

CHOREOGRAPHIC TURN #1 – ENGLISH SUBTITLES

INTRODUCTION

Dear spectators of contemporary dance, dear artists, cultural workers in the field of contemporary dance,

It is here that our manifesto, the manifesto of the Choreographic Turn, should speak, however, it may be more appropriate for this initial statement to be announced in the form of a letter.

As though everything in the field of contemporary dance has not been bad enough during the last decade, in 2020 a pandemic visited us as well. In an instant, all the basic conditions that make our work possible were eliminated. Contemporary dance practices are largely based on the possibility of bodies to touch each other, lean against each other, convert potential energy into kinetic energy, and provide a continuous flow to movement. Not only because bodies should signify in a choreographic, artistic sense, but also in order to understand their relationships in other senses, perhaps in the interdependence that Franco Berardi Bifo argues is a condition of human solidarity, a solidarity that cannot be unconscious of us as bodies.

We devised Choreographic Turns before we found out about the pandemic. Each edition of Choreographic Turn should take place live, in situations where the weights of bodies are not converted into digital information, and thus stretched. We are now forced to carry out their first editions online, under conditions and circumstances that will transform contemporary dance primarily and solely into optical data. When we watch dance live, optical data are not the only thing that constructs our perception. In the future, as viewers, we will endeavour to receive all the information which makes up our kinesthetic perception.

Choreographic Turn is based on the belief that for the development of creativity as well as production in the field of contemporary dance, we need an insight into its creation, construction, and production, not only an insight into the results of this process, into products. At the same time, we need an insight into the full spectrum of what contemporary dance work means and represents nowadays. Namely, it is about an entire array of studio, creative, a whole range of different procedural practices that produce very different dance aesthetics, attitudes, and viewpoints, as well as also very different discursive practices, from theory, history, production, pedagogy, curation, etc. We would like to provide all this with a voice, within Choreographic Turn, in the form of short presentation formats, with which we wish to co-create a new public space as a space for a multitude of different views and perceptions that can communicate with each other.

The individual parts of Choreographic Turns will be included in collections of perspectives and tools that creators will share, because none of us has created our work completely alone, rather, it is always the product of very different learning processes in which many participate. They will be archived and accessible online. With this, we want to enrich our creative processes and place them in relationships. Choreographic Turns will be exhibitions of problems, creative puzzles, and solutions, as well as

collections of tools for reading and receiving that will enable viewers to have a more complex relationship with various aspects of dance works. Individual editions of Choreographic Turn will never be complete, ultimate, or finished units, but a configuration of different individualities open to further development.

Choreographic Turn #1, devised and curated by Jasmina Založnik and Rok Vevar, deals with the relationships between choreographic work, language, and problems of dance terminology. All in all, it testifies to how language is always a constitutive part of thinking and conceptualizing contemporary dance works. Even though perhaps not everything in contemporary dance gets a name, language is always part of the creation. And bodies. In the middle of the 20th century, some artists put language in the place of the choreographer precisely in order to expand the range of creative contributions to contemporary dance authorship and save it from the choreographer's individual psychological investments. The practical tasks, which they designed with language, were able to be understood by the participants in their own way. Suddenly, there was no volition to decide for them whether they had solved the tasks successfully or not. This fact has radically changed the way of artistic creation in the field of contemporary dance. The devisors of the first Choreographic Turn set this as their starting point.

Choreographic Turns are produced by Nomad Dance Academy Slovenia. With Jasmina, I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart all the participants for their contributions and understanding of our initiative. Among other things, this is because we at NDA SLO are convinced that all of us who make up the local and regional contemporary dance community must strive to strengthen it. In addition to individual works, we always co-create the context, the contemporary dance public, consisting of artists, cultural workers, and our audiences. Together, we must be always improving the quality of our various competencies, and we can help each other with that.

Andreja Rauch Podrzavnik, WHAT I CARRY WITH ME :

A: I am Andreja Rauch Podrzavnik, choreographer, and you are watching recordings of rehearsals for the project *What I Carry With Me*. After some deliberation, I decided to show a montage of footage from several different rehearsals, showing several phases of the originally planned scene. In movement, in dance itself, I like to play with the use of the everyday, let's say *raw* movement on the one hand, and its execution in a stylized version, on the other. It's a kind of opening of the door into dance. At the same time, I am interested in juxtaposing the media of dance and text. In principle, the movement and the word are combined, they come in a set. But when you start manipulating the movement, when you start structuring it into dance, then the word sometimes appears as if it's from another planet. At that point, I

like to focus on finding passages, looking for some specific door, an opening, a crack which will basically make possible this transition from one medium to another, in a meaningful and poetic way.

The source for the material comes from us, that is, from me, it originates from me and then I invite co-workers into this process. Some of this content can be extremely banal, some of it quite mundane, seemingly insignificant information, which I then carry out as a kind of metaphor for a broader, perhaps even deeper meaning. Others are already a song in themselves.

We are working with a bunch of records that are relatively intimate, although at the same time they are essentially such that they could be part of the experience of almost every adult.

We all know the experience of remembering something, we all know what it's like to think about something, to doubt yourself, and so on.

I then shape the contents of our records into a movement score, which we then perform into some physical situation, into mise-en-scène, which presents the content in another way and gives it a wider space, another boundary, another perspective, and acts as a poetic commentary.

Anja Bornšek, Barbara Kanc, Tina Valentan, FLYING EYES :

T.: Hello, here with you are the authors of the delicate performance *Flying Eyes* - Anja Bornšek, Barbara Kanc and Tina Valentan. It was premiered at Kino Šiška at the end of September 2020. In this conversation, we will share with you a key principle of our work, the one which we think has most marked us.

A.: First of all, I have to mention that with the first tasks we set for ourselves, we actually started with the word "resonance". This was the first principle for entering the work environment, for our research.

In fact, we spent time in selected locations in nature, gave ourselves time and talked about exploring the resonances between our bodies, between spaces, resonances with the environment, and then in the studio we started assigning ourselves somatic tasks. We analysed the cell, we did some improvisations around embodying the principles of cellular fluids, membranes, and so the cell came in as an idea. This resonance and the exploration of the cell gradually transformed into the idea of 'grazing', as we collectively named this way of being, a way of being present, a way of listening and feeling. It's about the processuality between perception and reaction. For me, for example, grazing is exactly this specific time arc that happens between when I perceive something and the moment I actually respond to it, refer to it, whether I fulfill it or not, in this or some other way... For me, grazing is a state of presence, but also a space from which I act, or above all a space from which I listen even before I act. Maybe grazing, for me, is also a specific, very cellular state of presence, in the sense of really being present in the moment, really being there, trying to perceive as much as possible. At the same time, you are aware that you can immediately close a certain perception by reacting too quickly, but even if you do not react to something, if you do not establish a relationship, you also ignore the presence of something... So, in fact, for me grazing is a kind of exploration of the thin line between being active and listening.

T.: For me, grazing is the absorption of content, vibration, energy, the materiality of the environment in which I find myself. I open my body so that all this can enter and begin to inform it. That is, I do not try to interfere with the environment with my will, idea, my creation, with some predetermined purpose, but I allow myself to be imbued with content, I create behavior or movement in dialogue with space, thus developing a kind of action.

B.: For me, this grazing is a kind of softening of the body and at the same time a softening of the space. This is basically a reciprocal exchange path. It's about listening, you're basically withdrawing, or you're actually going deeper into yourself, it's observing what already exists. That you do not have to add anything in, but by observing, feeling, you perceive and recognize certain things that arise by themselves, in this space or in the body.

A.: I am thinking about the fact that to some extent when we were working with grazing, with this presence, especially in the environment that is alive, when we really went into nature, and then let's say, through all these conversations we had during the exchanges.. Our rehearsals took place sometimes in the woods, sometimes in the studio, in fact we talked a lot about how radically different these two spaces are, how one is basically dead and the other alive ... It is in this liveliness that there is a hidden way, when we were carrying out this practice, it opened up a spectrum of more sentient perception to us because the environment itself is basically alive and vibrating ... But the studio is not. In the studio, we are that living element ourselves. That's how we recognized that in such a context, we usually set ourselves tasks that are more intercorporeal, which is related to the fact that the studio space itself did not vibrate, basically. From grazing, from this learning to listen, nevertheless, in some logical direction, the need to listen developed. And not just listening, but in a way also after resonating, that is, after some action, after change. I think we have explored how, by grazing, our inner space changes in relation to the outer space in which we find ourselves, and also how our inner space changes in relation to the outer space. It felt like we were building a membrane between the body and the space we were in. In a way, it was a matter of replaying a copying between the outside and the inside, so then we also carried this idea that we can graze space, bodies, graze on our own body. It also affected our view of what materiality is and what image is. In what way does materiality affect the image, or how a certain image essentially carries a certain materiality within itself.

T.: I would like to add something, that this knowledge is very interesting to me, the experience that we explored with grazing right in the body. I already knew before that we humans are all made of the same ingredients as the universe, that we are made of stardust. With our process, however, I also experienced the actual experience and embodiment of this principle. Through touch, I tried to perceive what these different structures are, without wanting to change anything or communicate anything. Through my presence, I just wanted them to express themselves. It was an important lesson for me on how to just be present and hold space, how to connect these contents of the body with the components that surround us.

B.: To realize that I'm there when I'm grazing, and that my grazing is basically very passive in a way, it seems to me that I'm physically entering a space that I can't fully perceive. I remember how I was lying

on the stairs, I wasn't on the stage because the stage seemed like a space I couldn't step on, or I felt it was important to perceive the space where the spectators would come, where they would actually sit. So I was lying there, I remember well that moment when that thought went through me, that this space actually weighs something, that otherwise it has this rounded shape, and yet something can't, something can't escape, can't pour out of it. Everything that has accumulated would like to spill out, but it cannot. I remember that we then went to open the door, and that this was the only action that took place at that time, and at the same time it was an inevitably necessary one for the continuation, or for a loosening, for a softening and an airing-out of something so that our energy could be, basically so that we could emerge there with our sensibility. This is the same principle we used in the nature, to allow things that are otherwise invisible in some way their emergence, basically to give them a chance to grow. To open the door to them by grazing.

A.: Otherwise, what I'm going to mention isn't actually directly related to grazing, yet still I'm interested in the field that was actually opened up by touch. It seems to me that through work with touch we have gradually trained a certain hypersensibility in our body and in listening to the body of another. The experience has marked me so much that now this is present all the time, leading me to wonder how to even listen to something, in the here and now. So I direct my sensations in a certain way, with which I already determine my possible response, how I respond, shape and co-shape. It seems to me that in our process we have opened the question of what it means to be truly open to something, and the answer lies neither in complete passivity nor in complete activity. It's basically about a transition between these extremes of passivity and activity, in a way you're already interfering with it, even though in a way you'd like to just witness it. In fact, I am very interested in this flow between consciousness and a certain allowance of emergence, this is a really interesting field, especially in terms of choreography, in the context of a performance that has its own coordinates, laws and agreements. You want to somehow combine the two components, it seems to me that we really delved into this in this performance, also our dialogue somehow allowed it, maybe it's the specificity of the three of us, our personal characteristics, that we knew how to fluctuate between this tolerance and the shaping, the whole time. In fact, I think that in this project we have established, with a particular trust, a space for the undefined, or indefinable, and that we have actually succeeded quite well.

T.: Working with touch is a very important chapter, I think I am already relatively well acquainted with it, but during the process I still had to often question my communication patterns. When I was touching, I kept wondering if it was just my imagination or if there was something actually being communicated to me by the body I was touching, this other body. Is it just my projection or actual perception? This totally frustrated me, and I faced that frustration by trying to align with the universe and the earth, in order to become fluid, to become a channel through which the information of the body I was touching, certain information from outer space and my own information, flowed, it all started to mix and guide me ... It's about becoming aware of this higher intelligence, it's one of these truly glorious feelings because you come in contact with something superfluous, that isn't everyday. In myself, in my body, I carry the architecture of the Cathedral, while grazing, of course, I was connecting myself to what stands out from this circular elliptical architecture. When I embraced the whole space with an oval design, there was no longer any barrier between the space for spectators, the space for performers, this large cavity was formed. I have never been in this space before with such a keen awareness that everything goes around me and that it has both continuity and infinity. The curtains only emphasize everything, you can slip into the future, the past, back into the present, as if you were taking a train on a circular track. The reality of our process is that precisely because of the principle of grazing, we could not prepare the show in the studio and then just transfer it to Kino Šiška, this would go against it, it would not be in accordance with this principle. That's why we came to the Cathedral and focused on what surrounded us. The most striking materiality are the curtains but also a lot of technology, spotlights, the floor vibrated with me in one way, the wall in another way ... Our work was conditioned by this space, we had to develop the thing there, otherwise it would not work... Actually, the principle is transferable, I am interested in further development, we could try it elsewhere, in other theaters, in other spaces. How are we able to use this developed principle there, what would be created, can we actually use it to create different, fragile choreographies, different performances? This question is also interesting in terms of post-production. You always bring a performance somewhere and then perform it. Or someone could offer us at least fourteen days or three weeks of a space with a stage so that we can absorb ourselves there and share the experience of that space through our bodies, through our expression and movement. As if their space could look at them through us. Otherwise, in continuing I was thinking of starting a few new opportunities for Choreographic Turn, which could be covered by the second part, other concepts could also be discussed, such as airing out, softening, membrane or door, non-verbal, unconscious, poetic act, uncertainty, imagination of the spectator, instinctive or conscious work ... Well, that's already enough!

Maja Delak, JUST FOR TODAY :

M .: We started working on the performance *Just for Today* under the working title *Try Not to Think in Words*, which is very interesting. On the one hand, I will now speak in words, I will try to verbalize this process, and on the other hand, it really was an attempt in not thinking. I will return to this, it is about this step, that somehow it is necessary to know how to articulate action with words, but in the implementation itself, it is necessary to try not to work with that. So we started to work on the performance in such a way that we approached the work with the perceptual apparatus very precisely and in depth, that is, the work with observation, with listening, with weight, with some kind of negotiation on a more intuitive level. We were therefore interested in how, on the basis of such a deep recognition of the processes of each individual, we could get closer in communication in some way. But, this kind of work can go on only to a certain point. Following this, it is necessary to start articulating different experiences, and it is precisely with this articulation of different experiences that verbal communication is confronted. Well, and that's how language is formed, these words in a way become labels, they engrave and mark that which interests us. Otherwise, we may disagree in certain places, and in others we may immediately establish a common understanding. During this articulation we defined several modes of observation. One of the modes was observation which takes place during creation. That is, we all perform in the show, all five of us are involved in the process and we observe from the inside what is happening within each of us individually, as well as in relation to how close one knows to go towards others in this community. The second degree of this was also that when we didn't do it all together, or even when we did it all together, we shared an experience, we tried to articulate what that experience was. However, when we observed each other performing in two groups, three or two together, the stationary group basically tried to convey in words what we saw. At this stage, as experiences began to articulate, it became very important what a particular word means to each of us individually, and what a particular word means to all of us together. In this way, a territory was formed in which things had to be named so that we would all know what it was about, for the next conversation on a similar matter. So that with a single word or phrase, we try to define a task as quickly as possible, not just articulate an experience. In fact, during the process, we set up a collection that we called the "tool inventory". We created a system that touched upon different components of dance. It touched on space, the materiality that was going on, it touched on relationships because we were a group, and it touched on some emerging, substantive themes that came up. We wrote everything down, we recognized something with each articulation, named it, managed to establish it, and then we started the development within these frameworks. That is, at some point you assign a word to something that has

happened, then you try to repeat it, but not in an identical way, with the intention of exploring and experiencing it further, in different forms, in different relationships. Thus, a strong field was opened in which the territory of negotiation was established. This is again a very interesting term, we arrived at the territory of negotiations, although we started working with the question: "How can we attune within some kind of open structure?". It made sense to allow this negotiating. That is to say, negotiation was the beginning, and at the same time it became a territory within which words also took on additional meanings, or internal meanings, our agreements. For example, in this inventory, whether the performer took an active role or a passive one was important, and the relationship between the *image* and *frame*, if I say in Slovene, otherwise we used the English terms image and frame. The performance always began with the role of the chosen individual, and the other four formed her frame. And that was the starting point from which we commenced our tuning (before the beginning of the performance). As I've already mentioned, in the process we arrived at verbalization, that is to say, to the development of our understanding, of mutual agreements within this inventory. Interestingly, every rehearsal, that is, practically every improvisation, every task performed, and every response to the task, including all conversations, were recorded. And we immediately shared the recording with the group, we had an internal online platform set up where all these rehearsal recordings are collected, they still exist in video format. We were tasked with looking at these shots, and then talking about the impressions again. Which means that there was another view of the process, that is, a perspective from the position of the spectator. So first you are a performer, then you are an observer, and then you enter the role of a spectator, where you try to articulate once again, but because this was us, we already had the vocabulary. That is, with the second position, we entered back into that inventory and checked how the negotiation supported each part of the inventory, what it essentially produced. And in a way, this process, this eternal cycle of verbalizing, watching, performing, experiencing, renegotiating, verbalizing, and so on, is so interesting, in terms of circulation. This can also be called the formation and disappearance of instant composition or a composition that is created in the moment. This is an interesting aspect that we found worth highlighting as, in essence, it is a step of choreographic language that can exist as such. The aspect of group work is also interesting, it presents a great responsibility, but it also requires a great deal of commitment from each individual within the group. I mean, it's not about me as a choreographer, I didn't say, please Žana, please Anja, please Urška, please Krystina, do exactly that at this moment and in this way, but it's all our agreement, the whole structure of the show is a sequence of actions, which must occur within the time available, that is, within one hour, this structure is always the same, though not in chronological order. It's a kind of record, a movement score, which is

written in words from this inventory, and it represents an agreement that holds us together, which practically produces choreography. Regarding who will perform what part, in what way, how these tasks will flow from one to another, at what point are we interrupted by, say, the stage intervention of Ajda Tomazin (smoke machine), or which element is the one that inhabits the space, which one we will choose to populate the space for a performance, however, is practically always left to negotiation. Here we return once again to this point of negotiation between us, which, however, returns the words, through negotiation, back into action. Two-way processes are going on all the time, in this sense it is a very difficult task to enter such a performance without being familiar with all these rules that exist within the event. Which was also demonstrated in the second part of the process, which took place in 2019, where I invited a larger number of creators to join in approaching this process again. From the very beginning, it turned out that you can't enter such a process completely ignorant, in a way you must master this vocabulary first. That is, as if words existed in order to define them in some way, to define their meaning, in what way we understand them all together, so that we can then create a moving structure within this space that develops and determine the time of this development. It turned out that all the things needed to be explained, we had to go back to that inventory and set up a situation where the experience could be reborn. From there where this was re-articulated, it was exchanged, and it took time until basically all the members of the group, that is, all the performers, felt enough sovereignty and autonomy in being able to enter into relationship equally, which is interesting because this relationship on stage is actually equivalent. This relationship does not place anyone above the others, not in terms of performance, not in terms of some kind of hierarchy, what we will do today, in what way we will do something. No one is superior. In essence, these rules require equality. It seems to me that these procedures have, perhaps it is also a matter of a specific view on dance, or the demands that the viewer places on himself, what he would like to see on stage, this kind of performance has a specific rhythm and does not necessarily have to be the same all the time. It has happened that the show was extremely slow. It has also happened that the show went at an incredible pace, really fast and at the same time incredibly articulated in terms of physical articulation as well as in terms of communication. That is to say, when such procedurality unfolds, it also requires, on the one hand, perhaps a patient, and, on the other hand, an in-depth view from the outside. In this way, this space is understood as the space of the field of dance, conditioned and determined by the parameters by which the body in space is circumscribed, the moving body in space. I myself understand the entry of the body into space as a beginning, only the entry of the body into space, whatever action I then perform, I call this *an impression in space*. That is, as if I was to imprint something that then becomes part of our shared

memory. We observe one dancer, let's say, who enters a space, does what she does, but I call that an *impression*. The dancer leaves the space, and basically this space has a kind of relief at that moment, it has a kind of shape, it has a certain time ... That's how that impression is made. Many times, we then perform a task in which essentially all the others, or one of the others, imprints, that is, re-imprints in this space their understanding of that impression. It is interesting that this task is about negotiation, about the physical articulation of what I said earlier, verbalization is in a way an articulation of the task, that is, we have to agree verbally or establish an understanding, but here it is about something else, without explaining what that impression was, we make an imprint. And it is precisely when we are learning to understand it and when we are looking at it, when we understand how someone reacted to someone, when we understand how someone interpreted a certain task, that we basically begin to physically articulate understanding with each other in this way. This is how it arises, this field of negotiation, attuning ... Negotiation is quite a precise word.

ON METHODOLOGIES OF NOTATION IN CONTEMPORARY DANCE:

M.: Maybe notation is also important. Notation is a process that in some way writes down, by which we always think that it is writing with words, which is not always the case. In Emanat Institute's project, *Methodologies of Notation*, we have been searching for many years already for different ways and strategies of notating the practices of contemporary dance creators, from the point of view that the more subtle, more delicate strategies of working and choreographing, or establishing some methods of choreography, can be quickly lost, even faster than the performances themselves. It seems to me that this is a very important part of how dance, choreography, the understanding of choreographic practices are present in our local space. Without long-term or persistent imprinting into our memory, it seems to me that there is an excessive loss of things, in fact I am strongly convinced that it is necessary to recognize these kind of, as you say, *turns* or individual practices, or basically very isolated things, which take place somewhere on the margins, or even at the center of the activity itself. We need to verbalize them, record them, verify the ways in which they are recorded, whether the chosen method of notation is appropriate. It seems to me that such a practice is of great value. It is not about media, about digitization, recording and so on, this preserves the documentation of some kind of practice, but in order to understand this, it seems to me that this notating is needed on completely different levels. I've mentioned already experience, articulation, negotiation, and so on, I think these are all kinds of ways of understanding what is actually going on within this kind of practice. Each of us perceives this completely

differently because we experience it on all levels, from what we perceive to what we mentally and psychologically process, and also to how we experience it physically ... Regardless of the point of view, whether it is from the inside or from the outside, I think we always experience a dance performance on a physical level as well.