



Fragments & Samples

My work seems to be full of both fragments and samples. I find them in the dance improvisation practice that is at the base of my artistic research. I see them as models or scores for finding and making the different elements that I then choreograph together also with an interest and a taste for a patchy composition.

With fragment I understand a remain of a broken thing. Something whole has become pieces and the fragments are its scattered parts.

With sample I understand an extraction from something that is able by itself to show what the whole should feel like.

Both fragments and samples refer to something else, something more, something that is not there but is evoked by them in different ways. If the first points to an absence felt in the roughness of its edges and its incomplete nature, the second stands for the wholeness and points it to it like the micro in relation to the macro.

Between 2016 and 2019 I collaborated with the choreographer Alice Chauchat. Her practice with score-based dance improvisation has had a great impact on me. Chauchat's scores create different specific modes of attention with one common trait: they make the dancer meet the dance as a companion instead of understanding it as self-expression. Often the score invites an impossible task that requires a leap of faith to be executed. It could be to believe in telepathy, or in a non-formal-unison, or the existence of parallel worlds. The dancing is the result of the contact with an external source: a narrative that shapes the dance, that is the dance.

What remains in my own practice is a general sense that my dancing is part of a bigger (impossible to see in its whole) dance. When I improvise to my own scores I attempt a task rather than pursue a goal: I am available to what comes, aware that the score triggers a specific kind of presence. Becoming a catalyst instead of the source for the dance opens up to a dancing that can seem scattered, where I keep my precision of intention, but I am unaware of the full result. Looking from the outside the dancing is clear and particular, but also somehow erratic and composed of many parts.

This is the first level of my meeting with fragments and samples. Some scores are inclined towards producing a dancing that points more to the absence while other scores generate a dancing that points more to the whole. For example, the Memory score nr.1 - the spinal cord of my solo RAGUNASI from the second semester - is a score which creates fragments. It sounds like this:

*By dancing, get in touch with remembering.*

*By remembering, let the dancing happen.*

*Allow the encounters between dancing and remembering to shape a dance.*

The score is composed as part of my investigation of the relationship between dancing and remembering. A feedback loop is produced between the two actions that start merging into each other. The dance becomes a dance with absence, a dance of relating to something that I recall while moving, to something that is not there, but that I make present through the focus of my dancing. I stay with the memory and the dancing until they start to transform into another movement and/or another memory.

The fragmentation is both in me pointing to something that is not visibly present and in the choice of leaving each memory (and dance) unfinished. This choice roots in my awareness of the impossibility to exhaust a memory before it starts morphing into something else. When I feel that I am on the edge of that happening I decide to go further, to the next fragment.

An example for a score which generates samples is the Matryoshka score.

*Apparently you have been an egg inside your mother already when she was an embryo in your grandmother's belly.*

*Dance a dance as a body inside a body inside a body, letting yourself be moved by the movements those other bodies take.*

This score produces a quality of dancing for which the absent parts (the two extra bodies) are ingrained into the physicality of the dancer's body, which somehow becomes a sample of the whole imaginary situation. Any sequence extrapolated by this improvisation carries the same essence and can stand for the whole. Part of the piece AMULETS from my third semester was composed by movements taken by the video of one of the practices of the Matryoshka score. But here I am already touching the second level of my meeting with fragments and samples, making evident that the different levels are not so definitely separated as the logic of distinction would like them to be.

The second level is in the production of the material. Score-making and dance-improvisation are also part of producing material for my performances, but because they are the starting point of my research I have decided to assign them the first level for themselves. Other practices go from relearning some of the improvised dancing from videos as just mentioned for the case of AMULETS, to dances that are framed by a specific feeling or image, to performative actions which take a theme or a research into a new medium.

Again I will propose some examples to make my process more accessible.

Two dances come to my mind as illustrations for what I call framed dances. The first one is from AMULETS: the Lotus Dance. In the piece, both I and the dancer Andrea Deres wear at some point a papier-maché lotus flower around the neck. When that happens we get in a specific mode which results in a bodily state and particular movements. The dance is improvised but the frame is not a written score. The score is ingrained in the dancer through dialogues and practices happened during the rehearsal process.

The second one is from the final production, *Homemade Remedy for Patching Time*, and is called Baroque. It is a part in the solo where I move very slowly on the floor and 'place' myself from position to position. It is one of the results of my study of still life paintings that is part of the research for the piece (see *Still Life & The Pensive Image*). It is presented as extrapolated by the rest of the research but it makes that part of the process present on stage.

I see these two dances as samples, extractions of a bigger/longer process which they are able to stand for in the meeting with the audience.

Samples are also a model when I work with other mediums than dance as for example my interaction with the table and the loop pedal in *Homemade Remedy for Patching Time*. What happens on stage is improvised but the result of a practice that I have sustained for an extensive period in relationship with my exploration.

There is a trust that what is shown can pass on the complexity of an investigation that cannot be shared with the audience in its entirety. One could argue that everything that has been practiced can be understood as a sample, but I would say that for me it is also an intention of wanting to work this way: going for a specific part of a practice that feels to me as infused, charged by the whole process. Then taking it out of that context by juxtaposing it with other ones, letting them reflect on each other. I also think it is a question of how one decides to name one's work. Samples make sense for me in relationship with my interest for time, memory and sound.

A sample in music is a section of audio from an existent source that is reworked in relation to a new creation. It is a voice or/and a rhythm, that has a specificity, a groove, that represents a time and a space which are given tribute to. At the same time the sample changes and is transformed by the rest of the new music, as the table loop does when, being the first action on stage, it then finds its role in relation to the development of the piece.

This leads me to the third and final level of my meeting with samples and fragments. If on the one hand the different material I have been writing about has a specific nature, a character that I define with those two terms (fragment and sample), on the other hand the way I composed them together contributes to making that nature more evident. In my choreographies I like to gather different elements and juxtapose them without trying to make them into one thing. A rhythm of catching and dropping is a trait in my work, which has become more evident in the course of this master. I believe it has to do with my interest in investigating the nature of time and alternative time narratives, like the ones proposed by Carolyn Dinshaw in her book *How soon is now*<sup>(1)</sup>, where medieval tales are taken as inspiration to explore a queer sense of time.

Relating to choreographic materials as fragments and sample, which contain in them selves multiple times by their very nature of being both present in the now but evidently referring to a not present (that could be in the past as well as in the future), is part of my strategy to work with a sense of time that can be "touched, crossed, visited and revisited".<sup>(2)</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dinshaw, Carolyn, *How soon is now*, Duke University Press, USA, 2012

<sup>2</sup> Schneider, Rebecca, *Performing Remains*, Routledge Edition, New York, USA, 2011.

## REFERENCES IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

Dinshaw, Carolyn, *How soon is now*, Duke University Press, USA, 2012

Schneider, Rebecca, *Performing Remains*, Routledge Edition, New York, USA, 2011.

## CREDITS:

Photos: Alen Aligrudic

In the photos: Alice Martucci in the performance RAGUNASI,  
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