

Connection with what is not here yet, and ongoing research

intro

In this paper, I will try to open up the creative process of my next performance, developed in collaboration with BAU residency space in Amsterdam and Frascati Theater. The work will be presented at the end of June, after one month of research. This is the location of my process in ethnographic terms: theaters and rehearsal rooms are the spaces where the materiality of what I speculate might become a work takes place. How can a performance be researched before it fully arrives? and what kind of knowledge appears in that time, when the work is still not here, but already insisting in the body, in the studio, in the things that are read, remembered, desired, or repeated? The articulation of *patchwork* (Günel and Watanabe 2024, 131) as a place of mediation between what is being researched and the practice of research itself makes me think about the importance of Anna Kornbluh's concept of immediacy. I am interested in how the spaces in between, the locations, and the temporal and spatial infrastructures become the places where meaning is formed, both in the search for concepts and in the production of knowledge. I am interested in reading Kornbluh and Wark together because both point to a crisis of mediation. Kornbluh names immediacy as a cultural style, where images and affects circulate too quickly, while Wark shows how information itself becomes a new structure of power. Between them, mediation becomes a way to resist speed: to stay with the in-between, where meaning can still be produced otherwise.

the unknown work

This research follows the making of ***The thing, the second & the first*** as an ongoing process, developed through rehearsal, daily life, previous materials, embodied intuitions, and the temporal conditions of a residency. I am interested in thinking of the studio not as the only place where research happens, but as one point within a larger field of attention, where a work begins to be assembled through fragments, returns, interruptions, and things that do not yet know what they are.

The project asks what happens in the middle: between what is seen and what it means, between fantasy and form, between a body and an object, between a fiction, a reggaeton, a sent nude, and an impossible text. Against the speed of immediacy, and against the exhaustion of images that arrive already consumed, the work looks for delays, detours, and forms of mediation.

I would like to ask how performance can stay with the not-yet, with what escapes citation, with what disappears as soon as it happens. Maybe the question is not only how to make a

work, but how to remain close to the unstable conditions through which a work starts producing meaning.

unfolding

The creative process itself is not contained by the studio. The field of study for making a new work is also located in the life experience / huge concept but needed /, in the texts that are read, in past intuitions, in things that return from previous works, and in what refers to a kind of knowledge that comes before the conceptual.

Following Henk Borgdorff, I would like to think of artistic research as a way of articulating forms of knowledge that are not fully reflective yet, but that are already there, enclosed in aesthetic experience, creative practice, and embodied in the work itself. As he writes, artistic research is “the articulation of the unreflective, non-conceptual content enclosed in aesthetic experiences, enacted in creative practices, and embodied in artistic products” (Borgdorff 2012, 168–69). What interests me here is not only the idea of pre-conceptual knowledge as something abstract, but how this knowledge appears in the body, in repetition, in a certain attention to materials, and in the moment where something is still not clear enough to be named.

In this sense, I would like to put this in relation to what Gökçe Günel and Chika Watanabe are calling. Their proposal allows me to think of the process of making a performance not as a clean and continuous line, but as something made through fragments, interruptions, returns, and different sites of attention. Patchwork ethnography questions the separation between “field” and “home,” and proposes instead to pay attention to the seams where knowledge is actually produced. They describe this as a “‘seam-full’ engagement with knowledge production,” one that makes visible the movements between field site and home, between data and daily life, and between different acts of contextualizing and decontextualizing (Günel and Watanabe 2024, 131).

I am interested in bringing this idea into artistic research. If the studio is one place where the work happens, it is not the only one. The work is also being made through the things that are read, the notes that appear in between rehearsals, the memories of other pieces, the body arriving tired or distracted, the conversations that stay around, and the materials that insist without knowing yet what they are. So maybe the field of the performance is not a stable place, but a moving relation between body, text, object, memory, and time.

The process becomes patchwork not because it lacks rigor, but because it follows the actual conditions through which a work starts to appear. It is made through discontinuous forms of attention, through returns, through interruptions, and through the impossibility of separating completely the studio from the rest of life.

the thing, the second & the fist

the thing, the second & the fist unfolds as an ongoing practice of staging a duet, not only with another human figure, but with something else: a fiction, a reggaeton, a sent nude, an impossible text.

The work stays with the things in between, as a way of loosening the immediacy between meaning and what is being seen. It asks what might emerge after working through the how within the practice of the residency.

Dancing through a crisis of fantasy, where the consumption of images exceeds their production, and what is seen becomes somehow pasteurised, the work looks for openings, for in-betweens, where the choreographic can displace itself and embody the muchness.

By saying this, I want to recover Anna Kornbluh's chapter on autotheory, where she discusses the apparent exhaustion of fiction as a literary genre, a tendency that extends beyond literature itself. Kornbluh points to a rejection of the fantastic and of fictional mediation, replaced by the immediacy of first-person autotheoretical writing (Kornbluh 2024, 165). Here, the "I" comes to the foreground: the first person writes about itself in a kind of auto-phagocytosis of its own narrative.

I would like to put this into discussion. Academic texts, when attempting to diagnose what is happening in contemporary culture, often turn to visual art and literature as objects of study, perhaps because in these fields the object tends to remain fixed, stable, and available for observation. My question is: what happens if we analyze the field of performance, or dance, which requires a more ephemeral and chaotic form of observation, insofar as the action always escapes and slips through time?

In this sense, even if performance studies emerge partly from theater, and theater has a historical relation to literature, and even if the performative is often categorized within a certain kind of fictional production, few contemporary authors are able to touch the question of a living scene: a scene that modifies itself and changes in the moment, and that is difficult to analyze because it only remains as memory. There is no possible citation beyond description, or beyond the concept that grounds the work.

When anna kornbluh speaks about *cultural style*, criticizing the overproduction of images and the immediacy of their consumption, she points to a system that produces self-reference almost compulsively. what emerges is a kind of pasteurized information: previous materials are recycled over and over again in order to produce "new" content, only for that content to be extracted by platforms that generate profit from this very process.

More recently, McKenzie Wark has suggested that we might be living through something "worse" than the capitalism we already know. In her work around *capital is dead: is this something worse?*, wark argues that the ownership and control of information have produced a new form of ruling class, one that dominates not only labor but also capital as traditionally understood. ([Verso](#)) in an interview with alexander galloway, she puts it directly: we may be dealing with "a new mode of production: not capitalism but worse." ([b2o](#))

I am interested in thinking through a mix between these two authors. Even if they do not make the same argument, both understand that without dialectics, without mediation, there is no in-between. Anna Kornbluh argues that mediation means the active process of relating, making sense, and making meaning by working within the medium: “making middles that merge extremes,” and making things available in language and image (Kornbluh 2024, 5). immediacy is killing us. Following this logic, I am interested in thinking patchwork ethnography together with Anna Kornbluh’s critique of immediacy, in order to understand how the spatial relations between things sustain the complexity of a process of knowledge production, whether this process takes the form of a performance work or an academic text. What becomes important here is not only what is being researched, or what is being made, but the space in between: the temporal and spatial infrastructures that allow something to become thinkable.

This shared space allows the subject to become more complex, too. One is not only what one does, but also what one does not do, what remains suspended, what is delayed, and what happens in the middle. I bring this to a choreographic aspect: the body is one of these spaces, a site where thought and physicality, biological rhythms and conceptual movements, coexist through different orientations.

In *Queer Phenomenology*, Sara Ahmed writes that orientations shape the “relations of proximity and distance between bodies” (Ahmed 2006, 3). This is important for me because it underlines the **between**: the fact that how we are directed toward the world also affects how the world becomes available to us. Orientation is not only a position, but a way of entering relation. It organizes what comes close, what remains far, what becomes visible, and what stays out of reach. In this sense, the body does not simply produce meaning; it moves through distances, rhythms, and directions that condition how meaning can appear.

The materials are mediated through the body, through writing, and through the act of returning to them from different positions. But in the context of performative creation, this mediation does not happen only as reflection. It happens through trying, repeating, failing, insisting, stopping, watching, and sensing when something begins to produce a scenic force. A material does not enter the studio as an idea already ready to be represented. It enters as something unstable: a tone, an image, a physical impulse, a memory, a rhythm, a relation, or a question that needs to be tested through.

methodology on making ?

Entering the studio without knowing what to do

Being a dancer, it is always possible to enter a studio, put on music, and dance. To leave, just like that, knowing that what happened meant something. To dance. And that’s it. The forcefulness of the discipline, maybe? The same happens with dancing in a club, with ballroom dance, or with a half-danced song when a car passes by on the street with the volume high.

But since I started creating my own means of existence for my work on stage, let's say, when I started to stage what could be my language as a choreographer, entering the studio changed a bit. The feeling was as if the studio was asking something of me that I still did not know. That perception, of how a space asks for something that is not there yet, feels to me like a good question to begin thinking about in this text.

A blank page waits to be written, just like a space waits for the performative event to happen. I could, after several readings of Derrida in his understanding of the ghost in theatre, or of several queer phenomenologies by Sara Ahmed, think that my first action is a concept that becomes action: I commit to the unknown. I commit to getting to know it. I activate sensors of curiosity. I could say that this is my guiding concept in artistic research within the academic field, and in creation within the studio. I like thinking that actions interfere with our thoughts.

I put on a pop song to activate the gay memory of dance by itself. I free myself from things that are not productive, nor want to produce anything other than simply dancing to a pop song that takes me to a place so gay that the unknown becomes safe for me again. A familiar place in the body from which to begin knowing what is there, waiting to appear. With that, I play at activating thought through dance.

My physicality in dance comes a lot from the gestural. I am interested in dance that meets language at a midpoint: hands dancing behind a curtain, the speed of a passerby on the street, a hip that looks like it is waiting for a bus. There is something in the spectrum of the domestic and the everyday that fascinates me. I enter there, into the notion of the intimate as artificial, and I question the naturalness of forms.

But returning to the dance step first, I try to deactivate the symbolic mandate that appears when something could be put into the world, as labor or the efficiency of product making. I try for that symbolic to play in favor of a new creation, and for the failure of that symbolic mandate to become what subjectivizes the search.

So, I spend time searching, somewhere between distracted and very concentrated. I let go of obsessions and bring them back. I realize that the way I prepare the body will be the way of using it, and the way of using it will be the method through which the composition begins to find itself. There is something about how the method appears with what is there. Some time ago, I called that a kind of macrobiotic composition: creating with what is biodisponible in the moment. Something that the South American tone gave me in my early adulthood, to make with almost nothing and for something to appear out of that nothing.

In this sense, entering the studio without knowing what to do is not only the beginning of rehearsal, but also the beginning of a method. The studio becomes one of the places where the research happens, but not the only one. The work is also being made through the music I choose to begin with, through the gay memory that a pop song activates, through previous gestures, through daily life, through the objects that return, through distraction, and through the things that are not productive but still produce meaning because they are related.

This is where I connect the process with patchwork ethnography. Günel and Watanabe propose patchwork ethnography as a way of thinking research through its seams: between

what is being studied and the conditions that make study possible, and between different acts of contextualizing and decontextualizing (Günel and Watanabe 2024, 131).

The field of the performance is not only the rehearsal room, therefore the method appears through fragments: a tired body, an obsession that leaves and comes back, a plastic bag falling, a note written after watching someone else rehearse, a conversation, a desire, an interruption. The work becomes patchwork not because it is unfinished, but because it is made through discontinuous forms of attention. The studio is not separated from the rest of life; it is one of the places where life becomes available as choreographic material.

So maybe entering the studio without knowing what to do is already a way of resisting immediacy. It is a way of staying with the not-yet, with the delay between body and meaning, with the time it takes for something to become thinkable. The method is not to clarify too quickly, but to remain in the middle: between dancing and writing, between attention and distraction, between what appears and what still refuses to arrive.

It seems important, then, to insist on the use of time, and therefore of space, given their intrinsic relation, within a creative process that takes the body as its medium, or as its mediator. Having said this, in the performative field — and perhaps this is why many academics hesitate to enter its discourse — the medium through which things pass is the body. and because the body is present, because biological rhythm and living forces are actively producing and giving meaning, the analysis becomes more complex. It is not possible to write so quickly when what is at stake is a subject.

material on research / links

[*fantasy is gone . try out*](#)

[*ongoing research / echo from last work*](#)

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