

PART 2

EXPERIMENTATION & EXPLORATION: *BODILY RESONANCE*

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AR3A010 Research Paper
Explore Lab 27



WE ALL HAVE ...



We all have our shapes,
our bodies,
and dreams.
Let them align
with planets
of mine.
(& yours / them / theirs ...!)



Open the door,
tremble and fall,
embody the space
of no-one
and all.
(& yours / them / theirs ...!)

Imagine a future,
of anyone's room,
dreaming of shapes
for bodies
of all.
(Bodies of all ...!)

Zita Leutgeb, 26.10.2023



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MY BODY WITHIN RESEARCH & DESIGN

The project explores the relationship between my body as a research tool and the insights gained in the experimentation part, aiming to translate this knowledge into a design that allows for the individual, physical contribution of anyBody. Choosing to use my own body was a natural decision, the goal is to extract the insights gained in the research to create a space where everyone can act out their own possibilities of movement.

Photographing, drawing, dancing, and writing with my own body was a direct and intuitive step to express my curiosity towards bodies, movement, and architecture in the research phase. Nevertheless, it is relevant to mention that my body does not represent the wide range of all diverse bodies existing. More so, the experience I gained in this period will be translated as an encouraging impulse to celebrate the individuality of every single body in my design. By appreciating the uniqueness of anyBody, coming with various abilities, shapes, and energies, bodies can discover a sense of physical trust and strength in the design. It is in the moments in which we feel physical resonance in space, that we feel alive – with our energies flowing in each of our diverse bodies.



INTRODUCTION TO PART 2

The experimentation explores the relation between the body as a subject and its mirage in space, thus creating endless shapes of being (within) a human body. The aim is to open up a creative dialogue between architecture and bodily resonance, paging body in space and space in body.’¹

This part is a physical and experiential investigation, exploring new bodily and spatial interfaces. I walk, move, dance, and think with my own body as extended matter to absorb the space around me in its energies. By translating the experiences into notational drawings, texts, collages and chrono-photographic images, the moments of reciprocal attunement between body, dance and space come forth.

The body as extended matter with its sensibility for spatial awareness is the departure point for this experimentation – my (dancing) body as a research tool. **As I read and get inspired, I see things, I talk, I remember, I get up and move, I connect the strings, I collect them, and see what happens.** With a focus on experimentation, play, and bodily exploration, the dancer’s sensibility to surrounding spaces is emphasized. The moving body as a research tool constantly reconfigures itself to the space around and eventually puts into question spatial paradigms.

1 Diller, E. Scofidio, R. (1994). *Flesh – Architectural Probes*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press. p.23

2 Peeters, Jeroen. (2022). *And then it got legs*. Brussels/Oslo: Varamo Press. p.31.

In this part of the thesis the historical and theoretical research intersect with physical experiments, thus forming a guiding narrative for the research output. The free approach of media ranging from collages, poems, drawings to chrono-photographic snapshot series unfolds a new world and invites the reader to imagine a space from there. The process of collecting research material with the body is closely related to the dramaturgical process of conducting a performance process. It is about finding structures and connections between things that don’t necessarily relate to each other in a direct manner, it is by this adjacent contextualization that new discoveries will emerge. In the book *And then it got legs* Jeroen Peeters describes his dramaturgical creation processes: ‘I strongly believe in the powers of free association, in forms and materials showing up in a particular way or an unusual sequence. It is not so much coming from a decision or a preconceived thought, but it can be treated consequently.’²

1. KINESPHETIC RESEARCH

Kinesphere: is the sphere within our physical reach ,the sphere around the body whose periphery can be reached by extended limbs.’ (Laban, 1966, p.10)

The first intuitive experiment was to notate my own bodies’ movement through a space with boundaries. My body is encapsulated within a constructed, interior kinesphere – the very space in which I teach my dance classes in Rotterdam. Through the exploration of the medium of film and drawing, the goal was to explore the range of movement scales within a closed room.

Starting with the larger movement following a path, I arrive at moments of main deployments of bodily energy, marked in blue color saturation. These movements are then extracted and notated in detailed drawings, showing steps, jumps, and turns. The last scale exploration is the bodily kinesphere with its movement scales. Here, somatic gestures, marks, and traces are notated along an unfolded drawing of a circular sphere within our reach.

3 Parson, Annie-B. (2022). The Choreography of Everyday Life. London, UK: Verso Books. p.51.

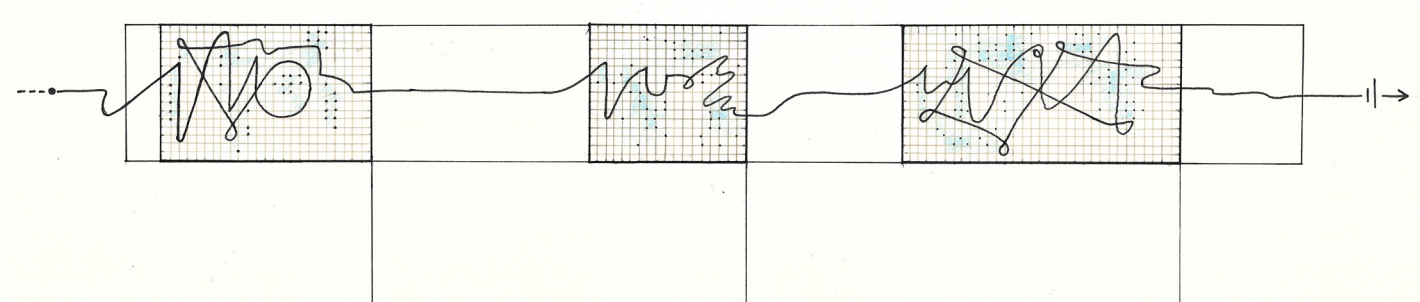
Temporal instances, as in (moving) moments in time, are frozen and translated into drawings that encapsulate the body’s reach across small, mid, and far-reaching extents. Through the medium of drawing, moments of the dance are captured and translated into a notational system. The experiment is the departure point for the exploration of space through bodily sensibility, sparking an interest to extend the research into the realm of built environments.

, The smallest circle in the human kinesphere is your breath cycle, and this sphere widens to the space around your body; then widens to your room, your home, and eventually to the wide shot which is a public kinesphere – the town square, the polis, the city.’³

1. pathway
(in space & time)



film of pathway



2. room kinesphere



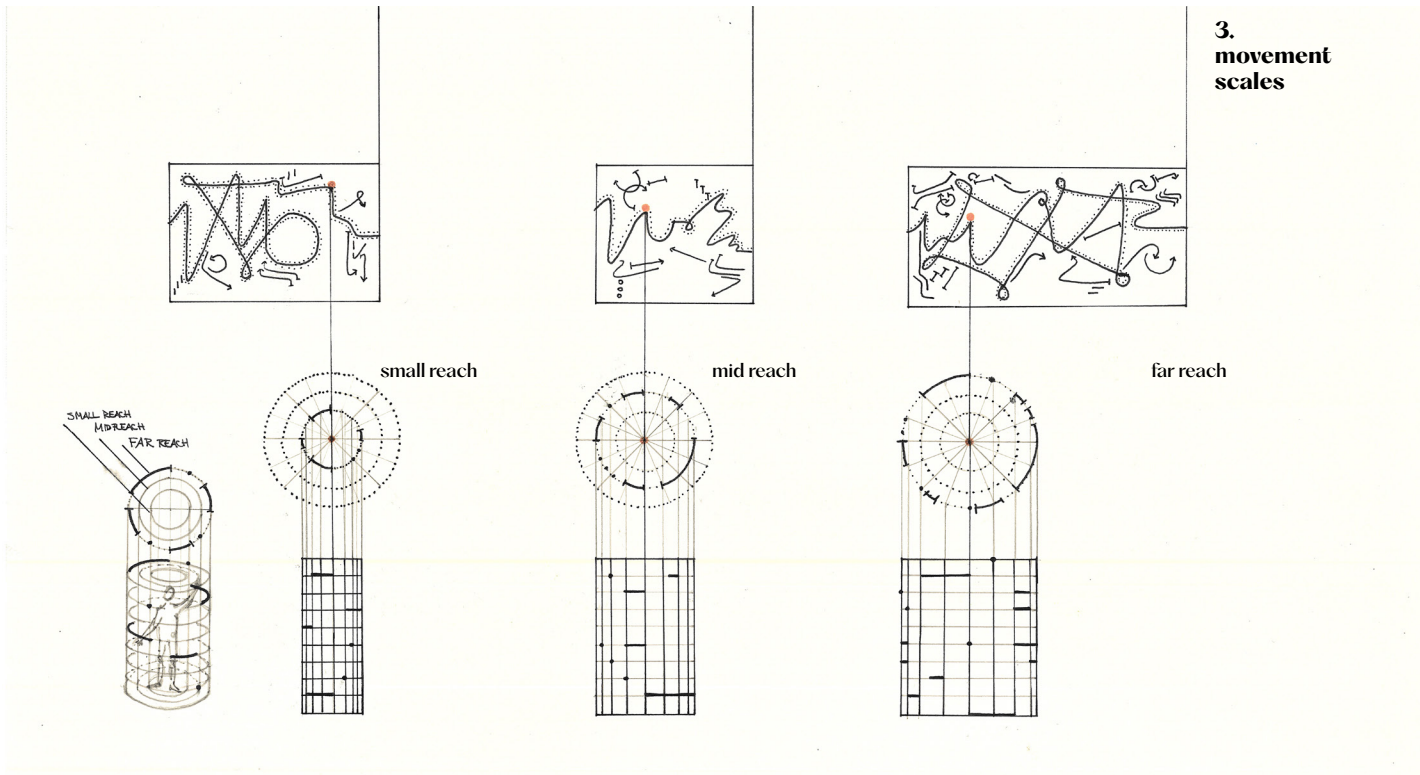
sequence I
small reach



sequence II
mid reach



sequence III
far reach



3. movement
scales

Kinesphere: is the sphere within our physical reach ,the sphere around the body whose periphery can be reached by extended limbs.’ (Laban, 1966, p.10)

2. LONG EXPOSURE PHOTOGRAPHY

What does the body want and need from space?

What are the limitations of each space?

Can we blur the boundaries of the human skin and the architectural skin?

This experiment explores the interface of my body with the built environment. The adjacent positioning of three urban sites in Rotterdam resonates with my movement and triggers this symbiotic relationship between the body and its spatial environment. Through the technique of stacking long-exposure photographs, the outcome captures multiple moments frozen into one image. The technique is inspired by Lois Greenfield and her photographic creations with dancers. For her, capturing movements in an image enables her to illustrate the passage of time. 'Dancers embody the passage of time. As photographers, we are capturing moments of various thickness or thinness. The shape of the fabric told me where the dancer's arm had been.' (Talk Lois Greenfield: Moving Still)

Architecture is invoked as a surgical instrument, delicately engaging in the self-reconfiguration of my body's extended matter. The concrete wall of a factory, the circular shape of urban interiority in a park, and a pedestrian underground tunnel allow the body to attune differently to each spatial situation. Each space makes me move in a certain way as it sets new limitations and requirements for my kinesphetic reach. My body takes the responsibility of filling up the space, exploding within the space, or encircling it. The limits of each space influence the pace and scale of my movements. **Some spaces spark a feeling of arrival, whereas others feel liminal and temporary – like a wind blowing between two buildings on a narrow street.** Others open up a kind of freedom and inspiration to move in an unusual way. Not only does the materiality and tactility of the architectural setting make my body respond in a certain way, but also the relation and view to the outside and other bodies passing by.



photographs by the author: self-timer & long exposure



2. LONG EXPOSURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Exploding. The concrete wall of an industrial building in Katendrecht. My body resonates with the echo of the heavy concrete. I push myself against the limits, until I have to fall. I use my last source of energy to hold on to the edge of the wall with my fingers, each of them touching the cold concrete wall. I fall, freely into the arms of them all. I am stepping through sequences of contraction and release, of pushing away and holding onto the last bit. I find myself somewhat stable in the middle ground, where I can bend my body

into a safe shape.



photographs by the author: self-timer & long exposure

2. LONG EXPOSURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Encircling. The circular shape with steps to sit on and rest, a piece of urban interiority in Rotterdam South. The space encircles me. I feel equally sheltered and free. I can transform, I can tremble from one side to another, no rules, no limits. Just the shape, my body, and my internal attunement. I can visualize myself replicating, I see the water, the sky, the past and the future, all whispering sounds of openness. I feel like a string figure or a marionette, swinging

from one side to another.



photographs by the author: self-timer & long exposure

2. LONG EXPOSURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Alining The Maastunnel, made for pedestrians to cross the river beneath the water. I have to fill up the space and keep going forward, pushing the limits of the linearity of the space. I want to break free but the long path with its white tiles squeezes me into a set of constraints. At one point, I am hunting for an escape from these parallel constraints. My body aligns its movement to the linearity of the walls. There are only two ways to go and I choose to go forward. I notice an urge to create variations to my movement within the strict directives. I discovered that in a tunnel under the water

dancing is possible.



photographs by the author: self-timer & long exposure

3. A POEM

This is a personal reflection after experiencing the performance of The Point Being by Imre and Marne van Opstal in collaboration with Studio DRIFT, which made me wonder about the power of violence and harmony that some bodies of today carry within them.

a personal resonance

misty soup

It is in these moments, in which the world remains still,
that our hearts open up a little more.
In a blink of an eye,
bodies collide.
Indecision, interruption & surprise.
The cycle of harmony and friction transcendences
into opacity, all over again.
It is in these fleeting moments, that I can let my
thoughts drift (...)
into a misty soup of eternal touches and dreams.

(Zita Leutgeb, 04.11.2023)



Performance

Imre & Marne van Opstal. (2023) The Point Being. Nederlands Dans Theater
Choreography / Direction: Imre & Marne van Opstal. Scenography: Lonneke Gordijn (DRIFT)
Music: Amos Ben-Tal

4. THE SPATIAL MANIFESTO

, This desire to articulate what you feel and perceive, to tell it, to name it, to describe it, this is as natural as the progression from walking to running to leaping, to shaping that leap into a pattern of leaps, and the group of leapers in unison – into a dance.’ (Parson, Annie-B. The Choreography of Everyday Life. p. 94.)

The Manifesto displays the spatial journey of the measured body, the performative body, and the open body, each relating to a chapter of the historical & theoretical research. The translation from research into design is facilitated by the Spatial Manifestation. The reader is taken along a path, following a narrative of both written and visual form.

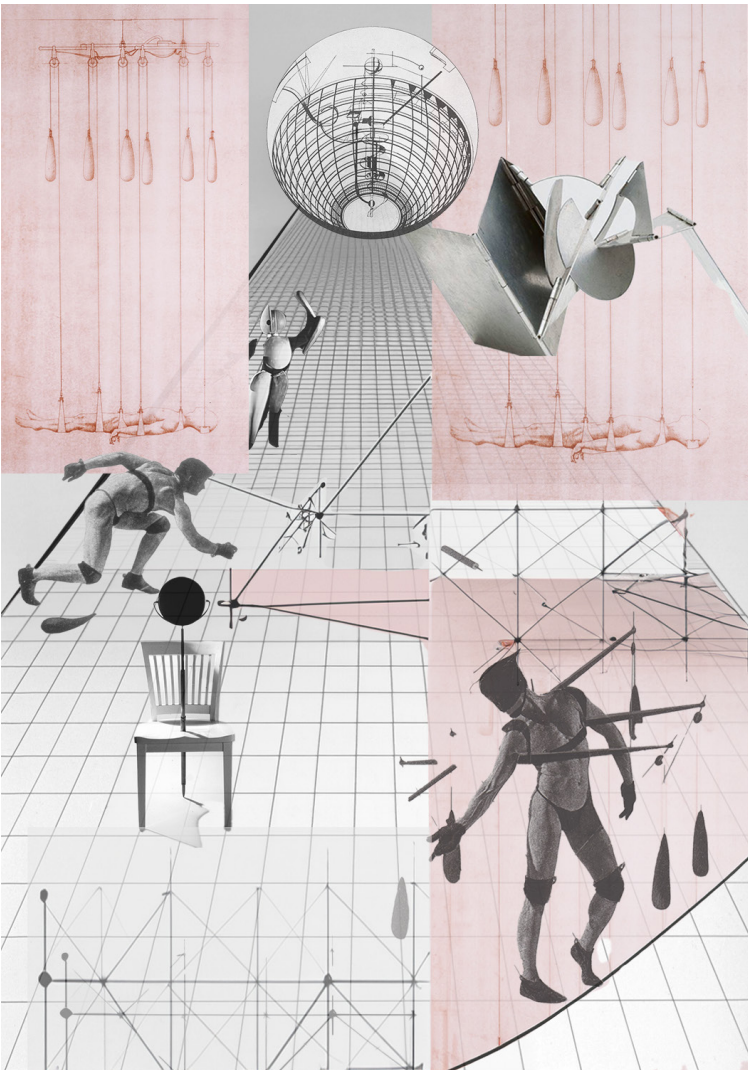
The journey of the body becomes vivid in the collection of collages, drawings, and first-person stories. The clustering of the visual and written inputs remind of a dramaturgical play. The drawings, inspired by the work of Swiss illustrator Warja Lavater, are to be read from top to bottom and to be interpreted with related stories and collages. Each drawing displays a path of the body through space and its encounters with other bodies and objects. The mixed media approach forms a scenographic, dramaturgical story to open up an imaginary world for the reader.

the spatial journey of the
measured body

performative body

open body

modern,
measured
body



collage of spatial encounters, by the author

*I (the traveler) embody the
modern body. This is my first
journey through the path.*
22/11/2065

I enter a spatial journey of in-
tensified embodiment. My body
is highly sensitive, my limbs are
like antennas. I am tracing lines
of connection. To the things in
front of me, but also the energy
around. To presences that are
not visible.

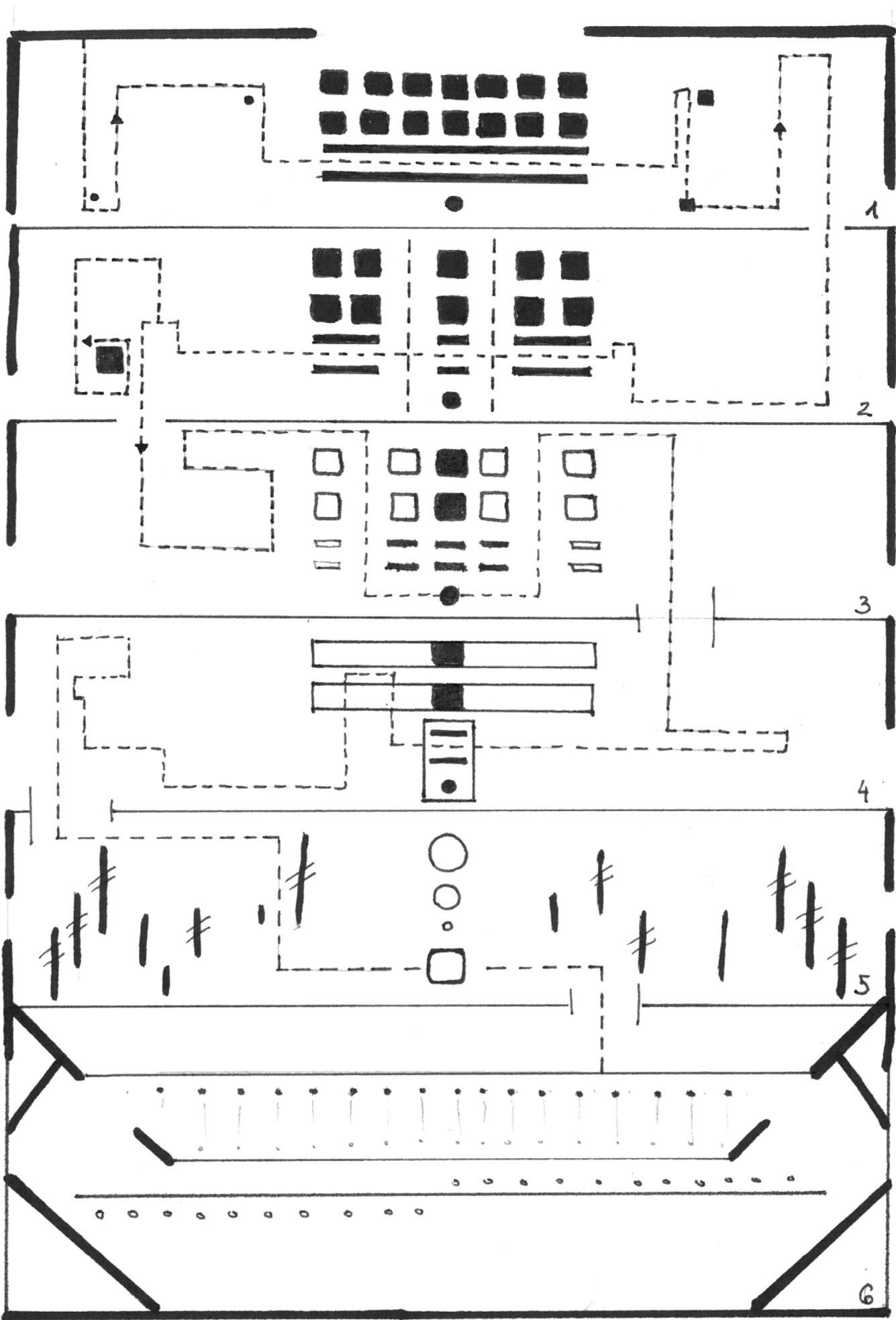
I have to cross static systems
within the cartesian grid.

Sometimes I am about to break
the boundaries of geometric
constraints.

Indecision,
Interruption & Surprise.

In a blink of an eye,
Bodies collide.

the body as a storyteller



sequential pathway drawing by the author,
ink-roller on paper

performative body

I (the traveler) embody the performative body. This is my first journey through the path.
22/11/2065

I embody flesh, crudeness, and the earthbound.

In this path, I feel the ground vibrating to the sound of human exhales.

Suddenly, the earth beneath the horizontal opens up. I fall into grounds of earthbound energies.

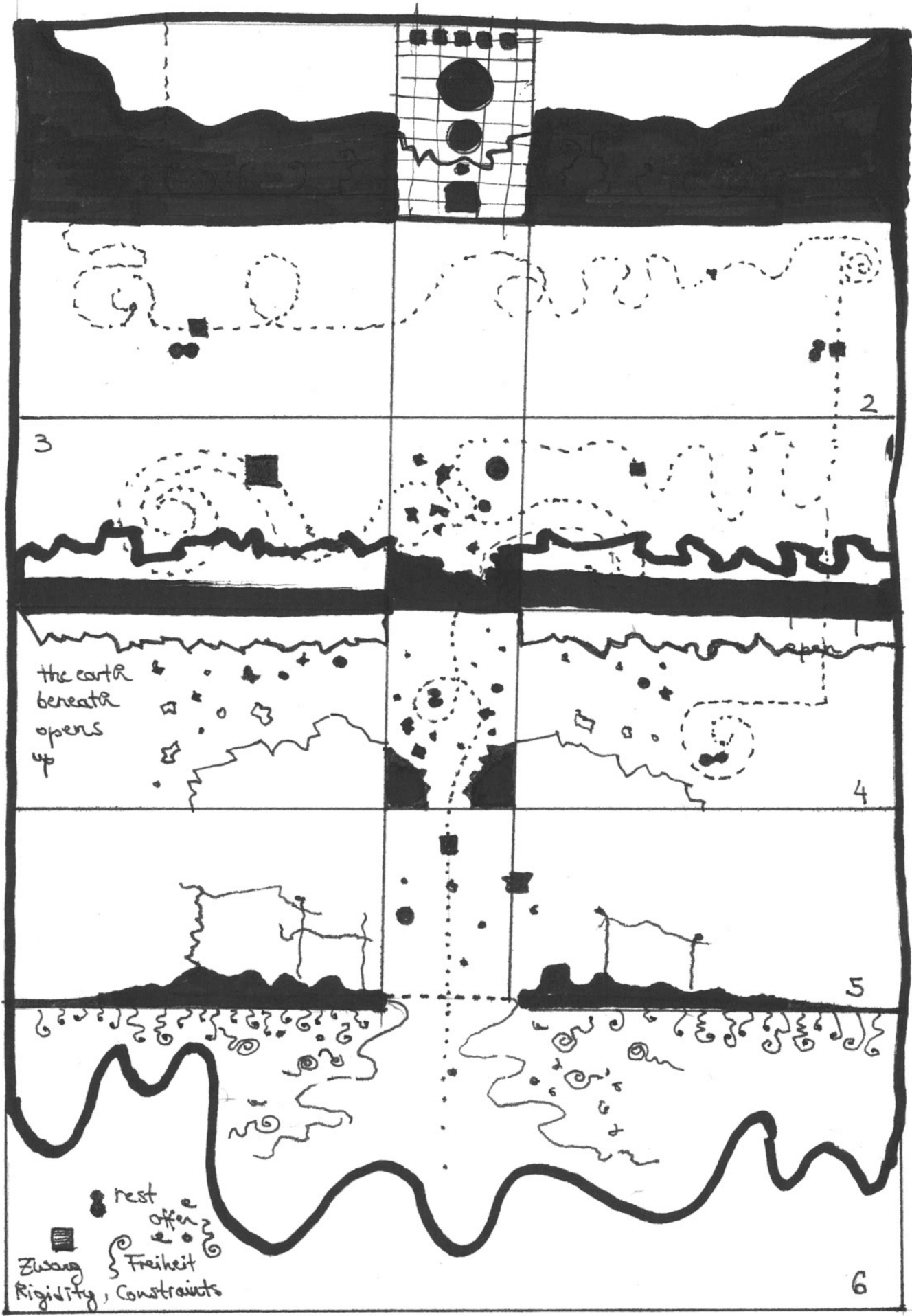
I celebrate my body in its bare weight, in its interaction with the others, and the environment around me.

This spatial journey is fascinating and frightening, in its crudeness. Here, Bodies are celebrated in their power and in their fragility.

the body as a storyteller



collage of spatial encounters, by the author



sequential pathway drawing by the author, ink-roller on paper

open body

I (the traveler) embody the open body. This is my first journey through the path.
22/11/2065

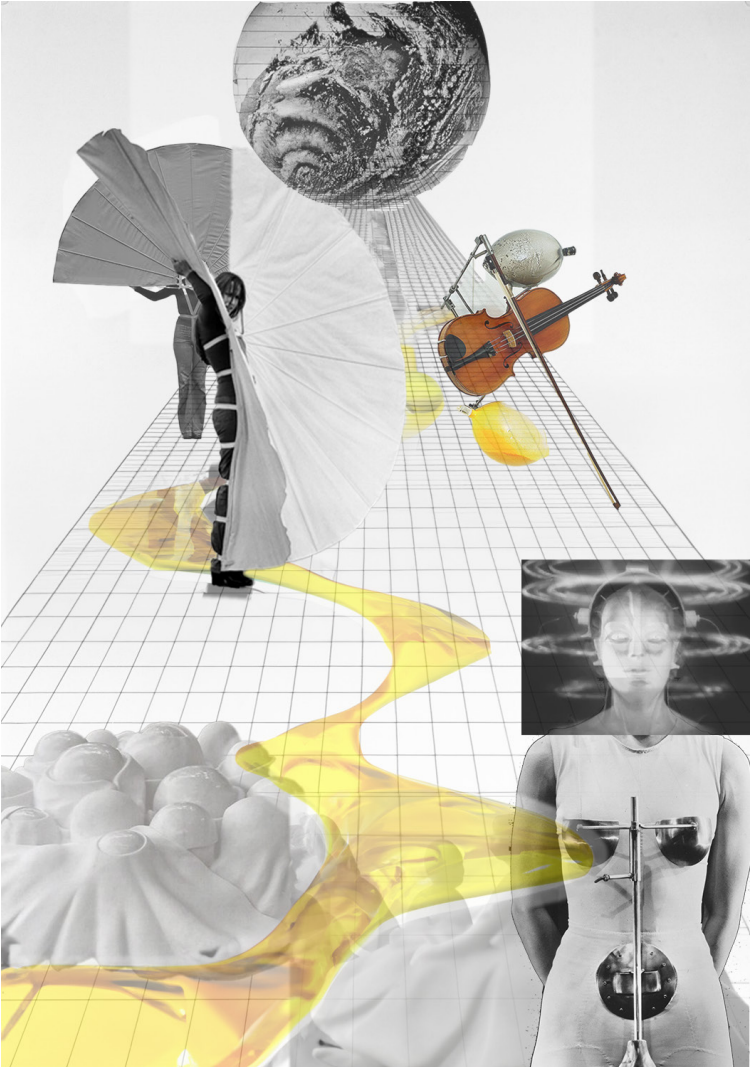
I need to drop my body into a liquid space to allow all the elements around me to come to life. Each single gesture, becomes a destiny.

I open my eyes, confronted by a misty soups of eternal touches and dreams. It feels like I can reach the clouds of cosmic souls.

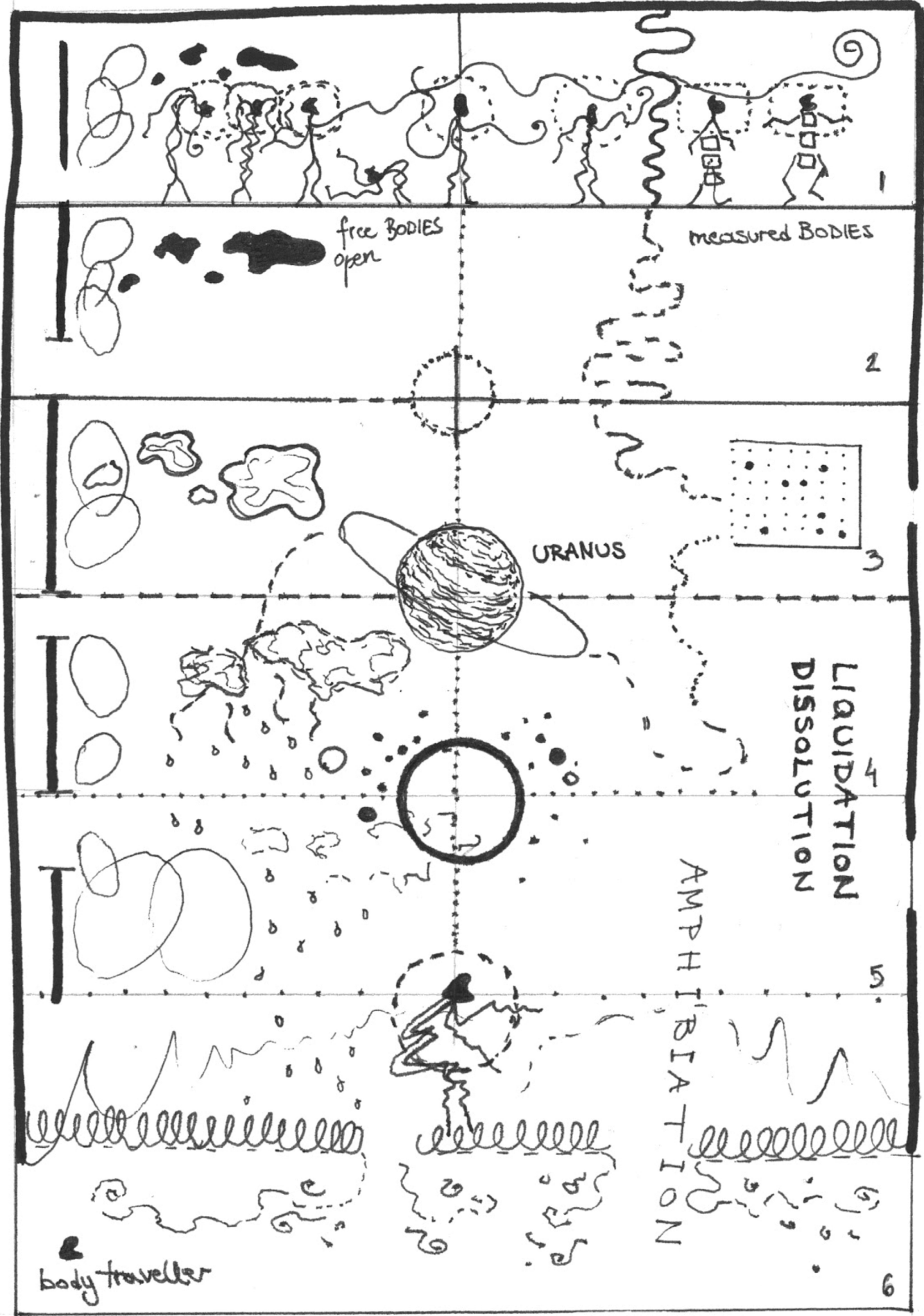
On my journey I encounter gender travelers, space-transformers, children, and ex-measured bodies longing for non existence.

At night I feel their steamy breath in my neck. In the morning strong rays of sun clear the space from the steam. I can feel the amphibiation of my body, merging into an Uranian universe. Spaces dissolve into enteral harmony.

the body as a storyteller



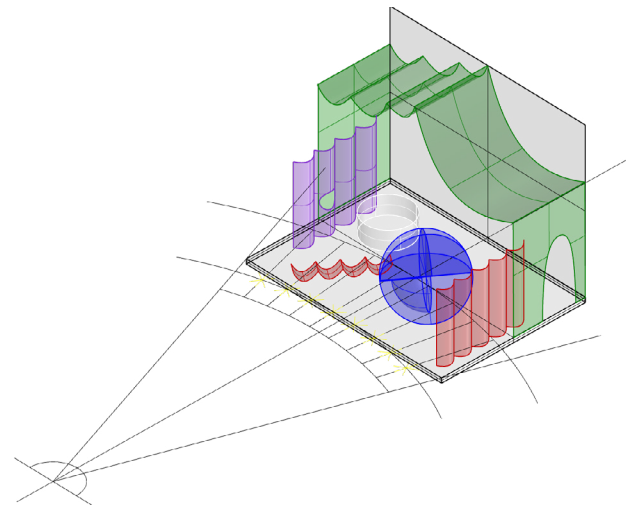
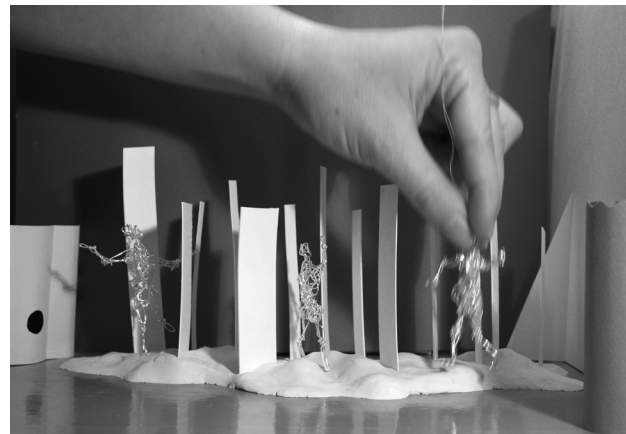
collage of spatial encounters, by the author



sequential pathway drawing by the author, ink-roller on paper

5. SNAPSHOTS & STRING FIGURES

Model Experiment

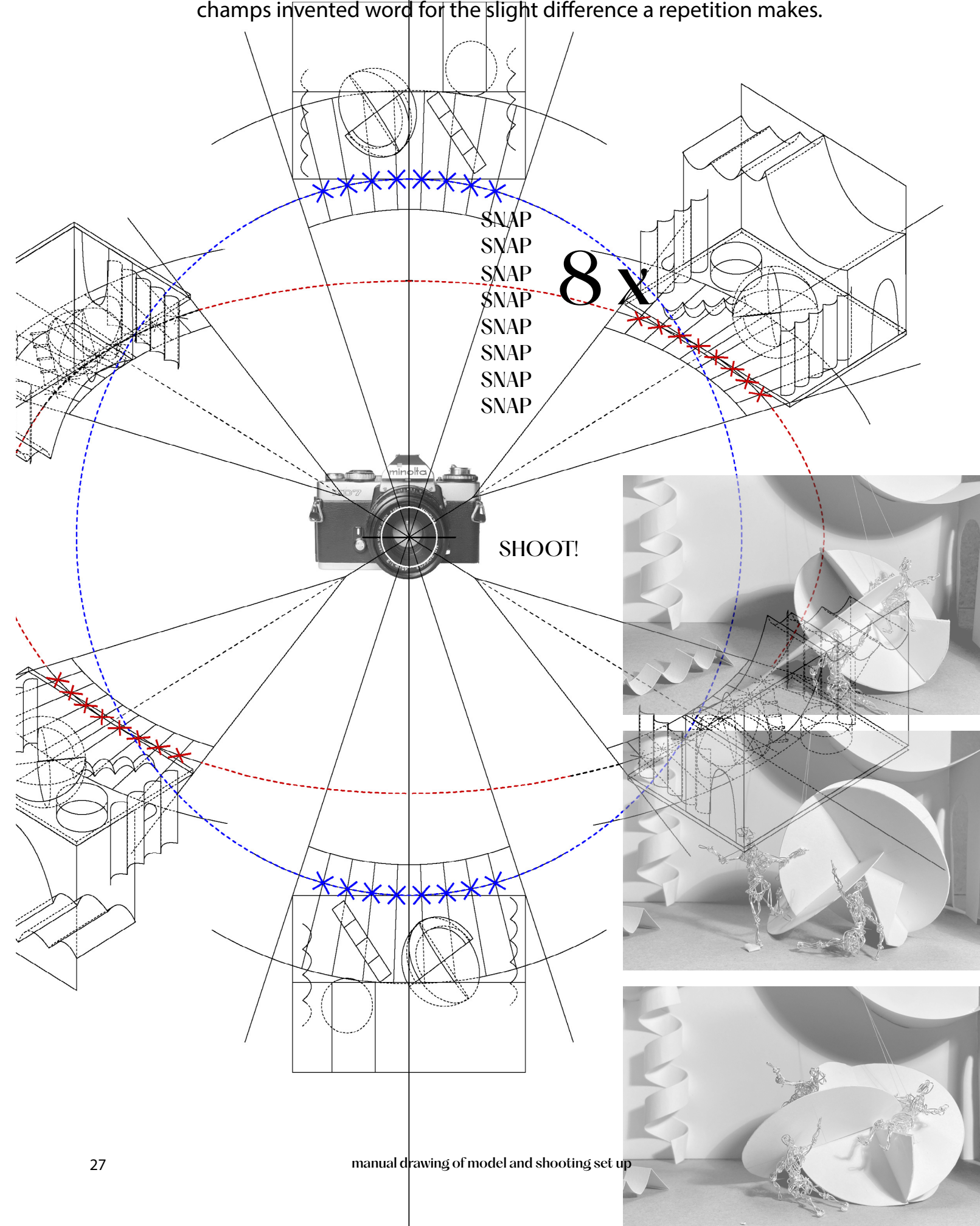


camera shooting angles, snapshots marked in yellow

This is a time-motion study with models. A chance operation by moving metallic wire puppets through the scene with my hand. Relating to Cunningham's *'canning'*⁵ of chance at its (re)release in performance, meaning to have the same departure point of an event and phrasing the outcome differently each time.⁶ I start with a metal wire and bend movable human figures in scale 1:33. 1 puppet, 2 puppets, 3 puppets. A scenographic paper backdrop is built including architectural elements and objects, curved walls, spheres to shelter, stage curtains and a pavilion of beads making sounds when one passes through.

^{5,6} Noland, Carrie. (2019) Merce Cunningham – After the Arbitrary. Chicago: The Chicago Press. p.36.

Like bits of glass in a *KALEIDOSCOPE*, falling into and out of place, the phrases, performed by dancers in their jewel colors costume, illustrate the *ACTION OF THE INFRAMINCE*, Duchamps invented word for the slight difference a repetition makes.



manual drawing of model and shooting set up

5. SNAPSHOTS & STRING FIGURES

Model Experiment

The camera is positioned orthogonally to the set model. A thin white thread meanders through the wire puppets' arms so that it moves through the scene like a human body. I set the camera and shot chrono-photographic series, each a 10-image sequence. The technique itself becomes the experiment, based on the work of Etienne-Jules Marey, who used chronophotography in order to investigate the dynamic laws of the body in motion. The outcome illustrates a scene with multiple playpoints for bodies to respond. Architectural shapes offer opportunities for appropriation and play. **The bodies dance like String Figures through the images, each series captured is unique, differing from the one before.** Relating to Marcel Duchamp's invented terminology *Inframince*, *the slight difference a repetition makes.*⁷

7 Noland, Carrie. (2019) Merce Cunningham – After the Arbitrary. Chicago: The Chicago Press. p.24.



model sequences & chronophotographic seriality

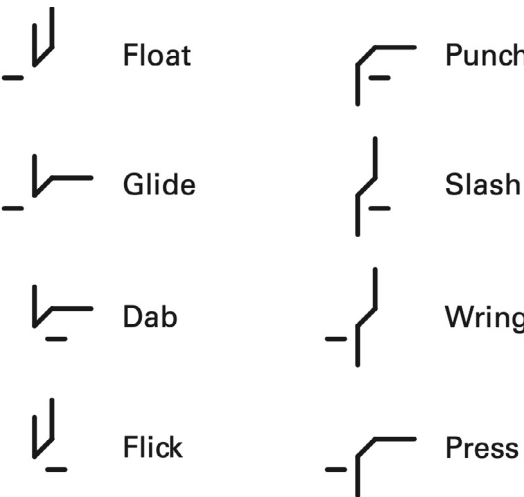
6. (8) LABAN EFFORTS & (8) SCORES

Drawing Experiment

PUNCH DAB PRESS GLIDE SLASH FLICK WRING FLOAT

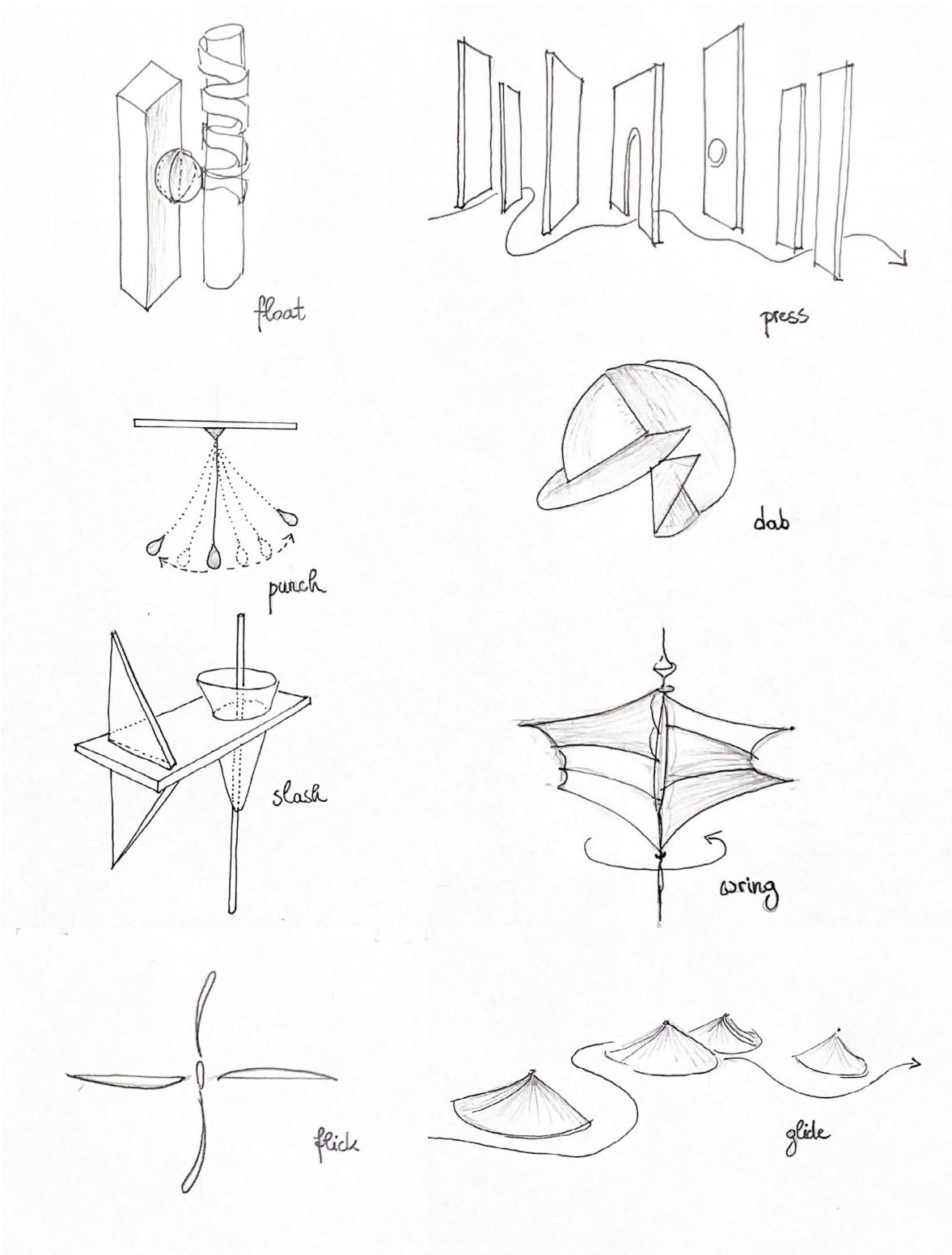
The 8 Laban efforts are: float, punch, glide, slash, dab, wring, flick, and press. The efforts have their origin in Rudolph Labans *Schrift-tanz (1928)* and his school of thought, in which he invented a notation system based on two purely sensory elements: that of the body's weight and that of its energy or, flux'.⁸

I grew up studying Laban efforts in my dance education in Vienna as basic vocabulary of modern dance, yet they provoke a very spatial component. I immediately connect the words to an embodied experience in space. Through the emancipation of Laban's work from the realm of dance, his efforts can be extended into the domain of space. It is at the intersection of bodies, dance (action), and space that intriguing moments emerge.



These sketches show an attempt to visualize the 8 Laban efforts as spatial response machines that evoke a certain bodily response. It is a dialogue between a spatial input (see the sketches) and bodily response. The reaction of bodies to architectures is explored in the next experiment.

⁸ Louppe, Laurence. (1994). *Traces of Dance, Drawings and Notations of Choreographers*, Paris; Éditions Dis Voir, p.137.



laban movement sketches

6. (8) LABAN EFFORTS & (8) SCORES

Drawing Experiment

We can **press** a door open.
We can **float** across the water on a bridge.

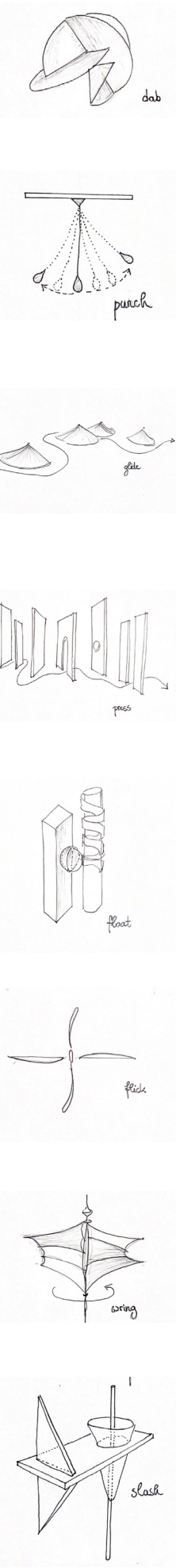
Can we **wring** architecture like a towel?
Can we **punch** a column?
Can we **slash** through architecture like a knife through a cake?
Can we **float** on a cantilevering beam like our bodies
float in a meandering river?

SCORE DRAWINGS

Eight hand-drawn scores illustrate the Laban Efforts as spatial notes of movement. The notes can be accentuated with a variety of accents: free, bound, sudden, sustained, heavy, light, indirect, direct... Full notes represent a fast movement, and empty notes a slower movement. The intensity, as in energy and scale, of each movement corresponds to the actual drawn size of the graphic markings.

9 Louppe, Laurence. (1994). Traces of Dance, Drawings and Notations of Choreographers, p.177.

Rudolf Laban saw analogies between music scores and dance. For him, concurrent gestures of the limbs provide chords in space, and sequential gestures create 'trace forms' or melodic shapes in the kinesphere (the volume of space immediately surrounding each dancer).⁹ Each of the scores can be combined to form a composition, a performance. The core purpose of this experiment is to provide a notation system for movement expressions and facilitate the embodiment of spatial experiences.



6. (8) LABAN EFFORTS & (8) SCORES

Drawing Experiment

float

flick

wring

slash

the more accentuation lines,
the faster the movement effort

score drawings, each relating to a movement effort

punch

stab

glide

press

half note
full note
1/4 pause

score drawings, each relating to a movement effort, pencil and ink on paper

7. SITES & SCORES

on site in Rotterdam

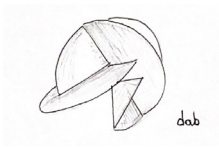

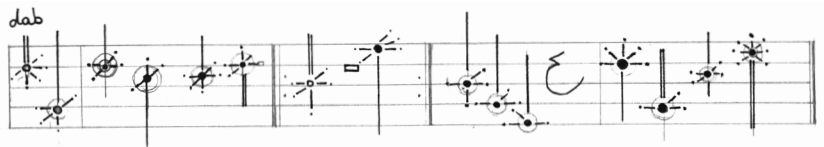
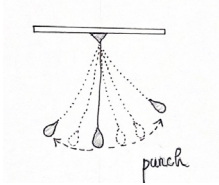

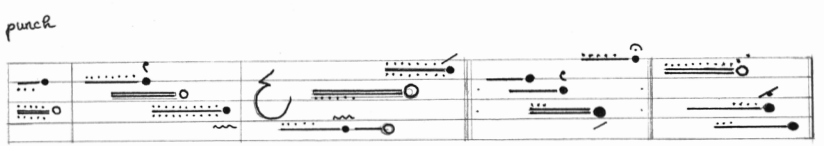


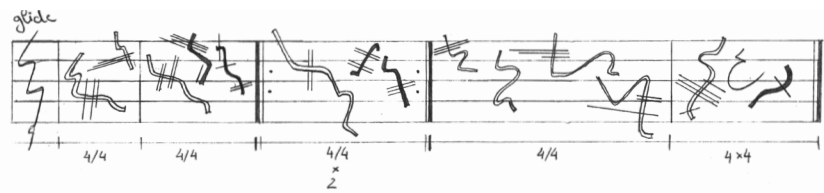
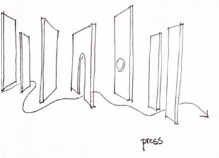
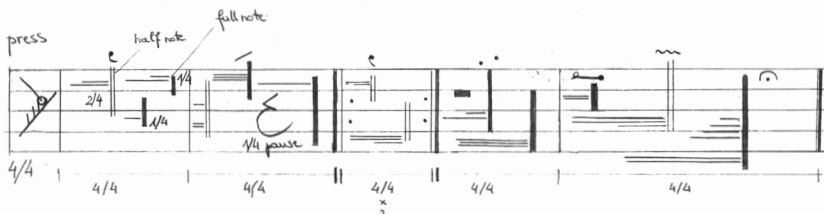
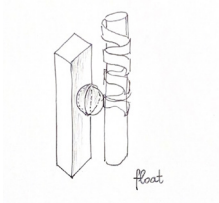

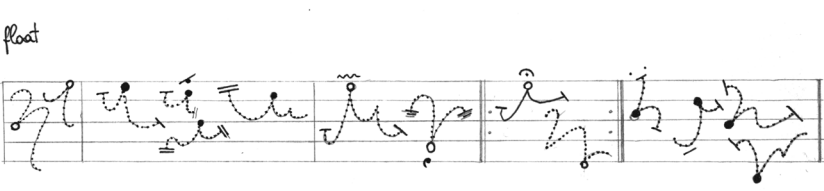


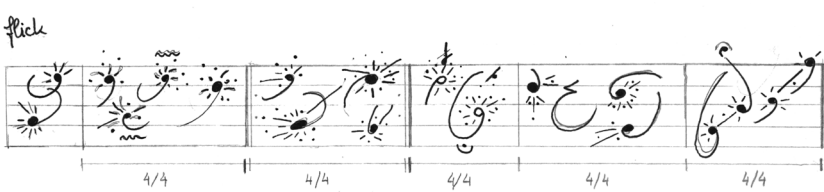

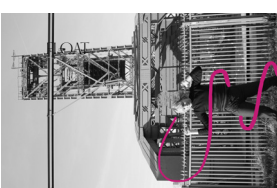
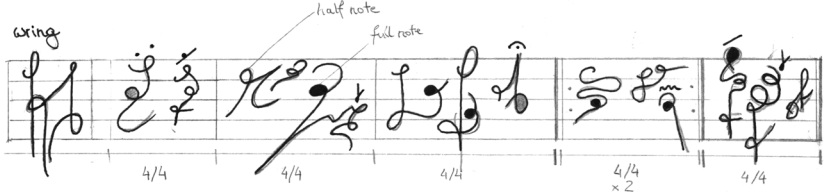
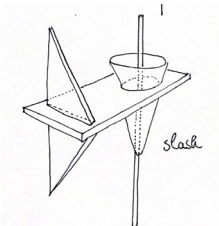

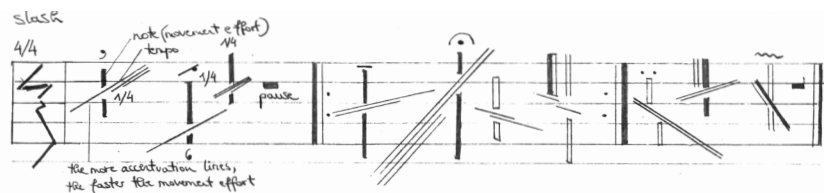
PUNCH DAB PRESS GLIDE SLASH FLICK WRING FLOAT

This is the experiment related to my site, the bridges, piers, and waterways tangling through Rotterdam Noordereiland and Kop van Zuid. I am taking a walk along a spine of movement initiators, meandering through the waters of Rotterdam. This is a story of walking, floating, and dancing through Rotterdam's network of waters and bridges.

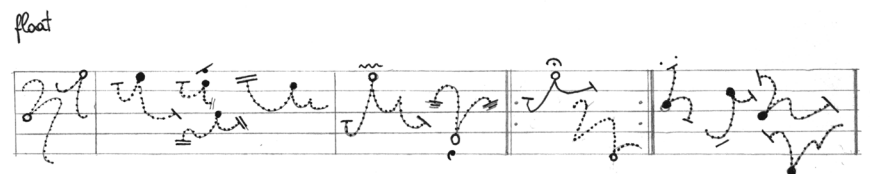
,Walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc., the trajectories it ,speaks'. All the modalities sing a part in this chorus, changing from step to step, stepping in through proportions, sequences, and intensities which vary according to the time, the path taken and the walker. ' 10

10 Peeters, Jeroen. (2022). And then it got legs. Brussels/Oslo: Varamo Press

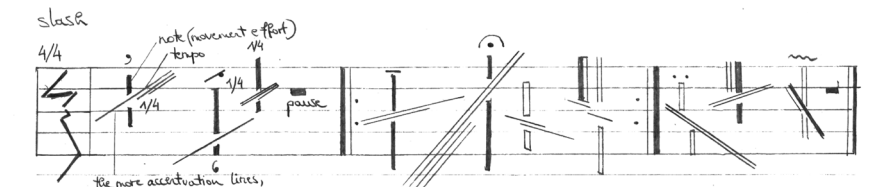
Urban elements of shipping docks, bridges, unused railway tracks, waterways, and nature together build the departure point of my own story. Walking along this trajectory, the body responds and attunes to the simplest shapes like a dockhand, a symbol reappearing all over Rotterdam. Incorporating remembrance emerges as a plausible design element. The walking aspect connects back to the experiment of the Spatial Journey, again taking a path as a departure to explore bodily attunement.

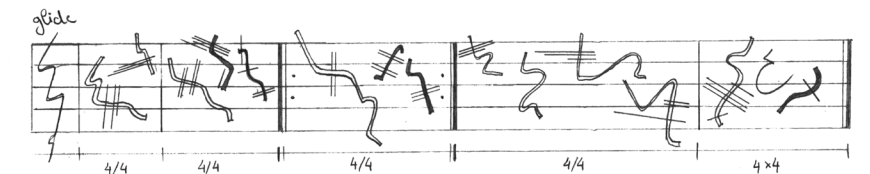
7. SITES & SCORES



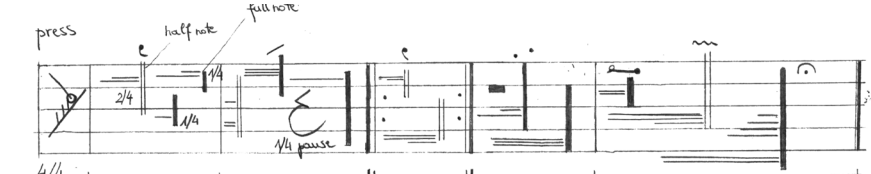
FLOAT



SLASH



GLIDE



PRESS

DESIGN GOAL

Design Goal

The envisioned design outcome seeks to create a space that celebrates the individuality of bodies and embraces the personal ways in which we move through space. Rather than imposing predefined architectural constraints on the body's movement, the design aims to empower individuals to directly interact with the surrounding built environment and other bodies – forming a diverse, moving collective as part of a performance.

The design introduces a floating stage element that has potential to interlock with various docks at the piers of Rotterdam. The stage frames the city's historical center as a backdrop for performances on the water. The goal is to enable actions of bodies that influence the architecture's position and movement in the water. Pivoting, Rotating, and Moving elements can be monitored through physical actions. The Bodies navigating and playfully interacting with the spatial environment automatically become part of the performance.

Site Specificity

Located along the piers of Maas River, the Maaskade of Noordereiland is a starting point for the design and an anchor for inspiration. The site comes along with powerful external elements such as wind, waves, currents, tides, and sounds of splashing water from passing boats, which all have the potential to dynamically shape the architecture. I image a design that moves with the water and tides, architectural elements and levels becoming invisible at a certain time of the day, responding to the seasons and the external weather conditions.



REFLECTION

on the research (outcome)

11 Parson, Annie-B. (2022). The Choreography of Everyday Life. London, UK: Verso Books. p.78.

Once we walk through everyday life with a certain sensibility to our bodies and space, we discover our ability as natural space-makers and choreographers. As we craft our paths and proximities, we are internally intertwined in an urban, spatial dialogue. Annie B-Parson mentions this in her book *Choreography of Everyday life* „*All day long we tacitly and spontaneously make decisions about how much space we need between one another, we place chairs, tables, and bodies in physical relationships that we find emotionally and somatically appropriate for our desires.*”¹¹

So if we ask ourselves again, „*Can the body, with its capacity for action, and its various energies, be said to create space?*” (Lefebvre, 1991: 170) Yes, as we move through the world and attune ourselves to our immediate spatial surroundings, our bodies respond with individual energies and actions. How beautiful it is to think about these personal moments of bodily attunement? Now it is my task as a designer to find and initiate these moments of reciprocal resonance between an individual's body and space. To discover spaces with an engaging quality capable of eliciting movement in all of us.



The desired design will allow new encounters between water and land, body and space, permanence and temporality, spectator and actor. Picking up on movement scales as a concept in Part 2, the research addresses this ongoing experimentation with different scales. Through models, photographs, and drawings I navigate forth and back between the widest shot of space, the city, the water, and the sky, all the way to the smallest scale, the center of the body itself, with our beating heart and senses.

The body and the surrounding space start a playful conversation to discover new ways of building and perceiving architecture of today and the future. If we allow our bodies to be curious and free, they will organically respond to spatial constructs, and a newfound sense of joy within us becomes apparent.





collage, interior of floating stage
bodies, stage, backstage and Rotterdam as a backdrop (by the author)

A CONVERSATION

BETWEEN BODY & SPACE

BODY:

I am ready to start this journey of bodily awareness. My fingertips are tickling. Let me see, what you can offer!

SPACE:

I am a spiral, a silver tunnel of light and weight, motion, shapes, times and dazzling sounds.

BODY:

It's happening. I curve, and spiral, and rotate like shells in the sea, stirred though the sand by the force of a wave. I arrive at a central point of force where my body bends, spirals, and rotates.

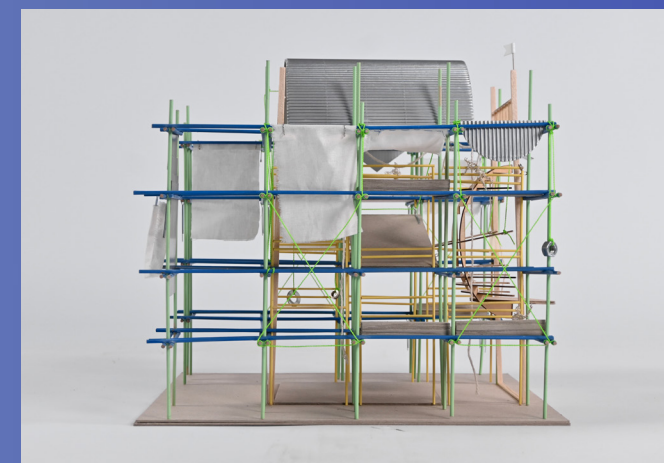
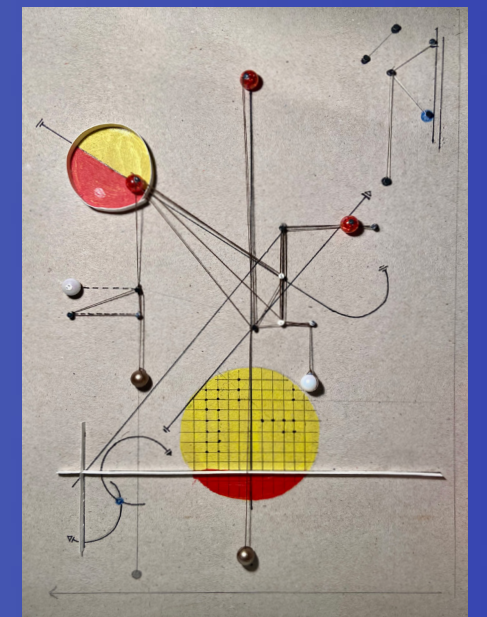
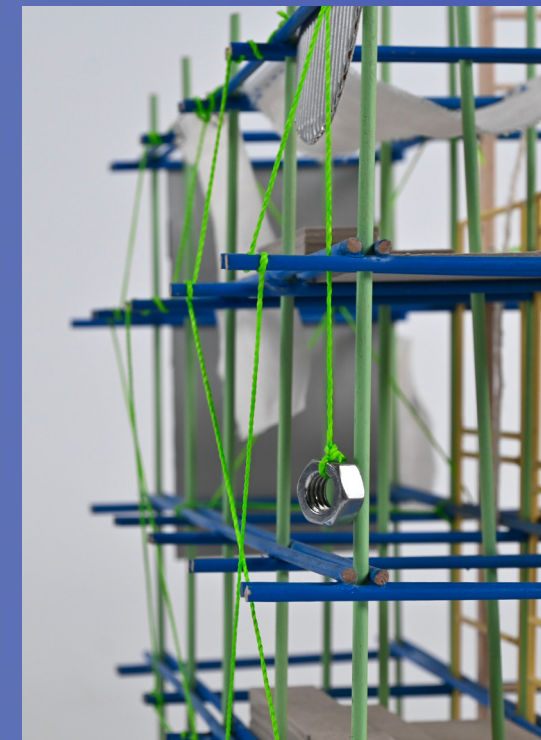
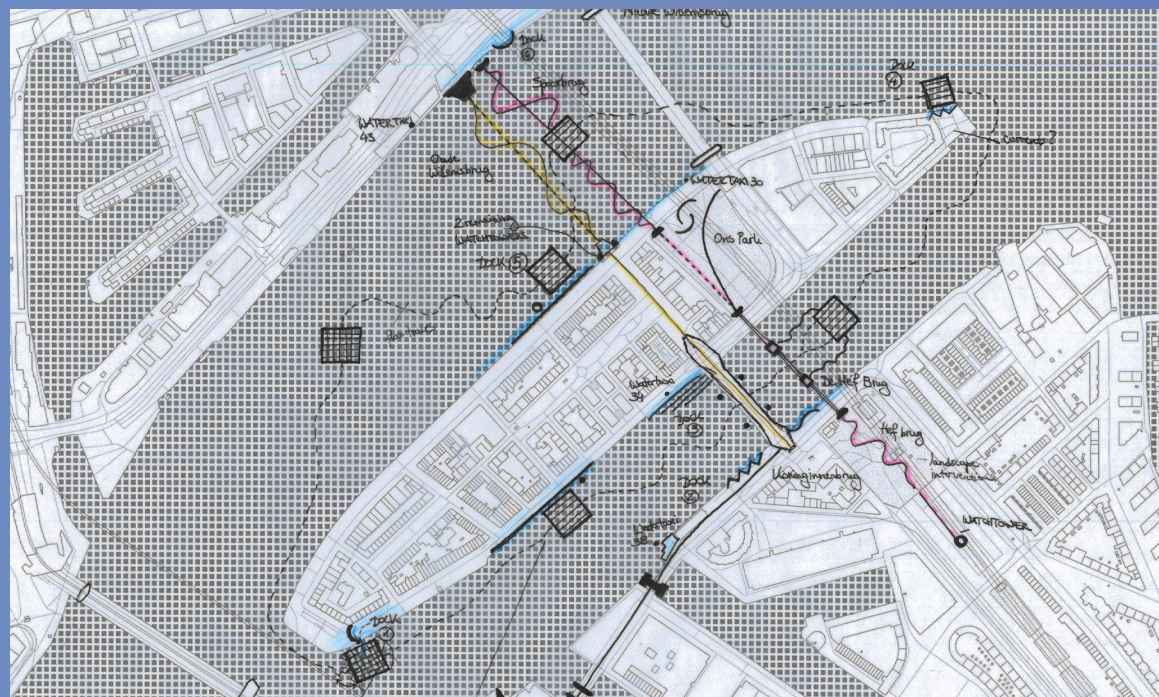
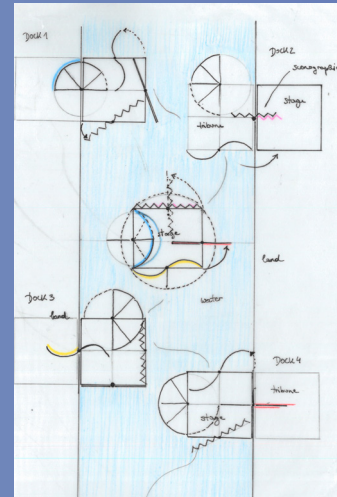
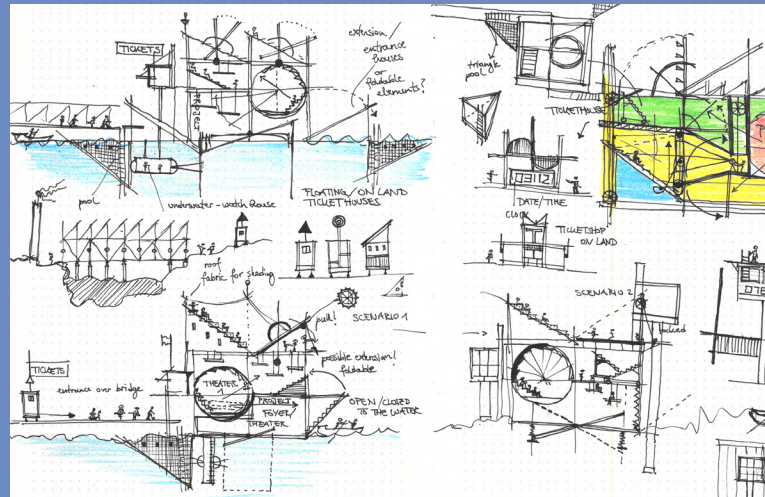
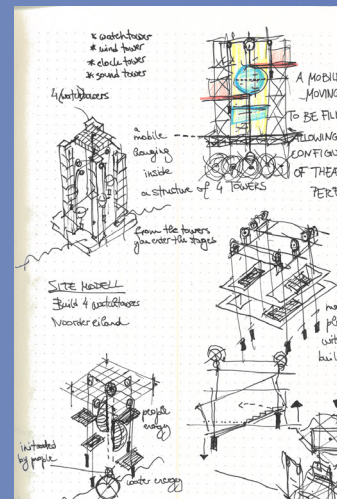
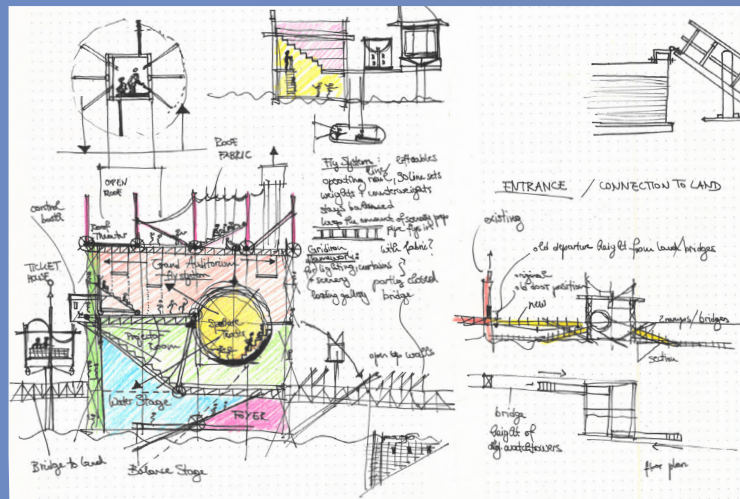
SPACE:

Your body moves like nature! Everyone I meet here moves perfectly, because this dance has been inside of us since the beginning of time. These dances are as natural as a flower blossoming on a tree, and the trees are dancing too, in response to the joy of the water, the sky, and the city.

BODY:

You are right, I just move my body to think and there it is: A newfound sense of joy within my body.

ongoing urban and structural proposal



DESIGN COLLAGE



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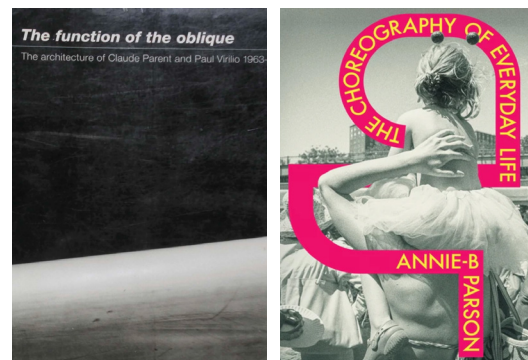
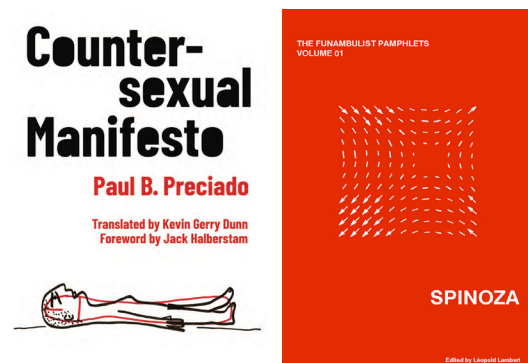
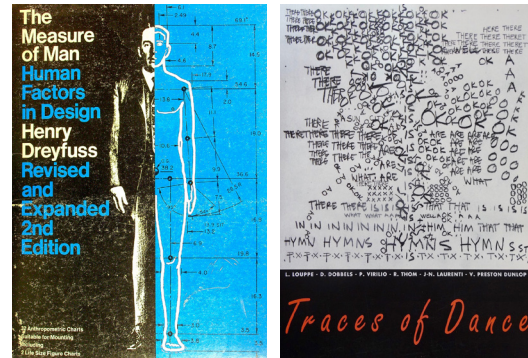
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