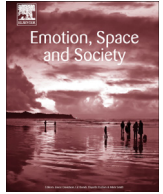




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Dizziness—A Resource: Dizziness and the compossible space in research-creation

Ruth Anderwald*, Karoline Feyertag, Leonhard Grond

Institute for Art Theory and Cultural Studies – IKW, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Schillerplatz 3, 1010 Vienna, Austria

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'[O]n the one hand we are in danger of burning up, of evaporating, of going too fast, of dissolving, and on the other hand we are in danger of freezing, rigidifying, of becoming mummified and unable to move. Dizziness contains within it both extremes.'

(Katzmair, 2015; <http://on-dizziness.com>, no pagination)

'For most who tend to seek balance, the lack of it leads to a state of crisis and loss of control; for explorers, boundary crossers, and creative personalities, this is in fact what drives their works.'

(Shmailov, 2016; <http://on-dizziness.com>, no pagination)

1. Introduction

This article summarises part of the findings of our research-creation *Dizziness—A Resource* (2014–17) funded by the Austrian Science Fund and hosted at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. We will introduce the two underlying key concepts, related practice examples, and tell the story of experimental filmmaker Oskar

Fischinger's wax-slicing machine. Furthermore, we will give insight into the philosophical background of the methodology that we have developed throughout the research process. This article underlines the creative potential of dizziness by introducing new ways it may be conceptualised, thinking with and through the frames of emotions and space.

Dizziness is understood as a phenomenon of embodied knowledge (Manning, 2009; Varto, 2013), blurring categorisation between the perception and conception of dizziness. *Taumel*, German for 'dizziness', implies a broader semantic field including medical indications of vertigo and further notions of physical and emotional disequilibrium, exhilaration, confusion, uncertainty, disorientation, and turmoil. *Taumel* therefore includes positive, negative, and ambiguous connotations. Mirroring the research trajectory, this jointly written text oscillates between cross-disciplinary conceptualisation and practice, approaching dizziness in a metaphorical sense as object and method. Research-creation as the combination of arts-based research and research-based art (Loveless, 2015; Manning, 2008) allows for manifold approaches, heterogeneous formats, diverse outcomes, and contradicting methods as modes of 'curiosity, sustained questioning, and analysis' (Green, 2012: 272). As in dizziness, we believe that the strength of research-creation resides in its ambiguous, wide-stretched and diversity-affirming nature. The first key concept we introduce in this paper relates to dizziness as a possible resource for creativity. The second explores 'compossibility' as an actual and theoretical space for the experience of, and reflection on, dizziness. Both concepts are mutually dependent if they are to bring about their creative potential.

Dizziness—A Resource started from the assumption that feelings of dizziness – of being lost or disoriented (Solnit, 2005; Ladewig, 2016) – are not only a part of the artistic and philosophical, but also of any creative process (Anderwald et al., 2013; Anderwald and Grond, 2015; Feist, 1998; Feyertag, 2015; Jullien, 2012; 2015; Montuori, 1994). Consequently, we inquired when, where, and how dizziness arises and how the experience of, and reflection on, dizziness and its conceptualisation can lead to a better understanding of inherent creative processes. Relating to the first key concept, our proposition is that the notion of dizziness could provide a critique of simplistic views on creative processes that describe them as logical circuits, e.g. 'break in, break down,

* Corresponding author. Schuettelstr. 21/14, 1020 Vienna, Austria.

E-mail addresses: contact@anderwald-grond.at (R. Anderwald), karoline.feyertag@klimgt.org (K. Feyertag), contact@anderwald-grond.net (L. Grond).

break through' (Anderwald and Grond, 2015; Deleuze, 2003; Katzmaier, 2015; Marks, 1998). Moreover, dizziness as a 'concept in motion' needs a mode of thinking infused by movement, not relying on fixed points but on moving relations and shifting anchor points (Strong, 2004). Our critique underlines the importance of the creation of 'compossible spaces' by the interaction and collaboration of persons who feel affected by dizziness in different or even conflicting ways, experiencing it as fear and/or pleasure. Within these 'compossible spaces' dizziness as movement becomes a resource, shaking and swiping away long-established oppositions and making room for the unfolding of seemingly contradictory feelings, processes, theories, matters, and disciplines.

2. Falling into dizziness

Dizziness arises locally and combines various elements: theory and emotion, momentum and disorientation, time and space. It can clear, cause a great stir, or move heaven and earth – it destabilises. According to Plato, dizziness constitutes all philosophical thought by destabilising the basis of knowledge to a state of uncertainty: as an ontological state it can prompt transformation and innovation (Plato, *Timaeus*: 49e; Echterhölter et al., 2010). The dizzy individual experiences an emotional rollercoaster ride involving feelings of exhilaration, anxiety, and disorientation. Exposure to dizziness increasingly reduces predictability and our ability to exercise control.

From a medical perspective, dizziness is considered a symptom, not a sign. Similar to vertigo, it can only be described by the experiencing subject and cannot be measured objectively. As a medical symptom, dizziness is ambiguous and can lead to a multitude of diagnoses. The vestibular system is the sensory apparatus that signals the coordinates of our spatial position to the brain, affording our sense of balance and spatial orientation. Together with the cochlea, it constitutes the labyrinth of the inner ear. As our movements consist of rotations and translations, the vestibular system comprises two components: the semi-circular canal system that indicates rotational changes in velocity and the otoliths that indicate linear changes in velocity. The vestibular system sends signals primarily to the neural structures that control our eye movements and to the muscles that keep us balanced. Psychobiologist Matti Mintz's research suggests a connection between our ability to maintain emotional and corporeal equilibrium and flexibility. His research particularly indicates comorbidity between anxiety disorders and a poor sense of orientation and balance (Mintz, 2016; Erez et al., 2002).

Working on his film *Failed States* (2008) filmmaker Henry Hills literally used dizziness as his resource. Spinning around and becoming dizzy with his camera in hand enabled him to overcome a severe crisis in his work. Not only had the vertiginous perception of the world matched his uncertainties about his work, but his becoming dizzy also stimulated new sensations and brought back a childhood memory – spinning and falling into the grass while watching the world turning around him.

Speaking of filmmaking, dizziness in its corporeal sense can be transmitted by unstable or rotating camera movements of which abundant examples exist in art films such as Stan Brakhage's *Scenes Before Under Childhood* (1967–70), Michael Snow's *La Région Centrale* (1971), Steve McQueen's *Static* (2009), or Catherine Yass' *Lighthouse* (2011). Moreover, dizziness in its metaphorical sense has been employed in cinema from its very beginning, as in the Lumière's gravity-defying first special effect in film (*La démolition d'un mur*, Auguste and Louis Lumière, 1896) or Georges Méliès' early film *Un homme de tête* (1898) and was later elaborated in surrealist films such as Teinosuke Kinugasa's *A Page of Madness* (1926) or Hans Richter's collaborative film *Dreams That Money Can Buy* (1947).

Furthermore, dizziness can be produced by abundant visual input such as the flickering of light, as used in Tony Conrad's film *Flicker* (1965) or Joachim Koester's *This Frontier is an Endless Wall of Points (after the mescaline drawings of Henri Michaux)* (2007). But dizziness can also be produced by a deprivation of visual stimuli, as seen in the 'prisoner's cinema' phenomenon reflected in, for instance, Melvin Moti's eponymous video work (2008). When a person – a prisoner for example – is subjected to prolonged visual deprivation, hallucinations in the form of colours and shapes might occur (Sacks, 2012). Therefore, dizziness indicates a situation in which the possibilities of reality can no longer be grasped in a habitual manner because of a lack or overload of stimuli, knowledge, or input.

Whether frightening or enjoyable, by falling into dizziness we enter a stage of uncertainty, disorientation, and heightened vulnerability where we are unsure of our abilities, perceptions, and processing – uncertain of ourselves (Butler et al., 2016). This manifests through feelings of excitement caused by a distorted perception of time and space, loss of proportion, and an increasing feeling of lack of control and/or temporary loss of memory and self (Katzmaier, 2015; Montuori, 1994). Dizziness can affect us as an individual, group, or society (Koller, 2014a,b) and the ensuing insecurity affects interaction with our environment (Lorey, 2015). To different degrees, these conditions of loss and feelings of insecurity are present in all dizziness processes, from crisis to flow experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), aporia to ecstasy, immersion in a film or book to philosophical pondering, or the creation of an artwork (Montuori, 1994).

Moreover, the emotional spectrum of dizziness must be considered in order to comprehend its potential as a resource. The experience of dizziness contains ambiguous and even contradictory feelings. This inherent unpredictability makes clear why dizziness cannot be seen as a means of 'self-design' (Groys, 2008). In its reflection, dizziness exposes related emotions as movements propelling the individual into a certain direction or perspective. For the aforementioned filmmaker Henry Hills, memories of being dizzy generated a positive reminiscence of childhood, which helped him come to terms with a creative crisis. However, not all recollections of dizziness necessarily need to be positive to have a constructive effect on navigation through dizziness. Therefore, the combination of the physical, emotional, and metaphorical experience of dizziness with the more reflexive and theoretical framework of compossibility proved essential for this research if dizziness was to be seen as a resource for creativity.

Dizziness represents the limit state of the challenged subject experiencing the vacillation between loss of control (staggering) and gain of control (equilibrium) (Echterhölter et al., 2010). In its metaphorical sense, dizziness starts with teetering and staggering at the limitations of knowledge, for instance when faced with a central problem or crisis (Alon, 2014) or aimed towards the creation of a new work of art (Anderwald et al., 2013). The compossibility of precipitancy and precision is what German philosopher Marcus Steinweg suggests for a situation involving dizziness in artistic or philosophical practice (2013). He further indicates a connection between the processes of thinking and art creation, both grounded in the groundless and the abyssal, starting from inherently aporetic moments (Kofman, 1988) and aiming at the impossible, in contrast to the self-reduction to the possible exemplified by politics (Steinweg, 2013). As Steinweg quotes Heiner Müller: 'Something new can only develop when you are doing something you cannot do [...] Art is what you want to do, not what you can do' (2013: 48). Describing this movement as headless or blind, Steinweg uses the practice of writing as an example in which the author develops a distance from the universe of facts without ever fully detaching from it. This striving to 'develop something new' by 'doing what

you cannot do' is further reflected in the following story about seminal filmmaker Oskar Fischinger that influenced our methodological approach.

3. Applying Fischinger's wax-slicing machine to *Dizziness*—A Resource

Between 1918 and 1921, filmmaker Oskar Fischinger — literature aficionado and at the time an apprentice — prepared a lecture for his literary club in Frankfurt. He set out to analyse and compare the structure of two theatre plays: Fritz von Unruh's *Platz* and William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. To supplement his talk, he drew graphic charts that illustrated the plays' dramatic developments as lines that collide, swirl, and break as the action unfolds. Trying to express his findings, he remembered: 'In preparing this speech I began to analyse the works in a graphic way. [...] On large sheets of drawing paper, along a horizontal line, I put down all the feelings and happenings, scene after scene, in graphic lines and curves [...] that showed the dramatic development of the whole work and the emotional moods very clearly' (Fischinger, 2006: 110).

However, this graphic exposition of the dramas' content seemed to baffle his audience. Fischinger understood that he needed to add the element of temporal movement in order to express his thoughts more clearly. After being introduced to Walter Ruttmann's work by a fellow member of his literature club, he felt encouraged to explore the possibilities of moving images. Following his precursory experiments with coloured liquids and wax, Fischinger invented a compelling apparatus: the wax-slicing machine. First, coloured wax threads were cast into a block, which the machine pushed towards a revolving, fan-shaped blade. The blade would cut thin slices from the block as the film camera shot single frames through an apparatus in the blade, to which the camera shutter was synchronised (see Figs. 1 and 2). Fischinger explains:

On a 2-dimensional plane, plastic forms were build up [sic] and formed in a block of colour wax—all kinds of forms and shapes and colour were imbedded in such a block of wax forms like pyramids or kegels [cones] or fantastic shaped forms like spirals etc. [...] [A]fter such a wax block [was] finished squarely, [it] was put in a machine, which cut fine thin slices off the surface of the block. After each slice was cut off, a motion picture camera placed before the machine photographed the surface of the wax plane. Then the next slice was cut off and again one frame was photographed with the camera ... Imagine the beauty of a polished cut through a wonderful stone [...] somehow the camera records the cutting of the full stone from the beginning to the end. The camera would, so to speak, wander through and through the stone, the wonderful pattern would grow. (undated typescript)

The methodology and research process of *Dizziness*—A Resource is inspired by the wax-slicing machine's animation process. Each cut in the wax block generates a shot from Fischinger's camera and thus the cut becomes a film frame. Setting these frames in motion animates the wax block's inherent dynamics. With every slice, Fischinger's abstract film expands, involving the viewer in its dramatic evolution. In contrast, the metaphorical wax block of our research-creation — a 'block of sensations' — grows by gradually incorporating different conceptual, emotional, and disciplinary approaches towards dizziness. According to Deleuze and Guattari:

What is preserved — the thing or the work of art — is a bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects. Percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo

them. Sensations, percepts, and affects are beings whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived. (1994: 163–64).

Moreover, these percepts and affects are the slices or 'snapshots' of our research-creation created through giving the research process a momentarily distinct form through writing, making art, or staging cross-disciplinary events (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013). Like single film frames, these artworks and texts are preserved and recorded on our project blog. Comparable to animating the snapshots on film, the blog's visitor then animates the accumulated 'snapshots' of the research process and creates his or her own 'animation' by choosing what to see, hear, or read (<http://on-dizziness.com>). Moving through the blog, the viewer is able to experience artworks, animate knowledge, and gain a new perspective on dizziness. Fischinger's animation process inspired this methodology: describing and applying movement in order to connect and convey meaning or knowledge that cannot be exposed otherwise.

4. Dizzy motions in compossible space

'... because in the end, dizziness, which I call ambiguity, is compossibility.'

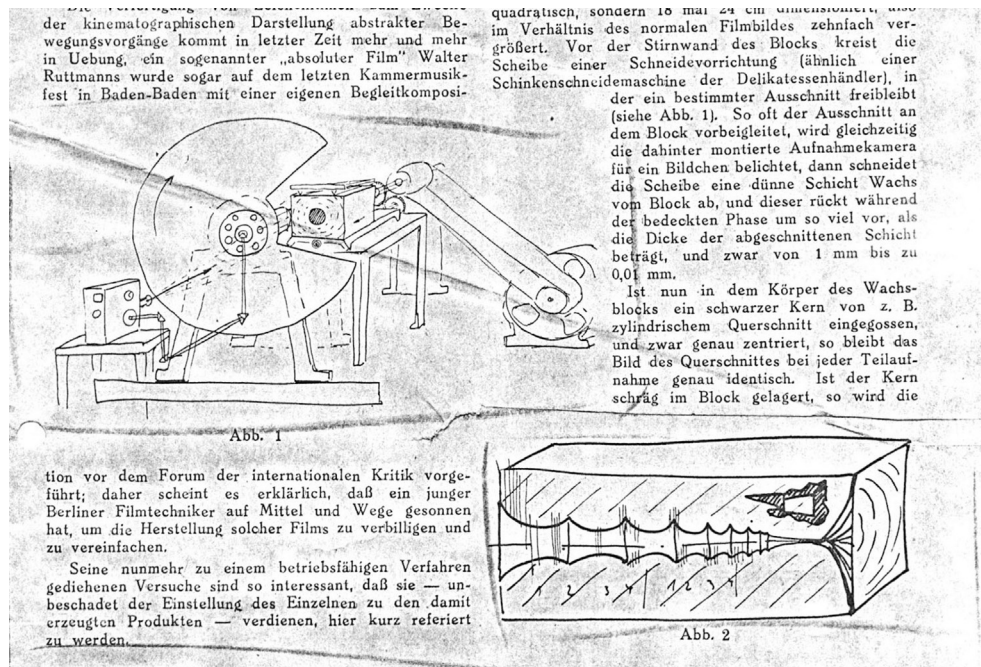
(François Jullien, Interview, Paris, May 26, 2015)

Falling into dizziness is a gradual process and enabling the experience of, and reflection on, dizziness requires a specific spatial and temporal setting. French philosopher François Jullien compares this process to passing through the 'sas' (French for 'lock', 'sluice', or 'compression chamber'), a space of exchange and transformation, passage through which results in a change in motion and velocity (2015). The sas is the metaphorical space-time of the in-between (things, views, feelings, situations, definitions, theories, matters) where compossibility sets in (Bachelard, 1969; Jullien, 2012; Game and Metcalfe, 2011; Simmel, 1994). According to Jullien, the term 'compossibility' means the possible and inclusive togetherness of contradictory elements (2015). Out of this confrontational togetherness, an in-between space can emerge, creating the possibility of dissolving and/or re-arranging what has been so far.

Evidence for such a compossible space is already found in Plato's notion of the *chōra*: a space, the formless form, literally the maternal womb or matrix (Burchill, 2011; Pechriggl, 2006). *Chōra* is neither being nor non-being but an interval in which 'forms' were originally held (Plato, *Timaeus*: 52d–53a). Another historical reference to compossible space is found in Leibniz's concept of possible worlds, constituted of compossible substances. These substances are only able to create a possible world when they do not contradict or exclude each other (Messina and Rutherford, 2009). However, by Jullien's contemporary definition, compossibility involves creating a space of ambiguity where established oppositions possibly collide, dissolve, and mix anew (2015).

Compossible space may be used to describe a situation and condition that an individual, group, or society can transgress and designates the possible and inter-relational existence of several mutually exclusive and contradictory worlds or states, as in simultaneous experiences of fear and pleasure evoked by dizziness. Therefore, compossibility can be understood as a paradoxical space where established opposites and ideas are still recognisable but tend to dissolve. The different motions assigned to dizziness — falling into, passing through, and coming out — disturb and unbalance the constituting components of the compossible space, allowing for their re-combination.

Fischinger's animation of the wax block may represent this passing through the compossible space. As motion, dizziness



Figs. 1 & 2. 'Zeichenfilme nach Wachsbildungen', illustrations for an article by Dr. Hans Böhm in *Die Kintotechnik* 9 (1927), permission to reproduce illustrations courtesy of the Center for Visual Music.

gradually becomes independent of the initial experience, still preserving it, but necessarily transforming the experience and ensuing emotions by reflecting on them, transforming thrill into fear into pleasure for instance. To reflect always means to create ruptures and pauses in the continuum of time and space; at the same time, reflection also requires cohesion in order to take the experience a step further towards understanding (Arendt, 2006). This reflexive process builds upon plateaus, it 'slices the wax block' of experience. Visualised in Fischinger's work, the slicing of the wax block and ensuing snapshots engender cohesion through their animation on screen and thus establish the compossible space for the passage through dizziness.

In this sense, dizziness does not solely pertain to a theoretical concept, but also a physical sensation and an ambiguous emotional experience, shaking convictions and habits. At the same time ontological concept and symptom, method and object, sensation and metaphor, dizziness is apt to animate its contradicting constituting components, and this requires a space to unfold. The inclusion of feelings into the philosophical concept of dizziness — feelings preserved as affects like despair, fear, enjoyment or exaltation — contributes to the transformation of a static philosophy of being into a dynamic philosophy of becoming made of perceptions, affects and concepts (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994).

With the following example from our research-creation, we introduce artworks created through the experience of, and reflection on, dizziness. The perception of spinning, transformed into a photo-sculpture model, provided first insight into the interdependence of dizziness and compossible space. Concerning the sensation of spinning, the simple percept of dizziness proved insufficient, demanding a supplementary transformation of the subjective experience into an affect, as we will explain in the following chapter.

5. Back to the dizzy body

'Art is seen as the ability to change the world [...] by radically transforming the 'sensible', or sensory, reality of the eye, ear, taste,

touch and smell, which unavoidably results in a change in ideas, understanding and insight.' (Varto, 2013: 9)

To elaborate on compossibility and dizziness, we became particularly interested in constituting the ephemeral moment of a spinning person's simultaneous standing and falling. It appears to be the turning point, the superposition of keeping upright and falling, the precise temporal moment of the compossibility of motion and standstill (Feyertag, 2015). Moreover, while falling we might believe we are suddenly falling from safety to uncertainty. But the basis on which we fall plays a significant part in our staggering and falling. The supposition that one is stable before falling is misleading; the staggering begins while we still feel safe and in control.

To elucidate on these thoughts in practice, every morning for the first few weeks of the research-creation project we spun in turn until falling down in a dizzy state and noted our observations in a research diary. Soon it became clear that one can see the other person stumbling or falling, but no outward signs indicate the quality of the other's experience of dizziness or when or if the other will fall. The individual's experience of staggering and falling is peculiar. From an evolutionary point of view, staggering triggers reflexes that are very old, located in the lower region of the spinal cord rather than the brain. When staggering, we instantly relax the unsteady leg and tense the other in an effort to regain balance (Bähr and Frotscher, 2009). As adults unaccustomed to falling, we were hardly able to predict whether we will regain balance or fall. At times, we experienced our staggering and falling down as if it was happening in slow motion — we even felt detached from ourselves.

The dizziness we encountered in our daily spinning was sometimes so strong that it impeded us to go on with our daily chores. Our notes describe that the dizziness felt slightly different every day, at times rather brief, at times a lingering experience. We felt particularly overshadowed by the ensuing dizziness when we were full of energy and eagerness to start the day. In the course of this self-experiment, the anticipation of feeling unwell after spinning resulted in a very unpleasant start of the day. Due to this, and



Figs. 3, 4 & 5. 'Photographic 3D model making', photo: Anderwald and Grond, 2015.

the fact that we usually needed quite some time to recover after spinning, we stopped these proceedings after a few weeks. In lieu we started riding a merry-go-round whenever in a difficult spot in our research-creation, as we found that the uncomfortable memories of being dizzy increasingly impacted the actual experience. Clearly, our emotional conditions influenced our experience of dizziness, pointing to the situational and conditional character of experiencing dizziness. Conversely, whether pleasant or unpleasant, dizziness as an out-of-the-ordinary experience extracts the individual from the day-to-day and thus may present a freeing experience.

Furthermore, within the experience of dizziness the compossibility of simultaneously standing (certainty) and falling (uncertainty) can be stated but not really observed except with still photography. Intrigued by the sensations of dizziness and the observation of our dizzy bodies, we began work on data for 3D models to compare the expressions of the dizzy body to the sensation of dizziness. Using photogrammetry, we tried to translate subjective sensations into percepts and affects with the help of 'iconic', a leading 3D studio in Istanbul. Surrounded by the studio's cage of cameras, we spun one after the other to the point of falling.

After quite a few failed efforts, 'iconic' was finally able to record

snapshots of us in the moment of simultaneously falling and standing, the data from which was used to print two photo-sculpture models (see Figs. 3, 4, & 5). These were created through the combination of a full-body colour photograph superposed on a 3D rendering of the body in motion. Anderwald's figurine depicts her staggering, precisely at the moment of falling. The statue cannot stand, velocity solely stabilised the moving body into an upright position in the captured moment, exposing one's illusion of control of the body's movements while already falling.

Both statues visualise the unpredictability of the body's expression when the subject is dizzy. Indeed, Grond was falling backwards the moment his photo was taken. However, his figurine's poise seems balanced and stable because his movements before and after the snapshot cannot be anticipated from his composure. Both 3D snapshots designate a compossible point, a threshold where standing and falling are momentarily coinciding (Feyertag, 2015; Jullien, 2016). Nevertheless, the statues cannot transmit the feelings the individuals experienced. As a symptom, dizziness needs individual expression and cannot be sufficiently explained or understood by objective measurements or visualisation from/of the outside.

6. Transforming dizziness together

Dizziness—A Resource aims at a more holistic understanding of the potential of dizziness by describing it through cross-disciplinary practice, analysis, and reflection. In our conversations with artists, scientists, and experts in fields related to dizziness we realised that describing dizziness is dependent on the use of metaphorical language. We intensified the collaboration with philosopher Feyertag, with who we started co-authoring texts including an artistic text lending voice to a personification of

dizziness. In this chapter we will provide an overview of the processes leading us to the creation of a sound installation that treats the exhibition *Dizziness. Navigating the Unknown* (Kunsthau Graz and Ujazdowski Castle CCA Warsaw) as a film animation, including the works of fellow artists as snapshots that form a compossible space animated by the voice of personified dizziness.

After capturing and analysing the dizzy body's expression, we shifted our attention to the feelings involved in experiencing dizziness using the generated 3D data as an artistic and reflective tool, considering this moment from different perspectives. Clearly, dizziness could not be sufficiently described from the outside alone, even if the data is cast into a sculpture and forms what Deleuze and Guattari term a 'percept'. Studying dizziness as a symptom and process requires the consideration of individual expression and time.

Therefore, we reanimated the captured data from the 'iconic' sessions as a series of still images and simultaneously searched for a narrative to translate the feelings of dizziness into another artistic language. In cooperation with graphic designer Christian Hoffelner, we produced *The Bend* (2015), a booklet that combines the still images from these sessions with a poetic text of the same name that emulates a spinning motion – walking in uncertainty – as it is written in a loop. This writing process transformed the percept of dizziness into an affect by adding a poetic narrative. (see Fig. 6).

Translating the research involving the 3D figurines further into creative writing, we started imagining dizziness as an archaic and hermaphroditic being, soliloquising its distress and desire. Now generated by the polyphony of the project's artistic and philosophical voices, our writing gave an account of the feelings that affected us while exposed to dizziness at various stages of the research process. Integrating narrative and personal forms of dizziness, we continued by producing the film *Dizziness is My Name*,

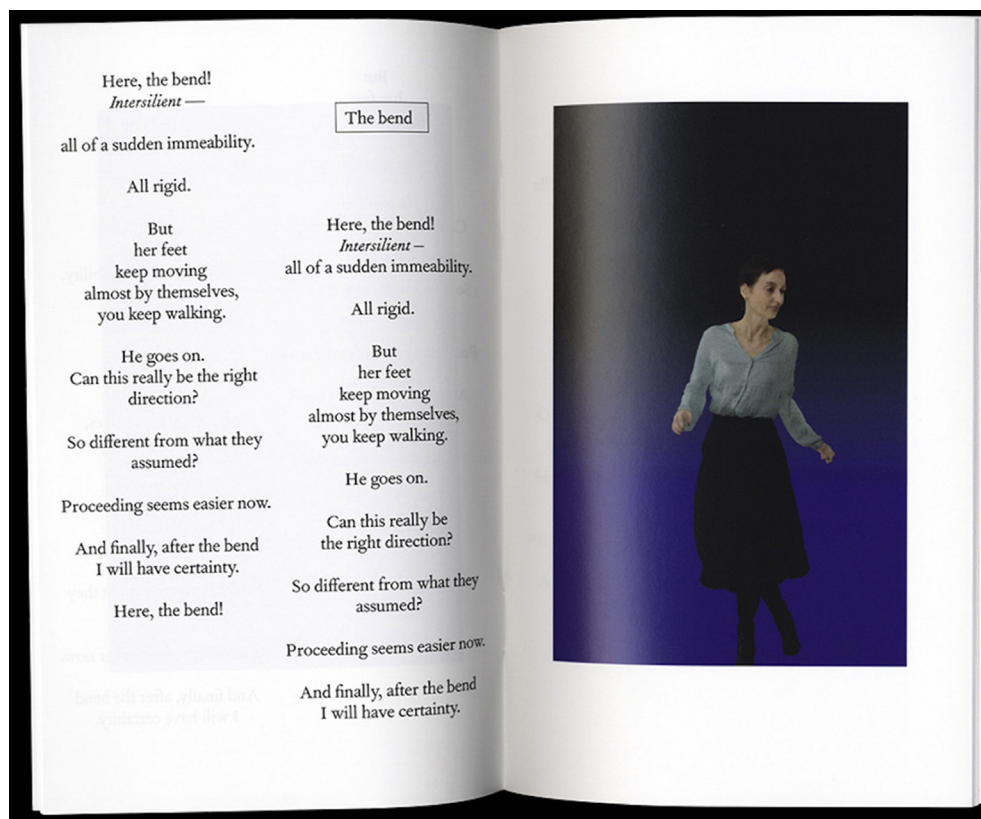


Fig. 6. 'The Bend', Anderwald and Grond, 2015.

using footage of the animated statues in addition to the co-authored monologue of 'Dizziness' in which the persona states: 'Dizziness is my name and I am a pendulum without rope or gravity. My gravity is movement.' This artistic work eventually led to the eponymous sound installation that guides viewers through the compossible space of the exhibition *Dizziness. Navigating the Unknown* (Kunsthau Graz and Ujazdowski Castle CCA Warsaw). The narrating voice of 'Dizziness' entices the visitor to move erratically through the exhibition space, setting in motion the animation of dizziness exposed in the selected artworks.

Our cooperation with Katrin Bucher Trantow, chief curator of Kunsthau Graz, was not as much a search for a common vocabulary as it was a search for common ground in the work process. Our exchange over the research trajectory was continuous and lively, involving other artists, scientists, and curators. We discovered that we had to adapt our improvisational attitude, while Bucher Trantow adjusted her strategic approach. The resulting process of co-curating the aforementioned exhibition mirrored the research-creation's findings in historical and contemporary artworks. Bucher Trantow brought a focus on emotion to the research process, emphasising the importance of viewers' feelings towards individual artworks and their emotional journey through the exhibition space. Correspondingly, we divided the exhibition into three intersectional fields: falling into dizziness, navigating through dizziness, and coming out of dizziness. These specific foci are inspired by a conversation with artist Joachim Koester, who insisted on the importance of coming into and getting out of dizziness as the defining moments for future feelings towards this experience of dizziness (unpublished interview by Anderwald and Grond, 09/14/2014).

7. Dizziness in artistic work processes – cooperation with creativity research and Kunsthau Graz

In cooperation with Mathias Benedek and Emanuel Jauk, creativity researchers at the University of Graz, we addressed dizziness' potential and what it might entail for creativity research. The first challenge was, as it is often in cross-disciplinary research, finding a common language. Merleau-Ponty's metaphor describing the search for creative expression as 'a step taken in the fog' (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 3) was the starting point of discussion with Benedek and Jauk when explaining our understanding of dizziness as a possible resource. In our experience as artists, we have regarded dizziness as a resource for creating new artistic work (Anderwald et al., 2013), whereas the creativity researchers considered states of dizziness as unproductive. Therefore, we questioned a relevant group of artists on their experience. But how could their experience of dizziness be measured for creativity research? We decided to develop a survey on dizziness in creative work processes connected to an art competition in order to gather empirical insight and quantitative and qualitative data on artists' work processes in a valid setting as well as encourage new ideas and artworks on the topic.

Together with Bucher Trantow, we designed 'Living in a Dizzying World', the competition that was tied to the survey for inclusion in the final exhibition of this research-creation at Kunsthau Graz. Standardised surveys, personality tests (Rammstedt and John, 2005; Tubes and Christal, 1992), and divergent thinking tests (Nusbaum et al., 2014) were examined and, by updating some of the questions, a questionnaire applicable to artists in their studio environment was created. Another challenge was to establish a language that did not put the artists enrolled in the survey under additional stress, but at the same time was still valid for a creativity research sampling investigation. Despite our efforts, six of the forty-four artists dropped out of the competition and survey

because they felt pressure responding to daily questions about their work process. Other artists found it advantageous, as this participant explains:

Somehow I was comforted by the idea that other artists were reflecting on their process at the same time I was. It made me realize that the challenge of art making is not unique—it is difficult for all of us and can lead to different emotional states, etc. I thought that the survey was really beneficial for me in terms of paying attention to my process in an objective way. (Benedek et al., 2017: no pagination)

Most artists appeared to have mixed feelings about their respective creative process, partially because the competing participants only had two weeks to create and submit their artwork to be judged by an international jury (Katrin Bucher Trantow, Sergio Edelstein, Anna Jermolaewa). The daily questionnaire included seventeen recurring questions and an open section for comments and could be filled out via an app or online form. At the end, the artists were asked to upload their finished work to a university server. In order to re-start the applicants' work process at the beginning of the competition, a quote from David Bowie's song 'Changes', 'turn and face the strange' (1971), was sent to the participants as an additional inspiration for the work. Indeed, finding a timespan that was reasonable for the artists' work processes, but also accord with experience-sampling methods for the investigation of extended creative work was yet another methodological challenge.

For two years of close cooperation, we gained insight into the emotions and experiences of dizziness in artists' work processes. Our first conclusion is that how artists deal with states of dizziness is related to their personality structure, momentary condition, and past experience. Some artists stated that they never experience anything like dizziness in their work process, while others related the opposite. Between-person analysis revealed that artists with lower levels of agreeableness, higher levels of openness and a history of high artistic achievements generated artworks the jury found to be of superior quality (Benedek et al., 2017). The artworks in the competition examined dizziness mainly from an aleatoric or destructive perspective. The winning artwork *Fractal Crisis* (2016) by Viktor Landström and Sebastian Wahlforss follows a woman having a nervous breakdown, a situation of internal and external crisis (Bucher Trantow et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the personality trait of openness allows for a greater ability to perceive two contradicting images simultaneously as separate and combined images (Antinori et al., 2017). This research-creation contextualises said ability with John Keats' notion of 'negative capability' coined in 1918 (Keats, 2014). It designates the capability of staying open and flexible when confronted with unknown, uncategorised or unpredictable knowledge or situations, – or in context with our research – the ability to enter and endure compossibility (Jullien, 2015). Within the compossible space the ability to use the movement of dizziness as creative potential becomes decisive. Philosophically speaking, this means opening up to the indefinite and shaping this opening that can be equated with defining the indefinite (Steinweg, 2013). In this sense the creative work process is considered oblivious to the aspects of impossibility. Creative processes therefore lean towards the aporetic and experimental, towards situations of unexpectedness and experiences of groundlessness and despair (Kofman, 1988; Alon, 2014). When we arrive at a dead end, with no possibility to carry on or through, are we forced to recombine all impossibilities – all which seems contradictory, exclusive, senseless, and disparate – in order to transform them into a compossible space and make for a yet unknown possibility.

8. Conclusion

In this article we defined the term ‘dizziness’ applied in *Dizziness—A Resource* and reflected on the concepts of dizziness and compossibility in theory and practice. The cross-disciplinary research-creation process of *Dizziness—A Resource* has led to the development of a methodology that draws from Fischinger's invention of the wax-slicing machine for film animation, an approach mirrored in the conception of the exhibition *Dizziness. Navigating the Unknown*.

The experience of dizziness contains ambiguous and even contradicting feelings. In its reflection, dizziness exposes related emotions as movements that propel the individual in a certain direction or perspective. Moreover, understanding the emotional and spatial movements that constitute dizziness, requires a mode of thinking based on movement. If we are able to conceptualise dizziness as constant movement through spatial, emotional, and social surroundings, we may gain new perspectives on the affects and effects of thought. Therefore, we base dizziness, as well as this adapted process of research-creation, on ‘the idea of “movement”, movement conceived both as object and method, as syntagma and paradigm, as a characteristic of works of art and a stake in a field of knowledge claiming to have something to say’ (Didi-Huberman in Michaud, 2007) and relate it to Fischinger's animation process. We conclude that movement is at the core of our experience of, and reflection on, dizziness. Furthermore, only through movement that describes dizziness can the pure modal logic of compossibility be set in motion.

As addressed artistically and philosophically over the research process, thinking-in-motion holds the potential to overcome the traditional oppositions of motion and standstill, certainty and uncertainty, knowing and not-knowing, because there is space and movement ‘in between’ professed opposites, which can become productive in moving towards new knowledge and meaning (Arendt, 2006). The concept of dizziness introduces an element of movement and openness to the ‘in between’ that could enable us to think the compossibility of opposites and acknowledge this grey zone or blandness for its creative and innovative potential (Bey, 1985; Deleuze and Guattari, 1994; Jullien, 2007; Manning, 2008). Therefore the development of ‘negative capability’ and enabling social and spatial surroundings are germane for transforming the ambiguity of dizziness into a resource.

Hence, the experience of dizziness is never purely enjoyable, as anyone who has set foot on a rollercoaster can concur, but it can provide new sensations, stimulus, and input. This out-of-the-ordinary experience brings about feelings of excitement and exhilaration that can oscillate between elation and exasperation, and thus its concomitant unpredictability has to be dealt with on an individual and interpersonal scale. Encouraged by our cross-disciplinary cooperation, we plan to continue this research-creation to provide a more holistic understanding of how dizziness affects togetherness.

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