

MAURA BAIOCCHI • WOLFGANG PANNEK

# CHOREOGRAPHIC THEATER OF TENSIONS

FORCES & FORMS

*Choreographic Theater of Tensions – Forces & Forms* presents, in a concise and substantial manner, the creative and theoretical approaches of *Taanteatro Dynamics* – an investigation of performative language based on the tension principle and the notion of the expanded body. Additionally, the book informs the reader about the trajectories of Taanteatro Companhia and its founding director Maura Baiocchi.

The Brazilian dancer and choreographer is considered as “one of the great interpreters and creators of Brazil,” and her company, founded in 1991 in São Paulo, is described as “one of the most radical, elaborate and rigorous schools of contemporary theater.” In the course of its trajectory, Taanteatro Companhia amplifies and develops its conceptual and methodological repertoire, initially conceived by Maura Baiocchi, and elaborated in cooperation with Wolfgang Pannek.

Widely illustrated, the first publication about Taanteatro in English is aimed at professionals, students and researchers of the performing arts, and the general public. It summarizes and refines an editorial project that covers the following books: *Taanteatro: Choreographic Theater of Tensions* (2007), *Taanteatro: Rite of Passage* (2011), *Taanteatro: MBE – Mandala of Body Energy* (2013), *Taanteatro: [Des]Construction and Schizopresence* (2016), and *Taanteatro: Forces & Forms* (2018).



TAANTEATRO



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Creator of Taanteatro Dynamics and founder of Taanteatro Companhia. Playwright, director, choreographer, dancer and actress.

MA in communication and semiotics from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo with the dissertation "Body and Communication in Process: The Tension Principle in the Taanteatro Experience".

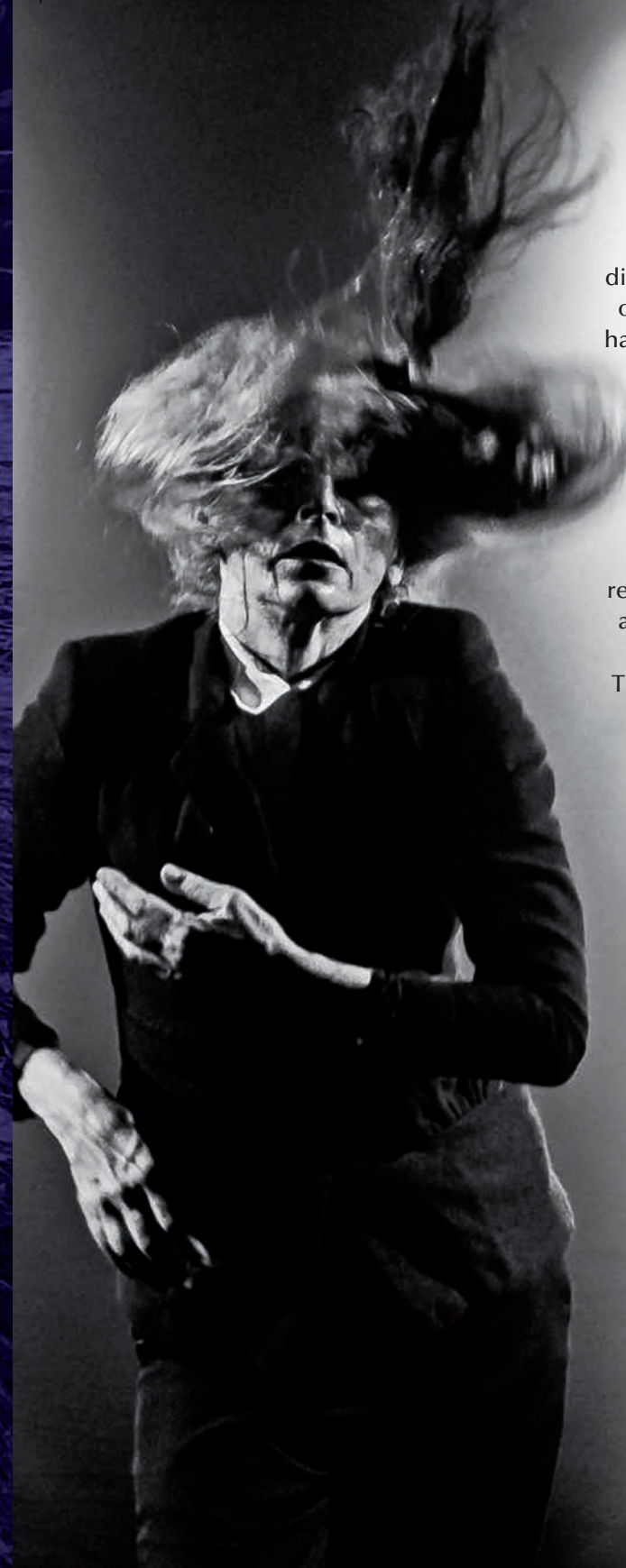
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This book comes at the right time. Its publication falls into a moment when – in addition to the ongoing discussion of the body – the theorizing of the affective in the theater studies has become more important compared to the rational aspect of the transmission of meaning.

The example of Maura Baiocchi appears (...) as an encouragement, while many theater makers are disheartened in the face of the reactionary front, which has been built against all experimental art for years.

The work of Taanteatro (...) is nothing less than the ever-renewed attempt to promote a new "co-existence" of man and nature. (...) It is a radically "green" theater that formulates a far-reaching critique of our civilization.

*Hans-Thies Lehmann*



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WITH A FOREWORD BY HANS-THIES LEHMANN







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**TAANTEATRO**  
COMPANHIA

São Paulo 2020



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# A radically “green” theater

Foreword by Hans-Thies Lehmann<sup>1</sup>

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This book comes at the right time. Its publication falls into a moment when – in addition to the ongoing discussion of the body – the theorizing of the affective in the theater studies has become more important compared to the rational aspect of the transmission of meaning.

Likewise, the example of Maura Baiocchi appears just in the right moment as an encouragement, while many theater makers are disheartened in the face of the reactionary front, which has been built against all experimental art for years. Maura Baiocchi is an artist who tenaciously pursued for more than 30 years her very personal journey in the performing arts, without being intimidated by opposition to the distinctive singularity of her practice, both from the state institutions but also often from her own cultural environment in which time and again theater is expected to provide unequivocal political messages.

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Dr. Hans-Thies Lehmann is an internationally renowned theater scholar. Lehmann was the director of the Institute for Theater, Film and Media Studies at the Goethe University Frankfurt. He is a member of the Academy of Arts in Berlin and President of the International Brecht Society. *Postdramatic Theatre* (Routledge, New York, 2006), the most acclaimed among his books, has been translated to 26 languages.

And last but not least, the book comes at a moment when the conception that the true world theater is taking place in Central Europe, in fact in Germany and its surroundings, and even more precisely in Berlin-Mitte, seems less and less tenable. More and more, the Central European theater idea is considered outdated; and in theater, dance and performance – as has long been the case in film – impulses from the southern and eastern edges of Europe, from Latin America, Japan, China or Lebanon, to mention but a few, are gaining more and more recognition as the truly authentic expression of our time.

The greater openness to these different forms of play (from which one can hope this volume will benefit) is directly related to the heightened awareness that the Alpha and Omega of the major problem of our time – only very abstractly named by the word climate change – is the relationship between the human being and its natural environment.

The work of Taanteatro can be considered as one big research expedition in this terrain. It is nothing less than the ever-renewed attempt to promote a new “co-existence” of man and nature. In its performances, plants, animals, stones and water are situated on the same level as the human actor. It is a radically “green” theater that formulates a far-reaching critique of our civilization. In this regard, the reference to Antonin Artaud in several of the more recent works is anything but random.

Since the 1980s, Maura Baiocchi creates performances and dance theater pieces, exhibitions, site-specific projects, and much more. The political dimension of this work can be explained with a beautiful formulation by Heiner Müller. In *Dove and Samurai*, a little text about Robert Wilson, he speaks of “the wisdom of fairy tales, that the history of man can not be separated from the history of animals (plants, stones, machines) except at the price of downfall.”<sup>2</sup> To determine the nature of the political in Maura

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2 Müller, Heiner (1989). *Material. Texte und Kommentare* [Material. Texts and comments]. Göttingen: Steidl Verlag, p. 50.



Baiocchi's theater, one could also refer to Jean Francois Lyotard. He developed the concept of intensity for deconstructive aesthetics. For him as well, the political is not, as usual, a practice around or with the institutions, it is not even a sphere for the elaboration of utopias, but simply the "determination of an area of play for libidinal intensities, affects, 'passions' ... [an] ... experimentation that currently spreads all over the world uniting practices and experiences of all kinds."<sup>3</sup>

The principle of tension can be understood as the core of the work. The name Taanteatro refers to the Indo-European root 'tan', which means tension, from which the term dance derives. Wolfgang Pannek has taken on the task of transposing Baiocchi's work into a theoretical language, which, of course, is best accessible to those already familiar with the pair's foundational work. The discourse about theater that the reader encounters here is essentially shaped by the study of Gilles Deleuze. There are advantages to this: the language of Deleuze, inspired by Nietzsche, is constantly trying to dissolve the almost inevitable fixation of processes into reified opposites, which in fact only exist in the intermediate states of flux. The language of theory thus has made a big step forward by grasping elements extraneous to theory such as the dynamics of physical states of tension, the perceptible 'tension' of different muscular states, etc.

It would, however, be a misunderstanding to think of the theoretical concepts as an expression of a metalanguage overlying the corporeal. Instead, a concept like metachoreography means here the detection of energetic states or poetic ideas from which the choreography first emerged. Of course, the meritorious work of conceptualizing physical theater is always threatened by a peril the present writing also does not escape from entirely. Namely, the drifting of the intention to overcome the silent falling of speech in face of the body into a new hypertrophic conceptual grid. It would therefore be a suggestion to the readers – after reading the intro-

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3 Lyotard, Jean-François (1978). *Intensitäten* [Intensities]. Berlin: Merve Verlag, p. 59.

duction – to first jump into the concrete, that is to carefully study the description and the pictures of the concrete theater work, and only then the theoretical part.

I got to know the work of Baiocchi in Brazil, when Helene Varopoulou<sup>4</sup> and I undertook a lecture tour organized by Wolfgang Pannek.<sup>5</sup> We were impressed by the noble performing culture of the artist, capable of uniting performance, dance, and butoh. The theoretically explicable multiplicity of forms became in her work a practical reality, which cast a spell over the viewer. The artist came across authentic for she knew how to communicate her actions' inner necessity to the spectator. We received a gift – the opportunity, that we, as spectators, were able to turn the artist's experience with her subject matter into our very experience watching her performance.

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4 The Greek theater scholar Helene Varopoulou taught at the universities of Athens, Frankfurt am Main and Berlin. She was chair of the International Theater Institute in Greece, founding director of the Argos Festival, and director of the Summer Academy of the Greek National Theater. Varopoulou is the author of *Passagen. Fragmente und Reflexionen zum zeitgenössischen Theater* [Passages. Fragments and reflections on contemporary theater] (2009), among other writings.

5 TN: The author refers to the *Hans-Thies Lehmann Brazil Tour 2010*.

# Access to the creative spirit

Introductory note by Shane Pike<sup>6</sup>

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Taanteatro – choreographic theatre of tensions – was first brought to my attention by a very close collaborator in 2012. Stumbling upon the work of the company bearing the same name, the methods and theories of Maura Baiocchi and Wolfgang Pannek were inspiring and career-changing for us both. Before long, these two Australian theatre directors found themselves in the southern Brazilian jungle, experiencing what would prove to be both an innovative and transformational approach to performative creation, enabling the artist's unbridled connection to their work, and themselves, in a most profound and evocative way. Ultimately, experiencing the processes of Taanteatro leads to a complete consumption of the artist by their own creative potential.

As one of Brazil's most applauded performance companies, Taanteatro has produced its works across the world yet remains largely elusive to theatre makers outside of South America and parts of continental Europe. In what could represent Brazil's greatest contribution to the performing arts since the works of Augusto Boal, this translated publication detailing the Taanteatro method has the potential to reignite the creative sparks in the English-speaking the-

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<sup>6</sup> Dr. Shane Pike is an Australian playwright, director and practice-led researcher. He is a Lecturer in Drama at the School of Creative Practice, Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology.



atre world, by providing a direct line to a once inaccessible font of knowledge (at least to those of us outside the Brazilian and accompanying Portuguese language spheres of influence).

This is a book for well-established performance makers, emerging artists and students alike; relevant to those in the disciplines of dance, theatre, performance art and every genre of embodied practice in between. The processes and concepts described and applied herein will help you redefine or articulate your longstanding creative practice, just as they will help you discover and understand your latent artistic potential and evolve your developing skill and technique.

Whether you're looking to uncover and express your true creative persona, looking for inspiration to develop and generate ideas for specific creative works, or simply have an interest in theatre and performance making you will find the techniques of Taanteatro useful and the works and history of Taanteatro Companhia, informative. This book, and its methods, comprise this scope of purposes for such a variety of people because the fundamental characteristic of Taanteatro is the ability it gives its practitioners to access their most intrinsic creative spirit.

# A world apart

Introduction by Wolfgang Pannek

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“Taanteatro is a world apart.” With this brief observation, reviews<sup>7</sup> published in the second half of the 1990s underline the “unique paths” covered by Taanteatro Companhia, attesting to the “visual quality”, “gestural refinement”, “text development” and “fascinating audacity” that are observed in their plays. Collectively, these observations echo the aesthetic singularity attributed to Maura Baiocchi throughout her career: “It is difficult to digest the infinite signs that have been imposed on us, but the taste is unforgettable!” This comment from the press, regarding the *Boomerang’s* premiere at Cláudio Santoro National Theater in Brasília in 1982, also testifies to “the moment of birth of a first-rate choreographer.”<sup>8</sup> After more than three decades of innovative performing arts research, Baiocchi is portrayed as “one of the great interpreters and creators of Brazil,”<sup>9</sup> and her company, founded in 1991 in São Paulo, is described as

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7 De Sá, Nelson (1997, October 24). Baiocchi satiriza a “Mexicanização” [Baiocchi satirizes the ‘Mexicanization’]. *Folha de S. Paulo*. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/1997/10/24/ilustrada/27.html>.

De Sá, Nelson. (1998, September 11). “Homem Branco” se perde no deserto americano. [“White Man” gets lost in the American desert]. *Folha de S. Paulo*. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/ilustrad/fq11099838.htm> .

8 Rezende, Pedro Paulo (1982, October 17). Passos de um coquetel bem bailado [Steps of a well-danced cocktail]. *Jornal de Brasília*, p. 22.

9 Navas, Cassia (2011). DAN – devir ancestral [DAN – ancestral becoming]. [http://cassianavas.com.br/wp-content/uploads/pdf/fomento\\_dan.pdf](http://cassianavas.com.br/wp-content/uploads/pdf/fomento_dan.pdf)

“one of the most radical, elaborate and rigorous schools of contemporary theater.”<sup>10</sup> At the end of 2016, following the “sophisticated mise-en-scène”<sup>11</sup> of the première season of *Artaud, the Momo* in São Paulo, Parisian spectators at Théâtre de Nesle were “hypnotized” by Baiocchi, critics celebrating “her grandiose play”<sup>12</sup> in a “lesson on the art of acting”<sup>13</sup> and by a performance that “exceeds by far all interpretations” of Artaud “given up to now.”<sup>14</sup> The presentation of the same work at Theaterhaus Berlin Mitte led German theatrologist Hans-Thies Lehmann to declare Baiocchi’s work nothing short of “refined performative culture.”<sup>15</sup>

In light of the recurring national and international critical recognition of Taanteatro's artistic qualities, it may seem paradoxical that the company, until this day, operates in conditions that do not guarantee its continued existence. However, given the economic fragility of Brazil's cultural environment, any sense of stability is inevitably precarious and ephemeral, sustained only by incessant and un-measured efforts that mobilize and devour Brazilian artists in their obstinate resistance to ethical and political neglect. Thanks only to independent creators and their commitment to artistic projects addressing essential human and social issues of their country – but who, until recently, developed their works without substantial public, private or corporate support – it is today possible to speak of a thriving cultural history in Brazil. Furthermore, it can be argued that the development of exemplary laws and programs designed to stimulate and

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10 Araujo, Celso (2011). *Androginia passada pelo fogo* [Androgyny passed through fire]. Poesia-parque blog.

11 Pinheiro, Lenise (2017, Mai 28). “Artaud, le Mômô” celebra 25 anos da Taanteatro Companhia [Artaud, the Momo celebrates 25 years of Taanteatro Companhia]. *Folha de S. Paulo*. <https://cacilda.blogfolha.uol.com.br/2017/05/28/artaud-le-momo-celebra-25-anos-da-taanteatro-companhia/>.

12 D’Azémar de Fabrègues, Guillaume (2017, November 16). Artaud, le Mômô – Théâtre de Nesle. <https://jenaiquunevie.com/2017/11/16/artaud-le-momo-theatre-de-nesle/>.

13 Person, Philippe (2017, November). Performance de Maura Baiocchi autour de textes de Antonin Artaud [Performance by Maura Baiocchi around the texts of Antonin Artaud]. *froggy's delight*. [https://www.froggydelight.com/article-19640-Artaud\\_le\\_Momo.html](https://www.froggydelight.com/article-19640-Artaud_le_Momo.html).

14 De Mèredieu, Florence (2016, December 11). ARTAUD. Taanteatro. Théâtre de Nesle. 2016. *Journal Ethnographique*. <http://florencedemeriedieu.blogspot.com/2016/12/artaud-taanteatro-theatre-de-nesle-2016.html>.

15 Comment by Hans-Thies Lehmann in a correspondence sent to Taanteatro Companhia.



support continuous artistic endeavor – and thereby motivating the latest florescence of the performing arts in São Paulo – results equally from the initiative of artists engaged in the struggle for consistent and meaningful cultural policies.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it is revolting to witness how valuable cultural achievements, made over the last two decades by hard labour and fierce debate, are, at present, threatened by the reactionary short-sightedness of political and religious agents who occupy or lust for places of power. In addition, the cultural community itself, although usually upholding values such as liberty, subjectivity and diversity, frequently reinforces the reactive power dynamics that characterize its broader society.

By virtue of its intrinsic insubordination to majoritarian social, ideological and aesthetic standardization, and under the pretext of not representing universal problems, singularity is easily denounced and dismissed as idiosyncrasy or solipsism. The “world apart” judgment effortlessly becomes a condemnation to marginality. Under this aspect, the cultivation of artistic singularity assumes the form of a double combat: the resistance to macro political and economic precariousness, and the invention of survival strategies against mechanisms of exclusion enforced by the cultural milieu itself. In political and social environments dominated by male chauvinists, reluctant to adopt transformative ideas, this battle of resistance becomes even more arduous when the combatants are women.

Maura Baiocchi and Taanteatro Companhia established their “world apart” in spite of socio-political and cultural uncertainties by navigating through profound, multiform, and often controversial currents of art. The company explored the thematic and modal tensions of some considered Greats, and others regarded Marginals, in the European theatrical, literary and philosophical cannon: William Shakespeare, Florbela Espanca, Frida Kahlo, Antonin Artaud, Comte de Lautréamont, George Tabori, Friedrich Nietzsche, Samuel Beckett, Robert Walser, Fernando Pessoa, Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari are among those who inspire and propel Taanteatro’s works. Layered upon this performative cruising of poetic, pictorial and philosophi-

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16 The Municipal Law of Theater Promotion (2002, with co-authorship of the councilman Vicente Cândido) and the Municipal Law of Dance Promotion (2005, presented by the councilmen Tita Dias, José Américo and Nabil Bonduki) were formulated by the movements Art against Barbarism and Dance Mobilization.

cal masterpieces, or expressions of aesthetic transgression, Baiocchi and her Company develop dance-theater pieces motivated by mythological, socio-political, decolonial, environmental and gender issues – as well as site-specific interventions in urban and natural environments – and produce exhibitions, festivals and multidisciplinary projects aimed at unpacking the intersecting lines between performing arts and philosophy. Frequently, these projects employ a mutually enriching exchange with international artists and scholars.<sup>17</sup> According to academics, critics and peers, Taanteatro stands out with its innovative and unpredictable reconceptualizing of performative language, as a result of the company's deliberate confluence of theoretical, artistic, pedagogical and personally embodied dimensions, in what the founder of the company calls *choreographic theater of tensions* or, simply: *taanteatro*.

From the outset, Baiocchi's work elaborates on training practices that develop, intensify and refine the perception, the skills and the performative presence of the performer. Methods of dramaturgical creation that foster the performer's artistic autonomy and the formulation of performing arts concepts are integral to the process. Although Taanteatro constitutes an integrated approach directed towards the development of performing artists and their performances, this intertwining of artistic learning, realization, and reflection does not stem from a formal requirement, but from a vital concern. It is born of a passionate desire to “dive into the dive”<sup>18</sup> and to follow currents, which, when navigated to their limits, inevitably intersect in the performer's craft: the eruption of art in thinking and of thinking in art.

In 1985, in the early days of re-democratization in Brazil, Baiocchi worked as a young lecturer at the National University of Brasilia, where she proposed a “horizontal methodology” in higher education as opposed to “strict and authoritarian obedience to the laws of the teacher.” Baiocchi would discover Deleuze only two decades later, but she already invokes at that moment a becoming-dance that rejects dance as a “copy of a copy”;

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17 Taanteatro Companhia has collaborated with artists and intellectuals from South-America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the US.

18 Quote from Baiocchi's poem *Outsider*.

that requires a dance “mutant as the world itself”; and that invites, in the name of the “plurality of ideas and bodily manifestations,” to the “exaltation of the imagination” and to “permanent invention.” “Dancing the Differences; Dancing with Differences”<sup>19</sup> is the motto animating her process-project, noted by Renato Cohen in 1998, in his panorama of the contemporary Brazilian performing arts scene.<sup>20</sup>

In the preface to the company's first book, the philosopher Peter Pál Pelbart perceives Baiocchi's attempt to “enunciate the logic of her creative process” and “to systematize her method of work” as an invitation directed “to creators and researchers of various areas, especially those who feel the urgency to rethink the aesthetic practices of contemporary times.”<sup>21</sup> The translation of this work into Spanish was hailed as a book which, “beyond the interest it undoubtedly has for theatrical researchers, is a text fundamental to an intense, profound and honest epistemological journey.”<sup>22</sup>

The documentation of the artistic methods and processes developed by Baiocchi and her company is not guided by the idea of creating a repertoire of normative formulas. Although it does not dispense with the academic foundations of its discoveries, the logic of the choreographic theater of tensions does not preach what to do in the field of performing arts. The *Taanteatro Dynamics*, rather, propose to explore the possibilities of conceptual and creative innovation through an eternal return to the field of forces that engender the movements, forms and signs in artistic making. The interlacing of two lines – the exploration of the *tension principle* and the dissolution of clear boundaries between the body and its environment – places the performer of Taanteatro in a liminal zone of

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19 Quotes from the announcement of *!Very Pleased Body!*, a project organized by Baiocchi at the National University of Brasília between June and July 1985.

20 Cohen, Renato (1998). *Work in progress na cena contemporânea*. São Paulo: Perspectiva. Renato Cohen (1956-2003) was a Brazilian theater director and performing arts scholar. Among his published works are *Performance as language* (1987, São Paulo: Perspectiva) and *The art of performance* (2007, São Paulo: Perspectiva).

21 Preface by Peter Pál Pelbart in Baiocchi, M. & Pannek, W. (2007). *Taanteatro: teatro coreográfico de tensões*. Rio de Janeiro: Azougue editorial.

22 Burgos, Nadia (2013). Teatro coreográfico de tensiones [Choreographic Theater of Tensions]. *Palos y Piedras*. Issue n° 17. <https://www.centrocultural.coop/revista/17/tanteatro-teatro-coreografico-de-tensiones-de-baiocchi-maura-y-pannek-wolfgang-cordoba>.

encounter and *in-between*<sup>23</sup>: On the one hand, identities and relatively stable historical and cultural meanings and, on the other hand, the supra-historical and assignifying energies that permeate and dynamize physical and mental forms. Both sides require experience and artistic integration by the performer. The pedagogical objective of Taanteatro, if it can be expressed, is to incite an active and radical artistic imagination, passionate about the uncertain combat between forces and forms at the extreme point of creation where expressive movement transcends the strictures of socio-cultural domestication.

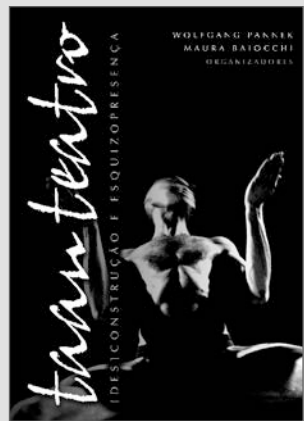
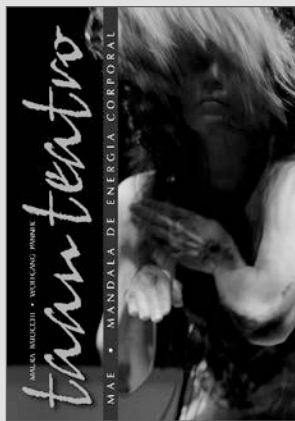
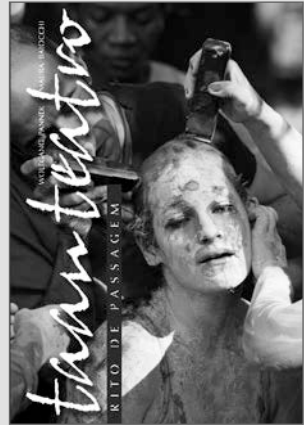
Starting from *Taanteatro: Choreographic Theater of Tensions* (2007), Baiocchi, Pannek and their collaborators gave life to an editorial project that shares the innermost workings and unfoldings of their creative processes. Their subsequent publications in Portuguese include the following titles: *Taanteatro: Rite of Passage* (2011), *Taanteatro: MBE – Mandala of Body Energy* (2013), *Taanteatro: [De]construction and Schizopresence* (2016), and *Taanteatro: Forces & Forms* (2018).<sup>24</sup>

*Choreographic Theater of Tensions – Forces & Forms* presents Taanteatro for the first time to English readers. Aimed at artists, researchers, students and audiences of the performing arts, this book is a sinoptic and updated re-reading of the previous publications. In the first chapter, *Dance of Concepts*, the reader finds a micro-dictionary, introducing to the terminology and the basic ideas of Taanteatro Dynamics. *Practices and Creative Processes*, the second chapter, synthesizes taanteatro training techniques and creation methods. The third chapter, titled *Trajectory*, details the artistic development of Maura Baiocchi and Taanteatro Companhia. *Gallery*, the final chapter, provides a pictorial panorama of the company's productions, staged since its foundation in 1991.

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23 Consult the section *In-between* in chapter 1.

24 Original Portuguese titles by Baiocchi, M. & Pannek, W.: *Taanteatro: teatro coreográfico de tensões*. 2007. Rio de Janeiro: Azougue editorial; *Taanteatro: rito de passagem*. 2011. São Paulo: Transcultura; *Taanteatro: MAE – Mandala de energia corporal*. 2013. São Paulo: Transcultura; *Taanteatro: [des]construção e esquizopresença*. 2016. São Paulo: Transcultura, and *Taanteatro: forças & formas*. 2018. São Paulo: Transcultura.







# DANCE OF CONCEPTS

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# Dance of Concepts<sup>25</sup>

What is a body? (...) Nothing but quanta of force in a relationship of mutual tension.

Gilles Deleuze, in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*

What is life? Nothing but an immeasurable and creative network of tensions in relentless flow.

Maura Baiocchi

## **Taanteatro**

*Tan* is a root word of Sanskrit which means force by stretching, expansion, radiance. The word *tanz* – dance in German – derives directly from this term.<sup>26</sup> Based on this, we created the word *Taanteatro* that we translate as *choreographic theater of tensions*.<sup>27</sup> It encompasses a practical and theoretical approach to the art of the performative body and to choreographic and theatrical research based on the *tension principle*.<sup>28</sup> This principle indicates that everything that exists, and everything that we create, results from the encounter of forces. Where there is no tension, there is no creativity.

25 We only believe in a concept that knows how to dance and potentiate the body creatively. Paraphrasing Nietzsche's Zarathustra, which says "I only believe in a God who knows how to dance," we find a playful and succinct way of defining the act of creating concepts in the field of the performing arts. In the course of its trajectory, Taanteatro Companhia expands and perfects its conceptual and methodological repertoire, initially conceived by Maura Baiocchi, and elaborated in cooperation with Wolfgang Pannek. The whole conceptual set of the Taanteatro approach is given a *posteriori*, based on observational and experimental data.

26 "The very word dance, in all European languages – danse, dance, tanz – derives from the root *tan*, which in Sanskrit means "tension." To dance is to experience and express with maximum intensity the relation of man to nature, to society, to the future and to his gods." Garaudy, Roger (1980). *Dançar a Vida* [Dancing your Life]. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira. P. 14.

27 The process leading to the central conceptual role of *tension* in Taanteatro is documented in Baiocchi, M. & Pannek, W. (2013), pp. 35-45

## **Tension**<sup>29</sup>

Tension (T) designates a difference of energy potentials between the forces and forms that relate, traverse and compose all singular phenomenas of life and, consequently, of performance.<sup>30</sup> The dynamic interactions articulated between forces, between forms, and between forces and forms generate new systems of tension, which reconfigure and reterritorialize the conditions, states and operational modes of the bodies, things and environments involved in these interactions. On the social and psychophysical levels of daily life, we tend to distinguish between pleasurable and desired tensions, which are perceived as positive, and unpleasant and rejected tensions, perceived as negative. Actually, and especially regarding artistic purposes, tensions should not be regarded as stable dichotomic sets of logical opposites, but as a dynamic continuum of multiple energetic relations and variations, differentiated by their degree of intensity. In any case, the personal feeling of discomfort, given by certain qualities of tension, does not constitute a valid objection to the creative relevance of the tension principle. The quality, intensity and effectiveness of transmission between the performer and the audience results from the artist's ability to perceive, understand, synthesize and modulate tensions – including verbal and non-verbal, dramaturgical and spatiotemporal tensions.

Our experiences and reflections concerning energy relationships (relations of forces) led us to distinguish three basic types of Ts: *intra*, *inter* and *infra*. *Intra-tensions* occur at the psychophysical level and manifest themselves in the quality of the performer's overall physical condition. *Inter-tensions* occur between bodies and other media and objects of any nature. *Infra-tensions* derive from the historical and supra-historical, sociocultural and political circumstances that surround a performance in the form of traditions, beliefs, values, codes, ideas, and poetic imaginary related to existential issues and

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28 Tension is considered a fundamental dimension or principle of life and creative processes in general. The *tension principle* was applied to the field of linguistics and literature by Alwin Fill. Fill, Alwin (2003). *Das Prinzip Spannung. Sprachwissenschaftliche Betrachtungen zu einem universalen Phänomen* [The principle of tension. Linguistic considerations on a universal phenomenon]. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

29 The reflection on tension and its functions for the creation and reception of works of the performing arts has an ancient history. The classical dramatic tension appears as a necessary structural phenomenon in the theory of action in Aristotle's Poetics until it dissolves, along with the disappearance of the narrative principle, in the postdramatic theater described by Hans-Thies Lehmann, in order to give place to the auratic presence of the intense body and its internal tensions. See also *Tensão e artes cênicas* [Tension in the Performing Arts] in Baiocchi, M. & Pannek, W. (2007).

## T-Typology<sup>31</sup>

**Body tensions:** Distinct qualities of intra-tension.

**Syntactical tensions:** Inter-tensions resulting from the sequence and combination of movements and performative signs among themselves, with the possibility of transgression and reinvention of dramatic structures and choreographic dynamics.

**Semantic tensions:** Tensions arising from the play of relationships of meaning between narrative signs and their sociocultural and historical references, including the presence of the body as a self-referential tension. Tensions resulting from the audience's attribution of emotion and meaning to the performative signs and events.

**Intermodal tensions:** Inter-tensions between various types of media and languages used in the performance: body, dance, music, light, projected images, text, costumes, makeup, scenery, props, etc.

**Pragmatic tensions:** Changes of level, plane, amplitude, direction, speed and intensity of body movement and action. Interruption, cut, surprise, flashback, overlaps of scenes.

## T-Strategies

**Conflict:** Unstable interaction between forces and forms through contrasts and oppositions.

**Indeterminacy:** Variety of possible solutions resulting from actions with open outcome and unresolved or even random situations and movements.

**Delay:** The holding or protraction of movement, action, and information.

**Metaphor:** The semantic contrast resulting from the transference of a linguistic expression from one referential context to another.

**Theme-rheme:** Succession and variation between known information (theme) and unknown information (rheme).

**Variation:** Change of forces, forms, velocities, rhythms, qualities and tonalities of articulation, codes and styles.

**Multiplication:** Simultaneous interaction of diverse macro- and micro-tensions.

**Asymmetry:** Imbalance of morphological and spatiotemporal proportions of dramaturgic and performative components, movements, actions and objects.

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30 *Singularities* such as people, animals, elements of nature, objects, gestures, sounds, silences, ideas, images, words, etc.

31 We created the T-Typology and T-Strategies by adapting criteria originally established by Alwin Fill in the field of linguistics research, to the field of performing arts (Fill, Alwin, 2003).

events. Any action or physical movement synthesizes and operates simultaneously intra-, inter- and infra-tensions, in a *flux of tension networks* that undergo constant transformation.

The application of the tension principle to the construction and analysis of performative creation allows the combination and interaction of energetic-affective, dynamic-structural and logical-discursive dimensions. The principle becomes even further distinguishable with the consideration of criteria such as *syntactic, semantic, intermodal* and *pragmatic tensions*; or strategies and dramaturgical techniques such as: *conflict, indeterminacy, delay, metaphor, theme-rheme sequence, variation, multiplication, and asymmetry*. When we arouse interest or excite the audience's curiosity – by choice or even without it being our intention – one or more of these dramaturgical strategies are at play.

### ***In-between*** (Ent[r]e)<sup>32</sup>

Tensions – as well as performative events – emerge from encounters between concrete or abstract forces and forms in space and time. These tensions transform, instantly, into poles of new encounters with other forces. Within this dynamic of mutual transformative implication of tensions and poles of tension, neither do bodies – constituted by the interplay of intra-, inter- and infra-tensions – remain identical but reveal themselves as transient entities and permeable media. The Portuguese neologism *ent[r]e* – here simply translated as *in-between* – refers to the following idea: bodies are processes, or passages, they are that what happens: *beings* (entes) and *betweens* (entres) at the same time. This implies that the in-between is not only a designation of the supposedly “empty” space of inter-tensions and interactions located between two or more bodies, but also a part of the constitutive process of the body itself. We explore this dynamic – the process of the entities and the entity of the processes – making the operation of Ts more fluid.

### ***Will to tension***

The tension principle involves a notion of reality constituted as a play of multiple, singular and dynamic forces and forms; as a continuous flow of intra-, inter- and infra-tensions. Once incorporated, this notion awakens in the performer the latent but ever-present disposition to interact creatively with the intensive fluc-

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32 Unfortunately, the Portuguese neologism *ent[r]e* – which is a playful contraction of *entre* (between) and *ente* (being) – has no satisfying correspondence (e.g. *betweening*) in English.



tuations of life. *Will to tension* means, therefore, the will to dive into the tension flow, to coexist and interact with its differences and intensities, and to accept the transformative potential arising from this dive. Furthermore, it implies the active affirmation of the process-character of both, the performing arts and the *performative presence*. The type or form of our experiences – feelings, gestures, dances, actions, emotions and sensations – is determined by the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the forces that produce them. This understanding invites the performer to perceive, analyze, incorporate, express and refine the relationships of energy that comprise the performative environment as a whole, including the body. Through the reiterated exercise of contact and interaction with the transformative nature of environmental forces, the artist may resist the tendency to standardize and automate codes of creativity. Porosity as well as active and receptive connectivity favor the renewal of the performer's sensibility, psychophysical tonicity, and spontaneous expressiveness and, thus, contribute to the creation of a tensive atmosphere rich in sensations without artifice. The will to tension – i.e. the will to experience, explore and express tensions – is the basis of the performer's creative power.

### ***Eternal originate***

The notion of the *eternal originate* presumes that artistic creation of any kind, as well as the artist performing the work, are open and infinite genealogical processes. This dynamic comprehension of the creative work and the creator rests on the idea that artistic work is a manifestation of life in which nature and culture combine.

The understanding of the body, and of performative action as an eternal originate, means to move like a force of nature: like an interplay of forces, one that does not recognize the authority of preconceived judgments concerning morals and beauty. This understanding demands a positive awareness of the selective dynamics of domestication according to culture, but does not presume reason as hierarchically divorced from or superior to tensional forces and their Dionysian power.

Dance, based on this notion is not the mere repetition, representation or interpretation of forms, sequences and rhythms of preconceived movements, but, above all, playful and spontaneous creation. Consequently, the act of dancing implies the absence of any separation or discrepancy between the generative process of dance as an artistic language and the moment of its performative expression. In other words, it does not allow a segmentation between performative creation (process) and the performance (product).

Therefore, presence, intensity, and meaning of a body, conceived as an eternal originate, are all direct effects of the mutual immanence of force and form, process and product, creation and work. As a creative disposition, the eternal originate presupposes an autonomous, untamed and courageous attitude, open to the experience of the diversity of the dimensions and tensions of life and an expressiveness understood as the exercise of freedom, beyond pre-established notions of what is artistically beautiful or ugly, right or wrong.

### ***Pentamusculature or Ecorporeality***

*Pentamusculature* (PEM) is a guiding concept for the construction of an *affective anatomy*. It attempts to integrate all aspects of life (and of a performance) with the performers' body and stimulates their awareness of the fluidity of body-environment relations: the body as an environment; the environment as an extension of the body; and the body as an extension of the environment. *Pentamusculature* or *Ecorporeality* is composed of five interconnected, interactive and porous musculatures – *apparent*, *internal*, *transparent*, *absolute* and *foreign*<sup>33</sup> (see box below) – acting concomitantly and in a constant process of interdependent reconfiguration.

This dissolution of clear and stable boundaries between bodies, as well as between bodies and environments, amplifies the notion of the body at the same time as it decentralizes its position in a given performative space. Consequently, the concept of pentamusculature replaces an anthropocentric vision of the performing arts – in which the human element determines the subject, the logic and the objective of a performance – by a *mise-en-scène* of tensive atmospheres.<sup>34</sup> This “dehumanization” of the performative event does not mean to diminish the emphasis on the work of the performers, but rather to lead to a re-evaluation of their role in the global context of a performance. The body becomes a compositional element of the atmosphere of tensions, equally important amongst other elements.

In accordance with their level of experience and self-recognition as (components of) pentamuscular environments, performers will prioritize the interaction between musculatures that benefit the desired tonus of the perfor-

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33 The chosen terminology does not aim to establish scientific distinctions or hierarchical divisions, it rather tries to awaken one's attention to an amplified vision of the body.

34 Consult the section *Atmospheric tension* in this chapter.

mance as a whole and of their particular bodies in relation to their work's overall tonicity. Choreographing or directing performers and performances efficiently, mainly requires awareness of the particular characteristics of these five musculatures as well as the scrutiny of the interplay of tensions, which they trigger within a specific process. Based on this comprehension, the creation of a consistent and powerful performance relies more essentially on the ecorporeal understanding of the performance, rather than on the formal organization of movements, displacement of bodies and objects, and gestures in performative space and time.

The eco-affective perception of the body underlying the concept of ecorporeality maintains close ties with Amerindian thought and praxis. It expresses the idea of human belonging to Earth, among and together with other life forms, and it emphasizes the necessity to *make bodies*. According to Amerindian anthropology<sup>35</sup>, bodies are irreducible to innate biological determinations and inherited social identities. With regard to their affective dimensions, human bodies are rather performative phenomena, whose relational awareness and potential need to be created and cultivated actively in order to realize utterly their capacities and functions.<sup>36</sup> This conceptual proximity, however, between Taanteatro and indigenous thought, does not limit the notion of ecorporeality to an ideal of harmonious integration of nature and human existence. Quite on the contrary, ecorporeality requires the exercise of our bodily faculties in interaction with all dimensions of reality – natural, social, industrial, digital – beyond dicotomies of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, truth and lie, pleasure or displeasure.

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35 Regarding Amerindian ontology and anthropology consult Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo (2014). *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Unívocal Publishing and Kopenawa, D. & Bruce, A. (2013). *The falling sky: Words of a Yanomami shaman*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

36 The intimate intertwinement of ideas and experience in Amerindian culture becomes particularly evident in the ritual process of becoming a shaman. In Taanteatro Dynamics, the practical dimensions of the decolonized performative concept of ecorporeality are explored within paratheatrical processes such as *rite of passage* and *rite of the shaman*. Consult the corresponding sections in chapter 2.

## PEM

**Apparent musculature:** the skin, hair, nails, and everything that characterizes the appearance: color, shapes, dimensions, marks, scars, tattoos, as well as costumes, make up and props in direct contact with the body.

**Internal musculature or whatever exists underneath the skin** and constitutes the body's systems. Bones, organs, muscles, ligaments, tendons, glands, veins, arteries, fibers, membranes, fluids, cells.

**Transparent musculature or the psyche and its functions,** like sensation, feeling, emotion, thought, consciousness, unconscious, subconscious, memory, intuition, imagination, dreams. The psyche affects all other corporeal systems through the nervous system.<sup>37</sup>

**Absolute musculature or object of beliefs** in a reality beyond all particularized forms of existence. In Physics, it corresponds to the concept of Energy that remains constant in the midst of all transformations of matter.

**Foreign musculature or anything that exists "outside" a body** and which can affect it, physically or virtually, through relationships with people, air, water, fire, the kingdoms of vegetables, animals and minerals, animate and inanimate objects.

We reproduce below some reflections of Baiocchi taken from interviews conducted by the Brazilian journalist Celia Musilli and the Argentinian actor and director Rodrigo Marco Del Pont.<sup>38</sup>

### **Musilli: What does *pentamusculature* mean?**

*This term designates an amplified notion of the body and means that we are not only head, trunk, and limbs or that we are made only of flesh, bones and blood, but also of mystery and of everything around us, that is, of all things*

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37 When we refer, for example, to the nervous system or the psyche as a musculature, we attempt to raise awareness of the possibility of toning mental and emotional faculties in ways comparable with the training of denser body structures.

38 Adapted excerpt from *Alquimia do Corpo* [Alchemy of the Body], interview published in Pannek, W. & Baiocchi, M. (2016, pp. 55-65).

*with which we relate to. For example, when we inhale, the air enters and circulates in our body. The air is a part of us, and we are about 70% to 75% water, we are all elements of nature and states of matter. When we see things, they enter into us through the sense of sight. The other body is me because it came into me through the look, the smell or the touch. The world enters us through the door of the senses. I understand that the body does not end here, at the skin, at its apparent border. The skin is permeable, porous and the boundaries of the expanded body are confused with the limits of life and the universe.*

*Sometimes dance can become an extremely narcissistic, limited place. But from another perspective, even Narcissus can be something expanded. For when the mythological Narcissus sees his reflection in the mirror of water surrounded by a beautiful garden, he sees not only his image but also the image of the whole reflected landscape. He mirrors himself and plunges also into the sky, the plants, finally in all the surrounding landscape.*

*Thus, pentamusculature is something wonderful and terrible at the same time. It is when we discover that the body does not finish here with the epidermis, that appearance is not everything and that anthropocentrism is a thing of the past. You, the air, the sky, the tree, that flower that dies, the bird that flies there, other people, the ideas of other people, they are all protagonists of life and nothing is disconnected. And even when there is direct contact with things or situations that we disagree with or reject, this contact will nevertheless continue to act upon us, for a short or long period, influencing our behavior, regardless of our will or awareness.*

**Del Pont: How does the typology of tensions relate to pentamusculature or ecorporeality?<sup>39</sup>**

*The tension principle is the starting point of taanteatro. This principle places all elements of the polyphony of languages that constitute the performing arts under one common denominator. Tension relates the singularities of life and of the scene – bodies, objects, movements, gestures, colors, sounds, words, ideas, etc. – articulating the processes of interaction between them. It operates as a differential of energy between these elements. It engenders the*

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39 Adapted excerpt from *Há tensão onde há vida* [There is tension where there is life], interview published in Pannek, W. & Baiocchi, M. (2016), pp. 11-29, originally published by Marcó del Pont, R. & Barrionuevo, Natalia (2014). Entrevista a Maura Baiocchi [Interview with Maura Baiocchi]. Docta, Revista de Psicanálisis, N°10, pp. 91-104.

bodies, which, in turn, generate tensions. As an energy differential, tension – or rather, the network of tensions – constitutes the performative event and life itself. Tension encompasses relations between assignifying forces, signification, and forces and significations. Its scope includes the interaction between sensibility and meaning present in the energy-sign tension and is of major importance for the intensity of communication relations in the arts. There is only tension where there is life, and vice versa.

In order to have a vital effect on the audience, the signs we use, artistic or otherwise, must be in touch with the energetic processes that engendered them. By emphasizing that the performer (or human being) is part of a complex and constantly changing universe of energy relations, Taanteatro contributes to an increasingly differentiated perception of the gradual processes that constitute reality and cannot be reduced to dualistic conceptions or anthropocentric perspectives.

Perceiving a performer or a human being from the point of view of tension, which includes assignifying and signifying processes, has led us, within the empirical path of our scenic production, to a conception of the body we call pentamusculature or ecorporality. Both terms refer to two different perspectives on the same question: how to understand the body and potentiate its presence and expressiveness? The body needs to be understood as an environment. This environment, strictly speaking, extends from the immediate space in which the body is inserted into the cosmos. Taking advantage of the astrophysical image of the constantly expanding cosmos, we can say that both the body and the cosmos are in a process of constant production and transformation. And, in this sense, the understanding of the body as an open process of creation is, fortunately, destined to mystery.

In Taanteatro, we distinguish three basic categories of tension: the psychophysical intra-tensions manifested in the state of each body, the inter-tensions between bodies and diverse media, and the infra-tensions of the socio-cultural and historical field in the form of immaterial goods constituent of customs, values, belief systems, laws, etc. Together, these three types of tension form a network that constitutes and characterizes bodies, at the same time as it is constituted and characterized by them. From the point of view of taanteatro, the quality, intensity, and effectiveness of communication depend on the ability to perceive and operate this tensive triad, corporeally and dramaturgically.

But returning to the most palpable aspects of our conception, it is possible



to say that we understand the body as an extension or an element of composition of the environment. The environment and the body are in inseparable processes of reciprocal constitution. The activities of breathing, feeding, and procreation are prime examples of this relationality that adds to each and every body, ultimately, a cosmic dimension. It “cosmonizes” the body and “humanizes” the cosmos. The notion of the body as a pentamusculature serves as a guide for the elaboration of an affective anatomy of the performer. As the term indicates, the pentamusculature is composed of five intercommunicating porous spheres, which are the apparent, internal, transparent, absolute and foreign musculatures. The apparent musculature refers to the appearance of the performer's body. The internal musculature concerns all of its subcutaneous systems. The transparent musculature covers all psychical functions. The absolute musculature is assignifying and can prescind the other four “musculatures”, as a kind of mysterious force independent of any particular being, phenomenon, or existence. Foreign musculature refers to all material and immaterial objects “external” to the body of the performers – the surrounding persons or pentamusculatures, the animal, mineral, and plant realms, the circumstances of life. In this way, the metaphorical concept of pentamusculature draws the performers' attention to an enlarged, differentiated and dynamic view of their bodies and the bodies of others. If the term pentamusculature underlines the diversity of the components of a body, the notion of ecorporeality points to the effect of integration and composition of the five musculatures.

### **Schizopresence**

The neologism *schizopresence*<sup>40</sup> corresponds to the attempt of constructing and denominating a type of non-representative and non-narrative performative presence, capable of producing signs sustained by a vital and creative tension between forces and forms. It designates an intensive disposition generated by a flow of creation that cannot be segmented, codified and regulated by instances of power external to the poetic event.

Presence is always co-presence, constant inter-tension. In performative presence, the real and the virtual blend: material, biological and social spatiotemporal conditions and facts of the bodies-environments involved in the performative event merge with immaterial and extra-quotidian dimensions

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40 Consult the philosophical framework of this concept in Pannek, W. & Baiocchi, M. (2016), pp. 193-218.

belonging to the poetic imagination of the performer and the audience. It emerges from encounters and possesses extensive and intensive dimensions. It indicates a will to tension – in other words, a willingness to activity and receptivity and to the cultivation of a dynamic state of permeability, irradiation, and interpenetration of bodies. Intensity and singularity of presence are based on the capacity to articulate the intra-, inter- and infra-tensions that constitute the performative event.

The philosopher Gilles Deleuze and his collaborator, the psychiatrist Felix Guattari, highjacked the term schizophrenia<sup>41</sup> from the realm of pathology and reversed its traditional meaning, giving it a positive interpretation as an incessant flow of creation or *desire*. In their reformulation of Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of *will to power*, Deleuze and Guattari describe desire as the ultimate ontological reality; as the very principle of creation and differentiation of reality. Desire is reality as the flow of creative forces. Desire desires (affirms, creates and repeats) always itself as the production of the new. Desire is "schizophrenic" for producing and uniting in one undivided and non-codifiable flux, two processes of change. On the one hand, *becoming*, as an intensive, continuous, absolute and living transformation; on the other hand, *history*, as an extensive, partial, analytical, relative and automatic transformation. In other words, the schizophrenia of desire consists in creating the *becoming-history tension*.

Following Deleuze and Guattari, the attempt to interrupt, organize and dominate the desiring flow by instances of power – God, moral, laws of thought, regimes of meaning, State, capitalism – transcendent to the productive process of desire fails, due to desire's creative nature, identical to ontological reality itself. The impossibility of subjecting this reality to the domain of external instances defines the revolutionary essence of desire. Consequently, schizophrenic desire does not operate in a representative manner, nor according to the image of transcendental powers, but creates a *body without image*<sup>42</sup> on the level of its productive immanence.

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41 The word *schizophrenia* comes from the ancient Greek and is composed of *s'chizein* (σχίζειν) which means split or splintered, and *phrēn* (φρήν) which means kidney or the seat of the soul. The term named a disturbance of spiritual cohesion and involves in modern psychiatry a varied spectrum of psychic symptoms.

42 The *body without image* produces reality, including its own, on the plane of *desire* immanent to the body, that is, without depending on and representing any kind of transcendent instance (God, morals, laws, axioms). Gilles Deleuze uses this expression as an equivalent to his interpretation of Artaud's *body without organs*.

The schizo-dimension adds to the performative presence a flight, not from form, but from any formal normalisation. It involves a creative rupture with any pre-existing ideological, moral, or aesthetic hypercode. Schizopresence is complementary to the notion of the eternal originate<sup>43</sup> – in so far as it neither represents nor interprets realities (be they themes, narratives, styles, people or characters), but rather, schizopresence constitutes and actualizes the real. It, therefore, contributes to the materialization of the ecorporeality and potentially expands, due to its relational, intensive and productive nature, towards the creation of a *schizoscene*.

### ***Metachoreography***

The term *metachoreography* has both a theoretical dimension and a practical dimension. In its theoretical aspect, metachoreography refers to the ontology of a choreographic or performative creation and defines, based on a genealogical investigation of the work, its elemental driving forces and ideas.

In its practical aspect, metachoreography denotes the process of incorporation of the genetic and energetic essence of the performance by the performers.<sup>44</sup> Under this second aspect, metachoreography does not pre-define specific forms, directions, rhythms or velocities of movements to be executed in the performance. It rather delimits the set and the quality of forces that trigger the performers' corporeal becoming and, consequently, engender their expressive forms. The articulated form or notation of metachoreography is the poetic imagination that overflows the transparent musculature during a creative process and operates as a subtext during performative action. As an open and dynamic device, metachoreography is the art of choreographing in-between. It is an imagetic orchestration of intra-, inter-, and infra-tensions.

A *metachoreographic poetic* synthesizes its interconnected theoretical and practical planes by understanding and incorporating the intensive ontology of expressive movement. Given that metachoreography does not impose a vocabulary of forms upon the performers, but rather invites them to contact the sphere of pre-formal intensities generating their movement and post-formal intensities generated by their movement, it is, above all, an effective antidote against the instrumentalization and objectification of body and dance.

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43 Consult the section *Eternal originate* in this chapter.

44 Consult *Mandala of body energy*, specially the section *MaRhythm*, in the chapter 2 of this book.

Here follows a small fragment of the metachoreographic notation developed by Taanteatro for *The Earth*, the first part of Euclides da Cunha's *The Sertões* staged by Teatro Oficina: *To awaken and incorporate the ocean into the body of the actors. The liquid medium and the image of the waves as source elements of movement and performative expressiveness. The ocean is often a symbol of the dynamics of life: itself place of births, transformations, and rebirths.*<sup>45</sup>

### ***Atmospheric tension***

Performing art presupposes the ability to compose body language (dance, physical action such as mime and pantomime, speech, and singing) with other mediums and languages such as, among others, space, time, light, object, costume, scenery, sound and video. The human imagination is where these inter-modal dimensions combine; but the body and its social experience is not necessarily the thematic center or the driving force of a performance.

The interactions with languages of varying complexity and dynamics modulate the fluctuations and transformations of the forces and forms that characterize a performance and generate an atmospheric tension that involves everything and everyone, although each one from its respective perspective. The involvement with the polyphonic performative environment does not originate, primarily, from rational, logical and discursive characteristics, but is triggered above all by the affective power and sensory unpredictability of this atmosphere, in combination with the existential relevance of the performance.

The spectators seek an extraordinary atmosphere, saturated with sensations, confrontations, uncertainties, and risks, which inserts them virtually in a situation of imbalance and curious suspension in the face of an enigma. This enigmatic derangement of communication structures and shapes the relationship between performance and audience. It establishes persistent productive, seductive and cognitive tensions. Generally, the mystery of the unknown and the excitement of the new both stimulate and activate the audience's interest, awakening the desire for connection and the vivid productiveness of imagination. Therefore, the staging of tension atmospheres requires the sensitive arrangement of the polyphony of manifold and hybrid forces and forms that operate reciprocally, in which no modality of artistic

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45 From 2002 to 2004, Baiocchi and Pannek collaborated as choreographers with Teatro Oficina. Exemplifications of their metachoreographic notations can be consulted in Baiocchi, M. & Pannek, W. (2007), pp. 133-141.

language has an accidental or merely ornamental character, not even the phenomena of chance.

In a vital and critical way, a *mise-en-scène* is embedded in the infra-tensions of historic reality. But, what makes up the poetic nature of a work is not a mere mimetic reflex or representation of social experience, for it constitutes and choreographs, regardless of eventual references to empiric content, its own reality, through a play of affections and ideas. It is obvious but nevertheless important to recall that there are no standard models for the staging of atmospheres of tensions, given that each work, in its time, demands a unique approach.

### ***Intense body***

The human body is a dynamic environment defined by multiple relations with other environments on Earth, within the all-encompassing Cosmos. Body-environment relations are characterized by encounter, difference and transmission of energetic and informational potentials. Therefore, the body operates as a synthesizer, catalyst and diffuser of tension currents of varying intensity. The body's unfolding towards and exchange with the "outside" (foreign musculature) implies a movement of continuous relational renewal, eventually accompanied by the transformation or destruction of existing, and the creation of new, environments. This mutual affection between bodies expresses itself, at the same time, through the intra-tensive state of each correlated body and the environmental atmosphere of tension generated by the encounter.

The tensional states of a body can be altered (in)voluntarily by directedness of perception, variations of breathing and movement, emotional and mental activity, or by environmental changes. Each tensive quality of the body has kinetic and expressive correlations that affect the states of related bodies and environments.

Each instant – state or movement – of the body is intense and significant at the same time. Frequently, this relationship becomes problematic when the forms of expression (languages, techniques) dissociate themselves from the forces that engender them or, conversely, when the spontaneous intensity of the body does not find adequate forms to optimize its expression. We understand the relationship between intensity and significance as the *energy-sign tension*.

The *choreography of the intense body* is thus an essential dimension of the eminently practical art of creating atmospheres of tension. Performers expe-

rience and operate the *tension flow* with increasingly subtle nuances, aiming to regulate microclimates and modulations of the *mise-en-scène's* rhythm<sup>46</sup> and general atmosphere, in order to affect the audience and themselves simultaneously.

To the extent that the body develops the capacity to process and coordinate the gradations and rhythmic fluctuations of its intra- and inter-tensions, it also acquires the ability to integrate all spheres of the pentamusculature within the performative action and to materialize the infra-tensive metachoreography. By consequence, choreographic sequences become increasingly powerful and precise. At the same time, incorporating new experiences, the expansion and singularization of the expressive territory and repertoire occur without losing the freshness or the novelty of the movement.

### ***Pragmatic aspects to be considered in choreography:***

- Perception of reciprocal relations between breathing and intra-tensions.
- Exploration and organization of intra-tensive qualities related to the *states of matter*<sup>47</sup>.
- Perception of the spatiotemporal orientation under the effect of intra- and inter-tensive states.
- Gradual transition of continuous tension flow (from hypertension to loosening, and vice-versa).
- Sudden transition between diverse qualities of intra- and inter-tensions.
- Variation of speed of movement observing the corresponding tensions.

### ***Tension Dynamics***

We distinguish three basic dynamics of tension that help to analyze and guide the creation of performative dramaturgy. These prove to be useful, not only from the points of view of the performer and the director but also from the perspective of the audience. The defining criteria of these tension dynamics – bursting, loosening and in-between – coexist and refer to the performative dramaturgy in general, and to the intra- and inter-tensive dramaturgy of the performer's body in particular.

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<sup>46</sup> *Rhythm*, according to Taanteatro Dynamics, designates not only relations of time units of a *mise-en-scène*, but refers also to the interplay of spatial relations (distances, displacements) and material units (objects, beings, sounds, lights, projections), in other words, to everything that integrates the performative experience and that can be perceived by the senses.

<sup>47</sup> Concerning the *states of matter* consult the section *Mandala of body energy* in chapter 2.





*Dynamic of bursting:* the tension between forces tends towards maximum conflict, causes stridency and provokes the rupture of their relations.

*Dynamic of loosening:* the tension between forces tends to the absence of conflict and causes the annulment of mutual resonance.

*Dynamic of in-between:* the tension flows between the extremes of bursting and loosening, exploring a vast range of harmonious or dissonant gradations of intra-, inter-, and infra-tensions.

Loosening and bursting tend towards critical points of the tension continuum and the intensity scale. Extreme reduction or increase of force relations leads ultimately to the absence of tension and resonance. Yet both can play an important dramaturgical role. The dynamics of the in-between does not point to a harmonious ideal, but to the exploration, creation, and modulation of a diversity of tensions in frontier zones of the performer's and the audience's experience.



# PRACTICES AND CREATIVE PROCESSES

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• TRANS

# Mandala of body energy

*Mandala of body energy* (MBE)<sup>48</sup> is a central practice of Taanteatro Dynamics. It synthesizes the attempt to experience, build and conduct an unstandardized and non-instrumentalized body-dance. A *desiring*<sup>49</sup> body striving for communication and freedom, capable of expressing its potency through a unique poetic beyond consecrated forms, styles or aesthetic codes. In addition to the understanding and incorporation of the pentamuscular state and of schizopresence, MBE aims to trigger unprecedented creative processes by awakening an extra-quotidian kinetic imagination.

Conceived as a meditative-creative dance, MBE proposes a cyclical dynamism which alternates between moments of formal rigor and free experimentation. The conscious experience of the body is stimulated through exercises of relaxation, breathing, stretching, twisting. [Dis]equilibrium, visualization<sup>50</sup>, vocalization and improvisation increase the body's ability to spontaneously modulate the flows and fluctuations of energy from the pentamusculature, in addition to benefitting the creation of radical dramaturgies and choreographies.

MBE explores the interaction of the five spheres of the pentamuscular body and transports the performer on a voyage of discovery of moods, affections and distinct levels of creative order and disorder. It provides an improvement of integration and agency of diverse bodily energies and faculties, thereby increasing the performer's psychophysical disposition, self-confidence, and self-perception.

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48 *Mandala of body energy* (MBE) is the English adaptation of the Portuguese expression *Mandala de energia corporal* (MAE).

49 *Desiring* in the Deleuzian sense. Consult *Schizopresence* in chapter 1.

50 In MBE, *visualization* relates to the ability to generate mental images.

## **Mandala**

Originating from Sanskrit, the word *mandala* is masculine and means circle.<sup>51</sup> It denotes the movement of cyclic and infinite time, of life and death. As a moving image, the mandala shows the macro and the microcosmos around a central point representing the origin of life. This center – a place of intersection of forces and creative principles – is the dynamic focus from which the energies of life emanate towards multiplicity, signaling the possibility of change. The dynamism between center and circumference is expressed by the dynamic alchemist principle: the center is everywhere, and the periphery does not exist.<sup>52</sup> Various cultures and traditions use pictorial mandalas as vehicles of spiritual guidance, contemplation and initiatory practices. Like the pictorial mandalas, MBE is a meditative-creative process, however with the important difference that theme, tools and materials are confused and manifest at the same time in the body-process of creation.

### **What is energy?** <sup>53</sup>

In Physics, *energy* is defined as a quantitative property of matter that performs *work* when transferred (in the form of *heat*) from one object to another. But the physical definition is rather abstract, and does not provide us with a very tangible idea of the meaning of energy.<sup>54</sup> However, since Aristotle this concept has been established and proven useful in scientific and everyday thinking to explain movement in nature. According to contemporary physics, the entire observable universe is virtually equivalent to energy.<sup>55</sup> As a physical constant, energy can neither be created, nor destroyed, but only

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51 According to Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, “in the universal symbology, the circle is the cosmos in its totality. The square is the Earth or the world built by men. The center of the cosmic mandala is the abode of divinity: the atom that makes up the material essence of man.” Chevalier, J. & Gheerbrant, A. (1996). *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*. London: Penguin Books.

52 According to texts of the Greek hermetic tradition (between 100 and 300 AD) attributed to the alchemist Hermes Trismegistus, “God is an infinite sphere, the center of which is everywhere, the circumference nowhere.” Roo, Alexander (1997). *Alquimia & Misticismo – O Museu Hermético*. Köln: Taschen.

53 Consult the topic *Energy* in Baiocchi, M. & Pannek, W. (2013), pp. 48-59.

54 Consult *The Feynman Lectures on Physics*. [http://www.feynmanlectures.caltech.edu/\\_04.html](http://www.feynmanlectures.caltech.edu/_04.html).

55 All ordinary matter has energy equivalent to its amount of mass (mass-energy equivalence), that is about 4% of the energy of the observable universe. The remaining energy is attributed to *dark matter* (23%) and *dark energy* (73%).

transformed and transferred. In its multiple forms, energy generates change.<sup>56</sup> All forms of life are constituted by and depend on energy. Life itself is transformation of energy, combustion<sup>57</sup> and the human body, hence, a receiver, converter and diffuser of energies.

MBE is, therefore, designed to activate and amplify the fundamental disposition of the body: its permeability, connectivity and radiation. By releasing, experiencing and coordinating forces of physical and symbolic transformation the mandala of body energy enhances the performer's pentamusculature and creative capacity. And, given the correlation between the concepts of energy and absolute musculature<sup>58</sup>, it also allows the interaction with dimensions of reality that otherwise remain seemingly imponderable.

### ***Visible and invisible anatomy***

The conception of MBE occurred in an intuitive, experimental and gradual way, fomented by experiences in different areas of the performing arts.<sup>59</sup> The subsequent selective and *anthropophagic*<sup>60</sup> integration of ancestral knowledge and corporeal procedures related to the agency of our subtle or energetic anatomy<sup>61</sup> has added dimensions receptive to Western scientific knowledge of human anatomy, beyond enriching the multicultural spectrum of the practice. In relation to the extraordinary Hindu-Tibetan legacy, MBE refers to the "invisible organs" integrated in the areas of bioenergy or *prana*<sup>62</sup> circulation, located along the nervous system – vortices and channels – and out-

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56 Physics distinguishes electrical, kinetic, potential, chemical and thermal energies, among others.

57 Cell respiration in organisms is technically equivalent to the energetic process of combustion.

58 Consult *Pentamusculature* in chapter 1.

59 The detailed description of this conceptual process can be found in Baiocchi & Pannek (2013), pp. 33-45.

60 In this context *anthropophagic* refers to the concept of *anthropophagy* conceived by the Brazilian modernist poet Oswald De Andrade. In his *Anthropophagic Manifesto* (1928), De Andrade defended the idea of post-colonial cultural independence through a magical lifestyle of indigenous inspiration and based on *cannibalizing* Western culture.

61 Consult the section *Anatomia Energética* [Energetic Anatomy] in Baiocchi & Pannek (2013), pp. 50-54.

62 *Prana* is a word from Sanskrit. It designates the vital energy extracted from sunlight, water, earth, food, and air.

side the body (fields)<sup>63</sup>. Together, they form rivers of subtle energy which regulate the body and its contact with the environment. The Tupi-Guarani and the Hindu-Tibetan system of energy anatomy are similar to each other, although they belong to geographically distant cultures.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Dramaturgy***

MBE is composed of seven successive dances – *SleepingAwakening*, *Zeroing*, *BowArrowTarget*, *Heart*, *Serpent*, *States of Matter*, and *MaRhythm* – distributed in three phases and outlined below.

The following notions concerning the corporeal sphere are intrinsic to all stages of this practice: the body consists of 70-75% water; it constantly produces fields of electromagnetic forces and information and depends on water and heat to survive; its nature cannot be reduced to a unit isolated or disconnected from life as a whole or from the universe; bodies, dances and choreographies are forms of energy – dynamic and transient.

The dynamic of MBE has similarities with the dramaturgy of a rite of passage that puts into question the very human condition. The three phases of MBE correspond to the three *metamorphoses of the spirit* conceived by Friedrich Nietzsche in *Thus spoke Zarathustra*: “Of three metamorphoses of the spirit I tell you: how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally, a child.”<sup>65</sup>

Phase 1 – *SleepingAwakening*, *Zeroing*, *BowArrowTarget* - this phase relaxes, invigorates and prepares the body through exercises that vary breathing modes and qualities of both predetermined and spontaneous movements.

Phase 2 – *Heart*, *Serpent*, *States of Matter* – this phase stimulates and toni-

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63 MBE works with the seven *angá-mirins* (little souls) of the Amerindian Tupi-Guarani protocol corresponding to the seven main *chakras* of the Hindu-Tibetan subtle anatomy system - five of them situated along the spine and two on the head. The Sanskrit word *chakra* means wheel, center, disk, vortex (whirlpool). The Sanskrit word for channels is *nadis* – interconnecting currents between *chakras* through which energy flows. Cells, tissues, organs, and the body as a whole generate electromagnetic fields. In addition, the subtle anatomy considers the existence of a field of energetic irradiation (aura) that surrounds the whole body.

64 See Jecupé, Kaka Wera (1998). *A Terra dos Mil Povos* [The Land of a Thousand Peoples]. São Paulo: Editora Fundação Peirópolis. According to Jecupé, the Tupinambá and Tupi-Guarani peoples have developed a refined technique of “tuning the physical body with the mind and spirit” (p. 24) by vibrating specific sounds or tones in certain regions of the body.

65 Nietzsche, Friedrich (1995). *Thus spoke Zarathustra*. New York: The Modern Library.



fies the transparent musculature, including imagination and emotion. It explores gradations varying from micro to macro-intra-tensions, strengthens the breath and vocal apparatus through free movements based on a guiding script, yet, it remains open to creativity.

Phase 3 – *MaRythm* – this phase is dedicated to diving into energy flows and fluctuations based on spontaneous creative impulses, and to the playful exploration of performative spacetime.

The dramaturgy of MBE engenders a cyclical-initiatory transformation: from Zeroing to *MaRythm* to Zeroing. That is, from a state of mere potentiality to a state of creative play and expression, mobilized by multiple desires, moods, forms and intensities and back again to a new state of potentiality. The transitions between all dances are facilitated by a return to the *Zero Non-Position (Z)*. This return helps to conclude the enduring dance and adds new psychophysical dimensions and energetic-creative characteristics to what follows. Through the course of the seven dances, the integration between spontaneous and impulsive action, thought, imagination, feeling, emotion, sensation and perception is gradually and continuously refined. During the interactive process between these faculties, the performers move from a state of complete relaxation to a period of awakening and from there to a phase of radical and unrestricted activation of their expressive powers culminating in a continuous creative flow. The mandala of body energy includes the experience and mediation of both the contemplative emptying and the conscious activation of drives and desires of the body. It is designed to prepare the practitioners for performative creation by mobilizing and strengthening their pentamuscular presence.

MBE can be experienced individually, in pairs, or collectively.<sup>66</sup> It has a variable duration between 90 and 120 minutes and is most effective when executed from start to finish, without interruption. However, it can be altered according to the needs and goals of the practitioners. Throughout MBE, the practitioners experience voluntary breathing movements – *lion breathing, sonorous transitional breathing, sonorous positional breathing, fire breathing, dog breathing, bhastrik breathing, and kundalini*<sup>67</sup> *breathing*

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66 The illustrated step-by-step instructions for MBE can be found in <http://www.taanteatro.com/english/publications/mbe-step-by-step-2.html>

67 From Sanskrit, kundal = that which is coiled. According to scholars of Tantra Yoga and Kundalini Yoga, it is a kind of nuclear telluric energy, igneous and chthonic, asleep at the base of the serpent-shaped spine and coiled in three turns.



– which activate and regulate the energy anatomy.<sup>68</sup> In the first and second phases of MBE, there are suggestions concerning the focus accompanying each movement or posture. The eight basic foci suggested for the purpose of the exercise are: *intimate direct*, *intimate indirect*, *direct open*, *indirect open*, *direct expanded*, *indirect expanded*, *direct ultra-expanded*, and *indirect ultra-expanded*. It is possible to work with more than one focus at the same time.

*Focus* designates the mental-visual attention of the body. It results from a specific quality of integration of intra-, inter- and infra-tensions, manifests how the forces and forms at play are synthesized by the performer and implies a particular kind of psychophysical directedness at each given moment of the performance. Consequently, the *dance of foci* – including the transitions between different qualities of directedness – is intrinsic to a choreography of tensions. By defining and modulating the formal expression of performative energies, the dance of foci intensifies and differentiates the performer's presence and score. For this reason, it has direct sensory effects on the perception of the audience.

Every MBE phase contains elements regarding sonorities and music. The first two phases can be performed in silence or accompanied by less invasive instrumental music. In the *Serpent*, music can be suppressed in favor of vocal sounds performed by the practitioners. In *MaRythm*, music and silence alternate so that spontaneous vocal compositions might appear.

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68 These breathing movements expand the spaces in the body and reduce mental anxiety and uncomfortable pain in joints, muscles, nerves and ligaments. They also tone the thoracic and pelvic diaphragms, muscles important for vocalization.

## Phase 1

### 1st Dance – SleepingAwakening

Approximate duration: 15 minutes

An invitation to relaxation in order to free the practitioners of their 'ten thousand psychophysical questions'. It is the moment of preparation of PEM that foregrounds the invigorating and creative journey of MBE. *Sleeping*: Forgetting and abandoning oneself are states of deep relaxation and sleep, which allow the performer to go through moments of germination and regeneration of body and mind in an uncomplicated and effective way, preparing them for new creative experiences, free from fatigue and laziness. *Awakening*: A slow dance that explores spontaneous movements of torsion, flexion and extension of the joints (from the smaller ones like fingers, wrists, ankles, jaws, to the bigger ones like knees, hips, scapula, waist, etc.), of the spine and the muscles in general. Special attention is given to kundalini breathing, toning and reconditioning of the intra-thoracic and intra-abdominal viscera (heart, lungs, liver, stomach, colon, etc.), muscles and vascular lymphatic and blood systems, affecting the brain and nervous system and benefiting the health of the spine.





## 2nd Dance – Zeroing

Approximate duration: 7 minutes.

The second dance consists of performing the Zero Non-Position or Z. It includes the lion breathing, the practice of the *third eye*<sup>69</sup> and the awareness of the corporeal motor center<sup>70</sup> located in the region of the navel, which functions as a bioenergy generator. In symbolic terms, *zero* indicates complete potentiality, the interval preceding cyclical renewal. In *Zeroing*, the practitioners calm their mind and establish an energetic circuit between the body (psychosomatic environment) and the surrounding spacetime. In symbiosis with assignifying energy flows, they experience a state of condensation of expressive potentialities prior to their manifestation. In other words, a non-referential state, a *tabula rasa* or a body without image.

## 3rd Dance – BowArrowTarget

Approximate duration: 10 minutes

This dance works flexibility, strength, balance, endurance, focus and breathing, and emphasizes movements of expansion, contraction and torsion. It expands the practitioner's connection with the foreign musculature through the establishment of multi-directional vectors that relate the body to the earth, the sky, the horizon, and the animate and/or inanimate objects of the environment. It explores centrifugal and centripetal movements starting from the corporeal motor center and accompanied by intense breathing. The spinal "is" the bow, the arms and hands "are" the arrows, and the target "is" either a real and concrete or an abstract and virtual object.

Within the rich symbolism of the bow and the arrow, we highlight the denotations of love and energizing vital tension from where desires blossom. The figure of the archer denotes the power of the warrior whose arrow aims at a target, that is, at an actualized version of oneself. The arrow therefore symbolizes the overpassing of identity and a projection towards new accomplishments. Nietzsche compares the philosopher to an arrow thrown randomly in hope to achieve unknown and challenging dimensions. In the discourse of his Zarathustra, the image of the arrow appears symbolizing the flight of the desire to surpass the reactive condition of the present human being in order to become the *Übermensch*<sup>71</sup>.

## Phase 2

### 4th Dance – Heart

Approximate duration: 10 minutes

In symbolic terms, the heart is the solar *royal organ*, the throne of the divine, the *home of the spirit*, and the matrix of contemplation and understanding. As “the living centre of the human being” it corresponds to the “heart of the world.”<sup>72</sup> Its beats or double movement – systole and diastole – refer to the expansion and reabsorption of the universe and the cycle of times. *Heart* is a visualizing-massaging dance, accompanied by intense activity of transparent musculature. It puts the practitioners in contact with the realm of their affectivity and intuition. It is easy and natural to perceive the cardiac plexus as the emotional center of the body. By “manipulating” the heart, the thymus

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69 The *third eye* indicates a position of the eyes in which the orbits converge to the point between the eyebrows. According to the bioenergetic system of the Tubuguaçu indigenous people, the third eye corresponds to the sacred grotto of being where the tone of the vowel E is located. In Hindu tradition, the practice of the third eye activates the understanding of the third dimension of forms (depth) and enables the unitive perception of opposites. The right eye corresponds to male energy and the left eye corresponds to female energy. The union of both – third vision – symbolizes the externalization of the “eye of the heart.” In Tao, this point is the “yin-yang”, corresponding to the pituitary gland, which is the main endocrine control gland; it regulates growth, genital, adrenal, and thyroid functions.

70 In Tantra Yoga this motor center is considered as “first consciousness.” For practitioners of Chi kung, a Chinese technique combining movement and breath, it is the “first energy center” or the “root of the body” (*tan-tien* or *dantian*). In the Tao, the navel is the point where the *vital energy* – *chi* or *ki* – originates.

71 The *Übermensch* (overman or trans-man) is a concept of Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy and expresses the idea of a new, post-historical form of human being, defined by an entirely active, affirmative and creative way of life.

72 Chevalier, J. & Gheerbrant, A. (1996), p. 479.



gland, and the entire cardiac plexus,<sup>73</sup> the hands become surprising donors, recipients, and guides of energy currents. Behaving as if they have eyes, the hands contemplate and massage the parts of the body they contact. They form personal *mudras*<sup>74</sup> spontaneous manual gestures, without preconceived artifice, which contain and reveal states of consciousness and deep humors, and thus allow the practitioners to perceive themselves completely in every small movement of the hands.

### 5th Dance – Serpent

Approximate duration: 20 minutes.

In addition to the image of the kundalini serpent, this dance employs the image of Ouroboros, the serpent that swallows its own tail, symbolizing the process of perpetual transmutation between death and life and the metamorphic process of ideas of movement, continuity, self-fertilization and *eternal return*.<sup>75</sup>

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73 From Greek, *thýmos* means vital energy. Tantra Yoga considers the existence of seven hearts or seven cardiac chakras. The cardiac plexus or *anáhata chakra* is the seat of vital air or prana, its seed sound (mantra) is *yam* and its color, green.

74 From Sanskrit, *mud* = charm, magic, satisfaction; *rati* = give, donate. According to Pedro Kupfer's *Yoga Dictionary*, in Hinduism and the tradition of tantric yoga "*mudras* are symbolic gestures that seek the realization of certain states of consciousness through the symbology and the messages contained in certain archetypal gestures." But not only the peoples of India created dances with symbolic gestures. Almost all Eastern cultures have developed dances rich in manual gestures with a symbolic attitude. For example, traditional dances from Bali, Japan, China, Korea, etc. The notions and practices *personal mudra* and *spontaneous mudra* were created in the context of the Taantatro research.

75 Consult *Ouroboros* and its relation to the *eternal return* in Chevalier, J. & Gheerbrant, A. (1996), p. 728-729.

76 "The deepest thing in man is the skin" is a famous quote of the French poet Paul Valéry (1871-1945).

Through the association of oxygenation, flexibilization, vocalization and visualization practices this dance works with greater emphasis on the respiratory, vocal, nervous, endocrine and locomotor systems. Respiratory work, through vocalizations of mantras and other forms of breathing, in addition to exercising the vocal tract, facilitates postures and movements, and activates vibrational patterns that contribute to the transit of energy in PEM. In the *Serpent* the hands also play an important part. They reinforce the circulation of luminous-sonorous energy through spontaneous personal mudras. The skin, the largest organ of the body, is invigorated by means of a simple but specific self-massage.<sup>76</sup>

The *Serpent* begins in upright position (vertical plane), emphasizing the work of the transparent and internal muscles. Through visualization, a luminous-sonorous self-massage of ascending trajectory, from the base of the column to the top of the head<sup>77</sup>, is undertaken inside the body. Spontaneous mudras performed around the corporeal surface conduct the irradiation of luminous-sonorous energy throughout the body, toning the internal musculature (glands<sup>78</sup>, organs, skeleton, etc.). The execution of this trajectory along the spine makes use of the notion of the seven angá-mirins or main chakras.

The second part of the dance is mainly performed on low and medium planes. It integrates simple practices of self-massage using traditional yoga poses and invented postures accompanied by respiratory movements which serve to strengthen the abdominal region, help to loosen muscles and widen the spaces of the joints and organs, relieving eventual discom-

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77 The ascendent trajectory of energy along the column refers both to the symbol of Western medicine, the *Caduceus* of Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine, and the pictorial representation of the energetic anatomy of Kundalini Yoga, in which the stick represents the main channel of ascension of kundalini energy. The *Caduceus* of Asclepius, a crude stick with a serpent wrapped around it, should not be confused with the symbol of Hermes, the messenger god of the Olympus, which is the caduceus with two serpents representing antagonistic forces, also present in the spiritual universe of Candomblé, in which the stick corresponds to the axis of the world, and its two serpents allude to the orisha *Oshunmare*, representing at the same time the male and the female principle.

78 The systems – endocrine, exocrine, nervous, circulatory, motor, reproductive, digestive and excretory – make up our fascinating and complex anatomo-physiological network. Each of these systems itself also constitutes a network. The endocrine system, responsible for the production of hormones, supplies our cells with electrochemical energy. Thanks to this hormonal network, our heart beats, blood runs in our veins and arteries, we feel hunger, sleep, wake up, our arteries burn, we fall in love, we procreate. The exocrine system regulates the external secretion glands: sweat, sebaceous, mammary, lacrimal, gastric and enteric.



forts, and increasing the limits of the body as well as the ability to sustain the postures. The dance comprises a set of fourteen poses that can be substituted by simpler or more complex ones, according to the elasticity and strength of each practitioner.<sup>79</sup> Another option is to halve the number of poses, holding each of them for two to three minutes.

### **6th Dance – States of Matter**

Approximate duration: 15 minutes

The sixth dance provides a simultaneously subtle and radical transfiguration of the body by applying three of the observable states of matter – solid, liquid, gaseous – to the exploration of levels, intensities and transitions of a wide range of micro-intra-tensions. The elements (and their qualities) related to these states and to be explored during the process are as follows: *Air*: gaseous, light, fluid, undulating. *Water*: liquid, soft, fluid, undulating, denser than air. *Mud*: mixture of liquid with solid, thick, slow. *Stone*: solid, rigid, fixed, very slow. *Fire*: gaseous, igneous, luminous, fast, undulating, hot and, at the same time, fragmented and continuous.

Starting from Z, and without leaving their places in the space, the practitioners incorporate the element Air by establishing all over their bodies<sup>80</sup> a degree of muscular contraction or relaxation that corresponds to the element's characteristics. Once the intra-tension is globally established, the practitioners perform continuous hori-



zontal wave movements with their arms, back and forth around their own body axis. *States of matter* begins with the element of Air and transforms from this gaseous state into the element of Water. The liquid state gradually solidifies, passing through Mud, and turns into the element of Stone. This solid state densifies up to a point of abrupt explosion, becoming Fire. At the moment of this final transformation the practitioners are free to leave their places and to explore the states of igneous gas moving freely in the space. Finally, they return to their starting point, transforming their intra-tensions again into Air. Each state of matter acts as the “principle of a good conductor”<sup>81</sup> to another kinetic-corporeal state or reality. During this metamorphic process of gradual solidification and final explosion the practitioners experience a process of pentamuscular integration.



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79 The beginner, due to the difficulty of performing a given pose, can replace or adapt it under the guidance of a trained instructor.

80 The practitioners learn to perceive, establish, integrate and transform qualities of intra-tensions correlative to the elements simultaneously in all parts of their bodies.

81 The philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1984-1961) said that the elements – fire, earth, air, water – in their “special dynamism” function as the “hormones of imagination” and allow us “to dream matter” and to “materialize the imagination.” Bachelard, Gaston (2011). *Air and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Movement*. Dallas Institute Publications.

82 *MaRythm* is a free adaptation of the Portuguese neologism *MarRitmo* (mar = ocean, ritmo = rythm), denoting the rhythm of the ocean. We chose this term instead of *SeaRythm* or *OceanRythm* because of its proximity with the original and a certain paronomasia in relation to *maritime*.



### Phase 3

#### 7th Dance – MaRhythm<sup>82</sup>

Approximate duration: 20 minutes

This last dance is a dive into movements and gestures rich in “the seriousness you had while playing as a child.”<sup>83</sup> It proposes to release and surrender to the play of currents of tensions starting from the dance of the *Wave*, which is a warm-up for submerging into the unknown. After transiting through the diversity of states, sensations, perceptions, tensions and movements proper to each of the prior dances, the practitioners now experience the integration of their psychological awareness in a process of creation of corporeal landscapes in which multiple sensory, imaginary and kinetic currents converge. The MaRhythm proposes the exploration of the environment and the rhythmic variations of the ocean<sup>84</sup>, symbol of the untamed polymorphic forces, passions and transfigurations connecting life and death.

In this dance, while following their energetic impulses without any censorship, the practitioners incorporate a spontaneous creative process of “dehumanization” – beyond the *all too human*<sup>85</sup> – that enriches their

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83 Excerpt from aphorism 94 of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a philosophy of the future*.



body's performative presence. MaRythm aims at overcoming deeply codified languages – mime, theatrical pantomime, dance styles – and quotidian forms of social expression imprinted on the performer. Transformed and renewed by completing the 3rd and last phase of MBE, the practitioners 'return to the surface' and reintegrate by performing Z, followed by a chakra reordination through mantra vocalizations. Finally, the practitioner performs the *silence position* which consists in closing the eyes and normalizing the breathing while posing one hand on the belly and the other one on the heart.

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84 The ocean is a traditional symbol of chaos and primordial creative power. As a metaphor for the dynamism of nonhuman energies endowed with intensities and expressions beyond value judgments and moral limitations, it is present in the physiology of Claude Bernard, who sees the human existence defined by an "inner sea" of "fluids that flow through the body"; in Nietzsche's philosophy, which compares the world to a monstrous and savage "sea of forces"; and in Sigmund Freud's psychology, which calls the primary sense of connection with the universe the *oceanic feeling*. The MaRythm is here presented in its basic version, with reference to the metaphor of the ocean itself. However, the referential image may change according to the performative purpose – for example, from the ocean to the jungle, the city, or the desert, or even to the exploratory exercise of specific corporeal intra-tensions without any imagetic reference. Thus, the MaRythm gains unprecedented energetic and formal characteristics stemming from the thematic stimulus that powers the choreographic or performative creation.

85 Nietzsche's expression *all too human* criticizes standardized and moralized "habitual valuations" and "valued habits" of human thought and behavior. Consult Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*



• Desert...

# [De]construction of performance

The exploration of the performers' own biography is an important and effective stimulus for the development of their creative autonomy. Through the investigation of the forces and forms that permeate their psyche and the biographical narratives that constitute their self-image, performers undergo a transforming effervescence that singularizes and strengthens their artistic production. Their performative presence becomes more immediate and vigorous in interaction with the diversity of dimensions of a performative event that they themselves conceive and experience, not only as subject, but also as the object of their own work.

Creating on the basis of subjective experience, with one's body as the substrata of artistic work, is in no way limited to supposedly minor issues related to "one's own navel."<sup>86</sup> Known since antiquity and consolidated during the Renaissance, the *self-portrait* became an important and recurrent modality of the visual arts, validated by some of the major talents in the history of painting<sup>87</sup> whose works demonstrate impressively, that a portray of an individual human face can synthesize the existential characteristics and the social atmosphere of an entire cultural period. One of the reasons for this

<sup>86</sup> As a universal symbol, the *navel* denotes the center of the world and of the human microcosm, the point of origin of transformative energies and the pathway of communication between the three traditional levels of existence: the surface of the earth, the underworld and the heavens.

<sup>87</sup> Among the historically renowned artists who painted self-portraits are Van Eyck, Da Vinci, Dürer, Grünewald, Breugel, El Greco, Velázquez, Rembrandt, Goya, Manet, Cezanne, Monet, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Munch, Barlach, Malevich, Derain, Picasso, Modigliani, Beckmann, Dix, Kahlo, to name a few.

iconic power of self-portraits is the fact that a body never comes alone. Individuals are constituted in, by and as multiplicities. The fact that nature and culture, history and biography, collective and subjective dynamics intersect in each body demonstrates the political nature even of a self-portrait. It therefore depends on each performer to come up with artistically fertile, unusual yet meaningful approaches that reveal how each navel's singularity connects to the great social narratives (real or archetypal), and vice versa.

In the early 1990s, Maura Baiocchi started to outline a creative process designed to nurture the performer's work through a, so to speak, "archaeological" excavation of their personal myths, called *[de]construction of performance based on [trans]personal mythology* (DEP). While tracing intrinsic and distinctive dimensions of each performer, this new approach expands unique individual experience by capturing intersubjective aspects of the performer's biography, sociocultural life and even trans-historical experience.

This endeavor of composing a performance impelled by astounding, vibrating and critical correspondences between unsuspected layers of intimacy and cultural and political formations that define the social exterior inhabited by the individuals/performers, activate physical, emotional, and spiritual faculties, in a way that dilutes habitual boundaries between consciousness and the unconscious, and calls into question notions of identity. It is not by chance that the [de]construction announces, already in its name, a complete program of theoretical-practical work, which introduces the performers to the main concepts and practices of Taanteatro, enabling their poetic reverie to become an artistic work.<sup>88</sup>

DEP only achieves its purpose in contact with an audience, in the performative communication with a diversified community of people that had no direct involvement with the creative process. At each presentation, the public reception and response, in its plurality of perspectives, renews the performers' understanding of their work. The presentation of the performance reiterates, in principle infinitively, the game of [de]construction.

As a method, the [de]construction can be divided into five, partly concomitant, operational phases: 1) survey and analysis of personal mythology, 2)

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88 An exemplary process of [de]construction is documented in Pannek, W. & Baiocchi, M. (2016), pp. 75-141. The same book discusses the application of DEP in collective works (pp. 145-149).

selection and transpersonalization of the theme/subject, 3) scripting and rehearsing, 4) presentation, and 5) critical analysis and improvement of the performance.

Before examining its organizational arrangement in detail, it seems convenient to explain the sense in which Taanteatro uses the terms performance, [de]construction, and [trans]personal mythology.

### ***Performance***

In Taanteatro Dynamics, the term *performance* has a broad and fluid meaning. It covers works in the field of the performing arts open to any type of fusion and innovation of languages. Hence, performers are persons who conceive and execute performative actions, that is, who act and communicate something through their presence and the artistic languages of their bodies.

We encourage performers to question preexisting forms, codes and styles of performance in order to assist their attempt of developing and projecting a unique language that corresponds to the specific requirements of their processes of artistic production. In this symbiotic interaction between creation and critique, the performers consider the energetic particularities of their bodies, of their theme and of the sociocultural moment in which the work occurs, in order to optimize the quality of the performance and their performative presence and action.

### ***[Trans]personal Mythology***

The expression *[trans]personal mythology* is a neologism blending the terms personal mythology<sup>89</sup> and transpersonal psychology<sup>90</sup>. In spite of the fact that

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89 The term *personal mythology* was introduced in 1956 by the Austrian historian of culture and psychoanalyst Ernst Kris in *The Personal Myth, a Problem in Psychoanalytic Technique*. In 1988, the psychologists David Feinstein and Stanley Krippner published the book *Personal Mythology*. According to Krippner, “we use our stories as personal myths” (Krippner, *The Interior Dialogue, Transitions*, 2009, 1, pp. 4-7). A personal myth is influenced by cultural, institutional, ethnic, and family myths, and “can be thought of as a cognitive structure – a pattern of thinking and feeling that gives meaning to the past, defines the present, and provides direction for the future. It serves the functions of explaining, guiding, and sacralizing experience for the individual in a manner that is analogous to the way cultural myths once served those functions for a society.” Krippner, Stanley (1986). *Dreams and the Development of a Personal Mythology* in *The Journal of Mind and Behavior*. Vol. 7, pp. 449-461.

these terms are derived from the domain of psychology – which studies, in the case of personal mythology, the structuring function of personal narratives for the psyche and, in the case of transpersonal psychology, liminal states of consciousness – in Taanteatro, [trans]personal mythology has an exclusively artistic function.

From a practical point of view, creating from [trans]personal mythology indicates *where* and *how* performers can find the theme and dramaturgical elements of their performance and designates a work process divided into two phases. In the first phase, the performers raise their personal mythology, that is, the real and/or oneiric narratives and images that structure their biography, experience and world view. In the second phase, they transcend the subjective dimensions of personal mythology, relating it to symbolic, archetypal, literary, sociocultural, and political collective realities.

In surveying their personal mythology – through a questionnaire and in dialogue with an advisor – the performers become aware of factors that delimit their individual existence: biographical, family and ancestral data, cultural and ideological influences, desires, preferences and identifications, and key events that determine their self-image, social situation and attitude towards life. The collected data generate and delineate a kind of psychophysical landscape, populated by images, narrative fragments, representations that together make up the personal mythology of the performers. It is crucial to consider that this process is not simply a collection, survey and analysis of preexisting personal information to be organized in a biographical archive. It is not only the recognition and interpretation of a previous life based on available memories, but an active construction of memory, a dynamic and critical mapping that differentiates and questions notions and codes of identity. Performative creation from [trans]personal mythology does not mystify nor does it objectify to represent or reaffirm the performer's recollections.

The second phase, or transpersonalization, consists precisely in overcoming the idiosyncrasies and limitations of the personal narrative. This transforma-

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90 *Transpersonal psychology* had William James and Carl G. Jung among its theoretical forerunners and emerged in the 1960s in the United States, formulated by psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, Stanislav Grof, and Anthony Sutich, with the purpose of investigating “experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos.” [Walsh, R., and Vaughan, F. (1993). On transpersonal definitions. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 25 (2), pp. 199-207.



tion occurs in several ways: the performer's reflection on their mythology, the dialogue with their advisor and colleagues, and the study of empirical, theoretical and fictional references. Taking a certain distance, the performers can reshape their mythology and return to it with greater capacity for intervention, associating its particular tensions with current or atemporal problems that transfigure, amplify and diversify the referential scope of their work. Advancing in the creative process, dramaturgical, technical, and organizational demands play an increasing role for transpersonalization. Coordination and direction of all aspects of the staging aim at the artistic-economic excellence of the performance, that is, the greatest intensity of sensation in combination with a minimum of symbolic redundancy.

### ***[De]construction***

The addition of the prefix [de] to the word *construction* and the prefix [trans] to the word *personal* were motivated by the perception of two necessities of the research already under way: on the one hand, the broadening of the creative horizon beyond a merely personal perspective in favor of an understanding and integration of the natural and historical constitution of the body. On the other hand, the escape from the naïve sacralization of mythological structures and automatisms through the submission of symbolic processes and narrative contents to critical analysis. In synthesis, [de]construction denotes the inseparable interweaving of creation and destruction, the transformative and cyclic character of the production of the new: deconstruction is also construction which is also deconstruction and so on. In this aspect, the [de]construction is always an open process, which actively destabilizes everything that is innate or inherited within the memory stores and the cognitive and expressive codes of the performer. The task of [de]construction refers to the elaboration of [trans]personal mythology and the artistic creation of the performance. Considering that [trans]personal mythology is not a mirror-narrative of the performer's biography, and that, by consequence, the performance is not the mere representation of a personal life, both go through continual mutations, nullifying sharp boundaries between action and contemplation, expression and interpretation, creation and critique, life and work. As we have seen above, much of the [de]construction is driven by the externalization and articulation of the performer's mythology, powers, tensions or creative forces. Everything that is expressed – in the form of movement, emotion, word – appears under new perspectives peculiar to the performer or his interlocutors (advisor, director, colleagues). This process, which in thesis is endless, finds its practical limits in an objective convention: the public presentation of the “finished” work on a certain date.

## **Questionnaire**

The survey of personal mythology begins with a questionnaire mapping the performer's life: family background, ethnic and national origin, gender identity, socio-cultural and professional status, memories, identifications, fantasies and desires, affections, values. It gives rise to passive identity characteristics emerging from their cultural infrastructures, and to active, projective and creative characteristics resulting from the autonomy of the performer, and which are determined by the way in which they wish to lead their lives. The questionnaire is the first element of the performer's DEP dossier. It consists of an open catalog of questions that may differ in degree of complexity, in necessity of reflection and research. These questions can undergo modifications, additions or reductions according to the thematic focus of each [de]construction.

The comprehensiveness and detail of the responses vary significantly according to personality, artistic interests and motivations. Regardless of the specific characteristics of each performer, the set of formulated written responses with their respective stylistic particularities, brings about an interior landscape and a possible narrative concerning the body and its world. The intensity of the sensations and reflections provoked by the questionnaire, in combination with the content and linguistic engagement invested in the formulation of the answers, gives the personal mythology itself a performative and transformative dimension that has positive effects on the development of the creative project.

The responses to the questionnaire form a dynamic cartography, revealing findings and themes of great interest which enable the refinement of personal mythology and the encounter with new information favorable to its transpersonalization. The research may be empirical and/or theoretical. It can focus on several fields of knowledge: human, social or exact sciences, as well as the vast field of arts or popular culture. In general, the performers are not aware of the meaning of the symbols that populate their mythology. Therefore, throughout the DEP process, we emphasize the study of symbology and comparative mythology.

What triggers this research strand are figures – motifs, beings, images, words, colours, shapes, or numbers – that stand out in the survey of personal mythology. The performer then has the task of finding these figures, or their correspondences, in the specialized literature. The study of a symbol and the variations of its meaning in different cultures opens unexpect-

### ***Basic questionnaire for the survey of personal mythology***<sup>91</sup>

- **Social identity:** Name, gender, age, place of birth, marital status, professional activity. Comment on these topics.
- **Genealogical tree:** Specify and comment on your family background in terms of ethnic, national and cultural influences.
- **Territories:** Indicate ambiances that you like or dislike – land or ocean, desert or mountain, city, house, cave, forest – and explain your preferences or rejections.
- **Animal:** List the animals you like or dislike and say why.
- **Colors:** Which ones are your favorites and which ones do you like less? Why?
- **Activity:** Discuss activities – hobby, study, work etc. – you enjoy.
- **Lack and excess:** What do you miss and what do you have to squander?
- **Desire:** Describe some unfulfilled desire and how you feel about it.
- **Dreams:** Narrate and comment at least one recurring or striking dream.
- **Premonitions:** What feelings and ideas do you have about yourself and the world in the future?
- **Patterns:** Do you have repetitive affective, cognitive or behavioral patterns? How do you feel about them?
- **Body:** How do you perceive your body? How do you perceive the bodies of others?
- **Cultures:** Which people or culture would you like to know and why?
- **Affinities and identifications:** Do you identify with some person, public or not, or with a fictional character? Point out the elements of affinity.
- **Striking episode:** Describe and comment on an experience decisive for your life.
- **Values:** Do you appreciate or reject some kind of belief system? Why?
- **Relevant topics:** Name and elaborate on issues that you consider important for your personal life or society as a whole.
- **Keywords:** List three or more essential words for the creative life of a body.

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91 The questionnaire is an open set of items and may vary according to the creative circumstances.

ed horizons. As the performers notice the complex symbolism unfolding of a seemingly simple element of their personal mythology in the great cosmogonic narratives, they often experience a turnaround of their inner world. Their self-image merges with the imaginary of other peoples, either historical or mythical, and with temporalities far beyond their immediate current social experience. The revelations and analysis of such hitherto concealed connections mark an incisive moment of transpersonalization. A moment which is capable of giving a new direction to the [de]construction and providing ideas that impel dramaturgic creation. The performer is encouraged to discover where and how a conflict of forces or *existential tension* resonates in fields of contemporary social, cultural, and political life. It is in this triangulation of research, in which personal, historical and mythical times intersect, that the process of transpersonalization surfaces.

### ***Interlocution***

It is the advisor's task, during all phases of the creative process, to help the performer by detecting and developing potentials, and by suggesting ways to overcome eventual difficulties. The dialogue between advisor and performer is conducted in an environment of trust and frankness. The advisor studies the answered questionnaire, takes notes of elements that stand out or remain unenlightened, and confronts the performer with inquiries that deepen distinctive mythological aspects. This exchange is decisive for the first steps toward performative realization. It allows not only the expression of personal mythology but, more importantly, its critical contemplation and reformulation for artistic purposes. Advisory comments and research suggestions concerning transpersonal sources seek to catalyze the choice of a promising theme for the performance.<sup>92</sup> Considering the richness of each individual's life and the impossibility of treating its complexity in a single performance, the ability to make choices is fundamental. Most often, the selective criteria is a feeling of urgency to articulate the existential tension (theme) that determines the performer's life at the time of their engagement in the entire process of DEP.

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92 In collective training processes, the performers sometimes work in pairs, interviewing each other. In this way, they experience the analysis of personal mythology from two different perspectives.



## **MAP**

After surveying the personal mythology and following its analysis, the performer is encouraged to generate a *pictorial mandala* (MAP). This bi- or three-dimensional representation allows the performer to visualize their personal mythology as a landscape. Drawing, painting, writing, gluing, rubbing, trimming, folding and incineration are recurring techniques used to generate these MAPs.

The circle, or mandala as mentioned previously, denotes the movement of cyclic and infinite time, of life and death. The center of the mandala is conceived as a crossing of forces and a creative principle. But the distinction between center and circumference, which defines the circle, does not express a definite hierarchical relation or opposition.

The set of circular dimensions – center, circumference, radius and the areas inside and outside the circumference – in combination with the free invention and distribution of shapes, figures, colors, textures, rhythms of lines, distances, directions and their respective intensities, endows a MAP with great power of visual synthesis, evidencing not only the theme itself, but also options of a possible spatial dramaturgy and the tensive atmosphere defining the performance in [de]construction.

In groups and workshops, with several performers creating their solos at the same time, individual MAPs are made available in sessions of collective contemplation in order to share narratives, aspects and circumstances that motivated them. Through questioning, observing and the in-depth analysis as a collective collaboration, a greater amplification and enrichment of the creative goals of each performative work is achieved.

## **MBE<sup>93</sup>**

Once the performers determine the guiding theme of their creative process, they begin to experiment it corporeally in successive MBEs, above all in the seventh dance, MaRythm, where they explore fluctuations of intratensions and correlated choreographic possibilities, triggered by their elected existential tension. At the end of the practice the performers take notes of the striking aspects and significant moments of their spontaneous dance in order to revisit and re-elaborate them in further sessions. Step by

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93 Consult details of MBE in the section Mandala of Body Energy.

step, this experimental process contributes to the metachoreographic clarity of the work, as well as to the refined construction of dramaturgy and choreography based on the typology and strategies of tensions.<sup>94</sup>

### ***Feedback and direction***

DEP encourages creative self-management and eventually enables performers to become their own interlocutors and directors in the future. However, the protocol does not dispense with the need of the performer for an outside eye. The interaction between the apprentice and an advisor, familiar with the method of [de]construction, is a key moment of DEP, and essential to the performers' overcoming of idiosyncrasies, attachments, redundancies, and excessive psychologisms, which often hamper the potential and maturation of the work and its primary media: the body.

Self-direction is possible, and serious dedication to learning by experience, coupled with methodical organization, benefits the development of this capacity. But, in general, self-direction presupposes the ability to move with a certain ease between surrendering to performative work and rigorous self-observational detachment, an extraordinary quality often lacked even by experienced performers. Furthermore, the task of direction is not limited to the performer's actions, but extends, no matter the scope of the work, to the integral orchestration of the performance's mediatic polyphony. For these reasons, once the [de]construction pretends to surpass the limits of laboratory training, in order to present a professional performance to an audience, it is sensible that a director (instead of an advisor) accompanies and conducts all phases of the creative process.

### ***Grid-script***

The *grid-script*<sup>95</sup> is a device of dramaturgical organization used in the creation of solo performances as well as choreographies of bigger casts and rites of passage. It provides a clear, compact and global view of the structure, the elements and the media interrelations of the dramaturgy, besides allowing its systematic sharing in a team. As the name indicates, it is a script in the form of a grid, consisting of columns and lines.

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94 Consult the typology and the strategies of tension in chapter 1.

95 Consult *grid-script* in the section *Rite of passage*. Detailed examples of the grid-script can be found in Pannek, W. & Baiocchi, M. (2016), pp. 101-128.

In spite of its formal structure (word-sheet), the grid-script should not to be confused with a bureaucratic formula. It is a dynamic authoring tool, designed to map the main artistic and practical dimensions of a performance. The items that make up a grid-script may vary depending on its application and according to the characteristics of each dramaturgy. In its basic version, the grid-script includes:

- a) Title, main existential tension or predominant infra-tension, metachoreography.
- b) Sequential organization of scenes: subtitles, actions and movements, intra-tensions, inter-tensions, infra-tensions, focus of attention, texts, sounds, music, lighting, video, costumes, objects, and durations.

### ***Tension graph***

The *tension graph*<sup>96</sup> is a guide that determines and visually registers the transformations and variations of intensity of the tensive atmosphere of the performance, complementing the grid-script. The performer draws the graph at a later stage of DEP, as it approaches the completion of the theatrical-choreographic composition as a whole. The technical and aesthetic formalization of a tension graph is at the discretion of the performers, who choose a mode of visual representation that corresponds better to the expressive characteristics of their performances. The performers might draw the development of an arc of tension on a scale divided by Cartesian coordinates, or may prefer a free drawing in which the energy and rhythm of the stroke, line and color express the dynamics and the intensity of the scenes.

### ***Dossier***

The *dossier* is the record or documentation of the entire process of DEP. It includes the answered questionnaire about personal mythology, the documentation of transpersonal research in the form of bibliographical and audiovisual references, MAP, grid-script, tension graph, the documentation of the creation process and the performance itself, plus additional notes. The elaboration and consultation of the dossier accompanies and stimulates the performer throughout the creative process as well as it furthers the organization, reflection and improvement of the work. It may also take the form of a blog or website, amplifying the opportunities for sharing and feedback.

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96 Compare the example of a tension graph in Pannek, W. & Baiocchi, M. (2016), p. 121.



### ***Step by step***

- Comprehensive and in-depth investigation of personal mythology and subjective experience through the questionnaire. Opening of the research dossier.
- Initiation of the [trans]personalization process through dialogue with the advisor and research of sociocultural subjects correlated with the performers' personal mythology.
- Selection of an existential tension (theme) of great personal significance.
- Transposition of [trans]personal mythology into practice through MAP and MBEs.
- Development of a theatrical-choreographic dramaturgy organized by a grid-script.
- Individual rehearsals alternated with rehearsals supervised by the advisor/director.
- Presentation of the performance to an audience.
- Critical analysis of the performance(s) by performer and director.
- Maintenance and improvement of the performance.
- Documentation of the creation process and the performances.
- Completion of the dossier.

# Crisis and creation

Social organization is strongly linked to the impositions of ethnicity, gender identity, family, government, economics, religion and ideology, among other factors. We are all dependent on rules and norms, which correspond to dominating value hierarchies and imply the use of and subjection to the languages that reproduce and reaffirm these values. The history of the arts, packed with concepts and classifications, demonstrates that artists do not escape this phenomenon and indeed, they may experience it even more acutely, precisely by exerting the refinement, transformation and invention of languages through their artworks.

Social integration and success depend largely on the acceptance of socially established and available identities in the domain of languages, histories and practices that usually shape and express these identities, and in the capacity for mediation between personal mythology and social mythology. If social and personal identities are constituted by narratives and performative acts, there is always the possibility of changing the vehicle, the content, the form and the place of their realization.

Despite the high level of artistic sensitivity in detecting the dangers within this diffuse threshold between the demand for the formal mastery of a craft and the trap of being dominated by the grammar of the languages the artist employs, much of what is done in art continues to be driven by a confused mixture of a desire for perfection and the submissive tendency to please or impress. For these reasons, briefly pointed out, and by subverting them, DEP usually does not develop as a quiet and routine promenade, notwithstanding its precisely delineated process. It corresponds rather, in Artaud's words, to a "methodical traumatization."<sup>97</sup>

In general, we do not expound in a broad and exhaustive manner over how we see ourselves. Our self-image may pervade our behavior, but not expressively. However, as soon as we go beyond the usual presentation of our persona and its role in the mythology of the society in which it operates, we no longer have all that much certainty of our feelings, convictions, values, and actions; nor even of the stories we tell about our own lives.

The enunciation and articulation of [trans]personal mythology in word,

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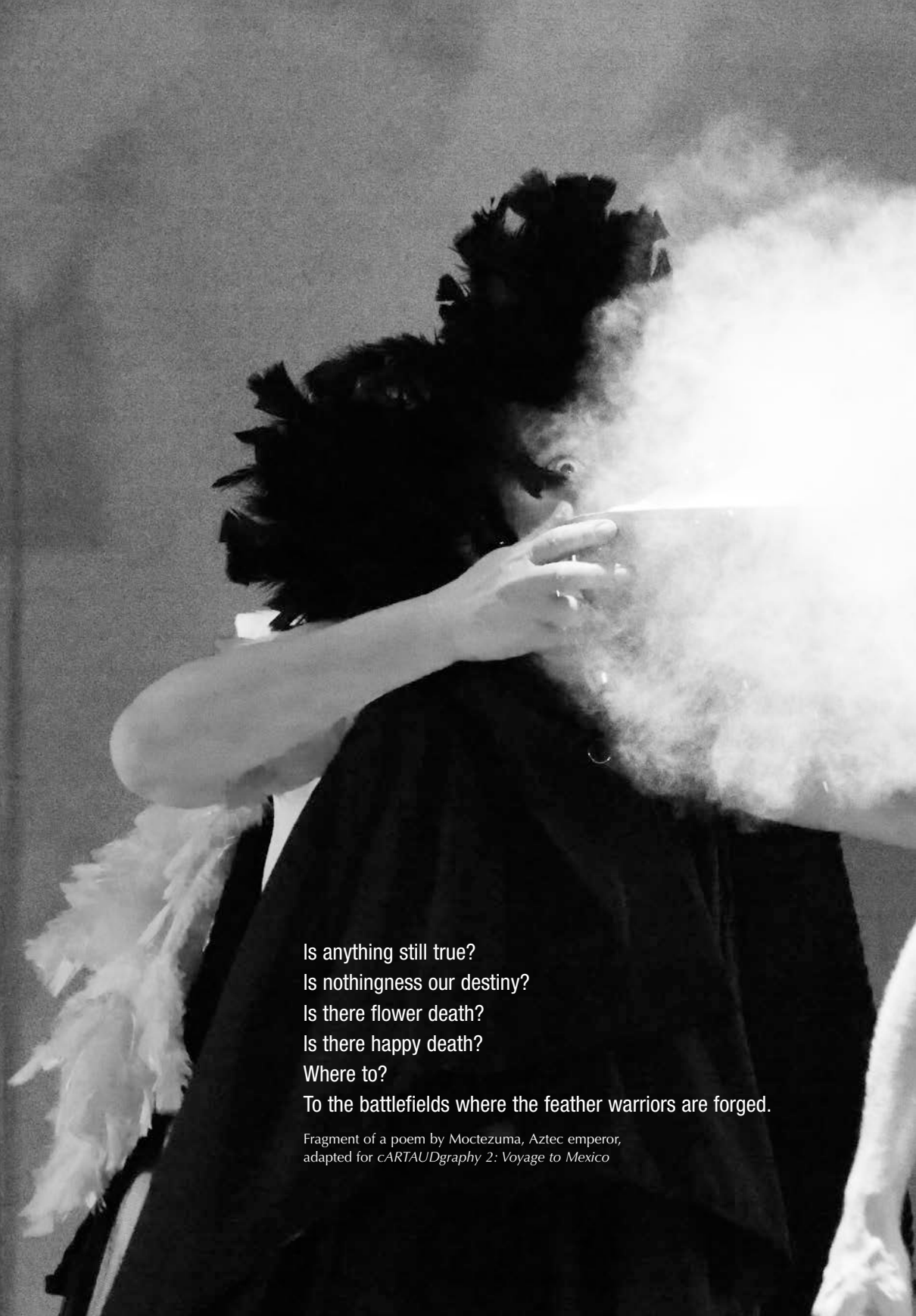
97 Consult *Aliéner L'Acteur* (pp. 1520-1523) in Artaud, Antonin (2004).*Œuvre*. Paris: Gallimard.

drawing, and performance puts to the test not only what we feel and think about ourselves and the world, but also our expressive forms. If on the one hand, the expression of one's life is accompanied by a feeling of power, on the other, the act of its externalization makes one perceive gaps, fragilities and mistakes, whether due to detachment from oneself or thanks to external perspectives.

Successive situations of ambiguity, uncertainty and dissonance, calling into question not only the consistency and relevance of existential events and facts, the narrative authenticity and stylistic precision of a mythology, but the very essence of the performer, are a frequent experience in the processes of deconstruction and transpersonalization. These strategic shudders of identity put the performer in a state of alert. They can eventually lead to a “mythological crisis.” However, from an artistic and even personal point of view, it is necessary to insist on the productive character of this type of crisis. It gives rise to a general mobilization of the performers' energy-anatomy, pushes them out of their comfort zones and unlocks astonishing forces that permit them to overcome immobilizing inherited images, stories and identities. In this sense, the mythological crisis has a liberating dimension by compelling artists to create forms of expression that conspire proactively with the incessant transformation and projective renewal of their bodies: the [de]construction of the performance presupposes the [de]construction of the performer.



• *Desert ...*



Is anything still true?  
Is nothingness our destiny?  
Is there flower death?  
Is there happy death?  
Where to?  
To the battlefields where the feather warriors are forged.

Fragment of a poem by Moctezuma, Aztec emperor,  
adapted for *CARTAUDgraphy 2: Voyage to Mexico*

# Rite of passage

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In Taanteatro Dynamics, *rite of passage* (RP) is a collective paratheatrical ceremony based on the limit-experience<sup>98</sup> of symbolic death. Developed and revised since its first inception in 1990, this ritual dynamic, beyond being a transforming personal experience, has proven to be a powerful laboratory for performative presence and a useful tool for the creation of countless solos as well as a variety of collective works by Taanteatro Companhia.<sup>99</sup> Before outlining the purpose and detailing the structure of RPs as conceived by Taanteatro, some words about the origin of the anthropological concept called *rite of passage* might seem appropriate.

## ***Anthropological correspondences***

RP was created by Baiocchi without any prior knowledge of the anthropological research of Arnold van Gennep<sup>100</sup> or the ritual and performance studies undertaken by Victor Turner.<sup>101</sup> The encounter with the works of these scholars in more recent times, however, enriched our own practice designed for artistic creation and the enhancement of performative presence.

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98 The concept of *limit-experience* was introduced by the German philosopher and psychiatrist Karl Jaspers (1883-1969). It refers to extreme and revelatory existential situations that defy emotional and cognitive boundaries but allow, when affirmed, the self-acceptance and liberation of a human being.

99 RPs are regularly performed at Taanteatro Residence Workshops (TTOR) and in Taanteatro training, research and creation nuclei (NUTAAN). The application of RP in the creation of performances is the subject of Pannek, W. & Baiocchi, M. (2011), *Taanteatro: rito de passagem* [Taanteatro: Rite of Passage]. RPs were applied in pieces like *The Bride who is Frightened Seeing the Open Life*, *The Laughing Square*, *Alice's Book of the Dead*, *U.Rite*, *Hamlet Machine Fisted*, and *cARTAUDgraphy 2: Voyage to Mexico*.

100 Charles-Arnold Kurr van Gennep (1873-1957) was a Dutch-German-French ethnographer and folklorist.

101 Victor Witter Turner (1920-1983) was a British cultural anthropologist who exerted great influence on the Performance Studies.

Van Gennep's writings establish an analogy between the periodicity of transformation processes of the universe and the forms of social rearrangement in human life. The ethnographer considers "the life of an individual in any society as a series of passages from one age to another and from one occupation to another." In 1909, he published the study *The Rites of Passage*<sup>102</sup>, in which he elaborated a *conceptual scheme* common to a multiplicity of social processes, such as ceremonies of birth, childhood, social puberty, engagement, marriage, pregnancy, paternity, initiation to religious societies, social ascension, professional specialization, and funerals.

According to Van Gennep, all these processes are accompanied by special acts of a similar pattern, that is, by ceremonies that "enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well-defined." These ceremonies regulate the interactions between the spheres of the sacred and of the profane, without these transitions eroding social integrity as a whole. The conceptual scheme of these special acts or rites of passage "theoretically includes pre-liminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of transition), and post-liminal rites (rites of incorporation)."

Van Gennep thought that in less civilized societies the dominion of the sacred over the profane tended to determine every stage of human life and he saw the boundary between these domains as the only remaining social division clearly marked in modern society. "The incompatibility between the profane and the sacred worlds" he states, was too big to be overcome "without going through an intermediate stage."

In the rite of separation, a mismatch in the sociocultural relations between individual and community requires a change of the individual's status in order to maintain collective integrity. The separation of the individual from the collective establishes an extra-ordinary situation that is interpreted as the symbolic destruction of the individual-candidate's social role and values. This crucial situation, in which the candidate enters unknown territory where symbolic and social orders are suspended, constitutes a limit-experience that defines the rite of transition. Unable to return to the past and still not prepared to assume a new social role, the candidate has to submit to the ongoing process of the rite, while the other participants serve to ensure the continuity of all ritual procedures. In the rite of reintegration, the candidate returns to daily reality, imbued with the experience of the rite and able to

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102 Van Gennep, Arnold (1960). *The Rites of Passage*, The University Chicago Press, pp. 1-25.

assume a new function in the community. Consequently, Van Gennep calls the rites of separation from a previous social order *preliminary rites*; the transitional procedures executing the suspension of order *liminal rites*; and the ceremonies of reintegration in a new social order *post-liminal rites*. The comprehension of these rites demands their being understood as rites of entry, waiting and departure, that is, as rites of passage.

As stated by Van Gennep, the presence of the sacred in the rites is variable, but always occurs at the frontier of an unknown or forbidden territory. For this reason, he draws an interesting analogy between rites of passage and territorial passages. In the old days, the countries of the world kept neutral zones between their borders, often formed by deserts and jungles, zones of free transit for any who dared. The neutral zone was considered sacred area for the inhabitants of the adjacent territories. On the other hand, the adjacent territories were sacred to those who lived or transited in the neutral zone. The prohibition of entering sacred territories was intrinsic to magico-religious thinking. Throughout the ages, the neutral zones have been shrunk and reduced to the ideal line of the border, marked by a stone or a threshold (fences, walls, customs and portals of police control in current times).

### ***Ritual presence, interaction and creation***

The rites of passage created by Taanteatro diverge from social ceremonies described by Van Gennep insofar as their themes, structures, and languages are not determined by the collective interest in avoiding the collapse of community integrity or by a behavioral and expressive framework encoded by tradition. RPs are rather characterized by the will, the needs and the imagination of the performer-candidate who defines the theme, actions and codes deemed necessary to carry out the desired transformation.

The ritual transformation in question is not intended to redefine the social status of the performer within the group of performers (among whom there are no hierarchical differences). Neither does our RPs presuppose attitudes of passivity or submission to collective authority. In RPs “submission” consists of an active and unconditional collective acceptance of the performative dynamics proposed by the candidate. Therefore, it is the collective that, a priori, opens itself up to the ideas and desires of the performer who, in turn, during the course of the rite, will surrender to, both the predictable and unexpected actions of the collective.

Obviously, all traditional rites have performative components, but their ultimate purpose is not artistic. Taanteatro Dynamics' rite of passage is conceived as an action and event in a zone of friction and fusion between life and art. It works as a stimulant of creativity and training tool for performative presence. The transformation, however important it may be for the psychosocial development of the candidate, is above all a transformation of the performer as such. And, it enables the harnessing of the forces and forms that it engenders in potential future theater-choreographic stagings.

RPs provide their protagonist (candidate) with the opportunity and challenge of a voluntary transformation (passage) by overcoming a known life situation, in order to move towards a new, not yet experienced, but desired situation.

The rite connects the candidate with a group of collaborating performers. While the candidate chooses the theme of the aspired transformation, conceives its dramaturgy and defines all other performative components necessary to the rite (roles, actions, ambiances, objects, costumes, music, etc), the collective assists to and interacts with the candidate throughout the course of the rite, according to the dramaturgical requirements.

The structure of a RP is elementary, in an Aristotelian sense, being composed of beginning, middle, and end. Yet, it generates a process of pentamuscular de-standardization mobilizing diverse and unprecedented modes of expression. These may include dance, singing, speech, glosso-lalia, animal language, pantomime, body painting, smoking, baths, offerings, suppers, enigmatic and extra-quotidian behaviors.

Prior to the date of the rite, the candidate exposes to the other performers the guiding theme, the purpose and the dramaturgy of the RP. Without rehearsal, at a pre-established time and place, the collective prepares the space, the objects to be used and the activities to be performed along the ritual process, following the candidate's guidelines. Minutes before the ceremony starts, the candidate delivers a final reading of the rite's grid-script in order to clarify any remaining doubts. After that, a concise version of MBE is employed as a warm-up and psychophysical preparation for the ceremony that is to follow.

Once the rite is set in motion, the RP becomes open to intuitive and Dionysian contributions of the collective, yet, without dismissing the dramaturgy or losing the candidate's passage as the ritual focus. The level of



integration between pre-established dramaturgy and surprising spontaneity will depend on the performers' degree of surrender to the dynamics of the rite. A RP demands a high dose of awareness, generosity and involvement of all its participants.

The themes of the rites may differ greatly in accordance with the disposition of the persons to be ritualized. Often, candidates show a willingness to transcend themselves, to transgress their particular, strongly historicized and socially codified situations. In the list of infra-tensions which frequently impel the rites of the candidates, we may enumerate the tensions between the sacred and profane, rational and savage, pragmatic and symbolic. Between the whole (society, nature or cosmos) and the part (individual or specific group of individuals). Between art and everyday life, or subordination and liberation – considering that each of these poles is inhabited by other secondary and related tensions, hence forming a network.

RPs displace the participants from their habitual daily life experience. They instill a sense of wholeness and of initial simplicity, accompanied by the effectuation of the creative forces of their pentamuscular nature.

Often unexpectedly during the rites, a flow of unfamiliar emotions, states of mind and actions rattle a candidate's sense of identity. The experience and overcoming of these moments and moods, ranging from ecstasy to crisis, however, leads to an increase of self-confidence and to a spiritual strengthening of the candidates and their collaborators. An astonishing freshness arises from the spontaneous creative activity and unreserved interaction between the performers, an uninterrupted incorporation of a pentamuscular performative presence, instinctively [de]constructed through the rite. The extra-quotidian experience emerging from the RP deterritorializes not only the candidate, but all its participants. Whether due to the incalculable and contagious atmosphere of the rite itself or because of exhibiting attributes they have never practiced in their lives, everyone undergoes a process of transformation, even though the focus of the rite is the passage of its protagonist.

The use of a grid-script<sup>103</sup> facilitates the orientation of and communication between RP ceremony participants. It specifies the theme of the rite and

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103 Consult *grid-script* in the section *[De]construction of performance*. Detailed examples of the grid-script can be found in Pannek, W. & Baiocchi, M. (2016), pp. 101-128.

the dramaturgy of situations the candidate will experience. The composition of each phase is determined by criteria as *sub-phases, metachoreography, choreography of tensions, location, period, characters, props, soundtrack, and speech*. For example:

| <b>Rite of passage</b>   |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Candidate                | Name of the protagonist   |
| Title                    | The guiding theme of the RP   |
| <b>Phase 1</b>           |   |
| Preliminary              | Situation from which the candidate wishes to separate   |
| <b>Phase 2</b>           |   |
| Liminary                 | Threshold situation that the candidate needs to cross   |
| <b>Phase 3</b>           |   |
| Post-liminary            | Situation that the candidate intends to integrate   |
| Subphase                 | Description of sub-units of each phase  |
| Metachoreography         | Elucidation of the RPs' infra-tensive territory   |
| Choreography of tensions | Description of the dances and their correlated intra-, inter- and infra-tensions<br><br>Definition of the foci of attention<br><br>Indication of music, sounds, song, silence<br><br>Duration and description of bodily displacements |
| Location                 | Definition of the place of the RP   |
| Period                   | Timeframe of the rite   |
| Characters               | Distribution of roles, indicating functions, names, moods, actions, costumes, and props   |
| Materials                | List of costumes, props, instruments, etc   |
| Soundtrack               | Indication of music, sounds, songs  |
| Speech                   | Indication of texts (monologues, dialogues, chorus)   |

For the purpose of illustration, here are some of the guiding themes chosen by the candidates of RPs: to become a warrior; to become an androgynous dancer; to overcome familial and/or social projections; to free oneself from ideals, becoming a person of the here and now; to abandon one's transient being to reveal one's true being; to make the transition from insecure juvenile life to self-confident adult life; to become someone who communicates freely through speech; to recreate one's consumer-body through a banquet; to move from a tamed and abstract existence to the experience of one's creative life; to leave the stagnant comfort zone of the known and to discover actively the dynamics of the unknown; to give birth and to overcome insecurity; to leave a state of imprisonment, of being fearful of the violence of the other, in exchange for a loving relationship of surrender and trust.



• *Rites of passage*

## **Ritual experience**

In order to illustrate the psychophysical impact of RPs, we reproduce, in the following, an excerpt of the experiential account by NUTAAN 2010 participant Chiu Yi Chih, philosopher, poet and performer.

*Living and performing the rites of passage in urban spaces, I explored an indistinct zone of myself. I felt like I was guided by a numinous force. My body was criss-crossed by shards of bodies, energies, asphalt, hiccups, car noises, blood, contaminated air, waters, and cement; all cut out of the Other. I interacted as a performer with the anarchic virtualities of an immense ocean. I never knew where the rite would lead me, even though we had the script mapped out. And the "enigma" was just that: to experience this intensive state between things and the interpretations that we make of them. From there, I began to intuit better what is meant by the zeroed body, the dead body, the body-without-organs, the sterile, the un-engendered, the desert full of life. To inhabit the interval state, the in-between constituted itself a risk within the very field of creation. In this process of experimentation, improvisation, and contact with the audience of pedestrians, I widened my field of perception, broke my muscular armor, tested my ego, and uncovered my viscera. In this shamanic/artistic process, my body was shattered, devoured by the other bodies, and then restored in several schizophrenic cuts. I bathed in the waters of an immense face, whose lives, identities, territories, and forces subverted my own identity. As if in an initiatory journey, my old body was swept away. I descended into hell and ascended into the heavens. There was nothing metaphorical about it. The body suffered, resisted. (...) I was as if a crystal sponge, bodily absorbing movements of fall, suspension, tension. Ancestry and urban environment, nature and civilization, all confabulated with my vertebrae. The pentamusculature concept allowed all performers to embark on this odyssey-trip.*



• U.Rite



# Rite of the shaman



As described above, RPs provide extra-quotidian performative journeys based on dramaturgies conceived by the rites' protagonists. The successful transition through the liminal phase of RPs depends on mutual surrender – to the candidate's concept of dramaturgy and to the collective's spontaneity – within a predetermined but open ritualistic structure.

In addition to this collective ceremony, Taanteatro developed the protocol of a more solitary rite based on a pre-established dramaturgy: the *rite of the shaman* (RS).<sup>104</sup> The protocol of this rite rescues key moments from archaic and shamanic initiation processes, precipitating the candidates into a kind of limbo of their own symbolic death. However, in the RS the transition through the liminal phase occurs without any external interference. It depends entirely on the candidate.

As mentioned before, RPs are not intended as special actions of social reintegration; but rather as creative dynamics that trigger performative transfigurations and benefit the incorporation of new expressive resources in an environment auspicious to poetic practice. The RS is not a neo-shamanic professionalization program. It neither proposes the recreation of a specific reli-

104 The word *shaman* comes from *šamán*, from the language evenca, typical of a group of Siberian hunters and shepherds. The concept of shamanism has been extended to other cultures, where it undergoes significant variations while adopting similar spiritual practices. Taanteatro's protocol of RS is based on information provided by Vitebsky, Piers (1995). *The Shaman: Voyages of the Soul. Trance, Ecstasy and Healing from Siberia to the Amazon*. London: Macmillan in association with Duncan Baird Publishers, and Eliade, Mircea (1989): *Shamanism. Archaic techniques of ecstasy*. London: Arcana, Penguin Group.

gious experience nor the performative validation of certain anthropological theses on shamanism.

RS is a paratheatrical ritual practice and, therefore, a specific form of RP. What matters to Taanteatro Dynamics is the shamanic initiation process as a type of dramaturgy; the journey of the candidate as a way of deepening the performer's inner experience; the discovery of expressive forces and forms emerging throughout the rite as an opportunity for performative innovation; and finally, the shamanic community practice as a stimulus for reflection on the social function of the performer.

### ***Archaic culture***

Traditional shamans occupy a variety of roles (priest, physician, mystic, counselor, storyteller) in their communities, but first of all, they distinguish themselves from other community members by their ability to perform a spiritual journey that puts all religious and cosmological planes of their culture into communication.

Classical shamanic cultures divide the cosmos into three levels (upper, middle, and lower) interconnected by a central axis. This axis – symbolized by the tree of life, the tent chimney, the sacred mountain, or the drum – allows the shaman's soul to descend or ascend to the worlds of good or evil spirits that affect terrestrial reality. The vehicle for crossing the abyss that separates Earth from the spheres of the spirits (or essences) is the controlled trance of the shaman.

There are shamans by hereditary transmission, by spontaneous vocation, and by accident.<sup>105</sup> Shamanic powers are considered inborn, but their consolidation and effectuation depend upon the acceptance of these powers, and of their constraints over a shaman's lifestyle, as well as the processes of instruction of traditional knowledge and the candidate's acceptance by the spirits. According to the Yacuts<sup>106</sup>, community acceptance of shamans is conditional on the conscious and balanced use of their inner strength. The shaman is supposed to display an appropriate convergence between knowledge and power.

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105 Accidental shamanism can occur, for example, when a person is struck by lightning or another force of nature.

106 The Yacuts are a Seminoles Siberian people of hunters, fishermen and reindeer breeders.



The uniqueness of shamanic knowledge results from the ability to overcome habitual limits that separate the body from the world and to situate oneself spiritually within the forces and phenomena. The capacity to transit voluntarily between historical and extra-historical dimensions of time; to inhabit the spirits of things and beings, as well as to let oneself be inhabited by their essences in order to experience and mediate their different points of view, endows the shaman with the art of acting upon reality.<sup>107</sup>

Magic power and hypersensitivity are inexorably correlated shamanic faculties. In a hostile world, shamans have acquired wisdom and improved their healing powers, including the ability to cure themselves, by experiencing concrete processes of spiritual transformation. Often, shamanic initiation itself implies the experience and overcoming of a psychophysical crisis that involves a serious shake-up of the candidate's mental status quo.

This shamanic crisis, accompanied by ecstatic dreams, fatigue, sufferings, torture, loss of consciousness, and isolation, leads the candidates to a mental separation from their habitual worlds and social identities. It impels them to either descend or ascend to the unknown worlds of the *spirits* or *essences*. Thus, exposed to these spiritual domains and in interaction with their ruling forces, which coincidentally are considered to determine life on Earth, the candidates face symbolic death perceived as the dismemberment, devouring or cremation of their bodies. These spirits may appear in human, animal, vegetable or mineral shape and operate as guides and teachers of the candidate. They transmit instructions in the form of actions, speeches, songs and dances. It is also through the intervention of the spirits that shamanic initiation achieves its goal. The recreation of the candidate's body from the fragments of the annihilated one, from the elements of nature and other objects. Bestowed with this new body that surpasses its former social determinations and constitutive dichotomies (such as profane-sacred, human-animal, masculine-feminine); a new body which will effectuate, with each of its components, a well-defined communitarian function. Thus, the shaman is now ready for resurrection.<sup>108</sup> Once reinstated to everyday reality, the shamanic tasks comprise the care for community health and psychosocial integrity, the mediation between the planes

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107 The social acceptance of the belief that shamanic practice acts upon reality also elucidates why institutions of power tend to co-opt or to eliminate shamans.

108 The general scheme of shamanic initiation here presented does not take cultural variations into consideration.

of visible and invisible forces affecting group and territory, and the guidance<sup>109</sup> of lost or violated souls.

Of major performative importance is the spectacular character of shamanic social practice: the sensorial and symbolic intensity and abundance of its expressive means, engaging dance, singing, music, ritual clothing, and magical accessories, all of which are revealed in dream or trance and mobilized during the enactment of symbolic death along with the community. The healing performed by the shaman has significant poetic dimensions, for it touches the body by stirring the imagination and demolishing “the barriers between dream and present reality.”<sup>110</sup>

### ***Ritual autopoiesis***

The RS is more precisely a rite of the performer as a shaman; a special dramaturgy designed to discover and integrate shamanic dimensions into the performative presence and work. Like the RP, the RS is not an action primarily performed for an audience, but rather a paratheatrical experience with initiatory functions, directed at people that aspire to the life of a performer.<sup>111</sup> Due to its critical liminal component of self-annihilation and recreation, this rite provides the candidates with the opportunity to become aware of their driving forces, to re-dimension themselves as persons and artists, to discover and refine the themes and forms of their communicational practice, and doing so in exchange with their community.

Because of its autopoietic nature<sup>112</sup>, the RS is a process that demands careful and meticulous preparation. Usually, it is performed in the context of groups that have already gone through the process of survey and reflection of

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109 This guiding function of archaic shamanism corresponds to the Greek term ψυχοπομπός, *psychopompós*, meaning the *guide of souls* like e.g. Hermes, who symbolizes the communication between Heaven, Earth and the Underworld, and escorts the souls of the deceased to the realm of the dead.

110 Eliade, Mircea (1989), p. 511.

111 The integration of RS experiences in the creation of solo and collective performances (e.g. 50 *Drawings to Murder Magic*, *cARTAUDgraphy* and *Rivers-Rites*) is a recurrent practice of Taateatro Companhia.

112 The term *autopoiesis* – from Greek αὐτο- (*auto-*), meaning 'self', and ποίησις (*poiesis*), meaning 'creation, production') – refers to a system capable of creating and reproducing itself. In contemporary times, the concept was introduced by Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. It is also a key concept in Niklas Luhmann's systems theory.

113 The rural headquarter of Taateatro Companhia has an environment conducive to this practice: a semi-open training hall within a huge tropical garden, intersected by a stream with a waterfall.



[trans]personal mythology. They have developed a reliable basis of collaboration and partnership among members. In RS, the liminal experience of symbolic death, recreation and resurrection is an intimate and individual transition, yet it occurs within a guiding dramaturgic framework, common to all candidates.

First, all performers become familiar with the concept, the structure, the dynamics, as well as with the general purpose of the ceremony. After that, the preparation for the rite begins. The RS includes individual and collective aspects, such as the definition of the type of shaman the candidate imagines they will become; the selection of locations; the choice and arrangement of ritual elements (clothes, makeup, props, instruments, materials) to be engaged. The group also needs to stipulate the approximate duration of the entire rite and of its phases and to draw a map indicating the collective locations as well as the individual trajectories and stations within the available geographical territory. The definition of the trajectory of each candidate deserves attention in order to preserve the necessary ritual intimacy, especially at the moment of symbolic death. RS' are best performed in nature, that is, in environments that open our awareness to the abundance and variety of organic life forms.<sup>113</sup>

Although ubiquitous in social life, rites of passage do not have the same ontological status as everyday actions. The rites of Taanteatro – RP and RS – are, at the same time, virtual actions and concrete interactions with given environments. The surprising power of these rites is based on a generic protocol open to the individuality of each candidate.

The protocol implies, however, a spiritual and physical struggle against the constraints of cultural systems of meaning imposed on the body. The desire to overcome limits that formerly defined their self-image launches the performers into a flow of vital tensions – between action and reaction, affirmation and denial, creation and destruction – and exposes them to the challenge of finding within themselves the motives and means to undergo symbolic death and resurrection.

The effectuation of this ritual potential depends primarily on the candidates' awareness and internalization of the fact that the RS does not entail the task of representing a social role (i.e. the shaman) and its actions, but the genuine attempt to seek and experience situations and transformations established by the shamanic protocol.

Beneficial to this outcome is the candidates' interactive openness to sensory data of the performative environment, to unexpected insights, learnings and motivations appearing during the rite, along with a poetic disposition to perform the ritual actions and express sensations and cognitions in ways beyond their habitual social vocabulary. Ultimately, by uniting these interrelated dimensions, RS implies a process of real metamorphosis and leads to the renewal, strengthening, and ethical-aesthetic updating of performative perception, presence, and expressiveness.

Even though, for the most part, the RS is a solitary journey, its protocol determines initial and final gatherings of all candidates, emphasising the communitarian purpose of the process. After passing all ritual phases, the now performer-shamans present themselves to one another, dancing their new states of being, performing their cosmic mediations, and conveying their social messages by making use of ritually engendered expressive resources.

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114 Concerning body without image, consult the footnote referring to this concept in the section Schizopresence.

## Stages of RS

| Stages of RS           |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Preliminary phase      | Union and Separation   |
|                        | Gathering of the candidates<br>Performance of MBE<br>Separation of the candidates<br>Beginning of individual courses   |
| Liminary phase         | Descent and Ascension  |
| Crisis                 | Action inspired by existential infra-tension<br>Spontaneous dance of humor crisis towards symbolic death<br>Descent to the Underworld  |
| Symbolic death         | Disintegration of the body / Creation of a body without image <sup>14</sup><br>Encounter and interaction dance with guiding spirits<br>Reception of teachings of the guiding forces                  |
| Return                 | Acknowledgment, composition and investiture of the new body<br>Ascension (return) to the world of the living   |
| Post-preliminary phase | Reintegration and Presentation   |
|                        | Return of each candidate to the ritual gathering place<br>Meeting and gathering in a circle<br>Presentation dance of each performer-shaman<br>Collective closing by performing the Zero-Non-Position |





# Effort

*Effort* comprises an open and diversified set of aerobic exercises (steps, jumps, falls, squats, spins, rotations, stretches, etc.) inspired by movements of various types of dance, sports, and martial arts, such as capoeira. It aims to oxygenate, tone, and flex the body, as well as to improve balance, coordination, rhythm, strength, agility, endurance, focus, spacetime perception, and creativity. In general, each exercise includes a combination of movements and is executed repeatedly as a sequence along a predetermined track. In addition, these exercises of displacement are performed forward, backward and sideward; as a combination of these directions interconnected by spins; and with variations of movement level (low, medium, high).

The effort exercises focus on the kinetic and creative self-improvement of all practitioners regardless of their initial capacity. Therefore, the sequences may be adapted and are open to variation and interpretation according to individual characteristics, in a way that allows less experienced practitioners to participate and gradually expand their potentials. The exercises can be practiced within a group, in couples or individually. Collective exercise, especially derived from capoeira<sup>115</sup>, furthers mutual awareness, interaction, coordination, and synchronization. As the group becomes more familiar with the different exercises, the practitioners are encouraged to freely improvise choreographic sequences based on the learned movements.

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115 Capoeira is an Afro-Brazilian martial art developed by enslaved Africans. Its supposed origin is N'Golo or Zebrodance performed by the Bantu people.





# Walking

*Walking* is a choreographic laboratory based on a simple yet rigorous set of premises. Simultaneously individual and collective, this practice consists of a linear displacement in two phases between two points in space; first forward, then backward. The starting point and the final point of arrival are identical. At the beginning and at the end of their laboratory the practitioners perform the simplified Zero-Non-Position of MBE. Unless otherwise indicated, the displacement is always frontal and remains on the established track. The laboratory lasts about 40 minutes, equally divided between both parts of the path.<sup>116</sup>

Walking's elementary dramaturgy, well-defined spatiotemporal path and clearly established infra-tensional theme favor the overcoming of anxiety, and enhance concentration, focus and intensity of the creative work. The movement qualities and themes to be explored in the laboratory are stipulated in advance. Walking is an individual practice performed amongst a collective. Therefore, the practitioners are reminded to open up to the energizing mutual affectation between all walkers, without, however, losing track of their own work. Here are some thematic suggestions – combinable amongst one another – for choreographic walks that explore intra-, inter-, and infra-tensions through:

- Qualities of breathing (regular, deep, short, panting, trapped, syn-copated, melodious, fast, slow)
- Levels of movement (low, medium, high)
- Intra-tensions (stretching, contraction, twisting, fluctuation, paralyzation, vibration, shocks, etc) and variations of intra-tensions related to the states of matter (solid, liquid, gaseous, igneous, and their variations)
- Rhythms and velocities of different body parts
- Foci of attention (direct, indirect, personal, interpersonal, expanded, etc.)
- Balancing stones on various parts of the body
- Evolving with an object (randomly chosen or of affective value)
- Dialoging with imaginary forces and forms (vectors, lines, balls, bubbles)
- Vocal sounds, words, texts

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<sup>116</sup> This time frame refers to a distance of about 10 meters (each path).



## Traaject

*Traaject*<sup>117</sup> is at the same time a training technique aiming to develop the faculties of direct and indirect communication with the audience and a tool for choreographic composition based on a practitioner-determined metachoreography. The practice includes the use of vocal resources. Traaject's spatio-temporal dramaturgy – formed by a dance of displacements, transitions, changes of direction, and rhythm – can be modulated employing T-types and T-strategies,<sup>118</sup> and by using the elements mentioned to enrich the choreographic laboratory of Walking.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, the practice is open to metachoreographic variations according to the imagination and subjects that inspire each performer.

The compositional power of Traaject relies on its spatio-temporal rigor. Its kinetic structure includes diversified positions, directions and durations challenging the performer to transmit artistic content by a nuanced energetic and formal treatment of all its sections and transitions. It encourages artists to conquer their territory, without appealing to artifice and redundancy, developing a creative economy based on their ability to fine tune movement, space and time relationships, as well as performative intensity. These variations require the performer's capacity of arousing and maintaining the audience's interest throughout the course of the displacement.

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117 *Traaject* translates the Portuguese neologism *traajeto*, coined by Baiocchi (trajeto = traject).

118 Concerning T-types and T-strategies consult chapter 1.

119 Consult the section *Walking* above.

In its basic form<sup>120</sup>, Traaject comprises the following movements:

**1st Movement / Prologue or Opening** (about 3 minutes):

The performer enters the stage – from *offstage right* or *offstage left* – and moves along the *back wall*, with her/his back turned towards the audience, until reaching the *center line*.

**2nd Movement / Presentation** (about 1 minute):

Facing the back wall at the center line, the performer undergoes a transformation that motivates them to turn around and reveal the front of their body.

**3rd Movement / Walk 1** (about 3 minutes):

The performer approaches *center stage*, facing the audience indirectly.

**4th Movement / Transition** (about 2 minutes):

The performer establishes her/himself at the center and experiences a motivation for physical action and spatial expansion.

**5th Movement / Centrifugal and centripetal expansion** (about 5 minutes):

Expansion of the dance, followed by the return to the center.

**6th Movement / Walk 2** (about 3 minutes):

The performer moves towards the audience, from center stage to the *apron*, aiming to break the *fourth wall*.<sup>121</sup>

**7th Movement / Vocal interaction** (about 3 minutes):

The performer breaks the fourth wall and establishes direct communication with the audience. The emphasis is on the voice, exploring one or more forms of expression (speech, recitation, declamation or singing of texts and glossolalia).

**8th Movement / Departure** (about 3 minutes):

Facing the audience and along the center line, the performer moves backwards towards the back wall and then exits the stage in a direction opposite to her/his entrance in the 1st Movement.

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120 This description of Traaject's basic form refers to conventional theater stages. The exercise, however, can also be adapted to non-conventional performance spaces.

121 The *fourth wall* is a performing arts convention suggesting an imaginary wall separating performers and audience. The performers act as if they cannot see through this "wall", while being observed by the audience.

# Corporeal calligraphy

In the most basic form of *corporeal calligraphy*, practitioners perform rotational movements with specific joints and, successively, transfer the focus of movement to other joints (e.g. from ankle to knee, knee to hip, hip to spine, spine to shoulder, elbow to the wrist, etc), in the manner of a warm up.

As a choreographic practice, corporeal calligraphy makes use of letters, words, verses, and entire texts. Using the interplay of different joints of the body, the performer rhythmically explores these linguistic elements, drawing, modulating and composing with their undulating, curvilinear shapes, understood as lines of forces.

It is, however, important to emphasize that this practice neither aims at the decipherable representation of a text, nor at the transmission of its possible meanings, but at the individual creation of improvised movement based on shapes so deeply internalized that the practitioners have no difficulty in recollecting them.



# Sonorous alphabet

The *sonorous alphabet* is a playful and inventive exercise for the development of a voice-dance. It explores vocal sensations and actions through the emission and articulation of phonemes related to letters of the alphabet, syllables, words, and glossolalia<sup>122</sup>. Although the practice also encompasses the work with meaningful linguistic elements, it is not primarily concerned with questions of significance, but rather focuses on the “material” and acoustic dimensions of words or sentences.

By virtue of putting the entire physiological complex underlying respiration, phonation and articulation into motion, the *sonorous alphabet* operates, first of all, as a vibrating and lubricating massage of the skull, the vocal apparatus, and as facial gymnastics.<sup>123</sup> Secondly, it increases the awareness of the corporeal aspects of phonation and articulation and thereby improves vocal modulation and diction. In addition to these more strictly voice related aspects, exercising the *sonorous alphabet* provides an expanded perception of the possibilities of choreographing facial movements and expressions.<sup>124</sup>

The alphabet can be exercised in different positions (standing, sitting or lying down) and in combination with discrete spontaneous gestures and dances without major displacements. Initially, practitioners oxygenate<sup>125</sup> their body in the simplified Zero-Non-Position of MBE.<sup>126</sup> Maintaining this position, they explore variations of breathing and of movements with their tongue and mouth (e.g. licking the walls of the oral cavity, teeth, and lips), followed by multidirectional movements of their facial muscles (including contracting and relaxing) and their eyes.

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122 *Glossolalia* comes from the ancient Greek – γλώσσα, glóssa [λαλώ, λαλώ, “lalo” and denotes speech in individual languages with no apparent meaning but preserving normal prosodic aspects. It is a phenomenon known in religions, poetry and psychiatry. Antonin Artaud is a theatrical author and poet who has worked repeatedly with glossolalia.

123 Muscles responsible for facial mime, mastication, movements of the tongue, lips, and neck.

124 Taanteatro Companhia explores these possibilities in works like *U.Rite*, *50 Drawings to Murder Magic*, *cARTAUDgraphy*, *Artaud, le Mómo*, among others.

125 We develop respiratory practices from Kundalini yoga and Chi Kung.

126 Consult the section *Mandala of body energy* in this book.

After this period of preparation, the vocal work in a stricter sense begins. The practitioners now perform the articulation and phonation of the entire alphabetic sequence of letters of their native language, or of any other language, adding new challenges to their work. The practitioners then study, refine and intensify the physical movements necessary for the articulation and phonation of each letter (vowels and consonants) yet, however, without emission of any sound.

The attention of the exercise is initially directed towards the detailed perception of the organs<sup>127</sup>, muscles, bones, points<sup>128</sup>, and manners that make up the articulation process of the phoneme. Only then, once the practitioners are aware of the muscular choreography of this process, do they actually start to emit the phoneme's corresponding sound. The exercise is now open to concentrated experiment as well as uninhibited play with the respiratory flow, exploring possible sonorous variations, the transformation of rhythms, timbres, volumes, and speeds.

During the emission of vowels, air passes almost without resistance through the mouth, nose, and throat, providing an opportunity to focus on the modulations of facial resonators<sup>129</sup>, tongue positions and tensions, mouth articulations and vocal chord vibrational intensity (phonation). During the emission of the consonants, the air encounters obstacles along its passage through the vocal apparatus. Therefore, in the work with these phonemes, the investigation of the "deaf noise" in the points of resistance (lips, teeth, tongue, palate, palatine veil, uvula) is emphasized, without amending the emission of the phoneme with vocals. This emphasis is important in differentiating between vowels and consonants. All of these procedures are enthusiastically applied to each letter of the alphabet.

When performed in a group, the sonorous alphabet causes an energetic contagion among the practitioners, benefiting the creativity and the diversification of the sonorizations produced individually. In a third moment, as the practice evolves, the vocal exploration expands – including syllables, glossolalia, words, and verses with linguistic meaning – in accordance with the composition of spoken text and song.

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127 Articular organs of the face: lips, teeth, tongue, hard palate, palate, and jaw.

128 Points of articulation: labial, bilabial, labiodental, dental, alveolar, postalveolar, retroflex, palatal, velar, uvular, pharyngeal, glottal, among others.

129 Facial resonators such as cavity of the mouth, cavity of the nose and paranasal sinuses.



# Corporeal totem

Traditionally, totems are beings, objects or symbols representing the guardian spirits of social groups (families, lineages, clans, tribes) with animistic beliefs. Although the name totem derives from the North American Ojibwe language, the use of multiform totemic objects is common to indigenous people worldwide and fulfills a variety of social, cultural and psychological functions.

In Taanteatro Dynamics, the development of the *corporeal totem* as a choreographic device emerged during the creation process of *50 Drawings to Murder Magic*, a big cast piece based on Antonin Artauds' homonymous text. For his combat against spiritual and social oppression exerted by institutions of power, Artaud created magico-poetic war machines<sup>130</sup>: cheap sheets of notebook paper covered with drawings and poems, burned and perforated by fire. As a choreographic correspondence to this kind of theater of cruelty transferred to performative objects, corporeal totems are quintessential expressions of energy and meaning of solo dances in one single posture, sustained and modulated only by breathing intensities and modifications of intra-tension levels.

These postures were then employed as compositional elements of the piece, be it in the form of a collective exhibition of performative presences constituting an entire scene, the choreographic sequencing of totems exchanged between the dancers, or as rhythmic counterpoints (interruptions and suspensions) of ongoing choreographies and actions. This creation method continued to be applied in other works, such as *The Human Face* and *Rivers-Rites*.

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130 Within the *nomadology* formulated by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, the concept of *war machines* refers to desiring practices of creative resistance against the sedentary power and authority of the State in the fields of social interaction and knowledge. Compare Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1986). *Nomadology – The War Machine*. New York: Semiotext.



# Taquara dance

*Taquara dance*<sup>131</sup> is a practice of body training and choreographic creation performed with a bamboo stick. The practitioners' work starts by lying on the ground with the stick placed against or on their bodies. Initially, they become aware of the state of their bodies, their posture and breathing. Next, they try to perceive the stick, its weight and its position in relation to their bodies (trunk and limbs). Subsequently, they carefully try to move in constant contact with the stick, without manipulating it with their hands and, as far as possible, without dropping it. Gradually, they then develop a dance with the stick, experimenting with different directions, angles and speeds of movement, going through the low, medium and high levels, until reaching an upright position. At the medium level and high level, the practitioners seek to explore different possibilities of movement in the space until they return to the floor where the dance calmly ends.

Taquara dance trains the perception and ability to interact with a delicate, light and non-human foreign musculature.<sup>132</sup> The challenge of moving in constant contact with the bamboo stick exposes the body to unusual situations. It requires careful attention to detail, to millimetered movement. The performers need to open themselves to the bamboo and to adjust the quality of their body movement to the characteristics of the object (length, weight, elasticity). By avoiding control of the stick with the hands and arms, especially in the early stages of training, taquara dance calls for tranquility and skill. The emphasis on the exploration of trunk movements (spine, neck, nape, chest, back, buttock, abdomen), in coordination with lower limb movement (hip, thighs, legs, feet), prevents the proliferation of peripheral gestures and acts as an antidote to anxiety. After reaching a certain domain of interaction with the bamboo stick, the performers might also make use of their arms and hands in order to integrate new movement options into the dance.

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131 *Taquara* comes etymologically from the tupi term *ta'kwar*, referring in general to gramineae, and in particular to bamboo. The bamboo stick (or rod) measures from 2 to 3 meters, depending on the height of the practitioner. Taanteatro Companhia artistically explored dances with bamboo in performances such as *Entraanz* and *Rivers-Rites*. The practices *corporeal calligraphy*, *corporeal totem*, *sonorous alphabet*, and *taquara dance* were developed by Wolfgang Pannek between 2010 and 2019.

132 In this respect, Taquara dance is somewhat comparable to Walking with several stones placed on different body parts.



# Skeleton massage

More precisely, *muscle-skeleton massage with stick and voice*. This self-massage was created from the observation of traditional massage techniques, which make use of hand, elbow and foot pressure on the body. We use a wooden stick (length: 120 cm, diameter: 5 cm) to exert pressure and engage the voice to provide relaxation of musculo-skeletal structures, oxygenate the whole body and tone the vocal apparatus.

This massage basically consists of lying with one's back (dorsal decubitus) on the stick, while loosening the body weight accompanied by deep conscious breathing and phonation of vowel sounds. Profound inhalation and exhalation as well as the emission of extended vowels (mantras) contribute to muscle relaxation and help to support and gradually eliminate any discomfort or pain. The stick should be positioned on a flat, firm surface and may be maneuvered freely according to the need of each person. Under the body, it can be positioned accompanying the vertical or the frontal axis of the body. On the body, it can be rolled from the feet to the head. Based on these elementary, suggested placements, practitioners will naturally discover other variations of exerting pressure.

The release of body weight onto the stick stimulates and invigorates all layers of skin, fascia<sup>133</sup> and the entire skeleton. The benefits of this self-massage include the improvement of the circulatory system, a considerable increase in voice capacity and the release of tension nodes from the deeper layers of the musculoskeletal system, which are difficult to reach with traditional massages.

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133 *Fascia* is a flexible and fibrous connective tissue that stabilizes, encloses and separates muscles, internal organs, and nerves. It is situated in three layers (superficial, visceral, deep) beneath the skin and forms a network able to transmit mechanical tension and to store and release elastic potential energy.



## Ecoperformance

As a performing arts concept, the term, *ecoperformance* was coined between 2009 and 2010, as part of the inauguration of a new cycle of Taanteatro works related to the performative investigation of tensions between body, ancestry, and environment. Ecoperformance understands environment and body as inseparable dimensions of performative creation. In an ecoperformance, the environment constitutes a living and interactive play of presences and forces. The performer is not the central agent, but one of the play's component's. At the same time as an ecoperformance experiments with environmental interactions as a performative event, it configures itself an environmental process. Ecoperformance can take place in any landscape, natural or urban, and may, among other possibilities, honor or re-affirm human being/environment interconnections. It may serve to raise the awareness of the harmful environmental impact of human actions, and, eventually, become a vehicle of political denunciation.

Authentic ecoperformance is inseparable from the eco-ethical and eco-poetic presence of the performer. For this reason, ecoperformative presence

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134 Consult the section *Schizopresence* in chapter 1.

135 The video-triptych *Ancestral Cerrado* is an exemplification of this idea: <https://vimeo.com/85623662>

136 The forums organized by Taanteatro Companhia had the following groups, artists, academics and producers among its collaborators: Omstrab, Passo Livre, Artesãos do Corpo, Membrana Experimental Fiat Lux, Cia. Mudanzas Escénicas Clap, Núcleo Taanteatro Córdoba, Marta Soares, Médrick Varieux, Mirtes Calheiros, Alda Maria Abreu, Rodolfo Ossés, Matías Balverdi, Cassiano Quilici, Cecilia Carrizo, Mauricio Berger, and Solange Borelli.

Man enters the forest  
the first tree falls  
man is a hero.  
The last tree falls  
man falls too.

Man enters the desert  
the first tree is born  
man is a hero.  
A forest is born  
man is born too.

*The forest by Cesar Baiocchi*

should not be confused with the aestheticized posing in front of decorative backdrops employed in some site-specific spectacles that only strive to aggrandize the aura of the artist. It is rather grounded in schizopresence<sup>134</sup> and conveyed to be experienced as a dynamic process of interaction and mutual immanence between the body of the performer and the forces and forms that compose the atmosphere of tensions characteristic of the performative environment.<sup>135</sup>

In 2011, Taanteatro Companhia organized the *1st Forum of Ecoperformance*. Under the motto *The environment is the people*. The event took place on World Environment Day, at the Umberto da Silva Dance Center of Olido Gallery in São Paulo. The following year, the second forum, *Ecology and Performing Arts*, based on a tetra pillar optics of sustainability (ecology, ethics, aesthetics, and economics) was held at the cultural space Mundo Pensante. The third forum, *Environment as performance*, was coordinated in 2013 at Espacio La Caracola in Córdoba/Argentina.<sup>136</sup>

Taanteatro Companhia, including a variety of NUTAAN editions, promoted and directed ecoperformances in the Moon Valley of the Chapada dos Veadeiros in the Central-West of Brazil; between the giant cacti of Pucará and in Tilcara's Devil's Throat in the Andes of Jujuy Province, Argentina; in the aridity of the Greek island of Rhodos; and in the terra cotta colored salt lakes of Matola, Mozambique. The company also interacted with the colonial center of Ouro Preto em Minas Gerais; with the canalized banks of the river Arroyo de La Cañada, in Cordoba, Argentina; and with the open sea at Solar do Unhão, in Salvador, Bahia. In São Paulo, it intervened in avenues, bridges, tunnels, plazas, monuments, parks, canals, cemeteries, churches, and subways. Some of these ecoperformances were recorded and disseminated through photography and video.



TRAJECTORY  
MAURA BAIOCCHI &  
TAANTEATRO COMPANHIA

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• *Breaking the Siege*



## Static-Ecstatic<sup>137</sup>

She on the street lost naked  
inside her dress  
that does not know  
in herself she lives: home sweet home  
in herself she dies: body tomb  
body prison?

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- 1956

Maura Baiocchi was born on April 19 in São João do Caiuá. Her mother, Josephina Desounet Baiocchi, and her father, César Baiocchi, are among the founders of this small town in northern Paraná/Brazil.

- 1960 to 1963

Baiocchi's first contact with theater took place in a community space where her father directed shows for adults and for children. Her mother stimulates her to study piano and teaches her embroidery, one of her favorite childhood pastimes, as well as riding horses, climbing trees, walking on walls and roof tops, swimming in ponds and streams, collecting stone. Her brother, Rômulo, teaches her how to ride a bicycle, play backyard cricket, dodge ball, and marbles.

- 1964

Brazilian coup d'état. Together with her family, Baiocchi moves for a brief period to Curitiba/Paraná and then to Brasília where she resides until 1990.

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137 The metacoreographic notations in the form of verses, reproduced in the chapter *Trajectory*, are authored by Maura Baiocchi.



• *The Four Elements*

- 1968

In Brasília, the new capital of Brazil, Baiocchi starts to study ballet.

- 1969 to 1972

She studies theater with Laís Aderne, debuts as an actress at the Pre-University Arts Center in Brasilia and widens her knowledge of performing arts, participating in modern dance, dance-theater, afro-jazz, martial arts, choral singing, and guitar courses.

- 1973 to 1976

Baiocchi studies Communication at the National University of Brasília and continues her studies of dance forms and other creative corporeal practices. On October 3, 1976, her daughter Bruna is born.

- 1977

She receives her Bachelor's degree in Communication.

- 1978

She dances in Hugo Rodas' choreography *Work N° 3* and becomes a member of Grupo Experimental de Dança de Brasília [Experimental Dance Group of Brasília], directed by Regina Miranda. With this group she performs *Encounters*, *The Four Elements*, *Triptych*, and *Breaking the siege*.<sup>138</sup>

- 1979

Baiocchi moves to São Paulo where she studies jazz, modern and classical dance with the company Ballet Stagium, directed by Marika Gidali and Décio Otero. At the Macunaíma School, directed by Sylvio Zilber and Myriam Muniz, she studies theater.

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138 TN: The titles of all works mentioned in this chapter were translated into English. The original Portuguese titles of works by Maura Baiocchi, Wolfgang Pannek and Taanteatro Companhia are referenced on the pages named *Works*.

- 1980

Back to Brasília, she creates and conducts a workshop entitled *Free Jazz* at the Center of Creativity 508 South and at the Theater and Dance School, directed by Graziela Rodrigues. She is a founding member of Movimento Cabeças.<sup>139</sup> With her urban intervention group, Eugnosic League of the Earth, and her street performance character, *Lili Manicure*, Baiocchi performs at the Concertos Cabeças.

- 1981

At Cinart (Center of Artistic Integration) she gives jazz dance classes for teenagers and ballet classes for children. At Cláudio Santoro National Theater (Villa-Lobos Theater) and within the CINART Movements event, Baiocchi presents *Chaplinlewisiana*, a choreography for adolescent dancers, and *Earth*, performed by children. She suffers a serious traffic accident, resulting in an exposed fracture of the right tibia.

- 1982

Baiocchi acts in the theater groups XPTO and Esquadrão da Vida [Squadron of Life], both directed by Ary Pára-Raios. At the Exhibition Gallery of the National Theater, she performs during the vernissage of *To the encounter of encounters* by plastic artist Annie Rottenstein. As part of the launch of Asas & Eixos [Wings & Axes], a dance group directed by Yara de Cunto and Cecília Leite, Baiocchi premieres her choreography *Boomerang* at Cláudio Santoro National Theater.

*Martins Pena Theater lives the birth of a first-rate choreographer. Her name? Maura Baiocchi. Boomerang is one of those works arising on days of grace. What makes Baiocchi's work so compelling is the extreme and diversified use of information. A flood of variations of motions and simultaneous pictures sweetly strikes us with the force of a Bloody Mary. It is difficult to digest the infinity of signs imposed on us, but the taste is unforgettable!*

Pedro Paulo Rezende, *Jornal de Brasília*.

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139 Movimento Cabeças [Movement of Heads - Brasília's Center for Art and Culture] was the most important cultural movement of Brasília in the 1980s and promoted the popular Concertos Cabeças [Head Concerts], among other activities.



• *Boomerang*



• *Lili Manicure*



• *The 7 Works of Steve*

The multimedia production *Boomerang* contains a critique of social misery and the oppression of freedom of expression during the Brazilian military regime. The work is censored and immediately excluded from the Asas & Eixos dance repertoire. Nevertheless, almost thirty years later, in 2010, the journal *Correio Braziliense* lists the piece among the “50 performances that marked Brasília.”

- 1983

Baiocchi inaugurates the Sintonia Studio where she teaches contemporary dance and jazz, in addition to coordinating theater, yoga, kung-fu and tai-chi classes. As a cast member of Asas & Eixos, she dances in *Carmina Burana* and *The Two Deaths of Quincas Wateryell*. She stages her play *The Lord of the Keys* at the Federal University of Goiás and creates *Candomblé*, a choreography for a composition by Rodolfo Caesar performed at the 1st Encounter of Electroacoustic Music of Brasília. As assistant director, Baiocchi works with Reinaldo Cotia Braga in Fauzi Arap's play *The Love of No* in Brasília and with Odilon Camargo and his group *Deixaeteolhardecimaembaixo*<sup>140</sup> in Goiania. In José de Lima Acioli's movie *The Third Margin*, filmed in Aruanã/Goiás, Baiocchi works as an executive producer.

- 1984 to 1986

Baiocchi is part of the first teaching staff of what would become the future Institute of Arts (IDA) at the National University of Brasília. In this context, she becomes a founding member of *Cometas Cenas*, a platform for the presentation of university performing arts works. At the inauguration of this project, she presents two pieces: *Cristovam my Love or to Create Tension* and *The Present of the Butterfly*, her first dramatic and choreographic incursion for an audience of children. In the following two years, she presents *Radical Solitude*, *Critical Point* and *Spiral* at *Saltimbancos Space*, the headquarter of *Cometas Cenas*, located in the Design department of the University. On campus, Baiocchi coordinates performative interventions with her students, addressing disparities between body and environment. She also conducts workshops open to the community with the purpose of social inclusion.

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140 The English translation of the group's name is: *Letmeseeyouupsidedown*.

During this period, she founds several performing arts groups: Weather Forecast, Naked Photographer, and Strange Body. The transgressive approach to the body and dance developed by these investigative and interactive multi-media groups diverges significantly from the prevailing dance-aesthetic canons in Brazil. Though short-lived, due to a lack of institutional and financial support, the activities of these groups later prove fruitful, setting the tone for the creative process of *Taanteatro Dynamics*.

- 1985

End of the Brazilian military dictatorship. Working with the urban intervention group Naked Photographer, Baiocchi experiments with a “static-ecstatic” way of dancing that she calls “photographic dance.” She conducts workshops at the Cultural Foundation of the Federal District, performs at vernissages of plastic artists like Eduardo Carreira, Terezinha Louzada, Naura Timm, Wagner Hermusche, and Vilma Noël, and collaborates with visual artist Sônia Paiva in site-specific performances. In partnership with Eliana Carneiro, Baiocchi conceives and performs *Duel*. Preliminary versions of this choreography are presented in Rio de Janeiro, at the Paço Imperial and Sesc Tijuca Theater, as well as part of the Fala Brasília project, promoted by the Culture Department of the Federal District.

- 1986

In Brasília, Baiocchi teaches at the Faculty of Arts Dulcina de Moraes. She stages *Duel*, *Invisible Connection* and *Nostalgic Tradition* at the Cláudio Santoro National Theater and choreographs and directs *Connection and Disconnection* for Weather Forecast. The journal *O Estado de S. Paulo* reviews the performance of *Duel* at the National Dance Festival in São Paulo as an attempt to break with “the traditional canons” and as a quest to “make dance a *limit-experience*.”

*Between the first and second part of the performance, the audience experiences a rare moment in the world of dance: there is only one arm-chair covered with phylum while music flows over the stage. (...) In the meantime, during this ballet without bodies or movements, the public hardly knows what to do. Some cough, others show a long yawn, some retreat, and many, many others remain, more and more curious. And this is what conveys *Duel*'s characteristic: curiosity with strong strokes of profound audacity. Alexandre Ribondi, *Jornal de Brasília*.*

## Outsider

the dive  
of the pilgrim body  
transforms the poem into toothy laughter  
escapes from the paper and bites

art without baptism  
liberates the verse  
without address  
nor language

attentive heart  
sharp blade  
tantric and tuned  
drifter universe  
on the road of vacuum

atmosphere of fertile tensions

while the monkey dances and sings  
causing echo in the viscera

similarly, someone lying on dry leaves  
without crushing them, lifts up and interferes

diving into the dive  
diving into the dive  
diving into the dive







• *Outsider*

**Works 1981-1986**

1981

- *Chaplinlewisniana*
- *Terra [Earth]*

1982

- *Bumerangue [Boomerang]*

1983

- *O dono das chaves  
[The Owner of the Keys]*
- *Candomblé*

1984

- *O presente da borboleta [The Gift of the Butterfly]*
- *Olho d'água [Water-Eye]*
- *Duo*
- *Cristovam meu amor ou para dar te(n)são  
[Cristovam my Love or to Create Tension]*

1985

- *Forasteiro [Outsider]*
- *Spiral*
- *Radical solidão [Radical Solitude]*
- *Ponto crítico [Critical Point]*
- *Du-Elo [Duel] – 1st version*
- *Estática-extática [Static-Ecstatic]*

1986

- *Du-Elo [Duel] – 2nd version*
- *Conexão invisível [Invisible Connection]*
- *Tradição nostálgica [Nostalgic Tradition]*
- *Conexão e desconexão  
[Connection and Disconnection]*

• *Du-Elo [Duel] – 1st version*



In April, in the foyer of Cláudio Santoro National Theater, *Duel* is performed in a special session for the Japanese dancers Kazuo Ohno, Yoshito Ohno, and members of their entourage. At the end of the year, Baiocchi quits teaching at the National University of Brasília in order to study butoh dance with Kazuo Ohno in Japan.

*(...) I saw their dance accompanied by mysterious music. I remember the alchemy casting pot. Dropping coats of the universe from within, one by one. It seems like a strange substance a magician is dropping to earth. Is that*

*strange substance a placenta witnessing the birth of a life? The physical body is the coat of the universe worn by the spirit. Breast milk begins to spill covering the earth. Kazuo Ohno<sup>141</sup> on *Duel*.*



• Kazuo Ohno and Maura Baiocchi

• 1987

In January, Baiocchi attends the tribute to Tatsumi Hijikata, on the one year anniversary of the death of the creator of *ankoku* butoh. She begins her studies with Ohno in Yokohama and trains with Min Tanaka's company *Maijuku* in Yamanashi. During this year, Baiocchi collaborates with performers such as Minoru Hideshima, Nakamura and Anita Saij, the painter and photographer Nourit Masson-Sekiné, the German theater researcher Karl Hormes, the circus theater director Ikuo Mitsuhashi, the photographer Yuji Kusuno, and the composer of electronic music Kazuo Uehara.

In Tokyo, she presents a series of solos: *Hansen-Jo* for a vernissage by the Portuguese artist Sebastião Rezende in Gallery Space 21; *Voice phrase* for electronic music by Kazuo Uehara at the Seibu Theater 200; *Oya* for Nourit

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141 Kazuo Ohno (1906-2010) was an internationally acclaimed Japanese dancer. Alongside Tatsumi Hijikata, he is considered the co-founder of *Butoh* dance. Ohno also wrote several books, among which is *Kazuo Ohno's World: From Without & Within* (2004).



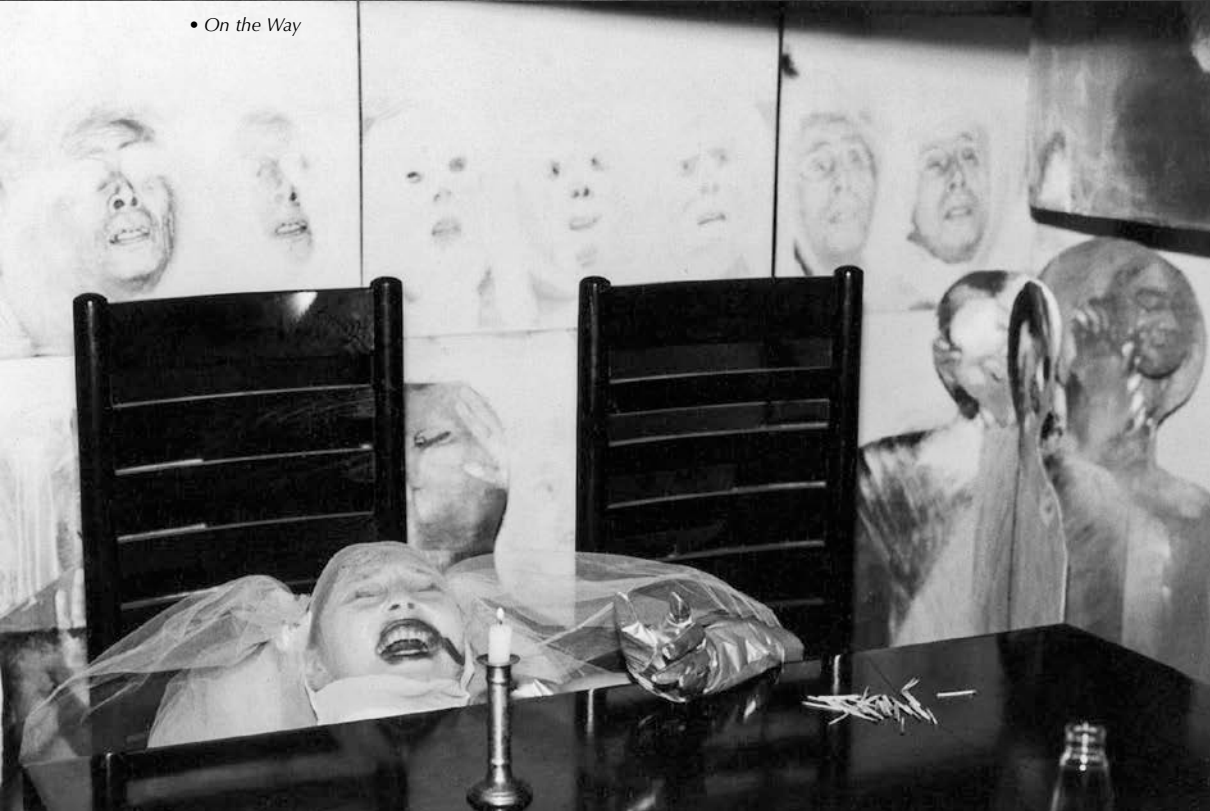
• *Between the Sword and the Wall*

Masson-Sékiné's installation *4 Landscapes for 4 Dancers* at the Striped House Museum of Art; *Yemoja* with live voice by singer Marília Yoshimasu at Agora Studio. At the Box Gallery Bar in Shinjuku, she performs within *On the Way*, an installation about Kazuo Ohno conceived by Nourit Masson-Sékiné.

Baiocchi performs *Between the Sword and the Wall* at the Hinoemata Performance Festival, which also showcases works by Kazuo Ohno, Yoshito Ohno, Saburo Teshigawara and Ishi Mitsukata, among others. Baiocchi is invited to perform at the Terpsicore Theater in Tokyo as part of the Post-Hinoemata Performance Festival, where she presents the trilogy *Three Daughters and a Water-Eye: Yemoja, Oya, Oshum*. On the streets of Yokohama and in events at Enkei Theater and Jan Jan Theater in Tokyo, promoted by Ikuo Mitsuhashi's Mugon Geki group, Baiocchi presents the first studies of what she later calls *Ophelia Subtraction*. For compositions by Kazuo Uehara (*Musique Collage II* and *Cosmos I*), she records locutions of poetic texts released in 1990 on the CD *Cosmos I*.



• Photo rehearsal at the Kazuo Ohno studio in Yokohama



• On the Way



## Hansen-jo

she observes  
stays empty  
runs off  
like juice of fruit  
from the mouth corner  
meanwhile the city dances ancestral earthquakes  
she knows Mount Fuji will cry out  
and the other side of the world will feel its pain  
for the suffering of the world  
the dancer offers her passage  
revolt without return  
for us, the echo



• *Variation in Black*





• *Variation in White*

- 1988

Returning to Brasília, Baiocchi creates *Variation in Black* and *Variation in White*. Both solos, based on the work of Portuguese poet Florbela Espanca, premier at Cláudio Santoro National Theater as a special inclusion in *Florbela*, a play directed by Plínio Mosca.

She performs *Brasília Bride* at Acts for Athos, an event in honor of plastic artist Athos Bulcão. Together with the choreographer JC Viola she stars in *Suite Brasília*, an episode of the movie *Brasília – the last utopia*, directed by Moacir de Oliveira and with a soundtrack by Renato Vasconcelos.

At the inauguration of the International Holistic University of Brasília (UNI-PAZ), directed by Pierre Weil, Baiocchi performs in collaboration with visual artist Sônia Paiva and creates a series of solo ecoperformances in the form of photographic essays: *Isadora Duncan and the Bull*, *Pina Bausch Sleeping*, and *Martha Graham in the Forest*, the latter considered “a perfect example of organic fusion with nature.”<sup>142</sup>

- *Isadora Duncan and the Bull*



At Cláudio Santoro National Theater, Baiocchi premieres her choreography *When the Butterflies Get Lost – Transparent Dances*. The work, supervised and with lighting design by Takao Kusuno, includes actress Andreia Neves and has costumes by Eurico Rocha, her collaborator in several works. In his review for *Jornal de Brasília*, Celso Araújo describes Baiocchi as “the revelation of a touching and devastating blow” and envisions her work as “a definitive trip to a radical theater.” The work receives the Best Play Award of the Association of Art Critics of the Federal District.

*Maura has what the Japanese call ‘isshoukenmei’, which is equivalent to ‘surrendering oneself with body and soul to what you are doing’.*  
Takao Kusuno<sup>143</sup>

- 1989

At UNIPAZ, Baiocchi conceives and coordinates the Embrace Project, an educational multidisciplinary program dedicated to rural school children. With a cast consisting of performing arts students, including Cecília Borges, Andrea Jabor and Jorge Dupan, she presents *Forest – Ephemeral Dances* at Sesc Garage Theater. She moves to Germany, residing in Berlin for nine months. At Freiraum Theater in Bremen, she presents the solo version of *When the Butterflies Get Lost*.

*The choreographic performance of the Brazilian Maura Baiocchi, who danced for the first time in Europe, offered the rare opportunity to experience the cultural interlacing between traditional stage dance, butoh, and Brazilian shamanistic ritual. The peculiar fusion of concentrated seriousness and playful comedy, of strong contemplative interiority and shimmering vivacity makes the dances of Maura Baiocchi so rich and exciting.*  
Christine Hoffmann, *Tanz Aktuell*, Germany.

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142 Silva, Soraia Maria (2016). O naturalismo na dança [Naturalism in Dance]. In Guinsburg, J. & Faria, J. R. (Eds.), *O naturalismo* [Naturalism], São Paulo: Perspectiva.

143 Takao Kusuno (1945-2001) interviewed by JOSÉ - *Jornal da Semana Inteira*, Brasília. Quando somem as borboletas. Sincretismo poético. [When the Butterflies get lost. Poetic Syncretism]. 1988, December. Kusuno was a São Paulo based Japanese choreographer, director and founder of the Companhia Tamanduá de Dança-Teatro



• *Pina Bausch Sleeping*





When the  
butterflies get lost

silent olympic beauty  
ineffable mnemosyne  
eternal birth  
larval nudity bursting  
like  
glimmer of light  
penetrating the hours

• *When the Butterflies Get Lost – Transparent Dances*



• Brasília Bride



Present at the Fall of the Berlin Wall, Baiocchi performs *The Day the Wall Fell* in the city streets, in collaboration with the painter Rosemarie Lobert. With the solo, *Behring Strait*, she is preselected to participate in the Choreographic Workshop Vienna'89 as part of the International Dance Week. In Japan, she cooperates with composer Kazuo Uehara in a multimedia show with lighting and direction of Yuji Kusuno, presented at the 2nd International Festival of Music Tega '89. Back in Brazil, she performs alongside Uehara in the event "Japan: Art and Music Today" at the Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP). The theater director Antunes Filho invites Baiocchi to join the Center for Theater Research (CPT).

- 1990

Baiocchi moves to São Paulo. After leaving the CPT, she conducts workshops at Vento Forte Theater and at the Catholic University Theater (TUCA). In the Strindberg play *To Damaskus*, directed by Dario Uzan, Baiocchi works as assistant director and choreographer. Invited by actor and producer, Sérgio Mamberti, she presents *Absolutes* at the Crowne Plaza Theater. Announced by the press as "Brazilian butoh takes the stage" (O Estado de S. Paulo), this set of solo works is composed of *Ophelia Subtraction*, *Variation in White*, *Variation in Black*, *Himalaya*, and *Behring Strait*.

*The audience that crowded the theater (...) encountered moments of intense emotion, deep lyricism, beauty, and enchantment in the characters created by Maura Baiocchi, and applauded with enthusiasm.*  
Carlos von Schmidt, Artes, São Paulo.

Baiocchi inaugurates the Butoh Nucleus Taan Technika in São Paulo and is portrayed as the choreographer who "makes butoh grow in Brazil" (Diário Popular). For her students, she conceives and directs *The Bride Frightened at Seeing Life Opened*<sup>144</sup>, presented at Vento Forte Theater and *Solos*, consisting of seven pieces by Cecília Borges (*Ilmigum*), Clarissa Drebtchinsky (*Bouquet*), Flávia Pucci (*Cal and the White Butterfly*), Katia Olmos (*Frida...*), among others, presented at the former Auditorium Dom Paulo Tarso of the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC/SP) and at Ruth Escobar Theater. Invited by José Celso Martinez Corrêa, founder and director of Teatro Oficina, Baiocchi participates in the first public reading of the play *Cacilda!*. She starts to delineate the set of practices and ideas later called Taanteatro Dynamics.

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144 The title of the piece was adopted from a painting by Frida Kahlo.





• *Ophelia Subtraction*

## Transparent

I saw myself inside out, performing  
a dance, neither beautiful nor ugly  
neither right nor wrong  
only absolute and intense

it's like taking a somersault

while I jumped I understood that our body is not our  
body, it is an aquarium and may break  
fish out of the water, necessary risk

and thus, empty and hospitable  
lovingly tense in raw freedom and continuous flow  
from my abyssal core I discovered  
the exact and ancestral gesture  
preceding form and  
thus preceding art





• *Himalaya*



• *The Bride Frightened at Seeing Life Opened (2nd Movement: Pilgrim Grooms)*



## **Works 1987-1990**

1987

- *Hansen-Jo [Spiral]*
- *Frase Vocal [Vocal Phrase]*
- *Entre a espada e a parede [Between the Sword and the Wall]*
- *Três filhas e um olho d'água: Iemanjá, Iansã, Oxum [Three Daughters and a Water-Eye: Yemoja, Oya, Oshum]*

1988

- *Variação em negro [Variation in Black]*
- *Variação em branco [Variation in White]*
- *Brasília noiva [Brasília Bride]*
- *Isadora Duncan e o touro [Isadora Duncan and the Bull]*
- *Martha Graham na floresta [Martha Graham in the Forest]*
- *Pina Bausch dormindo [Pina Bausch Sleeping]*
- *Quando somem as borboletas – danças transparentes [When the Butterflies Get Lost – Transparent Dances]*

1989

- *Floresta – danças efêmeras [Forest – Ephemeral Dances]*
- *O dia em que o muro caiu [The Day the Wall Fell]*

1990

- *Subtração de Ophelia [Ophelia Subtraction]*
- *Himalaia [Himalaya]*
- *Estreito de Behring [Behring Strait]*
- *A noiva que se assusta vendo a vida aberta [The Bride Frightened at Seeing Life Opened]*
- *Solos: Ilimiguim, Cal e a mariposa branca [Cal and the White Moth], Buquê [Bouquet], Frida..., Diadorim Veredas [Diadorim Paths], Sanktum [Sanctum], Andra*



• *The Laughing Square*



- 1991

Baiocchi conceives and stages the solo performance *A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night – Dance of Tensions*<sup>145</sup> at the Catholic University Theater of São Paulo. She chooses *Tabula Rasa* by Arvo Pärt as the soundtrack for the work. The costumes are made by Eurico Rocha. She then presents the piece at Freiraum Theater in Bremen. With the Butoh Nucleus Taan Technika, Baiocchi performs urban interventions in avenues, cemeteries, churches, and parks of São Paulo. She conceives and directs *The Laughing Square*, presented at the Sesc Dance Biennial and at Mambembe Theater in São Paulo. A headline of *Jornal de Brasília* declares that “The universe of butoh gains a new company”, and attributes to Baiocchi’s work “a very particular process of perfecting the body and full identification with the language of Butoh.” Yet, in the same article, the choreographer points to the fact that “the introduction of text and literary characters in the universe of Butoh” conveys “unprecedented risks and challenges, which will naturally lead to an over-run of the form/content traditionally known as Butoh.” The Vitae Arts Grant for her project *Taanteatro: a research for the transformation of dance* becomes a decisive impulse for the foundation of Taanteatro Companhia in the same year. Baiocchi wins the Best Actress Award at the CUPECÊ Film and Video Festival of São Luís do Maranhão for playing the main character in *Nayara – The Gorilla Woman*, a short movie directed by Marta Nassar.

- 1992

Baiocchi’s *When the Butterflies Get Lost* is part of the cultural program of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Eco 92) in Brasília. In Bremen/Germany, alongside artists and groups such as Kazuo Ohno, Yoshito Ohno, Ko Morubushi and Carlotta Ikeda’s Ariadone, Baiocchi

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145 Subsequently, the title is modified to *Frida Kahlo - A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night*.



• *Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night*

performs *Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night* and *Variation in Black* at the 92 'Butoh and Related Arts Festival, organized by Jürgen Müller-Othzen<sup>146</sup>. Wolfgang Pannek, then performing arts editor of the magazine *Bremer*, comments:

*Baiocchi did not give a biographical account of the historical Kahlo. But she conveyed, through her own language, a universal expression to Kahlo's wounds, to her loneliness, her desire for love and cosmic fusion, as well as to her natural and mythical sensibility.*

Pannek moves to Brazil and joins the company. The Vitae Fellowship allows the compilation of the concepts of Taanteatro Dynamics and

the creation of *Alice's Book of the Dead – Transitional Dances*. The six-hour dance-theater play is presented in four chapters and deals with the pilgrimages of Alice in the process of maturing, being constantly deconstructed and reterritorialized. The dialogue is composed by Baiocchi, adapted from a variety of texts such as *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Marguerite Yourcenar's *Fires*, texts on Greco-Roman, Hindu, Jewish and Afro-Brazilian mythology in combination with her own writings. The cast includes Regiane Caminni, Isa Gouvea, Valter Felipe, Adilson Nascimento, Marta Meola, Clarissa Drebitschinky, Rivaldo Nogueira, and Vera de Laurentiis. The work, with graphic design by Guto Lacaz, premieres at Sesc Pompeia Theater in São Paulo. Interviewed by *Folha de S. Paulo*, Baiocchi denies the existence of 'Brazilian butoh'. Back to Brasília, *Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night* is performed at the Cláudio Santoro National Theater. As a part of the international festival Conexão América, produced by Yakoff Sarcovas, Baiocchi performs *Variation in Black* at the Memorial of Latin America Theater.

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146 The artist is today known as Jürgen Müller-Popken.



• Frida Kahlo — A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night



*In Frida Kahlo, Maura Baiocchi is uncorrectable. A body without organs as Artaud wanted, a body deified by the fury of its concentration. Celso Araújo, Jornal de Brasília.*

- 1993

Baiocchi is invited to inaugurate the Armando Álvares Penteado Foundation Theater (FAAP Theater) in São Paulo where she presents her solo repertoire, including *Ophelia Subtraction*, *Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night*, *Himalaya – the Ancestor*, *Variation in Black*, and *Variation in White*. In his review for *O Estado de S. Paulo*, the critic Jefferson del Rios describes Baiocchi's work as "an art of elevated introspection and minimal gestures full of meaning" and compliments "the rigor of the performer's physical manifestation (...) Maura elaborates detailed subtleties." Taanteatro Companhia performs *At the Foot of the Mountain* at the Memorial of Latin America Theater during the International Conference of Education for the Future. At the School of Communication and Arts (ECA) at the University of São Paulo, she conducts the extension course *Butoh: from Kazuo Ohno to the West*. The director, performer and lighting designer Rodrigo Garcia joins the company.



- *The Laughing Square*



• *Alice's Book of the Dead – Transitional Dances*

• 1994

Pannek becomes co-director and producer of Taanteatro Companhia. Baiocchi conducts an extension course at the Performing Arts Department of the University of Brasília. At the invitation of Marcelo Castillo and the Latin American Network of Producers, Baiocchi presents *Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night* at the General San Martin Municipal Theater in Cordoba, Argentina. Invited by director Jorge Diaz, she also teaches an extension course at the National University of Córdoba. Baiocchi performs *Variation in White* at the IV Vitória-Brazil Dance Festival, curated by Marcelo Ferreira.

*The audience of Maura Baiocchi's work had access to a rare display of creativity. Her sculptural body moves as if time does not exist. Sympathetic, crazy, owner of not very reassuring dreamlike images. (...) It is possible that her presence has triggered a long-lasting creative effect. G.A., Página 12, Córdoba/Argentina.*



• CainAbel



• Month of Maya

## **Works 1991-1996**

1991

- *Mês de Maya [Month of Maya]* – urban intervention
- *Frida Kahlo – uma mulher de pedra dá luz à noite [Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night]*
- *O quadrado que ri [The Laughing Square]*
- *O terrível [The Terrible]* – urban intervention

1992

- *O livro dos mortos de Alice – danças transitórias [Alice's Book of the Dead – Transitional Dances]*

1993

- *Ao pé da montanha [At the Foot of the Mountain]*
- *Variação para bola e Shiva [Variation for Ball and Shiva]*

1994

- *CaimAbel [CainAbel]*
- *Variação para bola, Shiva e Madalena [Variation for Ball, Shiva and Magdalene]*

1995

- *In Billie*
- *Mês de Maya [Month of Maya]* – urban intervention

1996

- *Artaud – onde deus corre com olhos de uma mulher cega [Artaud – Where God Runs with Eyes of a Blind Woman]*
- *I: uma ópera chips [I: A Chips Opera]*

- 1995

Wolfgang Pannek conceives and directs *CainAbel* performed by Davi Taiu and Cesar Gouvêa and premiered at the Centro Cultural São Paulo. Baiocchi conceives and produces with Pannek the '95 *Butoh and Research Theater Festival*, organized by Taanteatro Companhia, simultaneously in São Paulo, Curitiba and Brasília. The multidisciplinary program offers a panorama of butoh dance showcasing the Japanese artists Ko Morubushi, Urara Kusanagi, Min Tanaka and Iwana Masaki for the first time in Brazil. The German performer Jürgen Mueller-Othzen, the French visual artist and butoh researcher Nourit Masson-Sékiné are also involved. The festival features a series of movies about butoh dance, including works by Chiaki Nagano and Peter Sempel. Contemporary Brazilian theater is represented by the groups Lume, Neo IAO and Orlando Furioso, the actresses and dancers Felicia Johansson, Cecília Borges and Júlia Pascali, the singer Madalena Bernardes, the researchers Renato Cohen, Cassiano Quilici and Isa Kopelmann, and Taanteatro Companhia. During this festival, Baiocchi launches *Butoh – Dance Path of the Soul*,<sup>147</sup> the first book about butoh dance in Portuguese, reviewed as “a good introduction”<sup>148</sup> to the subject.

*Baiocchi (in)forms the interested reader. She gives a comprehensive view of the movement and its unfolding to the present day (...) 'Butoh – Dance Path of the Soul' fulfills the purpose of showing the ideals of Hijikata and Ohno, as well as of their disciples.*

Valmir Santos, *Diário de Mogi*, São Paulo State.

Taanteatro Companhia participates in the Winter Festival of the Federal University of Minas Gerais held in Ouro Preto with *Ophelia Subtraction* and *Month of Maya*, an urban intervention resulting from a workshop. At the Monte Azul Theater Festival in São Paulo, the company performs Pannek's *CainAbel* and Valter Felipe's *In Billie*.

- 1996

Maura Baiocchi plays in Walter Rogério's feature movie *Eyes of Vampa*. Pannek translates and later produces Thomas Bernhard's play *Destination*,

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147 Baiocchi, Maura (1995). *Butoh - Dança Veredas D'Alma*. São Paulo: Palas Athena Editora.

148 Savini, Marcos (1995, October 30). Para entender a 'dança das trevas' [To understand the 'dance of darkness']. *Jornal de Brasília*.



• *In the Mood of  
a Black Mountain*



• The crew of "The Conquest"



• The Conquest



starring Maria Alice Vergueiro and directed by Luciano Chirolli. At Teatro Sérgio Cardoso, Baiocchi appears as a guest performer in Min Tanaka's solo piece *In the Mood of a Black Mountain*, produced by Pannek. She conceives and directs *I: A Chips Opera*, premiered on the roof-top of the Estúdio Nova Dança in Sao Paulo and later performed in streets, squares and tunnels of the city. The cast includes Valter Felipe, Isa Gouvêa, Wellington Duarte and Eliana Santana among its dancers. In cooperation with Teatro Andante, Baiocchi directs *Tauromachy*, featuring Tarcisio Homem and Ângela Mourão. The work premieres at the Teatro da Praça in Belo Horizonte. *Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night* is shown at the International Festival of Londrina (FILO).

Taanteatro Companhia produces *Artaud 100 Years* [Artaud 100 Anos], an international project in homage to the centenary of birth of the French poet, director and actor Antonin Artaud. Conceived and curated by Wolfgang Pannek, the project takes place at MASP, Brazilian Cinematheque, and Radio USP. The opening speech of the multidisciplinary project is given by the poet and translator Claudio Willer. The program includes a photo exhibition by Denise Colomb, lectures, recitals, book presentations, radio shows, movies, and three commissioned premieres. At the MASP auditorium, *Artaud – Where God Runs With Eyes of a Blind Woman*, conceived and directed by Baiocchi and performed by Taanteatro Companhia, as well as *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*, directed by José Celso Martinez Corrêa and presented by Teatro Oficina, are performed for the first time. The third work, *The Conquest*, an adaptation of Artaud's *The Conquest of Mexico*, directed and choreographed by Min Tanaka and with Baiocchi as assistant director, premieres at Sérgio Cardoso Theater. The cast of the latter includes Adilson Nascimento, Eliana Santana, Estevão Pedroso, Jorge Schutze, Luciana Porta, Rodrigo Garcia, Valter Felipe, and Wilson Julião, among others.

- 1997

Taanteatro Companhia performs *Artaud – Where God Runs With the Eyes of a Blind Woman* at Centro Cultural São Paulo and, during the Popular Seasons promoted by the Secretary of Culture of the Federal District, at Cláudio Santoro National Theater. *!Arará! Stories That the Bones Sing* premieres at Hilton Theater São Paulo, opening the festival *ContraDança*, curated by Celso Curi. On invitation by director Henrique Dias, the play is performed within the project *Via Paulista* at Sérgio Porto Municipal Culture Space in Rio de Janeiro. In his review for the *Folha de S. Paulo*, Nelson de Sá observes:



• Artaud – *Where God Runs with Eyes of a Blind Woman*

*Baiocchi (...), the greatest Brazilian exponent of butoh, shows far more in the play than this original influence (...) she reminds us of the American 'stand-up' (...) and proves to be a quality comedian. Apollonian, though Dionysian, she is extremely rigorous, amidst, as she says, the greatest 'mess'. The visual quality and the gestural refinement of her mise-en-scène are of obsessive care. Valter Felipe is the accomplished example of this integration. The actor's movements are of millimetric precision and, at the same time, display a provoking and fascinating lack of effort.*<sup>149</sup>

With *Variation for Ball, Shiva and Madalena* by Valter Felipe and Isa Gouvêa, the company participates in the Festival III Curta Teatro de Sorocaba and receives the Best Costume and Best Lighting Awards. *Tauromachy* is part of the opening program of the Winter Festival of the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Ouro Preto. The company launches *Taanteatro – Notebook 1*, the first publication synthesizing concepts and practices of Taanteatro Dynamics. Baiocchi plays the main character in *Impressions for Clara*, a short movie by Joel Yamagi.

- 1998

Pannek co-produces the presentation of *The Conquest* at Setagaya Public Theater in Tokyo. At Plan B theater, also in Tokyo and directed by Min Tanaka, Taanteatro participates in *Tropic of Capricorn / 6 Dancers from São Paulo*, performing *In Billie* by Valter Felipe and *Matter 1st Form* by Maura Baiocchi. In Brazil, *!Arará! Stories that the Bones Sing* opens the festival Perspectives of Theater promoted by Sesc Santos/SP. The mise-en-scène of George Tabori's *Weisman and Copperface*, translated and directed by Pannek and with Linneu Dias and Antônio Galeão in the title roles, premieres at Goethe Institute São Paulo and is performed at the international theater festival Porto Alegre em Cena, held in Rio Grande do Sul. The work receives a variety of positive reviews:

*Maura Baiocchi's and Wolfgang Pannek's Taanteatro Companhia is a world apart. Their plays are well done, with intense care applied to creation and elaboration. The text development and the study of physical action point to unique paths.* Nelson de Sá, *Folha de S. Paulo*.

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149 De Sá, Nelson (1997, October 24). <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/1997/10/24/ilustrada/27.html>.

*It is very pleasant to see such a homogeneous cast. Those who appreciate great actor's work had a kind of redemption.*  
Francisco Wasilewski, *Palco e Plateia*, Porto Alegre.

*The German director Wolfgang Pannek hits the spot, focusing on the text and the actors, without appealing to exhibitionism in the mise-en-scène.* Renato Mendonça, *Zero Hora*, Porto Alegre.

- 1999

In São Paulo, *Weisman and Copperface* is performed during the Theatrical Month, promoted by the Municipal Secretary of Culture. At the Fundaj Theater in Recife and at the Deodoro Theater in Maceió, Baiocchi presents *Matter 2nd Form*. The venues are organized by theater scholar Nara Salles. Baiocchi wins the Best Actress Award at the Recife Cinema Festival for her performance in *Impressions for Clara*. On invitation and produced by Marcello Castillo, Baiocchi performs *Ophelia Subtraction* at General Paz Culture Center in Córdoba/Argentina:

*Baiocchi is an artist who is the undisputed owner of all powers conferred by this word.*  
Alberto Lugaluppi, *La Mañana de Córdoba*, Argentina.

*Chants of Maldoror*, a choreographic recital, conceived and directed by Baiocchi, and based on the book by Comte de Lautréamont, premieres at the National Foundation of Art in São Paulo (Funarte SP). Among the artistic collaborators of the play are the poet and translator Claudio Willer and the composer Felipe Julian. The cast includes Valter Felipe, Isa Gouvêa, Wolfgang Pannek, Antonio Velloso, Isabela Graeff, Ondina Claes, and Ilana Gorban. At the Museum of Contemporary Art of Strasbourg in France, Baiocchi performs *Tree of Life*, conceived by Nourit Masson-Sékiné. *First Faust*, an adaptation of Fernando Pessoa's work, directed by Pannek and featuring Domingos Nunes, premieres at the Faust Festival, organized by Goethe Institute São Paulo. At the Mário de Andrade Municipal Library, Pannek stages *If you go to Frankfurt*, a play by George Barcat based on the life of Friedrich Hölderlin. *MatterLove*, written, choreographed and directed by Baiocchi, premieres at the Museum of Image and Sound – MIS. The piece, inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche's book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, includes video art by Wagner Hermusche.

• Chants of Maldoror



• ¡Arará! Stories that the Bones Sing



- 2000

At Sala de las Américas Theater of the University of Córdoba, the company stages *MatterDeath*, a performance resulting from a workshop held at culture space Apeiron Zool, coordinated by Diego Trejo and Karol Zingali. On this occasion begins Taanteatro´s cooperation with the director and choreographer Marcelo Comandu and with the painter Candelaria Silvestro. At Goethe Institute São Paulo and in honor of Friedrich Nietzsche's centenary of death, Baiocchi presents *Matter – State of Power*. The piece includes a commissioned composition of electroacoustic music by the Uruguayan composer Conrado Silva. Pannek directs Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, conceived as an urban intervention, and performed in parks, squares, streets and bridges of São Paulo. In Brasília, *MatterLove* is performed at the Cláudio Santoro National Theater and *!Arará! Stories that the Bones Sing* is shown at Teatro da Caixa.

*Maura Baiocchi is one of the most impressive scenic figures ever seen on Brazilian stages. She dominates all "modules" of the mise-en-scène of an original and contemporary theater. Baiocchi edifies a moving and scary panel, an imaginary drama beyond avant-garde, inquisitive and aesthetically unprecedented.*

Celso Araújo, *Guia Local*, Brasília

*Taanteatro Companhia belongs today to an important group of Brazilian artists that investigates the theatrical language.*

Alberto Guzik, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, São Paulo.

- *MatterLove*



- *MatterLove*



• *Frida Kahlo - A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night*

• 2001

The first edition of the annual international Taanteatro Residence Workshop (TTOR) takes place in São Lourenço da Serra, an Atlantic forest region in the State of São Paulo. Funarte SP hosts the project *Taanteatro 10 Years*. The program includes the premiere of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra – 4th Part*, with stage design by Candelaria Silvestro and original music by the New York-based band Artanker Convoy; the restaging of *!Arará! Stories that the Bones Sing*; the premiere of the duet version of *Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night*; the *Nietzsche Solos* project including *Become Who You Are* by Valter Felipe, *Night Song* by Ilana Gorban and *Decline* by Isa Gouvêa; *Soledad*, the first painting exhibition of Candelaria Silvestro in Brazil, and a photo exhibition by Bruna De Araujo. At the Araguaia River in Goiás, the company films *Fluid Forms*, a short movie directed by Wolfgang Pannek, featuring Maura Baiocchi and Valter Felipe, and with cinematography and editing by Bruna De Araujo.

## Works 1997-2002

1997

- *!Arará! Histórias que os ossos cantam*  
[!Arará! Stories that the Bones Sing]

1998

- *Homen Branco e Cara Vermelha*  
[Weisman and Copperface]
- *Matéria 1ª forma* [Matter 1st Form]

1999

- *MatériAmor* [MatterLove]
- *Cantos de Maldoror* [Chants of Maldoror]
- *Se um dia fores a Frankfurt*  
[If You go to Frankfurt]

2000

- *Matériamuerte* [MatterDeath]
- *Matéria – estado de potência* [Matter – State of Power]
- *Esperando Godot* [Waiting for Godot] – urban intervention

2001

- *Assim falou Zarathustra – 4ª parte* [Thus Spoke Zarathustra - 4th Part]
- *Torna-te o que és* [Become Who You Are]
- *Ocaso* [Decline]
- *Canto noturno* [Night Song]
- *Walserianas 1*
- *Frida Kahlo – uma mulher de pedra dá luz à noite* (versão duo)  
[Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night] – duo version

2002

- *Webshaman – Mandala Dance of the Ancestral Body*
- *Submerge*
- *!Submerge!*



• *Matter 3rd Form*



- 2002

In collaboration with Artanker Convoy, Baiocchi performs *Submerge* at the Oasis Festival hosted by Chashama Theater in Manhattan, New York. *¡Submerge!*, the duo version of this piece, with the participation of Pannek, and stage design by Candelaria Silvestro, is enthusiastically received at the Mercosur International Theater Festival in Córdoba/Argentina.

*Taanteatro Companhia dazzled. La Prensa, Buenos Aires.*

*An amazing show, ... an innovative proposal, ... a powerful cast. Miguel Passarini, El Ciudadano, Rosario.*

*Córdoba bet again on bold productions. Enthusiasm was remarkable in the cathartic ritual with which ended ¡Submerge!, a performance of Taanteatro Companhia, directed by Brazilian Maura Baiocchi. Videos, paintings and live music accompanied the dance of the protagonists,*

• *Taanteatro Residence Workshop – TTOR*



evoking the trajectory from an almost animalesque existence to a state of self-affirmation of will to power and creative freedom.  
Daniela Spósito, *Clarín*, Buenos Aires.

A pleasurable game of energies. "Pain passes, but pleasure wants eternity." An almost perfect definition of the experience of seeing *Taanteatro*. Luisa Heredia, *La Voz del Interior*, Córdoba.

With *Webshaman – Mandala Dance of the Ancestral Body*, Baiocchi participates in *Constellation*, a performance and digital technology project organized by Renato Cohen for the *Ares e Pensares* (Airs and Thoughts) project promoted by SESC Vila Mariana/São Paulo. In São Lourenço da Serra, she conducts a workshop within the Young Agent Project sponsored by the Secretary of Education of São Paulo. At the invitation of the director José Celso Martinez Correa, *Taanteatro Companhia* collaborates with *Os Sertões*, a twenty-five hour epic staged by *Teatro Oficina*, based on the homonymous book by Euclides da Cunha. Baiocchi choreographs *The Earth*, the first part of *Os Sertões*, and conducts the actor's physical training, assisted by Pannek.

- 2003

Baiocchi and Pannek continue to collaborate with *Teatro Oficina*, conceiving the choreography of the second part (*The Man 1 – From Pre-Man to Revolt*) and the third part (*The Man 2 – From Revolt to the Trans-Man*) of *Os Sertões*. Pannek acts in both plays. *The Man* wins the APCA Award for Best Performance. Baiocchi starts her post-graduate studies in Communication and Semiotics at the Catholic University of São Paulo. As part of "Surrealism", a project hosted by Culture Center Bank of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro, she participates in the public reading of Pablo Picasso's *The Four Little Girls*, directed by Sérgio Mamberti

- 2004

*Matter – State of Power* (duo version) receives the Dance Stimulus Award of the Municipal Secretary of Culture of São Paulo. The piece is performed at the Contemporary Dance Festival, at Olido Gallery/SP and at the International Festival Goiânia em Cena. Pannek and Baiocchi participate in the presentations of *Os Sertões* at the São Paulo Theater Festival, the Latinidades festival of Sesc Pompéia, at Ruhrfestspiele 2004 in Recklinghausen/Germany, and at the International Festival of São José do Rio Preto/SP. Baiocchi performs *Entraanz* within the Continuum event at the Brazilian Museum of Sculpture

(MUBE) in São Paulo and presents *Ophelia Subtraction* at the Dragão do Mar Theater in Fortaleza. At the event Artaud: Body, Thought & Culture, organized by Sesc Consolação/SP, Taanteatro Companhia presents *Artaud – Where God Runs with the Eyes of a Blind Woman*. In Bremen/Germany, Baiocchi and Pannek perform *Matter 4th State* at Kulturbahnhof Vegesack (KUBA).

*Incomparable, unique and never seen before. Again and again, new stories are being told – sometimes in subtle, sometimes in crude ways – solely through the dancers's energy and brilliant body language. Beate Niemeyer, Die Norddeutsche, Bremen.*

In São Paulo, the company establishes NUTAAN (Nucleus Taanteatro – Training, Research, Creation) which presents *Premonitory Performances* at the Glass Workshop of the Secretary of Culture of São Paulo State. On invitation by the International Festival of Electronic Languages (FILE), held at the Culture Center of the Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo (FIESP), Baiocchi coordinates the event Renato Cohen in Process. This tribute to the Brazilian director and scholar of performing arts also includes *Cardioconnections*, performed by NUTAAN 2004 at Sesi Theater.

• *Cardioconnections*





• *Xiphamanine* (rehearsal)

• 2005

With producer Lito Elio and Secretary of Culture, Aurelio Le Bon, Pannek organizes the *Matola-Brazil Cooperation*. Taanteatro Companhia travels to Mozambique with a multidisciplinary team including anthropologist Mari Baiocchi, cinematographer Bruna De Araujo, philosopher Luiz Fuganti and performer Valter Felipe. The team conducts training and lectures for the Companhia Municipal de Canto e Dança da Matola and the theater group Trás do Muro.<sup>150</sup> With a cast consisting of members from both groups, Baiocchi stages *Xiphamanine – Place of the Eternal Originate of the Mphama Tree* at the Cine África Theater in Maputo and at the Culture Center Bank of Mozambique in the city of Matola. The work includes the projection of works by the painter Malangatana Ngwenya. The environmental reserve Salinas de Língamo in Matola becomes the location of the video-ecoperformance *Ophelia Subtraction*, featuring Baiocchi, with cinematography and editing by Bruna De Araujo. At Olido Gallery in São Paulo, Taanteatro Companhia presents *Extemporary Dances*, comprising the solo performances *Body Nietzsche* by Valter Felipe and *In Square* by Karin Vecchiatti. Baiocchi acts in the feature movie *O Fim da Picada* by Christian Saghaard.

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150 Municipal Company of Chant and Dance of Matola and theater group Behind the Wall.

- 2006

Baiocchi defends her masters thesis *Body and Communication in Process: The Tension Principle in the Taanteatro Experience* at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo. The company conducts seminars at the department of Performing Arts at the National University of Córdoba and at the Foundation of Friends of the José de Alencar Theater in Fortaleza/Ceará. Baiocchi performs *Ophelia Subtraction* at the XYZ Dance Festival in Brasília.

*It is a magic that causes a bewitchment of the observers and moves inner worlds situated in unthinkable distances that inhabit us. A scenic reflection offered to the audience of Brasília by a unique, rare and incomparable performance. (...) It touches the public in a very different manner. (...) The doors of innermost insight are opened, and, then, the unconscious manifests itself in its universality. (...) We discover that we are made of the same material as dreams, as Calderon said. (...) The theater incarnated by Maura Baiocchi is pure dream. (...) The staging takes us to a kind of Bardo, where lullabies blend with analytical reflections, games of hide and seek, theater of shadows, free association of ideas, chickens of Angola. (...) This language performed by Taanteatro is the result of decades of research devoted to scenic expression. (...) It makes us daydream.*

Jaime Gesisky<sup>151</sup> on *Ophelia Subtraction*. XYZ Dance Festival blog.

The company organizes the project *Taanteatro 15 Years* at João Caetano Theater in São Paulo. The program includes the premieres of *Zarathustra Machine*, with stage design and costumes by Nourit Masson-Sékiné; *Feifei and the Origin of Love*, a choreographic play for children; and the restaging of *!Arará! Stories that the Bones Sing*. The project also features Masson-Sékiné's painting exhibition *Heaven is Everywhere II* at Hebraica art gallery, and her lecture series *Butoh Expedition*, hosted by the Japan Foundation. The company produces the documentary *Taanteatro 15 Years*. The journal *Folha de S. Paulo* lists *Zarathustra Machine* among the "10 most important cultural events" of the city:

*Theater and dance ally to demonstrate the resistance of Nietzsche's philosophy against banality, challenging the whole body, not just the intellect. Directed by Maura Baiocchi and Wolfgang Pannek, the play stages*

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151 Jaime Gesisky, Brazilian journalist and specialist for public policies of the World Wide Fund for Nature – Brazil.

*the discourse and the pathos of Thus Spoke Zarathustra.*  
Caderno Acontece. Folha de S. Paulo.

The project *Taanteatro + 15 Years* is selected by the first edition of the Municipal Dance Promotion Program for the City of São Paulo. *Zarathustra Machine* wins the National Foundation of Arts Klaus Vianna Dance Award. Baiocchi takes part in the short film *Náufragos* by Leandro Pinto. Pannek collaborates with public readings of *All Remarkable Men*, a play written by Marcelo Marcus Fonseca, director of Teatro do Incêndio.

- 2007

At the Cultural Center of the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte, Baiocchi performs *Frida Kahlo with Braids Cut*. At the Galeria Oeste, in São Paulo, she participates in Gal Oppido's photo essay *Biblical Allegories*. *Zarathustra Machine* is performed in theaters of the Unified Educational Centers (CEU). NUTAAN 2007 presents the solo project *New Presences* at Olido Gallery. The trio-version of *Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night* and *Feifei and the Origin of Love* are selected by the PROART program of the Municipal Department of Education of São Paulo. At the First National Journeys of Literature and History of Ushuaia in Patagonia/Argentina, Taanteatro Companhia conducts a workshop, Baiocchi performs *Ophelia Subtraction*, and Wolfgang Pannek gives the lecture *The Hamlet-Ophelia Tension*. The company participates in the Dance Promotion Festival hosted by Centro Cultural São Paulo and performs the urban intervention *The Loneliest Hour* on streets, squares and bridges of São Paulo. Baiocchi and Pannek release the book *Taanteatro: Choreographic Theater of Tensions*, published by Azougue Editorial in Rio de Janeiro.

- 2008

The company presents *Frida Kahlo – A Stone Gives Birth to the Night* at the Cultural Circuit of São Paulo. *!Arará! Stories that Bones Sing* is re-staged with Mariana Maffei and Kleber Ribeiro at Humboldt Theater in São Paulo. *Feifei and the Origin of Love* is performed at Alfredo Mesquita Theater, during the Theatrical Mosaic of São Paulo and at MIA 2008, organized by Sesc DF in Brasília. Baiocchi returns to a teaching position at the University of Brasília. She directs her students in the Alfred Jarry based *Ubuphagy*, performed at Cometas Cenas, and inaugurates the NUTAAN-Federal District. At the 5th Congress of the Brazilian Association of Research and Post-Graduate Programs in the Performing Arts (ABRACE) held in Belo Horizonte, Baiocchi presents her paper *Beyond Teaching or How to Create a 'Didactic-Without-Organs'?*

• Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night



## Works 2004 - 2009

2004

- *Cardioconexões [Cardioconnections]*
- *Performances premonitórias [Premonitory Performances]*
- *Materie 4. Aggregatzustand [Matter 4th State]*
- *Matéria – estado de potência [Matter – State of Power]*
- *Entraanz*

2005

- *Xiphamanine – eterno originar da árvore mphama [Xiphamanine – Place of the Eternal Originate of the Mphama Tree]*
- *Corpo Nietzsche [Body Nietzsche]*
- *Em quadrado [In Square]*

2006

- *Feifei e a origem do amor [Feifei and the Origin of Love]*
- *Máquina Zaratustra [Zarathustra Machine]*

2007

- *Frida Kahlo – uma mulher de pedra dá luz à noite (versão para trio) [Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night] – trio version*
- *A hora mais solitária [The Loneliest Hour] – urban intervention*
- *Novas presenças (monólogos coreográficos): Carta para si, Desencontros, Desnudo, Ensaios transitórios de uma despedida extrassentimental, Kalinana, Mutações, Nbanduti, O enjaulado/o louco, Primeiro choro, Riso do tempo, Sim, Subterrânea, Terra em transe, Vão. [New Presences] choreographic monologues: Letter to Oneself, Miscommunication, Nude, Transitional Essays of an Extrasentimental Farewell, Kalinana, Mutations, Nbanduti, The Caged / The Crazy, First Weep, Laughter of the Time, Yes, Underground, Earth in Trance, Void.*

2009

- *!Zaratustra! [!Zarathustra!]*



• Ancestral / Cerrado



• ¡Arará! Stories that the Bones Sing



- 2009

The company presents *Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night* at the Feverestival in Campinas/SP and *!Arará! Stories that the Bones Sing* at Olido Gallery and Viga Espaço Cênico in São Paulo. *Frida Fragments* is performed at the University Festival of Performing Arts of Goiás – FUGA 2. The Garage Theater of Sesc Brasília hosts the *Micro-festival Taanteatro*. The program includes first studies of *DAN – Ancestral Becoming*, an open rehearsal of *!Zarathustra!*, and a roundtable discussion with Flávio Kothe, professor of Aesthetics at the National University of Brasília. Directed by Baiocchi and Pannek, *!Zarathustra!* receives the National Foundation of Arts Klaus Vianna Dance Award and is performed at Teatro da Caixa and Plínio Marcos Theater in Brasília. It is the last work of the *Nietzsche Cycle*, initiated by Taanteatro Companhia in 1999. Baiocchi leaves her position at the Institute of Arts of the University of Brasília. She conceives, directs and performs in *Ancestral Cerrado*, a video triptych filmed in the Chapado dos Veadeiros/Goiás. With cinematography by Randal de Andrade, edited by Joana Limongi and original music by Cláudio Vinícius Froes Fialho, the triptych becomes part of the multimedia performance *DAN – Ancestral Becoming*.

- 2010

The project *DAN* is selected by the Municipal Dance Promotion Program for the City of São Paulo and also receives the Klaus Vianna Dance Award. Baiocchi premieres *DAN – Ancestral Becoming* at Olido Gallery. Further presentations of the piece take place at Teatro Itália and Espaço Cariris in São Paulo, at the Bank of Brazil Cultural Center in Brasília, and at the 6th National Theater Festival in Vitória. At the festival, the audience gives “standing ovations” to a play “of impressive aesthetic beauty and multi-media language” that “themmatizes both, poetically and politically, the relations between body, environment and mestizo identity” (Vitor Lopes, *City of Vitória*).

In São Paulo, NUTAAN 2010 performs urban interventions and presents *U.Rite*, directed by Wolfgang Pannek, at Olido Gallery and O Lugar Espaço Cênico. Pannek conceives and produces the *Hans-Thies Lehmann Brazil Tour*, a project of itinerant lectures by the teatrologists Hans-Thies Lehmann and Helene Varopoulou, hosted by several Brazilian universities (UDESC, UFRGS, UFG, UNB, UFBA, UFRN). At Kasulo Espaço de Cultura e Arte, Pannek produces the presentation of Rodolfo Ossés' solo *Valle del Silencio*, directed by Marcelo Comandu. Taanteatro Companhia participates in DRIFT, an international art residence in Rio de Janeiro organized by the British-Brazilian Zecora

• *Ancestral Cerrado*





• U. Rite

Ura Theater Company. At Cultura Inglesa São Paulo, Pannek organizes workshops and lectures by Zecora Ura's directors, Jorge Lopes Ramos and Persis Jade Maravala, and by Dorothy Max Prior, editor of the British Total Theatre Magazine. In Vitória, Baiocchi supervises *Stultifera Navis*, a work by Companhia Teatro Urgente, directed by Marcelo Ferreira.

*In 1991, I created the Vitória-Brazil Dance Festival. For the fourth edition, in 1994, I invited Maura Baiocchi. Her minimalist presentation of Variation in White at Carlos Gomes Theater revealed to us a singular artist of the Brazilian scene. Years later Maura Baiocchi returned to the National Theater Festival, presenting DAN – Ancestral Becoming in the same theater. A sophisticated mise-en-scène of dance, singing and video, highlighting the strength of her presence as a timeless shaman. A work that personified the aesthetics of her research in Taanteatro. In 2010, based on an Artistic Residence with grants from the Secretary of Culture of the State of Espírito Santo, I invited her to supervise the restaging of Stultifera Navis, the Ship of Fools, the first work of Cia Neo-laô de Dança. It was a privilege to have her orienting and preparing the dancers of*

*Companhia Teatro Urgente based on her original concepts of intra-, inter- and infra-tensions and “ecorporeality”, the result of her academic practices and research. Marcelo Ferreira<sup>152</sup>*

- 2011

Pannek writes and directs *Hamlet Machine Fisted*. Performed by Alda Maria Abreu, Ana Beatriz Almeida, Vlamiir Sibylla, and Roger Valença, the work is presented at the Funarte SP, Estação Satyros, Espaço Cênico O Lugar and Espaço Cariris, all in São Paulo. The project *Taateatro 20 Years* is selected by the Municipal Dance Promotion Program for the City of São Paulo. The Umberto da Silva Dance Center at Olido Gallery hosts the *1st Forum of Ecoperformance – The Environment is the People*, organized by Taateatro Companhia and with the participation of Brazilian dance groups like Omstrab and Passo Livre. *DAN – Ancestral Becoming* is performed at the International Ceará Dance Biennial. At the Federal University of Goiás, Baiocchi gives the lecture *Dramaturgical creation processes in Taateatro Dynamics*. In London, Baiocchi and Pannek conduct a workshop at BR 116 – DRIFT, a festival organized by Zecora Ura. Baiocchi and Pannek launch the book *Taateatro: Rite of Passage*. The Editorial of the National University of Córdoba, in collaboration with Ediciones el Apuntador and Transcultura, publishes *Taateatro: Choreographic Theater of Tensions*, translated to Spanish by Argentine director and actor Rodrigo Marcó del Pont and with a preface by Marcelo Comandu, coordinator of the university's performing arts department.

*This translation into Spanish of the investigations of Maura Baiocchi, creator of the Taateatro approach and founding director of the Brazilian Taateatro Companhia, and Wolfgang Pannek, co-director of this company, is an important link of the intellectual network that has been built since 1994 in the field of theater of Córdoba. Through seminars conducted at the National University of Cordoba, they shared Taateatro techniques and, on several occasions, Argentine artists traveled to Brazil to study and experiment, forming a space of knowledge and supranational exchange. We believe that this book – Taateatro: Choreographic Theater of Tensions – beyond its undoubted interest to researchers, is a fundamental text designated to the knowledge of an intense, profound and honest epistemological journey. Lidia Burgos, Palos y Piedras, Buenos Aires.*

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152 Marcello Ferreira is a Brazilian actor and dancer. He is the director of the company Teatro Urgente and lecturer in performing arts at the Faculty of Music of Espírito Santo, Brazil.



• *Hamlet Machine Fisted*

• 2012

*Hamlet Machine Fisted* is selected Best Dance Performance of 2011 by the culture poll of the journal *Folha de S. Paulo*. The work is performed at the 1st International Art Festival of Brasília and at the Vivadança Festival in Salvador/Bahia. In São Paulo, Baiocchi conceives and directs *[Im]pure Dances*. The choreography, with stage design and props created by the Argentine painters Onofre Roque Fraticelli and Candelaria Silvestro, and original music by composer Claudio Vinícius Froes Fialho, premieres at Olido Gallery. The piece, performed by Valter Felipe, Rodolfo Osses, Alda Maria Abreu, Vlamir Sibylla, Roger Valença, and Janaina Carrer, is later presented at Sergio Cardoso Theater and selected by *Bravo!* magazine among the city's Best Performances.

*[Im]pure Dances* constructs an oniric atmosphere, but updated to a time that forgot how to dream.

Daniel Gorte-Dalmoro, *Comportamento Geral*, São Paulo.

The company presents *DAN – Ancestral Becoming* and *Hamlet Machine Fisted* as part of the Choreographic Repertories project, hosted by Sesc Ipiranga. At culture space Mundo Pensante, the company coordinates the *2nd Forum of Ecoperformance: Environment and Performing Arts – A challenge*. Among the forum's participants are researchers, artists and producers such as Cassiano Quilici, Marta Soares, Mirtes Calheiros, Rodrigo Reis Rodrigues, and Solange Borelli. *DAN – Ancestral Becoming* is performed at the III Platform State of Dance at Sérgio Cardoso Theater. In Argentina, the company co-produces *Mixtures*, a visual arts and performance project organized by Candelaria Silvestro at the Córdoba Cabildo. Baiocchi and Pannek conduct workshops at the National University of Córdoba and at the Heitor Tizon Cultural Center in San Salvador de Jujuy. In Tilcara, in the Argentine Andes, Baiocchi performs the photo-ecoperformances *Ophelia* and *My Mother and Me in the Throat*. At The Barn in Tivoli/New York, she conducts the Butoh-Ohno workshop.

• *Ophelia*







• *My Mother and Me in the Throat*

• 2013

Rodolfo Ossés coordinates the NUTAAN/Córdoba in Argentina. At Espacio La Caracola and in collaboration with Mudanzas Escénicas Clap!, Taantatro Companhia organizes the *3rd Forum of Ecoperformance – The Environment as Performance*. Pannek is artistic adviser to Argentine choreographer Ariana Andreoli in the creation of her solo work *Partida*. At Nuage Fou Theater in Freiburg/Germany, Baiocchi presents *Variation in Black*. In Salvador/Bahia, Baiocchi and Pannek supervise the NUTAAN/SSA, coordinated by Ana Beatriz Almeida. The book *Taantatro: MBE – Mandala of Body Energy*, authored by Baiocchi and Pannek, is launched at Olido Gallery. Baiocchi directs Alda Maria Abreu in her solo *Androgyne – Consecration of Fire*. This work, with original music by Gustavo Lemos, premieres at Mundo Pensante and is per-





• [Im]pure Dances

formed at Viga Espaço Cênico in São Paulo. The piece receives the Klauss Vianna Dance Award and Alda Maria Abreu wins the Denilto Gomes Awards in the category “dominion of movement”, as well as the APCA Award in the category “dance revelation”.

*Androgyne – Consecration of Fire re-signifies the body in time and space, highlighting every muscle, every nerve, every fiber, raising before our eyes the splendor of the human. A journey through bodily potentiality and its plastic, malleable, folding, tense, expansive, convulsive, retractable ability. Célia Musilli, Carta Campinas.*

## **Works 2010 - 2014**

2010

- *DAN – devir ancestral*  
[*DAN – Ancestral Becoming*]
- *Rit.U [U.Rite]*

2011

- *Máquina Hamlet fisted*  
[*Hamlet Machine Fisted*]

2012

- *Danças [im]puras [[Im]pure Dances]*

2013

- *Androgyne – sagração do fogo*  
[*Androgyne – Consecration of Fire*]

2014

- *TRANS*
- *50 desenhos para assassinar a magia*  
[*50 Drawings to Murder Magic*]



• *Androgyne - Consecration of Fire*



• TRANS

• 2014

Baiocchi premieres the solo *TRANS* at the Freud Museum of Dreams in St. Petersburg, Russia, at the Frankenstein News Symposium: Figure of the monster in our contemporary society, organized by the University of St. Petersburg and the Center for Research in Psychoanalysis at Paris Diderot University. In Paris, the performance of this piece at Théâtre de l'Aire Falguière is produced by Nourit Masson-Sékiné. Rodrigo Marcó del Pont, director of the Melting Theater Company, organizes Baiocchi's performance at Brussels' Art Melting Pot (BAMP) and her master class at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. Back in South America, *TRANS* is performed at Olido Gallery in São Paulo and at the First International Congress of Arts, held by the National University Institute of Art (IUNA) in Buenos Aires, where Baiocchi and Pannek also conduct a workshop. In São Lourenço da Serra, Baiocchi performs the first recordings for *Co[r]po*, a video-dance project, and *The Great Health*, a documentary film about the Taanteatro Residence Workshop 2014.

*The dance of Maura Baiocchi is unpredictable. Her movements do not follow an a priori counting, her grammar never fits into a recognizable choreographic script. Now and again her movements are not in line, they suddenly cease, they transform into something else. The choreography of Maura Baiocchi cannot be translated into any con-*



• 50 Drawings to Murder Magic

*crete dance language. It can be said that it is not a language or scripture, nor a choreography, but what Jacques Lacan called 'lalange'.*  
Viktor Mazin<sup>153</sup>

The project *TRANS* is selected by the Municipal Dance Promotion Program for the City of São Paulo. At Cultural Workshop Oswald de Andrade and at Centro Cultural São Paulo, NUTAAN 2014 presents *50 Drawings to Murder Magic*, based on the homonymous work of Antonin Artaud. The work is directed by Pannek and co-directed by Alda Maria Abreu. The cast includes Ana Beatriz Almeida, Camila Duarte, Dora Smék, Janaina Carrer, Kalassa Lemos, Marcelo D'Avilla, Michele Carolina, Mônica Cristina Bernardes, Patrícia Pina Cruz, and Samanta Lewin, among others.

*Expressive, spasmodic, opiate, crazy. Words that passed through my head while watching 50 Drawings to Murder Magic, (...) inspired by the posthumous work of Antonin Artaud, the mise-en-scène corresponds to the sense of transgression the playwright, poet and French actor imprinted into his life and his art. (...) More than 50 years later, his proposal remains alive, imploding the limits of the artistic language through the body-word, the body-poetic, the insane, the body-delusion, the anti-conventional body that shelters and expels the demons of culture.*  
Célia Musilli, *Carta Campinas*.

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153 Viktor Mazin (\*1958) is a Russian philosopher, film scientist and psychoanalyst. Founder and director of the Freud Museum of Dreams in St. Petersburg. Among his book are *Freuds Gespenster* (2015) and *Unheimat* (2019).

body power place  
retains and overflows<sup>154</sup>



• *Co[r]po*

• 2015

Death of Valter Felipe, founding member of Taanteatro Companhia, on February 22. Pannek conceives and directs *cARTAUDgraphy*, a trilogy based on the life and work of Antonin Artaud. The five hours long work, with choreographic direction by Baiocchi, original music of Gustavo Lemos, and video art by Onofre Roque Fraticelli and Candelaria Silvestro, has more than fifty presentations within the Cultural Circuit São Paulo, at Flávio Império Theater, Martins Penna Theater, Alfredo Mesquita Theater, at Viga Espaço Cênico, Espaço Cênico O Lugar, at the Center of Reference of Dance of São Paulo (CRDSP), and at Culture Center São Paulo. The cast includes Maura Baiocchi, Alda Maria Abreu, Isa Gouvea, Mônica Cristina, Patrícia Pina Cruz, Fabio Pimenta, Henrique Lukas, Paula Alves, Janina Arnaud, among others.

*I met Maura Baiocchi during the 90's at the Vento Forte Theater. She performed a Butoh dance solo. Watching her I learned a lot about the nature of this very special dance. I have never forgotten that Yemoja-bride, a singular and beautiful entity, in its continuous movement, and that delicately transformed, from tiny to immense gestures, in a theatricality of great gestural rigor. (...) At the end of 2015, I had the great pleasure of accompanying the shows of the cARTAUDgraphy project. I could appreciate the aesthetic refinement of the mise-en-scene directed by Wolfgang Pannek. I felt provoked by the extreme and intense movements of a troupe of per-*

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154 The English translation of "co[r]po lugar de p[h]oder retém e transborda" preserves the same wordplay it expresses in Portuguese, resulting from the fusion of two words: *corpo* (body) and *copo* (cup); *poder* (power) and *foder* (to fuck).

Mas posso tranquilizá-lo: correspondem a uma busca sua, não a uma falta de comando sobre seu pensamento.

Com paciência escreverá poemas perfeitamente coerentes e harmoniosos.



• cARTAUDgraphy 1: A Correspondence

*formers, untiring in its dedication to the performative communication of the most important episodes of Antonin Artaud's life. A mention apart concerning the figure of Maura Baiocchi in the role of Artaud in the latter part of the trilogy. In many ways, I identify with the company's research, emphasizing the idea of choreographic creation "beyond the preestablished or consecrated styles of language". Mariana Muniz<sup>155</sup>*

Pannek lectures at the IV International Symposium: Contemporary Scenic Reflections organized by Lume Theater at the University of Campinas. *Androgyne – Consecration of Fire* is presented at Espaço Cênico O Lugar, at CRDSP, at the ABC Dance Festival, at Clara Nunes Theater and at the Dance Promotion Festival. Baiocchi presents *TRANS* at Espaço Cênico O Lugar, CRDSP and Alberta # 3 Night Club. Taanteatro Companhia organizes the project *Thoughts in Performance*, a series of lectures and debates with invited artists and researchers, including the poet Claudio Willer, and the philosophers Luiz B. L. Orlandi and Peter Pál Pelbart. Pannek orients the physical training of Fioravante Almeida and performs voice acting in *Retaining Wall*, a play by Carlos Queiroz Telles, directed by Alexandre Borges. Maura Baiocchi and Alda Maria Abreu perform in *Gramatyka*, a short movie by Paloma Rocha.

- 2016

The project *Taanteatro 25 Years – [de]contaminations* is selected by the Municipal Dance Promotion Program for the City of São Paulo. At Documentas Escénicas in Córdoba/Argentina, the company presents *Variation in Black*. Pannek coordinates NUTAAN 2016 and delivers *Pure Intensity*, a seminar about the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, hosted by the SP School of Theater in São Paulo. At the French Alliance Theater, he organizes and produces the *Artaud Occupation*.

*The most systematic Artaudian work developed in Brazil, since more than two decades ago, is that of Taanteatro, conducted by Maura Baiocchi – artist with formation in the butô dance of Kazuo Ohno, who in turn, according to Clayton Eshleman, was influenced by Artaud – and by Wolfgang Pannek. It includes events, creative laboratory work, residences and various stagings of Artaud’s works, especially the trilogy cARTAUDgraphy, and Maura Baiocchi’s solo Artaud, the Momo, as well as a staging of The Conquest of Mexico by Min Tanaka, under the auspices of the group, produced by Pannek and with Baiocchi as assistant director. All these contributions resulted in a colossal catalog. Claudio Willer<sup>156</sup>*

The program of the *Artaud Occupation* consists of the NUTAAN performance, *The Human Face*, directed by Pannek; the debut of Maura Baiocchi’s choreographic monologue *Artaud, the Momo*; the lecture, *The Irruption of Thought*, by Peter Pál Pelbart; and the launch of *Taanteatro: [De]construction and Schizopresence*, a book organized by Pannek and Baiocchi. *Artaud, the Momo* is also performed at Sérgio Cardoso Theater and at the Promotion of Dance Festival. At SP School of Theater, NUTAAN presents *In-Betweens*, conceived and directed by Baiocchi and Pannek. Baiocchi conducts the workshop *Butoh – dance path of soul*. Pannek lectures at the 2nd Sacred-Bleeding Frontier Encounter: Artaud and his Doubles, organized by Núcleo Viansatã de Teatro Ritual in Salvador,

155 Mariana Muniz (1957) is a Brazilian dancer, choreographer and actress.

156 Excerpt from the afterword by Claudio Willer in Artaud, A., & Willer, C (2019). *Escritos de Antonin Artaud. Posfácio para a nova edição. [Writings of Antonin Artaud]*. Porto Alegre: LP&M, pp. 208-209. Claudio Willer (\*1940) is a Brazilian poet, essayist, critic, and translator. Among his books are *Notes for an Apocalypse*, *Circular Days*, *Provocation Gardens*, *Strange Experiences*, and *The True History of the 20th Century*. In addition, Willer translated works by Comte de Lautréamont, Antonin Artaud, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Charles Bukowski.

Bahia. On invitation by the curators Cássia Navas and Isabelle Launay, Baiocchi participates as a speaker in the seminary *Aller-Retour: Danse Brésil-France*. Taanteatro Companhia tours through France and Germany. The presentations of *Artaud, the Momo* at Antonin Artaud Cultural Space (Rodez) and at Théâtre de Nesle (Paris) are produced by Theophile Choquet and, regarding the French capital, by Nourit Masson-Sékiné. Masson-Sékiné also produces a workshop conducted by Baiocchi and Pannek and promoted by CIRA Danse at the Choreographic Center of Strasbourg, as well as Pannek's conference *Artaud and the creative processes of Taanteatro* in Patrick Tenoudji's seminar at the University of Strasbourg.

*A long friendship of more than thirty years, made us, together, cross bits of landscapes, bits of the season. Endless moments in the lap of Butoh, but especially in the territorial basin of our common cultural lines where figures such as Frida Kahlo, Artaud, Nietzsche are enthroned ... Maura had adopted a dog which adopted me in turn and would run towards me always laughing. I was amazed! The capacity of using humor, irony, absurdity and derision, but also provocation and transgression, this trait of the spirit constitutes the genetic vocabulary of our friendship, our common interests and the desire to share time for collaboration and discussion. Laughter at the height of the awareness that pain and suffering are inherent to or even conditional on the human "Being." This network consciousness in Maura's flesh frees her from the very notion of art or form to elevate her out of time and on stage. The moving transpersonal flow of her presence in the world insinuates itself, becomes alive – and slides the light into the folds of the dark parts.*

Nourit Masson-Sékiné<sup>157</sup>

In Germany, *Artaud, the Momo* is performed at Lucie Betz' Nuage Fou Theater in Freiburg. In Schwerte, invited by the performers Patricia Marioli and Simon Bronikowski from Studio 7, Baiocchi and Pannek conduct a workshop and perform *TRANS*. In Berlin, produced by Reha Bliss, the com-

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157 Nourit Masson-Sékiné is a French painter, photographer and writer. She exhibited her work in France, Germany, Japan, Israel, Brazil, China, and Canada. As a Butoh specialist, she is co-author of *Butoh: Shades of Darkness* (1988).

158 Florence de Mèredieu (\*1941) is a French writer and lecturer in philosophy of art and aesthetics at the University of Paris-1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. She is specialized in the work of Antonin Artaud and has written books about Vincent van Gogh, Marcel Duchamps, Pablo Picasso, André Masson, Samuel Beckett, and Jorge Luiz Borges.





• Artaud, the Momo

pany holds an artist talk and a workshop at Mime Centrum, and presents *TRANS* at Acker Stadt Palast.

*Maura Baiocchi's performance exceeds by far all interpretations given so far. She is no longer in the realm of mimesis but of "sympathy." In the strong and primeval sense of the term. One is then in another universe. That of medula and bone, of the organic and hallucinatory unconscious. Everything passes through a totally dominated and elaborated gesture (...) meticulous and repeated work on the energy systems, allowing the definition in movement of corporal musculature that reacts – in a milli-metered way – to the slightest breath and the most indistinct inflection of the voice. Undoubtedly, this is the first time that Momo is incarnated by a woman. This sexual ambiguity reinforces still further Maura Baiocchi's sense of belonging to her "character." She is Artaud – and beyond Artaud – she fuses herself into his dreams and obsessions, flows into the gymnopedia of his attachments, displaces herself in each of his doubles, in each of his shadows. This universe is complex. Androgynous, especially. Furious and violent. Florence de Mèredieu<sup>158</sup>, *Journal Ethnographique*, Paris.*





• *Artaud, the Momo*

## **Works 2015 - 2019**

2015

- *cARTAUDgrafia 1: Uma Correspondência*  
[*cARTAUDgraphy 1: A Correspondence*]
- *cARTAUDgrafia 2: Viagem ao México*  
[*cARTAUDgraphy 2: Voyage to Mexico*]
- *cARTAUDgrafia 3: Retorno do Momo*  
[*cARTAUDgraphy 3: Return of the Momo*]

2016

- *A face humana [The Human Face]*
- *Ent[r]jes [In-Betweens]*
- *Artaud, le Mômô [Artaud, the Momo]*

2017

- *1001 Platôs [1001 Plateaus]*
- *Esquizopresenças: Deserto... & Verbar.*  
[*Schizopresences: Desert... & Verbing*]

2018

- *Mensagens de Moçambique*  
[*Messages from Mozambique*]

2019

- *Ri[t]os [Rivers-Rites]*
- *¡D-eia [¡D-ea]*

• 2017

The company pursues the project *Taanteatro 25 Years – [de]contaminations*. *Artaud, le Momo* is presented at the Funarte SP, at Viradalata Theater, at Viga Espaço Cênico, at the International Festival of Londrina (FILO), and at Documentas Escénicas in Córdoba, Argentina, where the *Taanteatro Forum* as well as the workshop *Body Without Image* take place. At CRDSP, the company presents *Schizopresences: Desert... & Verbar*, two solos by Isa Gouvêa and Mônica Cristina Bernardes, directed by Baiocchi. The choreographer makes first recordings for her video-dance project *Forces & Forms: Hair*.

At the French Alliance Theater in São Paulo, Pannek organizes the *Deleuze Occupation*, a multidisciplinary event with the participation of painter Candelaria Silvestro (*Cortaderas*, exhibition), the philosophers Peter Pál Pelbart and Luiz B.L. Orlandi, the writer Alberto Martins, the composer Rodrigo Reis, and the publisher Editora 34. On the same occasion, Taanteatro Companhia premieres *1001 Plateaus*, conceived and directed by

• 1001 Plateaus



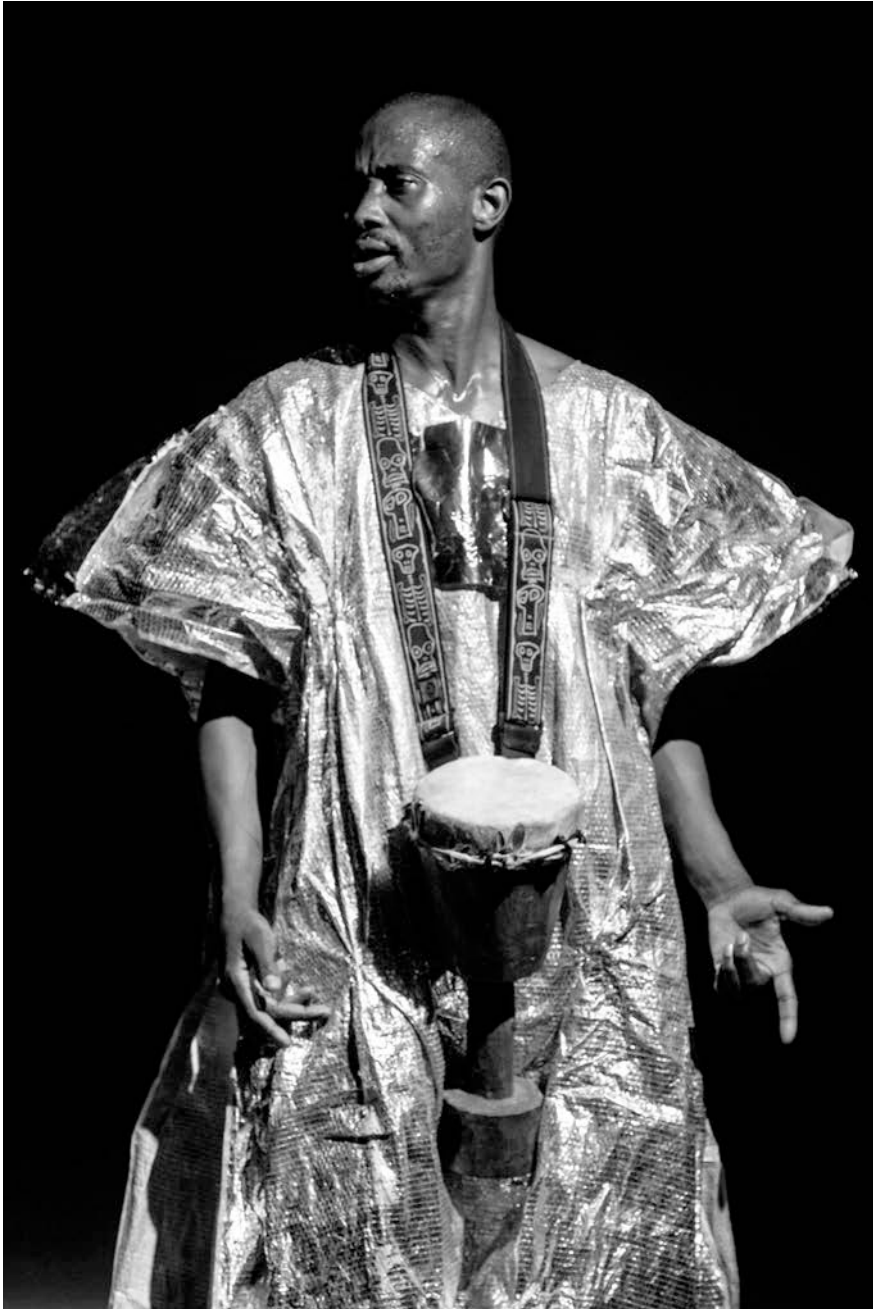
Pannek, with choreographic direction by Baiocchi, music by Gustavo Lemos, lighting design by Hernandez de Oliveira, and costumes by Eurico Rocha. The piece, inspired by Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's philosophical work *A Thousand Plateaus*, has further performances at Olido Cultural Center, João Caetano Theater and Paulo Eiró Theater in São Paulo. The cast includes Maura Baiocchi, Isa Gouvea, Wolfgang Pannek, Mônica Cristina Bernardes, Janina Arnaud, Gustavo Braunstein, Oz Ferreira, Hiro Okita, and Jorge Ndlozy. For this work, Baiocchi is nominated for the Dance Award of the Paulista Association of Art Critics (APCA) in the category Choreography.

The company returns to Europe performing *Artaud, the Momo* at the Théâtre de Nesle in Paris, and the Theaterhaus Berlin Mitte. Baiocchi and Pannek conduct workshops at Tatwerk Berlin and at El Haddawi Dance Company in Bavaria.

*Antonin Artaud is one of those celestial vagabonds one needs to rediscover periodically, no matter the path of brilliant incandescences adopted. For this, the intrepid will need a guide able to climb without hurry beyond the beaten paths, someone unlikely, whose presence immediately becomes evident. Maura Baiocchi is "Madame Artaud", Brazilian dancer and sorceress, an actress sketching an irony or whispering, in a distant way, to the side. Imposing her mastery (...) she is beyond incarnation. Terribly double, she is Artaud without ever ceasing to be the actress who stages him. Lesson about the art of acting, her performance leaves us stunned. Philippe Person, Froggy's delight, Paris.*

- 2018

Baiocchi is guest teacher at the Winterschool 2018 organized by Ingo Rashid Taleb and El Haddawi Dance Company on the Fraueninsel in Bavaria. In Brazil, at the launch of the first edition of the Art Residence Taanteatro (ARTT) in São Lourenço da Serra, the company creates *Messages of Mozambique*. Performed by Mozambican dancer Jorge Ndlozy, this solo work, with dramaturgy by Pannek and choreographic direction by Baiocchi, is presented at Funarte and at CRDSP in São Paulo. At the Arena Theater of the National Art Foundation the company organizes the *Taanteatro Occupation*. This multimedia project promotes the artistic production of Taanteatro Companhia and presents works by some of its national and international collaborators such as French actor Theophile Choquet, Argentine painter Candelaria Silvestro, Brazilian composer Gustavo Lemos, the coor-



• *Messages from Mozambique*

dinator of the Experimental Nucleus of Butoh, Thiago Abel, and the band Fuga Operária. Within the Occupation, the trajectory of Baiocchi and Taanteatro Companhia is documented by an exhibition of graphic design materials and photographs, organized by Hiro Okita. The occupation also hosts the premiere of a new version of *Verbing* by Mônica Cristina Bernardes and inaugurates the project *Antonin Artaud: Public Domain*, conceived by Wolfgang Pannek. On the same occasion, Baiocchi and Pannek launch their book *Taanteatro: forces & forms*. Pannek gives the lecture *Taanteatro and Poststructuralism* at the Colloquium New Methodologies of Research in Arts within the Program of Post-Graduate Studies in Arts of the State University of São Paulo. Taanteatro Companhia participates in the project Dance Moves Occupies at Funarte SP. *Verbing* is presented at the XI Nomad Festival of Dance and Theater 2018 and at CRDSP.

- 2019

With participants from Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil, the company conducts the nineteenth edition of the Taanteatro Residence Workshop in São Lourenço da Serra. At the invitation of Alexandre Nunes, deputy director of the School of Music and Performing Arts at the Federal University of Goiás, and promoted by the Postgraduate Program in Performing Arts, Baiocchi and Pannek present the book *Taanteatro: Forces & Forms* in Goiania. In São Paulo, at la minima galeria, the company organizes the presentation of *Requiem for Lorca*, a monologue performed by Rodrigo Marcó del Pont. The project *Taanteatro – [de]colonizations* is selected by the Municipal Dance Promotion Program for the City of São Paulo. It includes three solo pieces – *Artaud, the Momo* by Maura Baiocchi, *Messages from Mozambique* by Jorge Ndlozy, and *¡D-eia* by Monica Bernardes – presented at the Culture Center Oswald de Andrade, Kasulo – Espaço de Cultura e Arte, Sérgio Cardoso Theater, and Teatro de Contêiner Mungunzá. The project also involves *Rivers-Rites*, a work performed by NUTAAN 2019 representing the quest of decolonizing the human body with the environmental problems of the buried São Paulo river basin. Within *[de]colonizations*, the Guadalupian Médrick Varieux presents the Frantz Fanon based lecture-performance *The beautiful black doesn't give a shit about you, ma'am*. Performed more than fifty times since its premiere, *Artaud, le Mômô* inaugurates the Colloquium for New Research Methodologies in Arts at São Paulo State University (UNESP).

*“Artaud, the Momo” (...) used artistic languages such as dance, theater, music, poetry, and video in the constitution of a completely hybrid work. Maura Baiocchi’s work: every tiny part of her body, visible and*



*invisible, seemed to react connected with every intonation of her voice and breath. (...)*

*“Knot in the throat. (...) Air paralysis that needed to move, but without producing sound. Willingness to talk? None. (...) Only the subtle awareness of this knot and the face in state of amazement: (...) I did not suffer from rupture, but from suspension. Few memories of the text, (...) only clear images: the spatial organization, the look and the gesture of the performer. A spasmodic body (...) speaking the text, walking, touching objects, dancing among sound and projected images. A hybrid body. Hair, tongue, wrinkles. Little skin ... no nudity, no body curves, without virtuous gestures. A body-question insisting on surviving nothingness, A body on the edge of anguish, (...), of meaning. (...) A delusional body! In poetry, the verb must be delirious, said the poet. And when the body gets delirious? It becomes dance? In dance, gesture has to become delirious.” (Field diary, August 2016)*  
*This account begins with the effects of the performance, produced in this researcher’s body. (...) Articulated language was suspended. (...) After the show (...) no anguish, euphoria, or discomfort, no clear thoughts, just a kind of bodily affectation. Days later, while writing about the experience, (...) the images of artist’s gestuality reappeared*

• Rivers-Rites





• iD-ea

*intensely (...): “Body that catches delirium”. This expression describes my apprehension of the artist’s body on stage, but at the same time my own experience as a spectator: my body became delirious coming across with this other delirious body of the artist. (...) Bodies in resonance. Fabíola Borges<sup>159</sup>*

*Messages from Mozambique* is recorded by SESC TV for the Contemporary Dance television program 2020 and opens the 6th international festival Dança à Deriva (Drifting Dance) in São Paulo. Baiocchi performs solo dance for the video *Rising Phoenix*, showcasing a fashion collection by Berlin based Iranian designer Sepideh Ahadi. Pannek and Ndlozy initiate the research for *Chissano*, a solo performance based on the life and work of the Mozambican sculptor Alberto Mabungulane Chissano. Pannek and Ndlozy initiate the research for *Chissano*, a solo performance based on the life and work of the Mozambican sculptor Alberto Mabungulane Chissano, and create the video-performance *Chissano 1st Study*. In Buenos Aires, Pannek coordinates a Taanteatro workshop at Tole Tole Theater and, at the international conference “Deleuze Journey 3rd Edition: Practical Ontology” held at the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature at the University of Buenos Aires, he presents the paper *Decolonization of Thought and Body without Organs*.

159 Excerpt from Borges, Fabíola (2019). Por uma rítmica dos corpos falantes: ressonâncias entre a psicanálise e a dança contemporânea [For a rhythmic of the talking bodies: resonances between psychoanalysis and contemporary dance], pp. 117 - 118. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of São Paulo, Institute of Psychology and École Doctorale Practiciques et Theories du Sens, Paris University 8.



• Frida Kahlo – A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night



• *Alice's Book of the Dead – Transitional Dances*







• *Chants of Maldoror*





• *Weisman and Copperface*









• *Waiting for Godot*





• *!Arará! Stories that the Bones Sing*

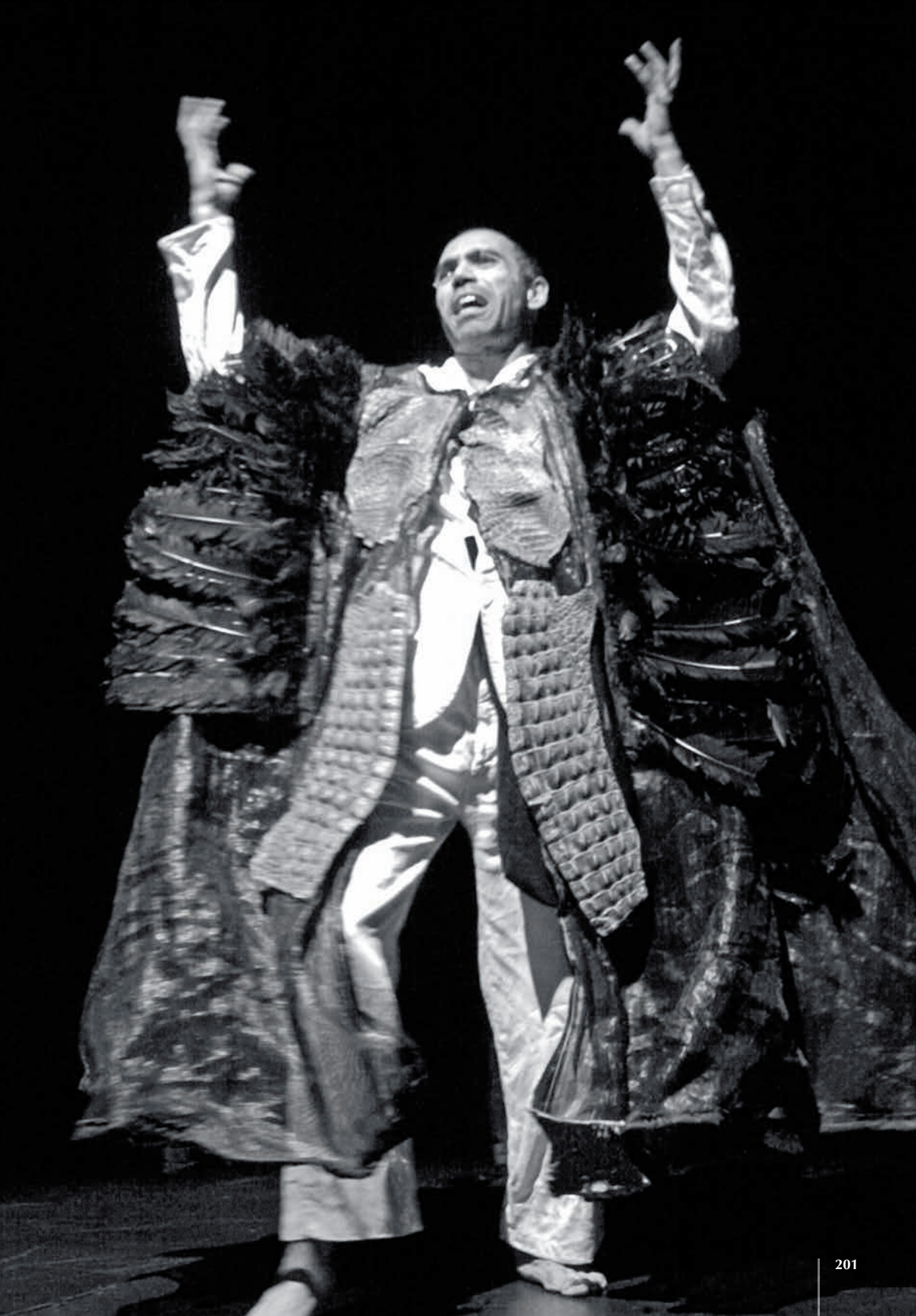






• Zarathustra Machine











• Frida Kahlo – *A Stone Woman Gives Birth to the Night*

• *!Zarathustra!*

























• *Hamlet Machine Fisted*







• *[Im]pure Dances*







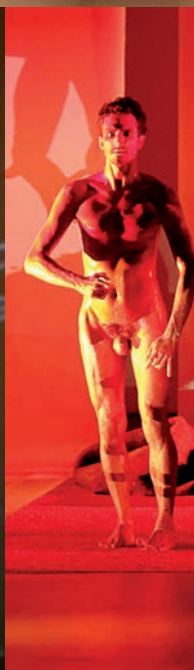
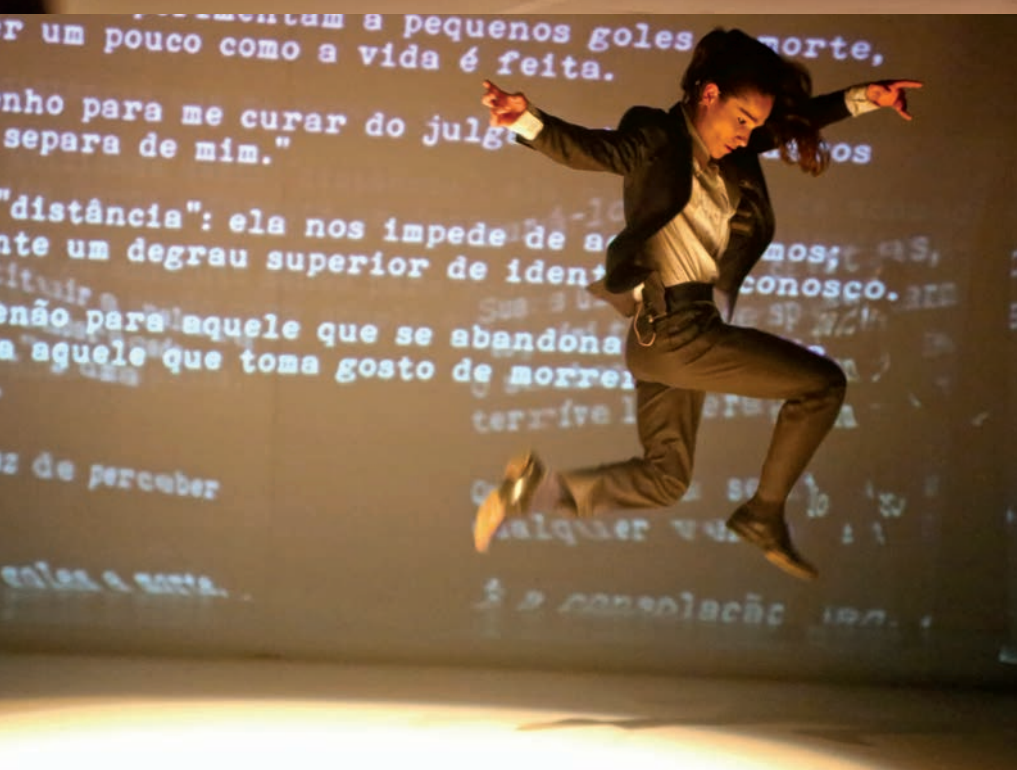
• *TRANS*



• *Co[r]po*











• cARTAUDgraphy 1: A Correspondence



• cARTAUDgraphy 2: Voyage to Mexico













• *Artaud, the Momo*



• 1001 Plateaus













• 1001 Plateaus





• Messages from Mozambique







• /D-ea





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