



Loops & Repetitions

I understand the difference between loop and repetition as technical. The repetition is when something happens or is done again but does not imply exactitude. I can repeat the same gesture but it will never be completely the same. The loop is for me something achieved by a machine, something that can be done with recorded music and images by sampling them and letting them run over and over. There is also something about the rhythm: the loop is a chain of duplication whose goal is to stay the same at infinity. Repetitions can be distanced in time.

It is interesting that the definition of loop in the online Cambridge dictionary⁽¹⁾ refers to strings, threads, that are curved, bent until one part of them touches or crosses another. There is something about coming back to one self through time and the circularity of that action. Loop is magic. While repetition is the effort and pleasure of doing something again.

I like to repeat things many times. I enjoy routines and how things slowly transform by daily repetition. Many of the practices that have been accompanying my research during the two years of the master have been repeated every day for long periods of time. It takes time for me to perceive things fully: I need to listen to the same music many times to feel that I know it. An image as well first feels revealed to me after some few encounters. I like to acquaint myself with things, especially with what I bring on stage with me, what I perform. It may be a desire for control, but I hope it is rather a desire for communality, for the sensation of having shared time, of having history together. Probably is something in between the two.

So repetition is an old companion. Loop on the contrary is a new friend. In 2022 I went to a concert by Farida Amadou at Loppen, Christiania in Copenhagen. Amadou was alone on stage with her bass, which she played horizontally, the instrument laying down on her lap. I was completely fascinated by the artist's use of the loop-pedals to create a base which kept going on and then developed in a different/new direction. I got mesmerized by her concentration and the choreography of actions to produce the sound. It felt like the music was building up layer by layer, almost a volume growing in space that reminded me of how I construct imagining landscapes when I am dancing.

Both loop and repetition have resonance with the thematic of memory and the nature of the fragments and samples (see *Memories scores* and *Fragments & Samples*). They can be seen as possible actions that relate these two fields of interest of mine. I could say that when I remember I repeat a fragment of the past. Also that I can get stuck in the loop of memory, like an image or an event is running over and over in my head. When I do this kind of connection between all the elements in my practice I start to get dizzy. Better to go to some concrete examples of how loop and repetition have been present in my work those last two years.

RAGUNASI is a solo from the second semester. It is challenging what I wrote at the beginning of this card because it is an attempt to loop dance. It is based on the first memory score (see *Memories scores*). The solo is thought of as happening in a corridor, like going down a hall from the 'beginning' wall to the 'end' wall with the audience sitting along the sides. I start with my back on the first wall and when I leave it I begin to do the score:

¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/loop> -viewed on May 23rd, 2024

² <https://faridamadou.com/> - viewed on May 23rd, 2024



By dancing, get in touch with remembering.

By remembering, let the dancing happen.

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

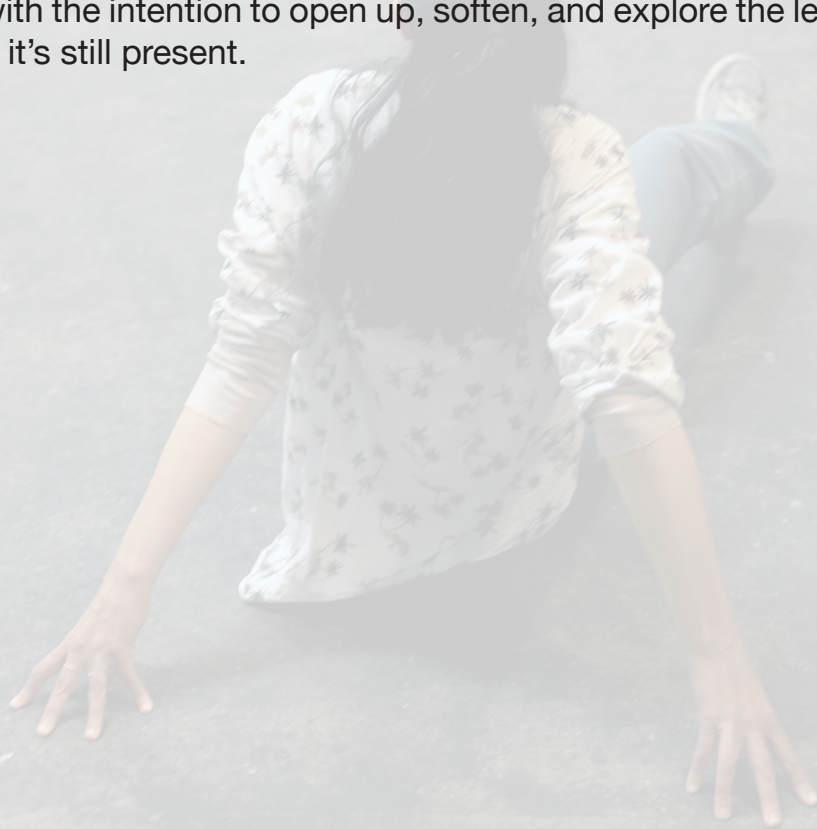
I dance using the whole space but with a direction downwards, progressively approaching the end wall. When I arrive there I pause with my back on it and wait until I am ready to walk back to the beginning position. And then the looping starts. The second time I dance through the corridor I try to reproduce exactly what I did the first time (which was improvised). It is an impossible task, but I consider the piece to be built on loops because the loop is the process I think about when I am in it. I am not repeating, I am replaying a dance as recorded in my memory. I loop the dance two times, so in total there are three parts, three passages from wall to wall. In reality of course they are different, I can't remember everything, even if I remember the movements I do them in a different way and probably a different order. Also there is an extra layer in each loop: the second time I go through the dance I talk in Italian with the intention to guide the audience through the memories and the third I distort the dance working on top of it by amplifying some of the movements, changing the tempo, changing the intensity. It's like working with samples and adding a voice over and some effects. I consider looping being the main action in the solo because my intention is to bend time, to cross it over itself, to revisit what was just done, but it is already past, to re-make it present.

RAGUNASI is a collaboration with the composer/musician Jaleh Negari. She has been working with an adjusted version of the same memory score to compose the music. The music is built on six parts and at some point during the rehearsal process the idea was that those parts would be set in a sequence that would then loop like this: A-B-C-D-E-F-A-B-C-D-E-F.

Our idea was that the dance would loop two times and the music one over the same duration of time. Conceptually it was appealing. But when Negari decided to perform live with me her desire for dynamics and to be able to respond to my dancing as much as I responded to her music won over the conceptual satisfaction. At the premiere the sequence of the music was quite freely maneuvered by Negari in something like this: A-B-C-D-E-C2-F. Not much looping left.

The fact that Negari could actually loop the sound made it less interesting for her and too fixed. The exactitude of the result didn't fit with the relationship between the music and the dance we were looking for. It became me dancing on the music. At the beginning I liked the idea because I thought that the music could become a structure of reference for the dancing, but when Negari decided to perform live, it didn't feel right anymore: it became too unilateral and she wanted the same freedom as me in the performance even if her material was more set than mine. If we had more time we would have liked to investigate other ways for Negari to play the tracks live in a more analog way and for me to play with the idea of sampling the dance. The potential of the loop did not get fully explored in this piece, but it stayed as an intention, a structure and a presence both in my dancing and in Negari's music. Hopefully we will soon have time to work further on the project.

Homemade Remedy for Patching Time is a solo from my fourth and final semester which deals with the '90s as a frozen time. Its starting point is Drum and Bass music (see *DnB*) and loops are present as themes and as methods. In this project I make my own loop of sounds at the beginning of the piece and use the loop as the skeleton of the whole performance. The loop is also here a magical element and I approach the making of it almost as if I was performing a spell. My initial idea for the piece was to make a homemade version of a DnB track by recording and looping the sound of objects standing on a day-after-the-party-table. The table is in the project a materialization of the '90s as a time that is still stuck in me and that I would like to unfreeze (see *Still Life & The Pensive Image*). To do that I make the objects sound by improvising with them and a microphone and layer their sounds on top of each other through a loop-pedal. To learn how to work with sound equipment I got the support of two sound artists: Joëlle McGovern at the beginning of the process and Rafael Canete Fernandez at the end. The fact that I am an amateur makes the loop-making even more magical for me: my intention is not to perform it as a musician, but to make it work as a kind of magical procedure, something between a game and a ritual. When the sound loop is completed, the recorded sequence becomes the sound I dance the next part of the solo on, for then mixing with other music (by Fernandez), but always staying present throughout the whole performance. The very concrete loop becomes itself a memory that plays in the back of the mind, while other intuitive, half-obscure, performative strategies are carried out with the intention to open up, soften, and explore the leftovers of a time that has passed, but it's still present.



REFERENCES IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/loop> -viewed on May 23rd, 2024

<https://faridamadou.com/> - viewed on May 23rd, 2024

CREDITS:

Photos: Alen Aligrudic

In the photos: Alice Martucci and Jaleh Negari in the performance RAGUNASI,
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