

— — SILLAGES — —

Research project



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Memo

While strolling through Montpellier one day, where I was studying for my “Exerce” Masters, I started thinking how I could bring my corporal practice out of the studio and into new horizons.

My initial intuition led me to identify two strata of the living – earth and skin - in which I sought to immerse myself, both physically and artistically. I chose two very different contexts to observe the two elements; for skin, a nursing home for senior citizens and for earth, a vineyard.

Today, it seems necessary to describe the link between earth and skin, and I aspire to hear/understand how the two elements communicate in apparently very different contexts. I wish to question the poetic space between working the earth and the work of time on the skin: traces of past toil on present-day bodies. I try to weave links between labouring and furrows, agriculture and memories, while digging up analogies and observing the emergence of narrative, interlacing anatomical, geographical and poetic imaginaries. Stories are expressed in word, image and movement.

I am particularly interested in women. Several eco-feminist readings have supported me in this, providing a critical stance on our relationship with the environment, notably thanks to the notion of distancing, developed in Starhawk's work, "Dreaming of the obscure ". Indeed, the distance between a stakeholder and their capacity to act on their environment, the "power over" lands and bodies, the inherited separation between systems of production and reproduction, and female menstruation as a basis for maintaining the cycle of human life, are all themes that allow us to reflect on the dynamics and intertwined relationships of power and control or, on the contrary, to just let go of what surrounds us, starting with our own skin.

Both in the nursing home and the vineyards, observation of the living through the holistic layers of skin and earth have raised several vital questions: particularly on the role of chemistry (Preciado 2018, Testo Junkie), so present in these two environments, with drugs on the one hand and pesticides/fungicides on the other, transforming our relationship with life and death (longevity, disease, care, etc). Also, the importance of women in these two environments: as dominant gender group in nursing homes, women inadvertently become eye-witnesses of the death of those around them, and in the vineyards through the ever-increasing numbers of women choosing this profession, and finding a new role for themselves, beyond that of just being the winemaker's wife, as in the past.

walking and being walked

listening to tales of life and work

observing earth and skin through touch

adventuring into the furrows of age,

into the furrows of time

which the living keep in their memory

Constructions of the environment

The research field - earth and skin - vineyards and nursing home - itself, imposes new dynamics. With the winemakers, a rural adventure opens up, a movement of expansion, something nomadic: I set off to meet agricultural land and those that live and work on it, far away from the urban area.

With the old ladies, their bodies at the end of life, a gentle movement of convergence is essential. I settle at the centre of the common environment of my correspondents. The movement is inward and intimate, a moment of sharing with four eyes and four hands. This settled atmosphere generates dialogue with the elderly ladies on past work and activities... both as a woman and as players at a certain point in history up to the first part of the 20th century: women who have known war and were born without the right to vote. The skin of their hands tells many bygone stories, stories of family, work, geography, love, health...

I lead the investigation into these environments, equipped with ethnographic tools in order to stay connected and capture moods. During our first meeting, I reveal my research objectives and artistic interests, and explain what brings me here. A space of work is gradually built between us, into which I introduce different elements: questions, a text, the drawing of a diagram. These elements must resonate between our two bodies, which is why the initial interview often takes on a "life story" format, and can evolve into a body interview, where touch will be the main tool used during future visits.



Tools for research

The initial aim was to investigate how I could, with my knowledge and training of the body, dance and Shiatsu, meet an environment in a sensitive manner.

For my research, I use several tools that I had already used during my choreographic exploration projects, thanks to practice on fasciae in particular, inspired by my Shiatsu training. Shiatsu is a Japanese skincare practice inspired by traditional Chinese medicine, which uses touch as the primary means of restoring energy harmony to a body.

In addition to these corporal tools, I use different methods from such ethnographic practices, as the interview.

I use the same ethno-choreographic tools to search for information in both environments – those of old vines and old ladies - but constantly adapted according to encounters and circumstances.



2. BODY INTERVIEW

Using this tool, I observe how physical work and the environment act on and transform the body. I use touch and my Shiatsu knowledge to map the body and discover the effects of activity - mostly physical, but I also take into account the individual in a holistic way - on the body. It is a passage from the vertical position, or work and activity mode, towards a horizontal position, that of rest, whereby access to other forms of feeling, more interior and subtle, is facilitated.

During my meetings at the nursing home, the physical interview focused more specifically on hands and forearms. With the winemakers, I began by the back and went on to explore the entire body.



1. CARTOGRAPHY OF THE ENVIRONMENT (thanks to activation of fasciae)

Between the environment and the drawing hand, is a body, which acts as a mediator or sensor of the sensitive, thanks to its network of fasciae.

This vibrating network is imagined as a spider's web, a collagen network, limited not only to the body's surface, but also able to both expand and retract; this makes it possible to explore and collect information from invisible spaces, far away, hidden beneath the surface of earth and skin.

Each environment produces its own unique map.

3. REPORT FROM MY VISITS

Like a travel log, I postmark the highlights of my research "walk". This includes stories, things which surprised and moved me, details which I do not want to forget, all noted in chronological order. A new way of writing directly within the different environments is currently being tested.



Research needs for 2020

On the one hand, I want to pursue collection of information in environments related to earth and skin, while continuing to use given ethno-choreographic tools.

I also wish to continue weaving the earth-skin link, while exploring ever more artistic-poetic-scientific entanglements, and taking time to listen to the materials and analyse them. This phase was skirted over during the first three weeks of research, offering avenues for further, more in-depth exploration. For this, I am looking for host sites in order to pursue what I call "the cellar and fermentation process".

Thirdly, I would like to work on sharing my research. This has so far taken the format of a small paper edition with a reading-performance, supporting the assembly potential of materials collected.

Each of these three stages can be worked on independently or jointly, according to the possibilities and inclinations of host sites.

Biographies

Project leader

Eve Chariatte, born in 1986 in Jura, Switzerland, is an independent dancer and choreographer. She first studied classical dance at the Rudra Béjart school-workshop in Lausanne before obtaining a Bachelor's degree in contemporary dance at SEAD (Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance) in Austria. Following her initial studies, she began her professional life by working in collaboration with artists from various artistic horizons, creating performances which then toured several European countries (Austria, Germany, Norway, France and Switzerland), while co-directing multidisciplinary artist residencies (FAC, STAMM studio). Her origins mark her artistic career and influence her attention to the transformation of earth and body through work. Her encounter with Shiatsu brings another dimension to her research, and today, Eve brings together somatic practice, dance and choreography, as well as writing, cartographies and rough sketching. She has just completed the EXERCE Master at CCN Montpellier, in partnership with Paul-Valéry University.

Scientific and methodological staff member

Joanne Clavel is a research fellow at the CNRS, in the Laboratory LADYSS at Paris University.

She worked at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris for almost ten years, studying the impact of global changes (climate, land use) on biodiversity. Following studies in dance at Paris 8 University, aesthetic mediation at ULG in Belgium and environmental humanities at UC Berkeley, her work today is focused on the environmental humanities - art, aesthetics and politics.

The modern-day ecocide demands radical changes in human lifestyle and disrupts the place of the artist in society. Joanne investigates the development of an ecological "lifestyle", in the world of contemporary dance and somatic practice, but also with farmers and nature lovers.

Visual and sound operator

Born in 1988, Vera Trachsel is of Ticino-Emmental origin. She trained at Bern Arts School. She works with different media such as drawing, painting and objects, exploring the interfaces between these media. Her practice, very experimental, describes everyday life. She regularly participates in various group exhibitions, notably at the PasquArt Centre, Biel, Lugano and Zürich, and has presented solo projects at Lokal-Int, Bienne and the Passage in Soleure. Regularly invited in artist residencies, she attended the FAC (St-Ursanne), and Porrentruy in the Swiss Alps, for the Artists as Tourists project, in Soleure or in Bern. Self-publisher of her own works, she produced the catalogue of the exhibition "Che c'è di nuovo?" She currently lives and works in Biel.

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