

Report on the residency from Gisela Müller and Gebrüder Teichmann

27.11. - 09.12.2021 @ Grabo Studio + Trafo Studio, Workshop Foundation Budapest

### **Short Report:**

Our residency in Budapest was the first part of a three-part research phase, with the aim of exploring new forms of simultaneity and equality of music and dance, sound and movement in space. Based on an open and playful approach, we engaged in the work with concrete spaces and their environments. Starting from empty space, using two portable tape recorders and our bodies. The reduction of the setup was a conscious decision to be able to concentrate on the essentials of our question.

With the cassette recorder, sounds and movements can be recorded acoustically and played back with a time delay, as auditory memories. The recording and the playback can be positioned, changed and set in motion at different places in the room. Through the directness of the medium and its operation, the process becomes visible and comprehensible, even for outsiders.

We began our daily rehearsals with 1-2 hour awareness warmups. The goal was to sharpen both physical and acoustic perception. At the end of each day, we recorded individual impressions of the day on video in a feedback session. With the experiences of the previous day, we prepared specific tasks for the next day.

During two days we had the choreographer and dancer Eszter Gál as a guest. She accompanied us during the process and gave very differentiated and helpful feedback. An open rehearsal was scheduled for the conclusion of the work phase. Initially intended as an open rehearsal, by the end of the residency we were already able to perform a half-hour score. A surprise for us, since we never had the goal to work on a piece.

The responses of the guests, who all came from a dance background, gave us confidence in our decision to reduce the focus towards movement and sound. Even so that approach went away from classical concepts of what is dance and what is music, it gave space to recreate musicality and dance as a direct performative intersection. This opened the door for an inspiring discussion and it was exciting to hear about the different perspectives of perception of the audience.

### **A sort of diary:**

27 November 2021 9.15 am Berlin Central Station: We board the train to Budapest. A long journey lies ahead of us of 10 hours through different countries / Czech Republic / Slovakia / entering Hungary and finally arriving in Budapest. When we were preparing the residency, we had decided that the train journey would be the beginning of our work. It has been quite a while since we could share space and time together due to the pandemic situation.

First day of rehearsals. 10.00 We meet Katalin in front of the Grabo building, where the Workshop Foundation has its offices and studios. Katalin gives us a guided tour of the building and we get to know the place. What a great place, especially the café with its fantastic food. A feeling of home, or rather, a place that could become a home. We start our

rehearsal in the studio with a long somatic warm up and then start walking around the studio. Out of the walking, all three of us at once stand leaning against the wall next to each other and become aware of the sound of the clock that is hanging above the door on the opposite side. What a moment of coming together. Without having planned it, we simultaneously change focus to listening and are aware of this special moment.

We go back to walking and concentrate on hearing and seeing. It feels so familiar. Walking is our practice - walking and talking, walking and hearing, walking and seeing, walking and playing with the different spatial relationships.....In walking comes the memory of the countless previous times and it brings us together. This practice is our home base from which we leave for other spaces, tasks and explorations.

Later during the rehearsal, the three of us stand in front of the window all at once and watch a woman working in the kitchen in the house opposite. We notice how much you know / hear the sounds she makes without actually hearing them. And at the same time, how familiar one is with the movements she is executing. The automatism of the actions / movements that you don't have to think about. Watching this scene is like watching a performance without sound, but you still hear the sounds.

During the next round of walking, we recognize a lot of sounds from outside of the building, like cars, bikes etc. and realize that these sounds are connecting us with the woman in her kitchen and all the other people in the neighbourhood, as everybody is hearing it simultaneously through walls and windows.

Sound connects us all while movement can only be perceived by the ones watching. While watching you have a choice what you are looking at or how you direct the focus. With sound there is no choice. We all hear it. It is more of a common experience.

How can we work and use these two aspects in our work / research?

The next day we are arriving late to Trafo Studio. Having searched for a good coffee place, and needed to find our way and orientation. Not knowing yet what the best way is from our house to Trafo. Katalin was waiting. Trafo - a very different space - a theatre place. Different atmosphere than Grabo. Feels a bit more sterile. Studio has a different size and a much more muted acoustic. A sense of being more closed into a space in comparison to Grabo studio where the outside, in terms of sounds, is present in the room. A new challenge - a new space.

In the following days we found objects / items to play with. Two Ikea stools and a heavy square wheeled case. They all produce amazing sounds when you move them. By playing with the objects, the physicality is brought together with the sound. There is no separation anymore, whether you focus on the movement composition or the sound composition. Both the sound and the movement are constantly present. In addition, these objects solved a recurring problem of how we can use the centre of the space while creating sounds. Previously, we had often worked on the edges of the room, playing with the radiators, walls, curtains, windows, etc., while the centre was reserved for movement and mostly empty. Now we could play the whole space, which gave us much more possibilities. On the other hand: now it was not only us in the room. but the three of us together with 5 other objects (2 stools, 1 wheeled case, 2 recorders). They came into the picture with us and the question

of: How do we behave not only among ourselves but also in relation to these objects and ourselves?

The last days: In the days before, we had developed a very deep, somatic physical warm-up, revisiting it continuously, which - we noticed - always put us in a similar mood. We began to wonder if this sequence of starting the daily rehearsals in a similar way would affect the way we worked with the sound afterwards too much. We were unhappy with the music we were creating and really needed to focus more on musicality and sound composition. So the following day we started the rehearsal by playing with the studio for quite a while, focusing only on creating sound and music. This was such a liberation and a great discovery. We found so many (new) objects and possibilities with which to create such different and unexpected sounds. After this experience, we felt that our awareness of the musical and performance aspect of our work was much more heightened. We felt a balance and it became much easier and more playful to shift the focus from sound to movement, from creating music to playing with physicality, in space, between us and the objects.

