

1. a (defined) area of inquiry

This research is essentially about the concept of Harmony. Harmony can be studied in different fields, however I am focusing my attention in the following aspects: agreement of ideas, feelings, or actions, or a pleasing combination of different parts, combination of separate but related parts in a way that uses their similarities to bring unity. It is important to point out that I am sharing this document as a practice-led researcher under an artistic scope, and not as a theoretical-philosophical approach.

Inspired by phenomenology (understood as the study of the human experience), mechanisms of embodiment and personal observations about how human beings interact with challenging conditions, I attempt to explore physically the process of negotiation between the personal intention and adaptation to the context looking for the key elements of harmony mentioned above. For that, I am exploring the potential of observing the interaction between the body (as recipient of the personal intention) and costumes as physical representation of conditioning. These interventions are a medium to explore deeper relationships between the human being and how he could interact with his context in a harmonious relationship applying elements of embodiment: the feeling of the condition as part of oneself and the sense of agency.

I believe that we find what we are looking for, what we ask our brain to focus its attention on. As an artist researcher my intention is to create images in movement (dance) that offers a different more harmonious reference in the mind of my audience. I attempt to create moving images where it is possible to interact with the conditions in a harmonious-pleasant way.

2. the key elements (words)

Harmony: Agreement of ideas, feelings, or actions, or a pleasing combination or arrangement of different parts, combination of separate but related parts in a way that uses their similarities to bring unity. Relationship between the parts in practical combinations. To flow, no resistance to the conditions and finding the way to still achieve a purpose.

The conditions: Metaphorically, the conditions refer to the context in which somebody is living. In practice, the conditions are represented by the costume.

The body: The body of the person understood as an unity of the sensations, thoughts, feelings, shapes, desires and memories. This body/person should be willing to suspend the intellect and

allow the shape and properties of the costume informs about the development of the experiment. I think on this body as the soul which gives life to the costume/body.

The intention: The purpose, aim, motive or objective of the body/person.

The costume: The costume symbolizes the conditions, it should be understood as the skin of a different body, a container with its own characteristics, possibilities, and limits. It is a body that needs a soul to experience life and pursue its purpose.

The material properties: Literally talking about the characteristics of the materials, weight, elasticity, fragility, resistance, shape, etc.

Embodiment: Bodily mechanisms that allows the dancer to accept the material properties of clothes as their own body. Awareness, incorporation, constant negotiation between the agency of the body and the adaptation to the conditions. Negotiation between move and being moved.

I, as the artist-researcher, will explore and find the connections between the elements. I will start the process by carrying on a literature review of the harmony elements mentioned in above and planning interventions (improvisations) where I explore and look for possibilities where the body and the conditions offered by the costume can interact harmoniously.

3. General purpose

This research offers benefits in the development of my artistic process. By the experimentation and development of investigative and creative tools applying key elements of the embodied experience for the development of appropriate movement language for the subject I am exploring and by finding ways to capture, document and share the process. According to my artistic values, this investigation has also the potential to trigger myself and the audience to explore complex socio-political concepts through the body in a tangible, simple, and pleasant way. Looking for alternative ways to reflect about possible solutions to wicked problems focusing our attention on what we want to create instead of on what it is not working. Thinking in young audiences or audiences with trauma, hopefully the images in movement offered would attract their attention and inspire them to believe in possibilities where we are able to interact with the conditions in the most harmonious way, maybe they would feel inspired to try on their own or even just being aware that something different is possible.

4. situate the research

I believe in the healing power of art, and art as an agent for positive change. This research relates deeply with who I am as a person and everything that is valuable for me, my culture, my family, my friends and any context where people is victim of challenging living conditions and the visual/mental conditioning of the media.

As a middle-class child born in México at the end of the 80's, I have been able to experience an intense period of social, political, militar and economic transformation. The constant struggle that represents adapting to the always changing conditions provokes a sense of constant vulnerability and fear. In addition, people are often bombarded by violent negative images on the media, which focus its attention to the shocking events causing more confusion and despair in the mind of the viewers. I believe that we find what we are looking for, what we ask our brain to focus its attention on, my intention is to create images in movement (dance) that offers a different more harmonious reference in the mind of my audience. I create thinking that my audience is a person who has been exposed to traumatic images/experiences, in consequence, I attempt to create images where it is possible to interact with the conditions in a harmonious way.

In previous stages of my research I started investigating the creation of movement language through the body and clothes, where the embodied experience is a key aspect of the process. Applying a phenomenological approach, my artistic enquiry focuses on the potential of integrating the material properties of clothes and the experience of the body through embodied mechanisms to explore what could be a harmonious way to interact with the conditions/context.

5. Research enquiry

How could the interaction between the body (the person/intention) and costume (the material properties, the conditions) be used as a medium to explore deeper relationships between the human being and its context towards the creation of a performance (attempting to create moving images that express harmony through mechanisms of embodiment)?

6. General shape of the research

*First cycle: How could the material properties of costumes serve as physical reference of an intangible concept?

I will explore both in a theoretic and physical way the concept of harmony, what would be a physical agreement between the body and the costume (the conditions), which aspects of embodiment feeds my practice and inspiration, the costume understood as part of the body, creating relationships between the nature of different materials and abstract concepts (for example: fragility – paper), the body interacting with the materials in different shapes, the body trying to find its own way to move inside the costume-body, how does the costume-body change through practice, which might be the potential of the materials and shapes, how can we interact with another body with its own properties. I would like to start understanding more through the practice.

*Second cycle: How could the findings organize and take shape towards a piece?

In the second cycle, based on the findings I will start creating costumes that offers different possibilities of movement, exploring deeper into the relationship between the embodied costumes and other bodies. What is my new understanding and reflections about the research. Design the way and element that will be included in the exposition and sharing. To allow intuition, discoveries and inspirations lead me towards the development of my final piece.

7. **your investigative approach(es), or methods in conventional research terminology.**

I am intrigued by the development of tools to apply to my own creative work and I need to understand how mechanisms of embodiment could be applied in my research process.

In the first cycle of the research I will explore both in a theoretic and physical way the concept of harmony. In the second part I will analyze my findings and start creating costumes that offers different possibilities of movement/relationships, as well as start visualizing the possible incorporations of those findings in a dance piece. Through the whole process I will be looking for references, analyzing my own process and the possible applications, as well as including the research in my daily rituals (morning routine) to avoid loss of focus. Following the advice of Twyla Tharp in *The Creative Habit*, I will prepare a box were I will collect materials, a sketchbook will serve as a journal for academic and artistic references, notes, drawings and any vision or intuition arrives in my daily meditation moments), as well I will make use of feedback loops to share and clarify my ideas with my peers. All improvisation/ exploration sessions will be recorded in video for documentation of the process and will be shared in feedback loops, reflections will be documented in drawings, descriptive writing or poetic reflections.

The phenomenological methodology proposed by S. Gallagher and D. Zahavi (2009) offers a pragmatic way to document and analyze what happens in the experiment process, approaching the first-person experience trying to capture how one is “thinking, perceiving, acting and feeling... by the careful description, analysis and interpretation of lived experience” (p 21), this is by literally talking about the dancer’s experience as detailed as possible. As dancers, we tend to “want to be creative”, and paradoxically we tend to consult our rational and inner critic compass to know if we are being “creative enough”. To be able to give a good description of the experience we had, it is important to bring the awareness back to the body and allow the active listening of what occurs.

A particularly important aspect to be considered when working with clothes is the information we perceive through the direct touch of our skin and the materials, as the intention is to adopt the costumes as a second skin. Haptics refers to a perceptual system that integrates cutaneous

and kinesthetic information, processing the material characteristics/properties of surfaces and objects through an active manual exploration. Some of the principal dimensions of haptic perception are roughness, compliance (elasticity and viscosity), thermal, weight, curvature, angle, orientation, shape, and size (Lederman & Klatzky, 2009). Our body adapts and regulates the range of the movement as well as the strength, pressure and tension it uses according to the properties of the materials, it should bring its attention to the skin and proceed slowly to allow time to process what is being perceived.

8. **Brief discussion of why your investigative approaches are appropriate to your research goal, area of inquiry and the context(s) you relate it to -methodology**

The phenomenological approach is the most adequate for me because the experience of the body is key informant of the process and the incorporation of a reading, journaling and sketching in my daily rituals seems realistic and easier to incorporate in a natural way that helps me keep traction and avoid loss of focus or accumulation of work in a short period of time, over all in the initial cycle. Embodied mechanisms require time and cannot be pressed. At the same time, as I am being the experiment and the observer, the documents allows me to zoom out and reflect “objectively” about the process, as well as feedback loops will help me to refine the way of sharing my findings.

9. **Framework**

Please find in the attachments my Theory Essay 2 about the costumes and embodied experience, further focus on the harmonious relationship will be develop in the coming weeks.

I will utilize the writing of fashion designer and visual artist Bugg, J. (2015) “Embodied design and communication: Drawing with the body and cloth” as the main reference to methodologies in practice, the text of phenomenological philosopher Merleau-Ponty, M. (2002). Phenomenology of perception to support the idea of the key role of the body as a medium to explore and to know reality. The research of embodied cognitive philosophers de Vignemont, F. (2010), Martin, M. (1995), Gallagher, S., & Zahavi, D. (2009), the studies of neuropsychologists Lederman, S., & Klatzky, R. (2009), Kilteni, K., Groten, R., & Slater, M. (2012) and cognitive scientist/theoretical psychologist Carruthers, G. (2019) to better illustrate the key aspects of the sense of embodiment. Choreographers Kylián, J. (2014), dance dramaturg Guy Cools (2020) and as artistic inspiration.

I found inspiration in this text of philosopher and neuroscientist Mark Johnson (2007): “Change your brain, your body, or your environments in nontrivial ways, and you will change how you experience your world, what things are meaningful to you, and even who you are” (p. 2). In his

book *The meaning of the body* he elaborates about how the physical characteristics of our body, sensations, the brain and cognitive processes determines how we perceive and make sense (give meaning) of reality according to the data we collect through the feelings of the body. The most significant words for me are: Change, body, environment, non-trivial, experience and meaningful. What is it meaningful for me? – For me meaningful equals the purpose, the intention: to explore the concept of harmony through the interaction of body and clothes.

Initial References

- Blaisse, M (1994) *Moving back*. <https://mariablaisse.com/portfolio/moving-back-film/>
- Bugg, J. (2015). *Embodied design and communication: Drawing with the body and cloth*. Academia.
https://www.academia.edu/14811188/Embodied_design_and_communication_Drawing_with_the_body_and_cloth.
- Carruthers, G. (2019). The Feeling of Embodiment: Our Target of Explanation. *The feeling of embodiment: A case study in explaining consciousness*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. DOI: https://doi-org.lib.fontys.nl/10.1007/978-3-030-14167-7_2
- Chopinot, R. (1986) *Le Défilé*. <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x7pwa7n>
- Cunningham, M. (1997) Scenario. <https://www.dansesaveclapume.com/en-scene/1101396-ballet-de-lopera-de-lyon-scenario-de-merce-cunningham/>
- Gallagher, S., & Zahavi, D. (2009). *The phenomenological mind an introduction to philosophy of mind and cognitive science* (Second). Routledge.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287271653_The_phenomenological_mind_second_edition.
- Gobierno de México. (2015). *La danza de los pascolas y el venado, elemento identitario del norte de México*. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.
<https://www.inah.gob.mx/boletines/1507-la-danza-de-los-pascolas-y-el-venado-elemento-identitario-del-norte-de-mexico>.
- Graham, M. (1930) *Lamentations*. <https://marthagraham.org/portfolio-items/lamentation-1930/>
- Jalet, D. (2013). *Les médusés - a choreographic journey by Damien Jalet in Le Louvre - Paris...*
<https://vimeo.com/70849036>.
- Johnson, M. (2007). *The meaning of the body*. Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Kilteni, K., Groten, R., & Slater, M. (2012). The Sense of Embodiment in Virtual Reality. *Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments*, 21(4), 373–387.
https://doi.org/10.1162/pres_a_00124
- Lederman, S., & Klatzky, R. (2009). Human Haptics. *Encyclopedia of Neuroscience*, 5, 11–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-008045046-9.01905-7>

Martin, M. G. F. (1995). Bodily awareness: A sense of ownership. In N. Eilan, A. Marcel, & J. L. Bermudez (Eds.), *The body and the self* (pp. 267–289). MIT Press. 15

[https://books.google.nl/books?hl=es&lr=&id=hwBh9nDDDFQC&oi=fnd&pg=PA267&dq=Martin,+M.+G.+\(1995\).+Bodily+awareness:+A+sense+of+ownership&ots=Y0cJdfGKQL&sig=eof1V3_oCBDahMG5E0wYpXSnEV8#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.nl/books?hl=es&lr=&id=hwBh9nDDDFQC&oi=fnd&pg=PA267&dq=Martin,+M.+G.+(1995).+Bodily+awareness:+A+sense+of+ownership&ots=Y0cJdfGKQL&sig=eof1V3_oCBDahMG5E0wYpXSnEV8#v=onepage&q&f=false).

MERLEAU-PONTY, M. (2002). *Phenomenology of perception*. Routledge. MERLEAU-PONTY, M. (2002). Phenomenology of perception. London: Routledge. Retrieved August 03, 2020, from

https://books.google.nl/books?id=q3HwhfjRmswC&printsec=frontcover&hl=es&source=gs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Nikolais, A. (1953) *Noumenon*. <http://noumenonblog.blogspot.com/>

Schlemmer, O. (1922) *Triadisches Ballett*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4pJlj_bteQ

Van Herpen, I. (n.d) *Sensory Seas, Look 07*. <https://www.irisvanherpen.com/haute-couture>

Vignemont, F. D. (2010). Embodiment, ownership and disownership. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 20(1), 82–93. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.concog.2010.09.004>

visual mapping

Transformation of the body in a meaningful way

for me, for sth to be meaningful needs to have a purpose

An intention

Of the piece

Of the dancer on stage

Relationship → CONTEXT

INTENTION

Back ground

Create harmony

México

* Contrasts

✗ Too much focus and exposition to aggressive, violent images

* Create thinking on who's gonna watch: (Kids & people with traumas)

* NO SHOCKING!

→ Create "positive" possibilities/outcomes

→ Possibility of achieving sth / seeds of possibility

Images in movement

→ Our perception changes through the body, what I see and how I see it.

Create images in movement that express harmony

HARMONY

Key words of Cambridge simple definition

- Agreement / accord
- Pleasant arrangement of parts
- Structure relations
- Practical combination

Represented by the costume that serves as the own body

Flow no resistance to the conditions and finding the way to still achieve a purpose

through mechanisms of embodiment: intention

① Accept the conditions as part of your body

② Having agency

vs allowing

→ Direct / Move

vs

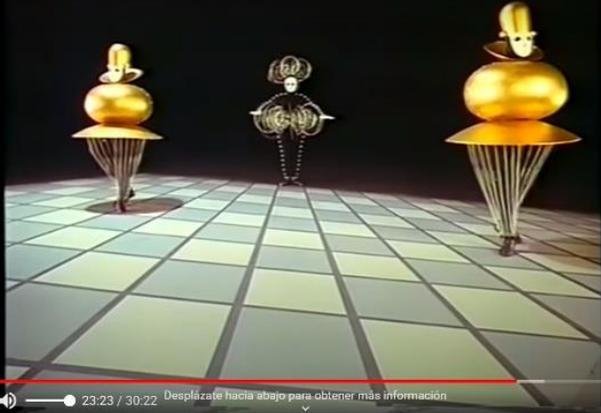
allowing, accepting or being moved



© Michel Cavalca



Triadische Ballet (Triadic Ballet)



23:23 / 30:22 Desplázate hacia abajo para obtener más información



10. **logistical plan**

FIRST CYCLE (ideal timing)

Mid October: Theoretic and physical exploration of the concept harmony. (alone)

End October: Reflections: what would be a physical agreement between the body and the costume (the conditions), which aspects of embodiment feeds my practice and inspiration, the costume understood as part of the body, creating relationships between the nature of different materials and abstract concepts (for example: fragility – paper). (alone)

Early November: The body interacting with the materials in different shapes, the body trying to find its own way to move inside the costume-body, how does the costume-body change through practice. (alone- feedback loop with peers) – I will ask an individual talk with my research mentor.

Mid November: Analyze the insights collected in the explorations and identify which might be the potential of the materials and shapes. (alone)

End November: Work with 2 dancers and explore how can we interact with another body with its own properties. I would like to start understanding more through the practice. (2 Codarts students)

Mid December: First sharing (Research mentor + SF)

SECOND CYCLE (ideal timing)

January: Start creating costumes (designs) that offers different possibilities of movement. (alone)

End January: Explore deeper into the relationship between the embodied costumes and other bodies. (dancers)

Early February: What is my new understanding and reflections about the research. (alone + feedback loops)

End February: Design the way and element that will be included in the exposition and sharing. (alone + mentor)

March: Sharing, report moment.

March – April: To allow intuition, discoveries and inspirations lead me towards the development of my final piece.

11. **Sharing**

"A picture is worth a thousand words"

As my interest is in creating visual references and I am working with the embodied experience, I consider that live exposition is the most appropriate format to share my research, as it allows me to share more context and carry on simple but significant perception/intention/visual experiments with the attendees that helps me explain better the relevance of the research and my intention. Complementary writing in the shape of a report or RC will be decided at the end of the first cycle. In case that the Covid regulations are still restrictive by the time of the exposition, I might consider using only the RC.