

5 doodles to 1 dance

The doodle term was used to create a small line, that didn't take up the whole page. In opposition to the practice of dancer and watcher where the watcher draws the line of movement, in this practice the drawing is made first as a line, that then the dancer will translate into a line of movement.

By calling it a 'doodle' this may have been why some of the drawings in the first try out were similar, as people drew what they had thought by definition a doodle was.

The exercise initially works to see how different dancers translate the same line into their body.

5 dancers each drew a doodle first. Then each dancer secretly chose an order for the 5 drawings. Then they created a movement sequence that came from that order. They then performed their dance as one connected action. The dancers outside watching then tried to guess the order of the doodles for that performer.

By being able to recognize how the dancer was translating the line into their body, the watchers can make guesses for the order. It can be noted, that the watchers are not neutral. But they are the drawers of the doodles, and even more they are familiar with the doodles in the way that they too have chosen an order and put the lines into their own body. So they each have a drawn relationship to one of the doodles, and a kinesthetic translation into action for all 5 doodles themselves.

While watching, they were in fact not looking at the drawings, but had to some degree memorized the order of the drawings as they had them translated into actions themselves. In this way they were using memory and self-movement translations to recognize the other dancers actions.

Compared to Vicky Fischer's research where audience's try to associate if an action from a dancer is watery or frog-like (check this out), in this case the outside audience is the one who drew the line, as well as have created their own action out of the line. The lines are not symbolic of water or representational of an animal. They are purely abstract. Therefore the watchers, as trained dancers themselves, have to interpret what possible array of choices a colleague may be pulling from in order to make a conclusion about what action would make sense.

Compared to research like Fischer's that is based on the premise that some action has semiotic or symbolic meaning for the audience to 'get' that uses narrative or even general feeling, this experiment utilizes what Julien Klein would categorize as artistic research. Two dots on the paper were translated as hand gestures, or eye glances. Rather than a symbolic approach where these lines should mean hands, the lines have an unfinished, open-endedness to them, that allows the dancer to translate how they understand. (elaborate), This is what we could call dialogical, where the dancer and watcher engage with the intertwining meaning that the lines hold. The dancer does not translate that doodle the same way into their own body, but can recognize what another dancer was thinking with their translation. Often due to certain features like symmetry or quantity eg two lines is two hands, or two eye glances.

In the first run through, the results were more inconsistent. Those who thought they were correct, were not necessarily correct. Those who thought their guesses were in the middle sometimes actually scored 100. What can be noted in the first time is that the dancers were asked to just draw a line without knowing what the experiment was. Many of the lines looked rather similar, which would make it difficult to differentiate between them. In the 2nd trial, the dancers already know what the experiment was. Even without seeing what each other drew, or agreeing to make larger distinctions, the variety between the drawings was more diverse. Additionally, three of the drawings could be said to convey simpler proposals allowing for greater readability. Participants are also using more recognizable features in the drawing, like angles or curves, meeting points or symmetry. Lastly the second trial also has the advantage that the participants have more practice in reading movements within this abstract exercise. They also have the insight to create more recognizable translations knowing others will be guessing them.

What stands out however, is not how many correct scores the dancers were able to match from the movement to the drawing, but the different approaches that each dancer used to translate the same lines, and the knowledge for other dancers to attempt to read the movements, when their own translation was distinctly different. For example, they could recognize that their two jumps was another dancer's two claps.

Drawing one: A tight wavy line running vertical.

Drawing two: Two same sized angles with an open bottom and an additional angle.

Drawing three: A circular wavy line that turns back in on itself before making a vertical drop with a horizontal bottom.

Drawing four: Two vertical dashes

Drawing five: Two lines crossing like an asymmetrical X

Translation descriptions:

Drawing one

For Aleks, drawing one was standing in place and making quick running actions with the feet. The pitter patter of the feet translated the multiple bumps in the vertical line.

Michaela translated drawing one by vibrating her body very short amount of time.

Miguel translated drawing one by vibrating in place.

Maria translated one by vibrating in place.

Drawing two

For Aleks drawing two was traced with one arm making the triangle like angles before dropping to the ground. The spatial properties switched from one arm tracing the line, to the whole body translating the line.

Michaela translated drawing two with angled lines traced by her hand (continuing with the same tactic from her drawing three translation blended together).

Miguel translated the two angles with two undulations of the spine before going to the ground and using his feet and body to create the bottom portion of the drawing. The tactic changes from tracing the line with his body to becoming the line as a position.

Maria translated drawing two by jumping up and down twice as the two triangles in the drawing and then landing on the ground in a horizontal position. This merges tracing the of the angles with her head into becoming the line at the end.

Drawing three

Aleks for drawing three put the wavy line through her spine and walked through the space. The curviness with drawn by her head and moved through space with her whole body as a pathway.

Michaela translated drawing three by tracing the curvy lines with her arm and hand.

Miguel translated the wavy line by undulating his spine horizontally as in the drawing and ending with the elbow and arm making a final angle. This could be interpreted similar to drawing two but strong similarities between the feet in the second drawing matching the proportion of the segment of that line helped clarify. As well as the in translation three the pathway of his elbow could be recognized as the overlapping part of the line, where the line looks like the joints of the shoulder, elbow and wrist. In this way we see bends in the lines get conflated to the dancer's awareness of the joints and then proportions of their own anatomy.

Maria translated the wavy line by bending forward and tracing the line through the space with her whole body, ignoring the last part of the line.

Drawing four

For Aleks the two dashes were not done vertically but they were embodied as the whole body making two jerky actions on the ground. The movement of two similar short actions in time translated the two similar short dashes in length.

Miguel translated the two dashes by clapping twice, turning the two short dashes into sound. A translation from perceived line to imagined line of sound.

Michaela translated drawing four of the two dashes as two hops next to each other.

Michaela translated drawing two with angled lines traced by her hand (continuing with the same tactic from her drawing three translation blended together).

Liisi starts laying down and kicks up both her legs sequentially.

Maria translated the two dashes as two short jerk pulses on the right shoulder. The amount of two and use of the same arm is noted.

Drawing five

Maria ran across the diagonal of the space, ran backwards and then turned to a different corner and ran diagonally across the space again. The cross of the X was a point in the middle of the space and her body translated the X as a pathway through the room.

For Aleks, drawing five was translated as crawling across the floor in a straight line and then retreating back on the same line. The X was not made, but the symmetry and straightness was translated. The position of the X on the paper also resembled the position in the studio space, from the audience perspective, down-left.

Michaela translated the two lines crossing by looking over each of her shoulders. The translation used eye sight as an imagined line and the X was crossed where her body stood.

Miguel translated the two crossed lines by swinging each one of his arms from a raised position down and behind him. The crossing point was this hands held together from the starting position.

Liisi's translations, as the fifth dancer are hard to understand from the video. This is also reflected in the four other observers guesses that were mainly all incorrect. It is likely Liisi herself forgot the order she performed and gave the incorrect order. Trying to see what order she actually made is also inconclusive. What is similar is her use of angles, vibrating and laying on the floor. It is through recognizing the similarities from the other dances that I can recognize the order is incorrect, but because of some differences and repetition, I cannot guess the order.

In the studio practice, the observers were only allowed to watch the sequence once and then had to make a guess.

The conversations that followed revolved around each dancer discussing what they recognized in each other's dance and how each one chose to translate the lines differently. The lines brought the conversation into a dialogical practice where the outcome was not determined.