

BALTIC TUNING



Last year, on a beach in Nida, I carried out an experiment that I caught on film. This video clip helped me analyze and see my work in new perspectives. It helped me understand my animistic experiences in my practice through sensorimotor processes and the selforganizing principles of physics.

I was having an afternoon to myself and wandered among the pines. I'm drawn to the water, and I take the opportunity to pick up some trash along the way. We usually call it "skräponad" ("trash-onade", a play on promenade). When I reach the beach, I walk a short stretch along the shoreline, stop, and sit down at a safe distance from the reach of the waves. I put down my bag. I think about this inland sea, the Baltic. I grew up on an island in the middle of it. My current home-studio is on the opposite coast. It's the first time I'm on this side of this sea. It's both familiar and different at the same time. Then I get caught up for a long while just staring at the water.

Then I think about the plastic bottles in my bag and feel like filling them with water. It's hard to fill them completely without getting my pant legs wet in the lively waves. I remove the labels to better see the shapes the water takes as "bodies of water." I set them up one by one and look at them from different angles. I lie down so that the water level in the bottles aligns with the sea horizon. I start pouring water between bottles so that all of them end up at the same level as the horizon. Some bottles are too short, so I have to place sand underneath to make them reach the same height.

When I have all the levels aligned, I take out my phone and look at the composition through the camera. I press the video record button. I watch quietly through the camera as six waves roll onto the shore, then I start slowly moving the camera so that the bottles' horizon rises in relation to the sea's horizon. Shortly after, a wave arrives that reaches farther than any wave during my entire time on the beach. It stretches several meters beyond any previous wave. I get a familiar yet overwhelming "wow" feeling when the wave and my camera movement raise the water levels at the same time, but in different ways. A feeling of being in sync, of being one with my surroundings.

Surely there was a measurable difference in sound level, in the color of the sea foam, or such, right before the unusually large wave hits. But it's nothing I consciously register. It's nothing I note and then make a deliberate decision to adapt my camera movement to. When I start moving the camera, it's for no particular reason. It's also nothing I can detect in the video when I study it afterward. At 00:21 I start moving the camera, and at 00:26 the wave sweeps all the way up to me and the bottles, and I experience it as a surprise, despite the fact that I had already begun adjusting my movement to it before it happened.

I've learned to keep a lid on my euphoria in situations like this. The times I've shown it outwardly, I've been told that I read too much into random coincidences. So I breathe calmly, keep my face neutral, and continue my camera movement steadily until the wave has finished its motion. But inside, I am dancing and rejoicing. I've been told I have "far too vivid an imagination," that I "always see patterns and connections in everything." Yet the feeling of something tremendous never fades when this happens. It's also one of the reasons I was drawn to animation. When I animated improvisationally, straight-ahead, I often get this intense feeling, of movements coinciding: in me, in my materials, and in my surroundings.

This kind of experience that everything is connected and that you are one with everything is everywhere in non-modern traditions (expand?). In western science it's been mainly rejected. Theories of flow affirm it to some degree. Carl Jung called this experience of things happening at the same time without having seemingly influenced each other as *synchronicity*. He described it as an acausal connecting principle, meaning that psychological events can be linked to external events through meaningful coincidences rather than through traditional causal relationships. Whitehead's empiricism also emphasises this kind of relations in nature. He questioned the cartesian way of thinking causally about events, as two separate events that arbitrarily splits the world in a false dichotomy of the objective world out there and our perception of it in our mind. (In my case; the exceptional long wave causing the cameraperson to adapt her camera movement). Whitehead instead sees the subjective and the objective as inseparable and intertwined aspects of the unified reality. (In my case; the aligned movements of the camera and the wave represents a connection between the camera and the wave).

My studies have taken me through several different journeys that combined has led me to understand these experiences through sensorimotor processes and the selforganizing principles of physics.

This phd project started with an experiment with eliminating my carbon dioxide emissions. This led to shifts in my life and practice that forced a completely new way to be in my body. The research environment at SKH with dancers in my peer group gave me some keys with their somatic practices. A workshop trauma release exercises and introductions to neuromuscular techniques contributed to better attend to how by body perceive and respond to my environment. Learning about interoception and sensorimotor therapies when trying to help family members with neurodivergent navigation, school refusals, eating disorders and anxiety also gave relevant perspectives. Especially neurodivergent communities contributed. And "passion communities". In combination with my interest in physics all these things have shown me that it's not really that irrational to think that all that exists in the world interacts and creates reality together. That everything is, in fact, connected.

In the case of the Baltic wave's movement and my camera movement, I don't think the wave adapted to me. But I do believe that my bodily interaction with the sea calibrated my sensitivity to the relationship between sound level, or something similar, and the length of the waves—and so I could bodily know that a larger wave was coming before my reasoning consciousness knew it.

But in other situations, when I make myself known rhythmically, through my daily routines, biological processes, by animating with focused attention, by swaying with

my body, humming with my vocal cords—I give the matter around me the opportunity to line up and join in shared frequencies. Just as I, whether I want to or not, will adjust my frequency to theirs. We will all do it in search for joint efficiency. It is an existence, a world that exists in the relationship, in the connection. This essence emerges through rhythmic, relational becoming with the world. It is through this interconnected process that we come closer to the reality of this world.