I think our traditional training in drawing necessarily affected our attitude towards the medium in that there had been lots of consideration and sensitivity to its means of expression.

A 7-minute edited video documenting our co-experimentation can be accessed after scanning the QR code below or under the following link: [https://player.vimeo.com/video/223289198?h=3bbbcacf304&app\\_id=122963](https://player.vimeo.com/video/223289198?h=3bbbcacf304&app_id=122963).

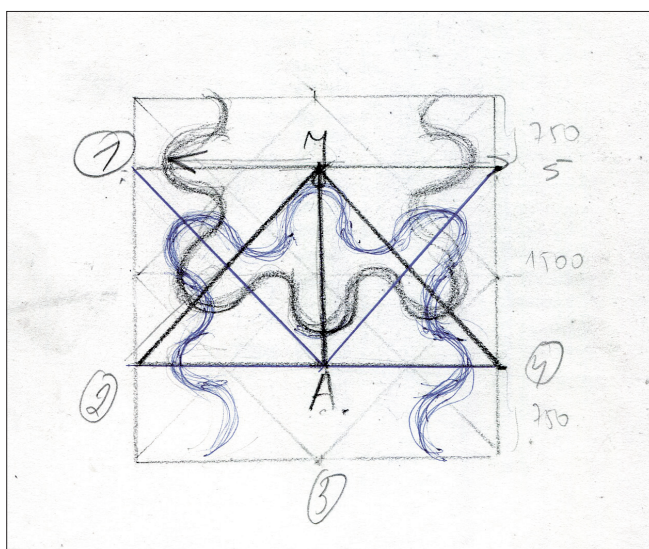
Total real time of the co-experiment – 90 minutes.



SCAN ME

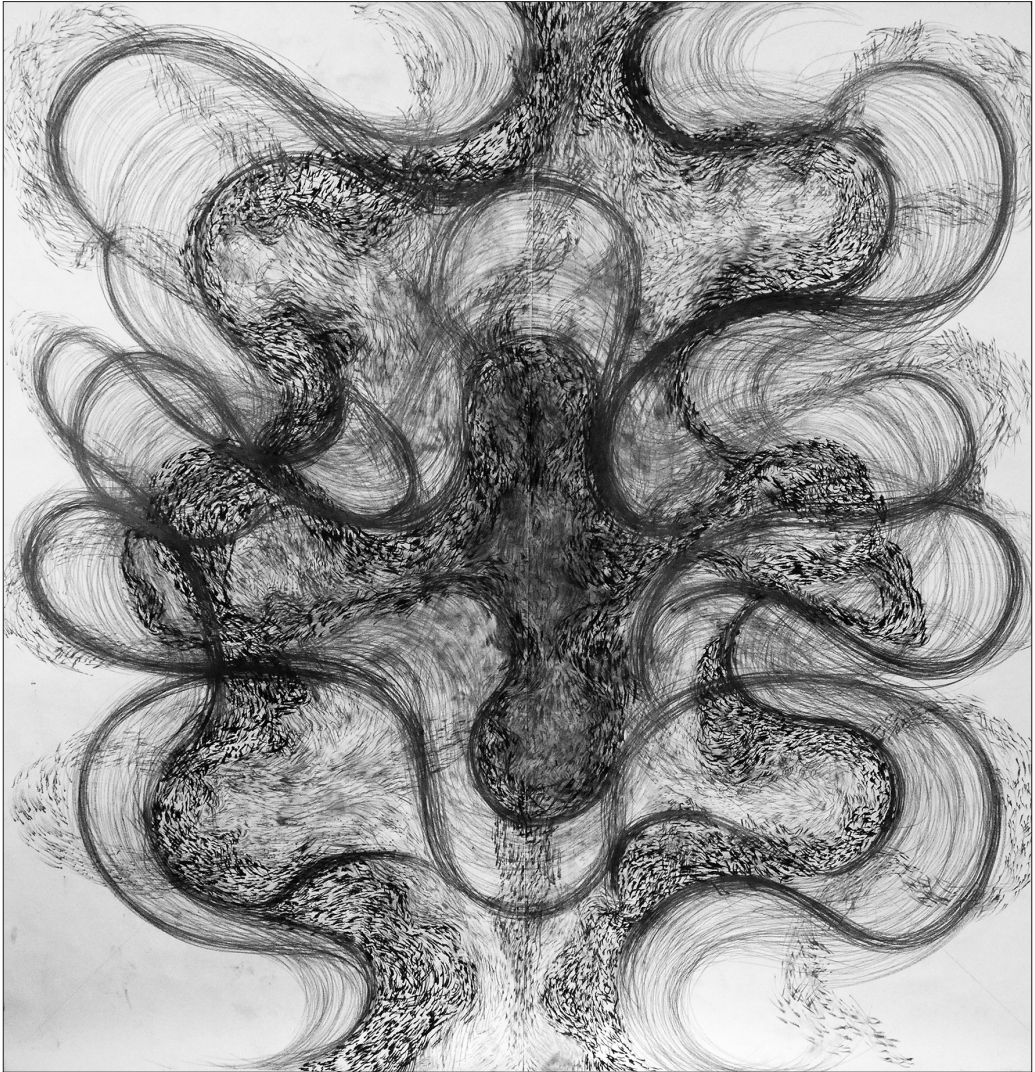
Before the start we discussed the following rules of our exchange:

- The diagram (Fig. 95) related to my composition *Extensions/Flexions Bipolar Solo* (Fig. 94) will be developed jointly.
- The initial actions with which we lay out the contents of the diagram will be the FW4 extension-flexion and the gestures of floating and gliding. The subsequent actions will depend on the co-dynamics and our individual movement needs.
- The reciprocity between us will develop based on point-of-contact, one of the principles in Contact Improvisation (CI). A delicate attachment to the partner will be created at the point where our wrists, forearms and/or arms touch. We will then explore how it is to mark the paper surface while rolling, sliding, pivoting and/or pushing against the other's hand. The mutual impact will happen by regulating pressure and by leading/ following or by resisting and pushing back. In the classic CI, point-of-contact may also occur between other parts of the partners' bodies. In this case, however, we will focus solely on our hands and make sure that the marking fingers remain in touch with the paper plane. Neither of these states of leading/following, resisting/giving in will last for an extended period. Instead, there will be a continuous duality, flow and readiness for loss and restoration of contact.
- There will be no time restrictions.
- The space designated by the paper will not be exceeded.



**Figure 95.** A diagram based on *Extensions-Flexions Bipolar Solo*, presenting the suggested movement progression for the partners. A - Agnieszka's starting position, J - Jaanika's starting position. May 9, 2017.





**Figure 94.** *Extensions-Flexions Bipolar Solo* by Agnieszka Karasch, a solo drawing as a frame for the collaborative experiment and performance *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar* by A. Karasch and J. Peerna. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m (137 x 137 in.), March 2017. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch

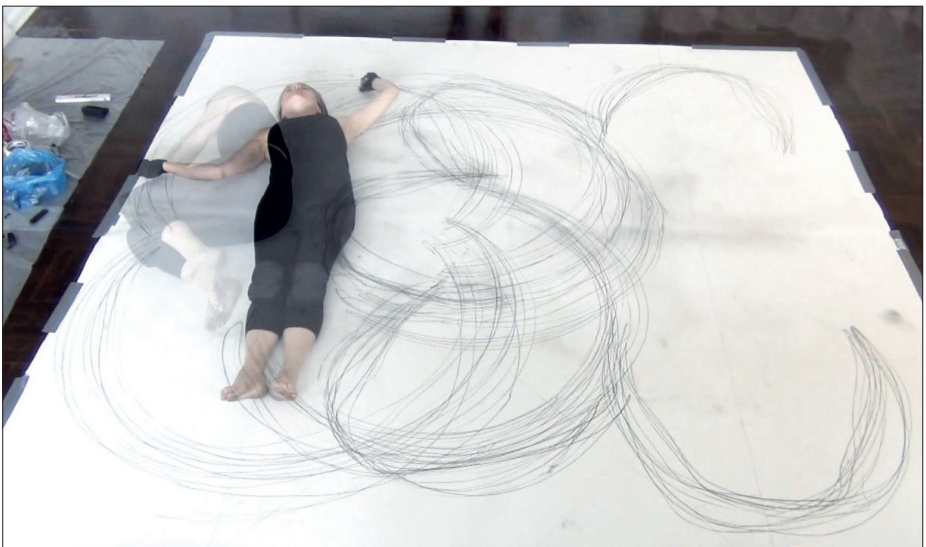


**clip 1, 0:00–0:13 min**

We start within the horizontal plane and low level by laying out the main structure with the FW4 action. I go first (Fig. 96) to then make room by leaving the plane empty for Jaanika. She enters the space and marks its upper side (Fig. 97). When she finishes, the organizing lines intersect at several points along the middle strip of the plane. Such taking turns is a chance for us to present ourselves to one another. This enables a better orientation in the collaborator's distinctive mode of movement. Watching her from the edge of the paper plane, I sense she's moving slowly and takes short breaks between the actions as if she were establishing her own tempo. Her eyes are closed. Her mood positively influences me as I perceive it as her expression of full engagement and affection mixed with independence from my own approaches.



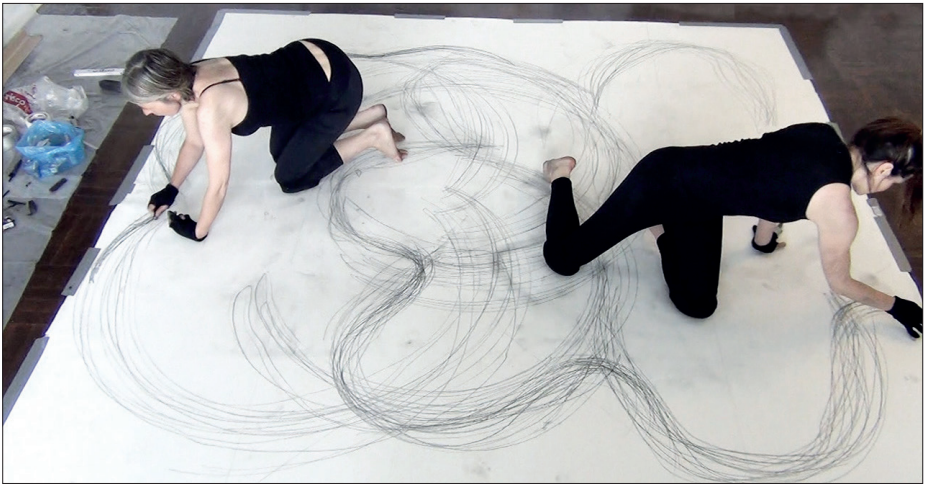
**Figure 96.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. A frame from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.



**Figure 97.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. A frame from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.

**clip 2, 0:13–0:26 min**

Together on the paper, we now start solidifying the composition by strengthening and connecting the existent shapes, each of us within her own half (Fig. 98). We do that with quick, light, floating gestures. I feel her unobtrusive and non-directive manner behind me and slowly begin to tune in to her rhythm. There is a growing sense of certainty of this interaction.

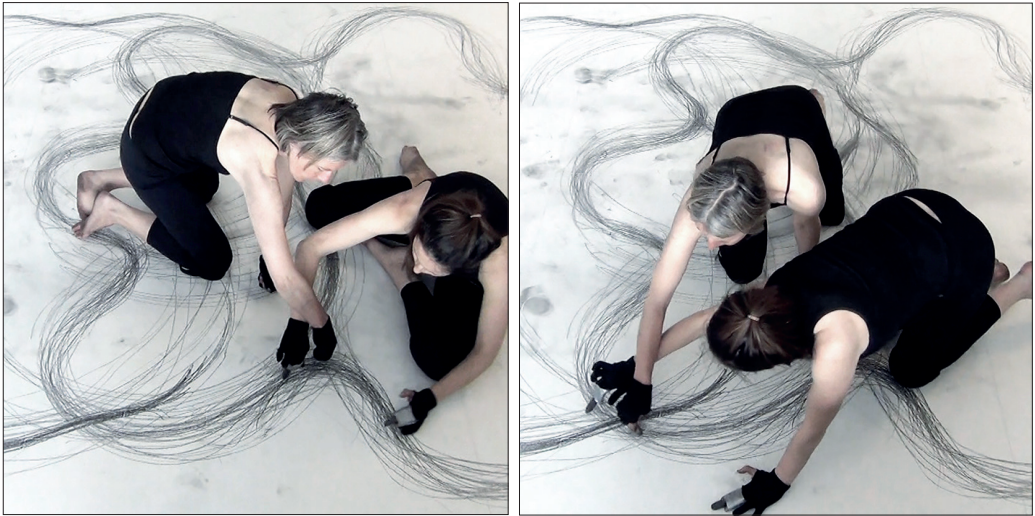


**Figure 98.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. A frame from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.

**clip 3, 1:24 min**

Once the main compositional lines and shapes have been established, we instinctively travel on our knees towards the opposite edges of the paper surface. Once there, we take starting positions by sitting on our heels and facing each other. This act brings in a sense of equality and respect towards one another.

clip 4, 1:25–1:33 min



**Figure 99.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. A frame from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.

When moving and drawing, we touch each other according to our bodily sensitivity, inner needs and wishes. We come across each other when gliding along the main pathways and at these pathways' intersections (Fig. 99). This occurs throughout the entire experiment.

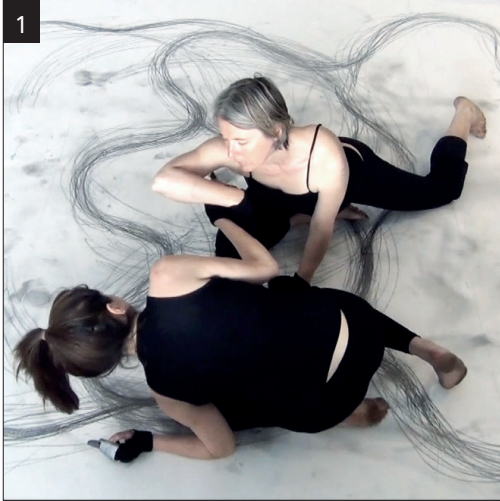
clip 5, 1:25–1:51 min

Jaanika is right above me at the mid-level, supporting herself on her knees. She lays her forearm on my gliding hand, her fingertips curled up and the graphite connected with my tool. This results in a delicate adding of darker tones to my own line and a slightly quicker thickening of my strand. She then pivots her forearm gently. I lead her marking arm on but simultaneously pick up the quality of her touch and soften my pressure against the paper. Pressure between us gently fluctuates and so does the tonality of the lines underneath. After a while, she stretches her body towards me, remains in touch but only to assist me without drawing and I see us finally lose touch with each other. So, I return to the point where we first connected.

clip 6, 1:52–2:00 min

We operate in the low- and mid-level, with our bodies supported firmly on the floor. Our interlocked arms shoot up in the air as if bouncing off from the paper plane, yet their speed is growing steadily, tempered by the increasing pressure and decreasing flow. While holding our hands high and in contact, we twist and turn around the invisible vertical axis. The axis also seems to establish how we direct our bodies and attention in space. The bodies are shaping, extending and curling up (Fig. 100).





**Figure 100.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing, a sequence of the non-marking actions. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. A set of frames from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.

**clip 7, 2:02–2:21 min**

I lay my wrist on hers, press against it lightly and start pushing her palm along my strand of lines. My fingers in the air and only her hand is marking. In this way I connect to the paper plane through her palm. Jaanika's hand becomes an intermediary between my hand, the drawn line and the laid tonality. The scene expresses my unspoken need to share the experience of drawing with the other person. Similar kind of touch happens in the clip 7a (8:40–9:43 min). Yet then, she is resting in the low level and almost fully submits to my initiative. The reversed configuration happens right after, when I choose to rest and be guided by Jaanika's rather indulging flow and decreased speed of movement (Fig. 101).



**Figure 101.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing, release-exertion duality in joint movement. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. Frames from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.

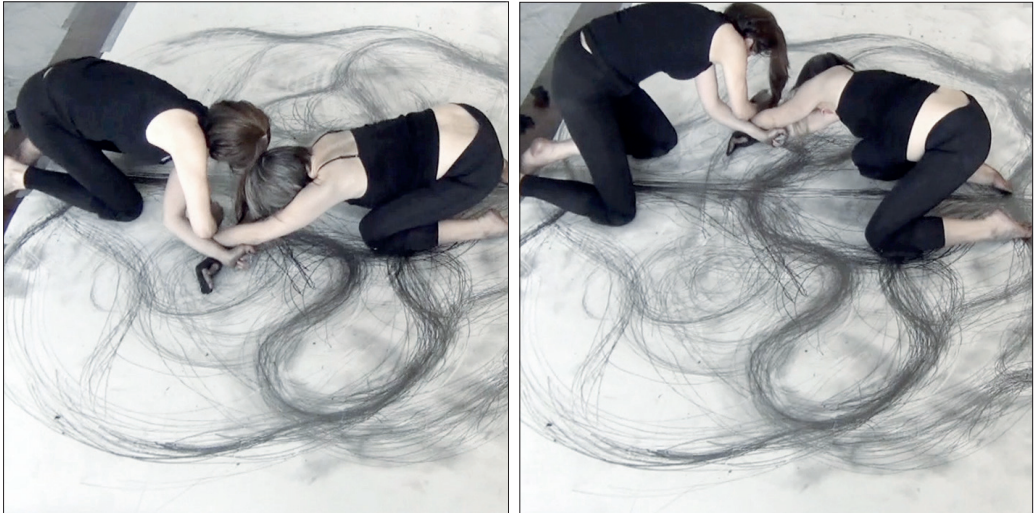
**clip 8, 2:29–2:33 min**

On our hands and knees, facing each other but staying out of touch, we are marking while swinging our bodies left and right. It feels like we are picking up on each other's momentum, felt sense of pressure and flow, yet sticking to our individual directions in space. In the drawing process, it seems like Jaanika is furthering my spatial impact on paper – a very energizing and uniting sensation that fills me with gratitude towards my collaborator.



**clip 9, 2:35–2:44 min**

We kneel opposite each other and at double the distance of our arms' length. Both my hands clasp hers and I start pushing them from one side to the other in a bit more energetic, swinging motion. There is a slight constraint in this connection, but I pay attention that the number of swings doesn't exceed the limits of tolerability for both of us. The bodies' flow is suddenly getting slightly stifled. The fragment of the strand thickens, darkens and expands. Its edges soften, which introduces tonal diversity along its entire length and turns it into a slender threadlike shape resembling a whip or a flagellum. This feels like a powerful joint impact on paper. We will repeat this between the minutes 13:03–13:20 documented in clip 9a (Fig. 102)



**Figure 102.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing, release-exertion duality in joint movement. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. Frames from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.

**clip 10, 2:53–3:24 min**

As Jaanika is performing a gliding gesture by hovering with her arm lightly above the paper, I tuck my wrist under hers and start pulling her hand up and further away from the drawing surface. She pushes back and downwards towards the paper, which releases slightly higher pressure in her whole arm. With our arms constantly in the air, we then jointly start looking for decreased pressure values. As if we wanted to prevent hitting the paper with full impact. As if the full impact were tasteless and inept. So, once we've found the right touch, we slowly aim downwards, situate our fingers firmly at one chosen point and stop moving for a couple of seconds. I sense the pause as a joint confirmation of the right moment to end the sequence. Only then do we start marking anew by gliding in the same direction and with similar speed to finally follow our disparate strands. Analogous oscillation of pressure within the bound of our arms is visible in the clip 10a (13:47–14:00 min) (Fig. 103).

**clip 11, 3:41–4:07 min**

We sit face to face and close to one another, our effort directed at saturating the fragment of the strand. Before we start, we take a break from marking. With our hands touching in the air, I try to exert enough pressure and specific motions on her forearm to make her engage in rotary gesticulation. My growing pressure accelerates her arm's turning in circles and releases more flow in her gestures. She gives in to this suggestion but only as long as I continue leading her through the spin. This surrender on her part causes our hands to rise and spiral in the air excessively. However, between the minutes 15:42–16:20 (clip 11a) she resists my similar imposition of specific gestures, which results with a minor skirmish ended by us parting again.



**Figure 103.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing, a sequence of the non-marking actions. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. A set of frames from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.

**clip 12, 4:08–5:16 min**

Curled up, on my knees and heels in a child's pose, I spread my arms wide to the sides and engage in ambidextrous marking (Fig. 104). With one hand I'm exploring wide rotary gestures on the paper, flow in my arm becomes less and less restrained. I observe the trace. My other hand is resting on Jaanika's forearm, co-marking in the rhythm of her steady, swinging motions. I fully return her spatial decisions and imposition of pressure. My attention is also divided. Most of it goes to my independent hand, yet the rest focuses behind me. I make extra effort not to lose the point of contact. After a while, I stop moving my "free" hand and take a rest. Meanwhile, Jaanika continues to lead my now mostly relaxed arm. The increasing flow on my side balances my heavily resting body. We will repeat this configuration in reversed roles between minutes 10:00–10:40 (clip 12a). This will also give an incentive to co-initiate the laying out of finer textures. The setup releases a particular type of closeness tinged with what I would characterize as tender, caring emotion.

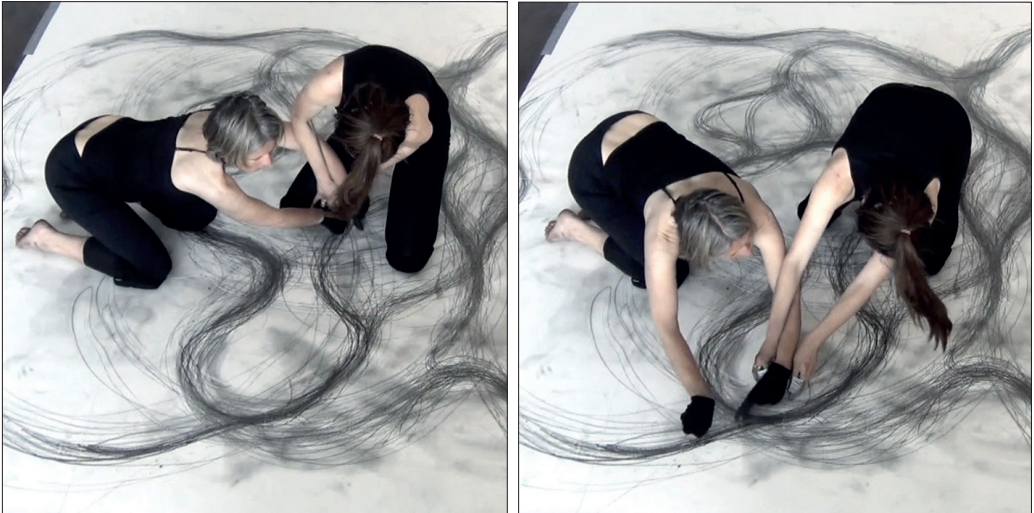


**Figure 104.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. A frame from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.



**clip 13, 5:16–5:42 min**

Similarly as in the clip 9, we start marking with our hands tightly clasped. The difference is that now Jaanika is establishing the values of all the effort factors (speed, space, pressure, flow). We stay side to side, which makes her choose the forward-backward swinging motion (Fig. 105). Her pressure on my palms is tangibly growing as she's supporting her body weight there. In this way, we quickly strengthen the tone and shape of the loop-like form underneath us. Soon after, she frees me from her clasp and imposes only the tempo of the swing. Clinging lightly to one of her moving arms, I follow as long as she wants. The spatial range of her floating gesture expands visibly. The rhythm of movement attained in such minutes evokes synergy between us – a vision of this work as a common task.



**Figure 105.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. Frames from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.

**clip 14, 5:43–6:30 min**

I mark the paper from above and mid-level. I work on a relaxed forearm with my arm bent at right angles to the paper surface. Meanwhile, Jaanika holds my arm at the point of its flexion and pulls, pushes, taps it, or throws in the air lightly. To this, I pull back with a similar force. Her action introduces a moderate tension in my shoulder and palm, my fingers splay open (Fig. 106). The configuration triggers additional qualities in my mark-making arm, ensures stabilization and brings in extra gestures of flicking and dabbing. Additionally, rotations appear in between the 10:51–11:15 minutes (clip 14a). Here, Jaanika does the leading with her both hands and along the entire length of my arm. Every few seconds we exchange the roles by transiting in contact high above the paper plane. There we soothe the tensions, increase flow between our hands to return to the paper. The pause brings in elegance and harmonizes the co-action. This type of sequence happens quite often and takes on various forms during the experiment (also observable in clips 14b: 13:21–13:45 min and clip 14c: 16:21–16:38 min).



**Figure 106.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. A set of frames from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.

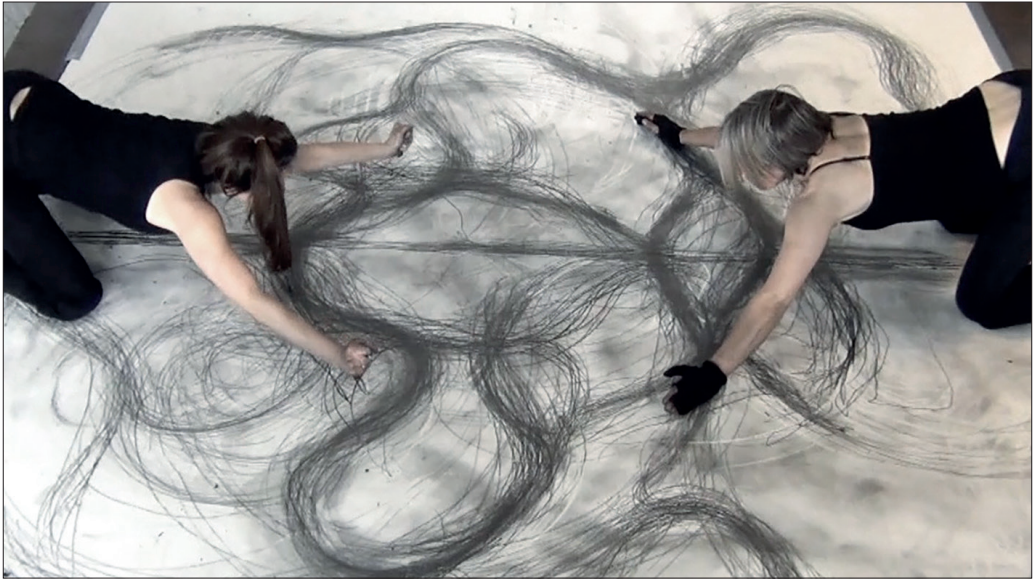
**clip 15, 7:01–8:40 min**

As in the beginning, we instinctively aim towards opposite ends of the vertical compositional axis. Once there, we keep travelling back and forth along the axis, alternately approaching and moving away from each other. Supported on her arms and knees Jaanika extends her whole body slowly, with increased force and condensing flow, like in an ab-wheel exercise (Fig. 107). In this I recognize her inborn manner of moving and drawing. I keep looking at this incentive with growing satisfaction. Her laboured trace underlines the main axis of the drawing. In these minutes I mirror her body's shaping and gestures (Fig. 108). Additionally, when in contact I embrace Jaanika's marking hands and squeeze them lightly with my forearms. When doing this, I simultaneously cross my arms behind hers and continue with my own marking. Sometimes the embrace brings us to a halt or minimal rotary gestures need to be performed (Fig. 109). Other times, her locked arms are an orientation axis for me along which I move up and down to modify the quality of my own oppositional gliding. We will repeat these patterns later between the 11:34–13:02 min (clip 15a).



**Figure 107.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. A frame from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.





**Figure 108.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. A frame from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch



**Figure 109.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. A frame from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch.

**clip 16, 11:16–11:34 min**

I am floating/marking along one of the compositional strands. Jaanika's forearm is in gentle contact with mine wherein she is establishing my speed and rhythm. After a while, she adds a subtle twisting gesture combined with shifting her arm up and down along my moving hand. I take it as a suggestion to mimic her gesture and follow her lead. Then, she delicately slides down onto the plane and disconnects from me to conduct the same action directly on paper and independently. We maintain this rhythm and echo each other at a distance for the next few seconds.

**clip 17, 14:08–14:38 min**

Allowing some distance between us, moving on all fours and from side to side, we start mimicking each other's arms marking ever more swiftly in circular motion. Our bodies' space expands. The abruptly increasing speed of this duplicated gesture quickly thickens the visual layer. The co-action adds arches and circles to the initial structure and thus develops the upper left part of the drawing (Fig. 110 left). Later, in the 14:39–14:46 minutes (clip 17a), we imitate each other's flicking and dabbing gestures. This is also when we start working on the next layer of the drawing, one of a finer, textural character. Towards the end, between 17:11–17:21 min (clip 17b), we replicate each other's flicking and slashing gestures. The separate phrases are impulsive, and we quickly achieve a common intensity in movement/marking (Fig. 110 right). The record of this short, finalizing sequence gives off two sets of black, swishing lines.



**Figure 110.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding, flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 9, 2017. Frames from a 7-minute video by A. Karasch..

**clip 18, 14:47–15:35 min**

In this minute we take such frequent turns in leading and adopting to the other's ways that the division of roles isn't clear. Specifically, there seems to be more focus on active transferring, borrowing and tuning in to each other's gestural variations. Changes of location are rather scarce. Instead, there are high amplitudes in speed of our arms. With reference to pressure, usually its lighter ranges are being explored.

**clip 19, 16:54–17:10 min**

Jaanika is attempting to provoke my hand's stronger impact against the paper surface. She presses against my working hand, directing all her effort upwards. I make a suggestion by saying: "Press me and then release." She doesn't continue for too long.

### clip 20, 17:23–17:26 min

90 minutes have passed, we move bolder and ever more in sync, but we also tend to repeat ourselves. Concurrent with this impression is the realization that the traces in the middle start blurring disproportionately fast in relation to those in the outer ranges of the drawing. The monotony in movement manifests itself in the visual plane as it slowly loses its power and freshness. Without any words and signs being exchanged, we co-decide to end the experiment. I feel this is happening because both of us realize that no fresh solutions will come about any soon, and many have already been tested in different variations.

Jaanika's full concentration and engagement in our collaboration gave our large-size drawings a special meaning. I wanted to contemplate, document and have them in my vicinity so I took them back to my studio. As I was hanging the works on the walls, a sense of deep satisfaction accompanied me. For many years to come I will feel the actuality of our acquaintance and the appropriateness of the form we created.

## 14.1.2 Interpretation

In point-of-contact, relative freedom of the actions and the compositional directives of the diagram emphasized the gestural character of our interaction. This had set mainly our shoulders, arms, wrists and hands in motion. Our body cores and legs were activated too but there was far more stillness there compared to the previous collaborative experiments with the binding. This naturally moderated the overall dynamics of the co-action making us not so prone to extremes. Except for the beginning, when we reached far on the paper surface to lay out the main structures, we chose to operate within the near- and mid-reach of our body space. Jaanika explored her furthest kinesphere later on, when she extended and flexed her whole body to alternately connect with me and retreat.

Regarding the space of the paper, we gravitated to its middle strip where the compositional lines intersected. The strategy and rules made us (inter-)act mainly within the horizontal plane of movement. Mildly restrained performing of gliding and floating encouraged us to work in multiple planal directions, by which the original compositional threads not only firmly embedded in the picture but also developed extra offshoots and intersections. Additionally, we mostly occupied the middle level of movement. There was also a frequent activity in the low level. Yet, we never lay down at the same time but rather took turns. This exploration of the low level introduced the possibility of regular recuperation, which additionally reduced escalation of potential tensions. Besides the minor changes in tonal values, this kind of passivity did not make a visible modification in the shape of the drawn line. Occasionally, we got up to the high level but that served the purpose of the drawing's inspection rather than our direct interaction. Finally, there was also no time restrictions. We took advantage of that and sometimes traversed and/or exceeded the paper plane to rest or to take a better look at the drawing.

With reference to the bodies' shape, we sometimes froze momentarily and took still shape forms like that of a ball or a leaning wall. Paradoxically, rather than rigidity and stubbornness these shapes, in my view, communicated co-presence and the bodies' awareness of space and each other. Additionally, while in motion the bodies' shapes had an advancing-retreating quality and our arms and hands had a rising-sinking quality. The bodies' rising-sinking, advancing-retreating, and left-right/forward-backward rocking let me infer about duality as the prevailing pattern of our co-practice. This duality in joint movement made us continuously transit between the two-dimensional of the paper plane and the three-dimensional of the space around us. The duality could be also found in an exertion/recuperation mode of our joint drawing.

Of all the states that co-existed in our Reciprocal Drawing, it is primarily the oppositional pair of *dream* and *awake states*. In LMA, the dream state refers to heightened experience of pressure and flow. In the dream state, sensing/impact produced (related to pressure) and feeling/intuiting (related to flow) exclude thinking (related to space) and decision making (related to time or speed). Analogically, the awake state refers to heightened experience of space and time (or speed). In this state, attention/thinking (space) and commitment/decision making (time) exclude sensing/impact produced (pressure) and feeling/intuiting (flow) (Maletic, 1987; Studd & Cox, 2013).

It is difficult to point to the exact clip(s) that exemplify these states accurately. In my experience, both states overlapped or continuously transformed one into another as we transited back and forth between these dualities. Further, the amplitudes of the experienced effort factors always stayed in the neutral ranges. However, if I were to identify the main tendency, I would point to the *dream state* since our experiencing wider ranges of flow and pressure prevails in the description. These are the minutes in which we stayed in a direct physical contact with each other and the material, alternately leading and surrendering in drawing, sometimes co-marking and swinging rhythmically, or lying on the floor. As noted above, this type of perceptual experience makes us more open to feeling, intuiting (flow) as well as sensing and impact produced (pressure). Indeed, in those moments I sensed Jaanika's qualities of movement better, that is her receptiveness, relaxation and adaptation. She worked as if in an energy-saving mode, with her eyes often closed or half-closed. There was no stubbornness in her body, no striving observable from the outside. Still, I could sense her engagement and focus on the drawn form. I like to think that she impacted my marks with these qualities and that her touch benefited my own drawing. Finally, when in the dream state, our shared marks did not instantly undergo visible changes. Rather, like undercurrents or hidden rivers, the lines accumulated for long to suddenly emerge in masses. The lines were flowing and undulating, there was continuity and softness in them. It was difficult to distinguish which one of us was the author of a given trace. Only the intensity of the tonal values increased quickly in the dream state, which imbued some planes with a deep satin quality. As a result of all this, I identify the dream state as the most desired frame of mind in this experimental thread.

Following this interpretation, the transient moments of switching between the dualities were more indicative of the *awake state*. They happened when we were gravitating towards each other to connect and veering away from each other to disconnect (e.g., clip 4), raising our hands away from the two-dimensional and upwards to include the third dimension (e.g., clips 6, 10, 10a, 11), or when we exchanged levels (e.g., clip 7a). Awake state also prevailed when we mimicked and mirrored each other at a distance (e.g., clip 15). The same can be said about those seconds in which we acted independently (e.g., clips 1, 2, 3). Paradoxically, our short interactions at a distance, but also the freezing in an unnatural embrace (clip 15), were closer to the awake than to dream state. In all those examples, our perception opened up to space and time (or speed). And so, with this opening a slightly sharper attention (related to space) to the collaborator and the drawing as well as a capacity to decide (related to time) about the next action came to the fore. Then, although at a distance, I was still able to perceive Jaanika's qualities including her reactive mood, being at my disposal, and her attention appearing neither too spread nor too channelled. This was as if she were encompassing the space and me within it, rather than being a separate actor in the exchange. The traces of us moving in the awake state, especially those resulting from the mutual mimicking and mirroring, were more distinct. They were being placed symmetrically and usually covered a wider area.





**Figure 111.** Records from the collaborative experiment *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Graphite, charcoal, eraser on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), New York (NY), May 9, 2017. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch.

The earlier observed tempered mobility of the lower body, and thus reduced spatial effort, lets me recognize *passion drive*<sup>84</sup> as the most desired mood for the Reciprocal Drawing practice. In our context, passion drive transpired through the intersubjective, heightened co-experience of pressure (sensing, impact), flow (intuition) and speed (commitment, decision making) and reduced co-experience of the bodies' space (thinking). Following this observation and using LMA terminology, I explain Reciprocal Drawing as an artistic practice in which two collaborators fully commit to one another and, based on their co-intuiting and co-sensing, jointly decide to make a visible impact on a two-dimensional surface through their continuous bodily contact to create an independent work of art<sup>85</sup>. Describing Reciprocal Drawing by the effort missing from our interaction, I understand the co-practice as the one rejecting rational thought and overt logical calculations.

<sup>84</sup> In LMA, passion drive is a combination of 3 effort factors. It refers to heightened experience of pressure, flow and time (or speed). Intention/impact produced (pressure), emotional feeling/intuiting (flow) and commitment/decision-making (time) exclude mental thought (space).

<sup>85</sup> I already explained my understanding of a drawing as an independent artistic product in terms of its capacity to be handled separately from movement. The detailed reasoning on this topic can be found in subsection 13.2.3 of previous chapter.

Notable is that, like passion drive, dream state (described in the earlier paragraph) and near state (described in the binding-related “Interpretation” subsection 13.3.2 of the previous chapter), all identified as preferential for Reciprocal Drawing, do not contain space effort. Clearly, elimination of space effort from the experience of movement does not mean its elimination in general (spatial quality is never fully non-existent) but rather the absence of this effort’s intensified experience. In LMA terms, excessive deviation from a goal is avoided in equal measure as narrowing down and obsessive sticking to one point in space (Sokołowska, 2014). To demonstrate, if I focused on one point it would not allow me to interact and complete the drawing, and analogously, if I were moving in all possible directions, I would not come into contact with the collaborator and/or the drawing surface at all. Therefore, both extreme spatial tendencies pose a risk of turning the co-marking into a difficult task and the drawn traces into a by-product of movement. The refusal to experience space in these extreme ways is a remnant of my traditional approach to drawing, where the body spatially organizes itself in relation to the paper plane to be able to arrange the marks in a certain order. As in the conventional approach so in Reciprocal Drawing, the space effort is lived *neutrally* which means that there is a pre-meditative and observant “inner disposition” (Maletic, 1987, p. 20) towards the paper plane as an object located in space for me. This object defines the dynamics of the co-movement of which traces are not accidental but intentional. This refusal of the extremities in spatial effort makes Reciprocal Drawing derived from visual arts rather than from dance or performance art.



**Figure 112, 113.** With Jaanika Peerna, after our collaborative performance *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 2*. Itinerant Festival, curated by Hector Canonge. The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (NY), May 15, 2017. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch





**Figure 114.** Records from the collaborative performance *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 2* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Graphite, charcoal, eraser on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.). Itinerant Festival, curated by Hector Canonge. The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (NY), May 15, 2017. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch

The jointly finalized drawing (Fig. 114) shows a complex, umbrella-shaped form of bilateral symmetry, closed at the top and open at the bottom. The form is embedded in a structure built of thick central and slightly thinner side stems which spread and interconnect. The main stems run horizontally along the form's center. They are undulating and intensely black, with their contours blurred. The farther away from the center, the more contrastive the structure becomes. There, the thinner stems reveal their content, a multitude of fine, long lines. The spaces in-between the stems are tonally irregular, translucent and speckled. Along the stems, vibrating textured planes accumulate. The drawn form is clear and makes a consistent impression. At first a bit grim and mysterious, it resembles bodily and/or natural systems that generate and maintain movement such as the cardiovascular system or river basin with a net of tributaries. Yet, I also tend to think of it as an x-ray of a giant medusae, a living, oxygenated organism that maintains a rhythmic, core-distal duality of motion. The co-experiment was repeated by Jaanika and I according to the same improvisational approach at The Bronx Museum of the Arts in New York a few days later (Fig. 112, 113). Figure 114 presents a slightly different visual variation resulting from that second attempt.

### 14.1.3 Evaluation

The co-experiment was highly compliant with the reciprocal leading/following in contact suggested in the rules of our collaboration. Yet, we spontaneously broadened that pattern by raising/lowering of hands in contact above the paper plane (clips: 6, 10, 10a, 11, 11a) and rocking left/right, backward/forward in contact (clips: 8, 9, 9a, 13). Additionally, we incorporated the partnering strategies in which the bodies' direct interdependence was lost – mirroring and mimicking at a distance (clips: 15, 15a, 16, 17, 17a, 17b) and mirroring by jointly approaching/drift apart<sup>86</sup> (clips: 3, 4, 10, 11a).

The dominant pattern of duality present in leading/following and in most of the above modes, evoked connectedness – feelings of patience, relaxation, care, closeness, and sense of trust. The unlimited time acted as an additional tranquilizer. In these conditions, our mutual qualitative impact was mostly subtle. Consequently, the bilateral influencing the quality of the traces was not visible immediately. The same extended time, however, allowed us to jointly thicken and saturate the traces so that the final record emanated exceptional qualitative depth, hard to achieve through solo work. Further, the following/leading dynamics went well with the initial gliding and floating gestures. For the same reason, however, we essentially did not co-develop any new actions apart from the flicking, dabbing and slashing introduced only shortly. This constancy of actions, but also our freedom to approach/drift apart, caused that the directions of the lines never changed rapidly. The prevailing pattern gave the lines a uniform, wavy character. Also, the strategy went well with the proposed diagram. Its two FW4-based arches overlapped, which created a common area with many cross-overs located in close proximity. Propelled gently by our dreamy approaching/drift apart, we had found the lines similar to railings that eventually always brought our hands together. Considering all the above, rather than to transform my trace as in the binding strategy, point-of-contact can be used to gently demonstrate possible shapes and qualities by leading the collaborator in contact, or to develop my own traces by following the collaborator in contact.

*Point-of-contact* as a strategy of Reciprocal Drawing gently reinforces the intentionality of my actions. The collaborator's touch has mainly a demonstrative and supportive function, by which it enriches the shape and quality of my trace. The strategy also opens me up to co-experiencing speed (or time) as an essential factor in building of the qualitative complexity in a drawing.

The common rhythm and repetition achieved through the joint rocking, mirroring, and mimicking evoked a sense of union, equality, strength, confidence, and commitment to the task. On a visual level, while mirroring/mimicking each other's moves, we simultaneously duplicated each other's shapes and qualities of traces. The joint rocking was more about intensifying one and the same shape/quality. In all these modes we interacted at a distance. There was still a connection yet without the travelling, which kept the previous traces relatively contrastive and intact. In this way, the composition was developing faster, yet remained complex, symmetry was being built at many levels but without meticulous elaboration. Moreover, the lines, shapes and tonal planes accumulated quicker, yet not fully disorderly, and textures were becoming dense, yet preserved their freshness. It is also worth noting that the initial FW4 extension-flexion was performed as planned but was not co-explored later<sup>87</sup>. Only Jaanika alone integrated her idiosyncratic extension-flexion that seemed to come from her own practice (clips 15, 15a). This expanded my own repertoire of actions since I tried to mirror her

<sup>86</sup> Description of different partnering strategies can be found in Table 1 on pages 78–80 in 9.3.1 subsection of the "Performance Drawing" chapter.

<sup>87</sup> The repertoire of the body actions available for Reciprocal Drawing is presented in Table 2 on pages 144–145.



a couple of times. Finally, our occasional walking beyond the paper plane did not result from the adopted strategy but was rather like breaking character and turning towards process-unrelated contexts.

Point-of-contact serves the creative process because it brings the bodies together in such ways that they can produce a combined effect that is greater than the sum of their separate efforts. Such type of work creates an atmosphere conducive to a deeper connection between two artists. In this sense, Reciprocal Drawing is a synergistic practice.

Additionally, reflection is given to the sometimes mutually excluding values of clarity of trace and mobility of the bodies. I already defined the values crucial for Reciprocal Drawing as: *clarity of trace*, *mobility* of the whole body, *purposefulness* of actions, and *attentiveness* (see section 12.8 of “The Solo Phase” chapter). Undoubtedly, our greater agility in the upper than lower body has brought our co-practice closer to conventional drawing. This had a calming effect on the process and ensured greater predictability of its product since we associated the new with the well-known. What’s more, the general spontaneity was preserved, we could move all body parts, explore all efforts, change planes and levels, and shape our bodies freely. With our hands fully mobile, each of us could clearly record every single gesture, and this never occurred at the expense of the other. Despite this enjoyed freedom, we chose to practice the non-marking actions every now and then. I introduced their specification and description in the “Evaluation” subsection of the previous chapter (see Tab. 4, p. 184). This experiment brought in the following new non-marking actions:

- The joint raising, lowering and/or floating of our hands above the paper plane (clips 10, 10a, 11, and 11a). All these actions belong to the movement-related category since they were conducted to ensure the bodies’ continuous mobility. What is new, they also counter-balanced the joint marking, our heads turned upwards, hands transited between the two- and three-dimensional, the bodies relaxed by changing their shapes and/or positions. Additionally, at these very moments we always regulated the intensity of touch, which helped us find the right shape and quality for the next marks. Therefore, point-of-contact brings balance to the reciprocal practice of drawing and creates an opportunity for the body to find the adequate movement to produce a line.
- The holding of the collaborator’s arm at the point of its flexion and gentle pulling, pushing, or tapping (clips 14, 14a, 14b, 14c, and 14d). These gestures belong to the drawing-related, non-marking actions since they were aimed at a direct modifying of the quality of the other’s marking hand.
- Jaanika’s resting of her arm on my body or stretching it to assist me (clips 5 and 12a), her twisting gesture combined with shifting her palm up and down along my forearm to suggest changes in the shape of my line (clip 16), getting down on our heels and sitting still to observe each other (clips 3 and 15), but also the earlier mentioned push and pull in the air to enjoy each other’s presence. These actions belong to the category of the partner-related non-marking actions since they resulted from our need to communicate.

Furthermore, the experienced situation was highly consistent with my *value of attentiveness*. The emergent marks could be observed, their production was worth the energy invested, and there was no physical discomfort. My focus smoothly transitioned between myself, the collaborator and our traces. All this transpires in the final work showing a creature of which movement symbolizes the continuous going out to the world and returning to oneself. The drawings of this thread are my favorite ones, because they reflect the co-creative process being in sync with my values and expectations.

With regards to purpose, we managed to separately visualize and then co-produce two firmly grounded compositions. Since many trajectories and crossovers were set by us at a start and we had all the time we wanted, our incessant redetermining the aim in space was reduced. In fact, the trajectories had become so familiar that one could glide along them with their eyes half-closed. New paths resulted from the need to add shortcuts. All this facilitated our joint building up and solidifying the main composition-*al* structures, smooth proceeding from general to specific, and/or transitioning back and forth between the various stages of the creative process.

Among the relative challenges imposed by point-of-contact may be the collaborators' different perception of time and the interrelated different sense of proximity. Sometimes, the bodies spontaneously determine the appropriate duration. Other times, it may take practice to co-establish a balance in which the duration of touch enables conduct of a sensible movement sequence. For me, the indicators of coming change are decreasing flow, internal impatience, boredom, immobility, rising warmth, and noticing the same sensations in my collaborator. Important is to always stay sensitive to the other's body, even at the cost of losing contact.

Further, the complete absence of problems in my collaboration with Jaanika may also be of concern. Because my aim has always been to lead the co-practice away from the problematic, this concern may seem contradictory with the broader intent of my research. However, after the experiments with binding, it became clear that provoking and living of conflicts in the co-creative process brings out opportunities. For example, so far the events induced by point-of-contact have not created a chance for the bodies' strenuous efforts towards mutual adaptation. There has been no getting out of my comfort zone. With this, the chance for us to develop our specific dynamics in Reciprocal Drawing has been excluded. Further, since there was no exposure of intense emotions, my self-reflection in the aftermath has not been too revealing. I recollected the basic truths of co-existence, rather than gained new insights about myself in relational and/or social contexts. Moreover, the absence of tensions may have needlessly obscured the spirit of artistic rivalry for attention, visibility and control – potential driving factors for the process and its products. In general, I consider the second thread co-experimentation successful on many formal and informal levels. Apart from the combination of different frames, I like to attribute the fluency of the reciprocal process and consistency of its product to Jaanika's perceived adaptive skills. Considering the above, the collaborators' temperaments seem to be factors with which the dynamics of the Reciprocal Drawing practice can be additionally tweaked.

In the next and last co-experiment of this research, Jaanika and I check if the modification of the diagram (Fig. 117)—related to my solo drawing (Fig. 116)—will generate any changes. The diagram presents a radially symmetrical form generated from the FW4 action. The composition is devoid of guiding threads and crossovers. It is suggested to be developed with a variety of gestures taken from the repertoire. In the end of this experiment, it will turn out that the change of the diagram, while maintaining the same rules, neither tangibly alters our reciprocal dynamics nor brings any new formal possibilities to the developed method. Only the introduction of the additional, high level of movement will be new, nonetheless complementary to the previously described connectedness. The missing components of the previous diagram—the crossovers and paths of mutual access—will be arranged by our bodies spontaneously at the start. The textures will become much reduced. The transformative power of Reciprocal Drawing, as evidenced in the collaborations with Ola and Ram, will also transpire. The next section presents the photographic and film documentation of this process. However, deviating from the previous sections, this co-experimentation is

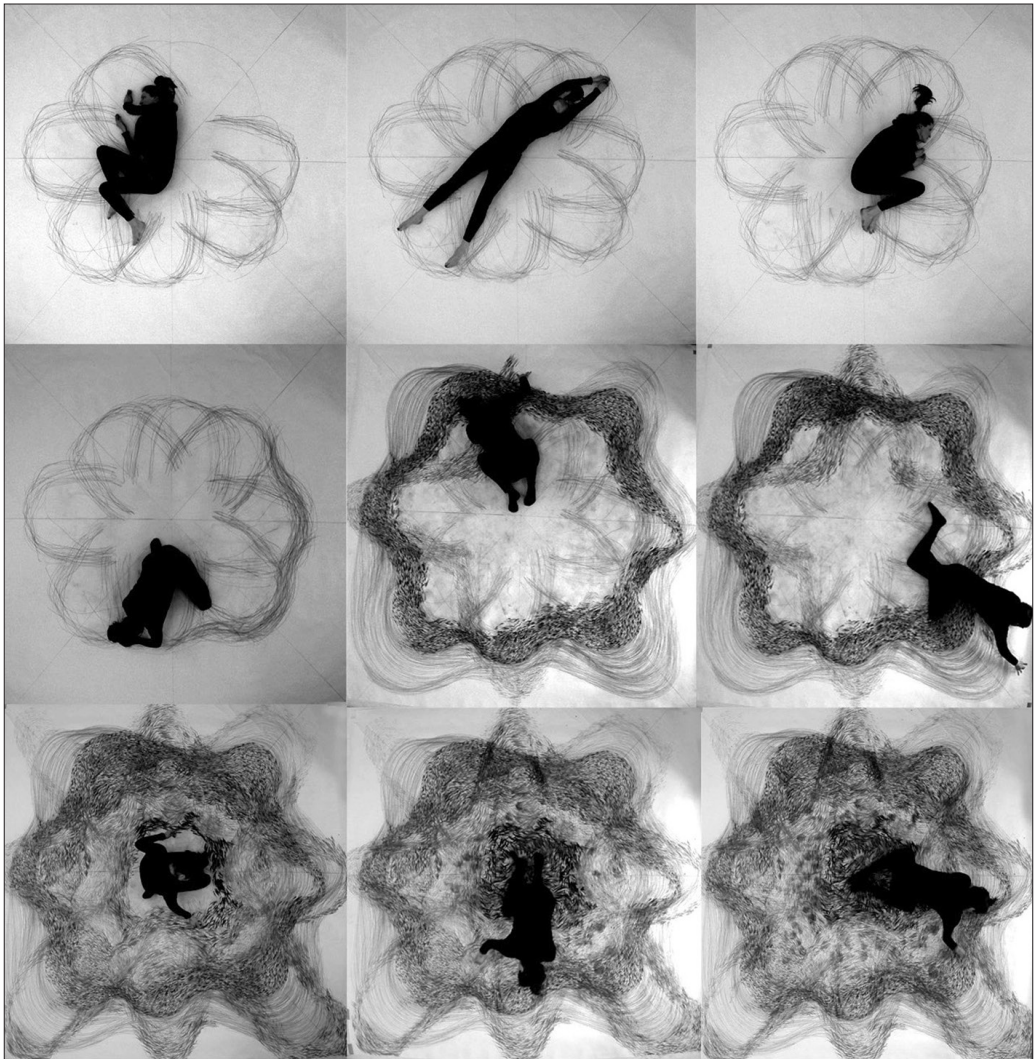
not described and analyzed with video clip excerpts, follow-up interpretations and evaluations as much of this is included in our first experiment. Since the effects will be satisfactory, I will suspend further experimentation and conclude the series of experiments included in this thesis.

#### 14.2 Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Centric

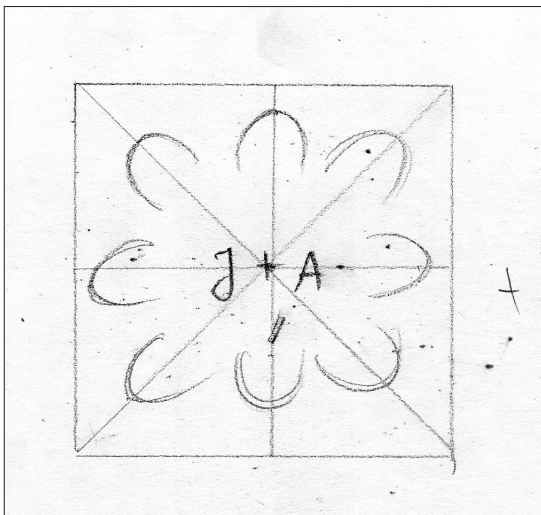


**Figure 122.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 12, 2017. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch



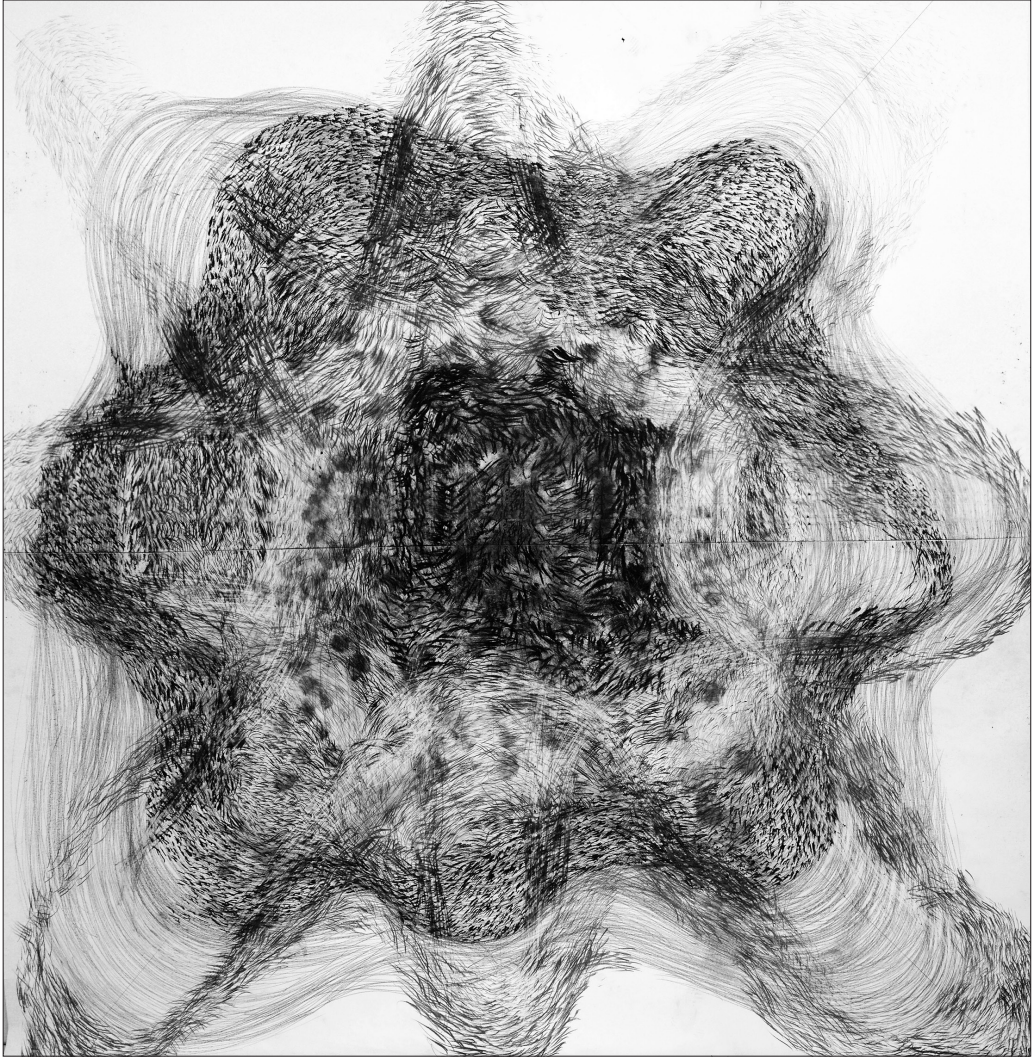


**Figure 115.** *Extensions-Flexions Centric Solo* by Agnieszka Karasch. Preparation of the compositional frame for the collaborative experiment *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Centric* by A. Karasch and J. Peerna. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m (137 x 137 in.), March 2017. Frames from a documentation video by A. Karasch.



**Figure 117.** A diagram based on *Extensions-Flexions Centric Solo*, presenting the suggested movement progression for the partners. J - Jaanika's starting position, A - Agnieszka's starting position. May 12, 2017.





**Figure 116.** *Extensions-Flexions Centric Solo* by Agnieszka Karasch, a solo drawing as a frame for the collaborative experiment *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Centric* by A. Karasch and J. Peerna. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3,5 x 3,5 m (137 x 137 in.), March 2017. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch





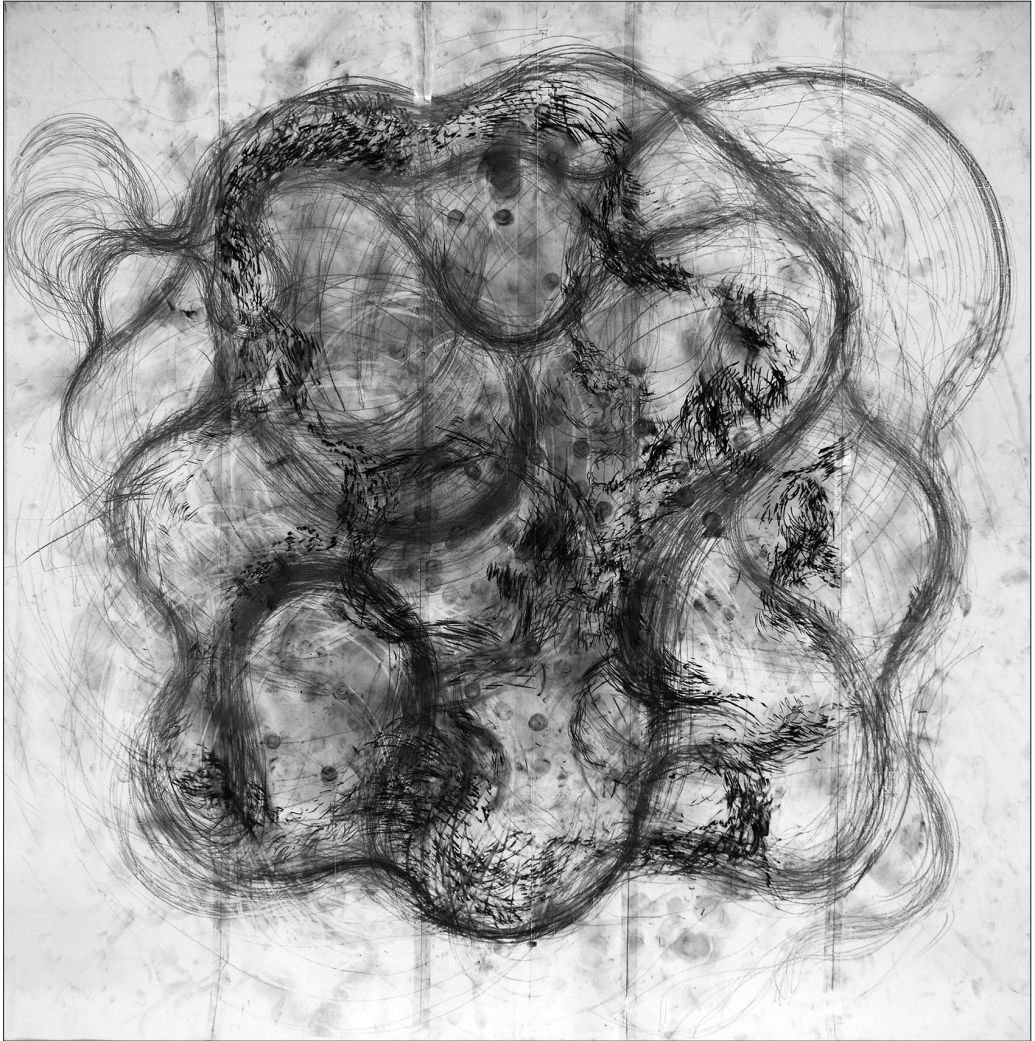
**Figure 118, 119.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 12, 2017. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch





**Figure 120, 121.** *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Co-exploration of FW4 extension-flexion, the floating, gliding flicking and slashing gestures and the point-of-contact strategy for Reciprocal Drawing. Charcoal, graphite on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 in.), durational studio work, New York (NY), May 12, 2017. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch





**Figure 123.** Records from the collaborative experiment *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Centric* by Agnieszka Karasch and Jaanika Peerna. Graphite, charcoal, eraser on paper, 3 x 3 m (118 x 118 inch). New York (NY), May 12, 2017. Photo credit: Agnieszka Karasch



In Part Three, I described my experience of drawing solo and in collaboration. In chapter 12, I recalled the solo phase of which the aim was to prepare the repertoire of body actions for the Reciprocal Drawing experimentation of the second phase. During the solo practice, I additionally observed correlation between my body's shaping in movement and the shapes of the drawn lines, between my body's spatial orientation and the development of visual structures, and between my body's experience of effort factors (speed, pressure, flow, and space) and qualitative diversification of my traces. I also defined my values to guide the subsequent, collaborative phase of experimentation. Then, in chapters 13 and 14, I described my experience of this phase with its five interconnected co-experiments of which the aim was to utilize the reciprocal partnering strategies of performance in favor of drawing. In the Interpretation subsections of each chapter, I explained Reciprocal Drawing from the perspective of LMA. Eventually, it became clear that the *passion drive*, *dream state* and/or *near state* are conducive to creating harmony in Reciprocal Drawing. The same interpretive line let me infer *spell drive*, combination of *mobile* and *stable* states as well as *remote state* as the ones leading to tensions. My experience of *space effort* came out to be crucial in this distinction. I also presented the new opportunities which binding and point-of-contact bring for drawing: the *reinforcement of intentionality of my actions*, *enhanced physical spontaneity and authenticity*, *production of new and complex compositional solutions for drawing but also transformation of the existent ones*, *better connection between my perceptive body and the means of drawing*, *conflict between the collaborators as a way to engage them emotionally*, and finally *mutual trust and connectedness between the collaborating artists*. Concurrent with these opportunities were some challenges which took my method forward: the imbalance between giving and taking and uncontrolled escalation of physical struggle and competition. In the next, Thematic Interpretation part of the thesis, I bring all the opportunities and challenges together and explain them in connection with Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of embodiment and the selected concepts of performance and collaboration theories.

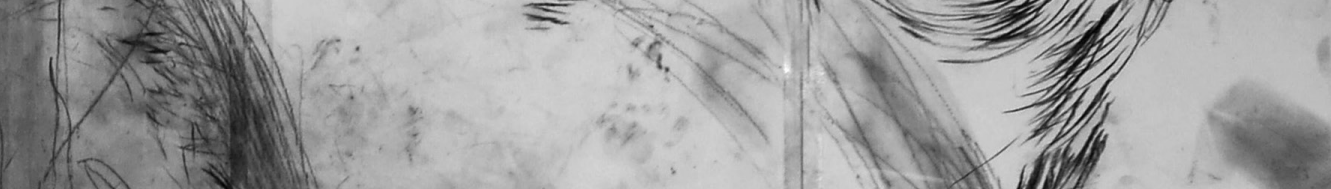
# THEMATIC INTERPRETATION OF THE EXPERIMENTATION PROCESS

The last part of this doctoral thesis is a result of phenomenological analysis and interpretation of my experimentation process. It is there to enable the reader a philosophical and social, and thus more encompassing understanding of the opportunities which the experimentation process brought about for the drawing practice. In the first chapter of this part, I discuss Reciprocal Drawing as an individual process and a unique embodied path to self-knowledge, while in the second chapter I consider Reciprocal Drawing as the one broadly reflecting the problematics of the I-Other relation. The third chapter is the last one in this publication, and so summarizes the entire research project. Instead of conventional introduction, the paragraphs below present an outline for the entire Part Four by consideration of Reciprocal Drawing through the lens of the drawing body's *intentional* relation to space.

In Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2012) view, space is *intentional* for the living body, which means that it is laden with sense, wherein "sense" denotes a meaningful connection of human perception to outside things. The living body's intertwinement with the world, its deep connection to the outside things, makes our actions (the actual muscular motions) intentional. Immersed in space, the body immediately and pre-reflectively understands and adapts to its environment. The concept of "intentionality" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p. 112) emerges throughout my entire experimentation. When I engage in Reciprocal Drawing my body stands as a central point of reference in space. Its central position within the image plane defines all the other spatial relations. Being there, I do not experience the materials and the collaborator as pulled out of my context, which is a positionality associated with many other research processes. Instead, I identify them from my own point of reference. For example, instead of speaking about the paper being located between the pillars of my studio, I tend to determine its location in reference to where I am marking. And so, when I kneel the paper is under me, the ceiling above me, my collaborator close by my side, and the audience far behind me. As Hass (2008) puts it, up and down, left and right, vertical and horizontal are all "spatial relations that draw their very meaning and intelligibility from my body lived as an organizing whole" (p. 78).

When on paper, my motions and attention relate to the sphere of meanings characteristic for the medium of drawing. When practicing Reciprocal Drawing, the paper is the nearest object of interest for my body. While also being keenly aware of the collaborator's presence, his motions and intentions, I perform a gesture in relation to the paper surface with a goal of leaving a mark there. Acting intentionally, I pre-reflectively look for the right distances and positions to make my traces fully visible, to find an adequate shape and quality of the lines, appropriate density of planes and textures. The memory of my solo drawing prepared earlier in my studio as well as the spatial projection of the diagram that connects to that drawing make my actions purposeful.

## PART 4

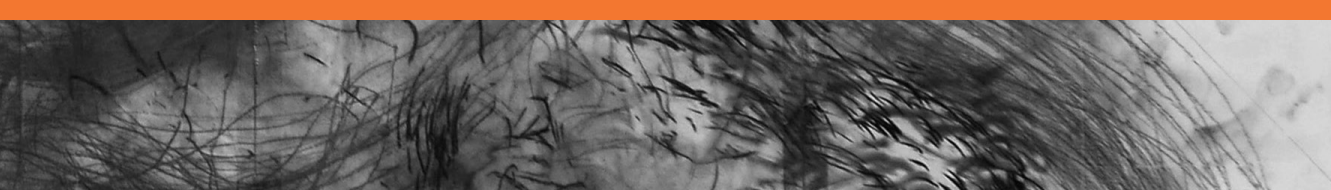


In a *gestalt*-like manner, my actions then reference the diagram with its many orientation points and crossovers. Because of the focus on those points and crossovers, my attention gradually encompasses the entire paper plane with its measurements and proportions and later also my partner's presence within it.

Placed horizontally on the floor, the paper plane extends towards the studio in which Reciprocal Drawing takes place. This introduces an element of familiarity to the body actions for they are performed within the spatial context familiar to both collaborators. The familiarity of that space then delicately shifts my focus from the medium-related issues onto the relationship between myself and the co-practicing artist. The close proximity of my body to the body of my collaborator within the limited boundaries of the horizontal plane establish a mutual trust, connectedness and friendship that are cemented by the co-produced drawing. At that point I also access a part of her *lifeworld* with her identity, specific experiences and approaches materialized in her workspace. This non-formal opportunity included in Reciprocal Drawing is of personal value for me.

Next step out and the studio points towards the public space of a gallery. In the Reciprocal Drawing practice the confines of the studio sometimes serve the collaborators as grounds for what Schechner (2002/2006) calls a "pre-performance" (p. 259). Much like one of Bert O. States' (1987) "intentional spaces" (p. 35), a gallery makes Reciprocal Drawing into a public event, a performance. Previously the medium- and relationship-oriented, here our body actions gain the extra characteristics of play understood often in a rather serious manner. The gallery space points to ever larger areas of cities and/or countries which need to be visited to make Reciprocal Drawing happen. Awareness of these surrounding spaces shifts my attention in the direction of what has been broadly identified as artistic collaboration, and so beyond the direct conditions of the Reciprocal Drawing practice. When performing different motions, I identify myself as a part of the artistic community. Through reciprocal encounters on paper, I perceive my actions as synergistic, that is leading to the production of artefacts that would never come into existence as a result of me acting separately.

Different from the sense of space described above is the broadest possible space. It neither immediately places my actions in a relational, social or cultural context, nor brings any specific opportunities for drawing. Rather, when watching myself from the distance as I immerse in Reciprocal Drawing, I get an emotionally detached view of the previous contexts and opportunities. From this position of connectivity and distance, it becomes possible to examine the ethical dimension of my actions. In Reciprocal Drawing a simple gesture and tiniest mark do not remain isolated but intentionally always ultimately refer to different scopes of meanings. The wider ranging areas and interrelated understandings build upon the narrower ones and vice versa. In this way, particular opportunities synergistically overlap and inform one another.



## 15. Reciprocal Drawing as a (Co-)embodied Act

In the first two sections of this chapter, I explain the opportunities and challenges that emerged during my (co-)experimentation in the light of the two complex and interrelated concepts of *spatiality* and *motility*. They are explained in detail in chapter 8 of the “Literature and Practice Review” part. These concepts were used by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) to articulate the living body’s perspective on space and movement. As a complex phenomenon, spatiality was explained by Merleau-Ponty by consideration of *intentionality*, *reciprocity* of the body and the world, and Edith Stein’s (1917/1964) concept of *reiterated empathy*, while motility was described with the help of notions such as *body schema*, *concrete* and *abstract movement*, *habit body* and *personal body* as well as *figure and differentiating field*. In the third section, selected opportunities and challenges are additionally discussed by considering of “physicality” and “resistance” (Foá et al., 2022, pp. 45, 47). As two of the key elements explored in performance drawing, they are thoroughly discussed in chapter 9 “Performance Drawing.” Delving into these selected concepts and themes, I present Reciprocal Drawing (co-) developed in this research as a (co-)embodied act.

### 15.1 In Touch with (my)Self through Reciprocal Practice

Returning to the relatively narrow space of the paper plane, the concept of intentionality is approached in more detail. Apart from the pure pleasure of touching the paper, my body action is accompanied by the desire to leave a mark in space. Additionally, the projection of the diagram already adds directional purpose to my marks. In these moments, the actions are mainly led by the overarching curiosity of the final compositional effect. For this effect materializes the sum of all my experiences with the medium to-date, it shows what I am capable of in drawing at a given moment in life. This curiosity opens the main intentional horizon for Reciprocal Drawing. While the clean paper makes my body pre-reflectively consider the possibility of marking in certain ways, a finished drawing strengthens this introspection because it confronts me with the visual qualities which the body is capable of releasing. And in that respect, the drawing is ultimately also a reflection of who I am at that moment.

Additionally, in Reciprocal Drawing my aiming to reach different coordinates within the paper plane is a promise of encountering the other. His immediate presence within this plane, direct and continuous contact, his body’s “*qualia*” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011, p. 49), and the specific striving to reach his compositional goals give extra legitimacy to my motions, reinforce my intending in space, and complicate the motifs of my actions. Now, the actions do not relate solely to the formal issues of drawing but are also re-actions to his specific behaviors: his attempts to establish fluency and harmony, to give support and contribute, or to take control and destroy. When I am confronted with these attempts, my actions display heightened intentionality. In the same way, the traces as carriers of these intentions become more authentic and laden with justified feelings resulting from the complexity of human interaction. For de Zegher (2010), drawing has a relational nature in the sense that one’s line draws on relation with the other as much as that relation draws on one’s line. The practice of drawing is “born from an outward gesture linking inner impulses and thoughts to the other through the touching of a surface with repeated graphic marks and lines” (p. 23). In Reciprocal Drawing, the seeing/seen relation between the drawer and a recipient of which de Zegher (2010) writes additionally includes the touching/touched relation, because my collaborator’s “kinesthetic practice of traction” (p. 23) on the surface is immediately felt on my marking hand. Also, the reciprocal presence of my collaborator creates shifts in my original composition, opens it up and transforms. Referencing Nam June



Paik's interpretation of La Monte Young's score, Foá and her colleagues (2022) write about "combined intentionality" (p. 89), which they explain happens in drawing when the participant's physical act of mark-making adds new layers to the original composition. Much like La Monte Young, I also work through my own score and engage my collaborator to respond to it. However, since our interpretations are fused within the same time and space, the combined intentionality manifests when the collaborator's act of marking immediately transforms the original composition as it develops under my hand. This relational aspect lived through Reciprocal Drawing makes my actions and traces relating to life, specifically reflecting the view I have of myself in a partnership. Bearing all these intersubjective tensions, the final drawing either extends and complements this view or distorts and complicates it.

Intentionality of actions and marks performed in Reciprocal Drawing can also be described by delving into the problematics of *reciprocity* – reversibility of the body and the world. For Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) space is *reciprocal* which means that there is always a symbiotic interconnectedness of subject and object, body and the world, self and the other. There is a basic intertwining between my living body and the materials when I act upon the paper and this paper, with its specific positioning and properties, has agency to make me draw in specific ways. The materiality of the charcoal and graphite, their unique textures, colors and smells stimulate the sensible, the simultaneous touching, seeing, hearing, and smelling. The specific qualities of these materials either calm me down or stimulate pleasure, excitement, anger, or frustration. In the co-practices of this thesis, reciprocity also manifests itself as a deep interdependence between the ways I arrange marks on paper and the ways my collaborator does. Depending on the pre-established reciprocal partnering strategy, our individual spatial choices either immediately modify the other's actions (strategy of binding) or gently enhance and directly demonstrate different gestural variations (the point-of-contact strategy). No matter how deep the modification of a single gesture is, it always comes from the reciprocal, symbiotic and dynamic character of this artistic practice. Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) claims that space is shaped by our plans and imaginings equally as they are shaped by the nature of space. This aspect of reciprocity permeates Reciprocal Drawing when the two collaborators' contradictory desires and aesthetic preferences are projected upon the paper plane, and the way a drawing develops reshapes, sometimes drastically, these individual projections. Consequently, the ways a drawing unfolds also affects its creators' positions towards each other. This strange interconnectedness of the three entities, the two lived bodies and the drawn image, is represented by a triangular setting in which the two elements continuously affect the third one and the third one determines the other two.

The same concept of *reciprocity* further explains the getting to know myself through the inspection of a finalized reciprocal drawing. To proceed with the elucidation, I first turn to Edith Stein (1917/1964) from whose philosophy Merleau-Ponty drew. Describing the living body given to us in perception, Stein (1917/1964) pointed to this body's two-fold nature. In its experience of itself, the body perceives and is perceived by itself. Because of this, the body is for itself simultaneously a subject and an object of perception. To illustrate, when I touch my right hand with my left hand, my left hand feels or inspects the right hand's unique surface, temperature, and form. In this way, the left hand becomes a senser and that what is being sensed. This double mode of the bodily experience was described by Stein (1917/1964) as "fusion" (p. 54) or "double givenness" (p. xvii) of touch. Merleau-Ponty extended Stein's (1917/1964) concept onto the other senses and ultimately to the self-Other and self-world relation in general (Parviainen, 1998, 2002; Weiss, 1998). In *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945/2012) Merleau-Ponty wrote about "double sensations" (p. 95), and in *The Visible and Invisible*

(1964/1968) he argued that this reversibility of living/lived, perceiving/perceived exists not only in the body's interactions with the self but also in the interactions between the self and other beings. And although he maintained this position, he still admitted that the reciprocity between a human and a thing is never total. To be precise, he detected that the touching/touched, seeing/seen is never complete but there is a point at which they coincide. Analogously, he spoke of the inevitable asymmetry of the I-world relation. This divergence or "*écart*" (p. 257), as he concluded, is precisely that which strengthens the reversible "bond" (p. 232). Referring to his reasoning, a completed reciprocal drawing, as an inanimate object, is indeed neither fused with my self, nor has the ability to sense my embodied nature. Indeed, I cannot say that I get to know myself fully when I touch the drawing or inspect it with the sense of sight. For the drawing is not like my body, an active knowing subject. Instead, it is an object that can only be known by me. However, as a record of the two intricate states, the state of my body with its energetic and expressive capabilities, and my mental state at a given moment, the drawing preserves this part of myself for me to which I later have no access to. Like the two divergent forms, convex and concave, of which Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) said establish a strong reciprocity, my touching hand and the drawing being touched, although fundamentally different, complement each other in my consciousness. Through its inspection, I introspectively observe my own mental processes and attitudes towards the other which partly belong to the past. Fraleigh (1987) argues that bodily knowledge, among other things, is about knowing how to express "aesthetic movement imagery" (p. 26). She claims that this knowing-how is one of the important forms of bodily lived experiential knowledge and as such opens way to self-knowledge. The records of my knowing body correspond with Fraleigh's aesthetic movement imagery. In the same way, the embodied productions resulting from Reciprocal Drawing become a foundation for the specific, relationship-focused self-knowledge.

Slightly different reasoning is needed when I refer to the opportunity of self-understanding assured by the collaborative process of Reciprocal Drawing. Here Merleau-Ponty's reciprocity and *écart* also apply. Yet, understanding of this opportunity through the lens of *reiterated empathy*, the concept formulated by Stein (1917/1964), is equally helpful. In explaining empathy, Stein's (1917/1964) point of departure was an assumption that the other's body is given to me as a living, feeling and perceiving subject and not only as a physical body or an object. Consequently, my perception of the body-subject implies understanding of her as a sensitive being and so, interpreting every physical impact, including mine as a stimulus inducing a sensuous response in her. To give an example from the co-experimentation, when I look at a physical object, be it a mark left on paper, I do not immediately imagine pleasure, relaxation, a prickly feeling or pain, since the image of the mark does not carry along any such meanings. However, when I see, feel and/or touch the collaborator's hand pressing against the paper and leaving the mark, I comprehend the effects of these actions within myself. Then, the pleasure or pain are given with this comprehension at once. In other words, the sensations that appear in me when I see and touch the other's body are a part of the meaning I ascribe to this living body. Continuing, for Stein (1917/1964) empathizing with the other starts at the level of one's body, and more precisely, with one's body's ability to identify the other's point of orientation. Parviainen (2003) explains that through empathic projection not only do we make sense of the other's experience of movement but also reciprocally make sense of our own movement as we place ourselves empathically in the other's point of view. Watching an acrobat balancing on a tightrope means for Stein (1917/1964) going through his motions inwardly, being accompanied or led, as it were, by his movements. When immersed in Reciprocal Drawing, not only do I see/feel my collaborator's physical body moving/drawing there and tied to me being here, but I also gain insight into his movement as I empathically project myself onto his point

of orientation. Paraphrasing Parviainen (2003), I propose that knowing my collaborator's bodily ways of drawing constitutes itself as an experience of my non-original bodily ways of drawing which are "only there for me in him" (Stein, 1917/1964, p. 16). In this sense, my perception of him drawing is simultaneously a reflection of my own expressive possibilities. His activity of drawing is the potential, the awaited yet inexperienced, the desired yet unrealized way of my own mark-making. Proceeding to the concept of "reiterated empathy" (Stein, 1917/1964, p. 58), one may say that after I have gained "access to the image the other has of me, [or] more precisely, the appearances in which I present myself to him" (Parviainen, 2003, p. 161), I am inclined towards the interpreting of this image. Here the term "image" refers to the appearances, and not image in a sense of a drawn picture. The term is, therefore, correlated with the "body image" (p. 24) explained by Gallagher (2005) as mental representations, beliefs and attitudes concerning one's own body. Again, this interpretation of the other's image of me occurs on the bodily and not intellectual level. And so, when I transpose Stein's reasoning onto Reciprocal Drawing, I understand this co-practice as an immediate bodily reflection of which the object is my experience of the other's experience of me. Through this direct co-embodied exchange with different collaborators, I construct a multifaceted image of myself as an animator, provider of fun and exercise, establisher of rules, a serious and stubborn competitor, a person to tease, test and go to extremes with, or reversely, somebody who eases and balances out the extremities and a diligent hunter of knowledge. As Parviainen (2003) argues, in the process of one's image interpretation one's sense of self-identity, including one's view of one's own body, is dependent on how one sees oneself from the perspective of the other.

Philosopher Angela Bello (1996) notes that our interpretation of the other's view of ourselves may sometimes be at odds with the inner perception of ourselves. In the Reciprocal Drawing practice this may happen once I have realized that instead of presenting myself to the collaborator as mainly following and supporting (judgement based on introspection), I come out to him as competitive, unamenable and impatient (judgement based on empathic projection). Based on that projection, I may start searching for new movement/drawing solutions to harmonize the entire process. In that respect, reiterated empathy as an experience embedded in Reciprocal Drawing presents itself as something constructive, as a means of broadening self-awareness through the continuous confronting of the multiple contradictory perceptions of the self.

## 15.2 The Projected Co-Developed (in)Tension

The concepts of *body schema* and *abstract movement* adopted by Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) to write about motility are useful in explaining how the new solutions for drawing emerge from application of the Reciprocal Drawing method. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) argued that, unlike *concrete movement*, the body's abstract movement is laden with personal purpose. The body accommodates to our projects. Without strenuous intellectual efforts, it converts an idea into action. The "body schema" (Gallagher, 2005, p. 24) – the body's unique "topography" (Parviainen, 2003, p. 157) that allows us to function as a unity in relation to our tasks, helps in the realization of this idea. The completion of a drawing by interacting in accordance with a reciprocal partnering strategy poses coordination challenges for the collaborators. Yet, supported by the individual body schema the two bodies sooner or later recognize this unique reciprocal co-dependence and pre-reflectively co-adopt to the multiplicity of demands and stimuli. For example, the point-of-contact principle was neither exhaustively explained nor practiced by myself and Jaanika beforehand. Nor did we thoroughly discuss the rules of our exchange or meticulously rescale the diagrams to match the extensive paper planes. Confronted with the reciprocal strategy, rules and a diagram, we first jointly

visualized the unique set of the repertoire's actions, which we then put into practice at request. At the beginning, the major compositional axes helped us to preserve the basic orientation in space, and our bodies spontaneously accommodated to the distances and limits suggested by the axes. All this was happening in a swinging rhythm which the bodies spontaneously synchronized so that an even saturation of lines and clarity of structural shapes could be maintained. As the experiment unfolded, we pre-reflectively increased and constrained individual efforts relative to each other thus assuring continuity of the reciprocal movement. While exchanging effort, we managed to co-establish multiple compositional crossovers. Moving fluently across the entire image plane without stopping to localize the crossovers or measure the distances, we pre-reflectively developed the singular shapes into complex visual configurations. The symmetry and complexity of the finalized works makes the body schema tangible in Reciprocal Drawing. Using Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2012) words, in the co-practice I experience the strict interdependence of the bodies as an efficient, joint "motor-project" (p. 114). By converting the co-imagined and the co-dependant into real co-action this project is effective and powerful in shaping the drawn structure. In this way, the collaborators transcend the previous status quo of two artists with their autonomous motions, disparate imaginings or aesthetic preferences and co-create a drawing of a distinct inner logic and coherence. In that regard, Reciprocal Drawing has a potential to strengthen the bond between its practitioners and lets itself be experienced as a synergistic practice bringing to life a drawing which they can never make on their own.

Despite the absence of logical calculations, the process of the bodies' adaptation to Reciprocal Drawing does not always run smoothly. This is because the *habit body* internalizes drawing as a relatively stable, private, or at least autonomous activity, happening in relation to the two-dimensional plane, while Reciprocal Drawing is associated with a three-dimensional, partnered, dynamic, and co-dependant moving form. Consequently, different challenges related to coordination and concentration demand extra consideration. Their existence can be justified with the concept of *figure and differentiating field*. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) explained that we first experience space as a the field pregnant with multiple meanings. Things (figures) are coming at us in excess. Because this abundance seems unbearable, we tend to focus on something chosen from the meaningful flow according to its relevance to us at a given moment. We do this to avoid tension. Therefore, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) described human perception as "ambiguous" (p. 294), with a tendency to shift between objects rather than to encompass larger configurations all at once. When designing the co-experimentation, I anticipated that our habit bodies, accustomed to focusing exclusively on marks, would counteract against the all-over type of movement dynamics specific to the reciprocal strategies. In that respect, the singular actions of the repertoire and their records help the collaborators to better focus. They constitute the smaller objects of the collaborators' attention within the differentiating field. As smaller objects, the records form textural planes or fragments of the composition. The planes and fragments are slightly larger but still comprehensible clusters of figures. Additionally, the extra stimuli coming from the bodies' interaction are curbed by the restrictiveness of the rules so that the bodies may initially concentrate on something chosen from the meaningful flow.

Further, in Reciprocal Drawing the overstimulation of the differentiating field is calmed by activation of the horizontal plane and low/middle levels of movement. The LMA-body actions are interpreted in relation to the horizontal plane by being flattened out against it. This ensures better coordination between the collaborators in that it reduces the excessive multidirectionality typical of the reciprocal strategies. Additionally, as Paxton (2019) confirms referencing Contact Improvisation, practicing horizontally on the floor helps one to better focus on the "specific interior events" (Paxton, 2019, 3:13–3:26 min). Once drawing is involved, this corresponds with McNorton's (2003) "dreamlike meanderings"



(p. 146) that regulate states of control and lack thereof in relation to the marks. Finally, as artist and scholar Katrina Brown (2020) notes, by activating the horizontal plane of drawing the body becomes quietly present among other beings and objects as opposed to it having the tendency to (re-)present something when “occupying a ‘higher’ place” (p. 64). Much like for Paxton, McNorton and Brown, my moving within the horizontal plane facilitated coordination, moderated agitation and eliminated symbolic thinking. This last factor was also assured by my application of the LMA-derived repertoire of actions.

However, the possibility of tension resulting from excess of meanings exists, as my co-experimentation with Ram had proved. The analysis of our co-movement coupled with my subsequent reflection showed that the unsettling factor are the collaborator’s frequent performing of the non-marking actions high above the horizontal plane. Such an activity forces upon the marking person too dynamic shifts of focus between the two- and the three-dimensional, which evokes tension – a confusing mixture of medium- and movement-oriented registers calling for attention. To reduce the tension, the Reciprocal Drawing method encourages joint taking breaks from co-marking and designating separate moments to co-perform the non-marking actions. The role of these brief moments is to regulate the two conflicting registers. Therefore, the function of the non-marking actions corresponds with the function of McNorton’s (2003) “dreamlike meanderings” (p. 146) experienced by the collaborators in the non-reciprocal partnering contexts. When performing the non-marking actions above the paper surface, the collaborators jointly shift their attention from the formal sphere of drawing onto the reciprocal movement. In this way they establish a stronger relationship, improve reciprocal connection, and find an adequate co-movement to leave a mark. However, as evidenced in the description of the co-experiments, once the stimuli within the differentiating field become unbearable, the collaborators may spontaneously transition from point-of-contact to other partnering strategies. When binding is involved, one of them may step on the rope to regain focus.

In this discussion, I already touched upon the subject of inner bodily tensions that emerge in Reciprocal Drawing from excess of meanings. These tensions can be further explained as a conflict being a part of learning new ways of drawing. To further develop understanding of these tensions helpful are the interrelated concepts of *habit body* and *personal body* as well as the concept of *habit acquisition*, adopted by Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) to write about spatiality and motility. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) illustrated the habit body as a set of interconnected organs and circuits of which the main function is to guarantee the body’s stability. The habit body preserves what has been learned. Langer (1989) explains the habit body as the one experienced in the past and attached to what is familiar. The personal body, on the other hand, lives in the present. It is devoted to our projects, ambitions and future tasks. For Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012), these two modalities gear into each other since the personal bases on the habitual and the habitual gets modified by the personal body’s life tasks. When the habitual does not oppose, new skills are gained. When it does, we experience it as conflict or shock, and time is needed for this reaction to subdue. My exchange with Jaanika illustrates the fluent co-modification of the habitual in the process of the bodies’ learning for we tapped into our habit of moving like contact improvisers do and immediately adapted it to drawing. Specifically, the habitual served the personal in that it lent the personal its tacit knowledge of point-of-contact, while the personal aptly modulated the habitual to produce a new skill in the process of marking. Referencing dance, Parviainen (2002) states that dancers use their previous skills and choreographic knowledge of movements to produce new bodily knowledge. This usually happens incidentally during improvisation. If drawing solo is equal with the well-habituated choreographic material, then the co-improvised movement assured by Reciprocal Drawing is the means by which one can discover new ways of handling this material.

The fluency observed in our exchange with Jaanika was missing in my co-experimentation with Ola and later with Ram. Although the habitual within our bodies drew from our previous experiences with handling ropes, these experiences came out as insufficient in the context of our drawing-related demands. Therefore, instead of exploring habitual patterns, as Hsieh and Montano did (Tamblyn, 1990), we were forming new patterns based on the trial-and-error method. From this perspective, my compulsion to make motor decisions, the uncontrolled transitions between mobile and stable states, lack of coordination and general uncertainty about my collaborator's goals accompanied by intense emotions were all manifestations of conflict happening between my habitual and personal body. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) claimed that this kind of conflict is a part of learning a new skill and that time is needed for the shock to subdue. He saw repression of the habitual body's possibilities and inborn patterns as necessary for the body to develop new skills. Hass (2008) explains that repression happens when one's commitment to a course of action goes hand in hand with our unwillingness to accept anything that could interrupt this project. In my co-experimentation, repression happened over time and was experienced by me as raising "bodily awareness" (Parviainen, 2002, p. 16) and control of the stimuli coming from within. Towards the end of the first collaborative thread (related to the strategy of binding), my motions had become slower and more coordinated and the accompanying emotions more moderate. Overall, I consider the first two binding-related experiments (the first one with Ola and the second one with Ram) as exemplifying bodily conflict and the habitual body's resistance in the process of developing the new skill of drawing. The third and last, binding-related experiment (with Ram) exemplifies successful formation of the skill through repression. This skill is an ability to produce qualitatively and spatially complex records by co-maneuvering of the rope, apt shaping of my body and continuous, efficient regulating of efforts in relation to the collaborator's movement. Consequently, the images entitled *Binding/Rotations* (Fig. 47, p. 160) and *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* (Fig. 71, p. 183) are a record of my passing from "a potentiality to an actuality" (Hass, 2008, p. 90). Following this reasoning, *Binding/Rotations Centric* (Fig. 93, p. 205), a transformed version of the *Rotations Centric Solo* (Fig. 72, p. 188), is an illustration of my repressed habitual body and the revived body schema.

The presence of conflict between the personal and biological body in Reciprocal Drawing creates links between my co-practice and Carali McCall's endurance-oriented *Work no. 1 Circle Drawing*<sup>88</sup> series (2004–2022) in which the artist explores "elasticity and conflict between mind and body" (Foá et al., 2022, p. 55). Holding a graphite, McCall performs circular arm movements against the sheet of paper attached to the wall. After about four hours, her grip on the tool weakens, blood on her knuckles appears, the paper starts ripping and the tool drops, which are all signs of the performance coming to an end (Foá et al., 2022). While for McCall conflict and loss of control over the process emerges at a specified time which she can estimate based on her endurance level or scale of determinacy, in my binding-oriented co-experimentation the conflict and loss of control were tangible at random moments and were sensed by me as an inability to repress my habit body and its stimuli coming from within. The examples of losing control are the moments when I step on the rope to shortly pause the body's interdependence. This main difference between McCall's and my living of conflict and control in performance drawing is visible in the composition and saturation of our respective final records. While McCall's work shows stability and deep saturation, Ram's and my drawings present dissipation of the form and its greater luminosity at random places.

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.caralimccall.com/work-no-1-circle-drawing>

### 15.3 The Reversible Resistance

Improved through the consistent Reciprocal Drawing practice, the new skill of drawing enables co-exploration of *resistance*. Resistance as an effort experienced by the body underlies the broader concept of *physicality*. In performance drawing the concept assumes intertwining of the primary haptic engagement with the artist's experiencing of physical and mental challenge (Foá et al., 2022). Resistance was explored by Matthew Barney in his solo series entitled *Drawing Restraint 1-6* (1987-1989) in which the artist challenged himself by climbing elaborate structures to mark the walls. His movement was additionally hampered by the bungee cord connecting his body with the floor. In Barney's approach, the experienced resistance is static, it appears as a result of the body performing in relation to inanimate matter. This resistance changes proportionally to the distance between his body and the point of the cord's attachment at the floor. The artist can raise resistance in controlled ways by stable increasing of his speed and stable decreasing of his space and flow. The moment of reaching the wall is the moment of greatest resistance. In this way, Barney's marks preserve a relatively fixed character. In Reciprocal Drawing, particularly if framed by the strategy of binding, resistance (or pressure in LMA terminology) is experienced as reversible. It is dynamically generated in my body by another living body moving intentionally in the opposite direction(s). This resistance fluctuates in the connected bodies depending on the level of determination in realization of their personal goals on paper. In practice, the reversible resistance is co-regulated by the collaborators' continuous maneuvering of the rope and adapting of speed, flow and space relative to each other. In such conditions, I do not have to, like Barney, continuously generate motivation within myself for it ignites spontaneously when we stimulate, restrict or frustrate each other on our respective trajectories. In this way, our marks continually transform and diversify in shape, quality and direction.

For Barney, the self-imposed resistance becomes a factor generating growth of his artistic form (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2010). However, after a couple of hours inanimate matter eventually puts a strain and exhausts the body, and time is needed for it to regenerate. In Reciprocal Drawing, we experience dynamic fluctuations in efforts, unexpected shifts of positions and roles relative to one another. In this way, our bodies exhaust and regenerate during the co-action, and so the form expands exponentially.

Referring to Barney's work, Foá et al. (2022) explain the act of performance drawing as awakening the biological body, turning it into a well-trained muscle and an artist's own expressive tool. As they describe, the cord supports and imbues Barney's reach with lengthened and stretched-out quality on one hand, but also creates "uncomfortable conflict" (p. 50) on the other, as the artist struggles against the restrictions imposed by the material. The moment of his conflict emerging is predictable and thus similar to the one lived by McCall in her *Circle Drawing* series. In the reciprocal contexts, the price for the revived biological body and the enriched quality of actions is the inner conflict between the personal (the projected) and the habitual (the biological), but also the repression necessary to improve the fluency of marking in co-dependence.

Furthermore, in my co-experiments with binding, different was my perception of the trajectory of movement. Barney's trajectory was readily constructed and mine projected. Therefore, he advanced according to how his props led him and I modified my projection due to the unpredictable dynamics of reciprocal movement. In that respect, understanding of space in the Reciprocal Drawing process is closer to that of artist Stuart Brisley. In his solo performance entitled *DRAWN*<sup>89</sup> (2016), Brisley develops compound structures built out of unstable materials. Depending on his actions,

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.stuartbrisley.com/pages/36/10s/Works/DRAWN/page:30>

the structures tend to alter (Foá et al., 2022). Also in my collaborations—using Brisley’s words—the “conditions of what exists in the frame of the work fluctuate between moments of ...visual coherence and disharmony” (as cited in Foá et al., 2022, p. 57).

The expansion of form and transformation of line is observable in most applications of partnering strategies in drawing. Referencing the collaborative *Line Dialogue I–III* (2008–2009), in which Jane Grisewood and Carali McCall synchronize their movement while marking along the wall, Grisewood (2010) describes this expansion and transformation with formulation “double capture” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 9), because when living these phenomena one person is doubling her possibilities. Once the reversible resistance comes into play, qualitative transformation of line is additionally unremitting and enforced, and the form expands with a tendency to dynamically fluctuate between coherence and disharmony.

The concept of resistance also permeated the process of drawing framed by point-of-contact but in much more subtle ways. In that respect, my co-experimentation with Jaanika is closer to the specific approaches represented by artist and researcher Robert Luzar. Foá et al. (2022) describe Luzar’s *Two-Legged Idleness, Untaped*<sup>90</sup> (2013–14), co-performed with artist Johannes Zits, as exemplifying the concept of resistance through consideration of stillness. In this work, Luzar sticks pieces of tape onto the wall or rests on the floor with his legs up against the wall. Repetitively searching for the right balance, he critically observes his muscle tension as his legs are approaching the tipping point to then suddenly fall onto the floor in an inertial sliding. His collaborator standing still at a distance is a witness to Luzar’s contemplative actions. Jaanika’s and my relaxed, lengthy moments of joint searching for the right tension between our hands to make a mark echo Luzar’s apparent idleness. However, while Luzar’s critical reflection on his own “bodily-felt distinctions” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011, p. 49) takes place individually, mine occurs on an intersubjective plane, by feeling my collaborator’s subtle reciprocation of my own barely noticeable changes in muscular tension. Our bodies, intimately close and pensive, slow down to the minimum. Then, our hands rise in contact to stop at the level where our respective pressures balance out. Once the balance is trespassed, the subtle tension between our hands disappears and our jointly established connection loses its adequacy, which corresponds with Luzar’s awkward falling.

In this chapter, I argued for Reciprocal Drawing and the experiments of my research to be identified as (co-)embodied acts. For this purpose, I utilized the ways in which Merleau-Ponty explained space and movement. Using the concept of intentionality, I opened by identifying the actions and traces of the drawing bodies as meaningful and feeding off the broader spatial, relational, and cultural contexts, but also as being informed by these contexts. In the first section, I explained the Reciprocal Drawing practice as permeated by Merleau-Ponty’s concept of reciprocity because one affects and is affected by the marks and used materials, but also because the collaborators influence each other and the drawn marks to the same degree as they are influenced by them. The same concept made it possible to present the products of Reciprocal Drawing as a source of self-knowledge in relational contexts. Stein’s concept of reiterated empathy was used as a foundation to argue for Reciprocal Drawing to be a practice expanding one’s individual expressive possibilities in drawing.

In the second section, the concepts of abstract movement and body schema were employed to explain Reciprocal Drawing as a process of learning the new skill of drawing. The challenges identified in my co-experimentation—especially the physical and

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.robertluzar.com/two-legged-idleness-untaped>



emotional tensions—were clarified based on the concept of figure and differentiating field. These tensions were then recognized as part of learning the new skill of drawing, which was substantiated with the concepts of habit body and personal body. The drawings resulting from adaptation of point-of-contact were described as representing harmonious process of learning, while the drawings resulting from the strategy of binding as representing the conflict-laden process. Finally, the bodily conflict, loss of control over the process and repression were accepted as an inevitable part of the reciprocal practice.

In the third section, this practice was presented as the one enabling the two artists co-exploration of physicality from an angle of the reversible resistance. This kind of resistance fluctuates in the body and changes intensity depending on the collaborators' spatial determination in realization of their individual goals. In binding, resistance is experienced more dynamically, which manifests in enforced transformation of line and expansion of form in cycles of coherence and destruction. In point-of-contact the same is experienced but in more subtle ways.

## 16. The Relationships Embodied Through Drawing

In the following chapter, I feature Reciprocal Drawing as relating to the problematics of the I-Other relationship. Here, the concepts found within the theory of performance, performance drawing and collaboration inform my discussion. In the first section, I thoroughly explore the social component of Reciprocal Drawing. For this purpose, I employ the concepts of *framing* and *keying* formulated by Goffman (1956, 1974/1986), perspectives on *play* represented by Caillois (1958/2001) and Sutton-Smith (1972), and the concept of *social drama* developed by Victor Turner (1969/2011). In the second section, I present Reciprocal Drawing as the collaborative “postconsensual” (Ruhsam, 2016, p. 75) practice that engages drawing and physical contact as means to deliberately to expose conflict and rehearse intersubjective tensions. This view of Reciprocal Drawing as mirroring interpersonal relationships is supported with Jean-Luc Nancy’s (1983/1991, 1996/2000) ethical understanding of *being-with* and his perspective on union. In the same section, I explain my co-experimentation as the collaborative approach which uses visuality to promote *creativity* understood as self-awareness and responsiveness to the other, after Dora Maurer and Miklós Erdély (2020). In the last section, interpersonal relationships—mirrored in Reciprocal Drawing—are approached by turning to the ethical aspect of Emmanuel Levinas (1974/1991). The additional basis for this reflection constitutes the body-oriented ethical reasoning represented by phenomenologists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999) and the deliberations of the curator Miwon Kwon (2003) about the logic of “gift economy” (p. 85). All the concepts referenced in this chapter are thoroughly explained in chapters 9, 10 and 11 of the “Literature and Practice Review” part.

### 16.1 Playing Drawing, Playing Life

To elaborate about Reciprocal Drawing as mirroring human relations, I first turn to Erving Goffman’s (1956, 1974/1986) concepts of *framing* and *keying* to then focus on *play* as a phenomenon through which the various dynamics of these relations can be fully lived. When theorizing about human relations, Goffman (1956, 1974/1986) noticed that there is always a cultural or natural setting in which people frame occurrences, meaning that they identify and label them. Performing is then about “keying” – adapting one’s actions to peoples’ existing frames of reference. In this way, the actions become recontextualized and gain a different significance. In the collaborative works presented in this thesis, the phenomenon of framing is immediately tangible when my collaborator and I switch from a studio to a gallery space. Then, even our side activities, such as adjusting charcoal on our fingers, massaging of strained wrists, resting or observing the development of work, suddenly change their status. The framing of a gallery triggers a perceptual change which relocates our bodies and actions into the sphere of relations characteristic for theater. From now on, we initiate the process of “keying.” Previously fellow artists, hosts and visitors, we now pass as actors and/or players. The paper on the floor unavoidably becomes a stage and the tools form a unique scenography. If these simple operations suddenly raise suspense, then one may expect so much more from framing of the very action of drawing together. Such a recontextualization imposes necessity of creating subsequent frames so that the very collaborative activity promises something more than just a presentation of skills resulting with an emergence of a drawing. For an action of drawing to become captivating for the viewer, there has to be a culturally charged superstructure in which the activity is placed and for the decoding of which more keys are needed. In the artistic co-experiments presented here, the reciprocal partnering strategies, the repertoire, the diagrams and rules of our exchange serve as these extra frames which bring our endeavors beyond understanding of drawing as a display of skill and a purely material, physical act.

For Carlson (2018), *play* serves as an example of Goffman's frame because it imposes boundaries within which the received signals are not true and "that which is denoted by these signals [as] nonexistent" (Bateson, 1972/1987, p. 189). Consideration of Reciprocal Drawing in terms of play demands description of its specific features. Firstly, the co-experiments resonate with Roger Caillois' (1958/2001) definition of play as being temporary and not obligatory. Further, they are understood as rule-based yet spontaneous, contractual yet not-for-real, a play in this sense. Originally, the rules and strategies were there for us to establish co-dependency and provoke tension necessary to achieve momentum in joint movement. Yet, when we performed in public contexts, the rules and strategies served the purpose of play. For example, Ram used the frame of play when breaking or circumventing the rules. In addition, the frame of play was also intended to make our exchange captivating for the audience, to expose particular relational dynamics with the means of movement and drawing. The restless push and pull induced by the binding strategy highlighted issues such as co-dependence of two people, intimacy issues, control and power plays, problem of freedom, or compromising of own values for the sake of the relationship's integrity. The point-of-contact evoked associations of balance between giving and taking in relation. Finally, in terms of productivity, our practices were financially nonprofitable, and the products of our performances were not used for anybody's financial gain. Nevertheless, some of the collaborative drawings continued to serve me as a point of departure for further discipline-related personal explorations.

Continuing, Caillois (1958/2001) distinguished the following strategies of play: "agon" (conflict-, control-based), "mimicry" (imitation-based), "alea" (spontaneity-based), and "vertigo" (p. 12) (subversion-based). His typification is divided by a major line that places agon (conflict) and mimicry (imitation) on one side and alea (chance) and vertigo (subversion) on the other. As Carlson (2018) speculates, *alea* and *vertigo* stand in opposition to conventional theater and, therefore, have become the strategies around which modern performance has evolved, thus shifting planning, control and imitation away from the perspective.

Although useful in theory, such divisions do not always coincide with artistic practices. In my experience, all four strategies coexisted in our experimentation with *agon* and *vertigo* (conflict, control, subversion) prevailing in the binding and *alea* and *mimicry* (spontaneity, freedom, imitation) in the point-of-contact strategy. The beginnings of the collaborative phase, especially the first of the two binding-related experiments, would be marked by *agon*, when I clearly sensed competitiveness, escalation of tension, and fight for control over the process and form of the final drawing. Once *agon*-oriented, our drawing became a chance for us to prove our strategic planning, logic and cleverness. *Mimicry* rendered itself visible when Jaanika and I mimicked and mirrored each other's gestures or demonstrated possible solutions to each other. The more advanced stages of our interaction—the second of the two binding-related pieces and the point-of-contact piece—were typically of *alea* character, that is saturated with spontaneous situations when the previous rules were treated with greater detachment and the new ways of moving were being developed. The freedom and spontaneity of such moments allowed for subversive actions and behaviors, which led to the unexpected turns and embodied forms of revenge, but also released emotions and made us completely forget the surroundings. In such cases, the *vertigo* strategy came to the fore. Carlson (2018) explains *vertigo*-based games as having subversive function, as aiming at temporary imbalance and a change in the status quo that leads from clarity to consternation. This change must be experienced through "physical sensation" (Carlson, 2018, p. 20) of all-embracing boundlessness. Among the many *vertigo* moments in our exchange is Ram's unexpected leaving me alone in the midst of the co-action and walking away to mix with the audience. At that moment a temporary consternation had taken the place

of my clarity. The space around me hit as acute, yet all-encompassing and empty, and tangible was the physical sensation of exposure mixed with the feeling of inadequacy. Or other times, when Ram was trying to get us to interact beyond the paper, to which I opposed, and we suddenly burst into laughter as if nobody was there. To illustrate this condition of body and mind merging in the pleasure experienced in the present moment, Victor Turner and the historian Johan Huizinga used terms such as “enchantment” or “captivation” (as cited in Carlson, 2018, p. 20), and theorists John McAloon and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi used the term “flow” (as cited in Carlson, 2018, p. 20) to additionally refer to creative situations when “reflexivity is swallowed up in a merging of action and awareness . . . and a loss of sense of ego” (as cited in Carlson, 2018, p. 20). The captivation lived through the reciprocal interchanges ultimately amplified the connection between my perceptive body and the means of drawing and made me fully merge with the developing form.

The *vertigo*, subversive function of play was associated by the sociologist Brian Sutton-Smith (1972) with an experience of *disorder*, a cutting loose as a reaction to an overdose of order. This function of play manifested in Ram’s actions such as breaking the rules, introducing unexpected gestures, erasing our traces, or leaving the paper. These behaviours also resemble what Schechner (2003) describes as “dark play,” (p. 36), accepting the rules and then subversively breaking them “so that playing itself is continuously in danger of being destroyed, as in . . . undercover actions, and double agency” (p. 36). Ram’s subversive actions got us engaged in vengeful erasing of each other’s traces or wrestling to “save” our own parts of the drawing. We escalated this chaos, as I thought of it, until we had reached a critical point after crossing of which I experienced an overwhelming sense of indifference towards all my preestablished frames. By letting off steam I lost my attachment to detail and the pre-determined vision of the end-product, became more decisive in implementing spontaneous solutions, reached for new tools, and eventually started enjoying the process. For Sutton-Smith (1972), experiencing disorder in play may lead to the formation of a new order. Loosening up eventually made me redefine the rules and my repertoire of the body actions. Disorder as a component of the Reciprocal Drawing practice may initiate a spontaneous disintegration of one’s otherwise fixed positions towards the medium. As a result, new attitudes and approaches to drawing may form. Therefore, I assume that Reciprocal Drawing may well be a way to free oneself from excessive mental speculations, unproductive self-complacency, copying someone else’s ideas, and/or longer periods of creative draught. Much like Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) who found inner bodily conflict to be an inevitable part of gaining new skills, Sutton-Smith considered external disorder as facilitating learning and development of “innovative normative forms” (Sutton-Smith, as cited in Carlson, 2018, p. 17).

Interrelated with Caillois’ *vertigo*, Sutton-Smith’s disorder, and Schechner’s dark play is Turner’s (1969/2011) notion of *anti-structure*. More specifically, I draw links between his concept of *social drama* and the series of performative processes presented in this thesis. Turner assumed that social processes take up the following pattern: 1. breach in an established norm, 2. mounting crisis, 3. process of redress, and 4. reintegration or recognition of separation. He compared all transitional processes in society, including those within an individual, to an “anti-structure” (n.p.), sporadic occasions to think about alternative propositions to “cultural codes” (Carlson, 2018, p. 17). Turner’s thinking is relevant to the co-experiments in question, as it touches upon the process of transition from a once established order towards a different order. My diagrams and the corresponding solo drawings with their clear structure, symmetry and attention to detail were the established norm which I tried to recreate in the collaborative situations. The two performances we conducted with Ram (see



sections 13.2 and 13.3) reflect Turner's pattern outlined above. Ram's change-imposing motions and behaviors caused a breach in my established mode of movement. Various uncomfortable bodily and emotional tensions including anger and frustration building up during my attempts to conform to the new ways of moving, ultimately led to local crises between us, fighting for positions, paying back, destroying the previous work, bypassing of the established rules, or even leaving the paper altogether. Consequently, there were attempts at redress in the form of adopting a more attentive attitude, openness towards the other's novel ideas, and finally a patient realizing of these ideas and/or repairing the previously destroyed traces. Sometimes these attempts ended with a development of a new joint sequence, which was tantamount to (re)integration of the sequence into previously worked out patterns of reciprocal movement. Other times, compliance was impossible, and recognition of separation followed. The latter happened on a microscale when we separated from each other temporarily by stepping on the rope. On a macroscale the recognition of separation best transpires in our first performance, when the rope broke between us. And then again during the second performance, when Ram suddenly left the paper only to return and lay down opposite me. Both situations made us terminate the co-action. While we also stepped on the rope during the performance with Ola, the same incidents between Ram and I differed as our performances started with diagrams as established norms of movement, which Ram then tried to restructure according to his own expectations. The stepping performed with Ola did not have a restructuring function, since there was no diagram at that point of experimentation and thus no aiming to develop any new form (see section 13.1).

Turner's theories are reflected in Schechner's (2002/2006) chart illustrating the complementariness of social life and theater (social drama = aesthetic drama). The drama that developed between Ram and I was reflected in the drawn form. The breach occurred already during the process of my marking, when the visual structure was not unfolding as I projected. The layout of the main compositional masses drastically shifted or decomposed, and the textures did not accumulate according to the previously worked out solo composition. It is not that I expected the drawing to be the same as the one drawn solo. On the contrary, I anticipated the breach in the old structure with enthusiasm and curiosity similar to those experienced by a person adjusting her old schedule to a life in partnership. Yet, the real breach exceeded my previous visions of it. It became inscribed in the final drawing *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* (Fig. 71, p. 183) as dull, gray planes filled with charcoal dust. When watching the drawing in the aftermath, I thought of it as forever fused with our tense interaction and referred to it in terms of "movement signature" (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 105).

If, however, the final product did not contain these destructive fragments, and such was the case with *Binding/Rotations Centric* (Fig. 93, p. 205), *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar 1 and 2* (Fig. 111, p. 229 and Fig. 114, p. 231), and *Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Centric* (Fig. 123, p. 240), I recognized them as independent drawings. Therefore, I understand Reciprocal Drawing as a method enabling two artists to co-produce new compositional solutions for drawing by transformation of the existing ones. From this perspective, the transformed drawing becomes an autonomous artistic product, eventually also independent of its creators' movement and intentions. In this sense, the transformed drawing is evocative of Turner's (1969/2011) new established norm. It can be handled according to the rights of drawing as a medium separate from the art of performance and dance: It can be exhibited to raise other associations unrelated to movement or described with a professional language of visual arts and interpreted in the light of different philosophies and concepts. The drawing can also be reintegrated into a series of solo works as their continuation or become a material for a new drawing. Referencing the multiple functions of play, Huizinga (1938/2016) concludes that play solidifies the community and actualizes hidden

values, assumptions and beliefs of the culture by representation. Indeed, our playful co-experimentation actualized mutual trust, commitment, and a sense of connection. Bringing back the memory of these valued experiences, the drawn works cement the relationships anchored in artistic community.

## 16.2 Singular Marks Plural

In the most recent models of artistic collaboration artists acknowledge interpersonal distance, expect and/or even deliberately arouse polarization (Kolb, 2016; Ruhsam, 2016). The existence of bodily tensions and reversible resistance, described in sections 15.2 and 15.3 of the previous chapter, and relational tensions, discussed in the previous section, allows me to identify Reciprocal Drawing as “postconsensual” (Ruhsam, 2016, p. 75) collaboration. Approached from this angle, Reciprocal Drawing is a form of collaborative social practice in which harmonious action leading towards completion of a drawing is not sought after at all costs. It should, however, be noted that the co-experiments of my research were conducted prior to the most recent global events, such as the pandemic and increased political and armed conflicts. These events might have again changed the need for closeness, harmony, connections, and proximity. This reasoning applies equally to the theories and the interrelated discussion on postconsensual collaboration, which is about to follow.

In collaborative projects involving drawing, the postconsensual model seems to work well when participants have equal artistic status and/or experience. In public or semi-private contexts where this status is not clear, one can at best try “raillery,” which is equal with light-hearted criticism, banter or teasing played out through symbolic, “propositional nature” (Rogers, 2008, p. 84) of the marks. However, the possibility of a serious malice or struggle for influence over the developments have been described as causing anxiety in the participants (Rogers, 2008). Similar caution about deliberate generating of conflict was exercised by McNorton (2003) in his choreographies engaging drawing due to his project’s embodied and pedagogical character. Among other collaborative projects involving drawing, the postconsensual model was applied in the *Inappropriate Collisions* by academics of equal artistic status Catherine Baker and Kimberley Foster (2017). In this project the authors exchanged their individual drawings by post for two years. Their deliberate polarization assumed that each recipient sabotaged the other’s attempts at upholding their individual convention but also prevented surrendering to the other’s ideas. In this way, the collaborative drawings retained “the uncomfortable nature of impact” (p. 141). Baker and Foster (2017) do not use the term “postconsensual” to describe their co-practice. However, their explicit focus on “the benefits of conflict” and “deliberate rejection of resolution” (p. 141) allows me to qualify it as such. In their conclusions, Baker and Foster (2017) appreciate the renewal which the approach brought into their individual practices. Although similar in terms of this opportunity, our respective research projects considered conflict experienced through drawing based on two extremely different strategies of collaboration. Baker and Foster (2017) practiced disagreement on a conceptual-intellectual plane, by working in separate locations and time, while my collaborator and I did the same on the physical plane defined by the dynamic, performative strategies that assume continuity of the bodies’ contact, unity of time, work-space, and location. Therefore, I argue that reciprocal strategies of performance facilitate postconsensual collaboration in performance drawing because they not only expose but also exacerbate conflict. The exacerbation is particularly identifiable in the *Binding/Rotations* series (2014–16) co-performed with Ola and Ram.

How is then Reciprocal Drawing a postconsensual collaborative embodied practice? Based on the philosophy of Chantal Mouffe (2013) and Florian Schneider (2006), Marcus Miessen (2010/2013) fosters “agonistic” (Mouffe, 2013, p. 41) model of collaboration, the one which rejects consensus and prepares conditions for a productive “struggle” (Mouffe, 2013, p. 7), the non-violent generating and revealing of conflicts. Mouffe (2013) recommends expressing the antagonisms in a designated, common, and symbolic space. In Reciprocal Drawing this symbolic space is constituted by a large paper plane situated on the floor of the studio or a gallery. Miessen’s model is then visible when my collaborator and I first establish and break the rules of our exchange and/or when we initiate joint drawing without a pre-established diagram. The consensus can also be consciously avoided when the collaborators draw in combination of the *stable* and *mobile* states by selecting the strategy of binding which, due to its rigidity, forces them to make motor decisions, thus adding a greater incendiary power to their exchange, as exemplified by the *Binding/Rotations* co-experiment (see section 13.1). Additionally, there is a potential of losing consensus when the collaborators draw jointly in the *remote state* and/or *spell drive* by trying to co-develop a composition of which main structural masses are placed far apart and do not assume any crossovers or common areas, as exemplified by the *Binding/Rotations Bipolar* co-experiment (see section 13.2). Finally, if the strategy of bidding gets combined with the diagram suggesting bipolarity of the collaborators’ actions, they can both achieve all the above recalled states and drives unsupportive of the harmonious Reciprocal Drawing process. In these states/drives, as was argued in the 14.1.2 “Interpretation” subsection, deviating from the individual goal in space is experienced alternately with obsessive sticking to one point. To remind, in LMA there are six states and four drives. The states are combinations of two effort factors, while the drives are constituted by three effort factors. Some records of such a postconsensual co-embodied practice may constitute independent productions and other records are fused with the experience of co-movement, which corresponds with Baker and Foster’s (2017) considering some of their conflict-based drawings as “success” (p. 149) and others as redundant.

Continuing, since such conflict-provoking conditions are acknowledged as part of the play in Reciprocal Drawing, they are not sensed as endangering the collaborating artists’ individual status and bodily integrity. Kolb (2016) reveals that in the new models of collaboration “conflicts, tensions and incompleteness . . . are not perceived as threats to freedom and stability” (p. 68). In Reciprocal Drawing, this openness to experience conflicts increases with the collaborators’ knowledge of how to achieve harmony during the exchange. And so, harmony is achieved through *dream state* and/or *near state* but most preferably through *passion drive*. Evoked by the pattern of duality, common rhythm and repetition in reciprocal movement, *passion drive* manifests itself in the intersubjective, heightened experience of pressure, flow and speed. Passion drive may enhance the collaborators’ bodily co-sensing, intuiting, and decision making during their Reciprocal Drawing act. The specificity of the states and drives is described in 7.2 “Effort” section of chapter “Overview of Laban Movement Analysis.”

While Miessen (2010/2013) sees struggle as a deliberative means to reveal broader contradictory social, and/or political interests, I understand the two bodies’ physical struggle as means to rehearse intersubjective tensions. Reciprocal Drawing aims to expose and visualize individual hidden emotions and contradictory attitudes by emphasizing the relational nature of our existence. Therefore, this inward orientation resulting from living the embodied conflict and looking at its product is basically what makes my approach different from Miessen’s stipulations. Through the struggle, I simultaneously expose and transform the established patterns in my own artistic practice. Also from this standpoint, I understand my collaborator’s position relative to me as that of Miessen’s (2010/2013) “crossbench practitioner” (p. 243) or Mouffe’s (2013) “adversary” (p. 18) – an outsider who purposefully stirs up disagreement within

the existing structures of my tacit knowledge. Reciprocally, I believe my position and role in another artist's professional life may be just the same.

To further describe our mutual status, I find it appropriate to use the term “complicity” (p. 15) coined by Gesa Ziemer (2016). Similar to Mouffe's (2013) adversaries, complicities do not aim at the classical friend–enemy relation. Instead, they are people who maintain close relationships, yet are not exactly friends. They are rather loners who never act alone. Paradoxically, there is more eagerness in their initiation of common projects than there was among the members of the past collectives. This is because complicities are more conscious of their own needs and goals. Reciprocal Drawing well reflects Ziemer's observations. The time when I work in the studio preparing the solo compositions and diagrams is like Foster and Bakers' (2017) “drawn act carried out in isolation” (p. 146) – when the thinking about the formal aspects of drawing merges with an expectant attitude and awaiting the future contribution of the collaborator. Although here my thinking also assumes his embodied presence within the image and envisioning of various plausible scenarios of the future embodied disagreement and how it may transform my solo product.

Apart from this tendency to combine eagerness with evanescence, complicities are also pragmatic in that they acknowledge that nothing is done at the cost of a single party and that each joint endeavour should be of mutual benefit (Notroff et al., 2007). The Reciprocal Drawing practice reflects this rationale by adaptation of the reciprocal strategies of performance in which one's support instantaneously releases the other's counteraction that benefits the supporter. The same mutual benefit can be observed when one's actions aiming at modifying the other's mark already regenerate the initiator's own marks.

Converting some of Ziemer's rules of complicity—as summarized by author Daniela Röcker (2016)—to the language the Reciprocal Drawing practice, I recognize that I hardly ever work alone but at least as a pair. In fact, I do not know much about my collaborators prior to working and performing with them, but when in action we appear as if as we knew each other well because of our bodies' intimate closeness. I do not systematically look for my collaborators. Rather, we find each other. We work tactically, never strategically. We transform our insecurities into desires and intrigues, as if we follow affects, not emotions. We unfold creativity through passivity as well as the “dramatic struggles” (Erdély, 2020, p. 102) at the point of uncertainty, risk and play. I am both cold and passionate towards my partners, like in love. We pursue a common interest, which directly benefits us both.

Scholar Martina Ruhsam (2016) reveals that many current postconsensual collaborative practices have been inspired by Jean–Luc Nancy's philosophy and specifically his concept of *being-with*. This concept and Jean–Luc Nancy's (1983/1991) understanding of union also creates theoretical frame for the Reciprocal Drawing practice. Nancy (1983/1991) rejected the with–or–without dualistic ways of treating any union<sup>91</sup>. He insisted that one's own existence is inseparably bound to the existence of others. The Heideggerian (1927/2010) “being-with” (p. 121) (*Mitsein*) was interpreted by him as a mutual exposure in which the “I” is always inseparable from the “we.” The Reciprocal Drawing act furthers that thought because here one's offer for the other is, as it were, granted with one's take. Given this, respect and an ultimate sense of ethicality is mutually expected, and any manipulation is out of question. Since the reciprocal dynamics

<sup>91</sup> Nancy (1983/1991a) defined union by negating of MacIntyre's (1981) communitarianism – the view of community as an antidote for loneliness and isolation of individuals and tradition–based artistic practice as a means to strengthen one's sense of community. Opposing this, Nancy (1983/1991a) argued in favor of community based on difference and multiplicity. Consequently, he rejected union built on an identity (e.g., of common goal or tradition) and on belonging (e.g., to a common place, category, etc.).



of the drawing excludes the possibility of using/being used, it is hard to talk about the collaborators' relation in the give-or-take dualistic categories.

Nancy rejected the dualistic understanding of union. He was convinced that the very fact of being born into the world already makes us a part of (a) community, so any discussion on belonging/not belonging does not make much sense. From this perspective, ascribing the drawing collaborators some separateness and/or distinctness is eventually pointless, because their presumably owned experiences (ideas, skills, productions, etc.) are always interconnected with those of other beings. And even more, the collaborators' and my individual desires and projects are immersed in culture understood more broadly as the one which precedes our individual being and from which we all draw. Thus, autonomy—if discussed from Nancy's point of view—can rather be described as an inevitable state of solitude needed for me to collaborate at all. Indeed, my striving to develop the Reciprocal Drawing method forced me to withdraw into intermittent yet quite extreme studio isolation. The “being-with,” argues Nancy (1983/1991), implies distance as a condition of each relationship. Paradoxically, as he concludes in his *Being Singular Plural* (1996/2000), the distance which comes with union is a guarantee of our freedom, prevents us from being lost and is “the condition for all understanding” (p. 90). To practice Reciprocal Drawing, I must keep returning to my studio. And reversely, to be truly self-contained, I have to experience direct, uninterrupted contact with my collaborator. The solo drawings are prepared with the consideration of the other, and reversely, the partnered exchanges and their outcomes feed my solo practice. Without this continuous transitioning between the solo and duo states, I either sense pointlessness of my endeavors or tend to lose myself in sacrificial efforts. Analogously, in the very Reciprocal Drawing act, the concept of being-with implies the collaborators' constant transitioning between the oppositional states of connecting and disconnecting, initiating and letting go, following and leading, or exertion and recuperation.

Another state identifiable in my co-experiments was the opposition between the specific passivity and activity. It appears in the concept of “creativity” (Erdély, 2020, p. 100) which I delve into in the following paragraphs. Angela Rogers (2008) and John McNorton (2003) notice how collaboration in drawing helps one to break through their habitual behaviours and formal mannerisms and enhance their creative expression. These opportunities have also been identified in the co-experiments of my research and are closely linked with these experiments' reciprocal character that stresses physical contact between the drawers. With this, Reciprocal Drawing expands the broad concept of creativity promoted by artists and pedagogues Dóra Maurer and Miklós Erdély (2020). Similarly to the orientation present in their pedagogy of art and instruction of drawing, Reciprocal Drawing links individual experience with the experience of another and uses drawing as a medium recording and reflecting this interdependency. Although Maurer and Erdély's *Creativity Exercises* were performed in groups rather than in pairs, I have found some exercises to be aligned with Reciprocal Drawing. For instance, their “disabled drawing”<sup>92</sup> in which the act of drawing was either disrupted by movements of others or continued by the principle of transfer, can be found in the binding-oriented experiments carried out with Ola and Ram. In our case, the rope additionally imposed the aggravating constancy of disruption and transference, since even the slightest change of movement by one person immediately disturbed the other's realization of intention and forced them to make unplanned motor decisions. Disabled drawing is also detectable at multiple moments of the interchanges with Jaanika, when a distinct gesture was demonstrated by the person leading in contact and continued or developed by the person following in contact. Our occasional mimicking

<sup>92</sup> The names of the exercises are retrieved from the descriptions of the documentation of Maurer's and Erdély's work presented at the exhibition *Creativity Exercises*, curated by Dóra Hegyi and Zsuzsa László and organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Warsaw (Poland) in 2016.

and mirroring each other at a distance also resembled the transference of gesture/line which Maurer and Erdély encouraged during their classes. Likewise, all the moments in which one of us was not marking but supported the other's doing through touch to some degree correspond with Maurer and Erdély's "active-passive drawing." In that exercise many participants would sit close to each other, directly holding and leading one partner's marking hand by the wrist while letting the other partner be held/led by them. Although similar in form, the passivity in our reciprocal contact was never about surrender. Instead, the marking person's seemingly passive and following hand was finely changing the point of contact, counterbalancing the leader's effort or giving this effort back to them, sometimes ferociously, to generate tension and continue movement.

Maurer and Erdély's exercises remind me about the 19th-century peculiar mediumistic practices preceding "automatism" (p. 242) of the Surrealists – the method of drawing encouraging randomness and freedom from rational control over one's own hand movement (Susik, 2016). For instance, the transference of gesture was successfully used by the artist and healer Emma Kunz who drew sophisticated structures letting her hand be directed by the spin of a divining pendulum (Taicher, 2005). A prototype of active-passive drawing, also uniquely corresponding with the point-of-contact principle, would be the practice of Georgiana Houghton. This spiritualist was composing her series of flowers believing her hand was being taken over by a spirit and used as a vehicle for their intentions (Foá et al., 2022). Spiritualism aside, Houghton's practice resounds in the moments when Jaanika drew with my hand while counterposing my push and in this way transferring some of her own artistry to my marks. Mediumship as exemplified in Kunz' practice with the pendulum, came forth when we took short breaks from the contact and I mirrored Jaanika's spinning motions at a distance as if mapping her "field of energy" (Taicher, 2005, p. 127). In both cases, however, I was never completely taken over. For, unlike the term would suggest, automatism in drawing does not assume a complete loss of control and giving up of own preferences on the part of the medium. Rather, there is always a minimal vigilance in the state of submission so that the work preserves something of the preferred structure and remains visually acceptable from the medium's perspective (Legge, 2016; Montagu, 2002; Susik, 2016). This combination of "binaries," such as "chaos and order, agency and autonomy" (Susik, 2016, p. 246), "state of flux" and "structure" (Montagu, 2002, p. 15), and "hallucination and control" (Legge, 2016, p. 104) reveals the reversible nature of automatic act (Susik, 2016). This reversibility is clearly detectable in Kunz' finely developed geometrical structures and Houghton's evident preference for flowers. In the Reciprocal Drawing act, the reversibility manifests in my submission to the collaborator's projection of the process combined with my sense of agency in relation to that process. In this way, the finalized drawing retains something of my latent aesthetic preferences and expectations. The mutual disrupting of movements, the transference of gesture, and simultaneity of activity and passivity appearing in Maurer and Erdély's exercises or spiritualist practices of Houghton and Kunz have been identified and expanded by the co-experiments of my research towards more complex spatial and qualitative solutions.

Maurer and Erdély's exercises helped break the habitual ways of seeing. Maurer so describes her method:

Creativity Exercises are teaching a general creative disposition, while the role of the drawing . . . is to specify this disposition: to provide occasions for the development of creativity in the visual domain. (Maurer, as cited in Sándor & Szőke, 2008, p. 5)

Likewise, Reciprocal Drawing makes the initiating and hopefully the invited artist leave their pre-existing ways and comfort zones of knowing, understanding, perceiving, and feeling and open up to new forms of artistic work. Like Erdély (2020), I do not see Reciprocal Drawing as enhancing creativity understood as solving problems, being efficient, or as purely a method of producing a drawing. Instead, the creativity I promote resonates with Erdély's (2020) approach in that it is about: (a) being able to see one's task from meta-level, that is understanding the process of drawing as a result of heightened self-awareness, responsiveness to the situation and to the other person with conscious avoidance of automatisms, and (b) being free from fear of evaluation and from compulsion to repeat the pre-imagined end-product.

Erdély (2020) liked to explore different ways in which creativity could manifest itself, both its constructive and subversive aspects. On the one hand, he believed in creativity lived collaboratively through visuality as a state of passive surrender – a “readiness that works in silence and without any outward signs” (p. 100). This type of creative state mainly manifested itself during the experimentation with Jaanika. Specifically, it displayed in her submissive, yet concentrated and open bodily disposition, attentive working with her eyes closed, in our occasional laying on the floor or kneeling in a child's pose<sup>93</sup>, or in our silent, joint pausing in contact and awaiting the right moment to resume drawing. On the other hand, Erdély's (2020) linked inventiveness with a state of anxiety and with the ability to participate in a competition to influence reality. Towards this point, he discovered that a “so-called pleasant atmosphere” (p. 103) does not necessarily contribute to the emergence of creative states. That is why hindering a partner by whatever means in the act of drawing was accepted and encouraged in his pedagogy. Erdély (2020) justified his methodology by claiming that people tend to avoid clashes and rather willingly cling to conventions to protect psyche and to avoid problems with fitting in. The conventions, those socially conditioned “[h]abits and ingrained prohibitions in a person's thought patterns . . . constitute an asphyxiative power that restrains potential” (p. 103). From this perspective, designing “dramatic struggles” (p. 102) allowed his students to release the latent power of “yet unformed impulses” (p. 103). Similar kind of struggling was my prevailing experience during the binding-oriented collaborations. The restlessness, polarization of roles, competitiveness—all happening while drawing with Ola or Ram—were the dispositions I slightly missed in the point-of-contact-based experiments. The pleasant atmosphere that I experienced while working with Jaanika did not contribute to the emergence of the kind of subversive creative proclivity that Erdély (2020) forged. In our case, the missed state was the bodies' strenuous effort towards mutual adaptation. By avoiding hindering each other in the drawing process, we surely managed to prevent the exposure of intense emotions, conflict and fight for control. In this way, as Erdély (2020) would argue, we protected the Self in relation to other and upheld the social, CI-linked convention of interaction. Finally, in both collaborative approaches, the one formulated by Maurer and Erdély and the Reciprocal Drawing practice, there was a similar conclusion. Namely, that while designing tensions, one should consider such a set of instructions that will prevent both endless bliss and harmony as well as a total anarchy during the collaborative process.

<sup>93</sup> Child's pose is a name of the position taken from yoga practice.

## 16.3 Drawing the Limits of Freedom

### A jump rope

I'm standing in the middle of the preschool yard. It's late spring 1979.  
A whiff of familiar smells – mixture of fresh grass, blooming aspen and dog's shit  
gently reminds me of the approaching vacation. The long-awaited end.  
I know my mother will soon pick me up for good.

Pani Wanda brings twenty cups on a large tray,  
places the tray on a square table in the middle of the wide pagoda.  
The tea tastes of sweet mint. The cooks make it cold in the summer. I drink fast.  
The sugary sensation in my throat announces playing "a horse and a coachman"  
with the popular Małgosia.

Małgosia fastens the jump rope, first she straps it around the back of my neck  
and then under my arms from the front.  
Now she is standing behind me holding two wooden handles, ready to go.  
She pulls them vigorously. Both her hands go up and then abruptly down  
while she clicks her mouth twice ordering me to start with a final "whoa!"  
I enter the imaginary race with a full speed.  
Małgosia's rhythmic pulling creates a nice, pinching sensation under my armpits  
– an encouragement and recognition of my animalistic efforts.  
Thumping of hooves and clanging of harness mixed with my loud snorting and neighing  
build up to an all-encompassing rumble of nature.

Time to stop and exchange the roles.  
I'm now standing behind her, think about other ways of putting the harness on Małgosia.  
I decide to place the rope in front of her neck.  
It somehow feels more natural.  
Reminds me of how old men used to do it to horses in Boczki  
– a village where I'd spend my summers.  
And so Małgosia gets her portion of feral ecstasy before we're done with the game.  
We split, each going her own way, looking for new things to do.

Then I see a small group of kids. They're approaching me, hostile and determined.  
They bring me to Pani Tereska – one of our preschool teachers  
who already awaits us on a garden bench.  
Tereska is in her early thirties. A tall, blonde woman.  
While she stares at me, more and more kids gather around us  
to watch the scene that's about to happen.

Michalak—she's calling me by my second name—  
nie wiesz jak masz zakładać skakankę?  
You don't know how you're supposed to put a rope on your friend?

She pulls me close.  
Her closeness causes a positive disposition grow in me for a while.  
I accept her authority. I want her to like me,  
and so I bring her my whole body amicably even closer.  
I don't know what to expect. I put up with her presence.  
Twenty kids around me. Shame in me.



Tereska picks up the jump rope and ties it around my neck.  
When she pulls on it more and more tightly,  
I feel my attention wandering away  
from our collective experience towards my larynx, breath and eyes.  
And it's not that she doesn't know when to stop.  
I sense her sensing pleasure at the rightness of the moment,  
at the effectiveness of her educational method,  
and in the adequacy of the onlookers' turnout.

Michalak, you didn't know you could strangle her?

As soon as she is done with the allegation, all the kids rush away back to their games.

Their squeaking happiness resonates awkwardly with my shame.

Isolation.

I relax my neck and swallow a couple of times.

Loss and hatred nestle deep.

A. Karasch, December 15, 2019, Warsaw.

In this section, I focus on ethics in Reciprocal Drawing by delving into one aspect of Emmanuel Levinas' (1974/1991) philosophy – the (often painful) disruption of the familiar unity of the world which we experience when encountering the otherness of the other. This reflection is preceded with the justification of the collaborators' behaviors and with a brief discussion on authorship which take into account the body-oriented, ethical reasoning represented by phenomenologists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999) and the deliberations of the curator Miwon Kwon's (2003) on the logic of "gift economy" (p. 85).

Writing about the conflicts emerging in the experimental plays of my research from the body's experiential perspective on morality assumes discussion on *fairness* in the Reciprocal Drawing act. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) claim that the ethical categories of good and bad have been shaped based on humans' perception of things as supportive/unsupportive to their physical well-being. Emphasizing the interdependency between the body and ethical concepts, the authors analyze different metaphorical figures of speech, such as "freedom of movement," "purity of breathed air," or "leap of faith" to expose morality as rooted in peoples' bodily experience of the world. From this perspective, the categories of good and bad are never unambiguous. Lakoff and Johnson's reasoning is, therefore, different than Levinas' philosophy since the latter entails no ethical principles or categories.

For Lakoff and Johnson (1999), the subject of fairness can be discussed by consideration of the "moral accounting" (p. 296) metaphor. From this standpoint Reciprocal Drawing is a transaction where each performer transfers some bodily effect to the other, wherein an effect of helpful action is conceptualized as a gain and an effect of harmful action as a loss. If gain (from bodily perspective) means freedom of movement, access to space, stability, balance and control over the body posture, then gaining these physical properties in Reciprocal Drawing means for each collaborator free development of one's own ideas on paper, control over the shape and quality of the drawn lines, access to all sections of the visual composition, and so on. Eventually, these opportunities also mean mental gains such as: sense of freedom, empowerment, emotional stability, or sense of control over the situation. Clearly, absence of these properties and the interconnected opportunities can be perceived as a loss. Consequently, Reciprocal Drawing is a play in which the collaborators transfer effects to one another in the form of supportive and unsupportive actions. The *supportive actions* enhance the other's opportunity to move/draw/sense. The *unsupportive actions* include:

restraining the other's movement/idea/influence, making the other lose control over their body/marks/emotions, reducing the other's access to space of a drawing/understanding of the situation, throwing the other out of their physical/aesthetic/emotional balance, or using the other's physical/creative energy for too long.

Furthermore, since fairness is about equitable distribution of both positive and negative values, it is also about "settling of accounts" or "balancing of moral books" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 296). Analogously, fairness in Reciprocal Drawing manifests itself in the collaborators' joint aiming at physical, aesthetic, and emotional balance. In practice, it can be achieved by compensation – each person's readiness to provide similar gains or suffer similar losses, or retaliation – each person's making sure the other suffers the same loss. For example, in my co-experimentation with Ram balancing out through compensation happened when one followed the other's drawing ideas after having one's own followed, when one supported the other in restoring his/her destroyed traces, or by letting one's own traces be erased after erasing these of another. Settling of accounts through retaliation happened when there was interfering with the other's process after having experienced the other's interference. In this case, there was crossing out, erasing the other's marks, blocking their motions, disconnecting from the other by stepping on the rope after being disconnected, or refusing to restore the other's traces after having experienced the same refusal.

From the ethical perspective described above, in the Reciprocal Drawing practice the value judgements are never unambiguous. For, what one understands as valuable may be valueless for the other. To give an example, when Ram started smudging out our common work in a decisive manner, it may have been because he wanted to realize his new idea (involving the smudging). He possibly expected my support in making his vision a reality. Perhaps he assumed that his actions were now in line with my idea of the valuable. And yet, I perceived his actions as inconsistent with my aesthetic preferences and rules, and thus as a loss of my already invested energy. Eventually, I withdrew my support, which for me was a gain and for him a loss. In this and similar situations, our individual ideas for drawing dictated how we perceived the value of the other's actions. This kind of dynamic brings along a risk of conflict. Consequently, in Reciprocal Drawing ethical judgements about the collaborators' individual reactions are only possible based on their specific preferences and expectations in relation to the process and its product.

The same ethical perspective makes it possible to draw a distinction between the behaviors typical for "crossbench practitioners" (Miessen, 2010/2013, p. 243) and the behaviors of two artists who practice Reciprocal Drawing to co-develop or learn new approaches. Once we pass as crossbench practitioners and the exposure of contradictory positions is the goal, then we may choose to determine the value of the other's actions through our own fixed understanding of drawing. If, however, the aim is the joint developing/learning new forms of movement, then the conflicts are recognized as part of the process and should rather be conceived as a result of our sensing some effects as forms of individual loss. If such is the case, then the tensions are expected to dwindle with time due to the collaborators' inner readiness to accept these losses for the sake of the other's gain and the overall harmony of the Reciprocal Drawing act. This self-limitation is then parallel with the repression that I wrote about in the previous chapter when discussing conflict between the habitual and the personal body. Analogously to the inner stimuli being successfully brought under control, the sense of loss is endured, accepted, and even anticipated in Reciprocal Drawing. At such moments it is eventually difficult to assign clear responsibility to any collaborator for stirring up the tensions.

The issue of balancing of giving and receiving between the collaborating artists is a point of ethical discussion for curator and writer Miwon Kwon (2003). Referencing

the ethics of score- and instruction-based artworks of the 1960 and 1970s<sup>94</sup>—the works of Fluxus members among them—Kwon (2003) argues that the current revival of interest in score-based practice results from the social need of living the model of exchange based on the logic of “gift economy” (p. 85). When realizing an artwork, the artist and her participant “put into motion a circuit of obligation and reciprocity, typically involved in giving, receiving or accepting, and giving in return” (p. 85). In this way, each person’s “sense of honor and dishonor, shame, power, risk, fear, status, humiliation and prestige” (p. 85) are being tested. By accepting my score—my rules and diagrams produced for my collaborators prior to our exchange—the collaborators put themselves in an “indebted’ position” (p. 87), as theirs is the obligation to respond to my instructions via the avenues determined by the diagrams. When in co-action, the gift is constituted by both persons’ physical effort invested in the completion of the other’s parts of drawing. Speaking in Kwon’s (2003) terms, there is a challenge inscribed in our physical effort which awakens an obligation in us to reciprocate with a “suitable response” (p. 87).

By engaging in my score’s interpretation with my collaborator, I refuse to practice what Kwon (2003) describes as “self-abnegation” (p. 87) – gifting the other with my creative authorship for her to complete the work. I also refuse to treat my approach as a form of therapy and the collaborators as patients who need creative stimulation. By doing that I would be establishing what philosopher Maurice Godelier (1999) describes as hierarchic giver–receiver power dynamic which stays fixed beyond the duration of performance as long as my collaborator have not proposed his own score for me to follow. Yet, when I join him in interpreting my score and we interact within the clear frames of the applied reciprocal strategy, it gives him a chance not only to immediately respond but also manifest control over the process and product. With this, he establishes a position of a giver and we become equal and free from further obligations. Our joint presence within the score-based work also creates conditions for him to start ignoring my instructions, rules and initiatives. I experienced the unpleasantness of this transgression when Ram suddenly left me alone on the paper and mixed with the audience. As Kwon (2003) explains: “the refusal of a gift functions as rejection of both the giver’s superiority and his or her invitation to solidarity. Consequently, there is always a risk of personal humiliation and of a breach in social relations involved with gift giving” (p. 92). Following these insights, by engaging in co-interpretation of my score I expect that my superior position of a giver will be balanced with a suitable bodily response within the frames of the adopted reciprocal strategy. In this way my initial authorial role in the Reciprocal Drawing process gets replaced with joint authorship.

The bodily and emotional tensions emerging in Reciprocal Drawing can be further reflected upon by turning to the ethical dimension of Levinas’ (1974/1991) thinking. The philosopher argued that at the core of ethics stands our encounter with the otherness of the other and our individual responsibility towards them. Specifically, when motivating our decisions and behaviors, we should first examine the limits of our freedom and consider how the other’s presence intervenes and transforms our understanding of the world. The ethical orientation represented by Levinas (1974/1991) also assumes that we are in contact with otherness through our body and senses. My utilization of Levinas’ approach in the following discussion is only partial. It is because I focus on the disruption and transformation of my bodily approaches, aesthetic values and preferences caused by my encountering the other. What is however set aside is Levinas’ (1974/1991) further argumentation where he discusses the *shadow of ethics*. The philosopher assumes that the disruption to the known world cannot eventually

<sup>94</sup> The works were presented at the exhibition *Work Ethic*, curated by Helen Molesworth at the Baltimore Museum of Art in 2003, <https://artbma.org/about/press/release/major-contemporary-art-exhibition-work-ethic-opens-at-the-bma>

be captured, recognized and tamed by us, and that any of our attempts to appreciate and express the other's condition or accommodate to the other's otherness, eventually always make us fall back on our ego-centered, totalitarian worldview. In this sense, argues Levinas (1974/1991), ethical living, although a part of our existence, is "against nature because it forbids the murderousness of my natural will to put my own existence first" (Levinas, as cited in Kearney, 1984, p. 60, emphasis by Kearney).

Returning to the aspect of human relations based on responsibility, I point to Reciprocal Drawing as the one in which I take responsibility for the collaborating artist by limiting my freedom to create. His/her presence within the paper plane immediately disrupts my fixed approaches to the creative process and its products in that it confronts me with the fact that some of my actions, ideas, and mental states bring loss to the other and thus must be constrained by nobody else than myself. As the writer and curator Adrian Heathfield (2000) observes, Tehching Hsieh's *Rope Piece* (1983–84) is infused with suspension and loss, in the sense of our relation to time and ourselves in general. For him, Hsieh's performance is about necessity of forming relationships as part of the human condition, it is about tension between freedom and constraint, about the pull and chase dynamics of these relationships. He reflects on Hsieh's work by asking if one is more free by being alone and unrestricted by any social or relational obligations (Galería Filomena Soares, 2010). As Moran (2000) explains, referencing the meaning of Levinas' philosophy:

[E]thics is never an egocentric mode of behaving, nor the construction of theories, but involves the effort to constrain one's freedom and spontaneity in order to be open to the other person, or more precisely to allow oneself to be constrained by the other. (p. 321)

During the co-experimentation with Ram, this limitation of spontaneity came to the fore when I stayed attuned to his behaviors and body actions. Then, I kinaesthetically, empathically interpreted my own actions as, for example, too enthusiastic, rushed or repetitive for his taste, as testing his patience or transgressing his understanding of fairness. In those moments, I was constraining my individual aspirations and aesthetic preferences or tried not to focus on my feelings of regret about the situation not developing the way I planned. The curbing of our individual omnipotence was tangible at the end of the performance series with Ram (see section 13.3) and throughout the co-experimentation with Jaanika, when we learned to adapt the individual movement to each other's spatial initiatives (see sections 14.1 and 14.2).

While the sense of loss embodied in Hsieh's performances is balanced with perseverance, the sense of duty and conviction (Heathfield, as in Galería Filomena Soares, 2010), the variation of the binding strategy enacted by Helena Almeida and Arturo Rosa in their *Untitled* (2010) paints an especially pessimistic picture. The growing rigidity of the bodies, their low mobility and precisely defined plane and path of movement are a result of the connection method being taken to the extreme. The partners emanate resignation and hopelessness, there is no chance for them to regenerate, and so their drawing appears monotonous and painful. As can be read, for Almeida freedom and cohabitation exclude each other. The work is a manifestation of love, yet the kind accompanied by endless ordeal and sacrifice. Her performance is a reflection on human relationships "undermined by external conditions but mainly by internal limits associated with psychological and intimate issues" (Galería Filomena Soares, 2010). I believe that modification of the binding strategy in drawing in the ways my research proposes helps internally rehearse and visualize a more nuanced and promising sense of union.

The ethical dimension of Reciprocal Drawing assumes the collaborators' balancing of their own understanding of the drawing process. By entering this practice, they accept the risk of their individual understanding to be transformed by the experience of physical,



aesthetic, and emotional loss. The transformation of practice and ethics is lived through the bodily negotiation between the self and the other. As theorist Alan Read (1993) notes, in collaborative performance such negotiations are in themselves the definition of ethics. The co-practices described in this research are representations of these negotiations – of the collaborators' imposing limits on their disparate visions. In this way, the joint drawings track the process of our becoming responsive, fair and responsible for one another.

In this chapter, I explained Reciprocal Drawing as the one reflecting the I-Other relationships and the social aspect of human existence through two bodies unique co-dependence in movement and drawing. Supported by the relevant theory, I first identified Reciprocal Drawing as play and highlighted the subversive, transformative but also the solidifying aspect of this practice. Then, Reciprocal Drawing was situated in the broader context of the most recent tendencies in artistic collaboration and recognized as the performance-based, embodied practice that enables deliberate rejection of consensus and exploration of the benefits of conflict. From this perspective, conflicts, ego shifts and fight for control between the collaborating artist are not a threat to their freedom and stability. The collaborators were identified as crossbench practitioners. Taking the philosophical background of the postconsensual artistic practices into account, I explained the relationship between the practicing artists as a form of union which they maintain by transitioning between the joint sessions and the solitude of their studios. While doing this they assume the positions of complicities. In this way they preserve their autonomy and improve the quality of their co-actions. Also, the opportunity to enhance one's own expressive capacities, which Reciprocal Drawing provides, was associated with creativity understood more broadly as heightened awareness, responsiveness, and freedom from fear of evaluation. Finally, I examined the behaviors of the collaborators' engaging in Reciprocal Drawing based the body-oriented ethical reasoning of Lakoff and Johnson. Reciprocal Drawing was presented as the practice of mutual balancing of gains and losses. Consequently, joint authorship was defined as an effect of our equality assured by the very character of the adopted partnering strategies, as these enable immediate reciprocation of my act of giving and by this I may free my collaborator from any obligations towards me. This discussion was expanded to include the ethical dimension of Levinas' philosophy. The responsibility for the other as well as a sense of loss were described as inevitable part of our social existence and thus inherent component of the Reciprocal Drawing practice.

## 17. Summary of the Research

This chapter provides a summary of my research project. First, I briefly remind the reader of the research aims, the goals of its practice-based stage and the goals of each chapter of this thesis. In the next paragraphs, I present the opportunities and challenging aspects which the research has revealed in relation to its stated aims. I also point to some open issues. I do this for each of the two phases. Finally, I outline perspectives for further research by considering issues related to the development of the Reciprocal Drawing method and its pedagogy.

My aim for this research was to extend my conventional drawing practice towards a collaborative, performance-based, reciprocal formula, and thus contribute to the development of drawing as a discipline of art. I tried to find out what the practice of drawing can gain from reciprocal strategies of performance. With these aims and the question in mind, I attempted to:

1. create the *repertoire of actions* relevant for Reciprocal Drawing (based on Laban Movement Analysis and its categories of *body* and *effort*);
2. adapt the reciprocal partnering strategies of *binding* and *point-of-contact* to drawing;
3. formulate *the rules* and *a diagram* for each co-experimentation;
4. provide an overview of my research method in the context of research defined as artistic research with phenomenological orientation;
5. create a theoretical foundation for analysis and discussion on the central research elements within the Reciprocal Drawing practice;
6. describe the individual phases of the (co-)experimentation based on my recollections of memories and the research data – the videos and photographs from the experimentation;
7. reflectively interpret and determine the nature of Reciprocal Drawing by identifying different *states* and *drives* evoked by this co-practice thereby establishing links between its diverse co-dynamics and their respective visual records (with the help of Laban Movement Analysis and its categories of *body*, *effort*, *shape*, and *space*);
8. reflectively evaluate the co-experimentation in terms of the opportunities it brings for drawing;
9. examine the written content according to the general themes emerging from it, and finally
10. to re-address the research question and the emergent opportunities within the context of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of embodiment, selected concepts from the theory of performance drawing and collaboration, and the ethical aspects of Jean-Luc Nancy's and Emmanuel Levinas' philosophies.

The goal of the solo phase was to create the repertoire of body actions which would offer motifs for interaction in the next, collaborative experimentation with movement and drawing. Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) served as a tool in the development of this repertoire. The body actions included in the repertoire (see Tab. 2, p. 144–145) were selected according to a number of criteria, also described in this thesis as my values of the (co-)embodied drawing. The criteria were formulated based on my previous artistic experience and the practical tests of the solo phase. These were: (a) maximum mobility of the whole body, (b) highest possible clarity of the action's record on paper, (c) purposefulness of the action(s), and (d) attentiveness in movement.

The solo phase additionally revealed the following formal opportunities:

1. The category of the body's *shape* correlates with the basic problematics of line and its shape on paper.
2. Concentration in motion on external space (the space contained within an image) and a goal within it translates into complex problematics of image composition.
3. The category of the body's *effort* translates into the problem of qualitative means of expression in drawing such as texture, tonality, contrast and/or saturation of lines, shapes and planes.

At the basic stages of the solo practice there was a focus on selected opportunities. In more advanced stages of this practice, I tended to combine drawing focused on the body's shape with spatial aiming and effort-related activity. Fluent and continuous transitioning between these modes proved to provide the best integration between bodily movement and its record on paper.

At the beginning of the research, when withdrawing from contexts other than my own body, I did not expect that traces of my movement would represent, depict, illustrate or convey anything. Although, as I have presented, the shapes, textures, and planes brought to mind natural and organic forms, the very forms and/or what they represented were never the goal of my solo endeavors. Since the goal of this research was to transform the conventional practice into a collaborative and reciprocal undertaking, I moved on to the next, collaborative phase as soon as the repertoire of actions was defined. My later occasional returns to the studio to work alone happened in between the collaborative experiments, when there was a need to prepare a solo drawing to define a compositional frame (a diagram) for the respective encounters.

Apart from the formal aspects, the solo experimentation has changed some practical aspects in my drawing practice. During the solo preparations I needed to reduce all sorts of additional actions which did not serve the fluency of the future exchange, such as reaching out for or changing the drawing tools. For this purpose, I started attaching the tools directly to my hand(s). As a result, in Reciprocal Drawing a tool often resembles a prosthesis or an implant which then becomes a part of my body's space. Elimination of the manipulating establishes a direct and uninterrupted connection between my mark-making hand and the paper plane. This connection enhances the living and knowing body's sensorial and holistic experience during practice.

The occasional studio isolation needed to practice Reciprocal Drawing seems to be an issue. To arrange the co-experiments, I had to isolate myself completely, at the beginning to develop the repertoire, and later to prepare the different compositional variants. Paradoxically, by striving to make my practice more collaborative I had found myself more isolated than most visual artists usually do. In this sense, establishing the reciprocity in drawing presupposes an equally extreme and literal distancing.

Viewed from the perspective of the collaborative phase, the solo experimentation is considered closed for it provided enough tools to advance towards the goal of this study. However, when treated as a separate stage, this experimentation opened up a broad perspective for further formal explorations in drawing. First, the body actions from the repertoire are only a part of the countless number of actions that meet my criteria. Therefore, a further study consists in expanding the repertoire since elaboration of the actions enables further openings in Reciprocal Drawing. Second, the selected actions, when combined with the whole-body movement, make it possible to produce countless compositional variants. This opens an interesting path of exploration around the subject of the specific body's geometry, spatiality and motility recorded within an image plane. Third, an even more complex trajectory assumes reviewing the body

actions through the lens of the individual effort factors. Since the initial exploration of effort factors had proven to trigger associations with the natural and organic world, here further probing considers the reciprocal, symbiotic connection between the body and the world and this symbiosis' manifestations in drawing.

The goal of the second phase was to co-develop the Reciprocal Drawing practice based on the following frames: the reciprocal partnering strategies of binding and point-of-contact, the repertoire of body actions, and the rules and diagrams (score). The completed co-experimentation and its description exposed a selection of opportunities which Reciprocal Drawing brings forth. The practice:

1. *Reinforces intentionality of my actions by building my physical spontaneity and authenticity in the drawing process.* Depending on the strategy of connection, one person's drawing activity either modifies or supports the other person's drawing activity. Additionally, the collaborators can demonstrate to each other different ways of drawing by direct touch. Resultantly, the shapes of the drawn lines become diversified and their quality enriched.

For clarity, the LMA-based repertoire of actions turned out to be a relevant frame based on which my collaborators and I initiated our respective exchanges. Amid the co-experimentation, however, I started to compromise my values and the repertoire began to lose its importance. The pragmatism, intuition, bodily knowledge of movement and the involved materials began to lead the process. This brought me to the point of re-evaluation of my language of drawing. As a result, the repertoire retained its vital power of initiating and determining the process. Yet, a wide range of additional, non-marking actions were accepted which have the following functions: (a) help the partners find adequate movement to produce a line, (b) keep the interaction going, (c) enhance communication between the partners, (d) modify the trace of a single partner. In this way, the partners create extra contexts which serve the co-practice in that they reinforce the intentionality of the marking gesture and thus contribute to qualitative diversification of traces.

2. *Constitutes a reciprocal and partnered, movement-based and improvisational method that offers an opportunity to co-produce new, complex and multiple compositional solutions for drawing but also transform the existent ones.* The preview of these transformations can be found in Table 5 on pages 274–75. As unique visual forms, the new and/or transformed compositions cannot come into existence as a result of each of the artists acting separately. Therefore, Reciprocal Drawing can be characterized as synergistic. Additionally, the new and/or transformed drawing becomes an autonomous artistic product, eventually also independent of its creators' movement and intentions. It can, therefore, be handled according to the rights of drawing as a medium separate from the art of performance and dance. For example, the drawing can be exhibited to raise associations, described with a professional language of visual arts, and/or interpreted in the light of different theories. It can also become a material for further solo work for one of the collaborators. In extreme cases, however, the transformation generated by the co-practice is so radical that there is an evident discontinuity between the transformed structure and its original version. If such is the case, the final product remains forever fused with the specific movement experience and is referenced in terms of "movement signature" (Studd & Cox, 2013, p. 105) or remnants from the encounter.

3. *Strengthens the connection between perceptive body and the means of drawing.* I can fully merge with the developing marks without thinking about matters unrelated to the medium and/or the process of engagement as it presents itself to me with immediacy.



4. *Generates conflict (both an internal and external one) and engages partners emotionally since the trajectories of the above outlined formal opportunities intersect with the intersubjective emotional tensions.* Consequently, Reciprocal Drawing provides me with an opportunity for introspection and self-understanding and is a means for me to rehearse these intersubjective tensions. Additionally, conflict—lived through experimentation and play—is a part of bodily learning new modes of drawing and/or a way to overcome mental blocks in one's own creative process.

5. *Evokes mutual trust, connectedness, and collegiality between the collaborating artists.* The products of their co-practice cement their relationship.

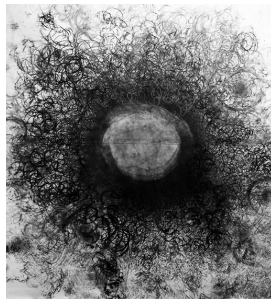
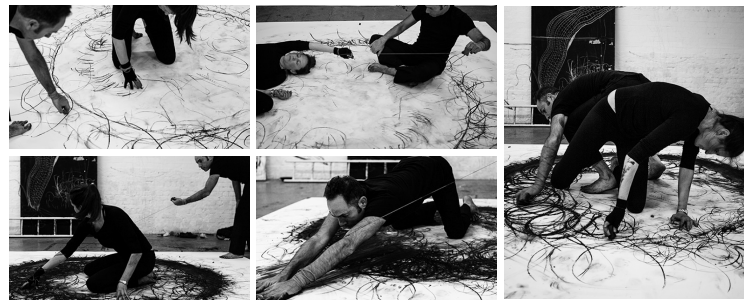

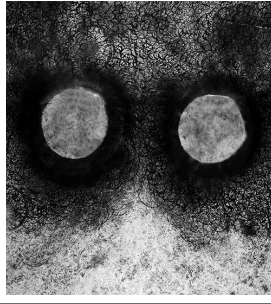


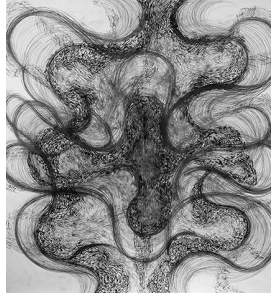

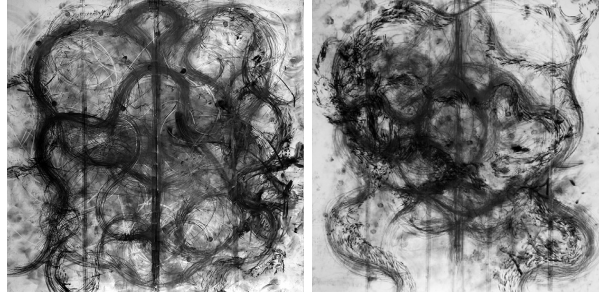
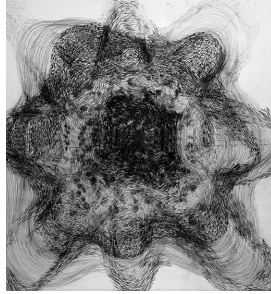

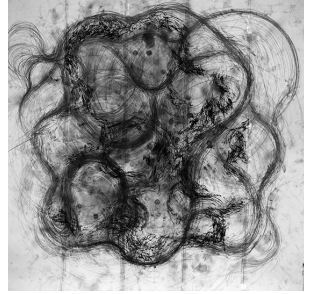
During the co-experimentation, I had devoted much attention to the emerging challenges. I had observed imbalance between giving and taking, uncontrolled escalation of competition and physical struggle as the basic challenges. Having said that, the competitiveness and antagonisms took my method forward. Within the safe boundaries of play and performance, the conflicts are a part of fun and learning, and should not be avoided by all means. Instead, future discussion on co-creative drawing may rather focus on the question of optimal combination of the parameters (strategies, actions, rules, diagrams, and temperaments) so that the competitiveness does not dominate each and every encounter.

The following issues from the collaborative phase remain open:

- Mapping the same combinations of body actions and strategies with different diagrams in collaboration with the same artists. Additionally, in the case of the binding-related thread, continuing the co-experimentation with a flexible band instead of a rope.
- Testing the same strategies in combination with different body actions (and consequently within new diagrams) with the same artists, for example: binding/ extensions-flexions with Ram, point-of-contact/extensions-flexions or point-of-contact/rotations with Jaanika. Like with any training repeated in pairs, better mutual sensitization and new movement solutions for drawing would be expected.
- Carrying out the co-experiments of the same parameters as presented in this thesis with artists of different experiences and temperaments.

By such a systematic expansion of the individual threads I could demonstrate how the dynamics in Reciprocal Drawing changes depending on the modifications of the specific parameters.

The outcomes of this research constitute a starting point for explorations in the field of performance pedagogy and drawing instruction. When referring to pedagogical situations, Mia Perry and Carmen Medina (2011), the authors of *Embodiment and Performance in Pedagogy Research*, argue that embodiment is not just an interesting or alternative method. For them, bodily co-experiencing with a student is simply an inseparable part of each educational context. In this regard, my research seems to offer tools for this co-experiencing. However, embodiment in Perry and Medina's (2011) understanding—the material, biological, sensual, social, and cultural experiencing of our bodies and the bodies of others—poses some challenges of ethical nature in educational contexts. This observation is particularly relevant in the context of Reciprocal Drawing, since its practicing may evoke a sense of loss, enforce re-examination of Self in relation to complex emotions and encounters, necessitate repression of feelings and habits as part of learning, and expose tensions within a personal-relational sphere. Dance pedagogue and scholar Eeva Anttila hints at similar challenges when she juxtaposes art with pedagogy.

SOLO IMAGE	RECIPROCAL STRATEGY	DUO IMAGE
	<b>binding</b>	
	<p><i>Binding/Rotations Bipolar, July 2016</i></p> 	
	<p><i>Binding/Rotations Centric, July 2016</i></p> 	
	<b>point-of-contact</b>	
	<p><i>Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Bipolar, May 2017</i></p> 	
	<p><i>Point-of-Contact/Extensions-Flexions Centric, May 2017</i></p> 	

**Table 5.** Juxtaposition of the solo drawings (far left column) and their variations (far right column) transformed through the Reciprocal Drawing practice.

While art, she argues, is about risk, getting out of one's comfort zone, provoking, searching and creating something new, pedagogy is about protecting, guiding, serving, educating, and creating conditions for good life (E. Anttila, lecture notes "Performing Difference," February 27, 2020). In the same vein, van Manen (2015) writes of pedagogy as "the experience of the good" (p. 75). The philosopher Francisco Varela (1999) defines goodness as *ethical know-how* – spontaneous, pre-reflective activity directed to a student, an almost bodily understanding of what is right for them.

When reflecting on "how would our disciplines and methodologies change if we took seriously the idea that bodies . . . produce, store and transfer knowledge" (p. 199), Diana Taylor (2016), a scholar in the field of performance studies, concludes that "(t)he move to introduce the body into the realm of scholarship has been . . . difficult" (p. 199). I also share Taylor's concern and similarly to Anttila, understand ethical requirements applied in art as different than those adopted in pedagogy. Therefore, I believe that prior to teaching drawing based on the co-embodied performative practice with a student, the ethical challenges of Reciprocal Drawing would have to be further tackled.

One of the possible challenges in educational contexts is the issue of close physical contact with a student. Embodiment happens with various intensity in different fields of education. Considering artistic education and more contextually drawing instruction, Rouhiainen notes that its conventional form generally introduces certain expectations with regards to behavior and bodily comportment in class. This, in turn, influences students' own experience and expectations towards drawing and how it should be taught (L. Rouhiainen, email correspondence, December 17, 2021).

Another challenge to be expected is the problem of inequality. As Suominen notices, in most cases but particularly in institutional contexts students are younger and take subordinate positions in relation to their teachers regardless of the intent of the pedagogue. Additionally, teachers are typically experts in the area they teach, while students are less skilled in the subject and still engaged in the process of learning (A. Suominen, personal communication, December 11, 2021). And while artistic context often disrupts hierarchical relationship between artists and their students, other aspects of this specific equality may come to the fore. Anttila (2011) confirms that teacher-student encounters in the context of art pedagogy are unforeseeable.

The third issue may be defined as a danger of realizing the artist-teacher's own artistic ambitions in the name of embodied collaboration with a student. Highlighting ethics of artistic research, Ravini (2017) and theorist Patricia Leavy (2009) warn against potentially harmful effects entailed by practitioners' attempting to force their own agendas or creative visions under the guise of artistic research. Finally, the fourth challenge might be different levels of physical skill and endurance among students. Yet I believe that, like with any other activity, skill and endurance need developing through simply rehearsing (embodied drawing included).

With the above outlined theoretical positions and concerns in mind, I see my further research to be initially of ethical nature, with the problematic trajectory of close physical interaction in teaching-learning situations intersecting with that of hierarchical relations between students and teacher and the one of more self-reflective nature, where I critically probe my motifs and expectations towards the students. At the end of this doctoral project I express a deep hope that our own "understanding of how we come to know and learn through the body helps us to imagine new realities, opening us up to greater possibilities for creating more inclusive spaces for our learners" (Lawrence, 2012, p. 78).



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**Agnieszka Karasch** (PL, b. 1975) is an artist, educator and researcher. She creates large, life-size drawings based on the body's geometry, its actions and gestures. Existing as independent works of art, the solo drawings also serve as diagrams for her collaborative *performance drawing* practices. In these practices, Agnieszka and a collaborator jointly move on paper according to partnering strategies that engage the bodies' direct contact. While in contact, the artists co-rehearse conflict and co-explore bodily *resistance* and its impact on marks.

Inspired by LMA, partnering strategies of performance, contemporary dance, actor's training, kinaesthetic exercises, and selected pedagogies of the 70-ies and 80-ies, Agnieszka directs her own artistic practice towards collaborative teaching solutions, thus making her own art and pedagogy inform one another.

Upon completing her doctoral degree she plans to pursue postdoctoral research into ethical aspects of embodied collaboration between an artist-teacher and a student in the context of drawing instruction. She is seeking collaborations with academic institutions but also with performers and dancers to further co-explore bodies' co-dependance and its potential for drawing.

Agnieszka earned a Master of Fine Arts from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Faculty of Graphic Arts. For over twenty years she has gained her pedagogical experience teaching at Designo - Foundation of Visual Arts, an art school she established, at The Academy of Specialized Pedagogy in Warsaw, Institute of Art Education, and German-Polish Willy-Brandt-School. Her works can be found at [www.agakarasch.com](http://www.agakarasch.com)



**Reciprocal Drawing** presents a postconsensual method of collaborative *performance drawing* in which two bodies work in a continuous direct contact. The method developed by Agnieszka Karasch engages 3 performative frames: 1) a *reciprocal partnering strategy*, e.g., rope-binding, originally used by Tehching Hsieh and Linda Montano in their *One Year Performance. Rope Piece* (1983–84), or point-of-contact, the principle of Contact Improvisation dance (Novack, 1990). Additional frames include 2) the *repertoire of body actions*, a collection of drawing-related actions compiled with the help of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), and 3) the *score*, a set of rules for the collaborators to follow. Reciprocal Drawing is an original method as it connects these 3 frames to tackle challenges emerging from application of contact-based partnering strategies in drawing. The research documents and analyses how with this method the collaborators devise complex reciprocal processes resulting in refined and meaningful products.

Karasch utilizes LMA and phenomenological research to examine the implications of adapting reciprocal partnering strategies to drawing. She considers the formal-visual aspect and the social-relational dimension of her method. Her research and the related performative process emphasize the embodied, dialogic and play-oriented quality of drawing. Karasch explains Reciprocal Drawing by employing the philosophies of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Luc Nancy, Emmanuel Levinas, and a broad range of practical and theoretical perspectives in art and performance studies.



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