The Dance Artist as Facilitator in a Gallery Context: Towards a Posthuman Ecology of Participation

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the Faculty of Humanities

2022

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Word count: 80.341

Abstract

Understanding 'facilitation' as an umbrella term to encompass the different forms of engagement between gallery visitor and dance artist, this thesis draws on both historical and research-led examples in order to develop an 'ecology of participation'. Tracing the line from the collaborative Happenings of the 1960s, and offering examples from six seminal dance artists and choreographers, and two practice-led research periods, I investigate the complex relationship between the dance artist, the gallery visitor and the gallery artefacts and space. The particular ethos of an ecology of participation is discussed and later, after working with the exhibition of bio-artist Patricia Piccinini, I offer my reasons for developing a 'posthuman ecology of participation'.

I propose that when the dance artist takes a posthuman and new materialist stance in the process of developing creative encounters with gallery visitors, this allows for engagement that respects 'otherness' and the more-than-human (Braidotti, 2013) and proffers an aesthetic experience that prompts visitors to potentially engage all their senses with the materiality of the gallery environment. Advocating for the dance artist as a/r/tographer (artist, researcher and teacher), I concede the entangled role they inhabit. I propose an outline for the training of dance artists as facilitators that acknowledges and embraces the multiplicity and complexity of their roles if they are to create an environment conducive to embodied and reciprocal engagement. Seeking to create a 'posthuman ecology of participation' that acknowledges spaces, environments, objects and the other-than-human as active contributors to the creative process encourages us to move beyond the confines of specified identities to create new ways of 'thinking, perceiving and sensing' (Braidotti, 2013, p.107). I identify instances where I consider that the dance artist's own unique creative practice has been able to achieve this together with a gallery visitor - and where it has not.

I offer current examples of this enmeshed, sustainable co-existence which prompts re-thinking of how dance artists engage with art gallery visitors and participants, both indoors and in alternative spaces. The dance artist can act as a catalyst for the gallery visitor to see and perceive dance and art in a new light, where the posthuman turn is seen as an opportunity, in Braidotti's words, 'to decide together what and who we are capable of becoming, and a unique opportunity for humanity to re-invent itself affirmatively through creativity and empowering ethical relations' (Braidotti 2013, p.195).

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or learning institution.

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Dedication

This thesis has been underway for many years, and many more people than I can mention here have assisted me on this journey. However, I wish to particularly mention the generosity of the two groups of postgraduate Dance Partnership students (now MFA in Dance and Participation) from the Danish National School of Performing Arts and dance artist and choreographer, Lucy Suggate who explored and developed this research with me. To Prof. Dee Reynolds who started this journey and to Prof. Maggie Gale who followed me through hills and dales to its destination. To my family, and especially to my brother Kevin, who although he will never see the fruits of my labour, believed in me from day one. My husband, Michael, forever supportive in all ways possible; without whose love, patience and good humour this exploration would not have been possible.

INTRODUCTION

The Dance Artist as Facilitator in a Gallery Context: Towards a Posthuman Ecology of Participation.

Introduction

> Art (is) an intensive practice that aims at creating new ways of thinking, perceiving and sensing. […] By transposing us beyond the confines of bound identities, art becomes necessarily inhuman in the sense of nonhuman in that it connects to the animal, the vegetable, earthy and planetary forces that surround us. […] Art is also, moreover, cosmic in its resonance and hence posthuman by structure, as it carries us to the limits of what our embodied selves can do or endure. (Braidotti, 2013, p.107)

> In order to know, you must move, as movement is fundamentally knowledge creation. (Forsythe in Kramer, 2016, p.49)

These opening quotes point to ways of thinking about art, perception and the role of the moving body in knowledge creation. They are closely related to the central research questions which underpin this thesis concerning the facilitatory role of the dance artist in an art gallery context. The thesis brings these elements into focus by proposing and delineating new modes of perception and creative physical engagement for the gallery visitor when encountering works of art. Firstly, the central research questions ask how the dance artist as facilitator can change or enhance the way the gallery visitor perceives, thinks and interacts with artworks when visiting gallery spaces, and they explore how the creation of what I initially call an 'ecology of participation' can achieve this objective. Secondly, the thesis aims to unravel the complex traits and qualifications needed by dance artists to inhabit this role, where they seek to offer a spontaneous, consensual and creative movement experience to gallery visitors. By engaging the gallery visitor in multi-sensory, collaborative encounters that can revitalise the body and the senses, the dance artist can, I argue, instigate new experiences and lead the gallery visitor into what might be considered new ways of thinking, being and doing. By offering the gallery visitor the opportunity to engage in a mode of visceral perception, a creative-in-the-making process is prompted by the materiality and content of the artworks, thereby opening up a shift in perceptions.

This introductory chapter maps a journey of creative collaboration from what we might now consider to be more traditional encounters in the art gallery in the mid-twentieth century, through to the development of an ecology of participation. The chapter closes by

proposing a performative *posthuman ecology of participation*, a concept that evolved during the later stages of the research in response to the works of bio-artist Patricia Piccinini and Danish choreographer Tina Tarpgaard. The aim here is to give context to the research through a discussion of its contribution to knowledge and the arguments that underpin it, to outline its design and methodology, and to provide an overview of the theory that has informed the research journey. The chapter also presents a chronological outline of the fieldwork undertaken over an extended period of five years from autumn 2016 to spring 2021. This trajectory starts with the development of the role of dance in the art gallery, involving participation without concerns for being physically distanced, to the significantly restricted participation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic which started early in 2020. The Introduction also offers an analysis of the role of the art of dance in facilitation and discusses how this is manifested and understood as an element of participation.

Overview and contribution to knowledge

The research presented in this thesis contributes to knowledge in three ways. Most significantly, it proposes a new type of creative practice which has emerged and developed from my own artistic, pedagogic and philosophical background. Here, then, I propose and interrogate the notion of what I have called an 'ecology of participation', where the dance artist engages in a practice that fosters an environment that contributes towards creating an *adaptable, harmonious and relational symbiosis where all elements have equal agency*. To clarify my usage of the word 'ecology' it is necessary to briefly expand a little on the term here, before covering it in more detail later in this introduction and in Chapter 1.

Initially, I used the term 'ecology' as a philosophical and metaphorical concept rather than a scientific one. 'Ecological thinking is to do with art, philosophy, literature, music and culture' (Morton, 2010, p.4), and to this list, I would also add performances and interactive events that prompt audiences to reconsider ecological relationships and environments. The idea of an ecology of participation developed during my first research/practice residency at Arken Museum of Modern Art,[1] Denmark, in November 2017, when I was attempting to understand and frame how some dance artists were more able than others to foster an environment and ethos conducive to creative engagement with gallery visitors. An 'ecology of participation' seeks to create an environment where the dance artist is an *adaptive*

1 https://www.arken.dk/ (Accessed 10.08.16)

facilitator, able to foster a *harmonious* and *relational* meeting between the gallery visitor, artwork and dance artist. The meeting should be *symbiotic* in that all parts contribute equally to the encounter through equal agency. The thesis offers new knowledge through investigating how dance artists can engage viewers of visual artworks through kinaesthetic, multi-modal empathetic forms of communication that can potentially change how viewers interact with the environment of the art gallery and beyond. Later in the research process, when I was preparing for the second residency at Arken Museum of Modern Art, Denmark, working with an exhibition by Patricia Piccinini in 2019,[2] this concept evolved into a '*posthuman* ecology of participation'. Through life-sized sculptures, Piccinini's bio-art exhibition *A World of Love* explores the borderlands where humans, non-humans, technology and other creatures meet, merge and sometimes transform. Drawing on the writings of Rosi Braidotti, my discussion of posthumanism questions the nature/culture divide and looks at the plurality of the human and our intra-connectedness, which is non-hierarchical. Piccinini's work exemplifies this and raises concerns about human intrusion into other forms of life. Such issues are congruent with my own concerns, developed over a period of several decades, around environmental and ecological questions, and I therefore added the prefix 'posthuman' to address and engage with the critical issues raised in Piccinini's exhibition. Hence, in the second residency at Arken in 2019, my use of the term 'ecology' expanded to embrace not only the conditions and atmosphere created by the dance artist, but also an understanding that ecology, in this context, also refers to an all-encompassing ecological connectedness between all things. Examples of a performative posthuman ecology of participation in practice are offered and analysed in greater detail through my work on the project, *HØST (Harvest),* choreographed by Tina Tarpgaard in the spring of 2021.

Additionally, as a researcher-practitioner, I also aim here to offer a pertinent, historical overview of the field of dance in the art gallery and to address the relative sparsity of historical knowledge about creative encounters undertaken by dance artists engaging with visitors within gallery spaces. Although there has been a growing number of performances and events taking place within contemporary art galleries, to my knowledge there has not yet been a cohesive study of the specific role of the dance artist as a facilitator in bringing about this type of aesthetic and embodied meeting between dance artist, gallery visitor and work of art. Drawing on key literature currently available, and through the selection of

2 https://www.patriciapiccinini.net/

dance artists who have influenced my research, I map how they have contributed over time to the incursion of dance in the art gallery. My further choice of six influential dance artists, Anna Halprin, Simone Forti, Trisha Brown, William Forsythe, Siobhan Davies and Boris Charmatz, illustrate and explore in greater depth how their practices have influenced my thinking and research. A critical analysis of the practice-based research spearheaded by the *dancingmuseums*[3] projects in 2016 and 2017 is offered, along with Siobhan Davies Dance's gallery interactions at Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester in May 2017. This is followed by a full account of my primary practice-led research in 2017 and 2019 at Arken Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj, Denmark. To conclude, I describe a final project by Danish choreographer, Tina Tarpgaard, undertaken in the spring of 2021, which reflects the continuing development of my research and the changing nature of participation.

Finally, the thesis intends to contribute to knowledge through a comprehensive and critical exploration of the qualities, skills and attributes that the dance artist needs to work creatively and physically in gallery spaces and beyond. This exploration is based on a process of critically analysing specific examples of dance artists' encounters with gallery visitors over time. Similarly, by examining different training practices, dance techniques, and conclusions drawn from my observations of dance artists' encounters with gallery visitors, I propose a framework for what I consider to be optimal preparation for these creative meetings. Through the thesis, I hope to show how the presence of the professional dance artist can initiate, create and foster an environment where an 'ecology of participation' and later a 'posthuman ecology of participation' can flourish; an environment that celebrates the entanglement, porosity and vitality between humans, non-humans and matter in an equitable relationship.

This research also provides timely insights into the importance of dance facilitation in art galleries on both theoretical and practical levels, at a time when collaborations between dance artists and galleries were growing. However, in March 2020, at a point where much of the practice-led research for this thesis had taken place, all cultural gatherings were curtailed and dance artists and choreographers were required to re-think how they could work. Having considered how to develop an ecology of participation and later a posthuman ecology of participation as a viable and desirable concept to work with, adapting to the changed circumstances proved to be a natural and fulfilling progression.

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3 www.dancingmuseums.com (Accessed 03.3.2016)

The pandemic magnified the necessity to reconsider our inter-relations with the social, more-than-human and material worlds and the methodologies used in this thesis allowed for a posthumanist perspective to be creatively explored. The thesis draws to a close with an investigation of how some dance artists met the challenge of a new 'no-contact', 'no public performances' context, and how their solutions and future proposals further contribute to knowledge through the innovative research design and methodologies they developed.

The Idea of an 'ecology of participation' and a 'posthuman ecology of participation'

The thesis is driven by the emerging idea that exploring and articulating an 'ecology of participation' can lead to evolving and refining optimal methods of engagement between dance artist, gallery visitor and works of art. These modes of interaction are holistic, creative and relational. I contend that the idea of an ecology of participation encapsulates a particular ethos, and requires a mode of training and quality in the dance artists' forms of engagement that explicitly take into consideration the unique nature of each gallery visitor, the physical space of the gallery and the nature of the artwork. The concept of an 'ecology of participation' emerged during my first primary fieldwork practice as I observed how some dance artists were able to create an atmosphere and environment conducive to participation, whereas others were less able to do so. Later, during the second phase of primary research in 2019, when I encountered the bio-art exhibition *World of Love* by Australian artist Patricia Piccinini at Arken Museum of Modern Art in Denmark in 2019,[4] I began to develop the concept of a 'posthuman ecology of participation' in response to Piccinini's work. Piccinini's life-sized hybrid sculptures explore pertinent and topical questions around humanity's ethical responsibilities towards the world we are creating and the environmental choices we make. Environmentalism, feminism and fantasy intersect in Piccinini's work, and it was important to acknowledge her philosophies on kinship, care and co-existence and to impart them to gallery visitors during the encounters.

At the start of this research, the word 'ecology' was, as stated, used mainly as a metaphor to describe a particular ethos, atmosphere and environment in the gallery space during these transient encounters. The research seeks to understand this ephemeral inter-connectedness and how it contributes to optimising the possibility for creative interaction between dance

4 www.patriciapicinnini.net (Accessed 10.10.18)

artists, works of art and gallery visitor. Here 'ecology' refers to the inter-relationship between humans and other-than-human and inanimate objects within the environment of the gallery space. Later in my research, however, I refer to a 'posthuman ecology of participation' and here my usage is more literal and takes into account the biological interplay between all living entities and matter, and also expands to embrace the principles of posthumanism and new materialism in performance. In considering a posthuman ecology of participation, the writings of philosopher Rosi Braidotti (2013) are crucial, as the opening quote of this Introduction suggests. Braidotti's call for us to find 'a new way of combining ethical values with the well-being of an enlarged sense of community, which includes one's territorial or environmental inter-connections' is essential here in considering how the dance artist interacts with visitors and the works of art in a gallery environment (Braidotti, 2013, p.190). This thesis argues that it is possible to achieve her aspiration in part through the dance artist's ethical mode of creative engagement with gallery visitors, artefacts and the other-than-human. To move towards the ethos required for creating a 'posthuman ecology of participation', one needs to foreground the material, dynamic qualities of the artworks or artefacts, and the presence and qualities of the dance artist and gallery visitor as well as the gallery space. A 'posthuman ecology of participation' therefore, seeks to create a harmonious, interdependent environment that stimulates an understanding of our connectedness and takes into consideration the human, more-than-human and materiality of the artworks in multi-sensory encounters. Issues raised in new materialism, which include investigating and appreciating the materiality and agency of matter are paramount, as is also the case in posthumanism; both endeavour to reposition the human in a hierarchy of species and respect their entangled relationship. I supplement Braidotti's work on posthumanism by also drawing on the works of Bennett (2010) and Barad (2007) amongst others, and their 'new materialist' perspectives.

'New materialism' proposes a new way of looking at matter that is non-dualistic and traverses the nature/culture, mind/body divide (Van der Tuin, 2010). This attributes agency to matter as an inherent, vital and enmeshed entity that shifts the focus from the 'who' to the 'what' in intra-actions[5] in creative encounters (Barad, 2007). For the dance artist in an art gallery context, engaging with new materialism would include appreciating and acknowledging not only the content of an artwork but also how the vitality and vibrancy of the materials used can intra-act and affect the dance artist's work. Bennett

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5 Intra-act, as coined by Barad (2007) refers to the idea that distinct properties are only fully realised in their interrelationship with other matter and do not precede the meeting.

(2010) uses the term 'thing power' to illustrate the intangible and elusive but vibrant properties of materials in an attempt to underline the latent capacity and energy of inanimate objects. Thus, through a renewed understanding of being 'with' the materials, we move away from the representational to new modes of experimental practice which later can develop beyond the confines of the art gallery.

Another important source is Guattari's *Three Ecologies* (2000) and his proposal for an 'ecosophical' viewpoint, because I see the meshing of 'mental ecology, social ecology and environmental ecology' (Guattari, 2000, p.41) as an added layer to contextualise the work of the dance artist when working in a gallery context. Following the thoughts of Guattari, I consider the three ecologies to be 'self, environment and relations' (McCormack and Gardener, 2018, p.4). These terms are relevant to my research, both in the content of the actual dance/art encounters and in terms of the stance of the dance artist. Morton points out that 'interconnectedness' is a fundament of ecological thought and underlines the importance of 'meshing' and overlapping boundaries, which chimes with Guattari's ecosophical ideas (Morton, 2010, p.7). In essence, I concur with Morton's view that 'ecology is profoundly about coexistence' (ibid., p.4) and I use chosen examples from my empirical research to illustrate where this 'coexistence' is visible and utilised in the meeting between dance artist, visitor and artwork.

The dance artist in a gallery context

In terms of the training required for the dance artist working in a gallery context, this thesis argues that their attributes should include professional training in a variety of dance techniques. It is important that they are experienced in improvisation and more specifically in the form known as Contact Improvisation if they are to interact physically with a gallery visitor (as discussed in more detail in Chapter 3).[6] Knowledge of and experience in pedagogy, that can support and inform their work when undertaking these experimental modes of practice, is also necessary. As the desired profile for dance artists engaging in multi-sensory encounters in the art gallery is complex and highly skilled, I have used the term a/r/tographer (artist/researcher/teacher) (Springgay et al, 2008), to analyse this hybrid role and to underline and exemplify the diverse roles and complexity of the skillset

6 American dancer and choreographer Steve Paxton is credited as one of the founders of Contact Improvisation movement, developed initially during the 1960s and 1970s in the USA. It is a dance form for two or more where there is a constant flow of movement and contact between those participating. (See Chapter 3.)

required for this kind of artistic labour and encounter. These diverse skills are then probed in greater depth in the thesis, drawing on the notion of the 'kinesfield' (Schiller 2008), understood as the dynamic relational field of interaction between the dance artist, the work of art and the gallery visitor. The 'kinesfield', in this context, encompasses qualities consistent with kinaesthetic empathy (Reynolds [2012, 2013] and Foster [2008]), and other theories relating to interactive/participatory performance. The art gallery can be seen as a place of 'choreographic dwelling' (Schiller [2008], Schiller and Rubidge [2014]), and one where 'expanded choreography' (as referred to in the writings of Franco and Lepecki [2014]; Forsythe [2017]; Manning [2014] and von Hantelmann [2010]) can exist. I examine the roles of artist, researcher and teacher separately in order to then draw them together to illustrate the entangled task the dance artist undertakes.

In the context of this thesis, I also suggest that the dance artist's personal philosophy should be one that embraces a commitment to sharing their art form through principles of equal agency, ethical engagement and a sense of responsibility for the environment they create. The content of each exhibition in which they participate as artists should be carefully interrogated and the encounters should be creative engagements that reflect the ethos and the artistic integrity of both the visual artist and the dance artist, and that consider each participant as a unique, sentient individual.

The theorists whose ideas I have made use of here are connected by the fact that they have an explicit artistic, pedagogical, or gallery interest that can support the work of the dance artist. They also all contribute towards my concept of a 'posthuman ecology of participation' and what I consider to be its inherent qualities. In positing a 'posthuman ecology of participation' as an optimal mode of engagement in a gallery context, I draw not only on scholars with a background in public and creative pedagogy including Biesta (2004, 2012); Chappell (2018, 2019); Hickey-Moody (2016) and Springgay (2008), but also on scholars who bring posthuman and new-materialist perspectives to an understanding of how we interact with other human beings, the non-human, objects and materials: these include Braidotti (2010, 2013) Barad (2003, 2007) and Guattari (1989/2000). From a gallery perspective, I also draw on several artists and scholars whose practice and writings have included work in art galleries or museums, including Bishop (2006, 2012, 2014, 2018), Rosenthal (2011), Wookey (2015), Jones (2012, 2015), Forsythe and Charmatz (in Janevski, 2014) and Simon (2010). Drawing on these writers and scholars, I advocate for a posthuman ecology of participation, as it encourages us to think collaboratively and

ethically with humans and other-than-human, seeing the necessity for non-hierarchical inter-connections, sustainability and kinship. This is an ecosophical viewpoint where equilibrium between the environment, the social and the individual is pursued.

Research design

The research was initially designed around the fact that to fully understand how the dance artist can prepare and create an ecology of participation, it was necessary to undertake a series of observational and participatory residencies. Observing and learning from each residency allowed me to build on the previous one, moving towards finding a more ecosophical and creative experience for both the gallery visitor and the dance artist. Due to the unavoidably changing modes of interaction during the pandemic, my final research exploring the work of the dance artist as facilitator in a posthuman ecology of participation required me to venture into the virtual world, outside the realms of the art gallery, and also into outdoor spaces.

The research design for the thesis involved attending or developing five artistic residencies where the main focus was on how the dance artist initiates and facilitates and how they interact creatively with gallery visitors. My fifth, and originally unplanned 'residency' in April 2021 took place on the west coast of Jutland in Denmark, initially outdoors and finally in a barn to comply with regulations around physical distancing when gallery spaces and theatres were closed. The art gallery residencies took place at four different gallery and museum sites between 2016 and 2019: the National Gallery[7] in London (autumn 2016); MacVal Contemporary Art Gallery[8] south of Paris (spring 2017); Whitworth Art Gallery,[9] Manchester (spring 2017), and Arken Museum of Modern Art[10] in Ishøj, south of Copenhagen (autumn 2017 and spring 2019). The National Gallery and the MacVal residencies were part of the *dancingmuseums*[11] project, a Creative Europe collaborative project involving eight museums across Europe in six different countries over a three-year period. The company representing the UK museums was Siobhan Davies Dance, which has a reputation for creating innovative and interdisciplinary collaborations such as the Aby

7 https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about-us/press-and-media/press-releases/dancing-museums (Accessed 10.09.16)
8 https://www.dancingmuseums.com/museums/mac-val-musee-dart-contemporain-fr/(Accessed 02.01.17)
9 https://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk (Accessed 5.05.17)
10 https://www.arken.dk/ (Accessed 12.06.16)
11 www.dancingmuseums.com (Accessed 10.09.16)

Warburg dance installation, *'material/rearranged/to be'* at the Whitworth in May 2017, which will be covered in greater detail later in Chapter 2.

For their contribution to the *dancingmsueums* project, Siobhan Davies Dance chose independent dance artist, Lucy Suggate,[12] as their designated representative and I followed her on the project, gaining insight into her methods of working with gallery visitors. I began following the *dancingmuseums* project in 2016 and attended three of the residencies, the National Gallery in London in November 2016, the MacVal Museum of Contemporary Art, Vitry-sur-Seine, close to Paris,[13] in March 2017 and the final conference at the Louvre Museum shortly afterwards. I gathered data from the encounters through observation, participant observation and a limited number of semi-structured interviews and I paid particular attention to the dance artist Lucy Suggate. As the main focus of this thesis is on the role of the dance artist as facilitator and the skills, qualities and attributes needed to undertake this role, I have gathered only limited data, through a series of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, from the gallery visitors themselves. Further extensive research would need to be undertaken to offer more in-depth viewpoints from gallery visitors' perspectives.

The two residencies I observed with the *dancingmuseums* project gave me insight into many of the questions informing my research. However, as I joined *dancingmuseums* towards the end of the first project, and was unable to interview all the dance artists about their experience of creating encounters and their interaction with gallery visitors, the project motivated me to develop my own residency as a dance practitioner/researcher. The time demands on the dance artists involved in the *dancingmuseums* project and the number of researchers who were already involved from the start in 2015 made it difficult for me to become fully integrated into the project and to experience a 'whole' process from its inception. Having a professional background in dance and pedagogy, I would be able to develop and explore the specific issues I wished to focus on; namely how the dance artists prepared for, engaged with and experienced the gallery visitors. On this basis, I approached Lucy Suggate and contacted the postgraduate Dance Partnership Education at the Danish National School of Performing Arts,[14] and also Arken Museum of Modern Art in Denmark, to propose a residency that would focus more specifically on the dance artist's

12 https://www.lucysuggate.com/ (Accessed 12.11.16)

13 www.macval.fr (Accessed 03.03.17)

14 https://ddsks.dk/da/danseformidling. The degree will be known as a Master of Fine Arts in Dance and Participation from the start of the academic year in August 2020. (Accessed 02.03.20)

pedagogical and creative engagement with gallery visitors and draw on my own professional experience. Hence, I would be able to investigate in greater depth the processes the dance artist goes through to prepare, structure and develop methods for creative encounters and their implementation in a gallery context. The residencies and the analysis of my findings are covered in depth in Chapters 2 and 4.

Primary research - Arken Museum of Modern Art

My primary practice-led research at Arken Museum of Modern Art in Denmark built on the experiences with *dancingmuseums* and sought to create new contexts for research, where we could introduce an enhanced level of sensory input and new modes of participation. During the first, intensive six-day encounter with the public at Arken Museum of Modern Art in 2017, improvisation, performative work, and spontaneous encounters, inspired by the museum's permanent collection, were the main focus. Through observing and analysing the various modes of interaction, I documented the encounters, including the dance artists' preparation for these meetings and the dynamics of their engagement with gallery visitors. The findings from this first residency prompted me to apply for a second residency at Arken in March 2019. This application was granted, but the circumstances around the second residency were radically different and ultimately highly enlightening, as they engaged me with new ideas and practices that would contribute towards my developing the notion of 'a posthuman ecology of participation', discussed later in the thesis. The bio-art exhibition *A World of Love* by Australian artist Patricia Piccinini (Arken, February – September 2019, discussed in depth in Chapter 4) was the catalyst for developing a deeper analytic frame for investigating the 'thingness' (Bennett 2010) and materiality of the exhibits, drawing on the posthuman viewpoint offered by Rosi Braidotti in her book *The Posthuman* (2013). The exhibits, which were life-sized hybrid human-animal-plant sculptures and a 'metaphor for the disenfranchised or excluded' (Piccinini, 2018, p.45) took a clear and intense philosophical stance, provoking the gallery visitor to assess their own standpoint. This, coupled with the current need for broader social awareness concerning environmental and ecological issues and the ethical implications of man's intervention in nature, prompted me, together with the dance artists, to find new modes of interactive practice that could make these elements the starting points for designing encounters. The encounters between the dance artist and the gallery visitor during this residency were therefore designed to embrace and interrogate the philosophical questions raised by Piccinini, and offer gallery visitors an invitation to participate, observe,

or pass by. Our preparations culminated in the production of an 'embodied guided tour' created and conducted by the dance artists who were part of the residency.

The research design allows for the gallery viewer to be a spectator, observer, participant, or 'witness' (Lepecki, 2016), making a distinction between forms of casual and focused engagement. There should always be the possibility for the gallery visitor to participate to the degree they feel comfortable, whether through a physical creative movement experience or a verbal facilitatory encounter. The facilitatory meetings in the residency projects included both structured and semi-structured encounters. Structured encounters included consensual participatory workshops in gallery spaces where the artworks formed the basis for the workshops. The structured workshops that took place at The Whitworth in Manchester in May 2017 were facilitated by professional dance artists who specialized in teaching young children. By contrast, it was important to Arken Museum of Modern Art that there were no scheduled workshops, as these were already offered, but that all preparations and rehearsals took place in the gallery space; this proved to be a valuable experience for the participating dance artists to familiarize and prepare themselves for both working in the space and encountering a transient public.

Each gallery encounter was primarily defined by the dance artists themselves, whether it was part of the *dancingmuseums* project or my research. My research was designed in collaboration with Lucy Suggate and the dance artists and was specific to the gallery collection, the architecture of the gallery space, and the demographics of its visitors. On completion of the analysis of the first Arken residency, it became clear to me that the constituent elements of an ecology of participation needed to be further developed and nurtured in order to create a conducive environment where ecosophical principles could also be brought to bear. Although this field of facilitation by dance artists is developing as it emerges and is therefore in a state of flux, I have given detailed analyses of the two co-designed residencies at Arken Museum of Modern Art in Chapters 2 and 4. Chapter 3 is a reflection and analysis of the first residency, particularly with regards to the qualities, skills and attributes needed by the dance artist, and I offer a framework for their training and development. In Chapter 5 I give examples of the most recent developments, primarily through the work of Danish choreographer, Tina Tarpgaard, who has responded to the changing global circumstances by presenting her works in innovative formats, including online and in alternative spaces, to allow for the requirements of being physically distanced.

Professional background and context

As a former contemporary dancer, choreographer and teacher in professional companies in the United States and Europe, and later in schools and higher education, primarily in Denmark, I have been closely associated with the evolving social role of the dance artist, the dance community and dance education.[15] In the 1990s I was also involved in performances in museums and art galleries with the Danish contemporary dance company, Uppercut Dance Theatre,[16] though, at this time, the open 'white box' spaces of contemporary art galleries were used mainly as a 'backdrop' for relevant performances. While traditional 'black box' theatre spaces were not always optimal for a 'modern dance theatre', art galleries were more receptive and innovative in their approach to housing more alternative performances. These performances took place at the Museum of Modern Art in Herning,[17] the State Museum for Modern Art[18] in Copenhagen, and the Glyptotek[19] in Copenhagen over a period from 1985 to 1995. In the late 1990s, these venues also included Thorvaldsen's Museum,[20] where alternative durational modes of viewing for gallery visitors through improvisational 'happenings' took place under the *Cultural Nights* umbrella. In the 1990s my gallery work extended to working with children in art galleries, using their chosen works of art as inspiration for their movement compositions. I consider this facilitation through using works of art to be an important element in enhancing and developing the children's creativity and expression through movement. It is with these experiences as a catalyst that I sought to further investigate how engaging with the works of art beyond the ocular can expand the activities of the gallery space, the dance artist and the visitor to include creative practices that seek to facilitate and enhance the visitor experience.

In my previous position (until 2015) as a Centre Leader in Acting and Dance at the Danish National School of Performing Arts, I was responsible for the design and implementation of the postgraduate Dance Partnership Education that focused on the combined role of

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15 BA (equivalent) from Dartington College of Arts 1973 in Dance with Drama; teaching certificate from Rolle College, Exmouth, 1975-1976; Alvin Ailey scholarship 1977-1978, performed with Mary Anthony Dance Theatre, New York, 1979-81; Iwanson Dance Company, Munich, 1981-1983; Uppercut Dance Theatre, Copenhagen, 1985-2002. M.Ed. from Exeter University, 2009; Head of Dance Partnership Education, 2002-2015 and Centre Leader for Acting and Dance, Danish National School of Performing Arts, 2010-2015 (also see Chapter 2 for details).

16 https://uppercutdanseteater.dk/ (Accessed 22.5.18)

17 http://www.heartmus.dk/Accessed 04.09.21

18 https://www.smk.dk/ Accessed 04.09.21

19 https://www.glyptoteket.dk/ Accessed 05.09.21

20 https://www.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/en Accessed 04.09.21

the professional dance artist as creator, facilitator and entrepreneur in cultural institutions. This programme started in 2002 and in May 2020 it was approved by the Danish Cultural Ministry as a 2-year postgraduate MFA, re-named as Dance and Participation.[21] Through my earlier M.Ed. studies, my dissertation was entitled 'The Dancer's World of Work', based on research on ex-students from my own institution. From the data, it became clear that independent dance artists needed to be able to embrace a multiplicity of roles in what the *Mapping Dance* report of 2008 called a 'portfolio' career in a 'dance ecology that is complex' (Burns, 2008). The report notes that 'careers in dance are multifaceted, with individuals engaging in multiple job holding and often working across sectors within the field' (Burns, 2008, p.14). I consider that I have now taken on the 'multifaceted' role of artist, teacher and researcher, and I have therefore chosen to use 'a/r/tography' as a framework for discussing my role and that of the dance artist in the gallery in this thesis. A/r/tography is an arts-based research methodology that not only investigates learning situations, in their broadest context, through artistic and aesthetic means, but is also 'an embodied query into the interstitial spaces between art-making, researching and teaching' (Springgay, 2008, p.67).

As a teacher of several decades, I suggest here that through an aesthetic, ethical and sentient mode of engagement, a notion of collective 'humanising creativity' (Chappell, 2012, p.1) can be accessed, which offers new modes and opportunities for interaction between art gallery visitors and the dance artist. 'Humanising creativity' characterises the creative process as being enmeshed with developing a sense of self and voice, while at the same time involving ethical awareness of our behaviour towards others. Chappell later developed this concept to also embrace a posthumanist perspective, saying that (post)humanism:

> Offers opportunities for new understandings of creativity which acknowledge spaces, environments and objects as contributors to the creative process, rather than simply seeing them as context (Chappell, 2018, p.287).

I understand '(post)humanising creativity' as also encompassing a move towards being enmeshed with the other-than-human and acknowledging the environment and materialities as part of the creative potential in a process of change and 'becoming'; elements that can be considered to be inherent in the encounters between a dance artist

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21 The educational offer will now be an MFA. titled Dance and Participation.

and a gallery visitor. New materialism and posthumanism have become integral concepts in my research, building on my earlier concerns with environmentalism, climate change and sustainability. During the 1970s I was captivated by writer Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), which had a profound effect on my ecological thinking. This was echoed again in 2006 by then vice-president Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* and now in the second decade of the 21st century by the young activist Grethe Thunberg.

Throughout my research journey, observing dance artists at work has been my dominant consideration, as has the development of a methodology for an ecology of participation, later concluding with a posthuman ecology of participation. My findings make it clear that many factors determine the outcome of gallery encounters. The dance artist's personal philosophy, training and cultural background permeate, influence and determine how and what they create, and the level and quality of their desire and motivation to share and develop their art form relationally are crucial.

Methodological placing: Practice-led research

In this section, I expand on my use of practice-led research as defined by Candy (2006) and my use of sensory ethnography as a methodology (Pink, 2009, 2015), to bring together my different experiences as a professional dance practitioner, researcher and teacher in the different settings as a/r/tographer (Irwin, 2006; Springgay et al., [eds] 2008). A/r/tography is a research method committed to artistic forms of engagement where creating, interpreting and analysing the engagements brings new forms of knowledge through practice (Irwin, 2006). As a performing arts practitioner, the use of practice-led research has become a default starting point in developing a methodology for this thesis. However, I make a distinction between the two types of research undertaken, referring to the fieldwork with the *dancingmuseums* as 'participant/observation' and my own research at Arken as 'practitioner/researcher' in order to make clear the different roles I adopted. In the *dancingmuseums* project, I had no influence on the design, content, or implementation of the encounters between the dance artists and the gallery visitors, whereas in the Arken residencies, particularly the second one, I was instrumental in developing both design and content. It should be emphasised that the Dance Partnership students and Lucy Suggate were also major contributors to the design and content and they were also active participants. During the Arken encounters, Lucy Suggate primarily took on the role of

mentor and guide, though she was also an active performer at the National Gallery, UK, as part of the *dancingmuseums* project where she represented Siobhan Davies.

The methodology employed in the research is derived from forms of practice-led inquiry where creative and artistic processes are combined with qualitative research methodologies, primarily sensory ethnography (Pink, 2015), and the 'facet methodology' of Mason (2011). I concur with Candy's definition of practice-led research, which sees practice as an integral part of the overall research, which in turn leads to new knowledge and has 'operational significance for that practice' (Candy, 2006, p.3). In the context of this research, this means exploring and developing new types of interaction between the gallery visitor and the dance artist, including developing a deeper understanding of the materiality and agency of the works of art and how they are inextricably enmeshed in encounters.

This research is a form of practice-led inquiry on three grounds. First, as a professional dancer and experienced practitioner in gallery settings myself, I took the overall artistic and creative responsibility for the design of the two (primary research) gallery encounters. Second, I documented these encounters through (limited) use of video, written accounts, interviews and photos, and third, I developed a project-specific methodology based on creative movement encounters to 'advance knowledge about practice' (Candy, 2006, p.3). I have also chosen to use Mason's 'facet methodology' as this approach allows the choice of method to match the needs of the research (Mason, 2011, p.75). Mason sees facet methodology as enabling different modes of creative enquiry and ways of seeing that can illuminate diverse 'facets' of the research, depending on the questions being asked and the 'lines of enquiry' being adopted (Mason, 2011, p.75). With regards to this research, the 'lines of enquiry' fall predominantly into the three main categories encompassed in a/r/tography, and the differing roles of **a**rtist, **r**esearcher and **t**eacher have indicated which 'facet' of methodology to use to 'catch the light in the best possible way' (Mason, 2011, p.77).

A key methodological 'facet' employed here is Pink's (2015) 'sensory ethnography', used to document and analyse the encounters between the dance artists and the gallery visitors. This methodology underlines the importance of the interconnection of the senses and their role in perception, as well as the role of space and place as 'a coming together and "entanglement" of persons, *things,* trajectories, sensations, discourses and more' (Pink, 2015, p.48). In choosing to use sensory ethnography as a methodology, I signal that the

body as a creative communicator lies at the heart of this research. Sensory ethnography sees learning as 'embodied, emplaced and empathetic' rather than a 'mix of participation and observation' (Pink, 2009, p.63). In the context of the dance artist in the art gallery this method is appropriate, as it also considers:

> the social, sensory and material environment and acknowledges the political and ideological agendas and power relations integral to the context and circumstances of the ethnographic process (Pink, 2009, p.23).

As practitioner/researcher, I conceive of embodied learning as an active sensory process that involves the body holistically and cognitively, and that is inter-relational and affected by the environment in which we are situated. The dance artist can be considered a conduit in this process or, as referred to by Ingold (2013), as a 'transducer'; one who 'converts the *ductus* – the kinetic quality of the gesture, its flow or movement – from one register, of bodily kinaesthesia, to another, of material flux' (Ingold, 2013, p.102). In the context of the dance artist, this means that they are the transducer who converts the material image of an artwork through their bodily actions into a movement piece or interaction that results from this input.[22] This is also a relevant concept when considering Schiller's 'kinesfield' (2008), which also involves reflection on 'the dynamic transaction that takes place between the body and the environment' (Schiller, 2008, p.433). The dance artist can be seen as a 'transducer' and also as being part of a dynamic transaction when they facilitate a reciprocal channelling of energy between the dance artist/gallery visitor relationship, and the artworks. Ingold is also careful to point out, and I concur with his viewpoint, that 'the work of art lies not in the transducer but in what issues from it' (Ingold, 2013, p.102), meaning that this is a three-way partnership in which each partner acts, and is in turn acted upon by the other; each having equal agency in the process; a *symbiotic* relationship. As the dance artist may be the initiator in most 'partnerships', the responsibility lies with them to ensure that they are also 'acted upon' by the gallery visitor, allowing for an empathic and agential process to emerge.

The a/r/tographer role that the dance artist adopted during the residencies concurs with Springgay's statement that an a/r/tographer seeks to take an 'active stance to knowledge creation' in order to make their inquiries 'emergent, generative, reflexive and responsive'

22 Anthropologist Tim Ingold (2013) used examples of a cello, a potter's wheel and a kite as examples of transducers that are affected by the 'movement of kinaesthetic awareness' (Ingold, 2013, p.103) that is created by the work of the cello player, the potter and the kite flyer.

(Springgay et al, 2008, p.206). This mode of thinking was integral to the creation of the different encounters, and examples of this approach are given in Chapters 2 and 4. Although in my discussion in Chapter 3, I have separated out the different roles the dance artist undertakes, it is important that they are enmeshed collectively in the dancer's artistic practice. Each role is dependent on the other and for this reason, I chose to work with dance artists who were postgraduate students in the Dance Partnership Education (*Danseformidler*) at the Danish National School of Performing Arts. Here, the dance artists are accepted onto the programme predominantly on the strength of their artistic background *and* their commitment to pursuing a pedagogical approach in disseminating their work. The development and implementation of an independent and original creative collaborative project is part of their dissertation process, which culminates in both a performative and theoretical presentation. The education framework focuses on the 'participants' physical, social and creatively established experiences',[23] attributes that are vital for the dance artist facilitating in a gallery. The qualities, attributes and training that I regard as crucial for performing and collaborating in the art gallery are therefore dissected and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3, and examples of them in action are given in Chapter 4. For this research, then, I separated the different a/r/tographer roles in order to analyse and develop my theories and then re-assembled them in order to outline how these roles contribute towards creating what I later termed a 'posthuman ecology of participation'.

During the encounters qualitative data was gathered through the use of sensory ethnography. This included observation, note-taking and participant observation, with limited video, photography and use of questionnaires. In addition, during my primary research, in-depth interviews with the dance artists and my collaborator, dance artist and gallery practitioner Lucy Suggate were undertaken. Initially, questionnaires were used with the gallery visitors, translating them into the relevant languages (French, Danish and English) but it quickly became clear that this method did not give a sufficiently nuanced or informative response and I therefore decided to try interviewing a limited number of gallery visitors instead. Though I am fluent in Danish, this also proved to be of limited value as it distracted my focus from observing the actual movement encounters and I therefore chose to concentrate on the creative interactions, behaviours and viewpoints of

23 https://ddsks.dk/en/node/15 (Accessed 12.07.18)

the dance artists rather than the gallery visitors' responses. A further period of observation and analysis focusing on gallery visitors' viewpoints would be needed in order to gather data of sufficient quality.

Embodied pedagogical praxis in an ecology of participation / posthuman ecology of participation

Since the writings of Dewey (1938) and later, Gardner (1983, 1999), it has been suggested that focused physical engagement can promote learning and open the senses to modes of perception other than sight and hearing. For those endowed with what has been referred to as 'kinaesthetic intelligence' (Gardner, 1983), being involved in movement can be an easier way to engage with and learn about the world. Sheets-Johnstone also writes of 'thinking in movement' as a way of experiencing the world and 'living it in the flesh' (Sheets-Johnstone, 1981, p.406). The body is fundamental to our experiences (Ellsworth, 2005), and as choreographer William Forsythe states, 'in order to know you must move' (Gaensheimer and Kramer, 2016, p.49). Forsythe, discussed later in the thesis, has created elaborate movement installations that challenge the gallery visitor's sense of their physicality and bodily knowledge in order to gain greater awareness and understanding of what their bodies can do. The introduction of an embodied pedagogical praxis involving dance artists, gallery viewers and works of art opens up even more complex and entangled modes of experiencing a gallery visit for those who wish. These process-oriented, multi-sensorial meetings embrace a variety of ways of engaging with the gallery visitor, which in turn raise new questions around agency and ethics among those involved. As an institution, the art gallery is not normally associated with creative and participatory movement and dance, though participation *per se* is evident in many museum and gallery spaces (Simon, 2010), and therefore the gallery visitor can be at a disadvantage if invited to contribute to a physical encounter with a dance artist. It is here that the agency of the gallery visitor should be prioritized by the dance artist and their wish to participate or not should be acknowledged, respected and acted upon. Conversely, there should be recognition of the dance artist as 'art in motion' and a reciprocal sense of care should be shown towards all involved in these new forms of practice and encounters. I propose that encountering a gallery visitor, unused to creative and physical invitations, requires pedagogical skills from the dance artist that are social, empathic and ethical if they are to present new ways of seeing, being and relating to an artwork.

These new forms of creative practice which include the human body and more specifically, the dance artist's body interacting with different materialities, are termed 'hybrid modes of practice' by art historian and theorist, Amelia Jones (2013). Jones writes of:

> a new hybrid mode of practices that draws on a legacy of body, conceptual and installation art to render new complex art experiences that are performative yet exist in various material forms (including, arguably, that of the artist's laboring body) (Jones, 2013, p.20).

This description is indicative of the 'complex art experiences' that took place during the second residency of Piccinini's *'A World of Love'* at Arken Museum of Modern Art in March, 2019. This exhibition involved these new 'hybrid practices' where the dance artist engaged physically with materials amongst the artworks and in collaboration with the gallery visitors. The issues raised by this exhibition prompted me to further investigate post-humanism and new materialism in a pedagogical framework. Philosopher Rosi Braidotti, who also interviewed Patricia Piccinini for the exhibition, proposes that we embrace:

> an enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others, including the non-human or 'earth' others, by removing the obstacle of self-centred individualism (Braidotti, 2010, p.49).

This sense of interconnection was brought sharply into focus by the many human-hybrid artefacts in the exhibition that exemplified the dilemmas that our bio-technological society is faced with. One of the questions Piccinini wished us to consider was how we care and take responsibility for the creatures that we create, deliberately or inadvertently. The 'embodied guided tours' at Arken were a form of collaborative interactive journey through the exhibition, with choreographed encounters and participatory interventions, and are a relevant example of pedagogical praxis in action. The encounters were specifically choreographed by the dance artists to emphasise our 'inter-connectedness' and the provocative and controversial nature of the artworks. The encounters created by the dance artists required a synthesis of 'hybrid modes of practice' and creative encounters that embraced the posthuman perspectives and questions raised by the exhibition together with an ability to engage pedagogically with the gallery visitor.

The post-human philosophy underpinning Piccinini's exhibition required me to move on from my original concept of an ecology of participation, as a mode of 'ecological thought' (Morton, 2010), to a revised concept that also encompassed posthuman and new

materialist theories. In posthuman and new materialist thinking, matter is considered 'lively' and has agency; new materialism perceives matter differently and seriously without the binaries of body/mind, nature/culture and human/non-human (Coole and Frost, 2010). In the context of the dance artists preparing to create an embodied guided tour based on Piccinini's exhibition of genetically modified humans, animals and technology, it seemed imperative, and ethical, to take seriously Piccinini's philosophical considerations of how we treat others, animals and hybrid creations. It was essential to understand both the body and the materiality of the artworks as 'matter that matters' and to appreciate that their *intra-action* was pivotal in constituting what was created during the encounters – a process of *new* relationality that was mutually created through the 'entanglements' of those involved (see Barad, 2007).

Braidotti's discussion of inter-connectedness between self and others and her urging that we 'think critically and creatively about who and what we are actually in the process of becoming' (Braidotti, 2013, p.12) prompt us to remember that what we are made of is, in essence, the same 'matter' as all things and that we are in a constant state of becoming. This entanglement between 'bodies and matter' lays a foundation for a 'new materialist pedagogy' as posited by Hickey-Moody (2016, p.12). This also resonates with what Hickey-Moody refers to as 'pedagogy writ large' (Hickey-Moody, 2020, p.227). This phrase is used to emphasise the wide-ranging pedagogical theories that also seek to set pedagogy in a broader, informal and non-institutional context where intersecting theories of public, popular and cultural pedagogy have the possibility to intersect. Examples of 'pedagogy writ large' that have been valuable and relevant to my research include the writings of Gert Biesta, who refers to 'becoming public' in praise of the openness of the public sphere, understood here as also including the art gallery and the possibility of human togetherness (Biesta, 2012, p.693); Chappell's 'posthumanising creativity', which 'emphasises […] the importance of seeing humans and objects as embodied and enmeshed' (Chappell, 2019, p.9);[24] Springgay and her 'pedagogy of corporeal generosity' that 'invokes interconnectivity, embodiment and motion' (ibid., 2009, p.89) and Hickey-Moody's (2013) 'affective pedagogy' which 'considers how art can change what a body can do' (Hickey- Moody, 2018, p.2). It is through the 'intra-actions' (Barad, 2007) between the dance artist, gallery visitor and artworks and their entanglement that a new and previously unknown

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24 Chappell et al. (2012) previously wrote about 'humanising creativity' as opposed to Chappell's (post)humanising creativity. See References for earlier publications on creativity.

relationality emerges, through the moving body instead of words. Moreover, the writings of these scholars have been a crucial influence on the development of my notion of an 'ecology of participation' and later, a 'posthuman ecology of participation'.

In referring to an 'ecology of participation' and later to a 'posthuman ecology of participation', the aim has been to illustrate the sense of progression in my research and to highlight the complex environment that the dance artist strives to create in order to enable and optimise creative, physical encounters between inanimate artworks and artworks that embrace the other than human, as in Piccinini's exhibition. This 'ecology' contributes to creating an *adaptable, harmonious and relational symbiosis* between dance artist, gallery visitor and work of art to offer alternative options for thinking about what 21st-century participation and facilitation might look like in light of the new complexities and multiplicities that the dance artist as facilitator might face.

As this thesis was researched and written over a period of time from 2016 to 2022, it allowed for in-depth practice, reflection and the development of ideas, methods and theories. As a dance artist extending into academia, this was a gratifying process for me as it gave the possibility for diffractive deliberation to take place, resulting in multifarious theories to choose from, select and develop. Barad contrasts reflection and diffraction from the point of view of physics – which I understand to mean that reflection is the mirroring or bouncing back of the object under inquiry as it was originally seen, whereas diffraction involves the bending or spreading of that image as it returns and encounters barriers or obstacles and therefore returns multiple images, or in the words of Barad, 'specific material entanglements' (Barad, 2007, p.88). In the context of this research, Barad's theory is useful as it embraces the multiplicity of notions that are then produced, not in a single reflection but in manifold ways that are separated and fragmented and later reassembled. I see this diffractive analysis as allowing for the intertwining of the multiple roles of artist, researcher and teacher (a/r/tographer) – identifying their separate strands in order to interweave them again into a seamless concept. However, once these different options and their implications become understood, a selection needs to be made in order to focus on the most relevant elements. The whittling down process was equally important and the decisions made after my first research residency made the choices for the second residency much clearer.

The art of dance in facilitation

Though I have used the term 'facilitation' in the context of this thesis, it is important to consider this as a constituent of 'participation'. Facilitation refers to the method used and in this context it includes making the connections between an artwork and a gallery visitor easier or more accessible. Participation is about taking part and being included in a process that may or may not lead to a product, and the dance artist facilitates this process. I use the term 'art of dance' to underline that I also see the dance artist as a work of art in their own right. Their participatory movement practices stem from an extensive artistic background and training, their personal philosophies and values or 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977; Katan, 2016), and their finely tuned responses to the content and materiality of the works of art and the gallery visitor. The quality of these creative artistic practices, coupled with a commitment to sharing them, and engaging with gallery visitors, is paramount for the dance artist in enabling them to engage with gallery visitors and realise relational aesthetic facilitation.

Different modes of facilitation embrace a variety of ways of engaging with the gallery visitor, but the core element lies in the dance artist's somatic[25] and kinaesthetic awareness and empathy,[26] coupled with their ability to form creative, aesthetic and relational encounters. Ways of engaging gallery visitors can range from offering an additional single sensory element,[27] giving verbal instructions to the dance artist's creative process, or physically participating in a guided improvisation or collaborative encounter responding to an aspect of the materiality of the artwork. The element of choice affords the visitor alternative options and levels of creative physical involvement not usually associated with a visit to an art gallery, and therefore interventions between the dance artist and gallery viewer should also seek to foster an experience that is 'ethically embodied' (Rouhiainen, 2008). In writing of 'ethically embodied' encounters, I am referring to an acknowledgment by the dance artist that they accept and respect the difference of the other and avoid taking for granted 'that the other person is like me'. The co-creative encounter should be one that can enhance the gallery viewer's experience by offering a creative meeting that is grounded

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25 Somatic training includes self-awareness techniques such as Feldenkrais training, Alexander Technique and Body Mind Centering in order to 'know oneself from the inside out' (Fitt, 1996, p.304).

26 Kinaesthetic awareness and empathy refer to the dance artist's 'capacity to participate with another's movement or another's sensory experience of movement' and 'a skill involving bodily memory and bodily intelligence' (Sklar, 1994, p.15).

27 See Chapter 2 for an example using the sense of smell.

in an embodied, ecosophical and ethical practice with each gallery visitor engaged with as a unique individual.

The dance artist as facilitator seeks to offer a holistic experience that is spontaneous and reciprocal, concurring with the definition offered by Harpin and Nicholson (2017) that participation is not 'an invitation and response', but works 'towards participation as an ecology of mutual beings and doings' (Harpin and Nicholson, 2017, p.14). By offering a possibility for embodied engagement and enhanced perception in 'an ecology of mutual beings and doings' I acknowledge that these collaborative experiences happen in 'the interval between things' (ibid., 2017, p.6) and that the gallery visitor has the option to bypass a movement invitation that takes place in the more ocular environment of the art gallery. By 'enhanced perception' I refer to the multisensory invitation given to the gallery visitor to engage all the senses in a creative movement encounter in order to stimulate new modes of seeing and perceiving that can expand the experience of viewing the artwork. Examples of these different modes are given in Chapter 2.

Art historian and critic Claire Bishop has written extensively on the role of participation within dance and the arts and writes of her concern for participatory arts projects where 'consensual collaboration is valued over artistic mastery' (Bishop, 2012, p.20). However, I see the dance artist, in the role of facilitator, as presenting their artistic practice *in dialogue* with the existing works of art within the gallery and this should be considered as an artistic work in its own right. Though it is difficult to make comparisons between completed, inanimate works of art and the ephemeral and live art of the dancing body in process, it is important to see the dancer's work as 'art' that is performed and experienced as such. Bishop goes on to call for a more 'nuanced language' in discussing participatory artistic projects, to move away from 'focusing on demonstratable impacts' (ibid., p.18) and more towards the aesthetics of the project.
Facilitation also requires good communication skills, both physical and verbal, and here elements of pedagogy can assist the dance artist in interacting with the gallery visitor. Bishop also discusses the interaction and blurred boundaries at 'the interface between art and pedagogy' (ibid., p.243) and considers that facilitatory encounters can only be successful if each of the aspects, 'art' and 'pedagogy', are given equal importance, a viewpoint that I agree with and consider fundamental for the dance artist working collaboratively in a gallery setting. An appreciation of the temporality and changing definitions of *both* words is needed alongside an equal passion for and understanding of

both 'art' and 'pedagogy' in their broadest perspectives, if the participatory events are not to be seen purely as social encounters valued more for their 'ethical efficacy' rather than the work's 'aesthetic conception' (Bishop, in Eschenburg, 2015, p.176).

The art of dance in facilitation then, relies on the ability of the dance artist to draw on an extensive range of abilities and creative practices to harmonise with the situation of the encounter. These abilities and creative practices encompass a professional level of performance, improvisation and compositional skills with a view to engaging the gallery visitor to participate or become an observer, witness, or audience (Lepecki, 2016). Taking a triadic approach between the dance artist, gallery visitor and artwork, I investigate the modes of communication involved in this facilitation and what takes place in the 'gap' as suggested by Biesta (2004) in his writing on interaction and communication in relationships. These 'gaps' are also imaginative and involve ephemeral lines of communication between the architecture of the art gallery and the works of art, between the gallery viewers and the dance artist, each affecting the other. [28] In discussing the 'kinesfield', Schiller also refers to a 'gap', though in Schiller's context it refers to 'the dynamic transaction that takes place between the body and the environment', suggesting multifarious actants (Schiller, 2008, p.433). This is highly pertinent to my research and I therefore borrow the term 'kinesfield' to denote the triadic 'embodied dialogic space' where interaction takes place between the artworks, the dance artist and the gallery visitor (Chappell et al., 2019).

Claire Bishop (2014) has referred to developments within dance and the art gallery as a series of 'waves'. The 'first wave' starting in the 1940s when art galleries became places to archive dance photos, music and film. This was followed by the 'second wave' in the 1960s when art galleries became places of performance, using the open spaces to house dance, not necessarily with any connection to the art being exhibited but offering alternative spaces, inside and out, to attract new audiences for dance, and public for the galleries. It was during this 'second wave', with the emergence of the 'happenings' of the 1960s, that dance as installation art began to be developed and the public was invited to engage with the works of art (Rosenthal, 2011). Later examples of dance in the museum and gallery[29]

28 For me the 'gap' represents the space of possibility between two or more people, the suspended moment in 'embodied dialogic space' (Chappell et al., 2019) where it is understood that environments and materialities also have a 'voice' in influencing outcomes.

29 In particular, MoMA in New York, Whitney Museum, New York, Tate London and Hayward Gallery, to name but a few.

constitute the 'third wave', though I propose that there is scope and opportunity to regard dance as interaction and intervention as what could be called a 'fourth wave', which places the interactive body, relationality, materiality, the environment and the senses at the fore in enhancing the visitor experience in the gallery and beyond to create 'an ecology of mutual beings and doings' (Harpin and Nicholson, 2017, p.14).

If a dancing, physical presence is to be successfully incorporated into the art gallery experience, vital questions need to be asked concerning *who* undertakes this facilitatory role, *how* the invitation is offered and *what* the consequences are, and we need to explore solutions and propose answers. By investigating these questions through my empirical research I seek to fill this lacuna and offer new knowledge to this emerging field.

CHAPTER 1

Dance and Art Encounters in the Art Gallery – Tracing and Developing an Ecology of Participation.

Introduction

> We are at a time in history where a museum in no way excludes precarious movements, nor nomadic, ephemeral, instantaneous ones. We are at a time where a museum can modify BOTH preconceived ideas about museums AND one's ideas about dance […] We are at a time in history where a museum can be alive and inhabited as much as a theatre, it can include a virtual space, and offer a contact with dance that can be at the same time practical, esthetic and spectacular. (Charmatz, 2009, p.47)
>
> The more that dance takes place in museums, the more the construction of distinct atmospheres seems necessary. (Bishop, 2014, p.73)

When the Walker Art Gallery in Minneapolis presented one of the first dance performances in a gallery space in June 1940, it was perhaps that 'time in history' that foresaw the beginning of a new era; an era where the inclusion of the dancing body in gallery spaces would initiate the start of a fertile and sometimes contentious partnership between dance artists collaborating with the visual arts and visual artists with dance.[30] Since then, dance artists have been creating, performing and facilitating in the art gallery, forging new alliances, experimenting across disciplines and offering gallery visitors opportunities for creative and physical involvement. Similarly, the visual arts have seen the opportunities offered by acknowledging the relevance, profundity and creative potential of the dancing body in gallery spaces. Together the art forms have moved the boundaries for both 'art' and 'dance', creating a temporal, hybrid universe that is still evolving.

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30 The 1920s to the 1950s saw the emergence of *modern* dance with dancers such as Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey, who had in turn reacted to the expressive movement genre of Isadora Duncan and the Eastern- influenced dance of Ruth St. Denis. This era continued into the late 1960s and 1970s when *post-modern* dance began to emerge with the Judson Church Movement (Banes, 1987).

This chapter looks firstly at such a hybrid universe, giving a selected overview of dance's incursion into gallery spaces, from the early pioneers in 1960s America through to England and Denmark in 2020/21. It highlights examples of contemporary dance artists from the 1960s and onwards who have created diverse forms of aesthetic encounters and participatory events, juxtaposing the ephemeral with the permanent, and the inanimate with the live. It is these diverse environments and how they engage the gallery visitor that prompted me to research and develop a proposal for an 'ecology of participation' which seeks to create an environment where adaptability, harmony, relational symbiosis and equal agency are developed. Drawing on Guattari's 'ecosophy' (Guattari, 2000), Schiller's 'kinesfield' (2008) and a broad spectrum of pedagogical thought, I explore and develop this proposition. Ecosophical thought, as previously noted, considers 'the environment, social relations and human subjectivity' simultaneously (Guattari, 2000, p.28). These concepts are highly relevant aspects in the development of what I initially called an ecology of participation, and they provide a theoretical framework for this methodological concept. I then proffer examples from six chosen dance artists: Anna Halprin (1920 - 2021), Simone Forti (1935 -), Trisha Brown (1936 -2017), William Forsythe (1949 -) Siobhan Davies (1950 -) and Boris Charmatz (1973 -) in order to illustrate both a historic development and what I consider to be ecosophical aspects which have influenced my own working practice (Guattari, 2000, p.28).

I draw on these six dance artists to illustrate examples of an early ecology of participation in practice, which gave both inspiration and context to my first research undertaken at Arken Museum of Modern Art in Denmark in November 2017. An ecology of participation later gives way to a posthuman ecology of participation, prompted by the work of bio-artist Patricia Piccinini during the second residency at Arken (2019) which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4. The chapter concludes by looking at the current situation for dance in art galleries and highlights both the challenges and positive aspects of this development for all actants but in particular the dance artist.

Historical overview: Dance moving into art galleries

To set my research in context, this section provides a brief overview of dance and art collaborations in galleries, focusing also on those visual artists who incorporated the moving body into their work; the subsequent section will look more closely at participation. Historically, it was art galleries in the US that laid the groundwork for

participatory encounters in the 1960s: these were forerunners in engaging both dance and performance art, in particular the Walker Arts Centre in Minneapolis, the Reuben Gallery and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. However, it was the Walker Arts Centre, initially a private home and art gallery, that was to expand and become one of the first non-theatre performance spaces to house dance performances in a gallery from as early as 1940.[31] Throughout its long history, the Walker Arts Centre has been synonymous with the support of innovative dance artists and the increasing presence of performance art. Merce Cunningham and Alwin Nikolais started performing there in the early 1960s, followed by dance artists such as Twyla Tharp and Trisha Brown during the 1970s, and Ralph Limon and Bill T. Jones during the last twenty years. Moving into the second decade of the 21st century, the Centre continues to promote innovative choreographers that often herald the start of a new era within dance and performance. Performances such as *Paradox of Stillness: Art, Object and Performance*[32] (April 2020) juxtapose still artworks with the live body and also include works by Simone Forti and Tino Sehgal. The Museum of Modern Art in New York, which opened a new space in 2019 designed specifically with performance in mind,[33] also has a long history of working with dance artists including Merce Cunningham, Trisha Brown, Ralph Lemon, Tino Sehgal and Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker, to name but a few. The Whitney Museum of American Art and the Guggenheim in New York all have dance and performance as part of their curating portfolio with the 'new' Whitney, which opened in the Meatpacking district in New York in 2015, also featuring dance and performance prominently in their Biennale events over the past decade.[34]

Merce Cunningham and Simone Forti were two of the first dance artists to present their work in gallery spaces in the early 1960s, though these were radically different in their content and presentation. Simone Forti, also a founding member of the Judson Church movement (1962-1964) brought experimental dance and improvisation derived from her time spent as an apprentice with Anna Halprin in California, while Merce Cunningham,

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31 https://walkerart.org/magazine/this-week-in-walker-history-from-galleries-to-art-center? (Accessed 05.06.18

32 https://walkerart.org/calendar/2020/paradox-of-stillness
'Presenting works from the early 20th century to today, *The Paradox of Stillness: Art, Object, and Performance* examines the notion of stillness as both a performative and visual gesture, featuring artists who have constructed static or near-static experiments that hover somewhere between action and representation as they are experienced in the gallery.'

33 https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/25/arts/design/dance-finds-a-home-in-museums.html (Accessed 20.02.22)

34 https://whitney.org/exhibitions/2019-biennial/films-performances (Accessed 15.04.20)

having broken away from the Martha Graham Dance Company, was developing his own more virtuosic and abstract dance style. As both a dance and visual artist, Simone Forti presented the first of her 'Dance Constructions', *See-Saw* (1960) at the Reuben Gallery in New York, and choreographer Merce Cunningham presented *Event #1* (1964) at the Museum of the Twentieth Century in Vienna, Austria. These two notable choreographers' works are still prominent in museum spaces and Cunningham's *Events* have been performed over 800 times, adapting his choreographed works for the different demands of gallery spaces; with the latest retrospective of his work taking place in 2017 at the Walker Arts Centre[35] (Bishop, 2018).

In the 1950s, visual artists such as Jackson Pollock (1950) and Kazuo Shiraga (1956) were also testing the boundaries of their art practice by incorporating their own bodies into their works. These became known as 'action paintings' (Rosenberg in Westerman, 2016), while another visual artist, Yves Klein (1958) was hiring 'models' as 'paintbrushes' where their bodily impressions on the canvas constituted the painting of the artwork (Rosenthal, 2011). Visual art was moving outside the confines of the canvas and towards the physical as opposed to the figurative; the body was becoming an integral part of visual artworks. This approach can still be seen for example in the work of Bolivian-American artist Donna Huanca[36] (Copenhagen Contemporary Arts, 2019). Huanca's large colourful canvases are complemented by dancers as mobile, painted works of art who, from being stationary, subtly move out of the canvas frame so that her large oil-painted canvasses become three-dimensional as the dancers move out into the gallery space.[37]

While some of the dance artists in the US in the 1960s were pioneering new methods of working in alternative spaces, dancers in the UK were only just starting to absorb the modern dance techniques from America, and in particular the dance techniques and works of Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. The Graham technique was to form the basis for the training of modern dancers at the London School of Contemporary Dance and its performance space The Place, initiated by the philanthropist, Robin Howard in 1975 (Jordan, 2003). The school became London's home for modern dance and still exists today, offering degree level training in contemporary dance. However, students graduating from the school were also active in creating an alternative dance scene and spaces such as the

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35 https://walkerart.org/magazine/hiroko-ikegami-merce-cunningham-events (Accessed 23.04.18)

36 https://copenhagencontemporary.org/en/donna-huanca/ (Accessed 07.10.19)

37 I attended this exhibition in August 2019. Unfortunately the dancers/models were only present at limited times.

Institute for Contemporary Arts in London[38] became a favoured performance venue when it moved to The Mall in 1968.[39] The ICA was not a traditional theatre space but a gallery used by contemporary dance artists in order to move away from the formality of the black box and allow for performances to be presented 'in the round' or in other alternative formats. In many of the above examples gallery spaces were used as more unorthodox spaces for choreographers to produce their work, though some also used this as an opportunity to shift and dissolve perceived boundaries between audience and spectator, performer and participant.

The 21st century has seen an increasing presence of *contemporary* dance in art galleries and in particular dance artists who also have a strong interest in visual arts (Bishop, 2014, 2018). Some of these dance artists have also been visual artists themselves, including Simone Forti and Trisha Brown, both of whom have created an extensive body of visual artworks. Choreographer William Forsythe, on the other hand, has curated exhibitions in collaboration with other visual artists and sculptors in order to engage the gallery visitor with their own physicality. Siobhan Davies has collaborated with visual artists, dancers, and the galleries, often starting from a 'blank page' to create a unique mobile performance space.[40] Similarly, Boris Charmatz has actively sought to include the gallery visitor as performer, participant and choreographer, as seen at Tate Modern in 2015.[41] These different aspects of engagement and facilitation led me to explore the possibilities of creating an ecology of participation in my own facilitation work with the aforementioned six dance artists significantly influencing my thinking.

Tracing participation in gallery spaces

One of the first indelible impressions concerning participation for gallery visitors could be said to have been created by visual artist, Alan Kaprow in 1959 with his '*18 Happenings in 6 Parts*', which specifically set out to include audience engagement. It was one of the first notable installations to set a score for gallery visitors to follow and gave rise to events which would later become known as 'Happenings' (Rosenthal, 2011, p.10). Since then, performances, participatory events and 'dance exhibitions' (Bishop, 2018, p.23), where dance encounters become extended performances to suit the needs of the gallery's opening

38 https://www.ica.art/about (Accessed 20.04.20)

39 Ibid.

40 Material/rearranged/to/be, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, May 2018.

41 https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/boris-charmatz-flip-book (Accessed 09.10.19)

hours, have become increasingly prevalent, with an upsurge over the past three decades (Bishop, 2018). This upsurge can be traced back to the myriad of socially engaged arts practices that first featured more prominently during the latter part of the 20th century in the UK. Bishop (2012) suggests that such projects were often focused more on social inclusion than on the quality of their artistic content. In particular, the community arts projects that proliferated in the 1970s and 1980s were seen by Bishop as prompting engagement that 'advocated participation and co-authorship of works' and 'aimed to give shape to the creativity of all sectors of society', intimating that their artistic value was questionable (Bishop, 2012, p.177). Bishop goes on to say that projects were directed more towards those who were socially, culturally and financially deprived (Bishop, 2012) and were part of a larger political programme set in place to shore up areas of cultural deprivation 'where the government cut back' funding (Bishop, 2012, p.14). Bishop has continued her critique of bringing art to the people as a substitute for bringing forward social positive change, and she reiterates in her book, '*Artificial Hells'* (2012), that she sees it as an imperative that participatory art is not considered as a political tool nor a 'ready-made solution to a society of the spectacle' but an activity that is as 'precarious as democracy' and therefore needs to be constantly tested and re-evaluated (Bishop, 2012, p.284); a point of view I adhere to.

However, even before the 1980s, dance artists, visual artists and galleries alike were seeking to open up the possibility for a collective, creative experience that could loosen the conventions of behaviour normally governing relations between the different art forms, gallery spaces and users. One such instance can be found in the archives of Tate Britain, as it was called in 1971 when they took the bold move to house a five-week retrospective of the work of sculptor, Robert Morris (1931-2018) entitled *Robert Morris.* Even though it was not the gallery's intention, the exhibition became a physically interactive artwork as Morris, who had no inclination for a retrospective, had instead designed a series of wooden and steel interactive sculptures to fill the gallery spaces so that visitors could enjoy the 'extended situation' (Morris in Westerman, 2016). This 'extended situation' included physical interaction with the installation pieces, as Morris saw this as the best way for the public to fully experience the size and materiality of the exhibition, testing their balance, dexterity, and endurance. However, this was a challenge that neither the visitors nor the installation could rise to; the physical prowess of many of the visitors was insufficient, as was the material stability of the artworks themselves, and the exhibition closed after only four days (Westerman, 2016). This exhibition, unique for its time, was designed for the

public to engage in a physical as well as a visual experience, and it received a renaissance at Tate Modern Turbine Hall in 2009 under the title *Bodyspacemotionthings* which included all the original pieces,[42] now reinforced and designed for the heavy usage that museums have come to expect when offering the possibility for visitor interactivity. The exhibition ran for three weeks and, as Westerman (2016) notes, there is now an expectation from the public to have the possibility to interact with these large-scale artworks that invite sensual interrogation. Another example of this sensual interrogation can be seen in the art installation '*I have grown taller with trees'* by visual artist, Claudia Comte (1983 -) at Copenhagen Contemporary in 2019.[43] In this installation the gallery visitor's ocular and physical capacities are challenged to interact with the artwork in order to fully appreciate the scale and tactility of the life-sized 'trees' in the exhibition. The intimate way the gallery visitors are encouraged to crawl, climb and even carve on the trees is intended to bring us as close to understanding their materiality as possible. One might argue that it is the responsibility of the artist and the galleries themselves to acknowledge these shifting borders and offer this kind of experience where relevant. It is this turn towards interaction and a greater sense of the material nature of the artworks that prompted a later adaptation of this thesis towards a *posthuman ecology of participation*, which will be described in greater detail in Chapter 5.

An appreciation for the materiality of the art objects and gallery visitors' involvement in dance was, and still is, an incremental process. From the tentative involvement by participants in Forti's piece *Roller Boxes* (MoMA, 1960), where the gallery visitors were invited to pull wooden boxes, to Forsythe's *White Bouncy Castle* (1997/2019) where there are 'no observers, only participants', there are evidential traces of the gallery visitor being willing to take on corporeal and creative challenges.[44] This would also seem to indicate a move towards creating a greater sense of autonomy for the gallery visitor and a liberalizing of the gallery parameters, which in turn effects a blurring and expansion of boundaries between artwork, artmaker and gallery visitor. Although Bishop has often questioned the artistic value of some participatory projects, she has also acknowledged that they could be 'a powerful medium for social and political change, providing the blueprint for participatory democracy' (Bishop, 2012, p.177). The idea of 'participatory democracy', and the expansion and re-thinking of the boundaries between audience and performer, are as

42 https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/robert-morris-bodyspacemotionthings (Accessed 09.10.19)

43 https://copenhagencontemporary.org/en/claudia-comte/ (Accessed 10.10.19)

44 https://williamforsythe.com (Accessed 04.11.18)

relevant in current work as it was during the performances at Judson Church and the Happenings of the 1960s and 1970s: there has been a continuum of relevance and intention, even if the approach or practice has changed. Dance scholar Sally Banes writes of 'active participation' (Banes, 2003, p.16) as primary to the audience experience in the 1960s, with artists such as Kaprow wishing to eliminate non-participatory audiences altogether in order to optimise the artistic experience. Setting this in context, the establishment of a dance space at Judson Church, New York in 1962 offered visual artists, choreographers, musicians and poets the opportunity to fully engage their interdisciplinarity and create a movement driven by an ideology that would allow for greater audience involvement and ultimately have a far-reaching impact on how dance more generally was viewed and engaged with. Parallels between the philosophies and ethos of the Judson Church era where artists worked 'at the very edges of artistic conventions' (Banes, 1983, p.101), and the exhibition '*Move: Choreographing You – Art and Dance Since the 1960s'* at the Hayward Gallery in London, in 2010, can be clearly seen.

This major exhibition included visual art, installations, performances, re-enactments, films and lectures and aimed to give the gallery visitor:

> an expanded awareness of how we can physically interact with our environment, using our entire bodies (and not just our heads) as a tool for gaining experience and knowledge (Rosenthal, 2011, p.7).

Rosenthal's quote once again highlights the shift towards giving parity to the moving body when it comes to 'gaining experience and knowledge'. In the catalogue of the exhibition, Stephanie Rosenthal, the curator at the time, mentions her fascination with the 'choreographic objects' of William Forsythe's work. 'Choreographic objects' pose the question, 'What else, besides the body, could physical thinking look like?' (Forysthe in Rosenthal, 2011, p.8). The answer to this question came in the form of sculptures and installations, prompting Rosenthal to mount this exhibition which included not only dance, visual arts and installations but, most importantly, also meant that the gallery visitor was drawn into an environment where the moving body was fundamental to experiencing the works of art. The porous boundaries between dance and art were highlighted and the fertile and mutual partnerships that arose brought the sentient body into the foreground, legitimizing movement and interaction amongst the artefacts. This retrospective included works from the past fifty years, with much focus given to the dance artists of the Judson Church Movement (Rosenthal, 2011). As Rosenthal explains, it was the intention to bring an expanded notion of choreography as a 'class of ideas' rather than an arrangement of

predetermined dance steps into an interdisciplinary environment, one that advocated the democratising of the body and the blurring of boundaries between visual arts and dance (Forsythe in Rosenthal, 2011, p.10). This drawing together of dance artists, artefacts and gallery visitors sought to create a harmonious synthesis of 'environment, social relations and subjectivity' (Guattari, 2000, p.28), which are the foundations for ecosophy and are akin to the components needed in creating an ecology of participation.

Move – Choreographing You, an extensive retrospective, represented a discernible shift towards what I consider to be an 'ecology of participation', where the artworks and gallery visitors are interdependent, creating a symbiosis and an environment that is *intra-active* (Barad, 2007) in its format. Intra-activity – as opposed to interactivity – according to Barad, questions the idea of a separation between subject and object and proposes that all encounters are relational and importantly, that this relationship is only formed *during* the encounter rather than pre-existing it. For Barad, intra-action 'recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through their intra-actions' (Barad, 2007, p.33). This suggests that, though humans, other-than-humans and materials in the exhibition have agency prior to meeting, unknown outcomes can emerge between the porous boundaries of subject and object, and they in turn are also indefinable, in flux and unfolding.

With such large institutions featuring dance and art interactions, others followed including, for instance, The Hepworth, Wakefield, (2014), who mounted the work *YARD,* by Allan Kaprow, its 24th 'reinvention' since its original showing at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York in 1961 (Wookey, 2015). Siobhan Davies presented *Every Day* at Glasgow Museum of Modern Art in 2013 and Yvonne Rainer presented her work, both dance and visual art, at the Raven Row Gallery, London (2014), to name a few. To follow, in 2015 the first *dancingmuseums* project also took up the challenge to offer gallery visitors other modes of perceiving and engaging with the works of art. I experienced the dance artists' work first hand when they had residencies at the National Gallery in London (November, 2016) and the MacVal Museum of Contemporary Art, south of Paris (March, 2017). Siobhan Davies Dance was the designated company for this first Creative Europe funded project, as she has a catalogue of activities in gallery spaces to draw upon. Siobhan Davies' gallery project, *'material/rearranged/to/be'*, in which I was a participant-observer, at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester in March, 2017 is a prime example of successfully creating an ecology of participation within the gallery environment, by providing a harmonious, adaptable and inclusive space, and I analyse this in greater detail later in this chapter. My

own participation in the *dancingmuseums* projects is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. The *dancingmuseums*[45] project started a second series of residencies from 2018-2021 where six dance artists, from different European countries, were involved in an action-research project designed to foster long-term collaborations between museums, art galleries, cultural institutions and their users, with a view to incorporating dance into gallery spaces.[46] In order to make clear that a second *Dancing Museums* project is underway, I henceforth refer to them as *Dancing Museums 1* or *Dancing Museums 2*.

It is interesting to note that when gallery spaces offer their visitors the possibility for intervention and interaction with artworks, with or without dance artists, it encourages the gallery visitor to investigate their own physicality and materiality in relation to an artwork. This has brought improvisational movement by the gallery visitor into the public sphere, acknowledging physical expression and movement as a natural and primal force and giving licence to different forms of movement other than the pedestrian. The gallery visitor is 'choreographing' their own experience in a collective, social constellation: a physical and dynamic mode of knowledge construction in the making. Although this resonates with my own research objective to create an ecology of participation, one which seeks to join the creative, collaborative and social experience within a framework which combines 'ethical values with the well-being of an enlarged sense of community' (Braidotti, 2013, p.190), the emphasis is now different. Though I echo some of the aspirations of the Judson Church movement, who sought to work 'at the very edges of artistic conventions' (Banes, 1983, p.101) and dissolve the strict delineation between the performer and their audience, I now also see as imperative a practice that includes both a democratic and ecosophical meeting. The dance artists of the Judson Church era sought a democratising of the body by paring back movement closer to its original form, and developing a movement vocabulary recognizable to all, in an attempt to remove the sense of the spectacular and elitist connotations. With these similarities in mind, one can see that the ecology of participation undertaken by the Judson Church movement focused more on the inclusive and community aspects of the meeting between dance artist and audiences rather than having ecological thinking at the fore. This became a further provocation for me to develop a

45 http://www.creativeeuropeuk.eu/funded-projects/dancing-museums-democracy-beings (Accessed 10.10.19)

46 The second round of residencies entitled *The Democracy of Beings* started in May 2019 and ran until 2021. https://www.dancingmuseums.com/ (Accessed 25.10.19)

research practice that could build on the important work of this time period *and* take it further to also include 'ecological sensibility' (Bennett, 2010, p.10). Ecological sensibility is manifested by acknowledging and experiencing that relationships between humans, other beings and materialities can be seen horizontally, rather than in a vertical hierarchy.

Democratising the body

The aforementioned galleries and artists have in common the desire to create a more egalitarian and non-hierarchical collaborative space, which according to Banes emerged during the Judson Church era, where the exploration of alternative spaces and 'working at the very edges of artistic conventions' prompted the writing of her article *Democracy's Body* (Banes, 1980, p.101). Banes points out the Judson Church movement's commitment:

> to democratic methods and to the complex collective process that led to choreographic modes that seemed to stand metaphorically for freedom (Banes, 1983, p.104).

These are aspirations similar to those encountered in the work of dance artists used in this thesis, who are seeking to offer interactions and experiences that give equal agency to participants. These 'democratic methods and complex collective processes' can be seen particularly in the changing role of the choreographer who often takes on the role as a 'facilitator' or 'delegate' to put forward the communal ideas of his/her dance collective (Kolb, 2013). Dance artists and galleries alike seek here to open the possibility for a collective, creative experience that can dissolve some of the conventions of behaviour traditionally found in the 'black box' of a theatre space, or the 'white cube' of an art gallery (Bishop, 2018). The impetus behind this is to lay the foundations for eradicating the traditional audience-performer dichotomy. Such reciprocal, osmotic encounters seek to flatten artistic hierarchies and involve participants in meaningful creative collaborations but, even though the political, social and cultural paradigms have shifted since the time of the Judson Church movement, many similarities remain. Here, entering the third decade of the 21st century, there is still a desire for more egalitarian and varied meetings between artists and their audiences as well as a striving towards greater social inclusion and an ongoing concern for the state of our environment and climate. It is interesting to note that *Dancing Museums 2* (2018-2021) was called *The Democracy of Beings,* and sought to bring dance

artists and arts organisations together to 'share, improve, develop and transfer skills and knowledge needed to broaden and deepen connections and relationships with audiences'.[47]

In dance training, this move towards 'democratising the body' can be seen in the dance movement form known as *Gaga*, named by its founder, Israeli choreographer Ohad Naharin in 1990, when he started his own company *Batsheva Dance Company* (Galili, 2015). It is mentioned here as it has two forms, Gaga/people and Gaga/dancers, and is based solely on guided improvisations in a 'round' format rather than the more traditional 'teacher in front' format. As the two names suggest, it is a dance and movement form for both non-dancers and professional dancers, but sets itself apart by not employing a particular dance 'technique' but rather activating the body of the participants through creative imaging and anatomical language. I see this particular movement form and teaching format as being particularly present in the ethos of 'democratising the body' as it seeks an inclusive, non-hierarchical and egalitarian method of working creatively with members of the general public and dancers alike. This movement form is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 when exploring the qualities and attributes required by dancers working in a facilitatory capacity in gallery spaces.

The idea of 'democratising the body' is an important element in the creation of an 'ecology of participation', and my six chosen dance artists explored in this chapter demonstrate this, albeit in very different ways. Anna Halprin (1920-2021) is considered to be one of the fundamental initiators of postmodern dance and is recognized for her exploratory approach to improvisation and advocacy for a greater connection to nature and for social inclusion and her site-specific work. Visual artist, dancer and choreographer Simone Forti (1935-) was also a student of Halprin's and took elements of her work into her own. Simone Forti, now in her nineties, continues to be a driving force in promoting the aesthetics of the pedestrian in the moving body, and her keen interest in kinaesthetic awareness as a means to sensing and understanding the 'body's changing dynamic configuration' is still relevant today with frequent retrospectives of her works being commissioned (Forti in Rosenthal, 2011).

Participation has been at the fore for French choreographer and head of the French *Musée de la danse* (*Centre Chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne*), Boris Charmatz. In 2015 he

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47 https://www.dance4.co.uk/projects/dancing-museums-ii/ (Accessed 15.04.20)

was invited by Tate Modern, UK, to mount a groundbreaking exhibition entitled *If Tate Modern were Musée de la danse?* (2015) where the whole museum was given over to dance and visitor participation. This two-day dance event, involving ninety dance artists, was envisioned and implemented together with his dancers and the participating public and put into action his vision for a *Dancing Museum* following his manifesto specifications.[48] Charmatz's vision involved overlapping and superimposing the entire gallery space with dance so that the visitors could experience differently how 'art might be perceived, displayed and shared from a danced and choreographed perspective'.[49] By inviting the gallery visitors to take part in simple warm-up sessions, together with the professional dancers, he sought to offer a 'democratising of the body' so that all who wished could be involved.

Choreographers Trisha Brown and William Forsythe have also closely integrated the architecture of museums and galleries into their performance work over the last fifty years. This includes Brown's *Walking on the Wall,* originally from 1970, which was revived at the Whitney Museum of Modern Art in 2010. A more recent example is Forsythe's *The Fact of the Matter* from 2015, where the entire museum (Museum of Modern Art, Frankfurt am Main) was reoriented and curated around a selection of Forsythe's works from 1994 to 2015. His installations were carefully integrated with the visual artworks and the modern architecture of the building so that the gallery visitor could be set in motion or prompted to perform a specific set of actions (Gaensheimer and Kramer, 2015),[50] thus creating what I would call an ecology of participation. It is through the re-imagining and re-organising of existing structures, giving opportunity for autonomy and agency and ethical considerations that the event opens up possibilities of co-creation, social relations and processes of becoming. It is in this realm that the dance artist can be an instigator or partner and assist in generating an atmosphere conducive to exploring the body's creative potential and to reflecting on its situation.

As curator Catherine Wood notes:

> If art, in its broadest sense, offers a way for us to look at ourselves and reflect on our time – a kind of symbolic mirror – then

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48 http://www.borischarmatz.org/en/lire/manifesto-dancing-museum (Accessed 03.04.19)

49 http://www.borischarmatz.org/?if-tate-modern-was-musee-de-la-danse. First-hand examples of Boris Charmatz's work in gallery spaces will be discussed later in this chapter. (Accessed 03.05.19)

50 Further discussions of Brown's and Forsythe's work are considered later in this chapter.

> performance within art stages us in the act of observing ourselves; it produces a two-way mirror (Wood, 2018, p.173).

However, forging a space and relationship between dance artists, gallery visitors and the gallery itself is an ongoing process of negotiation. The 'unruliness' of the dancing body, the 'performer/visitor hierarchy' and the possible 'transgressive' nature of its content are still, as Bishop suggests, issues to be considered, and this is discussed in the final section of this chapter (Bishop, 2018, p.27).

Having given a selected overview of participation in the art gallery I will now offer my initial framework for an ecology of participation, based on the philosophies and ethos that have filtered through from these dance artists through time. However, this framework has been developing and evolving during my fieldwork and first took on a tangible form only after I had completed my second residency at Arken.

Defining a theoretical framework for an ecology of participation in the context of the dance artist in the art gallery: An ecosophical lens.

Scholarly writing on the specific subject of an 'ecology of participation' within the art gallery is minimal, and so for the purposes of this thesis I have drawn from perspectives on ecology (Guattari, 2000; Morton, 2010; Braidotti, 2013), participation and facilitation in museum practice (Simon, 2010; Wookey, 2015) and pedagogy (Biesta, 2008; Bovill and Taylor, 2018; Chappell, 2019 and Hickey-Moody, 2013, 2016), in order to construct and further define my understanding of what an 'ecology of participation' might look like in practice in the context of a dance artist working in a gallery environment.

Ecology might be defined, as it is in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2008) as the 'branch of biology that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings'. Thus, in the context of this thesis, the creation of an 'ecology of participation' relies on the ability of the dance artist to adapt and work with the particular architecture and materiality of any given art gallery; to have sensitivity, tact and empathy concerning the relationship that they are entering into with the gallery visitors, and to have a heightened sense of kinesthetic awareness[51] and care for both the visitors and works of art. The word 'ecology' itself comes from two Greek words: *oikos* (house) and *logos*

51 The dance artist's specific qualities for undertaking these interventions are researched in greater detail in Chapter 4.

(speaking of/about).[52] In interpreting these words, I understand them to refer to an interaction within a given environment, place, dwelling, or institution. Secondly, in an 'ecology of participation', a form of collaborative meaning-making is taking place as a means to adapt, interact and co-exist in a dynamic community that is constantly changing. Through the attempt to build an environment of co-creation within the art gallery the dance artist offers an invitation to participate where the constituent parts have an equal voice and where interconnectedness, mutual trust and care are prioritized, thus contributing toward creating an *adaptable, harmonious and relational symbiosis where all have equal agency.*

In adapting this idea to an 'ecology of *participation*', within a participatory art gallery context, I refer to both the physical and relational environment as defined by the triadic encounters between dance artist, gallery visitor and work of art, or kinesfield.[53] Here dance artists actively seek to create and place their collaborative and creative artistic practices in the gallery space, in order to motivate and engage the gallery visitor in an active and reciprocal movement encounter which contributes towards creating an atmosphere compatible with an 'ecology of participation'. This ecological paradigm is used metaphorically, primarily to acknowledge that as individuals we are all integrated within the world and constantly inter-relating with everything around us; we *are* the ecological environment:

> which includes social, political, ethical and aesthetic dimensions, and the transversal links between them (Braidotti, 2013, p.93).

This notion links with that put forward by Guattari (2000) in his call for an ecosophical stance that advocates 'transversality' as a vital component: the contributing elements should not be seen as entities to be addressed separately but rather as enmeshed and of equal importance. 'Transversality' was first used by Guattari in the context of his work as a psychoanalyst to critique the hierarchical structures that were in place when treating patients in an institution where such structures were prevalent (Genosko, 2009). In an attempt to disrupt the mode of thinking enabled by hierarchical structures, he introduced new ways of working that would interrupt the normal roles of interaction within a pyramid structure. This he called 'the grid', whereby all members of the institution took on different roles across the 'organisational matrix', thus breaking down the existing hierarchy (Horton

52 www.environment-ecology.com (Accessed 10.09.18)

53 In my second residency at Arken, I also include the materiality of the artefacts in a posthuman context which is discussed in chapter 5.

in McCormack and Gardner, 2018, p.150). 'Transversality' according to Guattari, 'tends to be realised when maximum communication is brought about between different levels and above all in terms of different directions' (Guattari in Genosko, 2009, p.51). McCormack and Gardner (2018) understand Guattari's *Three Ecologies* (2000) to be:

> self, environment and relations (and that) the transversal dismantles the stratified order of things, and attends to the way in which all things operate ecosophically (McCormack and Gardner, 2018, p.4).

Such 'transversal thinking' across 'the socius, the psyche and the environment' (Guattari, 2000, p.41) and a desire for non-hierarchical structures can be identified in the work of the six dance artists/choreographers discussed later in this chapter. Claire Bishop in her book *Artificial Hells* (2012) also draws on Guattari in discussing transversality and the necessity for works of art to have a 'double finality' (Guattari in Bishop, 2012, p.273). According to Bishop (with whom I concur), this double finality refers to the work of art being able to be incorporated into a social context where it will either be embraced or rejected while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the artwork as a stand-alone concept. This conundrum is also pertinent in the context of the research in this thesis, which like Bishop, is also concerned with being categorised as an 'art-as-pedagogy' project which can become 'edu-trainment or pedagogical aesthetics' (Bishop, 2012, pp.273-274).

The three ecologies in Guattari's ecosophical framework are 'environmental, social and mental' ecologies (Guattari, 2000, p.41) and are to be understood in their broadest context without favouring one area over another. He advocates for non-hierarchical cross-disciplinarity, where the boundaries are always overlapping and forming a 'mesh' (Morton, 2010). The 'mesh' refers to the interconnectedness of the ecologies, and their permeable peripheries which go through matter of all kinds. The mesh has no beginning or end but is in a constant process of interaction across the finite and non-finite and all forms of matter, human and otherwise – all aspects of which I consider to be fundamental in the developing of a 'posthuman ecology of participation' (Morton, 2010).

Guattari's three ecologies are overlapping spheres, which I understand to also include the human and the non-human, and a re-thinking of the 'relation of the subject to the body' (Guattari, 2000, p.35). I understand these ecologies as a critique of our constant dualistic thinking in all these areas and see this as Guattari's call for a way of living that does not separate the 'social, political, ethical and aesthetic dimensions,' but advocates for

transversal links between them (Guattari in Braidotti, 2013, p.93). Bishop also sees value in art projects that have a social context, but one value should never be promoted at the expense of the other and she suggests a constant awareness and preparedness to re-evaluate the criteria for both (Bishop, 2012).

I acknowledge that Guattari's work is abundant and complex and this is a condensed and simplified synthesis of why I am choosing to use his ideas. However, to complete and defend this very brief venture into Guattari's ecologies and to clarify my point of view, I cite the work of Genosko in writing about Guattari:

> The three ecologies are an assemblage that shows how disparate domains constantly engage one another. There is a transference here between art's and ecology's hope in the creation of new universes of value (Genosko, 2009, p.84).

Accordingly, Guattari's ecosophical proposition foregrounds this equal assemblage of the 'environmental, social relations and human subjectivity' aspects, in their broadest terms (Guattari, 2000, p.28). He notes:

> We need new social and aesthetic practices, new practices of the Self in relation to the other, to the foreign, the strange …
> (Guattari, 2000, p.68)

Perhaps a good place to start is indeed through the arts and pedagogical practices.

Defining a theoretical framework for an ecology of participation in the context of the dance artist in the art gallery: A pedagogical lens

Taylor and Bovill (2018) use the term 'ecology of participation' to draw together their work on partnership, ethics and the co-creation of curricula in higher education (Bovill, 2013 and Bovill et al., 2011). Furthermore, they draw upon the work of mathematician and philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy which they use to frame a new method of working with the co-creation of curricula, between students and teachers, in higher education. The scope of this thesis does not expand into the area of process philosophy or teaching in higher education, but I have been drawn to Taylor and Bovill's criteria - as adapted from Whitehead - which outlines three principles related to their version of an 'ecology of participation'. Firstly, they refer to 'a process of becoming which

recasts subjectivity' which I see as offering opportunities to be in an ongoing situation that allows for change and development to flourish (Taylor and Bovill, 2018, p.112). Secondly, 'acting well in relation' (ibid., p.122) which I understand as a pedagogy of care and thirdly 'an orientation to harmony in which difference in equality is valued' (ibid., p.124), which advocates for embracing difference and otherness, human and more-than-human. Echoing Taylor and Bovill's criteria, utilising these values would support the dance artist's practice and allow for a working atmosphere that could foster sociality, collaboration, a greater sense of well-being, and appreciation of difference. Such attributes are particularly relevant in a setting where dance activities are not commonplace, such as in the formal space of the art gallery.

Bovill and Taylor's description of an 'ecology of participation' is elaborated with more formal institutional settings in mind, and it is important to emphasise the differences when working in public settings, rather than more formal ones. As noted, Claire Bishop also cautions against an art-as-pedagogy concept that risks undermining both art and pedagogy if equal attention is not paid to each of their qualities. She notes that '[t]esting and revising the criteria we apply to both domains' is of paramount importance and we need to:

> learn to think both fields together and devise adequate new languages and criteria for communicating these transversal practices (Bishop, 2012, p.274).

I see this as a reminder to be aware of the flexible and constantly changing nature of pedagogical engagement and how this overlaps with artistic encounters, while at the same time paying particular attention to the quality of each.

Stephanie Springgay also refers to Guattari's notion of transversality in her discussion of 'sensational pedagogy', understood as acknowledging the materiality of the body 'as a sensing and moving interface'. 'Sensational pedagogy' has ethical implications in that it has affective powers that can move us to act and re-act in different ways (Springgay, 2011, p.67). Both Bishop and Springgay refer to Guattari's notion of an 'ethico-aesthetic paradigm', which I read as a constant striving towards an ethical mode of creativity and inventiveness that considers the holistic wellbeing of the participant. This paradigm is also integral in embracing Guattari's *Three Ecologies* as discussed earlier (Guattari, 2000, p.41). I consider an ethico-aesthetic paradigm as a necessary presence in all forms of artistic pedagogy; formal, cultural and public. 'Public pedagogy' is also a term used by educationalist Gert Biesta in his writings on 'human togetherness' (Biesta, 2012, p.683).

This is seen as a mode of opening up public spaces to become, through their togetherness, public spheres. Following Biesta, public spheres as a concept rather than an actual space, could be said to also include public spaces, such as the art gallery, that allow for creative interventions and a greater sense of community (ibid., 2012). These interventions take the form of one who 'interrupts', who does not specifically teach or facilitate, but rather 'keeps open the opportunities for becoming public' (ibid., p.693). This is consistent with the role of the dance artist, who does not intend to be a teacher, pedagogue or provocateur, but to operate as a dance artist engaging in 'forms of interruption that keep the opportunities for becoming public open' through their creative activities (ibid., p.685). From this, I understand that Biesta is advocating for public encounters to be more about a process of relations, active engagement and embodiment which take place between people, and in this instance, between the dance artist and any number of gallery visitors within a public space.

Within a gallery context, differing modes of pedagogic engagement will arise including cultural, public and arts pedagogy, or as termed by Anna Hickey-Moody, there is 'pedagogy writ large' (Anna Hickey-Moody, 2010, p.227). She uses the term to embrace a broad spectrum of pedagogy that is also relevant in social contexts. Of particular interest here is her notion of 'affective pedagogy', of which she notes:

> Affective pedagogy is a framework for thinking through the pedagogical shift in perception effected by the aesthetics of an artwork (Hickey-Moody, 2016, p.258)

I see this concept as analogous with Biesta's notion of 'human togetherness', in that both seek to offer opportunities for different communities to create connections through aesthetic experiences, which in turn have the possibility to change our perception through 'affect'. 'Affect', as discussed here, refers to the ways in which we are preconsciously moved both mentally and physically before we are able to identify this stage as an emotion or feeling (Reynolds, 2012). According to Hickey-Moody, 'affective pedagogy' has the possibility to change our perspective and our subjectivity through creative arts practice. Hickey-Moody goes on to say that through an affective 'pedagogy of aesthetics' a form of 'posthuman material exchange' is taking place and that the affect prompted by an artwork invites new ways of perceiving, seeing and relating (Hickey-Moody, 2016, p.258). Likewise, Springgay's 'sensational pedagogy' is also dependent on affect:

> An affective or sensational pedagogy is a pedagogy of encounters that engender movement, duration, force and intensity rather than

> a semiotic regime of signification and representation (Springgay, 2011, p.78).

Through this form of affective and sensational pedagogy and the reassembling of the aesthetic milieu, one might argue that the dance artist, the work of art and the gallery visitor can engage in an encounter that is congruent both with an ecology of participation and a posthuman ecology of participation. Hickey-Moody considers affective pedagogy to be:

> posthuman because it is grounded in interpersonal relations, it is people responding to the *materiality* of art (Hickey-Moody, 2016, p.259).

This is particularly relevant in a context where gallery visitors are given the opportunity to engage simultaneously with the content of the artworks, the dance artist and the matrix of the immediate environment. Posthumanism is covered in greater detail in Chapter 5, but to close this section I will draw on scholar and dancer Chappell's proposal for (post)humanising creativity which she has written about extensively in the context of teaching interdisciplinary projects, including the sciences. Chappell reiterates that 'embodied dialogue' is fundamental to creative thinking, but adds that the posthuman dimension brings into play other living beings, materials, objects and environments in order to see these elements as intra-active actants that become vitally enmeshed in the outcomes (Chappell, 2018, p.279). Chappell also points out the importance of not applying human ethical considerations to these pedagogical situations but to consider 'an ethics of creativity' which is generated by the constellation of participants, both human and other, and takes into account the 'challenges of technology, relationships and sustainability (ibid., p.295).

Chappell's perspective is also compatible with Guattari's ecosophy within an ethico-aesthetic paradigm, and it is congruent with the work of my six chosen dance artists, who in their own different and transversal ways demonstrate this spirit and ethos. I have chosen to divide the six artists into two groups – one focusing on the 'environment' and the 'mental/self' (Halprin, Forti and Brown) and the other on the 'social/relational' and the 'mental/self' (Forsythe, Charmatz and Davies). I purposely entangle and 'mesh' (Morton, 2010) the ecologies to underline their interdependence and transversality. As stated, Guattari's three ecologies of the 'environment', the 'social' and the 'mental' encompass and overlap these spheres and also include the human and the non-human and the 'relation of the subject to the body' (Guattari, 2000, p.35). In addition, Guattari expresses the need for

'new social and aesthetic practices, new practices of the Self in relation to the other, to the foreign, the strange' (ibid., p. 68), an aspiration which also resonates with an ecology of participation.

Each of my chosen dance artists embraces and threads the three ecologies into their work, and although it would appear to be a contradiction to divide them, I do this intentionally in order to highlight a specific aspect of their work, either in terms of a more open encounter where the gallery visitor is not an essential element in the completion of the work, or in terms of their purposeful aim to engage the gallery visitor with their own physicality and inducing them to become entangled or active participants in the artworks – be they human or otherwise.

Anna Halprin, Simone Forti and Trisha Brown

Anna Halprin (1920-2021) is considered to be one of the founding figures of postmodern dance. Together with her landscape architect husband, Lawrence (1940-2009), she developed and taught somatically-based movement workshops and improvisation at her Californian home during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Amongst those who attended her classes on the outdoor deck of her home were Trisha Brown (1936-2017), Simone Forti (1935-), Yvonne Rainer (1934-) and Steve Paxton (1939-) who were later to be key figures in the Judson Church movement. The Halprins' concerns for the environment, community and social issues and their penchant for 'breaking the rules' opened the way for deeper conceptual experimentation and resulted in numerous community and activist dance projects and writings (see Banes, 2003). During the 1960s Anna Halprin, together with her dancers, created a myriad of choreographies focused on making the mundane and ordinary events of the everyday into performances that could change the way the public perceived such events: a 'ritual' that exalted the body as a 'fount of deep knowledge' (Ross, 2007, p.158). Halprin's works also engaged the methodology of chance in her performances so that the audience was free to make their own relationships between the events on stage and, in so doing, to make themselves become a part of the composition. Her later works would continue this use of everyday tasks, stretching the boundaries for performance and delving deeper into the origins of movement, assisted to a degree by her continuing interest in dance as therapy as a way to tap into her dancers' psyche. It was in her later years that she and her husband, Lawrence, became involved in community and environmental dance projects that acted 'in the gap between the personal, the public and the political' (Ross in

Banes, 2003, p.24). The Halprins hosted the *Experiments in Environments* workshops in the mid-1960s, with Anna often using these experimental settings as a starting point for new choreography. Here they began to realise their common ambition to forge an art form that combined the reality of the social problems of the time with creating extended choreographic works and site-specific events that focused on environmental and political issues of the day. Lawrence Halprin noted that the workshops gave:

> enormous insight into each person's interior desires and personality, his interests and attitudes – the restrictions create the form (Lawrence in Ross, 2007, p.205).

Here it is apparent that Halprin sought to bring the environment and relationality/social issues into focus. Her interest and commitment to combining her improvisational and somatically based artistic work with promoting environmental sustainability and, particularly in her later years, mental well-being and the championing of minority groups, are her legacy.

Halprin's working methods, with her famous outdoor deck, her use of trees, cargo nets, scaffolding and her 'task performances' can clearly be seen as having influenced the work of Simone Forti and Trisha Brown, who attended her workshops in the early 1960s. Forti would partake in these workshops and teach for Anna Halprin for four years before moving to New York with her visual artist husband, Robert Morris (see Chapter 1), where she would begin to present her own works in galleries and lofts. Forti and Morris became pioneers of participatory practices in museum spaces in both Europe and America. The process of moving into a gallery space was an organic and natural process for them, both having studied visual arts. For Forti, the gallery space allowed for a new configuration between performer and audience, the possibility for interaction with the artifacts and the creation of her own environments. In particular, the open spaces allowed for large-scale mobile works to be erected/performed and engaged with by the dancers and to some degree, by the gallery visitors. The possibility for greater mobility in the art gallery produced works such as *Roller Boxes* (1960), where the gallery visitors were invited to pull the boxes*, Hangers* (1961) where a construction suspended from the ceiling allowed the dancers to manipulate their movements with the help of ropes, and *Huddle* (1961), where members of the public also engaged in the simple actions that they saw the dancers create (Rosenthal, 2011). Forti's extended *Dance Constructions* not only created three-dimensional

environments but also brought the anatomical work that she had experienced with Anna Halprin back into focus. Forti expressed a desire to:

> bring together kinaesthetic movement intelligence with a real use of ideas in the form of props or organizational formal ideas (Forti in Breitwieser, 2014, p.38).

This later expanded to include *5 Dance Constructions* (1960/1961), which were first shown at the Reuben Gallery in New York. These pieces still continue to be performed today and the Museum of Modern Art in New York acquired the piece in December 2015 as part of their permanent collection. It was a landmark moment, reinforcing the changing focus for the art gallery through the acquisition of an 'art' piece with a different spatio-temporal and kinesthetic dynamic than was customary. In her later years, Simone Forti moved on to create 'news animations', 'anatomy maps' and animal portraits, continuing her passion for the study of natural forms and behaviours (Breitwieser, 2014).

Trisha Brown and Simone Forti met during Anna Halprin's workshops, and it was Forti who provided the soundscape for one of Brown's first pieces when she moved to New York in 1961. Like Forti, Brown was also an accomplished visual artist in her own right and was intrigued by the presentation of the ordinary in non-ordinary circumstances. Her 'equipment pieces', like the 'dance constructions' of Simone Forti, presented the moving body in ways not seen before, by taking natural movements and placing them in new and unexpected situations. Brown's iconic *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970) and *Roof Piece* (1971) are but two examples where movements are shown out of context, providing a stunning background for what are essentially everyday movements. Art galleries and outdoor spaces were often Brown's preferred arena to create dance and movement environments, and they became an interactive playground for her. She aroused visitors' physical curiosity and through creating interactive artefacts, she prompted them into dialogue with their own bodies. Trisha Brown died in 2017 but her works still exert influence on the dance and visual arts scene. They continue to be performed and exhibited in art galleries and site-specific spaces, the most recent being at the Edinburgh Festival in 2019 where five installation pieces, under the title *In Plain Sight,* were performed in the Scottish landscape, on lakes and in the woods.[54] Although she was not a direct advocate of visitor participation, her contribution to the ways in which dance was viewed and

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54 https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/13/arts/dance/trisha-brown-edinburgh-festival.html (Accessed 03.06.21).

experienced in art galleries and other non-conventional dance spaces warrants her inclusion in this chapter. Most notable amongst her pieces was *'Floor of the Forest'* (1970), a movement installation created in a loft in SoHo, New York City, and still performed in museums throughout Europe, including the Hayward Gallery in 2010, the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles in 2013 and most recently outdoors at the aforementioned Edinburgh Festival in 2019. This piece is noteworthy in the context of the history of dance in art galleries as it brought together a stand-alone installation, comprised of a large grid interwoven with ropes and hung with articles of clothing, which was also the movement apparatus for the two dancers. The two dancers 'perform' by putting on and taking off the displayed clothing, horizontally, while hanging several feet from the ground. There are signs explaining the functioning of the installation and, when the dancers are not present, it gives the gallery visitor the opportunity to fully engage their own kinaesthetic imagination and corporeal sensibilities when envisaging how this feat can be accomplished - thus activating their own kinaesthetic awareness and mental skills. The work oscillates between performance, installation and activation, encouraging the gallery visitor to act as a virtual mover within the grid (see Foellmer, 2014). Brown's 'choreography' was expanded to include the carefully placed instructions on the wall for the visitors to 'perform' even when the performers were not present, which engages with the concept of an 'ecology of participation' that can also include the virtual.

Tying together the work of these three influential female choreographers is their progressive and continuing commitment to activate and entwine the relationship between the dance artist, the materiality of the artworks and the visitor/audience; their implicit entanglement with materials and bodies paved the way for further exploration of an ecology of participation. Their approaches gesture towards feminist new materialism, even though the term was undefined at that point. Taking a cue from their work on interacting with their environments and materials made me consider how one could take this approach further and examine more deeply the agency of matter and our entanglement with it.

The following three dance artists, of a later generation, approach an 'ecology of participation' from a different angle: they seek the inclusion of the gallery visitor as an integral and constituent part of their artworks, of which they become co-creators.

William Forsythe, Boris Charmatz and Siobhan Davies

William Forsythe, Boris Charmatz and Siobhan Davies set themselves apart from the previous three dance artists in that they actively seek to engage the gallery visitor individually and collectively, in order for their artworks, interactions and installations to be fully appreciated. In much of their work one is also reminded of Bourriaud's 'relational aesthetics', which argues for 'judging artworks on the basis of inter-human relations which they represent, produce or prompt' (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 212).[55] In the works of these artists, designed specifically for art gallery spaces, the audience's integration, and sometimes its participation, are paramount. In the cases of Forsythe and Charmatz in particular, the objective is often more about motivating the gallery visitor to be active so that their works are perceived differently and sensuously. However, they achieve this in very different ways. In Forsythe's work, it is often the virtual and technological adaptations of an 'ecology of participation' that are manifested, and his notion of choreography might be understood as a way of *physical thinking,* rather than an arrangement of movements or steps. Though many of his activities in the art gallery do not involve live dance artists, it is a prime feature of his work that it activates the gallery visitor to engage in physical, creative exploration of the self. He believes that it is through the medium of movement that one can learn to know one's self better (Forsythe, 2016). Charmatz takes a different approach, always using dance artists and actively inviting them to partake in the creation of choreographies, re-enactments and the enjoyment of their own physicality and, in some cases, inviting the gallery visitor to join in.

William Forsythe (1949-) started out as a dancer and later became a renowned choreographer, first with *Ballet Frankfurt* from 1984 and then with his own *Forsythe Company* in Frankfurt until 2015. Parallel to his choreographic work he has created numerous commissions in art galleries around the world, the latest being in 2020 at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas. In 1989 he began to focus on what he calls '*Choreographic Objects'*, artworks that can be experienced as stand-alone installations or can be physically activated by a gallery public, creating an environment that becomes dynamic and complete through the presence of a participant. Though live dance artists are rarely present in

55 Bourriaud draws extensively on the work of Guattari in his book *Relational Aesthetics* (2002).

Forsythe's *'Choreographic Objects'*, the moving body and its capabilities are integral to his work, of which he says:

> No matter how diverse the scale and nature of these projects have been, they all strive to give the viewer an unadorned sense of their own physical self-image and to return the analysis of kinetic phenomena that was previously the exclusive purview of professionals to a platform that speaks clearly to the non-specialist (Forsythe, in Bogdan, 2018).

Forsythe's statement resonates with the ideals of the Judson Church movement in its desire to de-mystify dance and movement and make them accessible to audience members and gallery visitors, but he often employs advanced technologies, film and video in his works (Gaensheimer and Kramer, eds., 2016). As a significant contributor to creating an 'ecology of participation' he invites the public to experiment and engage with the different spaces, installations and media primarily through everyday actions. Forsythe encourages them to try out different physical tasks to better understand the physicality and limitations of the body, thus further promoting the idea of a 'museum in motion' (Kramer, 2015). These different physical tasks range from moving in time-lapsed films which morph the visitor's actions as in *City of Abstracts* (2000) to being in enclosed spaces which limit movement in *A Volume within which it is not possible for certain classes of action to arise* (2015), to attempting to traverse the gallery space through a myriad of suspended rings in *The Fact of the Matter* (2009). All the activities are carefully 'choreographed' by Forsythe to present the gallery visitor with an environment which tests and questions their senses and perceptions of movement and their bodies, often confronting them with a renewed appreciation for the capabilities or limitations of their own physicality. The installation *The Fact of the Matter,* taken from the name of the exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in Frankfurt, 2016, exemplifies this conundrum by pitting the gallery visitor against a seemingly manageable task of crossing the room by stepping into the many suspended rings, when in fact there are few who can accomplish the task without touching the floor. In this particular task, the participant is forced to try and integrate and manipulate their strength, co-ordinate their body mass and operate as a single entity while the installation opposes and disrupts this sense of a cohesive whole. In an interview with curator Mario Kramer, from The Museum of Modern Art in Frankfurt, Forsythe describes the task as an 'instrument of self-knowledge' (Kramer and Gaensheimer, eds., 2016, p.49). He notes that only by engaging with the installation can one gain this insight. Another installation, from the same exhibition in Frankfurt (2016), *Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time, No.3*, presented the

gallery visitors with the opposite challenge, asking them to *Please avoid coming into contact with the pendulums*. The installation, consisting of sixty metallic plumb lines hanging on long metal strings from the ceiling, was programmed to elicit a kinetic and acoustic counterpoint that divided the room into many, unpredictable changing parts activated by the visitors moving through the space. Forsythe describes it thus:

> Filled with unpredictable complexity, the space addresses the state of the visitor's perceptions and reflexes and leads them into a light and surprising choreography of perpetual avoidance (Forsythe in Kramer and Gaensheimer, 2009, p.49).

In these works Forsythe presents 'choreography' in a much broader sense than the arrangement of movement materials to constitute a dance, and he also researches extensively around the question, 'what else, besides the body, could physical thinking look like?'.[56] Through the use of 'choreographic objects' the gallery visitor is activated into motion, effectively becoming their own choreographer. His works invoke a physical curiosity, an adventure into participation where the body explores physically, adapts mentally and interacts relationally and ultimately learns *from* and *with* its environment – evoking an 'ecology of participation'. It is his commitment to the gallery visitor's sense of self-agency within these interventions, allowing for private experience in a public setting, which leads me to include Forsythe's work as exemplifying a mode of ecosophical thinking within an ecology of participation.

Concurrently with Forsythe's notion of expanded choreography within art galleries and museums, similar concepts were also being explored and realised by a new generation of dancers. Dancer and choreographer, Boris Charmatz (1973-) was thinking along the same lines and in 2009 was given the opportunity to establish the *Musée de la danse,* in Rennes, France. Charmatz's vision was for a new definition, not only of what a dance school could be, but also a museum. The question set by Forsythe as to how one can envisage choreography in other modes was embraced by Charmatz in his radical and provocative initiative where preconceived notions of what 'dance' and a 'museum' constituted were thrown up in the air and the definitions reassembled as they landed. His 'Manifesto for a Dancing Museum'[57] rejects the idea of a single 'centre', the 'choreographic' and the 'national', and instead proposes a pluralistic and expanded understanding of these words to

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56 https://synchronousobjects.osu.edu/media/inside.php?p=gallery (Accessed 11.05.22)
57 https://www-jstor-org.manchester.idm.oclc.org/stable/43966140?sid=primo&seq (Accessed 11.05.22)

encompass the wider environment. Here he sees choreography as a set of interchangeable tools to be used beyond dance and recognises that dance has no geographical or national boundaries (Janevski, 2017). Charmatz created a space for experimentation where the 'museum' was a place for dance and thought but also for movement and gesture, objects and archives (Charmatz in Janevski, 2017), and dancer Brennan Gerard has described the museum as being 'inside the bodies of the dancers' (in Janevski, 2017, p.132). True to its name of '*Musée de la danse'*, Charmatz's work moved into gallery spaces, first at Hayward Gallery in London (2010), then MoMA in New York in 2013 and again in London at Tate Modern in 2015 with the programme '*If Tate Modern was Musée de la danse'?* The paradox of dance and the museum, cohabiting as durational art, unlocked a wave of such projects and pushed the boundaries for what was considered dance and art. The question was raised as to whether it was the 'spectacular' that won over the aesthetic. However, Kathy Halbreich of MoMA states:

> if spectacle creates a sense of engagement with another human being, another body in space, then I'm all for spectacle! […] Maybe the most spectacular thing in the world is an empathetic connection to another person. That's what I see in the various spaces in which dance takes place (in Janevski, 2017, p.133).

This connection and engagement were apparent in March 2017 when I observed Charmatz and his dancers taking part in the Creative Europe *Dancing Museums 1* project at the Mac Val Museum in Vitry-sur-Seine on the outskirts of Paris. The Mac Val Museum of Contemporary Art was opened in 1999 in a multi-cultural suburb of Paris and houses French contemporary art. The MacVal Museum of Contemporary Art, as a partner in the *Dancing Museums* European project, arguably fulfilled the museum's mission criteria of 'living creation and increased dialogue around the artworks',[58] and the events I attended in March 2017 were well attended by the local multi-cultural community.

I was present when Boris Charmatz and his dancers presented excerpts from his *'20 dancers for the XXth century'*. Originally from 2012, the work epitomises the idea of the body as archive with the dancer's body being the source, the material and the instrument through which the gallery visitors experienced dance history in motion; the 'body being the ultimate space for a dance museum'.[59] Amongst other dance artists, Raphaëlle Launay and Magali

58 http://www.macval.fr/english/visits-events/article/events (accessed 21.05.18)
59 http://www.macval.fr/francais/evenements/archives/2017/article/dance-on-mars-boris-charmatz (Accessed 01.05.18)

Caillet-Gajan performed in the galleries, and in this instance each dancer had chosen a painting which appeared to have some personal meaning for them, to use as a starting point. Magali Caillet-Gajan chose a large portrait of the dancer Josephine Baker (artist unknown) whom she briefly referred to before going on to recall, perform, speak, laugh and interact with the gallery visitors while performing her 'dance autobiography'. I have assumed that she chose this two-metre high portrait of Josephine Baker to echo her own dance roots in commercial dance theatre and a certain freedom of spirit. The material she drew upon featured excerpts from well-known and lesser-known musical choreographers, and spanned a range of styles, from Isadora Duncan through cabaret to postmodern dance. Raphaëlle Launay chose to focus more on formal modern dance techniques and displayed virtuosity in her range of styles. Common to both, however, was the continuing narrative they gave while they performed, providing an extra dimension for visitors. They explained where the material came from choreographically and historically and what the material meant to them personally. The performances were intimate and humorous accounts of their own personal dance histories shared informally with the gallery visitors and seemingly well received by those that I spoke to, a number of whom responded to the experience with the following comments:

> "….it was interesting to see her inside the work, though I was surprised when she came over and hugged me!"!
>
> "I saw *Dancing Museums* in Bassano, Italy; this is quite different as it is a modern art gallery and seems a lot less formal. Watching Boris dancing was very intense."
>
> "I liked the different choreographies, you didn't feel trapped, it was all mobile and flexible, you could discover new things and I liked being in a light space."
>
> "I liked the close proximity and the personal stories."
>
> "I liked the liberty they take, it is not fixed, it is their own life, their own understanding, not history book, but personal."
>
> (Quotes from visitors at MacVal Museum of Contemporary Art, Paris, March, 2017)

These reactions seem to exemplify Boris Charmatz's own 'manifesto'[60] for a museum for artists that included being 'incorporated', 'transgressive' and 'provocative'. Though at first glance Charmatz's vocabulary may not resonate with an ecology of participation, seen through a new materialist frame as the previous artists, I consider that his working methods do promote a creative environment that is inclusive, dynamic and vibrant. He stimulates our quotidian way of thinking and doing; we become part of a community 'that in its inclusivity and exuberance, redeem(s) the equality of the thought, the thing, and the movement in the museum setting' (Halbreich, 2016, p.15). This framework also applies to the gallery visitors, who come as *viewers* of the works of art, but often end up as an *incorporated* audience or, alternatively, expected to participate only to find that they must wait in line for their turn. Either way, it is interesting to note that, as Bishop suggests, the problem of scaling performances or interventions up or down to accommodate gallery visitors and spaces remains a challenge for both dance artists and galleries (Bishop, 2014, p. 66).

The intertwining of different modes of performance and zones of engagement within a gallery space brings with it challenges for managing the space and its visitors. As an observer at Charmatz's event, it was clear to me that intrinsically the dance artists were creating an 'ecology of participation', allowing for a flow of intra-activity with the gallery visitors and the artworks. It genuinely felt that new relationships were forged in the moment of meeting. The gallery visitors became involved in making the environment one of creative engagement, facilitation and participation. The open and informal space of the galleries gave the visitors the option to take part, to stand their ground, or to move away from the interactions. This freedom of choice helped to create a feeling of consensus, where vibrant energy, creative collaboration and harmony could co-exist. These elements of performance, participation and re-enactment, along with autobiographical improvisation and facilitation, proved to be components that successfully captured the middle ground between the 'black box' (of a traditional theatre) and the 'white cube' (of a traditional gallery space), enabling a chequered pattern of both, rather than a 'grey zone' as critically suggested by Bishop (2018).

Another example of this fluid adaptation to a new environment, for both the dance artists and gallery visitors, is clearly seen in the work of Siobhan Davies Dance, whom I turn to

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60 https://www-jstor-org.manchester.idm.oclc.org/stable/43966140?sid=primo&seq (Accessed 11.05.22)

here in order to illustrate my argument that, like the dance artists before her, Davies seeks to create environments and ways of working that are 'transversal' in their thinking and execution. Davies also seeks to create environments where relationships are central to her theme, whether they are between the dance artists themselves or between the dance artist and the gallery public invited to assist in a movement experiment, as seen in *Manual* (2013) or *Table of Contents* (2014), where Davis notes: 'we had the audience in mind from day one' (Wookey, 2015, p.90). Davies is interested in exploring the fluid boundaries between dance artist and gallery visitor where each draws from and sometimes interacts with the other. She notes that:

> where (we) as danced-based performers might choose to place an internal border between expressing ourselves as an articulate, informed performer and then moving back across to being the source material we always are (Davies in Wookey, 2015, p.90).

Seeing her in action one is aware of her shifting attention and focus, between gallery visitor and choreographic material. Her concern for creating mobile and relational environments was very clearly articulated in the dance exhibition and installation, '*material/rearranged/to/be*' at the Whitworth Gallery in May 2017, which sets itself apart from many other collaborations, as it was fully integrated from the start into the assigned empty gallery spaces. There were no paintings or other artefacts that were not directly related to the project and it was also fully mobile, apart from the installation *1+1: Variations on Alteroception* by visual artist Emma Smith, who was part of the collaborative team on the project. The dancers, movable screens and videos moved their location after the flexible four-hour loop of diverse activities had expired, thus changing their relationship to the space and the gallery public, in a constantly shifting and dynamic environment congruent with an 'ecology of participation'. The ten artists, working with Siobhan Davies, had all worked independently from Aby Warburg's *Atlas Mnemosyne* (2010), creating material that ranged from delving deeply into the psychological aspects of Warburg's work (Mathias Sperling's *Loop*) to the more immediately identifiable, but still complex, duo of Siobhan Davies and Helka Kaski in *Figuring*, or Charlie Morrissey's *Actions from the Encyclopaedia of Experience*. Morrissey's contribution consisted of a series of improvisations prompted by single phrases projected on the movable screens. The phrases, stemming from his research and appearing randomly, challenged Morrissey to create improvised movement, sometimes from contradictory instructions; 'actions on the projected thoughts of the audience'; 'actions planned but unexecuted'; 'actions not yet made'; 'actions defined by gravity'; 'actions defined by blood'. Morrissey's intention was to question and explore 'the

discrepancies and convergences between what he feels and what the audience sees and feels as they watch him' (Wright, 2017, p.75). In near-constant motion, Morrissey strives to make his movement intentions almost tangible to the audience, reading the texts and 'reading' the audience, using his wide movement vocabulary to communicate with the visitors.

Siobhan Davies Dance's performance installation exemplifies how a collaboration with an art gallery, where the starting point is the bare gallery architecture and a common theme and which allows the space to evolve organically to facilitate the dance artists, the gallery visitor and the installation, can be particularly successful. In some instances the dance artists themselves were the 'works of art' and in others the objects were directly or indirectly the 'works of art'. What was common for all was Siobhan Davies' chosen source material of Aby Warburg's *Atlas* and the bodily archived material of each artist. Each focused on creating an environment of inclusion and participation through their specific art form, whether it was movement, light, sound or the visual. Informing each artwork was a desire for the gallery visitor to become mentally and physically aware and engaged in the overall visual impression and also the detail of each artist's personal embodied archive. By working across and between different disciplines and between the dance artists, the gallery visitors and the spaces, the dance exhibition could produce:

> a transversal circuit between the same domains that short-circuits this scalar hierarchy and catalyses a continual flow between them (Horton in MacCormack and Gardner, 2018, p.168).

A 'flow' of creative activity is activated by the individual artists as they develop an overlapping and constantly changing environment of community and participation through an ecosophical lens. Davies' dance exhibition takes into consideration the social dimension (through the meetings between people), the changing and evolving environment of the gallery space (her mobile and flexible installation) and ethical considerations for the individual (an open invitation to be involved in the space or not).

These six chosen dance artists clearly demonstrate a desire to work transversally and within an ethico-aesthetic paradigm that embraces the principles of ecosophical thought – each in their own way and to a greater or lesser extent. However, I consider that they all seek to invite their audiences to connect with their own bodies and, through the dance artist's creative processes, initiate a sense of harmony and relational symbiosis, where an

entanglement with the self, with others and with the environment is mobilized and foregrounded. The examples discussed thus far exemplify the ways in which transversality requires an understanding of the interconnected interactions between ecosystems, understood here as the dance artists and their work, social spheres (the gallery spaces), and the realm of the individual (the gallery visitor). Taking this entanglement to a micro level, we can see it in action between the individual dance artist, the work of art and the gallery visitor. My use of the term 'kinesfield' (Schiller, 2008) which is discussed in detail in the following chapter, is also relevant here to describe this triadic relationship, which I consider vital to embrace if the dance artist is to sucessfully engage the gallery visitor. However, regardless of the amount of preparation, the dance artist's contributions are not always embraced or accepted as part of the gallery's profile, and working towards new understandings of what dance is, and can do, remains an ongoing, exciting and unpredictable process.

Conflicts and contributions: The art gallery as the dancer's place of work

The alliance between dance, dance artists and visual art through sharing gallery spaces remains contentious and is viewed as problematic by critics such as Bishop, who argues in her essay '*The Perils and Possibilities of Dance* in *the Museum* (2014) that:

> [the] traffic between dance and the museum is one way and always on the museum's terms; dance animates the galleries of the museum but ultimately the museum flattens and homogenizes our experience of dance (Bishop, 2014, p.66).

Bishop also decries the fact that performances in for example, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, were 'sonically and visually adrift', noting that the spaces and acoustics are not always compatible with dance pieces that have been transposed from a theatre setting to the open spaces of the modern art gallery (Bishop, 2014, p.64). In an interview in 2011, choreographer and performer Jérôme Bel (Moreno, 2014) remarked that if dance was to be seen and appreciated in the art gallery it made sense for the dancers to be there for the duration of the opening hours and the exhibition; a practice that would be both labour-intensive and prohibitively expensive. However, these points of view reveal but two of the aspects that challenge both the gallery and the dance artist, with each forced to look at the reality of 'budget, concept and availability' (Rosenthal in Wookey, 2015, p.129). The gallery space, and in particular its floor, is most frequently unsuited to being danced on for several hours a day, over a period of time, and the dance artist is not an inanimate object to be

displayed; therefore compromises clearly have to be made. Rosenthal (2015) suggests that designated performance spaces, that are more attuned to dance, should be made available *within* the gallery space, thereby allowing for the integration of the two art forms but also taking into consideration the requirements of the dancing body.

Integrating existing performances into gallery spaces can be problematic and Bishop is concerned that dance can sometimes 'play into the hands of the experience economy' and that the 'integrity of the work' can be compromised (Bishop, 2014, p.72). I can empathise with these points of view in cases where choreographies are simply transposed from a proscenium stage to an art gallery, without being redesigned for either the space of the gallery or the transitory nature of the public. This transition from the so-called 'black box' of the proscenium stage to the 'white cube' of the art gallery has, according to Bishop, landed artists and participants in something of a 'grey zone'. She suggests this 'grey zone' has been created through the confluence of the traditions of the focused proscenium stage with the open and more informal fluid atmosphere of the gallery space, and refers to the resulting hybrid performances that also tend to inhabit the space for longer durations of time, as 'dance exhibitions' (Bishop, 2018, p.23). The impetus for these 'dance exhibitions', suggests Bishop, comes from the choreographer adapting their work to the gallery space,[61] as exemplified by Merce Cunningham's *Events* from 1972 or Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's *Work/Travail/Arbeid* (2015), or from a visual artist employing dancers and movement in the presentation of their works: this would include Robert Rauschenberg and Robert Morris (Bishop, 2018). Bishop also highlights the ubiquitous presence of various types of technology employed by many to record their experience, for example, the smart phone camera, thus inevitably refocusing the visitor's attention from the live to the screen. However, Bishop doesn't view this as necessarily negative but rather as a reality to be embraced and used to the full. Though I support this viewpoint, I would argue that developing an ecology of participation seeks to foster and promote meaningful live/personal interaction between a facilitating dance artist and a receptive gallery visitor or visitors. In my own practice, the aim is in part to redress the balance from the preponderance of everyday virtual interface to face-to-face interaction, and to develop an environment where human, rather than technologically framed participation is embraced. However, many dance artists have embraced new media to extend their work within the art

61 https://walkerart.org/magazine/hiroko-ikegami-merce-cunningham-events
https://www.rosas.be/en/productions/388-worktravailarbeid Accessed 02.04.19)

gallery, adding a new dimension through the use of 3D headwear, video and even holograms.[62]

The restrictive notion of dance and choreography as a compilation of pre-determined steps performed in space and time by professional dancers is, fortunately, no longer a general definition, and 'choreography' has come more into the mainstream of our everyday language. We hear the term 'choreographed' in reference to politicians moving around and interacting in the Houses of Parliament, we hear of the 'choreography' of war or the flight of birds but more often than not, it is still associated with dance and performance. Dance scholar Susan Leigh-Foster has written extensively on the subject, noting that in current practices, it is more about 'a practice of facilitating a collaborative encounter among dancers, directors, and artists in allied mediums' (Leigh-Foster, 2011, p.6). I would also add to Leigh-Foster's framework that a choreographer can be anyone offering the potential for creative expression through movement of humans, non-humans or objects, as in some works by William Forsythe. At the extensive exhibition at Museum for Modern Art in Frankfurt (2016), Forsythe displayed such diverse objects as feather dusters and suspended weights, and at the Gagosian Le Bourget in Paris (2017) flags on robotic arms were used as 'choreographic objects' to direct the gaze and focus on the observer.[63] This confrontation with expanded forms of choreography has created a dilemma for both dance artists and gallery visitors alike; both have raised questions about the level of ambiguity that is created when dance and movement are viewed in visual art spaces. Some dance artists are aware that the resulting expansion of their audiences 'legitimizes dance' to some extent and has the added potential to raise its status as an art form (Bel & Charmatz, 2014). However, as dance, and contemporary dance in particular, might be seen to be a more marginalized art form, it is also important to be aware of 'colonisation' by the art gallery, where the gallery regulations determine the content, form and physical spacing of dance events (Bishop, 2018). Franko and Lepecki also suggest that art galleries extend this invitation because: 'dance's presence in the museum reconfigures the very nature of the visual in the visual arts', and they pose the question whether dance in the art gallery is there:

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62 For example see: http://lionsaltworks.westcheshiremuseums.co.uk/about-us/latest-news/virtual-reality-dance-experience/; https://vrdust.org.uk; Simone Forti, *Angel* (1976) and Wayne McGregor, *Stairwell* (2010).
63 Excerpt from video of *Black Flags,* (2017) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XVrrmm9jno (Accessed 11.05.22)

> to operate through its crevices, cracks and usually dormant spaces to offer a spectacle of the living (Franko and Lepecki, 2014, pp.1-2).

Whatever the motivations for the art gallery and the dance artist, it is clear that there are possibilities for both, if we think transversally and ecosophically, to allow for a new form of relational symbiosis to transpire. I consider that the gallery space can offer a new and extended platform, not only for dance artists, but also for art practices more generally. Presenting gallery visitors with alternative and sometimes radical aesthetic possibilities, reframing the place of the living body in a 'productive cross-contamination' or engaging with a dance artist can alter the way we think, perceive and engage with the world (Wood, 2019, p.28).

Conclusion

This chapter set out to explore a historic overview of the incursion of dance into the art gallery that set a precedent for engaging the gallery visitor with dance and movement. It also set out to offer distinct examples of encounters that have influenced my aspiration towards developing an ecology of participation. By highlighting specific, though diverse examples of interaction, I have argued that the creation of this environment is dependent on the dance artist working from an ecosophical viewpoint and seeking to activate the gallery visitor, and I have underlined what might be considered to be vital elements in the creation of this environment. Thinking 'transversally' to include the environment, the self and relationality has proved crucial to this argument. Transversality offers a new 'dialectical contemporaneity' in working with gallery visitors (Bishop, 2014, p.9). Though Bishop uses this term in writing about three museums' approaches to facilitating their collections of visual art, the term also concisely covers the role that my chosen dance artists wished to adopt – one that produces a rethinking of the *approach* to gallery experience. This gallery experience takes on board the dialogue with the artworks of the past, present and future, and also the contribution that collective creative encounters can bring to a gallery public. Bishop illustrates how relatively small museums have been able to represent themselves singularly well by demonstrating the ability to make their permanent exhibitions 'provocative' and relevant to the past, present and future (Bishop, 2008, p.27). Although she does not refer to any movement encounters, I consider that what she names as 'dialectical contemporaneity' also runs through the work of my chosen dance artists. From the early works of Halprin, Forti and Brown to the later works of Forysthe, Davies and Charmatz, each has sought to offer a space of 'choreographic dwelling' (Schiller and

Rubidge, 2015) where the 'choreographic object' (Forsythe, 2018) can be seen anew. Whether it is an artwork, an installation or the dance artists themselves, it becomes the 'model of potential transition from one state to another in any space imaginable',[64] and offers a set of physical circumstances which in turn offers the participating body new knowledge about itself. My chosen artists have each sought to bring their vision of dance into a gallery space, combining existing works of art, or their own, with movement ranging from the pedestrian to the spectacular in order for gallery visitors to be captivated, questioned, engaged or puzzled. But their primary motivations are their desire to create greater understanding and awareness of our own physicality within an aesthetic framework; a deepening sense of our interconnectivity and a way to engage through an artistic medium with the social and environmental issues that we are faced with.

The examples used here challenge Bishop's (2018) 'black box / white cube' conundrum and embrace the idea of space, whereby gallery visitors' attention is allowed to fluctuate between observation, participation and performance. This is not without its complications and there remains a sense of 'friction between performance and visual art'[65] (Bishop, 2018, p.40). Indeed some gallery visitors have yet to accept this expanded mode of experiencing visual works of art in collaboration with dance and performance. However, rather than Bishop's 'grey zone', I see an integrated landscape of 'black box' and 'white cube' emerge with the presence and intervention of the dance artist in the art gallery. Here, periods of physical engagement and attentiveness will alternate with periods of observation and commonality or stillness with physicality. The concept of a museum, like choreography, has already been challenged by Charmatz and will continue to expand. But it will be of vital importance for dance artists to be seen as 'works of art'[66] in their own right within museum spaces and this will take time. As Charmatz expresses in his *Manifesto for a Dancing Museum* (2008), it should be:

> a permeable museum – it defends the principle according to which an openness to a broader concept of dance means allowing other movements to influence us, leave behind a fixed identity. To open up to difference.[67]

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64 http://www.williamforsythe.com/essay.html (accessed 10.04.18)

65 This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

66 See Chapter 3

67 https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/calendar/manifesto_dancing_museum.pdf (Accessed 12.05.22)

However, maintaining and raising the artistic integrity of *both* art forms remains the challenge.

Further investigation is needed to understand how gallery visitors respond to these new interventions and encounters and how dance artists can introduce and optimise the face-to-face and even body-to-body experiences. However, such triadic encounters between the dance artist, the gallery visitor and the gallery space clearly have the potential to open up possibilities for a fertile, creative and mutually beneficial collaboration. The following chapters[68] will attempt to elucidate and unravel the kinds of complexities that arise, in particular for the professional dance artist, when expanding this engagement towards a 'posthuman ecology of participation':

> based on a strong sense of collectivity, relationality and hence community building which crucially includes our environment and the other-than-human (Braidotti, 2013, p.49).

The suggestion here is that through the invitation to sentient involvement and through the stirring of the imagination from inner vision to embodiment, we can arrive at ways of knowing in the world that can cross the divide between animate and inanimate, between the established and the experimental and the past and the present. Inviting the gallery visitor to explore their own physicality requires an alert, sentient and reflexive dance artist to facilitate the unfolding of personal stories, underlining Forsythe's statement that 'movement is fundamentally knowledge creation' (in Gaensheimer and Kramer, 2015, p.41).

The historical overview underpinning this chapter, which has explored examples of what might be considered an ecology of participation, moved me to consider how this approach could be developed and employed during my own research project at Arken Museum of Modern Art in Denmark in November 2017. The following chapters map this journey, in both England and Denmark, and its subsequent evolution into a posthuman ecology of participation.

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68 Details of my primary research, with the *Dancing Museums* two-year European project which took place in five countries (2015-2017), the residency of Siobhan Davies Dance at The Whitworth, Manchester (2017), and the research undertaken by myself with dance artist Lucy Suggate and two groups of postgraduate students from the Danish National School of Performing Arts working at Arken Museum of Modern Art in Denmark, in 2017 and 2019, are investigated in more detail in chapters 2 and 4.

CHAPTER 2

Fieldwork: Examples of Dance Facilitation in Practice: *Dancing Museums* - National Gallery, London (2016) and Arken Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj, Denmark (2017).

Introduction

The previous chapter presented a historical and ecosophical overview of a selected number of dance artists who have influenced my approach to working with dance in the art gallery. Their approaches prompted important questions about how, in particular, today's contemporary dance practices can enhance the gallery visitor's experience. This chapter continues the journey, starting with my own education that involved working transversally with the creative arts,[69] through to the design and implementation of the research represented in this thesis as a whole. My own educational and professional interaction with dance and visual art prompted my initial request for a research period with the first *dancingmuseums* project from 2016–2018.[70] My participant-observer role in the *Dancing Museums 1* project[71] offered a valuable, but distanced glimpse of the role of the dance artist and I therefore sought to undertake my own research. As a dance practitioner myself, I saw the opportunity to develop a process that could focus specifically on how the dance artist prepares, designs and implements their working methods with gallery visitors. I therefore decided to undertake the role of researcher-practitioner at Arken Museum of Modern Art in Ishøj, Denmark. I make a distinction between participant-observer and researcher-practitioner as my roles were radically different in the two projects: National Gallery, London and Arken, Denmark. In this chapter, I focus on significant encounters between the dance artists and gallery visitors in both settings and across my different roles, in order to elucidate moments of invitation, its physical unfolding, and its aftermath. I highlight the challenges faced by the dance artists, examine the outcomes, and investigate the framework in which they occurred and their possible resolution.

69 At Dartington College of Arts, Totnes, Devon (1971-1973)

70 I also attended the first residency of *Dancing Museums* 2 entitled '*The Democracy of Beings'* but it will not be included in this thesis.

71 Now designated as *Dancing Museums* 1 to distinguish it from a second series which started in 2018 and finished in October 2021.

The chapter focuses in greater depth on the residency at Arken in 2017 as this offers more detailed insights into the work of the dance artist. The theoretical framework around which the residency was designed, including the concepts of the 'kinesfield' (Schiller, 2008), kinaesthetic empathy (Sklar, 1994), and touch (Manning, 2011) is also presented. The chapter closes with a selection of quotes and comments by both the dance artists and gallery visitors.

From *Dancing Museums 1*, London, to dance in a gallery of modern art, Denmark

One of the aims of the *Dancing Museums 1* project was to promote professional development for staff and visual artists and to create space and time for dance artists to research and develop their own creative work, sharing these experiences with other organisations and gallery visitors. Furthermore, the ambition for each residency in *Dancing Museums 1* was to:

> culminate in the creation of a new participatory, performative work in each of the five European cities highlighting the role live performance can play in enhancing understanding and engagement in art.[72]

Investigating this goal, concerning the role of the dance artist engaging creatively with the gallery visitor, was particularly relevant for my research and I therefore decided to request permission to take on a role as participant-observer during the two remaining residencies at the National Gallery, London and MacVal Museum of Contemporary Art on the outskirts of Paris. Working through observation and participation as a researcher was a new role for me in my own professional practice and I applied this methodological approach at two locations during *Dancing Museums 1*.[73] In my primary research residency at Arken Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj, Denmark in November 2017, I took on the role of researcher-practitioner, as I was also involved in the preparation, design and implementation of the encounters. The Arken residency was designed and undertaken together with dance artist and choreographer, Lucy Suggate,[74] and five second-year postgraduate Dance Partnership

72 https://archive.dancingmuseums.com/about.html (Accessed 26.04.20)

73 The first residency I attended was at the National Gallery in November, 2016 and the final residency was at MacVal Museum of Contemporary Art, Vitry-sur-Seine, Paris, France in March 2017.

74 www.lucysuggate.com (Accessed 11.12.16)

students from the Danish National School of Performing Arts in Copenhagen, Denmark.[75] Suggate has worked extensively in museums and art galleries, both independently and as the designated dance artist for Siobhan Davies Dance with *Dancing Museums 1*.

The lessons learned from *Dancing Museums 1* were carried forward into my own primary research in Denmark; initially in November 2017 and again in March 2019, both at Arken Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj, Denmark. After the *Dancing Museums 1* project, many questions were raised but remained unanswered and I sought to implement and answer these questions by designing a week-long residency at Arken in November 2017. However, findings from this residency and, in particular, my reflections and analysis of the role of the dance artist concerning the qualities, attributes, skill-sets and experience needed to embark on encounters with gallery visitors, prompted me to further investigate how their preparation and training could be optimised (see Chapter 3). I then planned to implement these findings in my second period of research in March 2019 (see Chapter 4). The second residency at Arken in March 2019, however, was radically different from the first due to the framework set by Arken and the content of the exhibition we were asked to work with. Therefore, I sought to put into practice the philosophy behind what I later called a 'posthuman ecology of participation' (discussed in Chapter 4), building on the experiences and understanding gained from my earlier research.

Personal and professional context: a transversal meeting with the arts

My interest in the overlap between contemporary dance and visual art can be traced back to my education at Dartington College of Arts in Devon, UK in the early 1970s.[76] At this time the college, under the leadership of Peter Cox, was enjoying a period of relative stability and was being recognised internationally as a pioneering arts college which was considered 'assured and influential' (Ross, 2008). However, by the late 1970s the necessity for the college to become academically aligned with other educational institutions, and its bid to secure funding, marked the start of a long and tumultuous transition period from its independent arts college status at Dartington Hall in Totnes, Devon, to a Dartington Campus in 2008, before being fully integrated into the larger academic network of the

75 This education received validation as an MFA in Dance and Participation, from the Danish Cultural Ministry in 2020.

76 Dartington Hall, near Totnes in Devon, was purchased in 1925 by Leonard and Dorothy Elmhurst who restored the medieval buildings and set up the Dartington Hall Trust in 1932. Over the years it has become a renowned centre for performing arts, education and sustainability, with an emphasis on combining these three elements.

University of Falmouth in the south west of England. The original site of Dartington College of Arts is now known as Dartington Arts School and Schumacher College with two new MA offers, *Art and Place* and *Poetics of Imagination*, originally due to start in the autumn of 2020. This continues the ethos behind the 'Dartington Experiment' which sought to offer 'inventive and radical approaches to arts pedagogy', which involved 'prioritising context as a core factor and "material" in art-making processes', approaches which resonate with my own research.[77]

Having come from a background in classical ballet, my move to Dartington College of Arts in 1971 was an unusual upheaval from traditional dance practices to a more radical community where the teachers were 'creative artists in their own right and trail-blazing teachers and educationalists' (Ross, 2008, p.161). Our first year was divided equally between dance, drama, music and visual arts: a curriculum unique in the UK at its time. The second year was devoted to our 'specialisation' - for me, this was contemporary dance - before moving on to Rolle College, Exmouth, UK, to take a teaching certificate.[78] The dance training at Dartington at this time, though predominantly based on Graham technique,[79] also focused heavily on improvisation and choreography, which in other institutions was predominantly a separate education *after* a career as a dancer. Dartington also had a constant flow of guest teachers, mostly from America, including Steve Paxton, Lisa Nelson (both influential teachers in Contact Improvisation) and Flora and Georgia Cushman (Graham technique). But above all, the philosophy of 'learning by doing' was dominant: risk-taking and collaboration were seen as guiding principles, and an understanding that the strength of the Dartington legacy lay in its philosophy of seeing the arts as a single, unifying concept, rather than separate entities, was paramount.

I deferred my teacher training year at Rolle College and instead moved to New York to continue studying contemporary dance.[80] Here, during the Summergarden dance series at

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77 https://www.campus.dartington.org/arts-school/history-ethos (Accessed 26.02.22)

78 Dartington College of Arts ceased to exist as an independent arts college in 2008 when it merged with University College Falmouth, eventually moving to Falmouth in 2010. There is a renewed postgraduate educational offer under the management of the Dartington Trust in what is now called Dartington Arts School.

79 Mary Fulkerson took over the Dance Department the year I left and the dance education became more somatically based, with 'release technique' being taught.

80 Initially I received training primarily in Graham, Horton, jazz and classical ballet, later taking classes in Limon and Hawkins techniques. In Denmark I would begin improvisation, contact improvisation, composition and somatic practices. I went to Rolle College in 1974 to complete my teacher training course and then returned to New York again.

the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1974, I would see dance in an art gallery setting for the first time. Over the next seven years in New York, whilst performing and teaching, I would take every opportunity to attend dance performances, indoors and out and especially those in an art gallery context. These performances emancipated the body from the confines of the proscenium stage and allowed the dancers greater autonomy in exploring their physicality. Trisha Brown was famously experimenting with gravity on the tops and outsides of buildings (*Man Walking Down the Side of a Building,* 1970; *Roof Piece* 1971), Simone Forti was performing in the gardens of the Museum of Modern Art, and *The Multigravitational Dance Group* was experimenting with weightlessness at The Guggenheim.[81] I experienced a new way of viewing dance and art as independent entities, but more importantly, and for me more fulfilling, as art forms sharing and exploring new realms of form, dynamics and collaboration, simultaneously.

After leaving New York in 1980, I spent three years performing and choreographing in Munich, Germany before moving to Copenhagen where I joined Uppercut Dance Theatre, becoming co-artistic director in 1985. During the next fifteen years, whilst performing, choreographing and teaching with the company, we would perform in art galleries and museums throughout Denmark, first using the space as an alternative to proscenium theatres and later choreographing and improvising for the specific spaces offered in the museums. These included performances and teaching projects at *Statens Museum for Kunst,* October, 1990 (the National Gallery of Denmark), *Thorvaldsens Museum, Glyptoteket,* March, 1990 (The New Carlsberg Glyptotek) and *HEART* (1991), (Herning Museum of Contemporary Art). Our work in museum spaces, though not always specifically participatory, remained a focal point during my professional career and the decision to research this area for my thesis came naturally when I left Denmark in 2015. I had been employed by the Danish National School of Performing Arts since 2000,[82] teaching contemporary dance and dance pedagogy, and later went on to develop The Dance Partnership Education as a two-year post-graduate course. In 2020 it received status as a Master of Fine Arts (now called Dance and Participation), awarded by the Danish Cultural Ministry. Having a knowledge of Denmark, its culture and language, made the decision to

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81 I attended a performance in 1975 in New York. Claire Bishop also refers to this group in her article 'Perils and Possibilities of Dance in the Museum' from 2014, p.64.

https://www.nytimes.com/1975/05/11/archives/dance-miss-evanitsky-the-choreographers-multigravitational.html

82 Then called Skolen for Moderne Dans.

undertake my research there easier, and I contacted Arken Museum of Modern Art, south of Copenhagen, to ask if they would be open to experimental work with dance artists and a participating public. I knew of the reputation of the art gallery as a progressive and inclusive institution, focusing on offering arts experiences for the local community while at the same time having an international standing in terms of its art collections and exhibitions. I would be working on site with the postgraduate Dance Partnership students from the Danish National School of Performing Arts, so its proximity to Copenhagen and its spectacular setting was an additional bonus.

My decision to undertake my own primary research was partly due to the fact that it was difficult to gain sufficient insight into the role and work of the dance artists when observing the *Dancing Museums* project. This was possibly due to my late arrival on the project, the extended number of researchers wishing to be involved,[83] the busy schedule of the dancers themselves and the added administrative work involved in having additional external collaborators in museum spaces. The research questions raised by *Dancing Museums* were also more institutionally based, focusing on 'long-term collaborations between dance organisations, museums, universities and local communities'[84] rather than on the role of the individual dance artist and their ways of working, which was my main focus. I was fortunate to be able to make contact with Lucy Suggate during the residency at the National Gallery[85] in London in 2016, and this contact resulted in two extensive collaborations with her in November 2017 and March 2019. Seeing Lucy in action and interviewing her at the National Gallery would set the foundation for the collaborations to come at Arken Museum of Modern Art in Denmark.

Dancing Museums: National Gallery, London, November 2016

The National Gallery collaboration was the seventh residency out of eight[86] in the Creative Europe funded project which started in Bassano del Grappa, Italy in 2015, and finished in Paris in March 2017. The aim of the project, consisting of five European dance organisations and eight museums, was to:

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83 The first DM started in 2015 and I first joined in 2016.

84 https://www.ednetwork.eu/activities/dancing-museums-the-democracy-of-beings (Accessed 19.09.19)

85 National Gallery film narrated by Lucy Suggate. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFbnzapPCRY (Accessed 26.03.20)

86 The final residency was at MacVal Contemporary Art Museum, south of Paris, and my experiences there are covered in chapter 2.

> define and implement new methods to engage audiences and enhance the journeys which people make when walking through rooms of history and art spaces. Drawing the public's attention to contemporary dance as an inclusive, communicative form, events will be produced such as choreographic guided tours, participatory workshops and a web platform, where the protagonists are both the artists and the public (*Dancing Museums,* press release).[87]

At the National Gallery, as the dance artist representing Siobhan Davies Dance, Lucy Suggate spearheaded the dance activities, and took the lead on designing the creative engagements together with the other four dance artists. Each dance artist had the possibility to direct the dance encounters at a different museum or art gallery,[88] choosing their own methods, preferred ways of working and in some cases, external collaborators. Betsy Gregory, a former dancer, choreographer and arts administrator, was acting as mentor during the activities and was on hand to offer advice and guidance as needed. I was able to interview Lucy and followed her work during the five days at the National Gallery, gaining greater insight into how she approached and developed her creative work and interactions with the gallery visitors. Lucy describes her way of working in the art gallery as follows:

> My artistic response to paintings has been to focus on time, space and colour, manipulating my body within these frameworks. The physical marks I make enable the public to read the body as a live and painted manifestation. Their reflections back to me always include reference to an aspect of the museum artwork as well as what I am doing (Suggate, in Dougan, 2016, p.81).

Lucy has also been interested in audience proximity and saw her work with *Dancing Museums* as an opportunity to redefine the performer/spectator role and examine the transactions that were taking place.[89]

Gill Hart, the National Gallery's Head of Education (2016), suggests that whilst many art galleries and museums are now incorporating dance into their programming, for the National Gallery the focus of *Dancing Museums* was to look at ways of enhancing 'visual

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87 https://archive.dancingmuseums.com/assets/dancing-museums-press-release-.pdf (Accessed 06.08.17)

88 The other seven museums are Arte Sella, Italy; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Netherlands; Civic Museum, Bassano del Grappa, Italy; Gemäldegallerie der Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna; Le Louvre, Paris; MacVal Museum of Contemporary Art, Vitry-sur-Seine, Paris; Palazzo Sturm, Bassano del Grappa, Italy.

89 Lucy's attributes in working in a gallery context are covered more fully in Chapter 4.

literacy' other than the explanatory spoken word. Working with choreographers was a possible way to test this (Hart, 2016). The interactions undertaken by the five dance artists were carefully choreographed and included improvisations, short performances, simple contact work with gallery visitors and the introduction of 'human furniture' for the gallery visitor to take advantage of. The proposition of 'human furniture' was devised by Lucy as a means to give the gallery visitor a physical rest from 'museum fatigue' by offering them the support of the five dancers to rest on a 'human chaise longue', lie back in a 'human arm chair' or be held aloft in 'the elephant chair' to better see a large painting. Initially, this strategy was used by the dance artists amongst themselves in order to encourage gallery visitors to take part. Once gallery visitors had seen others participate, they were eager to follow and this appeared to be a successful way of integrating the public.

Researcher-Participant Observations

During my five days at the National Gallery, there were always a large number of visitors present – perhaps the cold and wet November weather was a factor in bringing them inside. As would be expected at a renowned museum in a capital city, the visitors were multinational and ranged extensively in age. It was striking to note how the visitors reacted to the dancing presence. The dance artists were mostly dressed in everyday clothes; jeans, tee-shirts and trainers, so did not stand out as being part of a performance or different from the average visitor. Gallery visitors often walked by the activities without a glance, sometimes clearly ignoring their presence, while others stood and watched and many took videos. However, as soon as the dancers, in this case, Lucy Suggate and Connor Schumacher, put on a costume for a short, choreographed piece, the public stopped and watched. For Connor's piece, chairs were also placed for the public, making it clear that this was a more traditional performance. Lucy's short performances also had similar audiences. However, during contact improvisation work, where the dance artist and a gallery visitor were in close physical contact, sharing weight and supporting each other, few stopped to observe. I noticed this myself, as it seemed almost intrusive to stand and watch this simple contact duet; the fact that the dancers and gallery visitors were concentrated and physically touching each other gave an intimacy not usually seen in a public art gallery.[90] Of particular note was an improvisation by Lucy Suggate prompted by the

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90 *Dancing Museums* has excellent short videos on their website from each residency. The National Gallery (seventh residency) is narrated by Lucy Suggate and shows the encounters described above. https://archive.dancingmuseums.com/artefacts.html (Accessed 20.02.20)

painting *The Rokeby Venus* by Velasquez (1647) which was vandalised by suffragette Mary Richardson in 1914, reportedly in retaliation for the arrest of suffragette leader, Emily Pankhurst and her objection to the constant male gaze on the reclining nude female figure.[91] Lucy, dressed in a tattooed body stocking and heavy sneakers, talked to the public, improvising and telling them of the history of the painting and suggesting that a Venus of the 21st century might well be covered in tattoos and wearing sneakers. The fact that Lucy talked whilst dancing appeared to surprise some of those watching, particularly when she asked them questions during her improvisations. Some replied, others not, which may also have been to do with language. Proximity to her public is crucial for Lucy Suggate's work. As she notes, performance spaces:

> often insist on distance; fixed perspectives that somehow seem counter-intuitive. If my work is about passing on energy from one physical body to another why would I want you to be stuck still? In a gallery, paintings and the moving body are no longer separate- they are extensions of each other. Everything comes alive (Suggate, in Dougan, 2016, p.78).

This quote exemplifies a mode of ecological thinking, where there is a melting of boundaries between Lucy, the artworks and the gallery visitors she encountered. I saw significant potential in her way of engaging with gallery visitors and works of art and became intrigued by her approach, where I saw scope for further collaboration.

Both Hart and Suggate acknowledge the delicate balance needed if dance in the museum is to become part of a visual and visceral encounter that enhances the gallery visitor's experience. For example, Lucy speaks of expanding and contracting her energy according to the situation. Years of experience have taught her how to integrate and graduate her movement in subtle ways so that new ways of seeing and feeling can be extended to the gallery visitor. Gill Hart closes the interview with these words:

> The disciplinary exchange between choreographer and educator demonstrates that carefully designed experiences can lead to extraordinarily powerful visual encounters for everyone involved (Hart, in Dougan, 2016, p.83).

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91 http://www.artinsociety.com/from-the-rokeby-venus-to-fascism-pt-1-why-did-suffragettes-attack-artworks.html (Accessed 25.09.17)

Having experienced how Lucy was able to successfully engage gallery visitors through her ability to be adaptable, to harmonise with her environment and create a sense of equity between herself, the gallery visitor and the artworks, I felt compelled to ask her to collaborate with me. This further research would investigate what conditions needed to be present to allow for these evocative encounters between dance artist and gallery visitor to take place and to be well received by the gallery visitor. Through building on the experiences from the *Dancing Museums 1* project, I set out to research, together with Lucy, how this could be implemented during a residency at Arken Museum of Modern Art in November 2017.

Arken – The Beached Ship, 'the user-involving museum' (Jalving, 2016)

> *The exposed setting and the wind are the first thing that strikes one on alighting from the bus after a brief journey from Ishøj train station, south of Copenhagen in Denmark. Next, the looming expanse of white angular concrete reinforces the image of a futuristic beached ship, stranded on a deserted shore. Then as one crosses over the bridges and approaches the main entrance, the expansive space funnels towards a narrowing entrance and one sees the welcoming, larger than life, statue of the waving golden boy on the rocking horse*[92] *and one is forced to smile and feel warmed by this whimsical welcome.* (My first impressions on arriving at Arken Museum of Modern Art, 31.10.17)

As a cultural and political idea, Arken Museum of Modern Art was first considered in the 1960s when it became apparent that this southern area of Copenhagen had been left behind in terms of offering a visual arts experience for its growing multi-ethnic population. The area north of Copenhagen had several museums and art galleries, including the renowned Louisiana Museum of Contemporary Art in Humlebæk, but the southern area, according to politicians, lacked:

92 The 'boy on the rocking horse' is a sculpture by Elmgree & Dragset, called *Powerless Structures, Fig. 101* (2012), displayed at the entrance to the museum.

> a museum that should particularly benefit the area's many children and young people, and counteract the unequal distribution of cultural options in the Copenhagen area (Jalving, 2016, p.10).

In the 1980s the area had been reclaimed and dammed up as a Beach Park with seven kilometres of sandy beach and dunes for the enjoyment of the local population, and in the late 1980s a competition was launched to design a contemporary art museum which was to be positioned on this new waterfront, but planning permission was declined and the building placed further inland. However, the young winner of the competition, Søren Robert Lund, was later able to see his vision of the museum as a 'beached ship' after the building was awarded a grant in 2016, enabling it to be re-landscaped and the area turned into an 'art island' surrounded by water. So it stands today, 26 years on from its inauguration by the Danish queen in 1996 - with two large extensions to allow for international visiting exhibitions and its own renowned permanent collection.

Arken's commitment to providing a museum that 'engages the visitor emotionally and intellectually via both mind and body' (Jalving, 2016, unpaginated), and my own knowledge of the museum as an institution that promotes interaction, creativity and movement, as well as dance classes, made it an ideal institution to approach with my research project. In November 2016, I approached dance artist Lucy Suggate to enquire if she would lead the practical work with the postgraduate students in my research at Arken. I also approached the head of the postgraduate Dance Partnership programme at the Danish National School of Performing Arts, Laura Navndrup Black, and invited the five postgraduate dance students to work with Lucy Suggate in preparing them for a facilitatory role at the art museum. After consultation with the students' head of department, Lucy Suggate and I then sent an outline for a residency to the museum in January 2017. The outline proposed a five-day residency at the end of October 2017 with the six dance artists (including Lucy) who would act as facilitators, engaging, interacting and responding through movement and dance, to the artworks and gallery visitors as they made their way through the galleries. A tentative but positive response was received in May 2017 and we were invited to a clarification meeting at Arken to further expand on the project. The meeting took place with Jane Bendix, the Education and Development Officer and Dea Antonsen, one of the Museum Inspectors, and a provisional plan was designed and sent to the museum director, Christian Gether. It was agreed that 1st August should be the deadline for an answer from the museum and Lucy Suggate would come and work with the students for a week at the

school and museum in the middle of August to prepare them for the work to be undertaken. However, it was not until the end of September that the final letter of invitation was received from Arken. The delay was due to unforeseen circumstances and illness at the museum. Fortunately, both Lucy Suggate and the Danish National School of Performing Arts had kept the August dates and 30th October to 6th November free and the residency was confirmed.

The residency was designed to research the role of the dance artist in creating and implementing multi-sensory encounters that could take place spontaneously within the gallery setting. I wished to answer research questions concerning what skills the dance artists needed in order to engage in facilitation and movement encounters with gallery visitors and how this 'skilling-up' could best be achieved. This latter question is answered in greater depth in the next chapter. Preparation and training were required for the postgraduate dance students before venturing into the gallery so Lucy was employed by the Danish National School of Performing Arts on two occasions. In August, at the start of the school year, to begin work for the students to follow up on later, and again for a few days prior to the residency. It was also Lucy's brief to guide the activities during the six days in the gallery space, allowing me to focus on my research. To give a rich account and a diffractive response to the research activities I have highlighted specific encounters or 'significant moments' to use as descriptors in order to go into greater depth with an analysis of the situations that arose. The constraints of space and time make it practical and judicious to use this method, though I also acknowledge that this cannot give a full picture. I have looked at encounters primarily from the point of view of the dance artist, but gallery visitor reflections and comments are included and the physical setting of the gallery itself is described in order to present a more balanced view of events.

Research design for the encounters

After several skype meetings and discussions with Lucy Suggate and Laura Navndrup Black, the head of department at the Danish National School of Performing Arts, a provisional plan was made and the students were invited to join the project. They were asked to answer some questions about their expectations for such a residency and where their particular areas of interest lay so that these could also be taken into consideration. They were also asked to read relevant literature concerned with the research and received an abbreviated copy of my PhD proposal. Subsequently, a letter of consent to participate

was sent to the students and all signed.[93] For the dance students the primary focus of the research would be:

> to explore alternative modes of facilitating and interacting with the gallery viewers and artworks in order to promote and foster new forms of perception and engagement. (Extract from the information sent to the students)

In addition:

> the theoretical framework for the research would be focused on the intersection of kinaesthetic empathy, pedagogy and the creative process and how these play an intertwined role in the creation and implementation of the movement encounters. (Extract from the information sent to the students)

Three different types of movement encounters were proposed in order to offer a range of creative movement experiences for the gallery visitors. The activities were intended to fulfil my research needs and to be compatible with the abilities and interests of the dance artists and the profile of Arken, and they initially included the following:

- Short solo performances – choreographed by the dance artists and offering their interpretation of a specific work of art. The solos should be facilitatory in their presentation and offer room for comment and discussion, before, during or after the short performances.
- 'Random encounters' – these are spontaneous invitations to take part in a creative process together with a dance artist or artists. These creative processes can include participating in simple improvisations, taking part in group exercises that highlight an aspect of the artwork or partcipating in 'human furniture' where the dancers offer a 'human' seat from which the gallery visitor can view the artworks. Participation by the gallery viewers is entirely voluntary and participants are chosen and invited at the discretion of the dance artist, by mutual consent.
- Family workshops – open explorations for the whole family which will be offered at the weekend. Participants are free to observe or participate as they wish. Lucy Suggate would lead the workshops with assistance from the postgraduate students.

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93 The letter followed the protocol set down by the University of Manchester and an outline of the five-day project was sent to each of the students.

On arrival at Arken, it became clear that it was not possible to fulfil all these obligations and we therefore had to divert from the original plan. I should note here that one of the issues that arose frequently during all of the research projects relates to the different schedules and needs of funded institutions compared with those of the researcher. Researchers and institutions work to very different timescales, as do artists and researchers. Circumstances were often such that our plans had to be altered, adapted, changed or simply deleted.

Deviations from the itinerary

On arriving at Arken my contact, Art Educator Jane Bendix, with responsibility for education and development, informed me that there had been cancellations and that changes needed to be made to the itinerary. This resulted in adjustments to my planning and research. Firstly, it was not possible to arrange a meeting with Jane Bendix to discuss the art gallery's commitment and motivation for hosting the residency, as she was to be away from the museum on a course from Tuesday to Friday, the time period we were in residency. Also, as she was not present during any of the residency, she was unable to assess the impact of our presence and whether our interventions met their criteria, so I have chosen not to include this final question in my analysis. Secondly, the 'family workshops' at the weekend were cancelled in favour of more open-ended encounters, as family workshops were already being offered in another context. It was important for Arken that all the rehearsals and preparations took place in the gallery spaces and were also accessible to the gallery visitors. Thirdly, the planned 'encounter' with a class of children from the local school was also cancelled at the last minute. A group of students from the local high school was given the opportunity to engage instead, but the explanation given to them beforehand, by their teacher, about the dance artists' presence and the possibility for a movement encounter was such that their participation was negligible. I will offer possible reasons for this later in the chapter.

We adjusted our schedule accordingly so that these revisions could still include the encounters important for the research. In fact, the looser structure allowed for greater fluidity than had been envisioned; this had both positive and negative impacts. Primarily, it meant that the open-ended encounters were more prevalent and spontaneous and relied more heavily on the students providing their own motivations, creativity and frameworks for their encounters. For some students, this was no problem, but for other less

experienced students, it meant that they were not always sufficiently equipped to sustain working independently or collaboratively in this way. Examples of this are explored later in this chapter.

Methodology and theoretical framework

The research undertaken at Arken Museum of Modern Art included different 'facets' of my overall research question. The idea of 'facets' is taken from Jennifer Mason's (2011) work on 'Facet Methodology' which likens the overall research question to a gemstone with many 'facets' and states that:

> Facets are conceived as different methodological-substantive planes and surfaces, which are designed to be capable of casting and refracting light in a variety of ways that help to define the overall object of concern by creating flashes of insight. Facets involve different lines of enquiry, and different ways of seeing (Mason, 2011, p.77).

The 'facets' involved in this residency set focus on the following questions, though not all were answered due to issues around availability and illness:

- How does the dance artist engage with gallery visitors through the medium of movement and dance? What makes an encounter successful for the dance artist and gallery visitor? What skills are the dance artists bringing to dance encounters?
- What is happening in this triadic kinesfield[94] during this embodied encounter where the dance artist invites interaction between the visitor, the works of art and dance artist?
- How does bringing a corporeal and multisensory encounter into the art gallery shape the visitor's experience and what impact does this embodied intervention have on the visitor?
- What are the motivations for the art gallery to commit to promoting the moving body in their art gallery?

94 The concept of the kinesfield is employed to 'describe the relational dynamic of movement interactions that traverse the body and material forms in unbounded space' (Schiller, 2008, p.431).

In order to begin to approach these questions, different methods needed to be employed and here I drew primarily on the sensory-ethnographic methods proposed by Sarah Pink (2015). As noted above, I saw sensory ethnography as a valuable method. This approach can encompass 'embodiment as process' and offers a variety of methods that set the multisensorial at the fore for both knowing and learning (Pink, 2015, p.27). The methods I employed included active observation, participation, writing of field notes, videoing of movement encounters, and in-depth semi-structured interviews with the dance artists. Though I had also prepared questionnaires for the visitors, these were not used, as direct contact was more appropriate and valuable. I was able to conduct a limited number of interviews in either Danish or English, depending on the visitor, but I chose to focus on the physical encounters 'in the making' instead. In pursuing the research it also became clear that the field of study was overly broad and due to the limited access to museum staff and the relatively short time period, I therefore, decided to restrict my scope to answering the first two questions:

- How does the dance artist engage with gallery visitors through the medium of movement and dance? What makes an encounter successful for the dance artist and the gallery visitor? What skills are the dance artists bringing to the dance encounters?[95]
- What is happening in this triadic 'kinesfield' during the embodied encounter where the dance artist invites interaction between the visitor, the works of art and dance artist?

In order to approach these questions, I will describe examples to outline the encounters undertaken and then provide analysis of selected interactions from the different actants. Clearly, there were other interactions that I did not observe, so a complete picture cannot be given.

The Week in residence: a brief outline - Monday 30th October to Sunday 5th November 2017

Arken Museum of Modern Art is closed on a Monday so the students had the opportunity of returning to the museum with Lucy to revisit the works of art they had chosen in August

95 The skills, attributes and qualities needed by the dance artist to engage in movement encounters are covered in greater detail in chapter 3.

as inspiration for their choreographic work. From Tuesday to Friday the students were to undertake the different forms of encounters, as described earlier, and Friday would also be used to plan extra activities for the weekend when a larger number of visitors was expected. Although this plan was discussed and agreed upon beforehand there were deviations from it and I will discuss the reasons for this and the solutions proposed as the situations arise. Lucy and I had been in contact throughout the process and a personal meeting with myself and the students was planned for May. This meeting and subsequent contacts prior to October ended up taking place on skype or via email. Lucy, however, was able to work with the students for three days in August and prior to the start of the residency in November. On the first Monday at Arken it was confirmed that the family workshops at the weekend would not be taking place. The museum preferred not to formally schedule a workshop in the gallery space but give more room for random encounters and spontaneous meetings between the dance artists and the gallery visitors. This then allowed time to also plan a sensory encounter, involving smell, which I will discuss in more detail later in the chapter. They also recommended that all preparations for the weekend, when there would be more visitors in the gallery, should take place in the galleries themselves in order to underline that 'process' was the focus; a viewpoint we fully endorsed.

Lucy and the students worked together at Arken on Monday and Tuesday morning, to recap on the work they had begun in August but unfortunately, a different student was absent on each of the two days and one of them had not managed to visit the museum at all before the residency. This was apparently due to their own planning difficulties and work pressures. However, one of the other students, 'Jane', had visited the museum on several occasions prior to the residency, and had gathered valuable insights regarding the flow and demography of the visitors. She had also found her 'artwork of special interest' and had introduced herself to the gallery guards, which proved to be a valuable asset during the residency: she was able to engage their practical help, and talked to them about the work that was to take place. It was important that those present in the gallery had an understanding of the physical research work as it was often the guards who were approached by the visitors for further information. The residency was completed at closing time on Sunday 5th November, 2017.

The dance artists' understanding of their role as facilitators

Four of the five students were present, together with Lucy, on the Tuesday morning as we discussed how far they had come with their preparations. It quickly transpired that there was some confusion and difference of opinion regarding the word 'facilitation' and 'participation'. I see 'facilitation' under the 'umbrella' term of 'participation' to cover different modes of engaging with the public and had taken the word 'facilitation' as derived from the dictionary definition based on the Latin word '*facilis*' meaning 'easy'. In a dance context this would mean the dance artists using movement, dance and multisensory encounters to make something 'easier', more accessible or offer a new perspective; a paradigm shift from the art gallery being not only a place of ocular contemplation but also a place where an embodied, multisensory approach can offer an expanded connectedness to the artworks. At Arken this would mean that the dance artists' work with the gallery visitors could be collaborative, performative, interactive, observational, sensory, improvisational or participatory. Whichever format they chose, the task was to offer the viewers new modes of interaction and ways of perceiving the artworks that could shift the traditional role of viewer as primarily ocular and stationary, to an embodied and collaborative participant. Art historian Claire Bishop refers to 'participatory art' as making a distinction between 'social engagement', 'pedagogical projects' and 'participatory art', though all have people as their 'central artistic medium and material' (Bishop, 2012, pp.1-2). Here, it is the dance artist who must embrace being the 'central artistic medium and material' and choose when to offer the possibility for participation to the gallery visitor through the medium of their art form. At Arken, it was the role of the dance artist to bring these aspects into play in order to offer an enhanced experience for the visitor through the medium of movement.

However, even in art galleries where there are designated learning programmes one does not often see the word 'facilitator' used to describe embodied interactions. It transpired that several of the dance artists were tentative about the idea of engaging in physical interaction as part of facilitating with the public and had diverse and undefined understandings of the word. Perhaps this was also due to the varied backgrounds of the students. The five postgraduate students, two men and three women, came from different dance traditions and three different countries; two were over the age of thirty and the others were in their late twenties. Their common language was English though this was not the mother tongue of any of the students, but three were also fluent in Danish. Our

discussions around the use of the word 'facilitation' highlighted the overarching problem of combining creative, corporeal encounters using artworks to offer new perspectives, with a possible pedagogical aspect. This underlined Bishop's (2012) concern that the artistic content in projects can become diluted when linked with a learning or social aspect. However, Bishop also draws on the work of Guattari (2000) and his notion of 'transversality' (as described in Chapter 2), noting that it is often through combining differing aspects transversally, in this case, art and pedagogy, and critically questioning and reinventing them that we can:

> learn to think both fields together and devise adequate new languages and criteria for communicating these transversal practices (Bishop, 2012, p.274).

An example of a transversal practice, it could be argued, was seen in the early 1980s with the instigation of dance *animateurs*; professional dance artists, some working with dance companies,[96] others in regional projects, to stimulate participation and interest in dance. The word 'animateur' is taken from the Latin 'anima' meaning 'life', 'breath of air' or 'living being'. 'Animus' is taken from Latin, where the word has connotations of 'will', 'intentions' and 'feelings', and may have been an appropriate choice of title for the creative work undertaken in the art gallery; the dance artist acting as 'animateur' between gallery visitor and work of art. Dance scholar Raisa Foster, in discussing the role of animateuring, suggests:

> Animateuring aims to work as supporting the plurality of voices and initiating dialogue between multiple subjects through creativity, expression and reflection' (Foster, 2012, p.721).

I concur with Foster's understanding that the function of the dance animateur is to help others find a holistic and individual mode of expression through improvisational movement, where participants can respect their own abilities and movements at whatever level they are, and where the experience of creating is in mutual dialogue. This viewpoint is compatible with my understanding of the work of the dance artist as facilitator in an art gallery setting. I had therefore chosen to work with the Dance Partnership postgraduate students who I expected to be able to combine their artistic practice with a pedagogical one; this was an important element in inviting them to be part of the research and residency. The 2nd year postgraduate students, all of whom had a BA Degree in dance or

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96 I worked with Janet Smith and Dancers as a dance animateur in the late '70s.

significant professional practice, had pedagogy and creative practice in their curriculum, which constituted nearly a quarter of their timetable. Their final projects constituted another quarter where the 'facilitation' aspect[97] of their chosen area of research should also be in focus. All had been on one or two teaching practice placements during their first postgraduate year with different age groups and would be familiar with teaching and interacting physically with a range of ages, genders and nationalities. Still, it was clear that several of the students felt that they were not prepared for engaging with the general public and were nervous and reticent about this aspect.

As mentioned earlier, the range of meanings contained in the word 'facilitation' impacted on the movement research they undertook and impacted on their work overall. Facilitation meant very different things in practice to each of the students and it became clear during our discussions that for some of the dance students, 'facilitation', even in a dance and movement context, did not necessarily include or involve 'engagement', 'intervention', 'participation' or 'collaboration'. So, though I had naively assumed that all of the above could be used as modes of physical meeting in the act of facilitation, as I had experienced during the *Dancing Museums 1* project at the National Gallery with Lucy Suggate, we now had the task of translating the research design into movement-based activities that were also compatible with the students' understanding of the term and that were aligned with their own philosophies about dance, performance and participation.

The activities that had been devised for Arken were drawn from Lucy's experiences (and the needs of my research) when working with gallery visitors during the *Dancing Museums 1* project. These movement encounters were then added to in collaboration with the students during the preparation week. Lucy outlined what areas had been covered during the preparatory stage in August, but emphasised that more time was needed to go into depth with the different modes of encounter in order for the students to feel confident in interacting with the public. Even though they were familiar with different forms of teaching and writings about art and participation, in particular the work of Claire Bishop on the 'social turn' and participatory arts, only two were familiar with actually working in an interdisciplinary and improvisational role in a gallery context. Bishop's highlighting of the

97 Taken from the study plans of Dance Partnership 2017, my translation from the Danish. The programme became an MFA in Dance and Participation in 2020.

conundrum of juxtaposing an aesthetic experience with a pedagogical one was brought to the fore in this context, but it was perhaps not so much a juxtaposition as a superimposing and entwining that was called for here. Clearly, talking with the students made it clear that a radical re-think of their roles in engaging with the gallery viewers was called for, since they saw their roles as being neither pedagogical nor performative. So, given their reservations, how could we integrate the research requirements of the project with the philosophies of the dance students?

Dance artists' encounters with gallery visitors

The students, as part of their brief, had been asked to choose a work of art from the permanent collection that had significance for them in some way and from which they could create movement material, a short solo or improvisation. The artwork chosen should be one that they had investigated in depth and that could inspire them to create a movement response, and they should be prepared to talk about their process with the gallery visitors, if they were asked. The solos could be improvisational or set and could also include music and voice, if they so wished. Although the postgraduate students were all experienced performers, two of them were reticent about fulfilling this request, either because they had not invested time in finding a work of art that interested and inspired them or they did not wish to appear, as one student put it, as 'a performer in front of an artwork'. This proved to be a challenging experience for several of the dancers and in discussing this with them different points of view emerged. Two felt quite strongly about their role and, as one said later, 'my presence was not needed there as a moving body, it really didn't fit for me'.[98] To me this signalled that the dance artist felt extraneous and superfluous, instead of offering a new artistic dimension through which to view the two-dimensional artworks. It was clear that in future collaborations it was important for the dance artist to see their work as performance in practice and as a three-dimensional 'work of art' to supplement the already existing artwork.

These two dance artists found it problematic to be actively in the process of 'practising' their art form and improvising in the galleries, in what they considered to be an unfinished process, as they felt that there was an expectation from the public for them to 'perform' a finished product – much like the works of art on the walls. Due to the close proximity of

98 Interview with 'Ann' (not her real name) after the residency.

the public, the dance artists could hear the 'labels' that were attributed to their practice and they could also hear the comments. For one dancer, 'Ann' (not her real name), she felt so challenged by the comments that she said that she would not continue with this form of encounter as she felt superfluous to the setting. As 'Ann' noted, the gallery visitors had an expectation that a 'moving body in space is part of a performance', and this was not the intention in the work they were doing. I see this as a clear indication that more time was needed for the dance artists to consolidate their own artistic practice and to see themselves as an autonomous 'work of art' in their own right and to acquire the resilience to accommodate these situations. Even though it was made clear to the gallery visitors through notices in the museum spaces that the dancers were involved in an exploratory research project and not giving 'performances', it was obvious to the dance artists that the public had other expectations. Dance was to be performed and seen, not practised interactively in an art museum. For Ann the space was already 'overloaded' with artworks and there was 'no room for her', both mentally and physically. In later discussions, she referred to the art gallery as having, in her words, 'colonised' dance for its own purposes and questioned the hierarchical structure that she felt had been imposed on her.

I draw on Bishop once again, in her discussion of the challenges of performing dance in museum spaces. Not only is she critical of the physical circumstances that dance artists have to contend with, but she also sees that some dance artists and choreographers have been seduced by the status and prestige that performing in a gallery can bring and are therefore accepting of less than optimal conditions (Bishop, 2014). Dance artist Jérôme Bel goes further in saying: 'In the end it's as if you had to enter the museum to be legitimized!' (Bel in Brannigan, 2015, p.17). This continues the debate raised by Ann about dance being 'colonised' for the museum's purposes, and although I do not consider this to be the case here, the dance artist clearly felt under-appreciated and repressed by the gallery hierarchy. It becomes clear that for many gallery visitors the role of a dancing body is 'to perform' and present a finished, polished product rather than be seen as an ongoing medium of aesthetic expression and communication. Creating a sense of autonomy, as a solo performer in an art gallery, requires that 'special positioning' defined by philosopher and performance theoretician, Bojana Kunst as: 'a strategy for coming out of the exclusivity of your own moment and returning the gaze to the radical disconnection tactics of the Other' (Kunst, 2003, p.68). I understand this as an osmotic moment when there is a flow of energy from the dance artist's practice to the Other, but where there is a degree of permeability for the dance artist allowing them to remain immersed in their process but also be responsive to

the situation. This state of being and creative activity is one that is developed over time and experience. However, this 'special positioning' could be seen in the work of one of the postgraduate students whom I will call 'Jane' (not her real name). Jane's chosen artwork was an installation entitled *Fifty-Six Mattresses, Space-Time Foam* by Danish artist, Lea Porsager (2016). It was in a large open space which contained purple foam mattresses, lying apparently at random on top of each other but covering an area of around eight square metres in the centre of the space. The mattresses were interspersed with several large silver coloured objects that resembled giant eye hooks. On the surrounding three walls hung other large modern works of art. The 'fourth' wall was the opening to the gallery with a set of steep steps giving the 'mattress room' the feeling of an amphitheatre, which would later prove to be the preferred area for the gallery visitors to view the dance artists, though due to the nature of the design, it did not foster interaction. Jane found the space and the art installation inspirational and, after visiting the space on several occasions, observing the gallery visitors and exploring movement ideas, had movement concepts ready to try out. As an accomplished contact improvisation dancer and teacher, she saw this space with its haphazardly scattered mattresses as a promising starting point for a group movement experience in contact improvisation. This movement exploration developed into what we called 'the mattress bodies' and Jane, supported by Lucy, offered to take on the role of initiating any physical interventions, with the other students following her lead; this proved to be an effective method of working. Working as a group gave them all more confidence and clarity of intention. Their movement encounter began as a group contact improvisation that started on the floor, leaning and resting on each other, becoming entwined and moving in slow motion across the floor. For me, it was clear that they were a 'mattress' of moving bodies, thereby 'becoming' a moving version of the installation.

In talking with a gallery visitor who asked, 'What are they doing?' I asked him if the moving bodies on the floor reminded him of anything and then he replied, 'Oh yes, I see that they are like the installation, but they also remind me of a capsized boat of refugees, all flung into the water and clinging onto each other' (translated from Danish). This brief encounter showed how the added dimension of the moving bodies had also expanded his way of looking at the inert installation and connecting it to other experiences. This is one example of what I hoped would happen during this residency. A second example follows:

> *The dance artists are involved in a slow-moving group improvisation based on the theme of resting and leaning. (This is a movement reflection on the Space-Time Foam installation). Jane is*

reclining on the steps of the mattress room; she appears relaxed but attentive to the public who are gathering on the steps. The group gathering is clearly a class of young students from different countries. (It transpires they are from an International College in the north of Zealand and this is an organised outing). They are curious to understand what is going on and emanate an openness and energy towards the dance artists. Jane slowly and deliberately moves up a step and observes one of the students for several minutes. The young woman becomes aware of Jane's gaze and presence. Slowly and deliberately Jane moves towards the young woman who smiles as Jane leans against her. The young woman responds by relaxing her weight towards Jane and slowly they begin a slow-motion encounter; four of the other visiting students slowly begin to join the group of dance artists as well.

I speak to the young woman after the encounter and ask her to describe her experience: 'It brought the museum alive – life is much more exciting than things that are not alive. Seeing them moving really made me want to join in – I have never done anything like this before' (Fieldnotes, Wednesday 1st November, 2017).

This example shows Jane's positive and relational interventions with a gallery visitor, which I believe gave an added creative dimension to the young woman's experience of the visit. I observed Jane on several occasions and consider that her intention and energy were focused towards giving a generous and authentic physical encounter when engaging with the gallery viewers. Through her agency, intentionality and generosity she was able to achieve a degree of reciprocal contact with the young woman inspired by her chosen artwork, and I will now analyse *how* and *why* these encounters appeared successful.

The triadic connection of the 'kinesfield': Kinaesthetic empathy and agency

In order to answer 'how' the dance artist engages with the gallery visitor and what is being brought to bear in the situation, I will focus on the above example of Jane. I believe that her ability to 'read' a situation and draw on her inherent kinaesthetic empathy was honed through her training as an accomplished contact improvisation practitioner and her experience as a teacher used to close physical interaction and engaging with her environment. These abilities are also integral in the creating of what Schiller has called the 'kinesfield' (Schiller, 2008). The 'kinesfield' is Schiller's adaptation of Rudolf Laban's notion of the 'kinesphere' which describes the invisible delineation of the extended reach of the body and limbs in multiple directions, or our personal space. Schiller's 'kinesfield'

encompasses a more far-reaching dynamic field, where 'the relational dynamic of movement traverses the body and material forms in unbounded space' (Schiller, 2008, p.431). Schiller has used this term in relation to her own technologically mediated choreographies with people and environments. However, it is also relevant to my research, as the 'kinesfield' could also embrace the mediated interactions between Jane, the gallery visitor and artworks, creating a dynamic triadic encounter in the environment of the art gallery. It is in the in-between spaces of this triad that I believe Barad's notion of 'intra-action' is taking place (Barad, 2007). Here:

> … different material intra-actions produce different materializations of the world, and hence there are specific stakes in how responsiveness is enacted (Barad, 2007, p.380).

I also see this as highly ethically relevant, as Barad notes,:

> … possibilities for (intra-) acting exist at every moment and these changing possibilities entail an ethical obligation to intra-act responsibly in the world's becoming (Barad, 2007, p.178).

This idea underpins not only the complex processes the dance artist oscillates between when interacting with artefacts and materials, but also as performer, collaborator and sentient partner to the gallery visitor; it is here their *ethical* obligations come into play. Clearly, the intra-actions present in this triadic encounter are multifaceted and sensitive, requiring kinaesthetic awareness within an ethico-aesthetic paradigm if the dance artist is to engage in acts of facilitation and participation with gallery visitors.

In the case of Jane, I consider that 'kinaesthetic empathy' was taking place between Jane and the young woman (Foster, 2011; Reynolds and Reason, 2012; Sklar, 1994). This sense of bodily awareness in movement, associated with kinaesthesia, has long been of interest to dance and dance scholars, starting with the introduction of the term 'empathy' by Theodor Lipps in 1903. However, it was particularly after the writings of dance critic, John Martin (1939) and what he termed 'metakinesis', or 'kinaesthetic sympathy' in referring to the responses an audience can experience when observing dance, that the word came to be used more. Other scholars have embarked on in-depth research in this area (Foster, 1998; Calvo-Merino, 2008; Jola C, 2008; Reason and Reynolds, 2011; Pashman, 2017) and I will draw further on their expertise when discussing the skills and attributes needed by the dance artist in their work in a gallery context in Chapter 3.

It is interesting to note that Jane, as an experienced contact improvisation dancer and teacher, appeared to be able to emanate both a physical and mental openness and receptiveness to the gallery visitors, allowing for an ineffable, but strong, physical communication; furthermore there appeared to be a resonance between the participant which allowed for mutual interaction. I believe that Jane's decision to interact with the gallery visitor is also founded in her own bodily awareness and 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1997), in other words her assemblage of physical, mental and social values and her strategies for perception and interaction in the world. According to Katan (2016, p.24), 'habitus delineates the dispositions of a being' and with a background in teaching, yoga, somatics and contemporary dance, as well as contact improvisation, it appeared that Jane had consciously opened her senses and 'dispositions' to allow for a reciprocal flow of communication to flourish, which she actively encouraged in this encounter. Here it is also important to note the agency of the young gallery visitor; the invitation was reciprocal and equivalent. Writing on the role of *Cultural Phenomenology in Body-World Relations*, Csordas (2015) writes the following:

> The vector of agency (for it has a directionality) is for Merleau-Ponty from our bodies to the world in the sense of projecting into and orienting to the world.
>
> For Bourdieu the vector is a double one, pointing in opposite and reciprocal directions between our bodies and the world we inhabit and that inhabits us (Csordas, 2015, p.50).

I use this quote as a means of dissecting and magnifying what I see as happening when Jane is on the cusp of engaging with a gallery visitor. Her sense of 'projecting into and orienting to the world' are both apparent, as is her impetus towards a two-way connection between her body and that of a gallery visitor. Jane's' 'corporeal intentionality' (Reynolds, 2007) is clear in what I could call her 'kinaesthetic preparedness', and her 'projecting and orienting to the world' but also 'between our bodies and the world' (Csordas, 2015, p.50).

Here I have drawn together important aspects that these encounters exposed and have offered a picture, from my observational viewpoint, of the dance artist and the 'significant moment' that Jane embodied in her choice to engage with a gallery visitor. Clearly, Jane's experience in the aforementioned encounter is personal and subjective and it is only through my own long-standing interaction with dance and, in particular, the observations, video footage and notes of this particular 'significant moment' that I can begin to conjecture about what was taking place. In discussing this encounter with Jane, she

explained that she 'felt like the girl was already part of the group and just waiting to be invited to join the moving'. In analysing this moment, and Jane's appraisal of the situation, I refer to Damasio in suggesting that Jane first felt the 'sensation' of the young woman's presence and then 'perceived' that there was an opening for an invitation to participate (Damasio, cited in Pashman, 2017 p.34). Pashman qualifies these terms further:

> 'sensation' is a mechanical reflex movement, and 'perception,' an organism's awareness that something has happened – or moved, (and) are two distinct events, one empirically observable, the other qualitative and absolutely private (Pashman, 2017, p.35).

In discussing movement and awareness, sensation and perception, it is also relevant to consider Damasio's reference to what he calls the 'somatosensory' – which is his collective word for the three sub-systems that are at work in the body 'at any given moment' (Damasio, 2000, p.149). He divides these systems into 'the internal milieu and visceral division; the vestibular and musculoskeletal division; and the fine-touch division', and further explains that it is these three systems in combination, each playing an individual vital role, that relate information to the brain about the different processes taking place within the body. I would propose that these three sub-divisions could also be seen to encompass the 'six senses' – that is sight, sound, taste, touch and smell, and importantly in this context, proprioception – the awareness and sensation of one's body in space, or kinaesthesia, the awareness of the moving body in space. Delving deeper into Jane's moment of invitation and interaction, I would argue that what is taking place is reciprocal kinaesthetic empathy, understood as a two-way interaction that embodies not only the felt muscular 'sensations' but also a 'feeling' or 'empathic response' experienced by both participants. Reynolds (2012, p.64) also uses the term 'kinaesthetic affect' when focusing the emphasis on 'embodied responses' rather than 'emotional identification'; here it would seem that without an 'empathic response' to Jane, the young woman would not have been motivated to engage in a physical response and vice versa. In a further analysis, I discuss how the sense of smell opened further possibilities for encounters with gallery visitors.

Encounters with smell and sound

In a contemporary art museum, sight is clearly the primary sense engaged with when experiencing the works of art, but in our project we wanted to expand away from the ocular and offer opportunities for the other senses to be activated. Ultimately, with the dance artists, we hoped to be able to use multisensory encounters to offer the gallery

visitors an embodied experience that could expand their perception and interaction with the works of art, sparking their imagination and opening new channels of perception. I asked if any of the students were interested in pursuing another form of multi-sensory encounter and Jane decided that she would like to try and work with some of the gallery visitors using the scent of lavender, known for its calming properties.

> *We stand in front of the three-metre long painting in the in-between/corridor space. Jane has identified this as an area that people walk through, rarely looking at the enormous painting on the wall as they pass by. The painting is multi-coloured, with broad bands of pastel colours melting into each other – almost evoking a horizontal rainbow. In order to encourage people to take time, slow down and experience the painting, Jane has chosen to invite those who pass by to receive a dab of lavender onto their wrist, inhale the scent and observe the painting. She encourages them to take their time; to sit, stand or lie down and enjoy the calming effects of the lavender scent. Younger gallery visitors sit on the floor, most lean against the wall, a mother and baby lie down. She invites them all to inhale the scent and close their eyes and envisage the painting. 'Does the painting have a smell?', she asks'* (Fieldnotes, Thursday 2nd November, 2017).

We had hoped to include our own sound and music, together with movement, but the museum considered this to be too invasive in a space normally devoted to quiet contemplation (we were in the permanent collection).[99] However, we were able to persuade the museum to allow us to use the sense of smell and music with headphones so that it would not disturb other visitors. Even though the smell was used in a very reduced capacity it offered the opportunity for the gallery viewers to embody a new experience and also to enter into dialogue about their experience with other members of the public.

Referring back to the 'lavender scent' experience with Jane, I observed that there was a body of visitors who had joined the group and were curious to be part of this 'experiment'. All were eager to receive the drops of lavender on their wrists and initially listened attentively to Jane as she moved and talked them through ideas, inviting them to try out some simple movement ideas. The other dance artists were present, and having them start the different activities - sitting on the floor, improvising back and forth along the length of the painting - seemed to give the other viewers the confidence to also participate. One

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99 It should also be noted that several of the visiting exhibitions used music very overtly and the addition of more music would be intrusive and ultimately compromise the individual exhibitions.

dancer was on the floor, lying next to a young baby of about ten months who was clearly captivated by the movements that she was doing – even though they were simple and minimalist - and began to mirror her movements. This became an attraction for many of the gallery visitors and somewhat detracted from the activities that Jane was trying to initiate. However, it seemed clear that the gallery visitors were happier to observe the dance artists than to participate in any improvisation themselves and after a short period of time the group moved on to the next painting that Jane had chosen. This time they were equipped with headphones, provided as part of the installation, and Jane commented intermittently, telling them why she had chosen the paintings, and she performed a brief improvisation for the gathered visitors. They then moved on to an area at the back of the gallery with those who remained - a group of approximately 8-10 participants - and all took part in the improvisational dancing, in the privacy of the 'hidden red room', with a red light almost cloaking the moving figures. Being in a more isolated area, with a group of like-minded people, seemed to allow for greater and freer participation. I was able to have a brief discussion with some of those who took part.

Gallery visitor responses

The focus of my thesis is primarily on the work of the dance artist engaging with the gallery visitor but I was also curious about how the encounters I observed were received. I have therefore taken a random sample of the short conversations that I had with a limited number of the gallery visitors in order to present a range of responses to the activities. Clearly, they are limited in number and can only offer a glimpse into specific moments.

> It is wonderful that this kind of activity is taking place in the museum – the little girl also seems to think it is fun – she is really interested! I have never seen anything like this before, but I think it is fun and wonderful. (Comment from a couple taking part in the 'red room' improvisation, my translation from Danish.)

The response above was from a middle-aged couple who had taken part in the movement improvisation in the aforementioned 'hidden red room' and were commenting on a young girl who was very absorbed in the activity; I don't think the same response would have been elicited if the space had been more open and public. Other members of the public had this to say about observing the event:

> 'I just had to stop and observe – they are so good! I would like to join with them – despite my age!'

> 'They move so well; I did have the urge to move with them. One can see that they know each other really well but they still manage to move on their own'. (Visitor observing the 'mattress bodies').

Others, however, had these comments when prompted for their thoughts on what they had seen:

> 'I don't have any relationship to this at all. I am surprised you can write a PhD about such a thing'.
>
> 'A gallery space is a place of observation, not participation'.
>
> (Fieldnotes, Saturday 4th November, 2017, comments translated from Danish)

These mixed responses cannot be predicted by age or gender, making it even more difficult to adopt strategies for engagement. For a group of high school students from a local school, invited to participate, it was clear that they would rather watch the dancers perform than participate themselves. Seeing the dance artists involved in an improvisation prompted one of them to ask, 'Are they an installation?' I replied, 'Yes, they are a moving installation and you can join in if you wish'. The young student looked wide-eyed and said 'no thanks' and moved on with the rest of the class.

It became clear to the dancers that if they were to engage with the gallery visitors there needed to be a more direct invitation. They decided to display a sign explaining what they were doing and why, and wrote short notes of invitation to hand to the gallery visitors:

> *'Join the movement as we fluidly travel through space and time, to experience the artworks differently and change the perception of how you see the artworks and the museum space.'* (Written in Danish and English)
>
> The strategy is not successful … (My fieldnotes, Friday 3rd November, 2017)

After seeing how the high school students, in particular, responded to the dance artists we discussed again how to engage more with the gallery visitors and offer opportunities to participate. It was interesting to note that the majority of the group improvisations by the dance artists took place on the floor and we remarked that this could be a hindrance in terms of motivating people to participate. Firstly, because it is on the floor, people are in

general reluctant to get down onto a cold, hard floor, secondly, it is limiting for those who cannot physically reach the floor and finally, and perhaps most importantly, the physical space between the standing and reclining bodies is amplified. We discussed that being at eye level could also increase the possibility for engagement, both verbally and physically, as eye contact tends to be our first form of engagement. We had previously evidenced how working at different levels could affect participation when we noticed that young children were very interested in being part of the movement encounter. As the dance artists and the children were on eye level with each other, the invitation was clearer and the children did not feel intimidated by the dancers but saw it more as a game and an opportunity to participate. One four-year-old took part in a ten-minute group contact improvisation, being moved through the space by the dance artists, much to the amusement of the other gallery visitors. Another young child spontaneously started her own 'dance', inspired by the close contact, but the dance artists were still resistant to moving off the floor. I believe this was due, in part, to a lack of confidence and experience in working in a gallery situation, particularly when involved in close contact with the gallery viewers. Not all of the dance artists had worked extensively with contact improvisation and I consider that it would have been advantageous for them if they had. It could have allowed them to be individually proactive in engaging physically and confidently with the visitors.

Contact improvisation (discussed in depth in Chapter 3) requires that 'skin becomes a primary site of communication' and, although encounters with the gallery visitors would last no more than a few minutes, it still requires the dance artist to have corporeal confidence and a desire to engage in this manner, and the activity needs to resonate with the gallery visitors (Cooper-Albright, 2013, p.266). The reluctance to engage was compounded by the number of movements that involved close contact between the dancers, which clearly had an additional alienating effect on the gallery visitors. The students argued for maintaining their original floor format as they wished to adhere to the initial idea with the 'mattress bodies' as a reflection of the artwork; staying in contact, leaning, resting and intertwining. As a group improvisation this was successful; but didn't foster participation. Even though it was pointed out that this could be done standing, there was still opposition to changing this method of working and it became clear that a new strategy was needed that did not compromise the dance artists' integrity but could allow for a more inclusive and open method of working with the gallery viewers. Many of the gallery visitors at the National Gallery, in the *Dancing Museums 1* project, became involved in contact improvisation encounters and I could see its potential use here. As the name

suggests, the essence of this dance form is based on improvised movement and contact with a partner through the use of weight, the senses and the flow of movement between the collaborating bodies. In its more advanced and professional form, contact improvisation can be a precarious mode of dancing, with spontaneous lifts of a partner, shifts of weight, falls and rolls to the floor or swift direction changes.[100] We literally do not have eyes in the back of our head and therefore our senses need to be finely attuned to our partner and in particular our sense of touch as a receptive and giving organ.[101] However, touch is a complex and intimate mode of communication between people, heavily coloured by cultural norms and where the relationship between the touched and the touching is rarely clearly defined beforehand. So, though touch is a fundamental element in dance, for the gallery visitor it can be an unexpected and sometimes unwelcome addition.

Touching and being touched

Nina Simon, in her informative book on participation in the museum, underlines that it is not always necessary for the visitors to be actual participants and that observing new events in the museum can have as much value as participating (Simon, 2010). In discussing participation in her book, however, there is no mention of the use of movement, dance, touch or the body as a primary participatory element. In the context of this research, one can identify with the double meaning of 'being touched' by something; this can be both literal, participating in a movement encounter, sensing and responding to touch and pressure, or figurative, being 'moved' by the observation of an event or artwork where one has a sensation of being 'self-touched' on the inside of one's own body, referred to as 'inner touch' by Paterson (2013). Erin Manning in '*The Politics of Touch'* states:

> Touch takes place in the intensity of a movement-toward, the body becoming other through relation […] Touch is a mode composed of many parts. It is a mode capable of being affected while affecting (Manning, 2011, p.18).

This 'intensity of a movement-toward' can evoke reciprocity or provoke a desire to move away, and it therefore requires the dance artist to also possess resilience, awareness, responsivity and attunement as a facilitator (Hepplewhite in Preston, 2016). These attributes, coupled with an ability to engage aesthetically, creatively, physically and ethically

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100 American dance artist Steve Paxton is considered the founder of contact improvisation and his work will be covered in more depth in the following chapter.

101 Contact improvisation as a training method and its implications for working with gallery visitors will be covered in more detail in Chapter 3.

with another body, perhaps underline the complexities of this form of participatory encounter and explain why it is difficult to accomplish. It is particularly during moments of touch and contact that one can see the necessity for both 'attunement' in assessing whether the person is open to be touched and 'resilience' if the receiver rejects the invitation. There is often an inherent renouncement of touch in the museum and art gallery, often with paintings roped off and notices reminding us to keep our distance and 'please do not touch', so perhaps it is no wonder that the propensity to touch in art galleries and museums is diminished. However, in dance the opposite is true. Lucy Suggate had also encountered this 'no touch' phenomenon and, in order to counteract it, had created a successful mode of interaction, incorporating touch and close contact, with her 'human furniture' which she had used during the *Dancing Museums 1* project. We decided to explore its potential for the final days at Arken. Lucy described it thus in a notice for the gallery visitors:

> *'Human Furniture' is a choreographed journey for one visitor, its purpose is to support looking and alleviate some of the effects of Museum fatigue.*
> *We will take your body on a journey through the space, diverting information away from your eyes and into your body.*
> *We will handle you with care.*

(Notice for the public, in English and Danish, placed in the gallery spaces where the dance artists were offering the 'human furniture' experience).

'Human furniture', as discussed earlier, consists of different modes of supporting a gallery visitor so that they can relax and observe a work of art for a longer period of time or view the artwork from another perspective. The most challenging 'chair' for the dance artists is the 'elephant chair' and, as the name suggests, the dance artists try to replicate the height and majesty of sitting on the back of an elephant. This piece of 'human furniture' is quite strenuous for the dancers; normally requiring seven dancers for this particular mode, especially if it is to be for a longer duration of time. However, it is quite possible to do it with five dance artists (two men and three women) supporting the viewer at shoulder height. This method of engaging the public proved to be successful and several gallery visitors wished to try this novel mode of observing the works of art. At one point there is a lull in the activities, and some have declined the invitation so I ask to try out the 'elephant chair'. There is a series of one hundred photographs by the Danish/Icelandic artist Olafur Elissaon (1967) entitled *Cartographic Series 1-1V, 2000-2007,* which fill an entire wall, and I

ask to be lifted into the 'elephant chair' so that I can see the top pictures that are several metres off the ground. I am in the air, securely supported for about three minutes while the dance artists slowly progress along the gallery so that I can view the photographs on the top row up close, which would otherwise have been impossible. It is a special experience. Even though I know the capabilities of the dance artists and am confident in their care, it still requires a surrendering of one's body weight and close contact with the dance artists; I am touched by their presence and their care. An elderly lady asks if she might try as well. The dance artists ask her which painting she would like to view and from which angle and after removing her coat and shoes, she is duly raised up into the 'elephant chair'. I ask her afterwards about her experience. She tells me she is eighty-three years old and thinks that having dancers in the museum is a 'wonderful and different idea' and would like to see more of such activities.

As the idea of touch and physical contact are not normally associated with facilitatory activities in an art museum, the role of the dance artist as facilitator becomes even more intricate and precarious. The dance artists' 'social and aesthetic instincts' (Balfour, 2016), their 'propreoceptive awareness' (Montero, 2006) 'kinaesthetic empathy' (Reynolds and Reason, 2010) and feel for the 'kinesfield' (Schiller, 2008) need to be simultaneously brought to the fore and integrated with the dance artist's own personal philosophy; the latter perhaps being a prerequisite before the process can take place. These aspects are covered in detail in the following chapter.

Conclusion

Although this description and analysis can only give a glimpse of the many inter-relational events that took place between the dance artist and the gallery viewers during the residency, they provide clear examples of encounters where facilitation, creative collaboration and reciprocity were present and indeed where they were not. Here, I have focused mainly on the interactions with Jane and Ann in order to give detailed descriptions of actual encounters and analyse them in relation to the research questions which underpinned the residency. By focusing on their encounters I have been able to draw out the important 'facets' of my research relating to 'how' the dance artist engages with gallery visitors through their integrated role as artist/researcher/teacher or a/r/tographer as referred to by Rita Irwin and Alex de Cosson (2004). This concept is discussed in detail in the following chapter, as are the additional qualities and attributes needed by the dance artist to initiate and fulfil a collaborative and aesthetic movement encounter with a gallery visitor. The

chosen accounts have their limitations and many questions still remain unanswered. In particular, I consider it important to look at the role of 'pedagogy' in its broadest sense and at how 'somatics', improvisation and contact improvisation work as possible tools that the dance artist can employ and engage when working with the gallery visitors. In hindsight, it is also vital to embrace an individual dance artist's own approach and philosophy in relation to their work.

Whilst examples have been given regarding the public's reception of the interventions, more data would be needed to understand how these interventions are experienced and what can be done for the visitors in terms of providing better information and a framework that prepares them for such encounters. The impact of the residency on Arken as an example of a contemporary art museum has of necessity been played down here because of the logistical disruptions and absences during the museum residency. This resulted in the museum not being able to offer feedback, critique or affirmation concerning our presence in the museum. However, though it was difficult communicating with the administration, when we were present at the museum, the gallery staff, guards and technical personnel were actually very helpful and positive. Clearly, the museum staff were under a lot of pressure from the volume of visitors, which included many school children and students, as well as the pressures of hosting visiting exhibitions, holding external 'team-building' events and organising dinners that were taking place during our residency. It should be acknowledged that the museum did take time to talk with the guards at the museum, many of whom were male and in their mature years, to ensure that they were properly informed about the dance research and practice that was being undertaken. Judging by the footfall at the museum and the diversity of people visiting Arken it would seem that their vision is being fully appreciated by the local community and international visitors.

In sum, I would also query my own assumptions with regards to my co-researchers, the post-graduate dance pedagogy students, and the material and information given to them beforehand. In hindsight, knowing them more intimately and understanding their personalities and motivations more clearly may have allowed for greater involvement and a more unified approach. This becomes important in the context of my research questions, as I now know that I have pre-conceived ideas about the skills a dance artist requires to enter into this interactive role in an art gallery. This preconception is also based on my own work as a 'dance animateur' in the early 1980s, when these positions were first evolving,

and working in art galleries with children and young people over a period of twenty years. Our deliberations around the use of the word 'facilitation' highlighted the underlying problem of how to combine creative, corporeal encounters using artworks with a physically creative and, possibly pedagogical, factor. However, I consider that the experiences with Jane and also my earlier experiences with Lucy Suggate show that there can be a paradigm shift from the art gallery being primarily a place of ocular contemplation to an embodied, multisensory one where an expanded connectedness to the artworks can be experienced.

Based on this research, I decided that I would like to undertake a second residency where there was the possibility of a longer period of preparation for the dance artists and where I would be able to personally present my research ideas and be part of the practical creating period from the outset. I approached the Dance Partnership education at the Danish National School of Performing Arts in the spring of 2018 and they agreed on a limited training programme to prepare a new group of students to work with gallery visitors. After interviewing the students from the first residency and analysing their interactions, the head of department, Laura Navndrup Black, Lucy and I discussed what areas of training would be most beneficial for the new group in preparing them for the work with gallery visitors. These areas included a series of contact improvisation classes with Jane, focused readings, pre-visits to Arken and a theoretical, pedagogical and creative practical introduction with me. This was a major point that was brought up by all the students; a more unified vision was needed as they felt that with myself, Lucy and Laura involved in the project, the lines became blurred and there were too many interpretations. The new group would be in their first year of study (the original group were second years and graduated in June 2018), and a week in December 2018 was set aside for me to come and work with the students, theoretically and practically both at the school and at Arken Museum of Art. Arken had also agreed to a second residency in March 2019, though the parameters for this residency were quite different. Three selected groups of visitors were chosen for us to work with in the gallery spaces, so they all knew that they would be working creatively, collaboratively and physically with the dance artists. Clearly, this was a major departure from the first residency but proved to be an invaluable experience for all concerned. This residency is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from this first residency was for me to understand that a dance artist's personal philosophy concerning their artistic work is of greater importance than I had realised. Working as a dance artist in a gallery setting is

exposing in many ways, physically, creatively and relationally; this type of embodied creative practice requires particular attributes and, above all, the desire to share an artistic creative process and connect with gallery visitors. It is the intertwining of all the aforementioned elements that can lead to creating an atmosphere that allows for reciprocal, harmonious interaction and connectedness, conducive to an ecology of participation. Merleau-Ponty expresses our potential for 'connectedness' with each other in the following way:

> I experience my own body as the power of adopting certain forms of behaviour, and a certain world, and I am given to myself merely as a certain hold upon the world; now, it is precisely my body which perceives the body of another, and discovers in that other body a miraculous prolongation of my intentions, a familiar way of dealing with the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.142).

For me as a dance-practitioner and as a practitioner-researcher, there is a sense of wonder and fulfilment when this connection is reciprocated through the collaborative interchange of ideas and energy between dance artist and visitor, and the following chapter seeks to identify how this connection and reciprocity of engagement might best be achieved. Here, the work is driven by questions such as, how can the dance artist best prepare to 'perceive the body of another'? What different modes of preparation are needed in order to create encounters that can be considered meaningful, multi-sensory dance experiences for the gallery visitor and that can offer affirmation and acknowledgement for the dance artist as a dynamic, aesthetic and sensuous partner in this process?

CHAPTER 3

The Dance Artist in Multiple Roles - The Art of Dance in Facilitation

Introduction

> It is through the intensities of its own shifts between action and perception, or feeling-thinking-doing, that the dancing body produces dance in the moment of its occurrence, with very little to hold onto after the event (Brannigan, 2019, p.366).

This chapter is constructed as an in-depth analysis of the skills, attributes and professional training I consider to be necessary if dance artists are to successfully engage in creative encounters with gallery visitors and foster an ecology of participation. I give examples of specific interactions that have taken place in the gallery setting to substantiate my choices and why these particular skills are pertinent to the dance artist if they are to create innovative, relevant and engaging encounters with gallery visitors. The outcomes of these encounters are primarily dependent on the dance artist and I therefore explore and propose which artistic, pedagogical and somatic skills might be considered beneficial or even necessary for the dance artist to possess in this 'moment of occurrence' between dance artist and gallery visitor (Brannigan, 2019).

The chapter opens with an exploration of the changing role of the *art of dance* in practices of facilitation in the art gallery and discusses how movement, dance and touch have become more prevalent while at the same time there is an increase in the use of different technologies.[102] The role of the facilitating dance artist, as mediator between the gallery, the gallery visitor and the work of art, requires a specific way of working in order to foster these new modes of perception and interaction. I return to the 'kinesfield'[103] (Schiller, 2008) to illustrate the triadic intra-action underway in the gallery environment between the participants and art works, a process 'that constantly interacts and interweaves body-habitat processes and qualitative factors' (Schiller, 2014, p.19). What takes place within this kinesfield determines the outcome of the facilitatory encounter. I expand on my use of the term 'facilitation' in the context of this thesis in order to emphasise this as a principal

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102 The majority of the research was completed prior to 2020 before physical distancing restrictions were applied.

103 See also chapter 2 where the notion of the 'kinesfield' is covered in greater depth.

component of 'participation'. However, rather than offering a fixed definition of the dance artist as a facilitator in a separate role, facilitation is seen also as a *mindset* and a way of 'being between' (deLahunta, 2006, p.479). To see facilitation as 'a framework for thinking about relations and how to encourage a certain quality of exchange' implies seeing the dance artist in their professional artistic context using the art of dance, in its broadest guise, to enable facilitation, and participation where relevant (deLahunta, 2006, p.479).

The term *a/r/tographer*, coined by Rita Irwin and Alex de Cosson (2004) and further expounded upon by Springgay (2011, 2017, 2018), is dissected in order to illustrate the multiple and interconnected roles of artist, researcher and teacher the dance artist needs to inhabit to accommodate this position, to master the *art of dance* in a gallery facilitation setting. A/r/tography as an arts-based research method is used to underline the professional and creative aspects of the dance artist, while the phrase 'art of dance in facilitation' is used is in response to dance artist Ann's (see previous chapter) sense of invisibility during the first residency at Arken, despite being an independent and valued artist. I argue that the dance artist's participatory movement practices should stem from an extensive artistic background and training, in particular, the use of improvisation and contact improvisation, their personal philosophies, pedagogical stance and values or 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977; Katan, 2016). I also investigate kinaesthetic empathy and the role of touch and somatics as factors that inform the creative encounters between dance artists and gallery visitors and I examine how these creative encounters are prepared for, realised and concluded.

The chapter also touches briefly on what role the art gallery space, as a place of work for the dance artist, plays in this constellation, and then concludes with viewpoints from the dance artists, drawing on their specific examples to illuminate how kinaesthetic empathy and a new materialist perspective in the art gallery can foster, or hinder, an ecology of participation.

The changing modes of the art of dance in gallery facilitation

According to Claire Bishop there has been an increase in dance activities in art galleries since the turn of the 21st century, with the 'peak' being in 2010. This 'peak' culminated with the interactive performance of Marina Abramovic's *The Artist is Present* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2010 where Abramovic invited gallery visitors to sit in silence

opposite her for as long as they wished, in the gallery space (Bishop, 2014). The interaction took place every day during the opening hours of the museum for three months, marking a watershed moment in physical interaction between gallery artist and visitor. Since this time there have been numerous notable additions including the two-year and three-year long, *Dancing Museums* projects in 2015 and 2018; *Move: Choreographing You* at the Hayward Gallery, London, in 2015 and Boris Charmatz's *If Tate Modern was Musée de la danse?* in the Turbine Hall of Tate Modern in 2015, to name but a few. These and other events have sought to reinvent and invigorate modes of engagement between gallery visitors, works of art, gallery spaces and dance artists. The insertion of the dancer's body as a medium to activate gallery visitors has been enacted in different ways, including gallery visitors taking part in warm-up sessions (Tate Modern); interacting physically with the artworks (Robert Morris, William Forsythe); dancers doing contact improvisations (National Gallery, *Dancing Museums*) and re-enacting short sequences from earlier choreographies (Boris Charmatz). In these examples, the inclusion of movement and dance in the gallery has offered an expanded sensory and relational experiences for those who have taken part. These are important aspects of my own research, but I seek to delve deeper and investigate how the dance artist can also best train for encounters compatible with an ecology of participation. They must attune themselves to the environment of the art gallery, the materiality of the artwork and their relationship with the gallery visitor, by adapting their working methods, creating a harmonious environment and allowing equity to flourish.

These dance events have also evolved from specifically timed and set encounters or performances, to those that are also improvised and durational; termed by Bishop as 'dance exhibitions', where the length of time is extended to comply more with the gallery's opening hours than with a set performance time (Bishop, 2018, p.24). This format was used during the *Dancing Museums 1* project and my own project at Arken Museum of Modern Art, Denmark, with the dance artists being present for several hours before stopping or being relieved by others. During the Siobhan Davies residency, *material/rearranged/to/be* at the Whitworth Gallery, Manchester in 2017 the ten artists, from three different disciplines, alternated their 'performance installations' in both time and space in a continual process of re-creation. A gallery visitor would never see the same format or composition from one day to another so that 'their initial perceptions dissolve and then re-concentrate' even though the source material remained the same (Davies, 2015, p.38). The performers are no longer limited to professional dance artists, but also include any invited member of the public who wishes to be involved. (See also Chapter 2)

Various forms of technology that foster interaction and facilitation are also now more prevalent in art galleries and are frequently utilized by dance artists and choreographers such as William Forsythe in his *Stellenstellen Films*; a double-projection film of two of his dancers shown at museums in Frankfurt (2013) and Copenhagen (2015); Wayne McGregor's, *Stairwell,* a site-specific 3D installation shown at London's Hayward Gallery (2010) and Ralph Limon's *Scaffold* from 2014 premiered at The Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, to name a few. These alternative modes of viewing dance can spark curiosity, change perceptions or motivate us to move and engage with others. The use of mobile phones to record activities; sound systems to feed information to us and the use of 3D and virtual reality (VR) technology have become more commonplace and an accepted accessory in many museums and galleries. Other alternatives are in place such as at the National Gallery which started a dance project in December 2019 using VR 180[104] technology to film dance in gallery spaces, 'to explore the fusion of art, dance and architecture' combining different contemporary and street dance styles in order to 'connect with diverse audiences'.[105] The Victoria and Albert Museum has also used VR technology with the project *Dust* (2017), an interactive film inspired by the realization that we may all have originated from stardust and the film, experienced by the gallery visitor wearing a 3D headset, brings the wearer in close proximity to the virtual dancers.[106]

The use of different forms of technology to aid facilitation, particularly with regards to dance, will undoubtedly develop further over time, given the physical distancing restrictions we experienced during the global pandemic which started in March 2020.[107] These ranges of technology can allow us exciting and innovative modes of interaction and bring us in closer contact with our own bodies through motivating us to focus kinaesthetically and monitor our own sensations and movements, as seen in works such as *Shifting Ground* (1999) and *Trajets* (2002) by Gretchen Schiller, who coined the phrase 'kinesfield'.[108] However, I argue that it is only through the sentient body of the professional dance artist, working empathically and creatively with the gallery visitor, that a multi-

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104 VR180 technology can be best experienced wearing a VR headset in order to experience the space in 180 degrees.

105 https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/whats-on/virtual-reality-dance-in-the-gallery (Accessed 05.02.20)

106 https://vrdust.org.uk/ (Accessed 26.03.20)

107 The majority of restrictions on physical distancing have now been removed in Denmark (September 2021).

108 Discussed in detail in chapter 2.

sensory and uniquely tailored movement experience can be offered. The experienced dance artist is able to realign the hierarchy of the senses, moving away from the predominantly visual to one of creatively embodying touch, contact, sound and smell.

Facilitation through touch and contact

This realignment of the senses, using predominantly touch and contact, was, as noted, manifested during one-to-one contact improvisations at the *Dancing Museums 1* residency at the National Gallery (2016). The dance artists, working in couples with a gallery visitor, invited the visitor to be physically supported and moved while observing a particular work of art. The dance artist proposed how the visitor could be supported and moved so that the visitor could view the artworks from different perspectives. After the encounters, the dance artist would discuss the event with the gallery visitor, asking them what they had seen, felt and experienced and how this was different from their usual way of looking at artworks. In another contact event the gallery visitor was invited to use differing degrees of pressure to move the dance artist while they observed a painting and at the same time discussed the artwork together. This then progressed to a mutual moving of each other, through pushing, pulling and supporting, still discussing the artwork. While observing these latter encounters I noted that the gallery visitors clearly became more animated and breathless as they moved through the gallery space; the ocular and more stationary mode of observation was replaced by a heightened sense of their own physicality and the close mutual contact. Here one could clearly see a realignment of the senses, where the ocular moved into the background in order for the other senses to feel, hear, sense and interact with the partner. Clearly, this was an intimate mode of interaction and not for everyone, but feedback was collected by the National Gallery attendants, and although I have sought to access this material and received no response, to my knowledge, it has not been published. However, during the final conference at the Louvre in Paris in March 2017, Gill Hart, head of education at the National Gallery, quoted some of the comments offered by the gallery visitors which included: ‘thought-provoking’, ‘strange and intriguing’, ‘inspiring’, ‘curious and original’. When asked whether ‘choreography could offer an interesting alternative to written or verbal explanation’,[109] 89% agreed that they thought it was an interesting idea. Though this information does not come from an official survey, it does give an indication of the positive feedback from gallery visitors and provides an incentive

109 Fieldnotes from Louvre Art Gallery, Paris, during Gill Hart’s presentation at the closing conference of *Dancing Museums 1*, March 2017.

to pursue and understand this developing form of facilitation. A second form of contact encounter that could be experienced by the gallery visitor was Lucy Suggate's 'human furniture' described in the previous chapter, which generally met with a positive response from gallery visitors.[110]

In these examples of close contact between a gallery visitor and a dance artist at the National Gallery, it can be seen that the skills and attributes of the dance artist need to go far beyond that of their technical and creative training. Both verbal and physical communication and social skills need to be carefully attuned when in close social interaction with non-dance participants, and here kinaesthetic empathy and awareness need to be at the fore. For each dance artist, kinaesthetic empathy and awareness will have different connotations depending on their background and training and, in the following section, I give an overview of its developing presence, which I consider imperative, particularly when working with facilitation in a gallery context.

Kinaesthetic empathy: A necessary attribute for the dance artist

The field of 'kinaesthetic empathy' (introduced in Chapter 2) as a unified term first came into usage in the 1990s with scholars such as Sklar (1994, 2000) and later Foster (2011), Sheets-Johnstone (2011) and Reynolds and Reason (2012, 2010). However, the terms have a longer history dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century (Bastian, 1880;[111] Titchener, 1909;[112] Worringer, 1908[113]; H'Doubler, 1925[114]). It was during the mid-twentieth century that references to 'kinaesthesia', and the senses in general, began to become more common, and only later were the two words 'kinaesthesia' and 'empathy' set in conjunction with each other. For the purposes of this research I use and expand upon Sklar's (1994) account of kinaesthetic empathy where she states it is:

> … the capacity to participate with another's movement or another's sensory experience of movement […] it is a translation capacity that we all inherently possess (Sklar, 1994, pp.15-16).

110 Detailed examples are provided in chapter 2, where 'human furniture' was used. Further examples were offered during the residency at Arken Museum of Modern Art in November 2017.

111 Neurologist, Henry Charlton Bastian (1837 – 1915)

112 Psychologist Edward B. Titchener (1867 – 1927)

113 Art historian Wilhelm Worringer (1881 – 1965)

114 Dance pedagogue Margaret H'Doubler (1889 -1982)

Like Sklar, I would suggest that kinaesthetic empathy makes use of 'skills that can be developed through training and experience in qualitative movement analysis' (Sklar, 1994, p.16). Although the postgraduate students I worked with were familiar with Laban's writings on movement analysis and its practical use in creative dance, its use in focused observation had not been included. Qualitative movement analysis, according to Sklar, involves training one's perception to observe movements not only as specific actions but also to recognise the *quality* of the action and therein the time, space, flow and dynamic of the movement. For this reason, training in perception, movement analysis and focused observation were prioritised with the dance artists, in the preparation for the second residency at Arken, thus allowing them to better ascertain the visitor's propensity for engaging in a creative and corporeal encounter. Though these observations and conclusions are purely subjective it gave the students the opportunity to enhance their observation skills and take the time to analyse the movements of others and ultimately become more confident in initiating an encounter.

Similarities can be seen between Sklar's writings on movement analysis and Rudolf Laban's (1879-1958) extensive writings on analysing and classifying movements. Laban outlined his research into the principles of movement in 1926 when he first characterised his four major movement types. These he saw as 'kinetic', referring to the flow and mobility of the movement; 'dynamic', referring to the degree of tension or force; 'rhythmic', referring to speed and timing and finally 'metric', referring to the degree of extension in space (Laban in Maletic, 1987, p.54). These elements of space, time, weight and flow described the composition and 'feeling' of the movement and Laban's analysis is still used extensively in the teaching of creative dance, particularly in schools – albeit adapted to suit the individual teaching circumstances.

Sklar also discusses kinaesthesia as the 'felt experience' of the body which involves bodily memory and bodily intelligence (1994). The extent to which this is experienced is different for every individual, depending on their gender, culture, age and background. This 'felt experience', though only two words, covers a complex and multi-faceted area of research, but for the purposes of this chapter I suggest that kinaesthesia includes *all* the senses and that it is through the 'multiplicity of the body's modalities of perception – the senses', that we are best able to comprehend the world around us (Howes in Laplantine, 2005/2014, p.xii). As suggested by Laplantine, it is through the multiplicity of the senses that we come to 'a mode of knowledge that is no longer anatomical or physiological but – as we shall see

– choreographic' (Laplantine, 2005/2014, p.14). Laplantine uses the word 'choreographic' to describe the spatial and temporal relationship between people where each is 'disrupted and transformed' by the other (ibid., p.17), an apt description of the dance artist's interactions. Though Laplantine is writing from the aspect of an 'anthropology of the senses' and, since this translation, other scholars have gone into depth on specific aspects of the senses, such as Pink's writing on *Sensory Ethnography* (2015), Laplantine opened the way for discussing an 'extended sensorium' which helped to shift the focus from 'cognition to sensation' thus elevating the idea that the senses 'mediate the relationship between mind and body, idea and object, self and environment' (Howes, in Laplantine, 2005/2014, p.xiii). This is particularly pertinent in discussing the skills, qualities and attributes of the dance artist as it emphasises the embodied and creative nature of the encounter and also resonates with my adopted concept of the 'kinesfield' (Schiller, 2008), which recognises the ephemeral and intangible space between the dance artist, the visitor and the artwork.

By using movement analysis and recognising the role that kinaesthetic empathy, contact improvisation and somatic practices can play, the dance artist is able to hone their ability to know and understand their own bodily senses, behaviours and movements, and apply these competencies to facilitate mutual understanding, creative interaction and empathy with another. Though this could be seen as an over-simplification of a complex area, and I acknowledge that this is a multi-faceted area involving, neuroscience and physiology as well as the arts, I will offer examples of where the dance artist intentionally focused their kinaesthetic empathy towards a gallery visitor in order to gauge their receptivity. The presence of kinaesthetic empathy was evident through the example which I observed and documented in Chapter 2, with dance artist, Jane[115] at Arken, which clearly showed reciprocity in kinaesthetic empathy between the young woman and Jane. A second clear example was when a young boy joined in an improvisation with dancer Charlie Morrissey during the installation '*material/ re arranged / to be*',[116] devised by Siobhan Davies, at the Whitworth, Manchester (2017). Charlie Morrissey observed the boy copying his movements and, having gained eye contact with him, began a movement conversation with him, lasting several minutes, where they responded to each other's movements. In both these examples, the dance artist and the gallery visitor picked up on the other's movements

115 This encounter is described in detail in Chapter 2. Jane graduated from the Dance Partnership education in July 2018.

116 The installation was based on the *Mnemosyne Atlas* by Aby Warburg. Begun in 1924 but still unfinished at the time of his death in 1929, the *Atlas* is Warburg's attempt to map the 'afterlife of antiquity'. (Warburg Library, Cornell University)

in a call and response encounter where it was difficult to apprehend who was the initiator of which movement. In both instances, initiation and response became intertwined: not unlike a 'möbius strip'[117] where the inside and outside become a confluence of the same surface, resulting in a continuous and uninterrupted flow of movement, their kinaesthetic empathy was reciprocal, allowing for a harmonious flow of movement. Without this fine attunement, attention and understanding of another's movement and bodily expressions, the dance artist would have difficulty in recognising the visitor's readiness to engage in a sensory movement experience.

It is, then, through choreographing multi-sensory encounters that the dance artist seeks to offer this possibility for richness and diversity to flourish in the art gallery. Creating a space that can embrace bodies, ideas and creativity and unite them in a shared experience affords the gallery visitor an opportunity to take part in an embodied aesthetic experience. Achieving this requires skilled dance artists who have consciously worked with the notion of 'kinaesthetic empathy' alongside their technical, compositional and artistic training. These mutually empathetic and kinaesthetic encounters can be manifested on many different levels; from the dance artist simply moving in the proximity of an artwork or together with a single gallery visitor, to observing a dance artist in practice, or engaging with a dance artist in a mutually improvised movement encounter. How each of these engagements are experienced by the gallery visitor will also depend, in part, on the empathy felt, not only with the dance artist, but with the artwork being observed. According to Vischer (1873) this 'empathy' or 'feeling into' is an integral part of the aesthetic experience and his views have been echoed in the later works of Lipps (1920) and Martin (1939), but the discourse on empathy has evolved over time and its definitions are also dependent on the field of inquiry. Dance scholar, Dee Reynolds (2012) commenting on Sklar (1994), refers to 'kinaesthetic empathy' as:

> … movement across and between bodies, which in an artistic situation, can have an affective impact with the potential to change modes of perception and ways of knowing (Reynolds, 2012, p.88).

In the context of this research, this description is germane to the aim of the dance artist when offering the gallery visitor alternative 'modes of perception and ways of knowing' within a creative and original artistic situation. The ability to bring these elements together

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117 Co-discovered, independently, by German mathematician and astronomer August Ferdinand Möbius and Johann Benedict Listing in 1858, they are cited as having discovered the use of the 'möbius strip'.

can also be seen as inherent in the role of the dance artist as a/r/tographer, and I consider this triadic construction of artist, researcher and teacher as a vital component when working with facilitation in an art gallery context.

The dancer as 'artist' in the a/r/tographer

The role of the dance artist as facilitator entwines the multiple roles of **a**rtist, **r**esearcher and **t**eacher, referred to as a/r/tography'. As an art-based method of research it also involves 'creative practice and a performative pedagogy' (Irwin, 2013, p.198). Creative practice and performative pedagogy are clear elements in the dance artist's facilitatory role but first I will focus on the 'artistic' and technical skills that are vital for the dance artist to possess when working interactively in the art gallery. If the dance artist is to be considered a 'work of art' in their own right, their ability to master the physical elements of dance technique is paramount. The physical elements inherent in any dance technique include range of movement, balance, kinaesthetic awareness and a degree of physical stamina. Specific dance techniques have their own vocabulary of movement, as in classical ballet or the Martha Graham modern dance technique, but I would advocate for a broad-reaching knowledge of a variety of dance styles and practices. This is important, as a crucial skill for the dance artist working in the art gallery is the ability to improvise. Dance improvisation is a kinaesthetic response, in the moment, to an internal or external stimulus tempered and affected by the background of the individual dance artist and the immediate influence of the specific situation. Having the possibility to improvise and draw on different movement resources from one's own background in response to a visual stimulus or, more importantly with another person, is fundamental to the creative work of the dance artist. Improvisation is a highly skilled performance act and unique to each dance artist. The movement patterns that emerge will be the result of their particular training, movement habits, cultural background and preferences, and the impetus they receive for the improvisation. The 'new' material developed will also be influenced by other elements including the specific situation, the dance artist's emotional state and the environment they are in. These elements are absorbed and processed within a brief moment and the dance artist needs to be willing to experiment, take risks, be playful, have mental flexibility and 'metaphorical thinking' (Savrami, 2017, p.278).

Several examples of accomplished improvisations could be seen at the National Gallery's *Dancing Museums* residency in November 2016 and at the MacVal, Paris in March 2017.

Here, I will use the example of an improvisation which I saw performed by Lucy Suggate at the National Gallery. I consider this to be an excellent example of 'metaphorical thinking' and 'kinaesthetic imagination' (Reynolds, 2007). It is through kinaesthetic imagination that 'unforeseen movement possibilities are generated directly from kinesthetic events' (Reynolds, 2007, p.187). Lucy Suggate's improvisation was drawn from and inspired by the Pre-Raphaelite[118] paintings in one of the galleries. The visual stimulus came from the abundance of vivid blue swathes of material that could be seen in many of the paintings,[119] and the movement stimulus from the way the voluminous folds of material created different shapes and forms, and from the texture of the paint on canvas.[120] Lucy's 'metaphorical thinking' and 'kinaesthetic imagination' were made visible and expressed through the vivid blue all-in-one costume she wore and the movement vocabulary she chose during the improvisation. Lucy's improvisation resonated with, and enhanced, the tactility of the copious folds and fall of the blue material that could be seen in the paintings, and her quality of movement and vocabulary drew on the content of the artworks. This seemed to me to be a clear example of kinaesthetic imagination at play within the improvisation. She allowed the images, colours and materiality in the paintings, the sensuous, tactile nature of the materials and the gallery space to inspire her movements and evoke an improvisation that echoed her responses to the differing stimuli, lifting the paintings from the canvas and into the gallery space in a flow of movement.

This example, describing Lucy's improvisation, reflects many years of experience and illustrates her ability to draw in stimuli of different kinds and respond with imaginative and creative movement. However, improvisation without skilled physicality and range of movement vocabulary, gained through different training methods, would limit the dance artist's possibilities to finely tune their improvisations to the moment in question. It is vital for the dance artist to possess this ability to think metaphorically and use their kinaesthetic imagination in order to transform, vitalise and make visible the dance artist's vision and perception of the work of art, bringing an aesthetic and unique movement experience to the gallery visitor in the 'moment of its creation'. Being able to improvise in the gallery requires the dance artist to be able to 'expand and contract ones energy, so as not to

118 There are excellent videos and commentary on the National Gallery residency at https://archive.dancingmuseums.com/artefacts.html

119 *Ansidei Madonna* (1505) by Raphael; *Madonna and Child* (northern Italy, 1525-35).

120 Interview notes with Lucy Suggate, November 2016.

impose on the public'[121] and comes from finely attuning one's kinaesthetic awareness and empathy to the gallery visitors and gallery artefacts, attributes that I believe can be trained and refined.

Thinking 'in' and 'through' the body: Contact improvisation, Gaga and somatics

Sheets-Johnstone uses the analogy of dance improvisation to exemplify 'thinking *in* movement' as it is the 'nonseparation of thinking and doing' (Sheets-Johnstone, 1981, p.400), setting this form of dance apart from other codified forms of dance technique. Without the ability to improvise, drawing upon one's surroundings, the artworks or fellow dancers, the dance artist would lose a direct connection to their environment, an authenticity of movement and a creative resource that reinforces their role as dance artist. It is a creative process where:

> a particular situation is unfolding as it is being created by a mindful body; a kinetic intelligence is forging its way in the world, shaping and being shaped by the developing patterns surrounding it (Sheets-Johnstone, 1981, p.405).

In the case of the dance artist, these surrounding patterns could be the work of art used as a source of inspiration or the presence of the public and the gallery space which drives the flow of movement. Likewise, Shusterman advocates 'thinking *through* the body' and developed the field of 'somaesthetics' as a theoretical and practical study of how 'we experience and use the body (or soma) as a site for sensory appreciation (aesthesis) and creative-fashioning' (Shusterman, 2008, p.1). I argue here that certain dance forms fulfil these criteria as they not only develop the physical skills but also the intellectual and aesthetic capabilities of the dancer. Of note is the dance technique known as '*Gaga'*, initiated by Israeli dancer and leader of the *Batsheva Dance Company*, Ohad Naharin, as an example of a 'somaesthetic' practice. Gaga is an improvisational dance form that focuses on developing the individual dancer's somatic awareness, range of movement, creativity, and imagination. The movement research or classes, according to Gaga researcher Einvar Katan 'helps the dancers develop and advance their movement precision and sensibility' (Katan, 2016, p.ix). This is achieved over time through a series of multi-layered, verbal instructions, given by the leader of the class, which allows for personal movement

121 Interview notes with Lucy Suggate.

interpretation and expression within a proposed framework, using poetic, metaphorical and anatomical imagery. It is a complex process of attunement with the body in a constant state of preparedness; listening and responding to the inside and the outside and vice versa, in constant oscillation.

Having undertaken this form of training, I acknowledge the work as being a highly sensual and reflective mode of physical discovery which advances the dancer's movement range and scope and appears to bring a permeability to the movement in a two-way osmotic process which exudes fluidity and personal stories. Each dance artist brings their own cultural, physical and emotional history and modes of interaction into their dance work, referred to as 'habitus' by Bourdieu (1977). The 'habitus' constitutes:

> … a system of lasting, transportable dispositions, which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a *matrix of perception, appreciations and actions* (Bourdieu, 1977, p.83).

Through Gaga classes the individual dancer's 'habitus' is researched and sourced in order to expand the range and authenticity of their movement, emanating from an individual somatic standpoint rather than one of collective form. Katan explains that 'Gaga researches habitual patterns of movement in order to achieve physical breakthroughs' (Katan, 2016, p.25). Gaga is primarily an individual training form and bringing this training together with contact improvisation is advantageous for dance artists when working in contact with gallery visitors.

As the name suggests, Contact Improvisation(CI) involves contact with a partner through the surfaces of the body in order to create a flow of cooperative movement that can also travel through space. Both contact and improvisation as separate skills are inherent to the work of the dance artist in the art gallery, as was seen through the encounters within the context of the *Dancing Museums 1* project. However, Contact Improvisation is a dance form in its own right, which was developed by the American dancer, Steve Paxton in the 1970s and is still taught today, although it has undergone many transformations since then. Initially, Paxton started working with young male sports students in a practice that was highly physical and set new boundaries for what a body could do and how dance was perceived. Paxton was also a member of the Judson Church group that sought to reframe dance as a movement form for all, to emphasise its naturalistic attributes and to enable dance to be experienced for its expressive, unifying qualities (Mullis, 2014).

In my own experience, successful partnering in CI requires acute attunement to one's partner by responding to subtle changes in pressure, flow and direction and surrendering to the kinaesthetic investigation between two people; a vital quality when working with gallery visitors. When CI is performed by experienced practitioners, the image of the möbius strip once again seems appropriate, as the surfaces of the moving bodies are in constant exchange – the inside becoming out, and up becoming down, a constant interchange involving all the senses in concert with each other. CI has been said to look like a duet from the outside, but often feels like a solo for two when being performed and therefore it relies heavily on somatic and kinaesthetic awareness. Kinaesthetic awareness and kinaesthetic empathy come to the fore as all one's movements need to be aligned and unfold in rhythm with one's partner. An empathic interchange of weight, flow and direction are in constant flux, requiring each of the movers to have a heightened sensitivity and responsiveness to each other through all the senses. CI entails an active state of sensing at the same time that one is reflecting, responding and moving to the physical sensations from one's partner. This reciprocal and almost instantaneous feedback allows for the flow of movement to occur as though in anticipation and feeling of the next movement by one's partner.

It has been argued that this response mechanism uses 'mirror neurons' and it is relevant to note the importance of their discovery in relation to kinaesthetic empathy. The term was coined by Gallese et al. in 1996, when doing experiments with monkeys and refers to 'embodied simulation', or the idea of observed movement being able to provoke a similar muscular response in the observer (Foster, 2011, p.165). Taken a step further in 2004 by Hagendoorn (see Foster 2011), it was suggested that even anticipation of another's movements can trigger this occurrence when visual perception activates pre-motor areas of the brain, enabling the observer to respond as though they were about to move. Gallese likened this response to 'resonance', stating that 'it is as if neurons in the motor areas start to 'resonate' as soon as appropriate visual input is presented' (Gallese in Foster, 2011, p.165). In the context of contact improvisation, this resonance also occurs as a 'physical tuning among bodies' and happens almost instantaneously and imperceptibly (ibid., p.167). It is through training in contact improvisation that the dance artist can attune their tactile senses and set the 'preconditions' to be able to be more receptive to the impulses from a gallery visitor who would not necessarily be accustomed to moving in close contact with a dance artist (ibid., p.166).

Contact Improvisation is an intimate dance form, even when practised at a simple level: touch and whole-body contact is an inherent and essential part of the dance technique. Cultural norms and individual physicality will, in part, also dictate who wishes to participate or not. As mentioned, Paxton started the dance form with men, but women quickly became involved in the movement and, in order for the elemental qualities of contact improvisation to prevail, women also acquired the necessary techniques to be able to transfer and lift the weight of their partners. Now it is commonplace for women and men to improvise together and differences in strength and physicality between them can hardly be seen. Touch between partners of different sexes became more de-sexualised as no part of the body could be considered out of bounds; constant thought of 'no go' areas would only hinder the flow, texture and quality of the movement. However, in a public context and depending on the country one is working in, the dance artist must be mindful of cultural norms and the physicality of the gallery visitor, and make clear what the realm of movement is and what their movement intentions are when inviting a gallery visitor to participate. Once engaged in an encounter with a gallery visitor the dance artist must assume the responsibility for their partner, listening and attuning through the body to their partner's responses. Cooper-Albright suggests we see this responsibility:

> not as an oppressive duty towards others, but rather as an ability to respond, an ability to be present to the world and as a way of being present with oneself. This is the fruit of kinaesthetic attention, a physical mindfulness that prepares one for improvisation (Cooper-Albright, 2013, p.267).

Clearly, CI on a professional level is unsuitable for engaging with the art gallery visitor, unless they are practitioners of this technique. However, for the dance artist, experience in contact improvisation is vital to lead even the simplest example of this dance form. The earlier examples at the *Dancing Museums* residency in 2016 at the National Gallery showed how simple forms of contact work can be used to create novel and engaging ways of observing the works of art together with a dance artist. Without previous training in contact improvisation, it would not be possible for the dance artist to transmit the bodily trust and confidence needed by the gallery visitor to engage in this type of encounter.

A prerequisite for engaging in this form of corporeal dialogue is the dance artist's attunement to their own physicality, movement patterns, origin of movement and felt sense of self. This felt sense of self can be also be practised and honed through various movement forms, as noted with Gaga 'technique' and through other somatic practices, in

particular the somatic practices of Alexander technique and Feldenkrais, though there are other techniques that attest to the same ends of knowing and understanding one's movement patterns and from where they stem. For the purposes of this research, I will cover briefly the most prevalent forms and those that I have been personally acquainted with, which include the Alexander technique, Feldenkrais, and Aikido.

Both the Alexander Technique[122] and the Feldenkrais Method are somatic training forms for the individual dancer, though they are suitable for anyone seeking to improve posture, alignment and efficiency of movement. They are characterised by their slow tempo and conscious coupling of mind and body to allow time for more efficient re-patterning and absorption of new muscular configurations to take place. In the context of dance, these newly learned patterns are often then integrated into the practical dance training, promoting greater ease and flow of movement in order to create harmonious functioning and energy flow in a holistically integrated manner. This body-mind coupling assists in knowing one's body better; a criteria for then being able to interact with others.

Alexander Technique, founded in the 1890s by Frederik M. Alexander, focuses on correct alignment and lessening muscular tension through effective balancing of the body. Similarly, the Feldenkrais Method, devised by Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984) looks at bodily movement patterns to provide 'experiences whereby bodily information about movement patterns and habits gradually surface to allow examination and choice' (Feldenkrais in Lessinger [1996], Fortin et al. 2002, p.156). A more physical form of attunement to self and others can be seen in the martial art form Aikido (a form that also heavily influenced the development of CI). Originating in Japan in the 14th century, it became a systemised training form in the early part of the 20th century. It is characterised by its spiralling motions and the use of an opponent's weight as 'a fulcrum of one's own defence…. and is used to neutralise the situation' (Foster, 2012, p. 170). A fundamental element of Aikido is the notion of 'ki' as the 'self-cultivation of one's inner mind-body coordination', and it does not allow for any form of competition but seeks to attain harmony and calm control through its practice (Gordon, 2019, p.9). As a 'non-violent' martial art form it offers an enhanced understanding of how weight, gravity and awareness can be used optimally in dance and particularly in contact improvisation. It is here that

122 https://alexandertechnique.co.uk/alexander-technique/history (Accessed 04.09.19)

kinaesthetic empathy is also trained through the 'reading' of a partner's movements, seeking to blend and harmonise the energy from an opponent – which here can be read as the gallery visitor engaged in a simple contact encounter. Aikido is successfully used for both male and female dance students in their training for contact work where students of both sexes could be lifting, falling and rolling with each other. In observing these classes one can see that students become familiar with the sensation of falling, using the ground more softly and being able to return to standing efficiently. By being able to utilise the weight of one's partner to initiate the next movement, a greater sense of flow and softness is achieved in contact and the skilled dance artist can carefully engage any gallery visitor with sensitivity and confidence in a simple contact experience.

These examples of dance improvisation, contact improvisation and somatic practices are unique and personal movement expressions, generated in part by the 'habitus' of the individual dance artist (Bourdieu, 1977, p.82) and including the 'matrix of perception, appreciations and actions' (ibid., p.83). Regarding the dance artist working in the art gallery, their 'perceptions, appreciations and actions' involving gallery visitors are generated as an outcome not only of their artistic training but also of their pedagogical and philosophical preferences, which it can be argued, are inseparable. It is for this reason that it is also necessary for the dance artist to have the ability to engage pedagogically and see each venture with a gallery visitor as a unique form of consensual movement research and learning, guided by the dance artist.

The dance artist as *researcher* and *teacher* in a/r/tography

> Research becomes a process of exchange that is not separated from the body but emerges from an intertwining of mind and body, self and other, and through our interactions with the world (Irwin and Springgay, 2008, p.xxii).

This quote exemplifies how I see the function of research in the dance artist's facilitatory role when interacting with the gallery space, the artworks and the gallery visitors. It does not conform to 'standardized criteria' but 'remains dynamic, fluid and in constant motion' (Irwin and Springgay, 2008, p.xix). It is not a means of collecting and interpreting data, in the traditional sense, but an integrated intellectual and physical practice. It is the dance artist who must create an atmosphere conducive to collectively producing new creative knowledge and understanding, through their physical inquiry and processes of engagement with a gallery visitor. As a movement researcher, the dance artist must first explore the site

and content of the area; the affordances of the gallery space and the artworks. They must consider and design appropriate creative encounters and then engage in a unique relational and aesthetic meeting with a gallery visitor. The aim is then to offer new modes of perceiving and sensing the artworks through a creative, physical experience together with a dance artist. This does not negate the fact that many dance artists later document, reflect and share the findings of their encounters.

Dance improvisation is effectively, then, a form of physical research, and the dance artist needs to be fully receptive and responsive to the situation, people and environment. Especially when engaging with a gallery visitor, the dance artist is drawing on their extensive repertoire of movement, but must also allow for spontaneity and a sense of playfulness to prevail within a relational meeting. Each gallery visitor will bring a unique history and physicality with them and the dance artist must then adapt to this fresh situation to enable a unique creative collaboration with the gallery visitor.

The artist/researcher/teacher, in the context of the dance artist, is a contiguous constellation of roles that is constantly in process, relational and inter-corporeal. Having a broad range of pedagogical skills to draw upon is also an invaluable asset. However, and perhaps most importantly, there must be a disposition to engage, share and collaborate with generosity, empathy and tact before being able to draw on pedagogical competencies. Here the dance artist needs to see pedagogy not as a formulaic prescription, but as an 'event that pays attention to the material forces in entanglements in bodies'; seen in the art gallery as the interactions between people, gallery spaces and artefacts (Springgay, 2017, p.275). The 'event' is the affective experience between dance artist and gallery visitor where the interaction has the potential for change and is an entanglement of body, mind and matter, termed 'affective pedagogy' by Hickey-Moody (2009, 2012, 2016). This term is adapted from '*affectus'* where Hickey-Moody draws on the work of Deleuze (1988). *Affectus* refers to the 'movement from one state to another' (Deleuze in Hickey-Moody, 2009, p.273) but Hickey-Moody goes on to adapt this further:

> Affective pedagogy is a framework for thinking through the pedagogical shift in perception effected by the aesthetics of an artwork' (Hickey-Moody, 2016, p.258).

Here Hickey-Moody reiterates the necessity for the dance artist to be able to make a 'pedagogical shift', in its broadest sense, in response both to the artwork and the gallery

visitor. This also resonates with deLahunta's 'mind-set' when he refers to the role of facilitator as a 'being-between', and underlines my argument that 'pedagogy' involves not only theoretical and practical training but also the accumulation of individual experiences and philosophies that in turn generate this form of collaborative artistic practice. Not all dance artists desire or are able to develop, share and engage their practice in a public setting. As Blades points out, there is a distinction between the notion of practice as performance and practice as the internal processes that take place before a performance (see Blades, 2016). In the case of the dance artist engaging in improvisation in an art gallery, their practice *is* their performance *in* process and it may also entail a gallery visitor, with or without an audience; a situation that not all dance artists find rewarding or desirable. It is interesting to note that Lucy Suggate sees her practice **as** performance, whether the public is present or not. Experiences of misaligned encounters, to my knowledge, are few and far between for the experienced dance artist but the exposure that practice *as* performance can bring can be challenging for the less experienced dance artist.

Viewpoints from dance artists working in the gallery spaces (Arken, 2017)

The ability to be a 'work in process' or to use one's practice 'as performance' requires an experienced and self-reliant dance artist who can move fluidly between gallery visitor, work of art, their own artistic practice and can also fully engage with the particular space, materiality and architecture of the art gallery. This section explores comments relating to these topics from the dance students on the postgraduate Dance Partnership Education at the Danish National School of Performing Arts who took part in the first residency at Arken in November 2017. As previously noted, the educational curriculum which I started to develop in 2008 became a Master of Arts in 2020,[123] approved by the Danish Cultural Ministry. The education is designed for:

> professional practising dancers and choreographers who wish to combine artistic and pedagogic practice with a view to develop and realise artistic projects in which the participant's physical, social and creatively established experiences are central.[124]

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123 I resigned my position in 2015.

124 https://ddsks.dk/en/dance-partnership. Renamed as an MFA in Dance and Participation May, 2020.

The students in the first Arken project in 2017 were in their final year of study and the comments given here relate directly to their feedback, which allowed for better planning, preparation and implementation to take place for the second residency.

When interviewing the dance artists after the first residency, the issue of 'being a process-based work in a product-oriented space',[125] was raised by all the students. The expectation that they should be constantly performing was a prevailing feeling and some were unaccustomed to having their practice constantly viewed and for some, judged, as sensed by Ann in the previous chapter. For Ann, it was disconcerting to hear comments from the public and to be moved on by the guards at one point as she was 'in the way'. Though information was given to the guards about the type of work the dance artists were involved in, it was clearly not sufficient for them to appreciate that the dance artists were *part of* the gallery space and supplemented the works of art. It is often the guards that gallery visitors approach for more information and if they are not informed of the appropriate language and context it can have a negative influence. The expectation from the public that a 'moving body in space is expected to be a performance'[126] prevailed throughout the first residency. This was partly due to the spaces and galleries where the dance artists chose to work. An example of this was the quadrangular space where the installation *space-time-foam* (2016) by Danish artist Lea Porsager was displayed. The room, with large paintings on three walls and an installation covering the central space, could only be approached by going down a flight of broad steps, giving the room the feel of an amphitheatre and considered a 'dense space'[127] by some of the students. The gallery visitors used the steps to sit on whenever the dancers were improvising in that particular space, apparently waiting for a performance to begin, rather than appreciating a temporal, improvised activity. Consequently, a notice was displayed explaining that the dancers were involved in a participatory research project and that visitors were welcome to join in or talk to the dancers about the work. This happened on a few occasions but more frequently the dance artists were asked when the performances would begin. A second space that presented the same problem was *Detlef's Salen* (hall), the large open space, used for seminars and functions, which invited the same role of observation rather than participation. Subsequently, during the second residency, *Detlef Salen* was used for a public warm-up session with up to 40 people and others observing, thereby utilising the architecture of the

125 Interview with one of the postgraduate dance students, 06.11.17.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.

space more appropriately. However, as one of the students noted, if they had had more time and had a better understanding of how the spaces moulded and influenced their behaviour and that of the gallery visitors, they could have found ways 'to break the pattern of the space'.[128] Hence, if a new materialist and posthumanist approach had been taken during this first residency and time spent exploring the materiality and affordances of the rooms, a different, intertwined and more dynamic practice would have emerged *with* the room and those passing through it, rather than simply being *in* it.

In summary, all the dance artists felt that the time in the gallery was too short and that they would have benefited from an extended period of exploration. They had been asked to visit the space prior to working with Lucy but only two of them had managed to go there. This was because of the time pressures that were placed on them from their other commitments, including their usual studies and part-time paid work. All felt that there had been mixed messages regarding the focus of the research project, mainly because I had been unable to initiate the start of the project in May and therefore Lucy and their head of department had to begin without me. The students felt this produced three different versions of the project and that there had not been one clear direction to follow despite them receiving written material from me concerning my research. This confusion was evident at the start of the residency and much time was spent in deliberations over the structure and format of the research, as described in Chapter 2. It should also be noted that Arken Museum of Modern Art, like many contemporary galleries, has a particular architecture and profile which will also influence behaviours and flow of visitors. As a Danish contemporary art museum, Arken is also relatively small, informal in its layout and visitor management and trusting towards its patrons, and although dance performances had taken place before, visitor interaction with dance artists was a new venture for the museum.

Arken Museum of Modern Art as the dance artist's place of work

Arken Museum of Modern Art, a medium-sized contemporary art gallery built on a man-made island on the southern coastline of the island of Zealand, opened in 1996. Arken resembles a futuristic ship or 'ark' beached on the shoreline and is an angular building constructed in concrete and glass; additional gallery spaces were added in 2008 and 2009. The gallery has a permanent exhibition, consisting of Danish, Nordic and international

128 Ibid.

artists, but is also renowned for its special visiting exhibitions by painters who have included Picasso, Chagall, Frida Kahlo and Andy Warhol. Of particular note as a gallery space is the Art Axis, which is a large space measuring 150 metres in length with a ceiling height descending from 12 metres at one end to 3.5 metres at the other end (Arken, 2016). This space has been used for large scale exhibitions and interactive events including the exhibiting of a 40-ton Chinese train in Qui Anxiong's *Staring into Amnesia* (2009); Olafur Eliasson's 90-metre tunnel in his work *Your Blind Passenger* (2010), and Palle Nielsen's *The Model* (2014), which was an interactive exhibition specifically for children. I name these works to give an indication of the size, volume and atmosphere of the spaces that the dance artists worked in.

The unique contemporary architecture of the museum was mentioned by all of the dance artists, in both positive and negative terms during the interviews with them. For some, the vast undefined spaces were difficult for them to negotiate and interact with; some felt the spaces dictated how they should move, and others felt they were superfluous to the setting, competing with the existing and completed artworks. The aforementioned examples in the quadrangular space and *Detlef's Salen* (hall) are examples that show how the architecture of the spaces affected and directed both the dance artists' work and the flow of the public. Had more time been spent exploring the materiality of the spaces, mining information from the architecture and looking choreographically at their potentiality, it may have been possible for the dance artists to create improvisational works that sprang from their kinaesthetic imagination evoked by the environment so that 'the body becomes an intensive participant with the evolving milieu rather than simply the instigator of the action' (Manning, 2013, p.101).

An architectural example of an 'intensive participant' for the dance artists could have been the floors in the gallery spaces. I had expected that the cold floors would be an issue, but most of the students had come adequately prepared to work on the polished concrete floors which featured in the majority of the galleries. However, using the floor for group contact improvisations became one of the students' preferred ways of working, which in turn was a disincentive for the public. Young children walking at eye height with the dancers at floor level, though, were often eager to participate and several did take part in contact work with the dancers, much to the delight of the observing public. As one student noted 'young children don't have a filter' and are willing to participate and take chances. As the group improvisations were on the floor, they were clearly too challenging, and possibly

unsuitable, for the public, but for the dance artists the floor gave them the support that they needed. Here we can see a form of kinaesthetic empathy towards the floor, working in opposite directions for the dance artists and the gallery visitors. For the dance artists it provided quite literally support, physically, spatially and emotionally: for the gallery visitors the work on the floor had the opposite effect, distancing them both kinaesthetically and relationally from the dance artists. Different strategies were tried to improve visitor involvement, including writing notices, explaining the concept, and handing out small pieces of paper with a simple idea for movement written on it, but even here, many gallery visitors declined to take them. As one student noted: 'it was as though they thought I was trying to sell them something!'.[129] Once again the issue of the time required to research different methods of involving the gallery visitor was raised. Clearly, many gallery visitors felt too exposed and challenged when expected to make movement decisions themselves but when they were directed and supported by the dancers, as in 'human furniture'[130] the response was far more positive. Even though many gallery visitors did not participate in the encounters with the dance artists, a change in some of the visitors' physical behaviour was observed. I observed one young woman, having seen the dance artists improvising, waited until they had left and then began her own movement exploration, investigating the possibilities of seeing the paintings from different angles by doing handstands in one of the large spaces; others lay on the floor to see the paintings from a different perspective and others sat on the ground for longer periods of time.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to present a framework of skills, competencies and qualities needed by the dance artist to engage in physical encounters with gallery visitors. Examples of dance artist and gallery visitor interactions have been given to substantiate my choices. However, it was the possibility to interview the students after their week at Arken that proved an invaluable asset in understanding the complexity of the dance artist's role. My beliefs about the artistic attributes of the dance artist, in terms of their ability to improvise and choreograph at a professional level, proved to be correct but I underestimated how much their commitment to sharing their work, their self-confidence in their own artistry and their personal philosophies affect their ability to engage with the gallery visitor. I had also underestimated how much the architecture of the gallery space and the nature of the

129 Ibid.

130 Described in detail in chapter 2.

exhibits would affect the outcomes, and also how more time was needed in the gallery itself, to absorb and explore the space, the materiality of the artworks and how the visitors moved and interacted within each gallery.

I chose to conduct a second interview with the dance student, Jane, whom I consider was the most successful in engaging positively with the gallery visitors, in order to hear more about how she experienced the visitors and how she decided whom to approach. Jane made the following observations:

> It's about noticing the whole body, the whole language of the body, there is something radiant about a body – it is not mystical, it's about noticing things before they happen – it's like the moment of breath, a sense of something before you see it; just before you exhale, just before it happens, an in-between, in no-man's land. Seeing how the body is positioned, the person as a whole, the gaze, the breath, seeing if the body is inviting or not, does it turn away? It's also about the tone of the body as well, does it tense up and hold the breath? Or does it expand a bit? It's like a small animal that makes itself small when it is afraid, it's something like the body expanding - it's opening up because it wants to listen. If the body expands then there is space for me to enter – there is a folding and unfolding. Sometimes it can be only a part of the body opening up and the rest is following and then you have to approach the part that seems more open. It is a super attentiveness to the body.[131]

Jane underlines the complex processes that the dance artist needs to undergo in the 'moment of occurrence' discussed in the opening quote of this chapter, and the sense of involvement and commitment to the process that is required (Brannigan, 2019, p.366). I consider Jane's approach to her work, her kinaesthetic empathy and ability to fulfil the role of a/r/tographer to be an optimal profile for a dance artist working in the gallery. Clearly, her own philosophical and pedagogical ideas resonated with this type of work, as did her extensive training in somatic techniques and contact improvisation. However, judging from the comments of the other dance artists as well as my experience in other gallery spaces, I realised that it was also necessary to expand the criteria for successful encounters by including, to a much greater extent, the nature and materiality of the artworks and the gallery architecture itself; a more holistic and encompassing approach was needed. It was this realisation that led me to consider the notion of an 'ecology of participation', as a way

[131] Audio interview with Jane, December 2017.

to create the desired environment, one that was adaptable, harmonious, that developed aesthetic relationality and took into account all aspects of the encounter.

I would suggest that the National Gallery and Arken residencies showed how the physical proximity of the creative dance artist with gallery visitors can activate multiple senses, directly and indirectly, realising opportunities to experience the artworks in unforeseen ways. The role of the dance artist goes far beyond one of movement and communication as they involve the visitor in sensory experiences, associations and recollections as they engage with them. It is an important form of cultural and aesthetic relationality that goes deeper than the touch on the skin and lasts long after the gallery visitor has left the space. Ensuring that this lasting response can be part of a positive transformative journey for the gallery visitor is an important aspect of the dance artist's work in creating an 'ecology of participation'; a journey that includes a renewed appreciation for the role the sensuous body can play in engaging with the world. It was the desire to develop and realise an 'ecology of participation' that moved me to seek a second residency at Arken. I also wished to ensure the possibility of working with the next group of postgraduate students over a longer period of time in order to target the areas of work needed to fulfil my research into developing an ecology of participation. The following chapter shows however, that the nature of the second residency presented me with a different path; one that inspired me to divert towards a posthuman ecology of participation.

CHAPTER 4

Second Residency at Arken Museum of Modern Art: Patricia Piccinini's *A World of Love* – Creating an 'embodied guided tour', March 2019

Introduction:

> Art (is) an intensive practice that aims at creating new ways of thinking, perceiving and sensing. By transposing us beyond the confines of bound identities art becomes necessarily inhuman in the sense of nonhuman in that it connects to the animal, vegetable, earthy, planetary forces that surround us. Art is also [...] posthuman by structure as it carries us to the limits of what our embodied selves can do or endure (Braidotti, 2013, p.107).

Moving on to the content and design of my second residency at Arken Museum of Modern Art in March 2019, I now unfurl the reasons for my expansion into developing what I have called a *posthuman ecology of participation*. I had assumed that the proposed second residency would give me the opportunity to further develop and strengthen my concept of an *ecology of participation* based on my reflections and analysis from the first residency. Previously, we had worked with a loosely woven framework of creative movement interventions and chance encounters which took place between the dance artist, the gallery visitors and the works of art, with the emphasis on their inter-relationship. I wished to further explore the materiality of the artworks and improve and refine these triadic encounters for the second residency. However, the parameters of this second residency proved to be radically different and impelled me along an alternative, though logical, path to develop a 'posthuman ecology of participation'. This development was in direct response to the evocative underlining ethos of the exhibition we were asked to facilitate through movement and dance: Patricia Piccinini's exhibition *A World of Love'*(2019). The exhibition, which can be defined as 'bio-art', asks us to re-evaluate our thoughts and responsibilities concerning the development of technologically and bio-engineered 'creatures' and our role in manipulating and exploiting nature for our own ends (Mondloch, 2018, p.65).

Here then, I develop and clarify my interpretation of the term posthumanism and look at the scholars from whom I have drawn posthumanist perspectives and, where relevant, ideas from new materialism. The chapter then moves on to offer a summary of the seven different encounters created by the dance artists in their response to the hybrid exhibits

created by Piccinini. These encounters were mediated through an 'embodied guided tour' and were profoundly shaped by the philosophy behind the exhibits themselves. The dance artists used movement, dance, video and text/language as potential tools for reclaiming our embodied connection with a more-than-human world. The encounters highlight the capacity for dance to cultivate a multi-sensory informed worldview and to offer the possibility for new perspectives, understanding and connecting with our ever-evolving, but threatened environment.

The chapter concludes by looking at the responses given by the dance artists in individual interviews held immediately after this second residency. The dance artists were asked to comment on their training and preparation for their planned encounters and on how they responded to and experienced the embodied guided tour with the invited gallery visitors.

A World of Love – content and design of the second residency

> *It is March 2019 and Arken Museum of Modern Art rises majestically from its small man-made island on the coastline south of Copenhagen, Denmark, its ship-like structure stark against the grey sky. The 'Ark' is living up to its name, at present, as a safe haven for a variety of animals, plants, birds, humans and other creatures – but with a difference. The current exhibition by Australian artist, Patricia Piccinini, 'A World of Love', running from February to September 2019, exhibits life-sized sculptures and installations of human, animal, transgenic, cyber-technological and transspecies figures. At first glance many of the creations appear disturbingly human-like; aberrations of nature that invoke both empathy and alarm in equal parts. It is however, Piccinini's wish that we summon our compassion and care for these creatures which she sees as metaphors for what may come – or maybe are already here – prompted by man's imposition, intentional or not, on nature, biogenetics and technology.*
>
> Fieldnotes from Arken, March, 2019.

Piccinini's exhibition houses forty works of art ranging from the life-sized silicone and fibreglass 'humans' and transgenic hybrid sculptures to metal technological fantasies, videos and installations – all of which provoke the gallery visitor to alternately want to touch and care for them, or recede from and reject them. It is this dichotomy of feelings about difference and familiarity and otherness and subjectivity that Piccinini seeks to

address. She wishes to move us from an anthropocentric[132] viewpoint to a 'posthuman perspective' (Braidotti, 2013) where 'we must find a new way of thinking about nature that includes us – as we are – but that is not just for us' (Piccinini, 2019, p.49). Braidotti, who interviewed Piccinini for the exhibition's catalogue, takes the question further:

> How does your work contribute to a new relationship to the human, non-human, the inhuman, the trans- and post human in an era that is defined both as the fourth industrial revolution and the sixth extinction? What if those hybrid others, far from being relics of a distant genetic past, mark instead the path of our evolutionary future? (Braidotti, 2019, p.49).

Piccinini's response is that she sees her artworks as,

> … metaphors for the present rather than suggestions for the future. On one level they are catalysts – the deliberately incorrect answers to questions that I hope my audience will be inspired to discuss (Piccinini, 2019, p.49).

By arousing our sensitivities and displaying an alternative narrative, Piccinini did provoke discussion. Piccinini's works can be classified as a meshing of bio-art and hyperrealist art, as they combine the use of human and natural materials[133] with realistic life-sized sculptures and objects that are designed to emulate or be a precise imitation of the 'real' thing. For Piccinini the 'real' thing are life-sized sculptures of fabulated creatures including humans, hybrid humans, plants, technologies and combinations of all the aforementioned. The artworks are paradoxical both in their appearance and how they make us feel. Human and animal collide and merge forming a strange but still familiar hybrid that stirs alternating reactions of dismay and fascination, alienation and empathy. However, Piccinini makes sure to tip the balance in favour of our acceptance of these creatures; they are playful, non-threatening and sufficiently 'human-like' to awaken our caring instincts and make us realise that in some way we are genetically related. They cleverly raise existential issues and ethical questions about our manipulation and exploitation of other creatures, plants and technology through appealing to our sense of wonder and compassion.

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132 The term Anthropocene was coined by biologist Eugene Stormer and chemist Paul Crutzen in 2000 and, in their understanding, refers to the epoch following the development of the steam engine in 1784. This date marks the beginning of a time period where mankind has exerted significant pressure on the ecosystems and climate of the earth to such an extent that it has the possibility to change the rock strata of the earth; a definition given by the International Union of Geological Scientists.

133 The sculptures primarily use silicone as their outer covering. Its translucent properties produce a realistic skin tone, and human hair is used for the body and head.

It was Piccinini's exhibition that the six first-year postgraduate Dance Partnership[134] students, together with dance artist Lucy Suggate and myself, would be working with to develop a set of scores in preparation for creating what we called an 'embodied guided tour' for two groups of designated gallery visitors. The first group was composed of 12 members of *'Skoletjensten',* a national cultural network for teachers, pedagogues, youth workers and others involved in teaching and learning situations, who were taking part in external professional development sessions offered by Arken. My contact from the education department at Arken invited us to develop a day-long 'encounter', based specifically on the works of Patricia Piccinini, for the *Skoletjensten* group, whose members were mainly from museums and cultural institutions in and around the Copenhagen area and who worked with education and development in their respective areas. The second group were primary school art teachers, also on a professional development day. This group of thirty teachers were at Arken predominantly to work with visual arts, but a shortened hour-long 'embodied guided tour' was also offered to them.

These engagements differed considerably from our first residency at Arken. In this second residency, we were focused only on the *A World of Love* temporary exhibition and worked only with the two designated groups. However, it was also important to convey that any gallery visitor was welcome to join either of the groups if they wished. The two residencies at Arken presented radically different scopes of work (see Chapter 2 for first Arken residency where all encounters were random). Reflecting on the outcomes of the first residency, coupled with focusing attention on the Piccinini exhibition, led to a completely new way of working that could better prepare the dance artists for their roles as 'embodied guides', embrace the specificity of the *A World of Love* exhibition, and offer a relevant and meaningful encounter for the gallery visitors. Being confronted with this exhibition awoke me to the realization that it was both possible and desirable to combine an aesthetic and creative movement experience with the thought-provoking narrative and philosophy of the exhibition. Thus far I had explored an ecology of participation, researching how the dance artist could create an inclusive space and atmosphere conducive to creative participation, but had not necessarily taken into account scientific perspectives on 'ecology', as I had used ecology rather as a framework and source of ideas about interconnected principles. In this second residency, however, these principles became the foundation for an investigation

134 From 2020 called an MFA in Dance and Participation.

into how the posthuman aspects, raised by Piccinini, could be considered, explored and manifested in order to stimulate ecological awareness on a personal, societal and environmental plane.[135] Piccinini's concern for the 'creatures', 'beings' and 'kin' that are symbolized through her hybrid sculptures, whether animal, human, plant or technological, prompted me to combine my long-standing interest and concern for the well-being of our planet with developing aesthetic participatory practices that can become a 'tool for thinking' and facilitate experiencing the connection between ecology and the posthumanist concerns of Piccinini's bio-art (Stengers, 2005, p.185).

Towards a posthuman ecology of participation

> Becoming posthuman consequently is a process of redefining one's sense of attachment and connection to a shared world, a territorial space: urban, social, psychic, ecological, planetary as it may be (Braidotti, 2013, p.193).

Braidotti's writing reflects the same interests as Piccinini's artworks – to redefine our sense of attachment to all living creatures and understand our inter-relation and connection in a shared world. As I started to investigate the works of Patricia Piccinini, prior to working with the postgraduate students, it quickly became apparent that Piccinini's works were personal and philosophical artistic statements about our current environmental, ecological and technological issues. Through them she seeks to highlight the problem of setting boundaries between nature and culture, humanity and technology and our ethical responsibility towards new life forms that are created – whatever they may be. Piccinini's works are 'not about attributing human characteristics to animals as much as recognising our shared "animalness"' (Piccinini, 2019, p.97). They are a provocation to the viewer to understand our interconnectedness and to start conversations about our responsibilities towards the world and the creatures in it, of which we are just a small part. Piccinini's work has also provoked interest amongst 'posthuman' and feminist writers, most notably Braidotti (2013, 2016, 2019), who interviewed her, and Donna Haraway in *Speculative Fabulations for Technoculture's Generations* (2007, 2008). In invoking the term 'posthuman' I refer here primarily to Braidotti and her viewpoint that a paradigm shift in our way of thinking about 'being human' is needed, one that is inclusive, positive and sustainable. For her, to be posthuman:

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135 This resonates with Guattari's *Three Ecologies* (1989/2000) see Chapter 2.

> does not mean to be indifferent to humans, or to be de-humanised. On the contrary, it rather implies a new way of combining ethical values with the well-being of an enlarged sense of community, which includes one's territorial or environmental inter-connections. […] Posthuman theory also bases the ethical relation on positive grounds of joint projects and activities, not on the negative or reactive grounds of shared vulnerability. (Braidotti, 2013, p.190)

Braidotti's emphasis on 'ethical values', an 'enlarged sense of community' and 'positive grounds of joint ventures' resonated with the principles that we wished to put into effect in the encounters with the gallery visitors. Braidotti's proposition is but one of many in the field of posthumanist theory. N. Katherine Hayle's book '*How we became posthuman*' (1999) looks at the influence and dominance of computers and technology and the 'body as original prosthesis which we all learn to manipulate' as an alternative portrayal of the posthuman condition (Hayles, 1999, p.3). Wolfe's *What is Posthumanism?* (2009), Badmington's *Posthumanism* (2000) and the more disheartening book *Our Posthuman Future* (2002) by Fukuyama, have also been forerunners in discussing the idea of posthumanism. There are others who focus on differing perspectives and complex issues around defining what it means to be part of 'human nature' in the twenty first century. For the purposes of this chapter the focus is primarily on the works of Braidotti (2013, 2016), Barad (2003, 2010) and Bennett (2010), whose viewpoints resonate most closely with my own.

In broad terms, posthumanism questions the position of the human race as the superior, dominant and controlling species and moves away from the preceding era of the Anthropocene,[136] convinced of the infallibility of human power, our superiority and uniqueness (Pepperell, 2003). It is also concerned with how we are leaving an indelible and in some instances irreversible, footprint on the planet. Posthumanism looks closely at the evolution of species, our own and others, and at technology and culture, but does not negate the positive advances that technology can bring to us all. It reflects a way of thinking about how we live and conduct ourselves with others, with animals and the environment, ensuring that exploitation is not taking place and assuming ethical responsibility for our actions. As a teenager in the 1970s, I clearly remember Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* (1962) and the messages about the dangers of tampering with

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136 When the era of the Anthropocene started and when it will end remains a matter of contention. Crutzen and Stoermer (2000) suggest it started with the steam engine in 1784, though it is argued by Lewis and Maslin (2015) that it started earlier around 1610 with the onset of colonialism, global trade and the increasing use of coal and industrialisation in general.

and manipulating our environment. Even after fifty years, some of the same concerns and arguments about how we engage with our environment are still being raised today, including the unwanted side-effects of chemical deposits in our waters and land and the lasting effects they have on humans, animals and plants. Piccinini considers that her 'critters', whether they have evolved as a result of genetic aberrations, environmental tampering or evolutionary solutions, deserve our concern and care as we have an obligation and responsibility to those we create. Posthumanism sends out this plea for greater equality with other living beings, objects, materials and environments in our complex and enmeshed ecology; they are not passive forms, but matter with agency. I see Piccinini's sculptures, videos and installations as a striving towards this posthumanist paradigm, by exposing us to worlds of 'otherness' where our 'humanity' is required to respond ethically with empathy and compassion to these hybridities of nature, culture, biodiversity and technology. Barad (2003) and Braidotti (2013) boldly suggest that as 'actants', materials and environments have their own agency; they have 'thing power' (Bennett, 2010). 'Thing-power' for Bennett encompasses the vitality of the materials and an understanding that the objects are not here solely 'for' humans but that they have a 'life' beyond us, whether it be in landfills or the seas and we therefore have an obligation to engage with them sustainably and take responsibility for them. The notion of 'thing-power', in the context of Piccinini's work, seems particularly pertinent as the exhibits have distinct materiality and commonality that are designed to evoke 'affect' and disturb our own taxonomy of what it means to be human and how we engage with different materials, be they technological, human or otherwise.

In the context of this research, including posthuman viewpoints had profound implications for the development of a working methodology between the dance artist, the gallery visitor and Piccinini's exhibits. If one is to honour the concepts and philosophy of Piccinini's thinking, the integrity of the dance artist and the agency and autonomy of the gallery visitor, it is necessary to delve deeper into posthumanist theories, creativity and pedagogy in order to arrive at a concept that respects all 'actants'. Jane Bennett (2010) uses the word actant to mean:

> a source of action that can be human or non-human; it is that which has efficacy, can *do* things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events (Bennett, 2010, p.viii).

I understand this to mean that a form of transformation and a meaning-making process is taking place between the entities. In the context of Piccinini's work, this is a valid perspective, given the nature of the life-like works of art, the philosophical statements behind them and the call for action that comes when being in their presence; it could be said that the sculptures are actants informing the course of the discussion between gallery visitors – they are the 'agentic contributions of non-human forces' (Bennett, 2010, p.xvi). This was pertinent in the context of working to create the 'embodied guided tour' with the dance artists because, by their very nature, the different sculptures have 'affective' power and choosing which creative and facilitative aspect to focus on can have the possibility to mobilise this 'affect' to elicit different reactions from the viewers. According to dance scholar Reynolds, 'affect' is:

> pre-cognitive and refers to the point at which the body is activated, 'excited' in the process of responding, but this process has not yet reached consciousness (Reynolds, 2013, p.213).

So, a response is felt viscerally in the body but not, as yet, defined by a particular emotion or feeling, though an affective response could lead to evoking empathy, revulsion or any number of other emotional responses. However, Piccinini has designed her creations to effect a response of 'connection and empathy'[137] and these emotions are at the heart of her practice. She acknowledges that, at first sight, the strangeness of the exhibits can be disturbing but that they entreat the viewer to have empathy and see their connectedness within the world. She calls for 'xenophilia'[138], a 'love of the exotic' rather than xenophobia and appeals to us to see similarities rather than differences though fully accepting their 'otherness'. Braidotti also proposes that given our experimentation with non-human and technological others, we think of an 'ethics of transformation' as a way to encourage ethical thinking regarding the intertwining of human and non-human others. Therefore, a posthuman ecology of participation requires that these same posthuman principles are embedded in the encounters with the gallery visitors, acknowledging in this instance that:

> … becoming posthuman is regulated by an ethics of joy and affirmation that functions through the transformation of negative into positive passions (Braidotti, 2013, p.194).

137 https://www.patriciapiccinini.net/writing/0/449/93 (Accessed 18.11.19)
138 https://www.patriciapiccinini.net/writing/0/449/93

With this notion of joy and positivity as inherent in the encounters, the students, Lucy and I decided that creating an 'embodied guided tour' could offer optimal modes of engagement for the gallery visitors. These encounters would be more structured than those of the previous residency and created and prepared by the dance artists in the exhibition space beforehand, thus allowing them more time to research in close contact with their chosen artefact. Each dance artist was to carefully consider how they could best creatively embody and express an aspect of their chosen artwork that could draw the visitors into physically experiencing or perceiving the exhibits differently, and prompt them to question the issues raised. Arken wished the dance artists to be present in the gallery during these preparations, which then allowed them time to become accustomed to the curious gaze of the passing public, which had raised issues for some during the previous residency.

Creating, improvising and performing in a public space is not the default way of working for many dance artists, as experienced during the previous residency. It can be a new and challenging way of working, especially when coupled with the paradigm of posthumanist thinking which required the dance artists to reassess their own viewpoints and address those of the exhibition. The dance artists in this second residency had the advantage of a longer period of preparation, focused primarily on one of the art objects, thus eliminating the pressure of continuous spontaneity that the previous group felt. By fully immersing themselves in their chosen artwork, they were able to embody and convey the posthuman messages of the exhibit; practising 'de-familiarisation' and actively seeking to reinvent subjectivity and foster co-dependence over individual recognition' (Braidotti, 2013 p.93). The posthuman subject, according to Braidotti, is 'materialist and vitalist, embodied and embedded' and I consider that the dance artists, through their research and movement exploration sought both to de-familiarise themselves through working in unknown territory and to reinvent their own subjectivity, for a brief moment (Braidotti, 2013, p.51). Investigating the materiality of the artworks, whether this was the pliable feel of silicone, the coldness of metal or the rough skin of a hybrid creature enabled them to explore and better understand our connectedness with the other-than-human. The dance artists foregrounded these aspects and immersed themselves in the artworks to create encounters that would enhance a perception of co-dependence, meshing the social, the self and the environment of the artworks.

An 'embodied guided tour' of seven locations

When beginning to work on the 'embodied guided tour', the dance artists, Lucy and I decided that, given the time restrictions, we would focus only on a specific number of exhibits or locations and that these should be chosen by the dance artists themselves. The dance artists were already familiar with the exhibition, having attended the opening and visited the exhibition previously. Their first day in the gallery space was spent renewing their acquaintance with the exhibits and deciding which of the installations they would like to focus their attention on and to choose the form of facilitation they wished to work with. They had all researched the work of Patricia Piccinini and were also sent four texts concerning posthumanism, pedagogy and Piccinini's philosophies (Biesta, 2002; .Chappell, 2018; Lanzoni, 2012 and Mondloch, 2018). In particular, the chapter in Kate Mondloch's book, *A Capsule Aesthetic: Feminist Materialisms in New Art Media* (2018) would introduce the students to Piccinini's work, not only to its content and form, but also setting it within the context of posthumanism and new materialism. Mondloch's writing is also concerned with how Piccinini's exhibits can 'promote a critical and potentially revelatory spectatorship' which can 'perform our affective and corporeal relations with the objects', which clearly resonates with how the 'embodied guided tour' should be experienced by those participating (Mondloch, 2018, p.6). Secondly, Biesta's article *Mind the Gap!* (2004) discusses what is happening in the space between the delivery of a message to its recipient, and the recipient receiving it; 'the gap' that is open for communication. Within my version of the triadic 'kinesfield', between dance artist, visitor and work of art, these 'gaps' are where the intra-relationships take place, oscillating between the three actants in order to offer an alternative, aesthetic and sensuous way of experiencing the artworks in the gallery. Chappell's writings on creativity and (post)humanizing creativity (2018) acknowledge the agency of matter within embodied creative learning and affirm that posthumanism opens up possibilities for new modes of creativity, which include spaces and matter as active contributors to the creative process. Finally, Lanzoni's writings on the origins of the word 'empathy' offered a scholarly viewpoint on the history of the word and how it came into use; from 'sympathy' to 'aesthetic sympathy' and then into 'empathy' in 1915, and she makes a distinction between 'sympathy' as 'a reliable access to another's feelings' and 'empathy' as '*felt* into situations and objects' (Lanzoni, 2012, p.309). At a later point several writings in *Kinaesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices* were introduced to the students (Reynolds and Reason, 2012).

Each of the four texts reflected particular aspects of posthumanist thinking, public and affective pedagogy and examples of bio-art practices that were relevant to the residency. These articles were discussed and interrogated when I worked theoretically and practically with the students in December 2018. At this point, they were well acquainted with the area of my research but we once again discussed what the concepts of 'facilitation' and 'a posthuman ecology of participation' might mean in the context of the work we were about to undertake. Here we discussed its various forms: participation, involving the invitation to join an existing idea; collaboration and co-creation, with the possibility for the design and outcomes of the encounter to be jointly created; performance, with a pre-created choreography or choreographic phrase; and improvisation, creating the movement in the moment in response to the artworks and gallery visitors or simple contact improvisations - as possible modes of facilitating the different exhibits. Central to the modes of facilitating was the idea of the 'invitation' being given to other gallery visitors beyond the designated groups. We discussed that the dance artists should be more overt in their invitation, making participation more accessible and enticing while allowing space for those who did not want to engage. Visitors should have the possibility to join, decline, 'witness' or simply observe in passing (Lepecki, 2016, p.175). Given that the exhibition space was relatively small and that especially during the morning hours there were several school classes and other groups attending, it was important to take this into consideration so that all the varying activities could be accommodated and other visitors integrated if desired.

The students chose seven locations, each identifying an exhibit or exhibits that made a specific impact on them. They then designed unique encounters, choreographies or improvisations for each. The exhibits they chose were: 1. *Still Life with Stem Cells,* (2002); 2. *The Field* (2025-2018); 3. *Nectar* (2012); 4. *The Struggle* (2017); 5. *The Breathing Room* (2000); *Young Family (2002)*; 6. *Teenage Metamorphosis* (2017); 7. *Surrogate* (2005)*;* 8. *The Long Awaited* (2008), and 9. *The Eagle Egg Men* (2018). It should be noted here that one of the dance students was unable to attend any of the sessions and consequently Lucy Suggate took one of the locations (*The Field, 2015-2018*). Another student was absent for a day and therefore decided to write a 'poetic label' or letter to the gallery visitors instead. The dance artists worked in pairs in the gallery spaces, one acting as gallery visitor to try out the concept and provide feedback, before switching roles. Each dance artist chose a specific mode of facilitation at each of the locations, some including more than one. At the start of the exhibition, a brief verbal introduction was given before one of the dance artists led the group to a physical 'awakening' in the large space known as *Ditlef's Salen*. This was a gentle

introduction to moving physically with an emphasis on breathing and connecting to one's own body and was suitable for all age groups.

Still Life with Stem Cells **(2002): Using touch in facilitation**

The first stop for the gallery visitors after their 'awakening' session was '*Still Life with Stem Cells'* (2002), and here both groups - the cultural leader group and the art teacher groups - were invited to participate in a sensory encounter together with a partner. The exhibit shows a young girl sitting on a carpet affectionately playing with a collection of shapes and forms of different sizes that appear to be made of flesh - they are silicone, acrylic and with human hair - and some have spine-like features and a form of orifice adding to the impression of a life form. The forms have a tactile, almost muscular, quality to them, though they are not allowed to be touched. For this reason, the dance artists decided that the element of touch and contact would be a relevant and desirable way for the participants to engage with the exhibit through the 'muscle' of another. When both groups arrived the two dance artists were already engaged in working together; one dance artist was kneeling on the floor in a rounded, lump-like form and the other was kneeling beside her, gently feeling the structure of the spine and muscles of the back. The groups observed briefly and were then invited to try this with a partner, the dance artists guiding them through the process and asking them questions about what they felt and experienced. Throughout the process the participants were also encouraged to talk with each other and to ask questions when in doubt. The cultural leader group all knew each other, so this sensory exercise was not unfamiliar to them and they were able to participate fully, individually, as pairs and in a group. The encounter then moved from pair to group work with the emphasis on touch and contact until all twelve participants were moving as a single unit as a large 'muscle'. As they tentatively came together there were laughter and smiles as the last member of the group joined the 'breathing' clump. The art teacher group did not engage in the extended version as their numbers were greater (30) and the time was shorter. Through verbal instructions and visual demonstration, in close proximity to the exhibit and the participants, the dance artists were able to re-create an 'aesthetics of care' (Thompson, 2015) and the possibility to foster a sense of 'kinship' (Harraway, 2018) and perhaps begin to question the boundaries between self and others.

Touch is a complex and emotive act between the toucher and the one being touched and we cannot fully know in advance what response may be elicited by the act of touching. For

dance artists, touch and close contact are inherent in their everyday lives (see Chapter 2), but when working with different groups, in public spaces, it is necessary to gauge where the boundary lies between discomfort and engagement, particularly in an international setting where the norms for what is acceptable will necessarily vary according to the background and inclinations of the participants. Cultural and historical differentiation, in the understanding of how and why touch happens and what it conveys or expresses, need to be embedded in the methodology and aesthetic of the encounter, if a holistic and authentic meeting is to take place. However, in the context of this exhibition, touch and contact were generally accepted, perhaps due to both the 'human' content in the exhibition and the informality of the setting. The figure of the young girl caring for her 'kin' sets up a feeling of kinaesthetic imagination and empathy – how would it feel to touch these creatures? How would they respond? Our concern and possible dislike of these mutations is swept aside by the young girl in the exhibit, clearly, she feels a sense of warm 'kinship' with these creatures and we may ask ourselves how they have come about – are they part of her 'family'? How did they arise? Whatever their origin, they appear to have some human DNA in their amorphous forms and are therefore accepted and loved by their small carer. Piccinini wants our kinaesthetic imagination and empathy to come into play and for us to raise these questions in a response to the ever-increasing experimentation and research in the field of genetics. Who should decide what forms of life are 'acceptable'; what is normal and what are our individual ethical responsibilities when it comes to harvesting organs from other animals or assistance with fertility? By the inclusion of these strange but seductive creatures Piccinini takes us on a journey to consider these sometimes uncomfortable themes, and manifests through her bio-art what may be a future co-species, a new form of 'kin'. We can get to know this new 'kin' better through our sense of touch as it fosters greater connectivity between individuals and the world around us. Using only our visual sense distances us from and objectifies the world, whereas touch remains on our skin and becomes part of us, grounding us in a community of matter, human and non-human. It is only through *all* our senses that we fully experience the world around us.

The Field **(2015-2018): Using improvisation in facilitation**

In the second location on our embodied tour, the theme of fertility and organ harvesting is taken up in *The Field.* Here one steps onto a narrow, winding pathway through a dark field of three thousand white ceramic 'plants' that sit atop long stalks which sway as you pass by. On closer inspection some vaguely resemble human reproductive organs, having a phallic

and ovarian-like form, and others could possibly be the embryonic state of other small organs. Each is a slightly different 'plant' growing on this enormous rhizomatic structure. There are no flowers or leaves, but bulbous body parts that look ripe for harvesting. We are told that they are all interconnected and receive their nourishment through an underground network; the spectacle is both fascinating and unnerving. This installation is one of Piccinini's responses to the increased exploitation of fertility treatments and the sale of organs, and makes us question if organ 'farms' are part of things to come. However, putting the philosophical aspect aside, they are also things of beauty in themselves; intricate, sculptural and aesthetic, and it is these elements that the dance artist takes up when accompanying the participants through the field.

All the participants were given white gloves to wear and asked to experiment with different forms by holding their wrists together and manipulating their fingers to form their own 'plant'. As the room was dark the white gloves were easily visible and eventually a human chain was formed to move along the path. During this activity several other gallery visitors, children and adults, also joined in until there were over twenty people participating. At the end of the path, the group formed one large hand sculpture before moving on to the next location. Suggate led the participants and the gallery visitors through *The Field*, engaging with different groups along the way, quietly discussing with them where needed, or offering suggestions. They were encouraged to stop and look at the other sculptures dotted along the path but remained in connection as much as possible, and preserved silence. Here touch and contact were made 'safer' as all were wearing gloves but also more intense because they were asked to maintain contact and not to talk. The focus was on making different shapes with their hands rather than close physical contact, but still a sense of connectedness and cooperation was created.

Before the participants entered the next gallery space, the location of the third encounter, they were asked to imagine what the sound of a 'cross between an animal and an engine'[139] might be like? This was the transition into the next facilitatory encounter with *The Struggle* (2017).

139 Directions given by Lucy Suggate.

The Struggle (2017): Using choreography in facilitation

The Struggle is based on George Stubbs' large painting '*A Lion Attacking a Horse'* (1762), though created in a very different medium. Piccinini's version is three-dimensional, high-gloss, metallic and motorised. *The Struggle* shows a motor scooter and a Vespa in 'combat', resembling a lion-scooter attacking a Vespa-deer and can be seen as a comment on our anxiety about robots and artificial intelligence taking on human attributes. The precision of Stubbs' painting with its meticulous depiction of the muscles and physiology of the horse and the lion resonates in the life-sized metallic sculpture of the two vehicles with their shiny high-tech finish and detail. It is interesting to note that the 'scooter' has a clear resemblance to a lion, with a broad body and dark 'mane' and the Vespa is equipped with multi-dimensional mirrors that resemble antlers and sleek brownish-red body work.

The two dance artists who chose this exhibit decided they would like to create a short choreographic duet – in slow motion - based on the exhibit. The dance artists chose to wear brightly-coloured and tight-fitting clothes and crash helmets. By wearing the crash helmets back to front, they were able to conjure an eerie quality of alienation and anonymity, evoking a techno-human image that echoed that of the exhibit. The duet lasted approximately five minutes and, in the beginning, was accompanied by the drone of the animal/engine sounds that the participants were asked to imagine and create. The duet could also be seen as a 'struggle' in slow motion, with suspended aerial acrobatics, hovering movements depicting dominance and finally finishing in the same position as that of the exhibit. The dance artists wished to create a floor-level duet that could be seen from all sides and their choice of slow-motion movement against the backdrop of the two scooters allowed for a superimposed image of the two 'exhibits'. The movements showed the controlled and intricate muscularity of a slow-moving malleable body against the stark and rigid immobility of the scooters and therefore gave an added hybrid/human dimension to the gallery space.

Against one of the walls, in the same gallery space, stood an obsolete fridge with a flesh-like lump on top. Oozing from this lump was a substance that resembled honey; this exhibit was entitled *Nectar* (2012).

Nectar (2012): Using the written word in facilitation

The dance artist who chose this exhibit as part of the embodied guided tour was unfortunately ill during the preparation period and therefore decided to write a 'poetic label' in the form of a letter to the participants instead. Her 'Letter to Mother Earth' is a lamentation about climate change and after reading the 'letter' participants were invited to also write down their own thoughts. *Nectar*, as an exhibit, is something of a conundrum; it is both a comment on the disappearance of the bees, due to climate change and the reduction in pollen-rich flowers but also about our irrational squeamishness at eating food that is slightly rotted, or not perfectly fresh, when we in fact treasure the eating of honey. Piccinini points out that although we treasure honey, it is actually the regurgitated food of bees and therefore further down line in the chain of decomposition than food that is partly decayed. Theoretically speaking, we should not want to eat honey if we have a revulsion for decayed matter. It is this contradictory behaviour that Piccinini interjects into her artworks, making us re-consider our habitual assumptions and reassessing what we think we know. In this exhibit we once again see a hybrid 'creature' that clearly has human aspects, with a skin-like fleshy covering and an orifice that has taken on a function that nature can no longer carry out on its own – that of producing honey from its bulbous form. If this is the future to come, how would we react? What would our relationship to this 'blob' be?

Teenage Metamorphosis (2017): Using interaction and improvisation in facilitation

Moving into the next gallery we come upon a 'grassed' area containing a caravan and a creature lying on a blanket on the grass. Beside the creature there is a transistor radio and an open book, Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. The strange reclining figure appears to be part armadillo, part human but on closer inspection, the back of the creature seems to have what appears to be the sole of a giant running shoe with a deep tread, giving it the appearance of having an armoured back. Has metamorphosis taken place? Piccinini's fascination with accidental cross-overs between humans and technology, animals and plants, is once again at play here. As Piccinini herself says in a brief video about her work, 'technology takes on a life of its own'.[140] This particular exhibit could exemplify the crossing of human DNA into a running shoe which is already capable of gathering information and data about the wearer; their blood pressure, pulse rate, speed and so on. It

140 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8nSOKyLrKM (Accessed 25. 03.22)

is a chimaera, a fantasy hybrid that Piccinini has created, a transgenic being full of ambiguity; we don't know whether to be drawn to it or repelled but we are full of wonder.

At this location the dance artist was intrigued by the reclining figure and wondered how it would be to move with this peculiar armoured form on ones back. In the education and development department they had made some soft, assorted amorphic shapes out of stockings and stuffing material which they had formed into a wide range of malleable shapes. They had a bag containing about a hundred of these different-sized shapes and the participants were invited to add these to the body of the dance artist, either by tucking them into their clothing or by laying them on top of her body. All the participants engaged in this metamorphosis, seeing the clear outlines of her body mutate into a form that was distorted and unnatural. Once all the shapes had been used, the dance artist slowly began to move, almost unrecognisable under the burden of the clump-like forms, weaving a slow improvisation into the space. When she finally came to standing she began to remove all the shapes, except those on her back, and walked slowly to the next exhibition room. The similarity between the reclining creature on the rug and the moving dance artist was very apparent and this juxtaposition brought to life the 'otherness' of the reclining creature but also its similarities with the dancer.

The Breathing Room **(2000): Using guided improvisation in facilitation**

The next location was a self-contained room that housed video screens covering all three walls. As the name suggests, the sound of breathing could be heard in different tempos and volumes, and palpitating forms of undefined body parts could be seen on the videos. The breathing, starting slowly and evenly, then gave way to shorter, faster gasps of breath, as though in panic, only to slowly return to normal again. One of the videos resembled heaving shoulder blades, another a collection of pulsating orifices and a third, undefinable, but visceral, moist cavities which expanded and contracted. As humans we would expect to see lungs as the expression of our breathing but in this video, it was clear that there could also be other ways and forms of gaining sustenance from the air.

As the participants entered the space the dance artist was already present, improvising to the videos and using the timing of the breathing to regulate the tempo of her movements, the undulations of her body matching the primitive rippling of the undefined flesh in the videos. Another dance artist stood with a short, written score called 'The Importance of

Breathing?', for those who wished to follow at their own pace. As the participants observed, the dance artist approached one of her colleagues and asked her if she could place her hands on her shoulder blades and to breathe in time with the sound from the video, while her hands followed the rhythm. Once this had been established, she invited the other participants to ask a person close by to do the same. The cultural leader group were quick to engage but the art teacher group was more reluctant, possibly as they were not so familiar with each other. The dance artist continued to talk while she moved and suggested that they imagine that another part of their body could breathe, rather than their lungs. Could an arm breathe? A leg? As she made these suggestions the dance artist continued to improvise, moving throughout the space and shifting between the roles of performer and facilitator. She then moved out of *The Breathing Room'* and towards the adjoining gallery space which exhibited one of the most celebrated of Piccinini's sculptures, *The Young Family* (2002). Originally, the intention was to incorporate this sculpture into the facilitatory aspect of the dance artist's work but it quickly became clear to all that this particular sculpture did not need any additional information. *The Young Family* is a family of hybrid pigs – part human, part pig and there is such pathos mixed with love in the sculpture that one cannot help but be moved by it. This is Piccinini's comment on the use of animals, and in particular pigs, being used to harvest organs for humans. What are our responsibilities when human DNA becomes mixed with that of the host? Are they human/pigs or are they pig/humans and how should we treat them? Apart from their life-like appearance, these sculptures also stir maternal emotions and compassion and one is moved to consider the implications of human experimentation. Piccinini sees the sculptures as 'metaphors for the present rather than suggestions for the future' and goes on to say that they are:

> catalysts – the deliberately incorrect answers to questions that I hope my audience will be inspired to discuss (*A World of Love*, 2019, p.49).

The dance artist was wise to return to her own improvisation and allow this powerful sculpture to speak for itself.

***The Long Awaited* (2008), *Surrogate* (2005), and *The Eagle Egg Men* (2018): Using guided improvisation in facilitation**

The final location in the embodied guided tour included three exhibits and three different modes of interacting with the participants. *The Long Awaited* is a life-sized sculpture of a

young boy sitting on a bench, apparently peacefully sleeping with the head of a large mermaid- like creature resting in his lap. The image is bucolic and peaceful with the face of the elderly 'mermaid' clearly enjoying the warm embrace of the young boy. They are in harmony with one another. Is she an elderly relative of another era or is this another hybrid creature that has become his 'kin'? Is this an example of one of Haraway's 'intra-acting critters' in her book *When Species Meet (2008*)? Here she writes that her work:

> strives to build attachment sites and tie sticky knots to bind intra-acting critters, including people, in the kinds of response and regard that change the subject – and the object (Haraway, 2008, p.287).

Seeing these two figures in an uncommon, but contented embrace makes one reconsider the subject and the object in a different light; we are compelled to re-align our way of thinking. The participants at this exhibit are simply asked to find a comfortable position, sitting or lying on the floor, and to allow their gaze to witness the scene of the young boy and the elderly 'mermaid'. It is a moment of quiet reflection in keeping with the ethos of the exhibit. Moving on to *The Surrogate,* the dance artist, still with the soft protrusions on her back, crawls towards *The Surrogate*, which is a genetically engineered mythical creature created to help breed wombats, an animal close to extinction in Australia. Here, this creature, one of Piccinini's 'Natures Little Helpers', or 'fabulated companion species', (Haraway, 2008, p.289) 'gives birth' to three times as many wombats as a normal wombat, through its back where it also carries its young). The dance artist talks about the burden the wombat must feel while moving around the space, and she invites the participants to imagine this weight on their own backs – some try while others are happy to observe.

As we approach the final exhibit on the tour, the dance artist finally removes the bulging shapes from her back. Here we see three *Eagle Egg Men* (2018), named individually *The Astronomer, The Optimist and The Philosopher.* These three sculptures in the series are undersized, unusually formed male figures, apparently growing out of a cowboy boot made of leather. Their features are distinct and sharp-nosed, with red tousled hair and their shoulders are broad and well-defined for the size of the 'body'. However, it is none of these features that calls our attention but rather the nest of eggs that each is protecting in a pouch of flesh embraced by their arms. The eggs are not uniform; some are small and misshapen, giving the impression of malformation. This is perhaps a reference back to the problems of eagles' breeding due to a decline in their prey or the ingesting of chemicals.

Each of the sculptures has a different gaze, as suggested by their titles: *The Astronomer* gazes towards the sky, *The Optimist* looks outwards and *The Philosopher* looks downwards towards his collection of eggs. Images of male penguins caring for their offspring come to mind as we contemplate these unusual figures and wonder what these eggs will become. Whatever the outcome they will be cared for by these determined figures. The dance artist picks up on the theme of the egg and begins a simple improvisation with the participants asking them to imagine that they are holding an egg between their hands. She asks them to imagine that their fragile egg is growing larger and heavier and then begins to shrink again. She asks them to place the imaginary egg somewhere on their body so that it can gestate. Finally, she asks them to imagine that the egg is being absorbed into that part of their body and to feel the sensation of the egg as it becomes part of them. On this note we leave the gallery space - taking an imaginary part of the Piccinini exhibition with us.

Embodying a posthuman ecology of participation

Posthumanism acknowledges a reciprocal entanglement with all that is living and the material world, and the dance artist's work with Piccinini's sculptures directly sought to engage the participants in activities that would prompt them to consider these same objectives. The seven different facilitatory encounters, experienced during the embodied guided tour, sought to bring the human and non-human entities closer together and raise awareness of our intrinsic and co-dependent relationship with all living entities, our environment and technology. New materialism, which I see as a component in the broader context of posthumanism, sees matter as having agency and as being entangled with other matter, both human and otherwise. Schneider also suggests that 'new materialism commits not only to acknowledging matter as agential but also to acknowledging matter as *discursive'*. (Schneider, 2015, p.7). Schneider appears to concede that verbal speech is not the only form of 'language' that matters, and in this case both the subjectivity of the dance artist's bodies and the exhibits can have agential 'affect'. Their dancing bodies and the installations they chose to work with produce an intra-relationship; a unique creation that emerges in the moment of making. Each dance artist sought to capture this intra-relationship through the 'essence' of 'affect' in each of the artworks that they chose to facilitate. That is to say, they analysed their immediate response, chose a specific focus and then a facilitatory method with which to engage their participants. In so doing, 'intra-action' is taking place whereby new phenomena are produced and where 'intra-activity sees matter as an *active* 'agent' in its own materialization' (Barad, 2018, p.233). I understand this to mean that by

acknowledging the 'voice' in the material object we are compelled to pay attention to their role and place in the encounter and to acknowledge that a form of embodied and dynamic dialogue can ensue. As Karen Barad states, 'Language has been granted too much power' and, perhaps through the inclusion of an embodied practice we can come to better understand the nature of the non-human and the 'other' and our entwined and inter-dependent futures (Barad, 2018, p.223). However, in her study of Piccinini's work in *Unbecoming Human* (2018), Kate Mondloch considers it important that we do not underline and elevate the *human* in Piccinini's creatures but see them for their 'inexhaustible otherness' (Mondloch, 2018, p.81). By failing to understand this difference she considers that we risk, once again, favouring 'traditional humanism' rather than embracing the multiple identities of an enlarged community of 'others'. It is perhaps relevant to note here that Piccinini also underlines our commonality, suggesting:

> What we have learned from DNA is that pretty much everything alive traces back to one origin, and that therefore we – and apes, and salmon, and even bananas – share a remarkable amount of genetics in common (Piccinini in interview with Rosi Braidotti, 2019, p.50).[141]

Each dance artist had considered the posthumanist perspective and adopted the viewpoint that reorientation in relation to nature, to one another and each other was needed and each sought embodied methods of engagement that could interrogate the questions posed by Piccinini's artworks.

The layout of the exhibition was open and informal with no barriers or delineations between the public and the artworks, only a discreet guard standing in each gallery space. The informality of the arrangement and the open spaces were advantageous for the dance artists as it allowed for both close proximity to the artworks and sufficient space to move with participants. During the period of preparation, which also took place within the gallery but without working with any visitors, discussions took place as to how 'pedagogical' one should be in the delivery of the encounter. As we knew who the participants would be for each of the 'tours' and the encounters were created specifically for them, the pedagogical element became implicit in the creation of the encounter, taking into account the number of participants and their backgrounds and ages. The priority for each of the dance artists was to create an encounter and an atmosphere, at each location,

141 From the exhibition catalogue *A World of Love* – published by Arken.

that was consistent with their understanding of a 'posthuman ecology of participation' and conducive for other gallery visitors to join. It was underlined that the dance artist's own artistic integrity should be at the forefront and that they should also consider themselves as 'living works of art' and assign themselves the same artistic status as the exhibits. This notion of understanding themselves as 'a work of art' was important to raise as it was an issue in the previous residency where one of the dance artists felt herself to be extraneous to the exhibition. She found herself challenged by a public that expected a finished and polished performance or product, much like the paintings on the wall, rather than a 'moving work of art' in-process and seen as a sensuous and dynamic complement to the works of art and gallery space. Therefore, it was important that each dance artist 'took the space' and understood their own unique and vibrant contribution. I concur with Bennett's position here:

> Each human is a heterogenous compound of wonderfully vibrant, dangerously vibrant, matter. If matter itself is lively, then not only is the difference between subjects and objects minimized, but the status of the shared materiality of all things is elevated (Bennett, 2010, p.13).

As will be seen from the comments by one of the dance artists from Piccinini's exhibition, she was also aware of the possibility of being seen as secondary to the exhibit, rather than as a dynamic alternative mode of perceiving the artwork. For this reason she chose to present a short choreography rather than an interactive encounter, thereby contributing as a 'moving art object' and 'equal' to the other artworks in space.

By considering Piccinini's exhibits through an embodied, posthumanist and new materialist lens, the dance artists delved into the materiality and the philosophical content of their chosen exhibit, and created an independent and embodied work of art that had its foundation in their own aesthetic, philosophical and creative principles. Each dance artist had a different background and culture, as they came from six different countries, and therefore their approaches were as varied as they were. However, I saw this clearly as an advantage; they were used to working together and respected each other's strength and weaknesses. They were able to optimise their differences while celebrating their common ground in creating and facilitating dance. Their contrasting approaches to the task of creating the 'embodied guided tour' also allowed for individual choice in their delivery. Each chose a different mode of engagement; from being a choreographer (*The Struggle*), an improvisor (*The Breathing Room*), to a co-creator (*The Field*). All the encounters sought to

make affective forms of connection with the participants through a multi-sensory feeling body, and not just with the visual gaze. It is here that Piccinini's exhibition can be seen as particularly conducive to facilitation by a dance artist, as her bio-art:

> invite(s) us to experience not only our embodied absorption *within* but also our ethical-political responsibility *toward,* the rest of the material world (Mondloch, 2018, p.114).

Through carefully considering the materiality and the environmental implications of the exhibits, engaging in the artistic creation of an affective encounter and employing unifying modes of participation, the dance artists were able to move ever closer to creating a 'posthuman ecology of participation'. By combining these aspects, the key concepts of Guattari's *The Three Ecologies* (1989/2000) re-emerge, resonating with 'the environment, social relations and human subjectivity', which he collectively refers to as 'ecosophy' (Guattari, 2000, p. 28). Ecosophy, as discussed in depth in Chapter 2, adheres to the understanding that it is the complex interrelationship between these three aspects that needs to be brought into focus and, more importantly, addressed simultaneously. It is only by looking at these concepts collectively - rather than individually - that we can begin to address answers to ecological issues. In order to move forward positively, Guattari considers it 'quite wrong to make a distinction between action on the psyche, the socius and the environment' rather than all three concurrently (Guattari, 2000, p.41). Braidotti (2013) also echoes this line of thought and highlights the necessity for 'transversal linking' where we put aside our habitual patterns of thought and behaviour and begin to act and think differently if we are to make an impact on our environment (Braidotti, 2013, p.93).

The method of working that was employed by the dance artists in preparing and delivering their encounters also sought to engage 'the environment, social relations and human subjectivity' in a 'transversal' way, interlacing environmental, social, aesthetic and ethical concerns that are consistent with posthumanism. Although Guattari did not write about ecosophy in pedagogical terms, it seems both relevant and pertinent to make this connection in the context of the work of the dance artists in Piccinini's exhibition. The dance artists sought to bring a set of complex inter-relationships between humans and non-humans into focus through engaging in experimental and embodied facilitation that intertwines the ecosophical elements of Guattari with the posthumanist visions of Piccinini's creatures. It would seem that Guattari's multi-faceted vision for an improved world, thinking 'transversally', could have far-reaching consequences for pedagogy. Re-thinking oppressive modes of learning, removing barriers, intertwining arts and science and

fashioning new relationships between the human and non-human could create openings for a more exploratory and imaginative connection to things, processes, people and communities – it is this that the dance artist seeks to achieve through the creation and implementation of a 'posthuman ecology of participation'.

Although I did not interview any of the gallery visitors on this project, I actively observed the encounters with the different groups and also witnessed the gallery visitors who spontaneously joined in. As each activity was specific and simple enough for all to participate in, I believe that creating the meetings with a focus on posthumanist perspectives was particularly relevant for this exhibition. It fully respected and honoured the contents of the exhibition, the questions it raised and also allowed the dance artists scope to engage their kinaesthetic imagination and to develop meaningful interactions with the gallery visitors.

Dance artist responses

At the conclusion of the residency I interviewed all the dance artists about the theoretical preparation, their own expectations and challenges and what they could take away from these encounters with gallery visitors. These interviews[142] were more dialogic and specific in their content than the interviews with the first group in November 2017. This is because I had worked with these students, in preparation for the March 2019 residency, both theoretically and practically for three days in December 2018, and had therefore built a more robust and trusting relationship with them. The students also had more preparation time in the interim period, and the framework and structure were clearer from the start. There were few spontaneous encounters with gallery visitors and the students were able to take ownership of the process, planning ahead for their artistic encounters with the different groups.

During the three preparatory days I spent working with the students, we discussed the purpose of my research, the context and content for the encounters and the readings that I had sent beforehand. The first day was spent at the school, discussing the texts and hearing about the expectations of students for the residency and what 'facilitation' meant to them. The other two days were spent working practically in the gallery spaces at Arken Museum. Additionally, in January 2019 they all took part in a series of planned contact improvisation

142 Each interview was 25 minutes.

classes focusing on touch. This was conducted by Jane, who had taken part in the first residency at Arken and had graduated in July 2018. The students had also taken part in short teaching practices in high schools and primary schools as well as their normal curriculum, which included practical sessions in creative dance, technical training and pedagogy. It was only on the final day of my preliminary visit that I was able to talk with my contact person from the education department, Jane Bendix, and learned that we would have three groups of chosen participants to work solely with the Piccinini exhibition rather than spontaneous encounters. Therefore, the creative work with the students in January, was not focused on facilitating specific aspects of the Piccinini exhibition. However, it transpired that Dr Kerry Chappell would also come to the Danish National School of Performing Arts to work with the students, using her published article on *'(Post)humanising Creativity'* (2018) as a reference point for working with the students. This gave them an opportunity to delve deeper into posthumanism from a more pedagogical and creative viewpoint and to adapt their work to the specific requirements of the gallery. (See chapter in Snepvangers (2018) et al. pp.279-306)

The first question I put to all the students[143] was whether they felt that their general curriculum and the preparatory work from December 2018 had prepared them sufficiently for their work in the gallery. Three of the students mentioned that their pedagogical training had helped them, though for different reasons. One commented that it was 'the pedagogical skills of how you communicate – the clarity of what you say is so important, you need to say the same thing in different ways as people understand you differently' and another said 'the (pedagogy) theory was useful in understanding the different aspects of facilitating and having to reflect on everything; it makes you understand'. The third commented that 'pedagogy and facilitation were important for me, in terms of what the other person needs, how to facilitate. Understanding people, an openness towards people and not to make assumptions about them'. A fourth student mentioned 'the gap' as referred to in the writing of Gert Biesta's *Mind the Gap!* (Biesta, 2004). Here Biesta discusses what takes places in the interval, the 'gap', between the teacher and the student and that it is in part this tacit interaction between teacher and student that enables learning. She speculated on how this 'gap' comes into play in an art gallery context where the performer

143 Face to face interviews with five 1st year postgraduate students from the postgraduate Dance Partnership Education, Danish National School of Performing Arts.

is also the facilitator, and the audience also a participant and 'learner', and how 'learning and experiencing are similar'.

A second question concerned the challenges the students felt they had in working in an art gallery context. One student underlined that no matter how prepared one is in the studio, 'the work here (in the gallery) is so different, there is a great distance to the reality, between what we were preparing for, it is when you are actually in the space that you wake up and get inspired'. A second student discussed the inherent hierarchy between a performer and a gallery visitor and her desire to 'try to create a flat structure, to change the relationship as the performer, there is somehow a hierarchy. Performance and facilitating together was really interesting, going in and out of the different roles was an interesting process – it broke that hierarchy'. Another commented that 'it is challenging to work in a social situation, how to work with all the different people, to offer an example of different ways to be. You need to be flexibile, adapting to the changing situations and the different structures in the gallery'. A fourth student also raised an issue that came up during the first residency regarding the status of dance as an art form within a gallery context. She felt like their work was 'in some way looked down on' and wondered how 'important' the work they were doing was for the gallery. In order to combat this feeling, she decided to create a short choreography with her partner where they became 'objectified' much like one of the artworks in the gallery space. During the choreography the dance artists could not see or hear, as they wore motorcycle helmets, back to front, as a representation of part of the artwork. By being cut off from the audience they presented themselves as an installation or choreography as 'object'.

The final question asked of the students was what they might take away from their experiences of working in the art gallery. Two of them said that they would like to offer a similar experience in their own countries when they had completed their education. All commented on the positive experiences they had working as a group, acknowledging that although they had very different backgrounds they were able to 'be hand in hand and help each other…. We take it in turns to be the carrier and that's good'. Working in situ with Lucy and me had been seen as positive by all the students, with Lucy looking more closely at the artistic content of the encounters while I looked at the facilitatory aspects. One student commented on the similarities between working in the art gallery and working site-specifically, where the architecture, materiality and affordances of the space are an integral part of the performance. She saw it as being 'easier, through the inclusion of the

architecture and re-arranging how people see things, the gallery visitors were free to come and go, us knowing that they had come more specifically to see the artworks'. The idea of 'ecology' and understanding how 'in relation to each other everything is' was also highlighted. A second student said that the experience had:

> opened up my knowledge further, there were new connections that I could make. Facilitation and teaching are different, I used to react intuitively but now it is based more on my own research. In a dancing museum, how can I facilitate with the gallery visitors, I'm not a teacher when I am here? There is a circular connection, you have to be more performative. You discover what to do in the practice with the visitors, you never know what is going happen. I had to be more open and receptive with the people who had less experience; I had to be more verbal. I changed tactics as we went along, to try and read the body of the gallery visitors.

From these comments, it can be seen that the students were able to invest their artistic and pedagogical training in their individual encounters in ways that suited their creative profiles, while at the same time embracing the posthuman, ecological and philosophical issues raised by the artworks. It appears that all were able to build on the experience they had gained working in a facilitatory capacity in the gallery spaces. For me, the possibility to work with the students in December and to have some influence over their subsequent training before meeting again in March was also valuable in building a relationship with the them, and I was able to learn more about their artistic preferences and creative abilities and how they worked collaboratively as a group.

Conclusion

The development of a posthuman ecology of participation for the *World of Love* exhibition might be seen as a vital element in connecting the gallery visitors with the challenging images and messages raised by Patricia Piccinini's exhibition. Through their physical participation in the embodied guided tour, the gallery participants were affected not only by the sculptures' visual appearance, but also by an aspect of their 'being'. As noted by Reynolds, affective choreographic practices can 'foreground intermodal sensory perception, which interferes with visual distance and intensifies the spectator's corporeal engagement' (Reynolds, 2012, p.124). Taking this a step further towards actual embodied engagement with a creative idea linked to the sculpture would lead one to believe that the experience could be amplified by engaging all the senses, thereby creating greater awareness and empathy. The particular modes of engagement chosen by the dance artists for each exhibit constitute a further step onwards from an ecology of participation towards a

posthuman ecology of participation by decentering the human, foregrounding our entanglement with the more-than-human and with matter, presenting ethical considerations and acknowledging agency beyond the human. A posthuman ecology of participation is possibly seen at its most intense throughout this exhibition, pushing the sense of ambiguity to the extreme when the dance artists partially embodied the creatures. This can fill us with simultaneous abhorrence and compassion; our porous boundaries are breached as we embody the imagined movements of the creatures, and our tolerance for difference is re-orientated. By being brought into an aspect of the physical lives of these fabulated creatures, we are 'affected'[144] by them and brought closer to an affect of love, compassion and empathy rather than being repulsed by them.

Through the dance artists' interventions, the gallery visitors were confronted with questions about their relationship to their own bodies and about the consequence of what might happen through the exploration of genetic manipulation with other animals, plants and technology. The creatures provoke and disturb us with their 'otherness', but their similarities to the human and their non-threatening facial expressions awaken a perplexing feeling in the spectator. We are compelled to think about the ramifications of our actions on our planet, the limits of our bodies, our individuality mand what it means to be 'alive' in all its manifestations in a posthuman world.

It is relevant to note that this exhibition took place precisely a year before the COVID-19 pandemic became prevalent in March 2020, when the concerns for cross-contamination between species, raised by Piccinini, were in many ways realised, to the detriment of *homo sapiens.* The restrictions that curtailed cultural gatherings as a result of the pandemic also appear to have prompted a host of alternative and creative solutions to the problems this caused for art encounters and cultural engagements. The following chapter looks at some of the solutions that were created and implemented, and highlights examples of successful dance performances and encounters motivated both by our necessity for connection through art, and the physical distancing required to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. More widely, these artistic solutions are driven by an already existing impetus amongst dance artists to awaken our senses to the global ecological dilemmas we are facing as a species.

144 Affect is covered in greater detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Posthuman Ecology of Participation in Dance Performance and Praxis

Introduction

> Where a humanist, anthropocentric Humanities used to be, a materialist and ecosophical—an embodied and embedded—critical Posthumanities is coming into being (Braidotti, 2016, p.381).

This final chapter offers an illustration of a posthuman ecology of participation in action through the medium of both dance participation and performance. It demonstrates how engaging dancing bodies with other ecological matter and offering affective encounters and performances can prompt new frames of thinking about our own bodies and physicality and about how they are entangled with the environment in which we live. Initially, this chapter sought to further explore the 'embodied and embedded' guided tour delivered by dance artists during Piccinini's exhibition, *A World of Love,* and to present future possible modes of creative interaction, participation and art-making through a posthuman ecology of participation within a gallery setting. However, the unforeseen circumstances of the global COVID-19 pandemic curtailed community gatherings and close physical contact, except with one's immediate family, thus eliminating the possibility to research any new participatory encounters between dance artists and visitors within a traditional gallery setting.

The opening quotation was written before Braidotti's interview with Patricia Piccinini for her exhibition catalogue *A World of Love,* at Arken Museum of Modern Art, Denmark, in 2019, which was referred to in the previous chapter. The interview illustrates their common thinking and eagerness for 'a new alliance between humans and non-humans' to come into being and their desire to 'find a new way of thinking about nature that includes us – as we are - but that is not just for us' (Piccinini, 2019, p. 49). Working with Piccinini's exhibition made it clear to me that choreographed interventions, working with a new materialist and posthuman perspective, could offer meaningful relational encounters with gallery visitors, while at the same time promoting ecological thinking. These creative meetings can act as a positive incentive to view ourselves and our world differently and to 'think harder about the status of the human' (Braidotti, 2013, p.186). Re-evaluating nature and culture as being

separate from each other was vital, particularly in the light of the pandemic which was caused by a pathogenic coronavirus jumping the species barrier from animal to human. This led to the necessity for physical distancing, and between March 2020 and June 2021,[145] 'social distancing' became the norm. The majority of group activities, from travelling on public transport to attending any collective gatherings, were curtailed through a period of three 'lockdowns'.[146] Clearly, this had ramifications for the myriad of activities which rely on human interaction; participatory encounters in an art gallery context being but one of many. In order to pursue a creative and interactive pathway by continuing to engage creatively with people and to offer performances and artistic experiences, a radical re-think and re-framing were necessary.

I therefore decided to focus on innovative dance artists and choreographers who, having previously worked in gallery settings, had transformed and adapted their participatory work to accommodate these new circumstances. Consequently, this chapter seeks to trace this development by presenting specific examples of emerging performance practices, processes of making, methods and pedagogies. I particularly focus on dance artist and choreographer Tina Tarpgaard (DK), who has successfully developed her choreographic performances and participatory installations to incorporate both her ideas on posthumanism and new materialism and to encompass the restrictions placed on audience participation.[147] Other dance artists were also adapting their performance and participatory works but, to my knowledge, not to the extent that Tarpgaard has. I present an analysis of Tarpgaard's project, *The Membrane Triology,* where she has adapted the first piece, *As I Collapse*, to include virtual encounters and home 'visits', and the other two pieces have been further developed and adapted to alternative venues where physical distancing could be adhered to. The chapter explores how components of her creative work reflect current posthumanist issues and new materialist viewpoints, and incorporate sensory encounters consistent with my own definition of a posthuman ecology of participation. Self-activated immersive participation, which incorporates the element of water as material, practice, mediator and participant are evident in the work of Tarpgaard. Focusing on the dance artists as performative and participatory 'bodies of water' (Neimanis, 2018), she draws in the

145 From this date, a series of restrictions was imposed.

146 March 23rd – July 4th 2020 / 5th November – 2nd December 2020 / 5th January 2021 – June 2021 (DK) and July 2021 (England). From December 2021 until January 2022 -all cultural venues closed. A re-assessment is due on the 17th January 2022 in DK.

147 https://recoil-performance.org/ (Accessed 22.05.21)

audiences as participants, engaging them individually in contact and touch with water, thereby exposing its vitalism, materiality and precarity. These sensory and emotive activities provoke *affect* in the recipient, moving them in ineffable ways, defying immediate definition but leaving traces in our emotions and sensibilities even after the encounter has passed. The increase in 'affect' as a performative tool is covered in the conclusion.

Tarpgaard makes reference to feminist new materialist scholars including Haraway (2008) and Neimanis (2015, 2017, 2018) in her work, and in this chapter, I supplement this by also referencing the works of Åsberg (2018), Puig de la Bellacasa (2014, 2015, 2019), Latour (2005) and Braidotti (2006, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2019) to show how their theories become embedded in the choreographies and participatory activities of Tarpgaard's work. I return to Felix Guattari's *The Three Ecologies,* as discussed in depth in Chapter 2, as Guattari's ideas often emerge in feminist new materialist thinking, reiterating how the three ecologies cannot be separated. The idea of these interconnected ecologies is fundamental to a posthuman ecology of participation with movement at its core. Though an ecosophical viewpoint, which stresses that environmental, social, and mental issues should be considered simultaneously is an important element, it is the enmeshing of these aspects with a creative, immersive and aesthetic performative movement experience that is the challenge for a participatory choreographic or installation work which seeks to move us both literally and figuratively.

To conclude the chapter I discuss Tarpgaard's most recent performance project, a choreographic installation entitled *HØST* (*Harvest*) which I followed during its rehearsal period and up to its premiere in May 2021. This project draws together the successful pre-performance participatory elements of her earlier works, together with fundamental principles of a framework for a posthuman ecology of participation. The performance piece was researched and choreographed in collaboration with two dance artists working together with local farmers, helping on the farms and planting and caring for the crops used in the performance.[148] The farming communities were in a rural part of west Denmark and the performance premiered in a local cultural centre and a barn belonging to a local farmer.

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148 I assisted with potato planting, together with the dance artists and Tina Tarpgaard, whilst staying on the organic dairy farm.

To inform my discussion of the work of Tarpgaard, I also draw on examples from *MUZE-X Shaping Future Museums* (October 2021),[149] pre-conference webinars to illustrate how some museums and galleries have also approached the challenges set and how they see their role as participatory and societal institutions in the future. Museum directors and gallery curators were invited to describe their own experiences of having been compelled to operate differently during the closures. The webinars posed critical questions about how galleries and museums view, and will respond to, these social and environmental issues and how they may affect the role of museums in the future.

Though these performances and participatory events moved from more traditional spaces and shifted in content as a response to the restrictions resulting from the pandemic, I do not see this as a temporary measure; on the contrary. The additional opportunities to work outdoors, to engage with the more-than-human and with diverse technologies and to perform in alternative spaces, have prompted us to think more profoundly about our own bodies and to better understand our connection to and entanglement with different forms of matter and all living entities. In the previous chapter, the dance artists engaged with artworks and exhibits as metaphors and representations for a particular viewpoint on posthumanism, but in this chapter they engage directly and immersively with living matter, in particular water, insects and soil, through a new materialist perspective. To close, I analyse how and where this shift in performance and participation may take us and how this possibility will affect the work of the dance artist as facilitator in gallery and museum spaces.

Context

Despite these turbulent times,[150] when 'social distancing' has been required, it has been vital to seek out ways of continuing to respond constructively to the restrictions placed on our social and physical activities. Pursuing creative interactive solutions, through a posthuman ecology of participation, can possibily be a solution to a small part of the problem. Social distancing, which I considered to be a somewhat derogatory term, should rather be called 'physical distancing' to underline that this pathogen flourishes in close environments and staying apart diminishes the possibility for transmission. Nevertheless, as social animals we

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149 https://www.museumfutures.net/pre-conference-events, MUZE.X Shaping Museum Futures – Conference held in October 2021 in Malta.

150 The time of writing was March 2021.

crave close connection, touch and a sense of belonging, thereby making social *solidarity* paramount if despite being restricted from physically meeting in groups, people are to maintain mental and physical wellbeing. A degree of social solidarity and physical wellbeing has been experienced by many through increasing their online presence, maintaining contact through various forms of social media or through virtual classes, events and meetings. Conversely, meeting only through a digital interface with its inherent physical restrictions can lead to reduced physical and sensory activity, both of which are vital to our sense of wellbeing. Though having to be physically distanced has necessitated a move to more online interaction, or moving into other larger, alternative venues, it has, paradoxically, also inspired and driven many dance artists to seek out new modes of both connecting virtually and finding novel collaborators. In an ecology of participation, where the dance artists previously engaged physically and creatively in a gallery setting through fostering an *adaptable, harmonious and relational symbiosis*, they now work with examples of what could be considered posthuman interaction. They enagage with the more-than-human and with matter, and there is a decentering of the human subject with new combinations of actants, venues and interactions; examples are presented in this chapter.

Though we know something about where the pandemic started, there is still a huge gap between hearing about it and understanding the root origins of its existence. We know that there are questionable consequences regarding our constant interventions in the lives of plants, animals and the other-than-human world. These are echoed in the message displayed so powerfully and visually by Patricia Piccinini's exhibition *A World of Love* (covered in the previous chapter). Piccinini also highlighted the consequences of crossing genetic boundaries, our underestimation of the need for bio-diversity and under-appreciating the inter-reliance between all living creatures, whether human, non-human or other. Piccinini wished to point out that we have responsibility and an ethics of care to the creatures we disrupt and create; the creatures of 'speculative fabulations' as seen in her exhibitions (Haraway, 2011). However, like Piccinini, Braidotti chooses to look forward positively towards the future and it is here that the performing arts can play an affirmative and positive role. I argue that by working through a posthuman and materialist lens and using creative movement and dance, as in Piccinini's exhibition, the gallery visitors can be offered an embodied and sometimes immersive creative experience that leaves a resonance in the bodies of the participants.

In the following sections, I also show how engaging with different forms of matter in performance can produce this resonance in a specific and aesthetic manner through the materiality of water, insects and soil. Experiencing matter intimately can help shift our way of thinking, and by personally interacting with these elements we are prompted to look anew at substances we normally take for granted. Tarpgaard's *The Membrane Triology* (2017) explores the porosity and hierarchy between all living entities; the three works *As I Collapse* (2017), *MASS – Bloom Explorations* (2019) and *Extended Falls to Humanity* (2020/2021) explore and challenge our notions and understandings of what it is to be human when placed in juxtaposition with other living beings and matter. We are set 'in intimate conversation with the limits of "the human" and the vast potential of life outside of it'.[151] These occurrences highlight that we all absorb, discharge and intermingle as one universal entity, underlining that:

> not all of us can say, with any degree of certainty, that we have always been human, or that we are only that (Braidotti, 2013, p.1).

As I Collapse explores the element of water, haptically and immersively from the dancers' viewpoint, and visually, haptically and sonically for the audience, who also have the option to take on a caring role for the 'creatures' in the performance itself. Tarpgaard explores water and its accompanying micro-inhabitants from different ecological aspects but with participation and posthumanism at its core. Tarpgaard later adapts this performative work to facilitate interaction in one's own home, alternative spaces and outdoors. Part 1 of *As I Collapse* has been adapted to online viewing and participatory interaction and it is this performance piece that I primarily focus on, having taken part in an online performance. I also discuss the other two choreographies and finally document Tarpgaard's latest piece, *HØST* (*Harvest*) where I was present during rehearsals and the premiere performance in the barn.

Tina Tarpgaard: *As I Collapse* – 'A choreographic work for one human and millions of microscopic beings'.

Tina Tarpgaard started her professional career after completing her education at the Rudra Béjart School in Lausanne, Switzerland and the Rambert Ballet School in London. She started her own company in 2003 and her work has always included elements of

151 https://recoil-performance.org/the-memebrane-projekt/ (Accessed 24.03.19)

technology, often working with video artists and later incorporating interactive scenography and lighting and motion sensitive video graphics. Her physically challenging choreography is always accompanied by newly composed music. How relationships and hierarchies are formed between people, scenographies and more recently between human and non-human forms of life has been a constant theme in her work from the start. *As I Collapse* is a choreographic performance installation, originally choreographed in 2017 for five dancers and millions of algae which were present on stage and in the hands of the audience. The piece concerns itself with eradicating the human/culture divide, focusing on water as an element that binds us together and affirming our interdependence with all other species. By focusing on 'bodies' that are both human-sized and microscopic, Tarpgaard makes visible our commonality and dependence through the element of water. The alga, known as *pyrocystis fusiformis*, is a phytoplankton that moves with the oceans and is capable of conducting photosynthesis, making it an important contributor to replenishing oxygen supplies and consuming carbon dioxide. *Pyrocystis fusiformis* is present in the oceans and coastal regions of the world from depths of 60 to 200 metres and under certain conditions it can even be seen from outer space in vast numbers. The algae have the ability to glow when agitated, as when the action of waves and the movement of water cause luminescent patterns in the sea.[152]

The piece premiered at *Dansehallerne*, Copenhagen, in 2017, and was introduced by Tarpgaard herself as she explained how the audience should care for the small bag of algae that they had been given when entering the auditorium. During the performance they should not hold the bag between their hands as too much warmth and agitation would exhaust the algae and they would die. They were asked to return the algae to a bucket after the performance unless they were willing to 'adopt' the organisms and keep them alive – and sign an adoption paper to show their commitment. The piece opened in darkness with sparse sonic sounds evoking the dark depths of the ocean. The dancers, dressed in plastic-like, unisex, waterproof suits with hoods, moved in silhouette amongst large transparent pillows of water as they transported themselves through the space, mostly on the floor, evoking images of entangled plankton in constant movement. When the lights are dimmed, thin blue lines of colour appear, travelling across the space throughout the performance, signifying that the algae are active and emitting light. Already we see the dancers as a crossover between water, algae and humans as the scenography, costumes and movements

152 http://bioweb.uwlax.edu/bio203/f2013/eigner_rach/(Accessed 12.11.20)

evoke images of hybrid underwater bodies. As the performance progresses the algae/dancers embrace, struggle and rest on their water-pillows as water slowly seeps out. The dancers engage in intricate contact improvisation duets and contorted solos while moving through the space, engaging and disengaging with their pillow-partners and fellow dancers. Towards the end of the piece the sonic, sporadic soundscape develops into a more rhythmic percussion score and the dancers begin to take on more human-like movements; sliding, rolling, suspending and finally acquiring voice. The intensity of sound and movement increases until the algae/dancers are exhausted and they gather their water pillows to finally rest in a clump together, blurring the distinction between human and algae.

As I Collapse seeks to highlight the fact that humans and algae are more alike than we would perhaps assume. We are both highly dependent on water as a universal substance which is vital to our very existence, and we are therefore inextricably connected and interdependent. Living organisms require care regardless of their size or status. Tarpgaard suggests that the piece 'seeks to dissolve this dualism by de-centering the human body in order to enter a balanced and respectful relationship with other living matter.[153] Here, Tarpgaard successfully 'de-centres' the human to produce a performance where there is an intermingling and porosity between the dance artists and the other life forms; they become enmeshed and interdependent, their boundaries 'collapse'. This resonates with the writings of Rosi Braidotti in *The Posthuman* (2013), where she also writes of 'de-centering' and 'expanding the notion of Life towards the non-human or *zoe'* (Braidotti, 2013, p.50). Braidotti considers that the division between '*bios*' when referring to humans and '*zoe*' when referring to animals and other forms of life re-enforces the binary distinction between the two, which posthumanism seeks to minimize. Braidotti considers that '*zoe*' should be used for all forms of life, saying: '*zoe* refers to the endless vitality of life as a process of continuous becoming' (Braidotti, 2008, p.182). She acknowledges, however, that '*zoe*' and '*bios*' 'intersect in the human body' (Braidotti, 2008, p.177) and that there should be 'deep *zoe*-egalitarianism between humans and animals' (Braidotti, 2013, p.71). This '*zoe*-egalitarianism' is evident in this piece, depicted through the role of the dance artists where they are required to demonstrate a degree of humility, deference and care; they are now part of a greater whole. They are clearly dependent on their watery partners and possibly feeling discomfort as they engage with their cold, watery performance companions. This

153 https://vimeo.com/219833316 - Full length video at Dansehallerne, Copenhagen, 2017.

aesthetic intermingling of codependence illustrates how the dancing body and the algae can offer a creative picture of the 'vitality of life' in 'deep *zoe*-egalitarianism'.

The theme of egalitarianism also echoes in Tarpgaard's ongoing work on eradicating hierarchies and exploring the relationships that then begin to emerge. Tarpgaard exemplifies this eradicating of hierarchies in different ways in her choreographic works and installations. Initially she did this through the use of motion-sensitive scenographic software that can upstage, or decentre the dancer, through its ability to realign and manipulate the space, making us see 'holes' that are not there, or space that is shrinking, thus making the scenography the dominant feature within the choreography (*Living-Room*, 2012). Later, through the introduction of biological micro-elements that determine the direction and structure of the performance, as in *As I Collapse (*2017) and *Mass - Bloom Explorations* (2018), we also experience this re-alignment in hierarchy. De-centering the performer as the core element in the choreographies readjusts the audiences' perception of *what* is performing and for *whom*. By participating in these choreographies we begin to re-think our own positioning in the world and our interconnectedness with all that is around us; we can experience ourselves as trans-corporeal (Alaimo, 2008) defined by Braidotti as:

> both posthuman and environmentalist, entailing new models of ethics and politics that connect across vast expanses of actors (Braidotti, 2022, p.135)

Braidotti underlines our responsibility towards all forms of life, pointing out that our manipulation of animals, plants, seeds and other entities results in a hybridization that makes the distinction between species and organisms more porous and indefinable (Braidotti, 2019). Our intervention in all areas of the planet raises the question of our ethical responsibilities towards all living entities – intentional or otherwise - and this is also explored in Tarpgaard's work. However, the recent appearance of a different and unwelcome entity, in the form of a microscopic pathogen, has forced us to reassess how we interact and connect with one another. With physical contact, other than with one's own household not being permitted, Tarpgaard saw an opportunity during the first restrictions in early 2020 to expand *As I Collapse* to an online audience instead, reaching out through a virtual format for the audience to experience a 'collective speculation' about where 'I' collapses and 'we' begins.

The adapted piece was first live-streamed in Copenhagen in May 2020, in Brazil and Canada later in 2020 and in Copenhagen again in January 2021. Online, the piece is for one dancer and the algae are sent by post to the home of the participant, together with instructions on how to care for them. Time slots of 25 minutes are allocated to the audience and the dancer narrates events from the performance, offering directions for a series of sensory experiments with water that can be done at home in one's own time, and talking about her experience of working with the algae. There is also a guided twenty-minute meditation of water sounds and movement for the audience to experience. A video of the staged performance is available to watch.[154] This reconfiguring of an existing choreographic installation fulfils the criteria for creating a posthuman ecology of participation, where the human is de-centred, a symbiosis is created with all actants and they are presented as equal participants. It exemplifies the coming together of performer and environment and shows how this form of interactive hybrid practice can offer an opportunity for reappraisal of our current way of living and for a shift to the 'affirmative' (Braidotti, 2013). An affirmative viewpoint, according to Braidotti, 'combines critique with creativity in the pursuit of alternative visions and projects' (Braidotti, 2013, p.54). I consider that *As I Collapse* critiques an assumption of human superiority and lack of knowledge and understanding of the natural world, while at the same time presenting an alternative and affirmative mode of artistic practice that highlights the entanglement with non-human agencies. As Gender and Cultural Studies scholar Astrida Neimanis points out:

> We know our human bodies are at least two-thirds watery, but more importantly, these waters are in a constant process of intake, transformation and exchange. (Neimanis, 2018, p.55)

Performances such as *As I Collapse* can prompt us to think differently about our relationship with water. Understanding this cyclical pattern of our water intake, absorption and output, and its complex implications for us and the environment has a crucial role to play in bringing us closer to appreciating the materiality of water and our responsibilities for its care. Offering an interactive, affirmative and creative experience allows us to engage all our senses and physicality, to re-activate our wonder at the materiality of water and understand ourselves as 'materialist and vitalist, embodied and embedded' (Braidotti, 2013, p.51) and as part of the *worlding* of the world as noted by Barad (2007). Tarpgaard's *MASS*

154 I 'attended' a home performance in November 2020.

– *Bloom Explorations* shifts our focus from water to mealworms and plastic, a synergy that can have positive consequences for our planet.

MASS – Bloom Explorations

Tarpgaard's second choreographic installation, *MASS – Bloom Explorations* (2018) also looks at micro-organisms, but in this case, mealworms, and how they can become a vital source in our fight against the overly-abundant presence of plastic. This installation was created for 'art galleries, art exhibitions and unconventional spaces'[155] where a plastic dome filled with 200,000 mealworms and a single dancer in a nude-coloured one-piece bodysuit cohabit. The mealworms slowly, but surely, devour pieces of white plastic while the dancer moves amongst the worms as they quietly, but continuously feed and one is moved to wonder who will be the ultimate survivor in the long term. The audience can enter the dome and offer nourishment to the worms or the dancer and one becomes aware of the vulnerable relationship as the dancer co-evolves with her new inhabitants.[156] This piece brings into focus the fragility of the human body and the vulnerability we potentially face if the conundrum of being both dependent on and subsumed by plastic is not addressed. Dance critic, Monna Dithmer says of the performance:

> It is an invitation to a personal, visual experience of a woman transforming her body, skin and voice in an attempt to co-evolve with a species that potentially has better prospects than herself.[157]

This 'co-evolution' between the other 'critters' and the dance artist underlines, through an aesthetic and affective meeting, our necessity to learn from, and cohabit with other species. Setting the dance artist in the environment of the worms reverses what we are normally used to and offers a worm's 'perspective', encouraging us to give more space for bio-diversity, collaboration and priority towards environmental issues. Braidotti points out that:

> the Earth we inhabit is not an optional element, among others, but rather the primary location on which all others depend (Braidotti, 2020, p.27)

and this encounter illustrates this viewpoint, impacting all our senses, as it gets under our skin. This slow moving and contemplative piece was originally designed to be performed in

155 https://recoil-performance.org/productions/mass-bloom-explorations/ (Accessed 04.06.20)
156 https://recoil-performance.org/productions/mass-bloom-explorations/ (Accessed 12.06.20)
157 Dance critic Monna Dithmer (Politikken) in Plartforma. http://2019.plartforma.lt (Accessed 08.08.22)

galleries as a durational installation honing in on micro-moments between the feeding habitat of the worms and the foreign dwelling for the human. It then moved out of the gallery and has been shown in warehouses and other industrial spaces; in Ottawa (Canada), Elsinore (Denmark) and Munich (Germany) in 2018; in Helsinki (Finland) in 2019 and in Torshavn (Faroe Islands) in 2020. With its enclosed structure and live inhabitants, the installation is more conducive to raw open spaces where the public can roam freely and enter and exit when they wish. The durational performance usually has an allotted time of three hours, but it also takes place over consecutive days so that the degeneration of the plastic is visible and the habitat of the mealworms and the dancer is slowly transformed. One becomes aware that it is the mealworms who will 'bloom' and thrive in an overwhelmingly plastic environment while the dance artist's survival is questionable.

In this setting, we once again see a shift in hierarchy; it is the mealworms who will prevail in this particular environment and we are reminded that we need to find new alliances with non-human creatures and discover 'inclusive ways of caring across a transversal multi-species spectrum that encompasses the entire planet and its majority of non-human inhabitants' if we are to benefit from the inextricable bonds that connect us all (Braidotti, 2020, p.28). Observing the video of this piece, it is interesting to see that children are also active participants, eager to go inside the dome and offer 'food' to the small critters and water to the dancer. Creative workshops are also offered to school children where they engage in visual art sessions, building small 'houses' in the dome out of plastic foam for the mealworms, and revisiting them over a period of time to see how their 'houses' have disintegrated.[158] These intimate and personal sensory encounters are another example of how visual and tactile experiments can help to 'embody and embed' the environmental message through creativity, wonder and joy. It is increasingly important that we see these ventures into a posthuman ecology of participation as a mark of our care and empathy for other species and that our inter-dependence can be turned to our advantage and herald new ways of 'becoming-world together' (Braidotti, 2020, p.30). In the final piece in Tarpgaard's trilogy, hierarchy is also bought into focus, but this time it is the hierarchy between humans. The work explores how a specific place can contribute to the perpetuation of hierarchy and how, by using the space differently, one can disrupt the hierarchical framework.

158 Interview with Tina Tarpgaard via Skype 21.10.20.

Extended Falls to Humanity: Community involvement

The final part of the *Membrane Trilogy* is *Extended Falls to Humanity*, which began touring in October 2020, when forms of distanced contact were permitted in Denmark. In this performance, it is the local community and politicians of each town who take centre stage within a municipal building. They are both involved in shaping the performance/installation, as information that influences the content, unique to each site, is pre-gathered for each performance. Tarpgaard considers the piece to be;

> a physical, visual and musical rediscovery of the local community and the town hall. A piece where the citizens are not merely spectators, but also contributors.[159]

Tarpgaard's concern for 'collapsing' the boundaries between people, places, matter and objects is illustrated by choosing a physical space of political power, the town hall. Tarpgaard seeks to eliminate the order of hierarchy that can appear in such a setting where the politicians would normally have precedence. The local residents and politicians were taken into the conversation and asked about their dreams and fears for the future, both as individuals and as part of society. These comments were then mounted side by side onto 'an opinion board' for all to read. The idea of the 'fall', to which the title refers, is quite literally enacted by the participants. Climbing up some steps to a platform, they then fall into large piles of grey foam blocks with the other participants and dance artists ensuring their safety. This 'fall' embodies the risk and vulnerability of the individual body while at the same time acknowledging that we have to trust that we will be taken care of communally. Tarpgaard offers this as an analogy to the individual versus the citizen in society, and it thus becomes a political act, focusing on 'the citizen as the identity-bearing and rights-bearing individual in opposition to the physical singularity of the body'.[160] By bringing movement and dance into the town hall, using the space differently, the hierarchical order is re-arranged; through the medium of the moving body, music and voice the participants become an egalitarian collective.

These three choreographic works extend from the microscopic in nature, to the human individual in a political community, coming full circle as 'the finger is pointed back to our own species: *Homo Sapiens'* in the final piece.[161] This is 'a civic engagement project' – it is

159 https://recoil-performance.org/productions/extended-falls-to-humanity (Accessed 28.03.20)
160 Text description – Extended Falls to Humanity (Accessed 28.03.20)
161 https://recoil-performance.org/productions/extended-falls-to-humanity (Accessed 02.04.20)

about 'art and democracy and the role it can play in society'.[162] Moving people to act collectively and in solidarity in society is also highly relevant to situations such as a pandemic. Our planetary problems require us to consider new modes of collaboration, to think transversally and with inclusiveness, inviting a broad spectrum of agents with diverse views and experiences into our thinking. At the same time, existing organisations, including museum and gallery spaces, are now also compelled to rethink their very foundation and question their relevance and organization for the times we are living in, and this is discussed later in this chapter.

Discussing visitor participation in gallery spaces in Chapter 3, I drew on comments by museum scholar, Nina Simon (2010), regarding the value of participatory involvement and how to make encounters relevant for visitors. In a pre-conference webinar on *Shaping Museum Futures* in October 2021,[163] Simon underlined the necessity of reassessing the 'relevance' of the museum space for the people it serves and 'unlearning' some of the habits that have become embedded. I suggest here that Tarpgaard accomplishes this in *Extended Falls to Humanity*: she ensures that a new community of people, seen through a posthuman lens, become involved in this social movement experiment by re-locating to the town hall, thereby encouraging all the participants to see the space anew and in a more reciprocal manner.

Discussing the question of 'relevance' is particularly pertinent to developing a posthuman ecology of participation within an ecosophical framework. Tarpgaard's *Extended Falls to Humanity* illustrates that by combining highly relevant subject matter that touches and influences our lives with the participatory work of the dance artist, it is possible to create methods to view things differently and offer a sense of empowerment, individually and within a community. Clearly, being part of a physical community is difficult when restrictions are in place, but for her latest work, *Harvest* (2021), Tarpgaard chose to return to her parent's organic dairy farm, in a local farming community and to work mainly out of doors. Tarpgaard includes dance artists, farmhands, animals and community in the preparation process and the soil becomes an immersive material, just as the farming spaces house the performance. This further develops Tarpgaard's work on new materialism and

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162 Comment by Per Hoeg Soerensen – Culture Director, Skjern and Ringkjoebing Municipalities.
163 MUZE.X *Shaping Museum Futures* – Conference held in October 2021 in Malta.

her desire to explore the direct connections between the human body and the materiality of its environment.

HØST – *Harvest*, a performance celebrating the cultivation of the body and soil.

Harvest is a dance performance and installation which incorporates the themes of physical labour, social structures and the political ideologies that shape the landscapes which surround us. The focus is on the bodies' physical tillage of the soil and the unforeseen consequences on the ecosystems that develop in connection with this cultivation. This exploration is conducted in-between two professions; the professional farmer and the professional dance artist. In sharing both thoughts and work space, a dialogue on what it means to cultivate soil as well as our bodies is facilitated, and eventually translated into a work on stage involving soil, crops and the professional dancing body.[164] The labouring body of the farmer and the professional dancer are juxtaposed to highlight their similarities and dependence on their physicality, traditions and history. The presence of the soil and living grass on the temporary stage is the meeting point between the dancers, who helped to sow and harvest the grass, and the farming community with whom they worked. It is here that the two cultures meet in performance. The performance space, a barn in Idom, west Jutland, Denmark, is defined by bales of hay and the scenography of the soil and local crops growing on the stage. The barn belongs to a local farmer from the area and the original soundscape is also composed by a local musician, Lars Greve. The score is composed using manipulated sounds recorded from the working farms and local area and, during the performance I saw, also from the many swallows who lived in the barn. The raised platform, on which the soil and crops were placed, served as the performance area and also as a giant speaker through which the sounds vibrated, thereby making the soil actually 'dance'.[165]

The piece draws parallels between the skin, muscle and bone of the dancers and the layers of the earth, the soil being the 'skin' of the earth, the 'muscles' the layer beneath and the bones the sediment and rocks in the earth. Just as our bones have their unique DNA within them so does the earth; both retain a history of their existence. Clearly, this is a creative simplification of a complex process when describing both soil and DNA, but it

164 Email correspondence with Tina Tarpgaard 28.10.2020.
165 https://recoil-performance.org/da/productions/hoest/(Accessed 22.05.21)

brings forth an intense and evocative image. In their book *Soil: Skin of Planet Earth* (2015), Miroslav Kutilek and Donald Nielsen point out:

> When we compare the complicated process of creating a soil that takes decades to thousands of years with human or animal life, we recognize that a soil's existence passes through childhood, adolescence and adulthood. However, it is much more complicated (Kutilek and Nielsen, 2015, p.32).

Tarpgaard drew on these life phases with the two dancers, including their individual histories; the 'DNA' of their personal dance stories within their bones became an inspiration for the choreographed movement material. The dancers, one a contemporary dancer with an extensive background in contemporary dance techniques, improvisation and martial arts and the other a neo-flamenco dancer with a background in classical ballet and flamenco, clearly revealed their artistic roots and the influences of the activities they undertook during their week-long farm residency. Choreographic phrases stemming from their activities on the organic milking farm which was Tarpgaard's childhood home came through in their dynamic, powerful and poignant performance. Here, nurturing the soil and the growing crops was an integral part of the performance which sought to 'explore knowledge and movements associated with farming and juxtapose it directly to the craft and labour of being a dancer'.[166] In rehearsals, text was used by the dancers, so I know that movement material was also derived from significant moments in their dance histories, though these moments were not directly referenced in the performance. The choreography highlighted the dance heritage of each of the dancers through solos and duets in their particular dance forms while they simultaneously cared for and interacted with the crops that were growing on the stage area. At the end of the performance, the audience was also involved in the task of gathering the crops and caring for them and the soil so that they could be replanted.

As part of the residency, a limited number of workshops was also offered to children at the local primary school where the rehearsals I observed took place. The experience of the performances and dance workshops showed how a transversal approach, juxtaposing and blending apparently unrelated activities (farming and dance), can awaken and stimulate us cognitively and sensually, just as taking an immersive and new materialist approach can help us to tangibly rethink and appreciate matter in a new way. In *Harvest,* we come to

166 From the photographic handbook by Fryd Frydendahl, given to audience members at the performance of *Harvest*, April, 2021.

better understand that as human beings we inhabit and are immersed in an unavoidably material world where 'we are ourselves composed of matter' and this is a central issue in new materialism (Coole and Frost, 2010, p.1). This move towards *what* is performing rather than *who* is a reflection of new materialist thinking, which acknowledges the agency and entanglement of matter.

Feminist new materialism and immersive, affective encounters with water

The term 'feminist new materialism' emerged during the 1990s and has steadily developed as an interdisciplinary exploration, evolving in diverse formats and strands over the past several decades. Since Coole and Frost's book, *New Materialisms* (2010), different interpretations and theories have gained traction and broader audiences, including in the visual and performing arts. New materialism rethinks the body/world divide and effects a paradigm shift in how we think about matter in relation to objects, people and the environment – matter is given agency (Bolt, 2013). I see new materialism as an intertwined relational concept between bodies and objects that acknowledges the importance of their 'affect' and agency. The meeting between phenomena 'intra-acts' to produce entangled, changing, and unpredictable outcomes that do not exist prior to the encounter but emerge in process (see Benavente et al., 2020 and Barad, 2007). According to Barad, 'agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has. Agency is *doing/being* in its intra-activity' (Barad, 2007, p.235). It is through an appreciation of the porosity of matter and by avoiding a binary distinction between materiality and nature/culture that we come to understand the entwined and constantly changing nature of phenomena and their agency. If this understanding is translated into the performance and participatory activities that the audience engage in, it is plausible that their intimate engagement with these elements could shift their perspectives and 'allow matter its due as an active participant in the world's becoming' (Barad, 2003, p.803). Dance artists, particularly those who work with contemporary dance forms and improvisation, already work somatically with the inner materiality of their bodies and its visible musculature, and for many of them the shift towards engaging more with the environment and ecological matter has been an instinctive and progressive process. The current focus on climate and sustainability has also prompted an increase in dance events,[167] both performative and participatory, that expose and rethink this intra-action, not as representation but as a way

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167 See dance artist Stina Strange Thue in *Walking Landscapes*, Guldborgsund, *Metropolis*, Copenhagen, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISWIfQkPxiE (Accessed 03.03.22).

of 'becoming *with* the world' (Neimanis, 2018).[168] Examples of such events are *Rimini Protocol* that staged a particpatory event at the 2014 Climate Change Conference in Germany and *Metropolis: Art and Performance in Public space* which takes into account 'our new reality' where 'art and artists find new connections, new paths and new possibilities'.[169]

For humans, the flow and flush of waters sustain our bodies, but it is also important to understand how it connects us to other bodies, to worlds beyond our human selves (Neimanis, 2017, p.2). Tarpgaard's *As I Collapse* provides examples that show how water connects different kinds of bodies and that 'water is also our *kin* or one of our 'relatives', a body in its own right' (ibid., p.173). Astrida Neimanis has written extensively on water from political, posthuman feminist, and ethical viewpoints. She urges us to see 'our watery relations in/as a more-than-human hydrocommons', and argues that we should challenge anthropocentrism that sees embodiment as a human prerogative. This statement resonates with the work of Tarpgaard, who also urges us to re-evaluate our understanding of water as a reciprocal exchange; we are primarily comprised of water and in turn, water is also partly made of us 'with all the biological, chemical and ecological implications' (Neimanis, 2017, p.1). Understanding this interconnectedness and interchange should likewise help draw attention to our responsibility to care for and nurture water. Neimanis suggests that figuring ourselves as bodies of water is 'a way of taking up an ethical subjectivity toward our planet's vital waters', and I interpret this as an opportunity for us to individually participate in artistic events where we can experience this in action or where we can be guided into reconsidering how we view the materiality of water or the effect of other dynamic substances on our own bodies (Neimanis, 2018, p. 57). It is through intimately engaging with water and other matter in relation to ourselves that we can come to fully experience their immediacy and vitality. To be affected by water's intimate touch, as in Tarpgaard's performance, awakens our understanding that water is 'what we make it' and that we are all responsible and have a part to play in this process (Linton in Neimanis, 2017, p.157).

Tarpgaard also draws on a new materialist perspective, and by offering an aesthetic, pertinent and creative experience that aims to shift our habitual thinking, or non-thinking, about the crucial element of water in our lives, she has shown how a posthuman ecology of

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168 Walking Landscapes (2021); Performative Landscapes (2020); Bodyscaping (2021).
169 https://www.metropolis.dk/metropolis-2021/ (Accessed 14.05.22).

participation can be adapted to different circumstances. Moreover, 'water is also an idea that irrigates the imagination and sustains cultures and worldviews – no less important for survival' than water itself (Neimanis, 2017, p.185). This quote adds credence to the idea that water is the lifeblood of us all, not only physically, but 'spiritually and emotionally' and to this, I would also add creatively (McGregor in Neimanis, 2017, p.183). One only needs to think of the myriad of artistic expressions performed through music, visual art, dance and literature to appreciate the inspiration that water gives to many of us. On a more quotidian basis, walking along a river or by the sea can stir our senses and awaken our imagination and perception in an affirmative manner. As Braidotti suggests, when considering how we can transform potential negativity and untapped resources into positive and affirmative responses, 'it comes down to a question of creativity' (Braidotti, 2008, p.11) in turning the negative to the positive. I understand this approach to also encompass our natural resources, as through direct and intimate contact with these resources, we can appreciate them anew. Experiencing the visceral feel of water on our own skin in a creative and immersive encounter puts us in a better position to change the way we think individually, behave communally and engage environmentally. In this way, we can see the three ecologies as a necessary entanglement when engaging in creative practices. Through these sentient encounters the participant is *affected*, and an ineffable physical and emotional shift is under way. Consciously experiencing an event through the intensity of our senses can foster an embodied ecological awareness and prompt us to review our ways of thinking and engaging with humans and the other-than-human world.

During the periods of restriction, when physically being in touch with others was not permitted,[170] we had a renewed opportunity to awaken our individual haptic and sentient responses to materials. Morton (2017) suggests that seeing and hearing are also part of touching and that the 'humble' touch has the possibility to bring us closer to an intimacy with our surroundings and the materiality of things, which in general were not so prohibited. This in turn can give us greater connectivity to the material agency of the objects we engage with and offer alternative channels for our senses. Performances moving in/with water can be immersive, haptic and affective ways for participants and audiences to respond to and interact with one of our most precious natural resources. There is no single

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170 In Denmark most restrictions were lifted in June 2021, though face coverings still had to be worn on public transport and a 'corona passport' had to be shown to enter galleries, museums, restaurants and cafes. In England all restrictions were due to be lifted on the 19th July 2021 however the lifting of restrictions came later in the year.

definition of the term 'immersive' and I use it with a light touch, referring to Adam Alston's writing on immersive theatre where he says that, amongst other qualities, it has a potential for eliciting 'affective consequences of an audience's own engagement in seeking, finding, unearthing, touching' (Alston, 2016, p.8). I consider this to be pertinent to the work of Tarpgaard. Through 'productive participation' and working with audiences who 'co-produce by doing more than watching', the audience and visitors are invited to experience a sentient encounter prompted by posthumanist issues (ibid., p.3). This approach resonates with my earlier research working with dance artists at Arken Museum of Modern Art in March 2019, when they used the materiality of the bio-art sculptures by Piccinini as part of the embodied encounters that were designed to arouse a multi-sensory and visceral experience for the participants.

In Tarpgaard's performances and installations the public is also engaged:

> through an intimate involvement in performance that enlivens the affective possibilities of an uncertain future (Alston, 2016, p.3)

In these works the use of water and soil is central. By focusing on water in an immersive and performative manner they open our senses to a ubiquitous element, not only as a source of life and sustainability, but also an element that needs our urgent care and attention. However, water is but one of the resources that we so often take for granted and whose inherent liveliness and agency we often fail to recognise. Water is also trans-corporeal, as it is a substance that becomes entangled with, and passes through, bodies, Others and landscapes (see Alaimo, 2010). Likewise, soil is also trans-corporeal and is another material that is in imperative need of our care and attention. We are porous beings, transporters of matter and undeniably connected to our environment, as the environment is to us, through the medium of our flesh, our bodies. It appears that through our limited access to physical contact with other humans we have become more aware of our own sentient needs and are drawn even more to nature around us and desire sensuous and haptic experiences, often in the outdoors. The increase in the numbers of people walking, cycling, wild-swimming and gardening are testament to this and these activities have brought us in closer contact with the outdoors. Writing about soil, Puig de la Bellacasa (2015) suggests that it has been seen primarily in terms of its value for the needs of human demand but we are now alerted to urgent warnings about the exhaustion of the soil and its ecosystems. Tarpgaard's *Harvest* brings soil into focus and dialogue with dancers on stage,

giving an aesthetic, immersive and ecological perspective to working with bodies and soil in a new constellation.

Renewing the ecosophical circle - through the 'sensitive equipment' of dance.

These performances by Tarpgaard exemplify a posthuman ecology of participation and mirror the principles of Guattari's ecosophy; consideration of self (body and psyche), the collective (the social) and the environment. In the aforementioned performances, the scenography's focus on water and soil as life-giving elements attempted to sensuously involve the individual human body in an intimate entanglement with our most vital resources. Collectively and socially the performances brought us into contact with other living beings, matter and organisms, highlighting both our entanglement and the predicaments that our environment faces. Soil and water are also 'lives' or 'actants' in their own right, part of our complex network to which we have a responsibility of care, which I consider to be fundamental for a posthuman viewpoint. Tarpgaard, in discussing her work, also draws on the work of Bruno Latour (2005) and Donna Haraway (2007, 2011) saying:

> The making of productive encounters that decentre the human and place it outside of itself presents a ground upon which the future – future ethics, future politics – can be built, a future of great openness.
>
> Being open to biologies and biological processes that do what and go where our bodies cannot, thereby places us in intimate conversation with the limits of 'the human' and the vast potential of life outside it.[171]

Tarpgaard's choice of philosophers - Latour and Haraway - highlights her interest in the complexities of relationships and the intricate weave between humans and non-humans, between '*zoe*' and '*bios*', as referred to by Braidotti (2018). Braidotti, as stated, advocates '*zoe*' as the generative life force, using '*zoe*' to name the 'endless vitality of life as a process of continuous becoming' and acknowledging our connection to all forms of life and the driving force that connects across species and matter (Braidotti, 2008, p.182). Bringing the soil on stage and making it an integral and intimate collaborator in the dance performance is also a way to express this vitality of life in all its forms.

171 https://recoil-performance.org/the-membrane-projekt/ (Accessed 10.09.21)

Philosopher and anthropologist Bruno Latour's 'actor-network-theory', first discussed in the 1980s, is relevant here as it seeks to:

> extend the list and modify the shapes and figures of those assembled as participants and to design a way to make them act as a durable whole (Latour, 2005, p.72).

For me, this statement highlights the need to understand how each link or element is interconnected with and dependent on each 'actant' affective in a rhizomatic way; within each network there is another network. Latour's theory/method looks at relational ties, how human and non-human entities interact and how these multiple relationships constantly change and influence each other. Speaking at a lecture at Harvard University in 2016, Latour referenced art as a way of 'gaining sensitivity to questions given – sensitivity equipment that only art can provide',[172] and I see Tarpgaard's work as being capable of addressing vital issues through the 'sensitivity equipment' of dance and movement. I consider the 'sensitivity equipment' of dance to be its ability to combine the elements of the physical, mental, emotional and creative in an aesthetic endeavour which has the possibility to move the onlooker into another temporary, but enhanced, state of being. Likewise, Tarpgaard draws on Haraway's concern for the 'critters' of the universe which sees the 'world as a knot in motion' (Haraway, 2003, p.6). For Haraway, this highlights the necessity to understand the fluid entanglement between living entities. She sees the world as devoid of a strict nature/culture divide, a viewpoint shared by Latour (1993) and proposed through Tarpgaard's performances. The assumed abundance and natural status of soil and water are set in a new context, where we are asked to reconsider our relationship to the vital materialism of these elements. In our hands, under our feet and through our senses, soil and water become even more alive to us; we take them into our bodies through our sense of touch, smell, sight and hearing: an osmotic process is underway. Writing on *Reanimating Soil* (2019), Puig de la Bellacasa points to its 'biological wonder, independent livingness, sensual enlivenments, life as regeneration and animatedness' (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2019, p. 392). By highlighting the many properties of soil and water, Puig de la Bellacasa and Neimanis breathe life and vitality into substances that we take for granted, and which Tarpgaard makes tangible and sensuous through her performances.

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172 Bruno Latour, Lecture at Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTvbK10ABPI (Accessed 09.10.21)

As explored in the opening chapters of this thesis, we also saw dance artists moving into alternative spaces, working transversally and approaching choreography in new ways. They sought to make dance and movement accessible as modes of social engagement and also to democratise the body. The more radical choreographers of this earlier era, in particular the dancers and choreographers of the Judson Church movement, also used movement and dance in ways not seen before; gone was much of the artifice of dance and narrative story-telling to music, to be replaced by recognisable everyday movements with themes that were more mundane, pertinent, and sometimes had a political or social undercurrent. As now, choreographers of that era used their artistic platform to raise relevant issues; works by Yvonne Rainer (*M-Walk* in 1969 and *WAR* in 1970) and Steve Paxton (*Collaboration with Winter Soldier*) and socially collective and environmental pieces by Anna Halprin exemplify this (Banes, 1987). Writing of the Judson /Grand Union period, in her book *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, Banes discusses how the notion of choreography was expanded by 'challenging the range of purpose, materials, motivations, structure and styles in dance' (Banes, 1987, p.15). Similar to the Judson Church/Grand Union era, Tarpgaard's works, explored in this chapter, are concerned with such challeges to the aesthetic of dance and movement. Even though the issues being raised by Tarpgaard are quite different, they are no less vital than those raised by choreographers of the 1960s and 1970s; for all these choreographers, there is a fundamental desire to use their art form to explore and engage with audiences in an egalitarian and democratic way. They focus on both environmental and societal issues and then invite their audiences, through creative interaction, to engage with their viewpoints; they are seeking to reverse the 'fatalistic passivity' towards theses issues through a renewing of the ecosophical paradigm (Guattari, 2000, p.41).

Conclusion

Here in Denmark, where I am writing up my research in winter 2021/2022, the performing arts and other forms of collective gatherings are again in restrictive mode after having slowly opened in the summer of 2021. It is worth re-thinking our modes of interaction n the longer term if we are to continue to develop our art forms, our physical and mental well-being and adapt to the changing circumstances. The aforementioned projects by Tarpgaard demonstrate this potential for adaptation and expansion, not only through extending the physical surroundings of their performances and interactions, but also in the content and *intention* of their performances and interventions. Like Piccinini's bio-art creatures and beings, Tarpgaard uses her art form to aesthetically call forth important

issues highlighted by the posthuman challenges of ecology and environmentalism and 'the rejection of self-centered individualism' (Braidotti, 2013, p.48). Posthumanism, as an umbrella term, embraces a complex range of areas and here I have only touched on a selection that transverses my perception of a posthuman ecology of participation. These areas have included posthumanism as a philosophical and cultural stance, and new materialism, looking at our connection to water and soil and how we can create a symbiotic relationship between us as intra-dependent living organisms through facilitatory modes of performance, immersion, interaction and the role of affect. In this constellation of working with environmental issues and those participating, the dance artist as facilitator must find the balance between maintaining an aesthetic and creative mode of interaction and advocating the principles of a posthuman ecology of participation in a time of ever-changing parameters. Drawing on the examples discussed, I consider it possible for this to be achieved through innovative thinking, involving an appreciation that *zoe* is an energy force embedded in all life to be recognized and acknowledged, and I believe that through expanding our field of work to encompass technological advances we can reach a more diverse and extended group of people. As noted, Braidotti argues that the posthuman subject 'is rather materialist and vitalist, embodied and embedded, firmly located somewhere,' and perhaps this 'somewhere' is in many more locations and with many more people and actants than we first realised, and it is only our ingenuity, imagination and creativity that sets the limits for where this 'somewhere' can take us (Bradotti, 2013, p.51).

CONCLUSION

Introduction

> Art forms have something to tell us about the environment, because they can make us question reality (Morton, 2010, p.8).
>
> The body is thus not a provisional residence – an immortal soul, the universal or thought – but what leaves a dynamic trajectory by which we learn to register and become sensitive to what the world is made of (Latour, 2004, p.206).

Over the past six years, I have continued to unfold and apply my practice as dance artist, researcher and teacher, rooted in the ongoing research of this thesis, investigating the role of the dance artist in a gallery context. Whilst I initially set out to explore how dance artists prepare for and implement their interactions with gallery visitors and to devise proposals for how this can best be achieved, the process revealed more complex circumstances that transformed the research. I started by proposing a framework for an ecology of participation and later saw the potential and rational for advocating a posthuman ecology of participation that could be embraced, not only in a gallery setting but in other cultural settings as well. My contribution answers the initial research questions:

- *How has the role of the dance artist, in a gallery context, changed over time? How can their role as facilitators offer an additional frame of perception for the gallery visitor?*
- *How can the role of the dance artist as facilitator change or enhance the way the gallery visitor perceives, thinks and interacts when visiting gallery spaces?*
- *How can developing what I have termed a posthuman ecology of participation enhance and give relevance to the experience offered to the gallery visitor?*

When first considering the role of the dance artist within a gallery setting, I returned to my own roots which go back some forty years to the start of my contemporary dance career in New York City, and my reading of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) while at Dartington College of Arts in the early 1970s. Developing parallel with my passion for dance, as an artist, teacher and researcher has been my concern for the ecological well-being of our planet and during the writing of this thesis, these aspects have become more pressing and entangled. Initially, I proposed an ecology of participation that could create the required

ethos to encourage engagement - from the perspectives of both the dance artist and the gallery visitor. Later this gave way to a posthuman ecology of participation, which moves engagement into the realms of the posthuman. Most importantly, a posthuman ecology of participation, which to my knowledge has not previously been explored in the context of the art gallery, offers new perspectives and modes of interaction where the fields of dance facilitation, visual arts, posthumanism and new materialism intersect. It emerged, over time, that it was possible and desirable for the dance artists to use these four elements to both dissect and amplify aesthetic, social and ecological questions raised through their interaction with chosen artworks. By combining these factors, the dance artists were able to create movement experiences that shifted perspectives on the viewing of artworks, enabling the gallery visitor to experience them in a more tangible and sentient way. These new frames and modes of perception were developed during the writing of this thesis in order to facilitate a dynamic and meaningful encounter for the gallery visitor. My argument has been that when this approach is adopted, the artworks and the way they are experienced somehow seep beneath the skin to leave a lasting impression on the body and mind of the gallery visitor that prompts a shift in perception, thinking and being. Subsequently, this approach was adopted in non-gallery settings during the closure of gallery spaces, but it quickly became apparent that a posthuman ecology of participation could be advantageously applied in future art gallery projects.

Exploring the historical overview of the changing role of the dance artist within a gallery setting and my six chosen dance artists and choreographers influenced and focused my own research. Tracing the development of their work across boundaries, by bringing dance experiences into the art gallery through movement, touch, space and time, showed how the gallery visitor can explore their sense of self in relation to an artwork in a different, often more sensuous and embodied way. Looking at how these dance artists set the landscape for an ecology of participation, where dance and movement became a more accepted, appreciated and significant mode of interaction, spurred me to continue along this line. The fertile territory they created for participation and intervention paved the way for future dance artists to further develop these possibilities and foster a greater sense of democracy and agency in what might traditionally be thought of as elitist gallery spaces. Reflecting on their examples and also analysing my observations from the *Dancing Museums* 1 project helped frame a more indepth method of working with dance artists and gallery visitors in my own research. During the ensuing two projects at Arken Museum of Modern Art, my research was able to demonstrate how these dance and movement encounters could

broaden and enhance the visitor experience and contribute new knowledge to the field of dance facilitation in the art gallery. By focusing on the complex and layered role of the dance artist and the transferable skills they develop and apply, the research process revealed how their active and relational role can provide new experiences for visitors, not only in relationship to the art works but also the gallery space and in other cultural settings.

It is, perhaps, the discovery of the multifarious skills and the wide scope of what the dance artist can offer that has been the greatest revelation during the process of research that underpins this thesis. Their role in interacting with the gallery visitor with relevant aesthetic and creative experiences demonstrates their capacity for aesthetic relationships that can also reach beyond the formal gallery setting. The triadic notion of the 'kinesfield' (Schiller, 2008) was an important element here, as was acknowledging the dancer, not only as an artist but also as a researcher and teacher (a/r/tographer) in its broadest context. Transitioning from an ecology of participation to a posthuman ecology of participation meant that in addition to being a facilitator, the dance artist was now also required to incorporate a mode of interaction and relationality that embraced a posthumanist and new materialist viewpoint. Furthermore, the 'embodied guided tour' developed for Piccinini's sculptures and Tarpgaard's new materialist performance installations demonstrates how artistic and philosophical statements can be amplified and made tangible for their public. I have argued that this mode of interaction can enhance and give greater relevance to the experience offered, whether within a gallery setting, outdoors, or in spaces not normally associated with performance. Here, dance artists may be required to embrace multispecies orientation, to operate in a way that values the ongoing and entangled place we occupy in the ecology of our planet, and to appreciate the materiality of matter as dynamic, shifting and always in process. It is through acknowledging these philosophies that *adaptability, harmony, relational symbiosis and equal agency,* as proposed in a posthuman ecology of participation, can be achieved. The question then arises as to how future dance artists should train and prepare for these encounters if they are to embrace an ecosophical standpoint and maintain their role as performing and facilitating artists. I have outlined a skillset that can optimise these objectives within a gallery setting, but I also propose the dance artist can be engaged in other cultural, pedagogical and social settings, as their training prepares them for relational and creative interactions that can be enjoyed in a much broader context. This could be an area for further future research.

Divergences and limitations

Whilst the thesis began with a defined path and process, it was also important to embrace the changes that were presented along the way. The limitations first experienced in the *Dancing Museums* residency prompted me to initiate my own research at Arken Museum of Modern Art and the subsequent divergences, with the change in approach for the second residency, opened up new and valuable possibilities. The appearance of the Covid19 virus also contributed to a shift in thinking, focus and methodology. Patricia Piccinini's exhibition, *A World of Love* (2019) proved to be a watershed moment, impelling me to progress towards a path of posthumanism and explore how this could be manifested and brought to fruition through the work of the dance artist when engaging in the art gallery. With the sporadic closure of most public spaces between March 2020 to June 2021,[173] the original questions in this thesis concerning the role of the dance artist as facilitator purely in a gallery context also came to encompass other spaces as well and therefore required broader answers. As dance artists and choreographers needed to find alternative solutions and modes of encounter to continue to practice their art form, they also moved to outside spaces and embraced other forms of life, so it was fortuitous that my research with Piccinini had already taken me on the path of a posthuman ecology of participation. The questions Piccinini raised were innately related to the situation that followed in 2020; her concerns that our way of life could conjure the presence of an unexpected 'critter' came to pass and jeopardised our normal way of living. The philosophies, methodologies, practices and strategies developed during the Piccinini residency proved to be particularly pertinent and relevant to the predicament we found ourselves in. I was also fortunate to be able to apply and develop this new knowledge during my residency with Tarpgaard's *Harvest* (2021), looking at the similarities between the toiling work of the farmers who tend the soil, and the toil and labour it is to be a dancer; both cultivating their craft (see Chapter 5). Moving into outdoor spaces to cultivate the soil and rehearse among the crops and farm animals shifted and expanded the audience's understanding of how a dancing body can become entangled with its environment and effect the movements it performs. The choice to perform in a barn also expands the idea of what a performance space can be and do. The positive experiences outside of the gallery, engaging with the environment from a new materialist perspective, reinforced the case to bring this method of working back into the

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173 In England the period of restriction was extended until 21st July 2021 due to the high prevalence of the Delta variant of the corona virus. In June 2021 most restrictions were lifted in Denmark, though the requirement for a 'corona pass' in order to eat in restaurants and attend theatre performances remained in place. During the winter months of 2021/2022 further 'lockdowns' were imposed.

gallery and offer movement encounters that would also highlight and integrate the materiality of the chosen art works as well as their form and content.

My move towards a posthuman ecology of participation was both a logical and necessary transition. Having experienced the 'humanising' and transformative nature of many of Piccinini's fabulated 'critters', the question of Man's intervention on nature was brought into sharp focus. One became aware of an osmotic cycle of cause and effect, from man to nature and nature to man until one finally understands the message that we are one and the same thing – we are in this together. Though 'posthuman' is an umbrella term that includes many different factions, I have used it here to underline the plurality of the human as intra-connected within a multi-species co-existence and as an identifier for a particular approach and intention in the way we live (Braidotti, 2013). In this thesis, a posthuman ecology of participation is offered to suggest potential ways the dance artist can engage and interact aesthetically, relationally and creatively with gallery visitors within a meaningful, posthuman and new materialist context, rather than as a descriptive set of strategies and methods. The varying modes of practice and encounter, whether within the art gallery, alternative venues or outside, are intended to reflect this new mode of living. The given examples intentionally show how the dance artist can traverse the ocular through a sensory and relational movement experience that entwines animate and inanimate, subject, society and environment, offering new frames for thinking and feeling about the issues in question (Braidotti, 2019). I see the encounters in this thesis as realising these objectives by offering the gallery visitor an opportunity for a creative meeting that can enhance and give relevance to their visit and offers the potential to change the way they see and interact within the gallery space. More broadly however, a differently focused research process would need to be undertaken for this to be unravelled and to more fully understand how such encounters are perceived, experienced and remembered in practice by gallery visitors.

At the start of my research, in the chosen art galleries and museums, I initially considered the artworks displayed within the gallery walls as the key source of content and inspiration for the dance artist's encounters. However, when encountering specific exhibitions and performance spaces, new sources of movement material and inspiration arose. This in turn allowed for a reconsideration of the role of the facilitating dance artist. Having initially considered professional dance training to be the dominant factor in determining the positive outcome of the encounter with gallery visitors, I now see how important the personal philosophy of the dance artist as a/r/tographer is. The combination of their

professional training and 'habitus', which are paramount in creating an atmosphere conducive to a posthuman ecology of participation, are in fact vital to sucessful encounters. I suggest that in part due to the circumstances of the pandemic, the physical parameters have also changed for the dance artist. Art installations outdoors and atypical spaces where the artwork can often be entered, engaged with, and sensed by the whole body, also became their workspaces. The dance artist's field of work became broader and more complex, requiring a longer period of preparation in order to be able to develop 'affective relationships', that can have the potential to instigate a shift in viewpoint and thinking or 'create a new sensory landscape for the beholder' (Hickey-Moody, 2016, p.259). Without the dance artist having a personal connection to the space and subject matter, and a commitment to sharing and engaging with visitors and participants alongside having the necessary professional training, it will be difficult for them to forge relationships and create affective moments of encounter. The dance artists in their expanded modes of facilitation and participation are now required to create what Bennett calls:

> a cultivated, patient, sensory attentiveness to nonhuman forces operating outside and inside the human body (Bennett, 2010, *xiv*).

As noted here, this 'sensory attentiveness', to the materiality of objects, was an unfamiliar way of working for the dancers who were involved in the residencies and workshops. Many had worked site-specifically before, where the space, place and context of the performance were pre-determined by its geography. Now, however, they had to make the materiality of the artworks, 'nonhuman forces' and the ecological world tangible in a sensuous, creative exchange; be it with Piccinini's silicone figures or technological fantasies or the dampness of the earth and grass in Tarpgaard's *Harvest.* Tarpgaard sees the growing grass as agental and in so doing the grass becomes a co-performer, made apparent through the intimate contact that the dancers engage in with the soil. Through the use of all the senses, the dance artists sought to create 'affect', a visceral response that animates the body into thought or action on a pre-conscious level. This use of 'affect' as a way of stimulating us into action has been on the rise and as it can have profound effects, its use should be carefully considered so that it is appropriate to the creative encounter (Thompson, 2009).

Affect as performative material

I consider that encounters with a strong prevalence of 'affect' can have repercussions for future participatory artistic experiences. With the possibility for sensory and multi-modal meetings with works of art - including dance artists - the potential to create 'affect' within

the receiver or participant is increased and we therefore have a greater responsibility for how this is manifested. In the earlier chapters of this thesis my chosen six dance artists and choreographers employed both affect and a synaesthetic approach, albeit in a subtle manner. By combining different sensory elements they used affect in order to stimulate the gallery visitor's senses, movement possibilities and ways of thinking, but possibly not to the extent we saw later.

Affect, as discussed in Chapter 3, has become a more prevalent term during the period of my research and though the scope of this thesis barely touches on the extensive theories of affect, its role as an element in the performing arts is noteworthy. Though 'affects are not concrete entities', affect has the potential to move us from one state to another, and how this is realised is determined by our individual histories, culture and background (Guattari in MacCormack and Gardner, 2018, p.11). However, I see the creating/staging of affect as becoming more widespread and therefore ethical considerations of how affect is manifested and then received are also brought into play. Allowing ourselves to be affected is a way of being open to events, people and encounters, which in turn places a responsibility on those using affect as a performative device or facilitating within a gallery setting. However, being moved, both literally and figuratively, towards or away from the affective is a highly individual response within a complex loop of biological and cultural systems; but, one way or the other, we are stirred to action.

Forsythe's physically challenging installations or Charmatz's participatory performances seek to move the visitor, internally as well as externally, creating sensations and affect that can later evolve into feelings or emotions; participants can take a stance on their experience and perhaps gain new knowledge about themselves. Forsythe's and Charmatz's use of affect is not as explicit as that of Piccinini, whom I see as using affect to elicit a distinct response from the visitor. During the embodied guided tour of Piccinini's hybrid creatures, affect was generated in both participants and performers as they were confronted by the more-than-human exhibits which had the capacity to stimulate widely diverse reactions, from empathy to abhorrence. It is first after sensing and processing affect that one is able to unravel and begin to categorise the experience into feeling. In the later chapters, I advocate for a posthuman ecology of participation as a nuanced mode of experiencing phenomena through new frames of feeling, thinking, observing and moving; here, affect can play a productive and creative part in conveying a message. The examples of Piccinini's embodied guided tour and Tarpgaard's works illustrate diverse strategies and performance

modes that also produce affect, evoking different emotive responses in each of us. Piccinini intentionally seeks to stir affect and elicit an intense response, but she is astute in her methods to ensure our complicity with her viewpoint in a compassionate and empathetic manner; this was mirrored in the encounters created by the dance artists. However, the way in which we respond to these stimuli and whether they impact our behaviour when engaging with the human, more-than-human and otherwise, is for each individual to process. In particular, Piccinini, Tarpgaard and the dance artists understand the delicate balance we find ourselves in and use the 'sensitivity equipment that only art can provide' to offer an aesthetic and sometimes provocative encounter that, perhaps only later, reaches our consciousness (Latour, 2016).[174] Latour considers that the arts have a unique possibility to both 'dramatise and de-dramatise' ecological messages through their aesthetic modes. Through the performing and visual arts, we have a medium that can literally touch all our lives, inside and out. Latour himself has also embarked on performance projects in an attempt to bridge:

> the almost total disparity between the emotions we should feel when faced with ecological problems […] and the feeling of worried, yet vague blasé nonchalance with which we greet each increasingly devastating item on the news (Latour in Coppola, 2015, p.32).[175]

This quote resonates with the role of affect as discussed in Chapter 4, and my assertion that multi-modal and embodied experiences can create a greater impact, re-sensitise us and leave more lasting traces in our bodies and consciousness than the spoken word alone. Affect, by its very nature, stirs us into sensing and feeling; it is a provocation to experience and perceive differently. We are prompted to respond to a bodily reaction through a choice of medium, whether visual, auditory or physical, to stimulate a response and, perhaps, to make lasting changes in how we think and interact.[176]

These different modes of affective intervention connect directly to the dance artist and gallery visitor, illuminating the precarity and possibilities that emerge through these

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174 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTzhTlrNBfw – Talk given by Bruno Latour on Sensitivity Arts, Science and Politics in the New Climatic Regime, University of Melbourne, July, 2016.(Accessed 11.11.21)

175 Latour has also initiated and collaborated on various performance pieces stemming from his writings on climate change, e.g. Gaia Global Circus from 2004 which was performed in conjunction with his Facing Gaia lectures in New York City. The piece has been performed in many different versions, most recently at The Kitchen, New York, 2015.

176 A personal example of 'affect' was visiting an abattoir as part of a movement project while at Dartington College of Arts. The visual, olfactory and physical experience created lasting affect; from that day forward I have been a vegetarian.

different practices – whether interacting with a work of art, a more-than-human sculpture, or the earth itself, we can be moved into action through dance, both mentally and physically to foster positive transformation, as small as it may be. The skill-set of the dance artist, working with a posthuman ecology of participation, can guide this process and influence the outcome by initiating an embodied, aesthetic and relational encounter.

A loop within the spiral of change

Dance and choreography, as argued, have the possibility to stir us into action through the expanding of their domains, both physically and conceptually. Choreography is no longer considered to be the arranging of steps by a single person but has become as Forsythe suggested, a 'curious and deceptive concept', whose function is to be 'at odds' with prior concepts of what choreography is seen to be; the setting of limitations and boundaries on the concept of choreography 'serves no cause'. (Forsythe, 2018). The dance artist also seeks to move these boundaries, much like the earlier choreographers of the Judson Church era who also sought to shift the established frame for choreography and initiate change in their own way. Once again an additional loop is being added to this spiral of change. In the '70s the catalysts for change were different from those in 2021/22; gender issues, racial inequality and military conflict were but some of the issues that aroused sentiments, and though these issues are regretfully still prevalent, the focus now also includes concern for climate and man-made ecological change, unemployment, migration and racial equality as some of the predominant factors. Now, choreography as the organisation of bodies, matter and living entities still seeks to challenge these boundaries, as seen in many of Forsythe's works, Piccinini's sculptures and Tarpgaard's installations. Here, the body is spurred into action, eliciting responses and sending the spectator or participant along a path of self-knowledge about our own physicality and the world we live in.

Though this thesis focuses on the participatory role of the dance artist in live settings, the advance of technology from the 1970s to the 2020s cannot be denied. A turn to technological solutions has also been necessary during the lockdown periods which has had consequences that are both positive (we can stay connected and informed) and negative (physical and social contact are minimised). These advances in technological solutions are but the beginning and will continue to develop. However, many have also enjoyed new freedoms with the possibility to work from home and the opportunity to individually explore the outdoors. Awakening our physicality and exercising the senses in ways that we

have not done before has made us more aware of the vital materialism and ecological entanglement that is ever present around us. As Bennett suggests:

> materiality experienced as a lively force with agentic capacity could animate a more ecologically sustainable public' (Bennett, 2010, p.51).

Tarpgaard successfully adapted her work to technological solutions as well as modifying her performances to outdoor spaces. Both Tarpgaard and Piccinini have used their art form to pave the way for engaging audiences and participants with subject matter - and matter - that reaches into our everyday lives and also globally. I predict that this tendency will continue to develop in both large and small-scale productions and events, stirring our senses, as a participating public in open spaces or as audience in more traditional settings. Mainstream choreographers and performance spaces have once again taken up environmental and social issues, including internationally renowned Canadian choreographer, Crystal Pite, who has created large scale works, including *Emergence*, National Ballet of Canada (2009) physicalising parallels between insect hierarchies and humans, and *Flight Pattern* at the Royal Opera House, London (2017) about the plight of refugees. Again, this inclusion of current concerns as a starting point for performance content is not new, but its presence in major opera houses is not so common.

A second 'loop of change' appears within ecology where there have been recurring events to highlight the increasing pressures on the earth and its resources. From the opening of the first global conference on the ecological state of the world in Stockholm 1972, to the Kyoto Protocol in in 1997 and the most recent COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021, ecologists and scientists have been warning about the anthropocentric stance that Man has taken. As Timothy Morton rather fatalistically states, 'the end of the world has already happened' (Morton, 2010, p.98). Particularly, theatre, dance and performance have taken an active stance in using their performative medium as 'something embodied, ephemeral and affective' to convey their concerns about ecological and climate issues (Lavery, 2016, p.230). At COP26, in Glasgow (November, 2021), dance films pertaining to renewable energy and climate change were presented with dramatic footage of dances in Antarctica, to illustrate the disappearing ice shelf, and dancers performing on seventy-metre high windmills were juxtaposed against the backdrop of a windfarm off the coast of Scotland to highlight renewable energy. According to a report by Duncombe and Harrebye (2021), 'creative activism', as some of these events have been termed, is in fact more successful in capturing peoples' attention and curiosity, and there is 'a correlation between creative

activism and being moved to later take action on the cause' (Duncombe and Harrebye, 2021, p.20). Though the performances and exhibitions discussed in this thesis are not examples of creative activism, they have in common that they both seek to provoke affect in the viewers and participants through engaging their audience directly and 'in situ', stimulating an affect or movement response which can ultimately lead to new ways of perceiving, understanding and acting.

Working with one's artistic medium to convey an ecological viewpoint is not new, as can be seen from the work of Anna Halprin, who died while this thesis was being written.[177] Halprin (discussed in Chapter 2) who was at her most prolific during the 1970s and 1980s, was acclaimed for her environmental and community dance works, and later went on to develop *Still Dances* with photographer Eeo Stubblefield in the late 1990s (Halprin was then in her eighties). The photographs profiled her often naked body as part of the environment, covered in seaweed, leaves or sand, embedded in different environments in an attempt to embody and become 'one with nature'. Though this might be considered a romanticised image of ecology, it pays respect to Halprin's vision of a 'collaboration between the inner and outer worlds' and is a culmination of her work that has always depicted a posthumanist viewpoint and will be the legacy she leaves behind (Stubblefield in Woynarski, 2020, p.120). Posthumanism as a term was not in use when Halprin started her environmental dance work, but decades later her work has come full circle. We now see more instances of dance and ecological ideas being combined, as raised in the next section. Dance scholar Nigel Stewart defines environmental dance as an overarching term for the:

> dance and somatic practices concerned with the body's relationship to landscape and environment, including the other-than-human world of animals and plants (and can also be) dance and theatre works for the stage that mediate some aspect of the natural world or the qualities of a particular place (Stewart, 2010, p.32-33).

Though this resonates with the later works discussed in this thesis, there is also now greater adhesion to the idea that our own bodies are our place of unique personal ecology, highlighting our own complex bodily systems which, in turn, are innately entangled with the vibrant matter of the environment around us. Whether we are indoors, outdoors, or

177 Anna Halprin died in May 2021 at the age of 100.

within a gallery context the dance artist endeavours to activate our senses to better appreciate our entanglement with our '*zo*e' environment.

Future imaginings

This thesis touches on some of the participatory dance and gallery events that have recently taken place in Denmark and England, but it is only a small selected sample of the range of dance in art gallery spaces. From the 1970s and onwards, dance performances and participation in the art gallery and in the field of ecology have expanded and proliferated, reaching broader audiences and publics, separately but also in combination, and I foresee that there will be more to come. The prevalence of 'ecodramaturgy' (Woynarski, 2015), 'ecodance' (Sweeney, 2010) and 'environmental dance' (Stewart, 2010) and different forms of 'ecoperformance' have also emerged, enmeshing and intertwining the fields, constructing new ways of understanding and experiencing our world through an aesthetic and embodied perspective. The temporary closure of art galleries and particularly performance spaces provided both challenges and opportunities for all the performing arts and, if they wished to continue performing, it was necessary for them to expand their fields of performance and broaden their scope for interaction (see Chapter 5). Some performances moved outdoors, often relating to the immediate landscape around them, offering embodied and/or immersive experiences for their audiences or relating to critical aspects of our environment. One such example is *Bodyscaping + Habitat* (2021) by performance artist Nana Francisca Schottlaender – a participatory performance work under *Metropolis* (Art and Performance in Public Spaces, Copenhagen) which took participants, suitably dressed, through a landscape of sand, rubble, rocks and stones on landfill where an artificial island is to be built to protect Copenhagen from the possibility of rising sea levels. A second example is *Walking Landscapes* (2021) which took place across Denmark with over 140 contributing artists, including dance artists, to offer day-long interactions coupling their art forms with nature from different perspectives. The interactions could be experienced live or followed via a weblink. The intention was for the performances to be a 'countrywide manifestation and symbolic event in a time where the human and nature have to find a new balance'.[178] So although the consequences of the pandemic have been far-reaching and sometimes negative, the repercussions from this ongoing event have raised people's awareness of our precarity and awakened an understanding of the necessity to rethink the

178 https://www.metropolis.dk/walking-landscapes-2021/ Translated from Danish. (Accessed 10.01.22)

resources we use. Future performances and research projects also point in this direction, with organisations like *art.earth*[179] planning a six-day event at Dartington Hall in June 2022, entitled *Sentient Performativities: Thinking alongside the Human,* with performances, workshops and discussion groups looking at how 'somatic practices can foster embodied ecological awareness and communication between the human and the other-than-human worlds'.[180] How we are interconnected with the human/more-than-human world through an ongoing osmotic process, of which we are often barely aware, is being brought to the fore. This renewed focus on the fragility of the body and our realisation of our inter-connectivity with all that is around us, has prompted a change in the way we interact and think about the body and its positioning in the world. This thesis provides original methodologies for exploring this bond through a posthuman frame, where sensuous and aesthetic encounters, between arts works, gallery visitors and dance artists, contribute towards new awareness of our entanglement.

Museums and galleries are also adapting to these new circumstances. Since the lifting of restrictions in Denmark in the middle of June 2021, museums and galleries are offering new experiences for their public, often including a 'sensory experience', though limiting the number of visitors. One such example is a guided tour through the Rodin exhibition *Displacements,* [181] at the New Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, which offered a sensory movement experience prompted by the sculptures in the exhibition. Also at the Glyptotek, a choreographed installation for children and their families was performed in a 'hyperaesthetic, secret garden' where the dance artists are depicted as elaborately costumed 'flower creatures', hinting at a posthuman way of thinking. These examples illustrate a move towards a more embodied and aesthetic mode of communication in a gallery setting, and they create sensuous environments that offer stimulation to both the eye and the body where they were not so prevalent previously. Boris Charmatz's *Manifesto for a Dancing Museum* (2009) advocating for an 'incorporated museum' is being realised. It remains to be seen if this renewed curiosity and awareness of the role of the moving body in museum spaces and practices continues, and only time will tell if this tendency will become more prevalent and diverse.

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179 https://art-earth.org.uk/symposium-sentient-performativities/ (Accessed 24.02.22)
180 Ibid – Symposium and performance information.
181 https://glyptoteket.dk/udstilling/auguste-rodin-forskydninger/ (Accessed 07.08.21)

It is encouraging to see that some dance artists are continuing on a path of posthumanism; my collaborator at Arken, Lucy Suggate, continues to create in gallery spaces, with her latest work being a choreographic installation under the title *Choreomania and Companions* (May, 2021) at the *Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art* in Gateshead, Newcastle. In this installation, Lucy worked with her dog Molly, a retired greyhound, in an improvisational resting and reclining, prompted by their bonding rituals over the last four years. In the piece, entitled *A Giant Dog Bed,* the two lie with each other, 'dressed' identically, with Lucy in a unitard that resembles Molly's colour and her markings; the piece is allowed to evolve at Molly's pace. Here, again, we see a move to working with the more-than-human, involving sentient creatures in a slow-moving 'choreography' and it will be interesting to see if this is a temporary trend or a more inclusive way and enduring mode of presenting in gallery spaces. The *Baltic* has also established a four-year partnership with *Siobhan Davies Dance* which 'seeks to advance the creation, presentation and development of audiences for experimental independent contemporary dance within a visual arts context', a partnership developed 'in recognition of the needs to further grow the dialogue between contemporary dance and visual arts'.[182]

Tina Tarpgaard has continued her choreographic work, under restricted circumstances, illustrating a determination to continue choreographing by incorporating the limitations society has set into the planning and production of the work. I believe these constraints will simply be absorbed into the choreographic process so that more performances and encounters between dance artist and their public can take place, regardless of whether they are in a designated performance space or not. One such space is an ordinary house on the outskirts of Copenhagen which has received a grant to be a 5-year durational artistic research project for the performance group *Sisters Hope. Sisters Hope Home* invites visitors to become immersed in a sentient living, 'dedicated to poetic and sensuous modes of being and being together'.[183] The house has been refurbished according to the aesthetics of the performance group and the home will serve as a performance platform and research centre focusing on 'how inhabitation of the sensuous and poetic relates to the understanding of the ecological connectedness of everything' (ibid.). Visitors can attend for half an hour or book to stay a night and artists and performers can apply to hold residencies or present their work there. This concept is particularly interesting as it enmeshes the artistic with the

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182 https://baltic.art (Accessed 10.05.21)
183 http://sistershope.dk/sisters-hope-home/ (Accessed 03.02.22)

idea of a sensuous everyday, blurring boundaries so that the aesthetic is integrated into the whole environment and daily experience of living in the house.

These forward-thinking collaborations, such as at *The Baltic*, have also been set up between *Copenhagen Contemporary: International Art Centre* on Refshaleoen and *Danshallerne,* the house of dance for professional training and performance. The two organisations are sharing the huge industrial buildings which formerly housed the ship building industry. The enormous spaces can accommodate large scale artworks, performances, installation art and 'monumental video works. [This is] art that can often be entered and sensed with the whole body'.[184] The sharing of spaces will probably become more desirable from economic, collaborative and inspirational standpoints and, as can be seen from my given examples, the moving body and participation are seen as integral elements in these new collaborations.

The second *Dancing Museums* project completed its three-year term at the end of 2021, having had a disrupted final year due to the pandemic, and it remains to be seen if a further research project will emerge and how this may be manifested. The dance artists in this latest project continued their work at the different galleries and adapted to the situations in each of the countries, some turning to more technological solutions and others moving outdoors. A closing 'choreographic conference' was to take place in October 2021 in Bassano del Grappa, Italy, where *Dancing Museums 2* started in 2018, but moved online due to restrictions in travel. The aim was to disseminate the findings and 'give a wider, transnational visibility to the project and its outcomes'.[185] I attended this conference virtually, though found the limitations of online dissemination somewhat restrictive.

These are but a few of the initiatives where dance, visual art and museums are collaborating to create innovative encounters for their public but these are already here, and it will be the next generation of dance artists who will open up new and unexplored experiences which will reveal new and different kinds of relational encounters. I predict that more boundaries between arts sectors will disappear and a new variety of interventions will appear in unconventional settings, where the skills and attributes of the dance artist can also be validated and enjoyed. To close, I return to Bishop (2014), and agree with her viewpoint,

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184 https://copenhagencontemporary.org/en/visit/(Accessed 26.11.21)
185 https://www.dancingmuseums.com/projects/final-conference/ (Accessed 03.12.21)

citing Guattari, that art needs to be transversal, capable of standing on its own but able 'to take flight into and across other disciplines' (Bishop, 2014 p.278). So, though the physical boundaries of collaborations may merge, it is paramount that the role of the dance artist as facilitator should maintain its artistic, investigative and pedagogical role with the focus on the unique creative and relational movement experience for the individual participant. Through the offering of these relational sensory, aesthetic experiences that draw on Latour's 'sensitivity equipment that only art can provide', visitors can have the opportunity to be immersed in the material environments they are visiting, and perhaps experience themselves in new and unexpected ways. Ultimately, my ambition has been to enhance the gallery visitor's visit and stir them into new ways of thinking, being and doing – a possibility for renewed wonder and curiosity between the self, the human and the more-than-human. The methodologies in this thesis offer the possibility for this re-enchantment and to enrich lives on individual, societal and environmental levels, thus fulfilling the criteria for a posthuman ecology of participation; one that accomplishes a harmonious, adaptable and symbiotic relationship where all have equal agency – even after they have left the gallery space.

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