

Residency A Very Eye at CC Heidelberg

2nd week (25.02 - 03.03.2019) :

The start of the second week was a bit bizarre. There were lots of ideas and curiosities, but we were somehow a bit lost in how to translate them into our two bodies, without the presence of other people, since we are researching about the crowd. But eventually things started to happen and beside developing further our rhythmical patterns and ideas for the Atelier or future group collaborations, we explored delicately the position of observing and being observed. This task of one performing and the other one observing, we named after a while 'best friend', because of the empathy establishing between the observer and the performer; the inner eye of the performer, judging or analyzing normally its own actions, is suddenly replaced in the observer, but in a non-judging way but supportive and caring!

Further we were busy with theoretical documentation about crowd psychology, mirror neurons, gesture spreading, empathy, perception, kinesics, crowd identities (passive = audience / active = mobs > aggressive, escapist, acquisitive, expressive), imitation etc. We are curious to confuse borders in that work, physically and socially and that's what we tried out in the sharing on Sunday, which happened in the form of a participative atelier. It was fantastic and overwhelming!!! The group fusioned in a very little amount of time, thanks to non-verbal communication, generosity, listening and many other unconscious factors why us human beings tend to couple up or follow the group, but the most impressive and incredible part of this workshop was the sensible and accurate listening of every one!

Notes on the Atelier :

Starting with a common simple warm-up, closed eyes, bringing awareness to your own body and feel the people around you. Then have a small and gentle Sunday dance, activate every articulation in your body and eventually open the eyes and spread in space while walking... Then we transited without any gap into the first proposition :

MUSEUM > we proposed the situation of wandering around in a museum, filled with people, being observer and being observed at the same time, looking at the other people as you would look at an artwork or a visitor, but letting the **evolution** and the **transformation** of it be commonly decided by the crowd, looking for a **group cohesion, contagious movement, etc...**

From this moment on we stopped talking and the group went on its own journey for about 30min... It was incredible what happened, but it was totally different from what we expected. We were about 35 individuals, generously sharing this space and this experience, but yet everyone had its voice, which means a lot of information and inputs. The cohesion of the group was definitely there but we were hoping for a moment of total synchronization in rhythm, gesture or speed and this was a bit more tricky to get the whole group going for one single thing!

- generous atmosphere of taking and sharing, listening and proposing > people felt free to do what they want, meeting unfamiliar people in a different way (non-verbal communication), creating a common ground of understanding, confidence and trust!
- mirror neurons > wanting to imitate what you see > physical contagious reaction
- be effected by what you see !

- sticking to one thing seems more difficult, people felt very free (yet very positive!) and engaged, but not necessary on a long term commitment. If one movement, rhythm, action, gesture should contagion the whole group, then it needs more time, to be seen, understood, spread, picked up, transmitted, incorporated... and then from there on the crowd could possibly go everywhere together
- position of observing and being observed at the same time; it feels like never being alone and always in complicity with at least one other person
- music was a very important factor to carry the group dynamic and guide in a certain way the evolution and energy of the task (Moondog, Colin Stetson, Alog, Phonophani)
- we were surprised how hard it was, to gather as one big organ. Well, it was actually not possible in the sense we had it in mind. Even though we have said, that we aren't leading figures at any point, we thought that it would have an impact on the group if we do the same thing over a long amount of time, like repetitive movement structures, rhythms or a common gaze, but people joined us for a little moment and then eventually went on in to something else.
 - > Maybe we need to gather all in one precise point, as a clump, mob, in order to initiate a common group action or **amplifying** the present condition to find one voice > endurance/patience/time > using the group as a support and source of energy for each individual > tribal, repetitive, ritual...
- What about doing the museum task once again at the end of the workshop?

DABKÉ > after a short break, we started again with a rhythmical session, based on arabic folkloric dance (dabké). The group energy was amazing and it has never been in that way before, when teaching in classes. The people were open and ready to take in, to listen and to react, thanks to the first part (Museum). It was a celebration and a common breath, even if some didn't get the steps right away, they were carried by the group, plus it was lots of fun!

TRANCE > we prepared a rhythmical pattern with a short movement phrase, that we taught them in two divided groups (different patterns and levels of difficulty) to then combine them again on top of a very repetitive and minimal musical score.



- this part of the atelier felt somehow the most difficult one, maybe because it was more strict in its form and actually we would have needed much more time to develop this, so that the performers can get comfortable with the score and find again their freedom in it, that they found in all other tasks. At this point, it was maybe a bit forced then to teach them fixed material.
- the arm phrase on its alone works really nicely and its interesting to mix up the directions, but its also a big potential for chaos!
- We want to work on the idea of two groups synchronizing and desynchronizing, but since the material was very fresh and not everyone felt right away comfortable with it, the precision was missing and therefore this effect was not really visible. So either we simplify this task radically to do it in the same amount of time (more improvisation?), or to take more time and really insist on it!
- We felt the potential of it, but it was not really emerging, so we have to keep on working on it, so that for the next residency we are ready to propose something more solid.

COMMON GAZE > the idea was to follow the same gaze, looking at the same point and sharing a common visual trajectory in space. The gaze will effect the posture, which doesn't need be an imitation of each other! People should keep on moving through each other, no one ever takes over fully the role of the leader or follower, borders are confused and roles are changing before you become aware of them > like holding a hot ball in your hands, that you can't keep for too time > it needs to be in movement all the time : continuous, no hierarchy, the individual shifts between disappearing and appearing, the physicality changes in relation to the point in space you are looking at and the trajectory of the group, etc.

- we have to be more clear about the rules or structure so that simple copying of each other can't happen.
- based on wandering (déambulation), shifting in space, constant moving
- no waiting, everyone is responsible
- one comment from a participant was, that it was great to have started off from an individual place, meeting the people through the first task (museum) in a physical way and finishing together, facing the same direction, moving as one.
- can this be a beginning of the performance? one starts walking around in space with a **continuous visual trajectory**, a second one joins, a third one, a fourth one, etc.... what happens to the public?

SINGING > the idea was to create a soundscape of voices in a different way : each singer can only perceive her/his own voice because (s)he has blocked the ears with the hands, but (s)he can see the other performers moving silently their lips, which is the only tool to synchronize together.

- it was amazing to see what happened, harmonies appeared without hearing each other
- freedom and absence of judging, since you can't evaluate if its 'right' what you are doing
- where does this have its place in the creation > soundscape, musical score, part of the performance???

> What about trying to mix all those elements in one task / score / improvisation ?



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