

Condensed Summary: Final Report - CC Residency: Reading Dances

(November 4–20, 2024)

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Residency Aim

To develop an interdisciplinary performance concept integrating reading, dancing, music, and choreographic practices. Inspired by the Shared Reading Method, the project explored how literature and movement inform one another, engaging audiences in the interplay of text, sound, and dance.

Guiding Questions

- How can we better observe and appreciate contemporary dance?
 - How is reading like dancing, or viewing dance like reading?
 - How might a nonlinear approach to reading open new ideas for choreographic practice?
 - What moves us when reading, and how might we choreographically reformulate this inner movement as a poetic practice? (What if poetry is not only found or made to emerge in poems, but also in landscapes, moments of illumination, revelations, or shocks?)
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Conceptual Exploration

- Exploring the act of wandering/wondering/questing as a metaphor for reading. To read a poem is to traverse a path. *Bewegung*.
 - Viewing dance as a text to be "read" and shared through personal, subjective interpretation.
 - Approaching reading as a form of choreographic potential, where the act of reading mirrors movement patterns—going back and forth, rising and falling, skipping ahead, or lingering thoughtfully on a single detail, much like the fluid organization of motion in dance.
 - Using surrealist, associative methods to inspire movement through literary metaphors.
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Process Highlights

1. Shared Reading:

Texts such as Sherwood Anderson's *Book of the Grotesque* and poetry by Müesser Yeniay and Inger Christensen inspired reflective discussions.

2. Movement Creation:

- Improvisational tasks were guided by operations such as translating single words into gestures.
- Still images morphed into moving pictures (*Trans-Forming*).
- Literary imagery, like metaphors (e.g., "bodies made of sand"), inspired movement.
- *Transposition*: Body parts were used as "writing instruments" in virtual space. Eye movements while reading were graphically transposed into larger spatial and physical dynamics.

3. **Dramaturgy:**

Embracing open-ended, fragmented structures that prioritized audience engagement, inviting active complicity and personal interpretation. Reading as an act of solitude paradoxically united countless minds, intertwining their creative energies like a silent chorus of dancing bodies—each moving to their rhythm yet connected in shared experience.

4. **Interdisciplinary Tools:**

Texts were treated as musical scores; reading aloud became a choreographed act.

Workshop (November 20, 2024)

Participants explored movement metaphors (e.g., walking on sand) and creative techniques like *sloppy copy* and gesture modulation.

- Collaborative exercises, such as *pass the gesture*, linked text to movement, while soundscapes enriched the experience and allowed for further “re-formulations.”
 - A dialogic format encouraged reflection between participants and observers.
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Performance Overview

- **Interactive Prelude:** Guests selected word cards as “tickets,” which were arranged to create spontaneous poems.
 - **Choreography:** Solos, duets, and group dances interwove with dynamic sound compositions and spoken texts, including poetry by Inger Christensen and Hilde Domin.
 - **Lighting & Soundscape:** Flashlights and improvised music created an immersive, dreamlike atmosphere. The sparse, self-made lighting approach was a dramaturgical decision inspired by metaphors such as “seeing things in a different light,” “only my shadow remains,” and “where do we find enlightenment?”
 - A collaboratively developed, improvisational score further enhanced the dreamlike quality of the performance.
 - **Post-Performance Dialogue:** Audience reflections fostered a shared sense of meaning-making.
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Outcomes

- Broadened interdisciplinary engagement with dance, music, and literature.
 - Strengthened audience connection through participatory and interpretive frameworks.
 - Fostered emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic collaboration among creators and spectators.
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Future Directions

Feedback from artists and audiences will guide refinements for future iterations, deepening the interplay of dance and shared literary exploration. Ideas for further development include:

- Integrating inclusive approaches, such as exploring the potentials of sign language and reading for the blind.
- Adapting age-oriented approaches to expand accessibility.

The residency successfully bridged movement and literature, emphasizing creativity, exploration, and shared artistic expression.

A BIG THANK YOU goes to the city of Heidelberg and especially the Choreographic Center HD for making this work possible”.

Catherine Guerin

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