



# LAB NOTES

from the teachers meeting  
of the **contactfestival freiburg** **17**

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of the contactfestival freiburg **17**

summary of various discussions, labs and research

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## PREFACE

The contactfestival freiburg exists since 2000. It was initiated and co-organized by Barbara Stahlberger, Benno Enderlein and Eckhard Müller. As committed CI practitioners, teachers and organizers, and following the synergy of the encounters, interests and experiences, the three founders met and imagined a new International CI event in Freiburg, as a gathering of the teachers and the international CI community to exchange about their practice. 2013 we decided to include Daniela Schwartz into the organizers team. 2015 After 16 years of collaboration Benno leaves the festival team in mutual agreement.

Each of them merged their experiences to co-create the contactfestival freiburg. Their great investment, energy and passion have created the first international CI festival in Europe, influencing the CI community worldwide. Many other CI festivals with a similar structure have followed it. The Festival runs Intensives, Classes, Labs, Performances and Jams and is an annual weeklong event.

The teachers meeting happens just before the Festival for current and former teachers of the Festival to get details for teaching, facilitating and exchanging during the event. Some topics are about the contactfestival freiburg, but a big part is to share and exchange about Contact Improvisation itself. The themes and topics, brought up from the teachers, were discussed, tried, taught and researched by bigger and smaller groups of teachers during the meetings through the years.

The notes can be a source of inspiration for organizing, teaching and dancing. They may show solutions for some topics, but are meant only as informative material to build up the process of knowledge. The following notes are written from various teachers who were taking part in the teachers meetings of the contactfestival freiburg.

Please remark that the most of the notes are not written in perfect English or edited correctly. They are still raw. Some more, some less.

Barbara Stahlberger brought these notes together in this collection with a great help of Bryce Kasson

The photos are taken by Charlie Rabuel, Patrick Beelaert, Marco Novara, Eszter Gal, Barbara Stahlberger ...





**REPORTS**

## CQ Newsletter Report from Ann

I had not participated in a Contact Improvisation festival with over 300 hundred people since Oberlin College hosted the 25th anniversary celebration in 1997. Therefore, it was an extraordinarily moving experience to find myself standing in a big gymnasium with that many people again two decades later. As I first scanned the room, I was amazed at the sheer number of bodies standing arm in arm, creating an enormous circle of people – and possibility. Their clothing – the bright greens, yellows, reds and purples that stood out against the dark colors – made me feel I was in a vast field of dancers. My mind quickly calculated whether I could dance with them all – six jam nights, 50 dancers a jam – at five minutes each I would have to dance close to five hours a night. We came from 40 different countries; half of the participants were new to the festival (like me), and half had been to Freiburg before. A good number, in fact, constituted a stalwart crew of regulars who had been coming for a long time, knew what to expect, and became the de facto keepers of the space. The whole scene struck me as somewhere on the continuum between a hippie retreat and a boy scout jamboree – a kind of Woodstock for Contacters, with enough flexibility to invite experimentation and enough structure to keep us safe and well-fed.

As people introduced themselves in the circle, I was struck by the cluster of geographies – the Palestinian men sitting next to the Israeli couple; the Ukrainian women next to the Russian family; the Koreans next to the Chinese. Some folks claimed bi-national locations including Berlin/San Francisco, Madrid/Paris, and Slovenia/on the road. Having traveled

from all over the world to gather in this small town near the Black Forest to dance together, we could feel the anxiety begin to melt away and the excitement begin to flow. By the end of a short, guided warm-up, my cheeks were tired from grinning so much. The first hour together in that cavernous space set the tone of celebration and investigation for the week to come.

The Freiburg Contact Festival has been evolving ever since its original incarnation in 2000, when it was launched by Barbara Stahlberger, Benno Enderlein and Eckhard Muller. Eventually, Daniela Schwartz joined the team and a couple of years ago Benno shifted out of his role as a key organizer, although he continues to participate in various events. After 18 years, the organizational team has it down to a science – the structure of the event is impeccable. The whole event runs incredible smoothly (at least from the outside) and the space is welcoming and alive at all times of the day and late into the night. Once registered, each participant receives three different letters outlining the specifics of signing up for intensive classes, transportation, housing, and payment.



Like any good summer camp, these missives tell you what clothing to bring and what to expect once you have arrived, with a whole area on the website for frequently asked questions. The food is scrumptious, the musicians wonderful, and there are intensives and one-off classes for every kind of dancer, both beginning and advanced. In the day-to-day running of the event, Barbara, Dani, and Ecki are helped by a whole posse of teachers and former teachers as well as a solid crew of staff who set up an outdoor kitchen. It is extraordinary to think that the amazing food (breakfast, lunch, and dinner – not to mention midnight snacks) is brought to us by folks who arrive a couple days before the event begins and that the “top chef” manages the entire catering operation from an elaborate food truck and tables set up under an awning.

Before the official Contact Festival begins, there is a gathering of former and current teachers. This is a meeting of minds and bodies from many different backgrounds who bring a variety of perspectives to their practice of Contact Improvisation and related somatic work and performance

genres. Over the course of five days right before the festival begins, these teachers share experiences and skills, as well as assuming a critical responsibility for managing various aspects of the Festival, including performances (both spontaneous and curated), feedback structures, the library and archive room, study labs, facilitating afternoon and evening jams – to mention just a few of the extensive range of activities taking place in multiple studios at any one time. Most importantly (and ingeniously in terms of organizational strategies) however, the teachers lay down a solid ground of physical inquiry that coats the space of the “Sports Halls of the Wentzinger Schule.” By the end of the event, it was clear to me that the presence of sustained and focused dancing over this time allows the current and former teachers to locate themselves in a way that then supports the wild energy that arises when another 280-some people enter the space.

The festival begins with a welcome dinner where old friends meet and greet and new folks sit down at an empty place and are immediately welcomed into the conversation. Then there is the big opening circle, which then is divided into smaller groups based on language affinities. Eventually, we all gather for a big opening jam. It literally took me hours to wind down that first evening after moving with and along so many dancing bodies, including some current students of mine, one of whom came with her parents (clearly Contact has become a cross-generational activity over the course of its 40-odd year existence). Every night afterwards, the space is divided into two different jams. One is very open, often driven by the live music and with a lot of chatty energy around the edges, giving it a bit of a club feel. The other is a focused jam, the theme of which changes from night to night. One night, there was the classic Contact Quarterly – inspired jam in which folks would read bits



## REPORTS

of CQs aloud to inspire the dancing. As someone who loves words and history as sources for dancing, this was one of my favorite evenings. I especially appreciated the fact that the atmosphere of these jams was invaluable helped by the addition of soft performance lighting rather than the florescent gym lamps. This is the kind of detail that I recognized as very important in setting up the right mood for sustained dancing.

Every morning of the festival begins with five simultaneous intensive classes. This year the teachers were Benoit Lachambre from Canada, Cristina Turdo from Argentina, Franck Beaubois and Isabelle Uski from France, and myself, Ann Cooper Albright, from USA. These two and one-half hour classes run for five days and represent a core investigation. After lunch, there are a series of single classes taught by many

other teachers from all over the world. These are wonderful opportunities to experience many approaches and different kinds of expertise. I took one each day and was thrilled to learn about “tensegrity,” my bones, and dancing with a sensibility in the eyes that can support weight sharing. In addition, there are all kinds of special events, mealtime discussions about politics or somatics or micro-phenomenology, different scores and performances. I particularly enjoyed the 10 x 5 score in which 10 people take five minutes each to present something they are currently investigating or passionate about. Another time there was a kitchen table score. This is a structure in which a group of no more than five people have a conversation around a table in front of a bigger group of witnesses. Just like a round robin, anyone can participate and folks rotate in and out. In addition to many spontaneous



performances, there was a more formal event one night. This year it was curated by Jess Curtis, and included some mysterious dancers dressed in amazing animal costumes. They would pop out of a corner for a few minutes and then disappear. I stifled my desire to follow them and see who they were (at least one was in my class, I believe), but I noticed that several of the children immediately traipsed after them in curiosity and awe.

There is, of course, much more to report about the dances and conversations that circulated through the space. Obviously, each person's experience of this kind of event will be different from other people's. Nonetheless, I sensed that for almost everyone involved it was a wonderfully invigorating time of dancing, learning, and making friends. Because I believe that this kind of facilitation is an important part of learning Contact Improvisation, I try to give my students the opportunity to take charge of planning a workshop or curating a big jam. Having been there this past summer, I will encourage my students to adventure out there sometime. The Freiburg Festival provides a great model for gatherings of this scale. The real savvy of the organizers lies in their understanding of how to create the right mix of structure and freedom in an event that accommodates so many different kinds of dancers. It was truly an extraordinary experience and I feel honored to have been invited to partake this past August 10-16th.

CQ Newsletter Report by Ann Cooper  
Albright Festival 2017

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**WORKS & STUDIES**

## Reason(s) to document the labs

Compiler's Note—There was a discussion this year at the TM questioning the reason(s) to document the labs, including if it is necessary at all.

Does anyone use the lab notes?

In what way(s)?

Some thoughts that emerged are listed below:

General Themes

Reflection

Representation

Responses

Recipes

Different ways that emerged to generate or utilize documentation included:

- notating in one's mother tongue, not only in English, to facilitate ease and the flow of ideas
- Writing for which audience? One possibility: for your future self
- Representation of points of view/ different perspectives from within the lab
- Relating back to the title (or core question/statement) of the lab
- Striving for clear language/openness
- Information: what happened?
- Discipline
- Collection of words, images
- Scores as document

Proposed by the Organizers of the Festival  
compiled by B. Kasson 17

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## CI and Radical Politics Lab

Participants: Anne Cooper Albright, Benno Enderlein, Brandon Gonzalez, Daniel Mang, Irene Sposetti, Kees Lemmens, Otto Akkanen, Trinidad Garcia Espinosa, Vanessa Grasse

5 minutes work on the floor with breath and imagery to get into our bodies and senses.

A round of introductions and sharing of motivations and interests

10 minutes in duets simultaneously dancing and talking further about our interests

Input by Daniel to frame the discussion:

- sketch of one way of interpreting the “political-economic arch” of the last 50 years or so, ideological effects of neoliberal hegemony, breaking of the neoliberal consensus since 2007
- Godfroy of Daniel’s position on ci and politics – not in and of itself productive of social change on a larger scale, desirable for ci to be combined with radical activism in various practical ways
- report on the Radical Contact gatherings

Open discussion, controversy on whether and in what way ci has social and political effects, on whether the practice is in and of itself “political” or should be combined with certain politics...

Daniel shares a practice of saying Yes, No and Modify verbally and nonverbally (could be vaguely classified as “Radical Contact material”), proposes to talk about the experience afterwards and evaluate this exercise in the light of critiques of Western approaches to consent and boundaries that rely on individualist notions of self.

Circle

Final round of talking and dancing simultaneously.

Lab at Freiburg TM Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
Facilitated by Daniel Mang

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## THE 'LETTING GO' LAB

Proposed by Barbara, as a wish to continue the theme that Laura proposed in 2016 (The Unimaginable) and 2015 (Not Knowing).

Laura proposed that the lab this year be called 'Letting Go' as the topic of letting go—of expectations of being a good dancer, judgements or pre-planning regarding what movements are made, or ideas about what contact improvisation is or should be— is how the topic was introduced.

Barbara shared a quote from Benoit: "The practice is letting go."

We danced for 20 minutes, talked, danced for 20 minutes and talked again.

A selection of statements that we decided on as a group to share as documentation:

*"Letting go doesn't mean expecting something new or unexpected to happen."*

*"How do we know when and if the unknown happens if we don't know it?"*

*"How do we know the difference between not knowing and being lost? Is there a difference?"*

*"It feels precious in this kind of Teacher's Meeting / CI environment, to create a space of allowance for questioning how we practice CI and how we can generate openness and permission without being vague."*

*"It is delicious to be reminded that physical lightness results from working with the idea of letting go."*

*"The permission to not affirm expectations opens up the door to joy and playfulness. Not knowing if a proposal will be affirmed or not creates a space of aliveness and curiosity, while inviting a kind of attention that feels safe - specifically because agreements are not assumed."*

*"Why don't I do this more often??"*

*"Maybe there is something that we are trying to build that we are not aware of - maybe it's a long term project that we are building in terms of finding a place of excitement to dance from. What are the values that we normally have in the forefront of our minds when dancing?"*

Participants: Laura H., Barbara, Mary, Bryce, Niklas, Laura D., Ezra, Stephanie, Georg, Jana, Cleo, Kees, Katja

Proposed by Barbara  
compiled by B. Kasson 17

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# PERFORMANCE MAKING

Site specific as a direct encounter to reality and people, reinventing and reinterpreting public spaces, bringing and allowing new dimensions to the daily life stages.

Collaborative Lab: Irene, Franck, Malaika elaborated as a discussion sharing

TM Lab  
Facilitated by Irene Sposetti

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Which are my interests in performance-making based on Improvisation, and eventually Contact Improvisation. As a dancer, choreographer, as a spectator. Which are the tools, processes and scores we use in performance-making, what do we look for, what touches me as doer or viewer.

## Interests and tools

Malaika: Playful scores, partly challenging to create a certain state of surprise, unexpectedness and alertness; awareness of musicality; being fascinated by your own process and composition; stillness; clear structures to avoid waffling during the improvisation.

Franck B: Sense of Time, that has an aesthetic in itself; the Arising of the dance; the encounter and collaboration process towards making a performance; site specific performances— sensory meeting with the space, the imagination that arises from this meeting, the affordances and memories of the space.

Irene: Clarity and simplicity in composing on stage; the balanced relation between expressivity, movement and narrative; the humanity and authenticity of the dancer; the capacity of triggering the evocative power of the dance.

## Physical Diversity— Concepts/ Terminology/Access

“Language around disability is different around Europe. Let’s look at terminology. How do people with disabilities feel about it?”

### Context

Jess’s background in aerial circus brought him to work with people with disabilities.

Historical/ Medical model of disability = referring and identifying people by their medical condition. I am not my medical condition.

More recently developed social model = no one is intrinsically disabled, we are disabled by society. The building of stairs ,disables‘ people who use wheelchairs.

### Talking about the uniqueness of the physicality:

“I am an artist with a disability”  
=Person First terminology

“I am a disabled artist”  
= Social Model =more political identity

“Disability doesn’t define me but it is a declaration of identity”  
= relevant political action/statement

### Terminology

When do we we write about disability – how do we do it? When and how is it appropriate?

### **Special Needs:**

patronising; historically ghettoization of children in school programs that groups cognitively and physically disabled persons into the ,special‘ classroom (in UK this relates to cognitive learning difficulties)

### **Handicap**

= historically it comes from hand and cup= begging = not a welcomed word

### **Mixed ability**

Still used in some cultures but generally frowned upon by activists as it presents hierarchy

### **Inclusive**

Reiterates a normative boundary. If you are ,including‘ someone you are intrinsically defining them as other.

### **Integrated**

Often used but still insinuates otherness.

### **Physical Diversity**

Jess finding this the most appropriate term. It includes many kinds of embodied diversity—gender, sexual preference, race, size.

### **Impairment**

medical definition of how one is inhibited by movement.

### **Invalid**

behindert (German) = ,obstructed‘

### **To be ,crippled‘**

is a historical pejorative. Word ,crip‘ being reclaimed as in ,crip theory,‘ ,crip studies.‘

### **Ableism**

(correlate of racism, sexism) everything is set up for a normative body, not being

aware that we are practicing and acting just for a particular able body = similar to sexism or racism

**‘Temporarily-Able-Bodied’ (TAB):**

One name for non-disabled people, coming from disabled theorists.

**Seeing the ‘beauty’ in diverse body in overcoming the ‘condition’:**

This relates to Inspiration porn = being inspired by ‘heroic’ person that overcomes a condition.

Tanzfaehig.de has resources about this language in a German context.

Who is choosing this terminology – often not people with disabilities. Why do we need identifiers? Useful when describing an event: class, symposium

‘people with diverse physicalities are welcome to attend this class’

Different words in different languages:

Spain: multi-funcionabilidad

IT: Diversamente abili and disabili

UK: Differently able, mixed abilities, learning difficulties (usually referring to cognitive difficulties)

What are the invisible impediments?

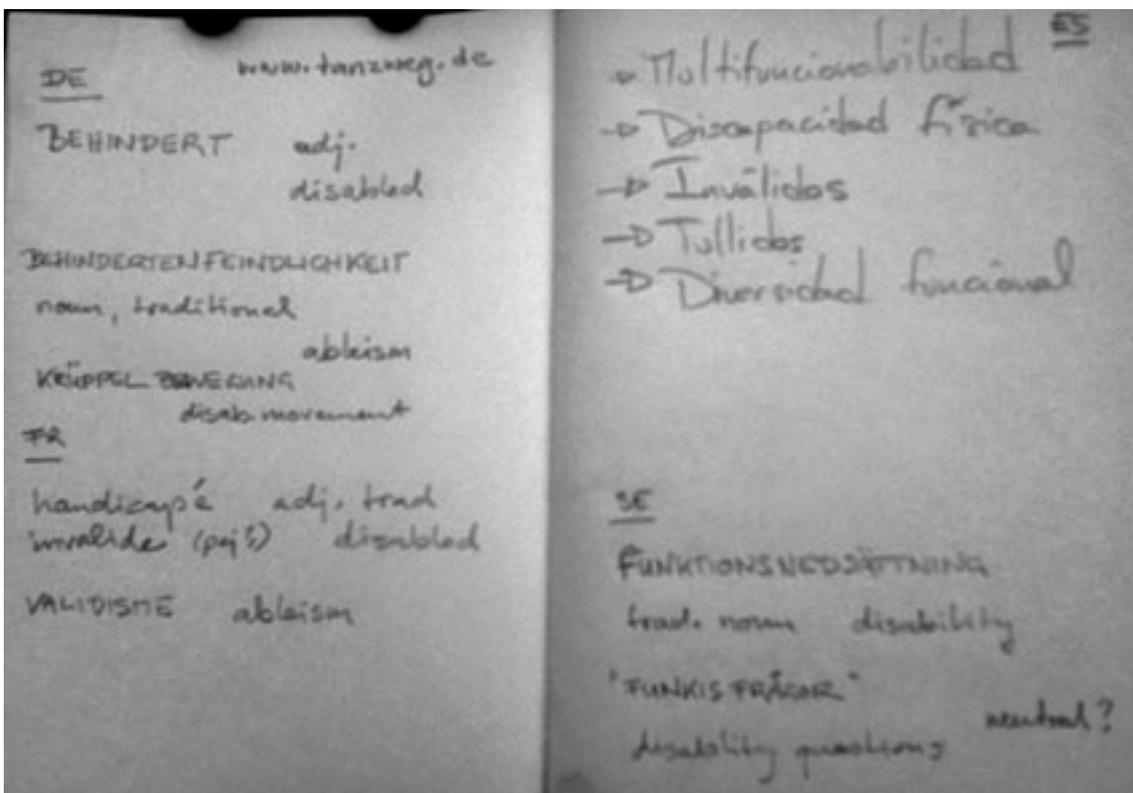
Example: Habit in CI to sit on the floor for a long time not accessible for some people.

Questions for Jess:

What are your interests, wishes in sharing this in this festival and the CI community?

Raising awareness ? J: How can we raise awareness in our world to encourage more accessibility?

Lab proposed and facilitated by Jess Curtis  
TM Festival 17





## CI and its set of Values, at a cross road of Cultures

Synthesis of the discussion, questions and answer of the participants

Irene : “An important aspect I have recently been observing and paying particular attention to, as a Western person who has been teaching and promoting contact improvisation in India and China for many years now, is the dynamic born of the meeting of these very different cultures, western and eastern, characterized by very different histories and socio-political realities.

I have been questioning then and researching more closely the specific set of ethical, social and political values that inform contact improvisation practice, its communities and institutions in the West. I am trying to understand how a western contact improvisation culture can relate to, be received and develop within Asian nations and cultures.

I believe that Contact improvisation is more than just a movement technique for dance. It comes with its own unique set of values and ideas seeded in its origins in the USA by the founders and further developed internationally over the years by a growing number of practitioners.

These values played a major role in the decision of the founders of contact improvisation not to codify and copyright the form, and to never seriously entertain the idea of official certifications and teacher trainings for this practice.

Other, related intentions and values informing contact improvisation, its communities and its practice, today, seem to be, as far as I can tell:

- A preference for non-hierarchical structures (or at least very flat hierarchies), for democratic and collective decision-making
- A preference for collaboration and co-creation in the organization of events
- A distaste for commercialization, open competition and aggressive marketing
- A wish to avoid categorization and discrimination of people based on race, class, gender, age, norms of ability and physical beauty, etc
- The intent of redefining touch and redrawing the map of the body, enabling a rediscovery of touch and intimacy beyond sexuality and the family nucleus
- Awareness of and care for the environment
- A preoccupation with physical, emotional and mental health
- An emphasis on individuality, independence and freedom of choice

I am curious and eager to continue to actively participate in this meeting of cultures, creating bridges between different needs, allowing dialogue, transformation and diversity to occur, as well as eventually encouraging worldwide connections, more exchange, unity and understanding between people of different cultures and backgrounds.”

How to facilitate this dialogue between cultures and transmit not just technical aspects of the dance but also values and intentions without dogmatism or imposition?

The participants are concerned about this issue by direct experience of traveling themselves and teaching in Asian countries. They are all confirming the existence of an articulated set of values belonging to CI culture.

A common suggestion is to include these themes in the teaching, speaking openly about values and ideas of the CI culture and communities, finding ways of exploring those themes in combination with the physical technical training.

Avoiding imposing solutions and modalities by suggesting options and ways common in western communities, avoiding defining and narrowing CI to only those options and possibilities.

Open the discussion to a larger network of practitioners and experienced facilitators by making eventually an article about this on CQ.

Discussion initiated and facilitated  
by Irene Sposetti, TM Festival 17

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„Embracing performance as a part of a CI jam“

## “Embracing performance as a part of a CI jam”

*moving on from the Gravity of Watching setup; when dancing in a CI jam, how does the decision to perform influence the dancing of my partner(s) and myself, both felt/seen from the inside and seen/felt from the outside?*

### a SHORT description:

In a CI jam, being watched by others (the watchers) as we are dancing, at one point my partner and I (the doers) verbally agree, that we are, from now on, performing. From then onwards, as we keep being watched, we continue our duet, now performing against the backdrop of the CI jam. All (doers and watchers) observe what, if any, change has taken place. When the performance is over, „what happened“

is stated verbally by those that wish to do so (doers or watchers), for about five minutes. Then the first part is repeated: the same couple dances, verbally agrees and performs again, with the same people watching. The end of this 2nd performance completes one cycle of the score.

Then, roles can change and the score repeats; or not, in which case we merge back with the jam. Supposedly, this practice is continued for several days. Appart from clarifying the score, the first discussion only happens after the practice has been going on for some time, giving space for settling into the score and clarification-by-doing...

### LOONGer description:

In a long lasting CI jam with numerous participants, we have those dancing and others looking at the dances. From the subjective perspective of a dancer, I assume (from observing myself and others) that my dancing is influenced by the awareness that I'm being watched. Their (watcher's)



eyes become my eyes too, as We (I+they) watch me and my partner(s) dance. The watchers are (consciously or not) aware of their influence/contribution on/to the dance, and accept the score by continuing to play this (watching-doing) game. It becomes a CI performance, where the performer is striving to stay present in a dance with no set future, moving in the reflexual; while dealing with the effects of being self-conscious; which (again from self-observation) could result in being slightly ahead of oneself, making plans to then execute them. The pauses, long durations, letting go are integral to the essence of the form of CI. In a performance, this is being challenged. \*\*\*

All of the above is one possible formulation of what is already happening in a CI jam. The proposal for this ongoing research is to stage this situation, inside of a jam. Below, I describe the score 1 and score 2.

{\*\*\* clearly, I write about my own approach to CI here; but I believe we don't have to agree on this, in order to perform, and learn from this score, together}

The above score could be thought of like sinking a colored balloon, filled with water, into water, and letting it float there. Or, to say it in yet another way: in a aquarium full of water, wrapping up a part of that water into a colored balloon, leave it floating there in the midst and see what is happening: to the water inside the balloon (seemingly a different color), outside the balloon, the aquarium.

### 1st version of the score

So: a duet is having a dance in a CI jam, knowing they are about to perform. For the moment though, they are „just dancing“. „Getting into it“. „Warming up.“ It might be late in the jam, and there might be

some people sitting around watching this particular dance. The dancing couple might become aware of their watching. Then, as they notice it's already happening; or as they become ready; they say to each other verbally, that they are now performing.

This recognition/agreement is the only new element this score brings to a CI jam.

What happens from there? What is felt from the inside? What change is perceived from the outside, against the backdrop of the ongoing jam, of dances „not being performed“? This is the 1st version of the score.

### 2nd version of the score

The 2nd score is slightly more contrived; here, the watchers are „staged“, and so are inside of the balloon. There are two advantages here: one, the attention of the audience is agreed upon and so will not wonder. This enables an outside feedback between the dances. And two, in this setup there is a third layer that could appear, that of the audience. Which is the jam participants watching the exchange/dance



of the (active) watchers and the dancers. Seeing the watchers as those that are „inside“, as active participants of the jam.

#### what needs to be said, as context:

- Improvised Performance is an ongoing question for me. So is the nature of CI. The goal of this research is to find ways/tools/vocabulary of performing CI, and performing improvisation, by creating for myself and my partners another focused platform to practice Contact, Improvisation, Performance.
- For me, a ticklish subject with CI is, has always been, that I don't know where it begins and where it ends. But I know CI has to do with Contact and is a part of Improvisation. This, to me, is a more familiar field.
- I've never performed CI. That is I've never performed CI exclusively, and under that title. Except in a regular CI jam.
- -'ve not done much homework in researching the (probably) myriad of papers that have been written on the subject. I'm approaching this as a naive (non) scholar, and as a dancer with some experience. I'm now trying to collect some CQ articles, reading and scanning them.
- it's often stated, that CI was developed out of a performance (Magnesium, Paxton, 1972). Is it not natural, that performance would be integrated into the major score in which CI is being practiced these days: the CI jam? To say it in another way: what stands in the way of calling a CI jam a performance jam? What interesting questions come up (about CI, about performance), when doing so?

- Seeing it broadly, if a CI jam is a platform, where we all agree to each do our own research, that staging (a) performance(s) like this but adds another element to the soup.

#### Some previous experience with this score:

For a short time (one jam) we've practiced the 2nd version of the above score at the BeJam in Bern, this June 2017:

Three watchers, two dancers. The dancers Do, until they are done. Then all meet for 5 mins, and what was observed is said, for 5 mins. There is no discussion, yet. Then the same couple dances again. Then the roles switch.

I won't state here (as I have in our online talk on 21.7.) what happened, not to mess with the openness of the experience to-be-had. What is useful to say though, is what will provide clarity to work on a common ground, while providing the liberty for an individual approach/experience.

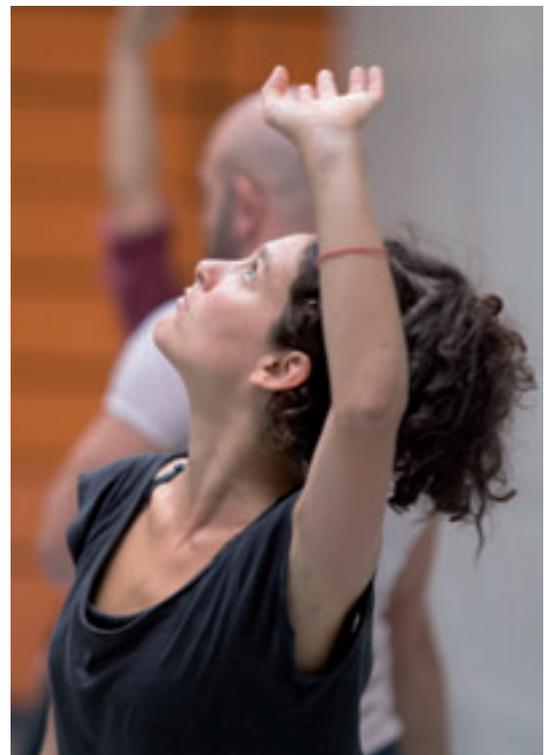
#### So:

- Performance is one-a-them Big words. It changes shape and color, depending on the mind that voices it. So prior to doing the score, we should at least agree, that our score should not disturb the jam any more than you would by your actions/behavior if you were NOT doing this score. In the basin, the water inside and outside the balloon is the same substance; it's the colored balloon that provides the perspective. It's still a CI jam.

- in the „do - talk - do again“ score, the tone of the verbal exchange is vital, since it will color the 2nd performance dance. This is not the time to critique, discuss, advise. For that, the score invites us to state „what happened“, making the personal/subjective experience/perception the focus.
- The score could be modified, and could evolve. Still, at least to start with the emphasis would not be on the talking, but on doing, and doing again. I'd say one or two cycles (2nd version of the score) in every jam; while the 1st version (less „staged“) version of the score can (and will/does) keep surfacing. Yet by naming, and focusing on (=creating a lab...) we make it more present.
- Writing all this is homework for me. Personally, I like to do the „homework“ before the event; creating a clear score, and a platform for exchange; to then give way for dancing, and exchange.

Watching Lab  
Facilitator Jurij Konjar

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## Open Lab

### Structure :

This is a Lab where you come having no clue on what will happen. The structure is made in a way that we catch emerging themes from a first dance and then gather and share our interests or ideas that popped up during the dance. Then we dance with the material we collected, without any process of choosing. We just have this „pool“ of material as a start. After the second dance we share again, and collect material. And so on.

Timing : 20min dancing / around 20 min sharing / 20min dancing / around 20 min sharing

### Experience :

As the structure was announced at the entrance of the studio, we didn't speak first but got directly into the dancing, each person joining as she arrived. We worked a lot with what is already there (almost as an In situ process) : The size of the (very big) studio, the lines, the ways to get out of the space, the light... multiples parameters of the spaces. Quite minimalistic experience.

### The report :

At the end, we verbally put different material into the pool from our various experiences. We then decided to create a kind of Dada text, or collage of our impressions, an 'exquisite corpse' where each person writes the next line without seeing the previous lines.

### Extra notes for the Unknown Lab from Cleo:

- looking at 'What is ending' and 'what is beginning' at any moment
- in the dancing, changing the timing (for instance, go slower) to be in the unknown
- not to predetermine my "zone" of unknown
- what are the limits of the letting go? (politeness, safety...)
- not to say NO to what I recognize, but to say YES to something else—so letting that something else come
- "Twist the way of decision. Shift and track something to engage aliveness."

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Facilitator Cleo Laigret

## Tried & True: Teaching Lab

We agreed to use the Tried & True structure to address several themes that we wanted input on. In Tried & True, teachers form a standing circle and offer examples of different exercises / solutions to address a theme. The teacher offering the exercise goes into the centre of the circle and may ask for an assistant to help them demonstrate.

### Topic 1: strategies for staying warm while teaching

All: move around while teaching, stay in your body, move while watching carefully

Ann Cooper Albright (ACA): show a lift but only halfway – then explain that it could go higher if.... there was more momentum, pelvis, etc

Maga: beginning of class prepare from the floor – warm-up the core

Muriel: I use the image of moving silently, like a cat, on the outside of the studio, to keep silent in my movement

Malaika: self-massage and walking as a strategy for staying warm, and also for starting the class—like a circle of foot massage

### Topic 2: how to teach mixed levels

Jana: I like walking exercises, walking scores. We are walking through the space and filling it all evenly, and going through each pair of people like going through a

gate. And as the group does this the gates get more and more narrow. You can make a pleasant touch with people as you pass them by.

Richard: Deliver the material in bitesize chunks. Like the exercise with one person standing in the middle between two partners who touch him on chest and back, with their arms extended. The middle partner gently falls forward and back ward, keeping ankles soft. Then he does the same thing with the partners' hands from farther away, then the same thing with eyes closed.

ACA. One of the things with mixed classes is a lot of people don't know how to roll on the floor – so I like to teach rolling from sitting back to back, and then into rolling on one another (MST note: I call this 'surfing'). I call it the red carpet treatment, to extend the leg that's closest to your partner by take this leg back under the partner.

Nita: I like to get people to work with the principle at their own level. I generally ask who are the teachers and invite them to help people who are at a newer level. I generally teach at the advanced level and let the newbies be guided by those who are more experienced.

Vanessa: I always try to keep my practice to reach the advanced level. I offer a led exploration for a long time before finally bringing in a structured exercise. Explore a principle with yourself on the floor, then with a partner. For example, the principle of pouring the weight on the floor and peeling away (in solo) and then doing the same thing with a partner.

Nita: I generally move in the direction of something I don't know – or something I'm curious about but don't fully know yet-- e.g. the principle of calling and sending

someone, – or listening to the low tone within the muscle—finding the low tone underneath the higher tone and working with that. Or at a more advanced level, giving one percent of your weight and 100% of your commitment to fall.

Filip: It's important to think about a strategy to communicate your exercise. I like to say:  
Make impossible possible.  
Make possible easy.  
Make easy pleasurable.  
Make pleasurable elegant.

Vanessa: I like to introduce eye contact, and a contact dance with the gaze. Before we enter into touch there is this human communication which can change.

### Topic 3: spirals and momentum

Ivan: I imagine and feel the invisible spirals in the space, and invite these to spiral me – to move my inner spirals. Thinking about spirals inside and outside, but multidirectional perception. I'm rolling but I'm also leaving something in another direction—because a spiral is infinite.

Jana: Eyes help a lot, so if I'm looking around I'm also already spiraling.

Vanessa: I like to have them close their eyes and then I put pasta in their hands-- fusilli pasta. It makes them smile as they study the spiral with their eyes closed.



ACA: I like to sit back to back, and practice spiral reaching, (one down, one up) into surfing. It's great to encourage people to use the back space. You can use the eyes, also, to initiate.

Ivan: You can find spirals in bodywork. Then in movement, see what happens if A twists B gently (e.g. on the wrist), and B has to follow that.

Muriel: Go into a counterbalance with both hands, and one person goes down. Then let go of one hand and the bottom person releases completely—watch what happens. This is a good way to invite people not to become too toned when finding the spin motion on the ground.

Ivan: I like to say we can lab about what Spinoza said: What can a body do? What can two points do in a meeting? We can slide, roll, we can get out of contact. One point still and the other rolling, See what this can trigger in exercises.

Vanessa: I like to use this principle of drawing and sending. Like Charlie Morrissey's exercise of drawing someone, so two stand facing each other, and begin walking forward and backward—feeling the draw of the other's centre in the change of direction, (in corridors along the room), and let this speed up, so they really start to feel the momentum. And then, just as you are going backward you extend an arm, and then they support you as you sink down, and then they can pull you up. And you can let this take you into the counterbalance



spin-on-your-butt motion, as well. Or the down person can take the up person onto their feet!

ACA: Yes, so for momentum, you can really throw someone from your feet, so A is flying on B's feet, and B throws A, and A goes straight to floor to become a base for B. The key is not to add little steps in between, just go straight from one to the other.

Richard: I like to talk about this principle from a Japanese martial art called masubi – which is a mutual sword contact made through the lower arms, for example, where both are pouring weight mutually together, and then if one person takes that weight away, you immediately create momentum.

Vanessa: I like to teach momentum with a pendulum image – simple step forward and then step back to centre. Then that introduces the surfing board, surfing the waves, like you're on a surfboard, and then tipping forward into the watering can image (spine extends and leg behind balances). Watering can image—you can tip yourself and water someone else.

Malaika: I learned a great exercise recently of how to work with momentum. In trios: one person gets pushed from partner to partner, like a 'ball'. The task of the 'ball' is just to go with the push, not to add or subtract momentum / force / energy. Then the partner in the center, the 'ball' can close eyes. The movers and cushions can redirect the mover (the 'ball') using their arms, to catch and send them, or to catch the arms by swinging them around. A circle of dancers can also bounce the ball around between them.

ACA and Richard add that: as the 'ball' you can also take your pelvis down and a little bit up when you come into the partners

on the side – this becomes an undercurve that can turn into a lift by the redirectors / catchers / senders.

Maga Radlowska, Ann Cooper Albright, Muriel, Nita Little, Susanne Martin, Jana Bitterova, Vanessa Grasse, Richard Sarco-Thomas, Filip Wencki, Ivan Vendemiatti, Malaika Sarco-Thomas (scribe)

8<sup>th</sup> of August 17

Malaika Sarco-Thomas as facilitator / scribe





## Short Verbal Lab Reports notes:

### SciFi lab 2 = time travel ten years into the future.

Met another something with touch that we have never explored before. Also explored our own body that was unknown to us, and we came together and explored together living for ten years together, getting all the knowledge that we could get from being together.

### Physical diversity Vocabulary – Jess Curtis’ lab

Handicap is an unwelcome term: comes from cap in hand – looking for handouts. Inclusive, Mixed ability – these terms still insinuate difference and marginalization. Cripple is becoming reclaimed—comes from the crypt—like ‘queer’

### From touch to space:

We were practicing:  
Recognising the space between touches as a continuum  
Imagining the body is empty and is informed by all the touches of things from outside it.

### Asaf’s research lab:

Proposed scores for study  
Instrumentation for quantitative study  
Qualitative studies are being conducted with an interview technique called microphenomenology. E.g. having two people lean into one another and looking at the work used to describe that.

### Alice Godfroy

Low res MA programme in Nice on improvisation – going there for specific workshops over a 2 yr low-residency masters.

- More about performance as research,
- Applied improvisation
- History of improvisation
- Performance Improvisation.

ACA: There needs to be an argument that improvisation is a series of skills that are really important for surviving in this world, rather than a giving up of skill.

### Documentation of dance, lab from Ester.

Set up as  
10 min alone with the lab notes. 15 min with a partner. 15 min with the group.  
The curious space score, from Eszter:

- Being Alone.
- Being with a partner.
- Being with the group.

### Irene’s lab about ethics of CI

Irene’s been working in institutions in universities, in China: neoliberal, hierarchical, etc. CI is developed and owned by local communities—a push to start making the practice theirs. And there is a push toward commercialization of this there—how do I express and encourage these principles?  
CI is not divided—it is a whole of skills, ideas, and concepts that can be enhanced in teaching.

Sharing 9 August  
scribe by Malaika Sarco-Thomas







**10x5**

## 10x5 Monday

### Defne and Eszter

Introducing Mind the Dance, a digital publication on inspiring dance teachers and others to document their work. Brief overview of the IDOCDE / LEAP/ REFLEX Europe projects and the idocde.net site. Content and researchers.

### Trinidad

stickers for „Dance Here“ project

### Kees Lemmens

Asks: Who teaches technique?

What are skills: anything that expands your capacity to make choices physical and mental attention?

how to support?

how not to injure yourself?

coordination?

What is dance apart from technique?

Communication, expression, investigation, curiosity, playfulness and imagination, an expression of vitality, collaboration, de-conditioning, conditioning, creativity, research, a human right, perception & walking, collaboration, a perspective, joy, a freedom of spirit, performance

What is a teacher?

What is the relation of teacher/student?

Do you have an objective/purpose in your teaching?



### Bryce Kasson

(from Cologne / Koln)

Two things that (are annoying!!) challenging to me:

1. culture of warmups at the start of a jam that unify everyone
2. people plugging their phone in and playing music throughout the jam

### Melissa Garcia

from Uruguay is working to start a university-recognised dance programme. Wants to create exchanges with other universities to teach. Invites support for this. The program is free, and there is no entry requirement to join!

### Christina Turdo

From Argentina. Wanted to share what is happening in the political level there in Latin America. Argentina. In the transition between dictatorship and neoliberal governments we have achieved human rights and political awareness. I have a project called expanding borders through inter-exchange between cultures. Brazil, Uruguay and Chile have strong CI communities, so there is a big network of support. Habitat is a project that brings about manifestations / protests in the streets. Teachers and students were protesting through a whole week, dancing CI in the streets, visual artists, etc. So I wanted to remind that all that is happening is not always communicated by the media. Media are not reporting the truth. And I think CI has lots of potential in these situations.

### Ezra LeBank

is inviting conversations about:

Dealing with injury in sacroiliac joint – physical emotional spiritually difficult. Wants to have conversations about injury – and invisible injuries.

Is comfortable talking about money – so talk to him about that.

Feels that people have something against him – so

### Laura Doehler:

Talking about STP (Shared Training Practice, London, hosted by Exit Map) which offers a space and a set time frame for personal training alongside other movement practitioners. A loose spacial arrangement governed by set timings make up the skeleton of the sessions to facilitate inquiries into ones training and propose that observing movement and its intuitive curiosity can be considered a training. The talk meandered across the different side effects that happen such as ,cross-influence of interests and development, fixed inquiries versus fluid streaming, management and regularity. Laura said she would love to see this format being taken and established in other places. Here is more info: Shared Training <https://exitmap.wordpress.com/training/>

### Nita Little

Has been developing an institute for the study of somatic communication. Comprised of dance ensembles with skills in improvisation and ci. Each institute is called a collaborator – each one of them is a research body, studying somatic communication. How is it that each one of us communicate across spaces, bodies, with the human and the nonhuman?

The purpose is to gain expertise in somatic communication. I'm curious what this gift is, here, before we replace all our parts with machines—what is this singular, multiple gift that crosses across singularities and multiplicities. How can this serve cultural appreciation. Berlin, Seattle, Gainesville Florida, Bristol, Sao Paulo, Auckland, France. How can we train for performance and investigation. Collaboration with science, anthropologists, etc.

### Franck Beaubois

from France: Has had an experience with autistic kids. Has been working for 6 years in an institute for this. How to have a common experience. How to relate, how to survive. Simple things: if we are all going slowly, if we are all breathing together, we can see that it has consequences. Lastly we had an experience with parents, brother and sisters. Carolina Droler from Madrid said she has been involved in making a programme of Art for Everyone, each school chose a theme of improvising with objects, especially fabrics was really helpful to create dance and improvisation.

notes from Eszter Gal,  
10x5, TM 9<sup>th</sup> of August, 2017

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Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> of August, TM 2017





**LISTS OF THEMES AND TOPICS**

## Teachers' Meeting LABS/enters 2017

- **Healing Transformation**  
Sabine Sonnenschein (no report)
- **From Touch to Space**  
Kees Lemmens (no report)

TM 2017  
Report from Barbara Stahlberger

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## List of Topics

### One possible recap of the topics given by the teachers

- Discussion  
Ci and its set of values ethical human  
and political  
political corner - Ci a current politics  
of division
- Bodywork  
somatics, release, imagination, fascia,  
therapy
- CI & words  
language - writing, talking, teaching
- Bigger groups  
Jam, underscore(s), ensemble,  
Scores
- Special need groups  
physical/sensory diversity, injury

### More Topics:

- Absence of Effort
- Outdoor
- Mindfulness - Zen & Improvisation
- Performance presence
- (My) greatest Failures? The  
impossibility of teaching  
improvisation.
- Scholarly research
- Therapy, self reflexivity of the teacher  
emotions
- CI and Ideology

proposed by the TM-Facilitators 17  
Eszter Gal, Peter Pleyer

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TO CONTINUE...