



# LAB NOTES

from the **teacher meetings**  
of the **contactfestival freiburg 15**

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# LAB NOTES

from teacher meetings  
of the contactfestival freiburg **15**

summary of verious discussions, labs and research of past teacher meetings  
teacher meeting for the contactfestival freiburg 2015



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## PREFACE

The contactfestival freiburg exists since 2000. It was initiated and co-organized by Barbara Stahlberger, Benno Enderlein and Eckhard Müller. As committed CI practitioners, teachers and organizers, and following the synergy of the encounters, interests and experiences, the three founders met and imagined a new International CI event in Freiburg, as a gathering of the teachers and the international CI community to exchange about their practice.

Each of them merged their experiences to co-create the contactfestival freiburg. Their great investment, energy and passion have created the first international CI festival in Europe, influencing the CI community worldwide. Many other CI festivals with a similar structure have followed it. The Festival runs Intensives, Classes, Labs, Performances and Jams and is an annual weeklong event.

The teachers meeting happens just before the Festival for current and former teachers of the Festival to get details for teaching, facilitating and exchanging during the event. Some topics are about the contactfestival freiburg, but a big part is to share and exchange about Contact Improvisation itself. The themes and topics, brought up from the teachers, were discussed, tried, taught and researched by bigger and smaller groups of teachers during the meetings through the years.

The notes can be a source of inspiration for organizing, teaching and dancing. They may show solutions for some topics, but are meant only as informative material to build up the process of knowledge. The following notes are written from various teachers who were taking part in the teachers meetings of the contactfestival freiburg.

Please remark that the most of the notes are not written in perfect English or edited correctly. They are still raw. Some more, some less.

Barbara Stahlberger brought this notes together in this collection.

The photos are taken by Patrick Beelaert, Mary Pearson, Barbara Stahlberger  
...





**REPORTS**

## Report from Dani to CQ

I'm just back home after contactfestival freiburg 2015.

We had a wonderful Festival, and CQ was so present during the whole event!

We had Romain Bigé as a researcher with his "Eat & Think" project @ lunch during the whole week. He gathered and related 2 texts, 1 by a philosopher and 1 by Steve Paxton (@CQ). It was very nourishing.

We had a donation event conceived by Nita Little, Peter Pleyer, Eszter Gal, Mary Pearson... and throughout the festival we raised money for CQ from the participants, and the festival added on top.

We are happy to share with you that we have 500 euros for you. Ecki will contact you to arrange who to get them to you.

We had an ideo-kinetic Jam, a project adapted from Peter Pleyer where all the CQ collection was available on a mat with a mic, and everyone could choose what to share, read loud and feed the focus Jam. It worked beautifully. Magazines were also taken into the dance floor, being read quietly on the side.

We had Dieter Heitkamp "Going into contact Performance", with a version he created for the Festival, where so much history about CI and CQ texts wrote by Steve and others were read loud.

This year finally the Festival was about CI History, content and context. A lot of material has been read, talked, touched, danced, and spread.

Also the Festival Library was much more used with this input.

We hope we created more awareness about the value of CQ and awaken more interest from the teachers and practitioners to engage, subscribe and support you.

Love to all from Strasbourg.

my time to rest for few days, after so much work, and dance.

dani

Report from Daniela Schwartz to CQ,  
22. Aug. 2015

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## CQ Newsletter Report from Martin

Back in July of 1998 Barbara Stahlberger and I sat on an ocean facing deck in Point Richmond, California with an expansive, three-bridge view. We had both just been part of the Berkeley Contact Improvisation Festival and were basking in the days of dancing and learning. Barbara turned to me and said, "We need a festival like this in Germany. Who can I find to help me create it?"

Barbara returned home and with the assistance of Eckhard Mueller and Benno Enderlein (and now, Daniela Schwartz) created the Contact Festival Freiburg in 2000. It soon became the model festival in Europe, spawning contact improvisation festivals throughout Europe that now run annually from May through September.

I first taught at the Freiburg Festival in 2001 when there were 150 attendees. During my most recent visit this past August there were 301 attendees gathered from 26 countries and five continents.

My experience over 35+ years of festival-going is that these big group events have a life cycle, and that after a few years they can become a bit routine, even stale.

I am happy to report that after 16 summers the Freiburg Contact Festival is as alive and vibrant as ever. Separately, I asked each of the four organizers, "how is it that this festival has not gone stale after all this time?" They all independently gave the same answer: "We give the festival over into the hands of the teachers. They keep it fresh because they keep filling it with their curiosity and inquiry."

During its first decade the festival never repeated a teacher so the roster of offerings always felt fresh and timely. They also invited all the previous teachers to attend the festival for a token sum. This way, with many of the festival participants being teachers, the quality of investigation within the classes and at the jams was profound.

Each year the organizers invite a teacher to lead the pre-festival workshop, a five-day intensive investigation of the form. I was honored to receive that invitation this year. This particular offering allows the organizers focused time for their own dancing and inquiry. All four were very present for those five days, even with the next two big events coming up.

Between the pre-workshop and the festival is the 'Teacher's Meeting,' a gathering of all those who will be leading classes and workshops in the current year, along with past teachers and potential future teachers who have also been invited. Ecki expressed that the use of two facilitators at the Teacher's Meeting (TM) works because, "... we find that one becomes the open-hearted hospitable host and the other one directs the group and makes sure they keep things moving." This year Peter Pleyer from Berlin and Eszter Gal from Budapest facilitated the TM with a very light and generous hand.

This year's TM allowed over 60 teachers to meet and dance and lab their questions while preparing to be the constellation that would hold the festival group once it grows to over 300 people. Most of the time is spent jamming and labbing, with some sessions reserved for the nuts and bolts of preparing for the festival.

The TM included many structures into which the teachers could pour, exchange, and blend, with extraordinary generosity. The 10X5 structure gave ten teachers five

## REPORTS

minutes each to talk about what excites them most right now. This structure was repeated several times.

There was also ample lab time with topics ranging from 'Scores for 'Not Knowing' , to 'Anatomical Imagery', 'Paying Attention: CI in Performance', 'Spiritual Experience in CI', 'Subterranean (Shamanic) Aspects of Teaching CI', and 'CI as a Political Action'.

The festival proper begins with everyone gathered into a huge circle in the gym hall and each person stands in turn, saying their name and where they live. I was surprised at how emotional an experience it was to hear how far and wide these people come from to dance together.

Smaller groups were then created, grouped by six different languages, in order to transmit all the pertinent festival information. The largest language group~ after German~ was Spanish, then. English, Russian, French and Finnish. These groups then went into slow motion dancing that eventually connected all the groups and opened up into the evening's jam.

Each evening the massive gym hall was split in two: the regular jam space and the focused jam space. The focused space had different scores each night and including a box filled with secret scores and a night that began with no duets~only solo and group dancing. One evening, an "ideo-kinetic jam", initiated by Peter Pleyer had archival copies of CQ and other contact books around the space. When someone found a passage that moved them they could approach a microphone and read it to the dancing bodies. This jam was packed and had rather 'informed' dancing.

For the yearly "History Talk", I led a score titled, 'Who Dances CI? Who Are We: An Interactive Talk.'

I had participants begin with the Universe Score, where people take a stand for their histories, their beliefs, and their desires. With such a diverse, worldwide group of dancers, it was interesting to see our demographics on many levels. It got interesting when people began to make statements about identity and race: "I'm queer," "I've been discriminated against because of my color," and "I'm a political activist."

The only statement that created a consensus was when we found out that not one of this group owns a yacht.

On the fourth afternoon the students initiated several labs events. Some titles included: Buddhism Practice and CI. C.I. with Props. Contact and Climbing and Bouldering. Contact and Basketball. Singing in CI. Non-violent Communication and CI. Dream Work and Movement. Breaking Away From the Form.

Festival Intensives were taught by Eszter Gál and Peter Pleyer, Gretchen Spiro, Ruslan Baranov and Didier Silhol, and myself, Martin Keogh. Individual classes were taught by, Noam Carmeli, Enikő Szilagyi, Rajendra Serber, Ady Elzam, Inna Falkova, Heike Kuhlmann, Laura Barcelo, Steve Homsher, Diana Bonilla Lafuente, Vera de Propriis, Panu Erästö, Rachel Dean, Laura Hicks, and Mathilde Monfreux.

This year, two experiments were tried. One was a welcoming in of participants' children and integrating them into some of the jams and performances. Another was the presence of a resident philosopher, Romain Bigé, who matched philosophical treatises

with Steve Paxton's writing, and led "Eat and Think" meetings during the lunch breaks.

Dieter Heitkamp created the performance segment this year with 10 dancers: „Going Into Contact Performance“, used historical Contact performances and texts to create a narrative for a compelling hour of dance. Another performance was a humorous fundraiser for CQ magazine.

Several aspects of this festival touched me especially the murmuring heard throughout the room as people translated to their non-English speaking friends.

Over 50 helpers made this summer's event run smoothly. A large share were from Spanish speaking countries. Just before the festival began several helpers were washing all the recently unpacked dishes, readying them for the mountains of meals that are at the heart of most any gathering. They sang and scrubbed, breaking into peals of laughter as they worked, creating a warmhearted feeling-tone for the festival.

The four organizers~ Barbara, Benno, Ecki and Dani~ seemed surprisingly calm and never rushed or drawn thin. Their preparation and well-oiled teamwork gave the rest of us~ teachers and participants alike~ a sense of expansiveness. By late afternoon, on the third day of dancing, eating and conversation, there was a tangible feeling of people relaxing into the warmth of each others' companionship that carried us through the entire week.





**WORKS & STUDIES**

## Tried and True Exercises

Intention: To share exercises that you have used in your classes to teach various skills

Format: Each teacher wrote down skills on small pieces of paper...we saw the most popular „themes“ and started with those topics. Teachers demonstrated how they teach the exercises.

### Warmup

Quickly go to floor and back up 10x as fast as you can

molding clay--animate the clay, not pressing for pleasure, pressing to warm up the body

starting with smiling/laughing while having a dance

### Weight sharing

architecture; structural support, explain leaning, equal commitment in, lines of integrity, arches

one dancer in the center of a circle of people--the outer ring of people offer support as the inner person uses them for support

two people face one another with their hands up and pressing into one another, noticing the force that the floor gives („it's a push but receiving from the floor“)...playing with percentages of pressure

percentages--in hands/knees teacher says things like 20% on L hand, 70% on R knee, 10% R hand, 10% L knee

„instead of using the word push, can we use the word extension?“

Transitions/Not stopping the movement--how to link continuity of flow

- Gretchen/Steve's mountain/mole game (half the class are in the hands/knees position [mountain], the other half comes under [moles] as underdancer... and they come up from under the „mountain“ as an underdancer...change roles and go to another person after each interaction)
- Rolling point „dosey-do“ beach ball exercise
- Martin's vacuuming exercise: one partner is on hands and knees, other person is on the back, facing up...they alternate positions by moving with backs vacuuming together
- Eyes leading into the back space
- Shoulder lift--continue to pour weight once partner is going into the floor
- Cascades (sluff and pour)
- „Continuity often stops when the body is off-center“
- „Continuity of perception--go for continuous perception, not continuity of action; constantly changing the field of perception helps the body to loosen up.“
- Tone
- Extending limbs as person moves someone else, body is connected to the spine
- Changing the space as you move
- Using balls between people-increase complexity with changing levels

Lab at 2015 Freiburg TM  
Facilitated by  
Gretchen Spiro & Steve Homsher

## Scores for not knowing

Present: Laura, Richard, Gesine, Heike,  
Didier, Dani, Eszter, Barbara, Kees, Mary....

2 sides

- to acknowledge when I'm planning in advance – to change direction, speed.... (score)
- to confuse myself by shaking me up with getting disoriented so I don't have the control anymore

More talking about – attention, curiosity and presence.

See what this talk changes the dance – focus on presence and curiosity?

Just try to not know?

Change something as soon you notice that you know...

15 min dancing with this...

### **Notes myself:**

Immediately did that score by changing something, as soon I knew what was coming.

Found myself changing my focus from presence to curiosity and the other way around.

- How can I stay present when I'm curious?
- How can I stay curious when I'm present?
- Is it possible to do both at the same time?
- How fast can I switch?

How many things I can pay attention to at the same time?

What means time? Does it help to stay present?

Body presence radiating out

Curiosity I move into my mind - opening the senses – paying attention to a particular sensation.

Energy is rising through it.

### **Some more notes while listening to others:**

Is there a time to presence?

Is there an amount of presence?

Sense of being?

Strong undirected sense of compassion

Attention does it have a direction?

### **Focusing on senses helped to stay present**

Tao - heart-minded = present

Mind – connected to space

Heart – connected to empathy

Keeping my mind busy with other things and pay attention

What do you practice, when you practice that?

Image of not knowing is advanced?

Question of teaching?

Can we know without language?

I always know

Is there an understanding without language?

Not knowing - Not through the partner –  
more through the event happening

Something in between or around - the  
presence of that will build the not knowing  
in us.

Can we make a decision without  
intention?

Time seems a part in it all...

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Proposed by Laura Hicks 15\_08\_09

## 'Not Knowing' Lab, Part 1

### **Generating Score Ideas for not knowing:**

Not knowing = not pre-planning, and also =  
innocence, or being in the moment. When  
you find your self pre-planning, step out,  
then come in

Improvisation Performance: moving without  
knowing what you are doing, moving fast  
etc, speeding up things so the mind cannot  
follow

Let the body lead, not the mind, the body  
knows

Trick yourself

Does knowing = conscious? Becoming  
conscious, becoming unconscious

If I articulate my experience I become more  
conscious or knowing, what is knowing?  
Not knowing what the dance will be, seeing  
the dance before it happens. Not assuming  
that I know ambiguously How do I deal with  
the fact that I really do not know, how to be  
ready for that?

Supply the unfamiliar or see things,  
Acceptance of chaos

Dance duet with strong sense of attention  
(attending to curiosity)

Eyes – not using the eyes for a long period of time, in order to experience disorientation - or - following your eyes body attempting to organize itself to follow directionality

In the lab we danced 15 minutes with attention to changes between presence and curiosity, spontaneity, going for what you feel you need,

### **Findings & Discoveries after dancing:**

Focusing awareness in the senses rather than on thoughts, moving from the senses or only listening to what happens without being an active part of the movement that happens, feeling awake and alive

Maybe the score inhibits process – attention takes time, palpable sense of being. “I actually felt a strong undirected sense of compassion”

State as a word is confusing, it connotes the static of passiveness.

I fell into a process in which I allowed myself to be in, and when I recognized I was out I brought myself back.

Heart mind, dissolving into it is a Taoist practice, mind translates as space and heart is empathic

Attention to not knowing became a proprioceptive sensing of internal and external space. (the one dissolving into the other), and presence in it was empathic instead of cognitive or sensory.

- What do we “really” practice when we practice moving with the “not knowing”?
- What for...?

- How do we teach that...? How do we use it (not knowing) as a concept, as an underlying principle in our teaching?

- Is it a state that we want to get into – is it a beginning / a preparation for something else...?

- How is it relating to performativity?

- Is it, can it be a performance practice

- As a viewer – how do I read or sense of what I see with knowing the score?, how is my seeing informed by knowing the dancer’s focus?

I have decided to practice not knowing with my camera, being placed on my belly. I lay down on the my back and placed the camera on my belly and closed my eyes, kept my finger on the shutter, and was there... following my breathing and in a moment just pressed the button and took a photo, not knowing what the image will be... then I turned a bit and played with the that. My attention on the breath and the camera on m belly was strong and the finger pressing moment was a surprise. As a result, my question was if we could we tell the difference between the photos I have taken with my eyes open and choosing the moment and when not...(It was a fun play)

Sunday 9th August 15 TM Lab  
Facilitated by Laura Hicks,  
notes by Mary Pearson

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## Not Knowing Scores

### While I am moving:

I notice more, when I do NOT TRY TO KNOW, there is less attachment to what I do/experience/notice when there is less attachment to what I do experience/notice, there is more SURPRISE

Trying to not know I notice, how wanting to understand sneaks in;

I name and understand and accept that this is what is happening and I notice that what I understand already changes .... or not .... but still is something different now - my focus has changed, I notice, name and understand another detail

anyway, there is always more that I don't know to what I know, so I don't need to worry about trying to not know ... very relaxing!

Random „silly“ movement surprisingly leads to form or to just becoming still and empty

### Reflections and notes during our sharing after the dance:

- authentic movement?!
- attending to moments, not narratives
- noticing what I would normally do and telling myself not to do it and find out what else can happen
- staying longer in a thing than until the first impulse to change it
- curiosity of a child; playfulness

- overstimulation and distraction become too much to follow and I let go
- attention is a process, it has no direction; the mind needs to be engaged as well as the body
- strong, undirected sense of compassion
- focussing on the senses rather than on thoughts leads to presence
- can we know/understand the parts/concepts without language? Knowing versus understanding. Knowing=the thinking without the language

### And thoughts after the lab:

Now I believe that I am more interested in not assuming, not planning and in not necessarily understanding the decisions that my body-mind makes (can we make a decision without having an intention?)

rather than in not knowing -as this happens anyway.

I guess knowing (or trying to know) for me is more about being present and open towards change and the focus is more on noticing than on having a grasp.

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Sunday 9th August 15 TM Lab  
Facilitated by Laura Hicks,  
Report by Gesine Daniels

## Not Knowing LAB Part 2

### Group talk, reflections:

Uli: moving with eyes closed – feels like that there more space for not knowing there – no planning, no decisions and no offers from outside

why are there so many offers come when I have my eyes closed?

Openness with eyes closed and change the rule for myself

... found it really hard – you have to got keep on focusing on something... was hard – very much thinking – very hard – she has done something very similar before, she would start again this evening to discover what it is...

... in and out of ways of judgment – and projected judgments – social behavior challenging what is a norm is it an easy place to be? Lost interest – do I represent it rather than being in it? Stillness is a place of arrival – using vision: what I recognize from a place of now – understating cognition – thinking...

... childish play, trying knowing where it is curiosity - full body presence one part is innocent – taking the pressure off – flash is so alive, but at on the other hand it feels like a very blown up ball □ brought a need of getting away from it

... is it me not knowing – or am i trying to make my partner not knowing?

Didier: to be by myself first then connect or be with others? there was a fly “landing on me”? the fly was the first contact... maybe

the fly does not know that she/he met me, or she/he knew, I could not tell, I did not know.... not knowing who met whom first...? then he went to Dani, it was an obvious relationship not like with the fly – then he saw a dead fly :-(  
he could follow the dead fly – from that moment the dance become unknown...

Robin: he needed to be alone first ? he took his previous lab notes: state of readiness, available space ? to create this space is hard – subject of attention – disturbance (?) occurred

clarity was found in grounding – putting his arms to the sides; doing simple movements; organizing the body in a passionate way .... then a duet took him out of it - sometimes more sometimes less...

Rachel: had a dilemma – having an action (?)– are we seeking not to know the action or the outcome of the action ? – are we looking for: what is going to happen in the future...?

Uli: how do I know what will happen – allowed my desire to guide me and something else will happen – always evolving in my dance – being still was part of it... be infused by the space with people without judgment

Laura was echoing Robin: the immediate availability of every single person I encountered! Here was no “stuck-ness of the dance” in duets – appreciated – Chris Aiken’s quote: “be aware of the tyranny of being interesting” - it was a performative space – but did not feel she had to make interesting choices – there was no good or bad choice

.... state of presence – felt like a performance

.... projected himself on a non human body  
– I can not say I... - then went further into an  
animal body – transition for one to another  
– social encounters – play : me in other  
environment

Dani: noticed she did not use what she did  
last time – being in any action - reading  
the conditions : noticing what does she  
not know, strange places to be – what  
is reacting first in a place of knowing  
something...

... the mind is very active – very strange  
state – very active fields, shifting, intimacy  
was noticed !!!

The holes are present since the morning –  
not knowing how others will deal with what  
I'm doing?

Mathilde: her experience connected to  
her back pain – acceptance to start with?  
nice, needed to be lazy? it carried her  
experimentation – looking for not being  
too stimulated - nice drive: how to keep  
follow her desire and at the same time really  
accept what is here

... permeability of the duets – wanted to be  
spontaneous, but not clever

Romain: not knowing meant: not seeing  
objects and trying to shift away from them;  
live the emerging of them – sensory states

Eszter:

- so what am i practicing right now?  
knowing now allows to not know then ...
- the research reaches/moves beyond  
the CI duet form – where is the search  
within the duet form?

- Have been moving so so slow, “how  
slow can I move to catch myself not  
knowing the next?” How do I catch that  
moment?

- “what if I am in this dance and only  
moving when I notice I know where I am  
– not possible”

- how do we trick ourselves in order to  
arrive to not knowing?

Markus: 5 min exchange on the topic by a  
small group before the dance took place:

- shifting focus – stay in a duet
- you are always knowing something
- playing that I do not know something,  
(a bit like a clone
- body to relearn from „mission  
impossible” body needs to re-adapt
- bodywork scores – to give many  
impulses – sensory overload
- two people dancing and 2 people  
asking questions – and the dancers  
answering the questions

Markus: what I do is it really the right thing?  
Do an action is it right? believe on what I do  
and follow it – brought him to new places –  
composing the unknown

- to “glue” your body part to your  
partner while your partner keeps on  
dancing

- noticed the danger: I wanna be very  
quick or very slow

- like to have longer pauses – helped  
for the unknown!

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‘Not Knowing’ Lab, Part 2, 11<sup>th</sup> Aug. 15

## SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE IN CI

Present: Sabine, Muriel, Vera, Kees, Enikö,  
Didier, Stephanie, Benno

*“What could be a spiritual experience (in CI  
...and/or other dance)?”*

### **We first simply went round the circle with this question:**

Sabine:

Dancing was always central in her life. The switch to viewing dancing as a spiritual experience happened only later in her career, when she met the slow dance meditation of Daniel Odier in 2007. She experienced to get one with the space in dancing. The space includes the others. The space can be the actual surrounding or include the whole universe. She has since then found ways to support to make that experience happen in her CI and Tantra teaching which work for her (for example a special way of breathing) ...but principally in the end they are not really needed for it to happen, and the spiritual experience can happen in any form of dance too.

Muriel:

It is a way to be connected in the moment, sometimes with the other people there, sometimes not with the other people ... whether in discotheques, contemporary dance, or in free improvisation or CI. What keeps her out of it is being too much in the thinking. So it is a question of how to get away from the thinking.

Vera:

It is an experience of connecting, with the sky and the earth, with myself ...without too much mind-activity: to be in a flow without

judgement.

In a catholic way spirituality is to be connected to God. So maybe it is: to be connected to the universe, which she relates to nature as well.

Also it is about surrendering ...not surrendering the control over our lives, but maybe it is also about trust. We don't need to make anything; we don't need to do when we dance.

Kees:

I have warm feelings about the small dance: it relates me to the universe through gravity. For me the soul is not something very esoteric: it is something I can feel.

The soul is the larger me. It's not essential to this experience to be with others, as there is not really a difference between you and I in the soul.

I don't however always want to be in a spiritual experience: I can also be “in the flow” or in the moment without it. So it's not just being in flow or in the moment, for me; a spiritual experience surpasses all that.

Enikö:

Everything is a spiritual experience from one viewpoint. She says she cannot separate an experience of moving or other experience from a spiritual experience, because dance-improvisation is a field of integration for her. She thinks we can know everything; we're able to sense everything. It is important for her to improve / extend our perception. She does not look for answers; she takes questions and being in questions. One of the most important things in her life is now the integration of spiritual practice/ consciousness methods and the improvisation/dance. She has a new research now what is about; the connection between the Quantum-Consciousness Field and Improvisation.

Her main interest in that how can these two “different” (? who knows) filed support each other.

Didier:

He says he is impressed with what everyone is saying ...so much that he almost doesn't know what to say. Spirituality may be another word to speak of all this.

Spirituality has connotations with the esoteric and with the mystical; something you don't or can't talk about. The mystery is very attractive to search or to share.

It is like you are here, but you are also in a bigger space.

It is also time as a space.

Stephanie:

She says that she knows nothing of spirituality.

It is a practice of perceiving... It happened to her in a Deborah workshop.

Can every cell of the body be at once in the studio as time is passing? She felt all the other bodies in this moment.

Space as time ..., which is a very particular place to be. Perhaps people call this spirituality?

Benno:

He thinks about the spiritual as the organizational force behind everything.

It gives him the trust; I don't have to do anything, this force is working through my body-mind-space. In CI we have strong roots that it is all physics, and all the emotional and also the spiritual is put aside ...but it is all happening. Some people are open to it and some people are uneasy with the idea that there could be something bigger than themselves. Intuition is a spiritual connection.

### **Defining the terms:**

Sabine then proposed to clarify some definitions....

For this she referenced Jörg Lemmer Schmid's PHD-dissertation on CI and "being in the flow": More Quality of Life through Flow-Experience and Mindfulness

There are different ways of meditation:

opening or widening your attention is one way, another way is to narrow down, direct or focus your attention on one specific thing (like for example the breath.)

Jörg represents the idea of these two ways in a drawing of 2 circles: one circle's surface represents everything someone is aware of. The other, smaller, circle within that larger circle represented the person's attention on something within that large scope of awareness. The first way would be represented by trying to make the inner circle as large as the outer circle is.

In CI the meditation of the focused attention might, according to Jörg, be related to "the rolling point contact" exercise, whereas "the small-dance" might represent the way of widening focus.

It is also a sub-question of Sabine whether the first way, for example rolling-point, can also lead to or in itself be a spiritual experience already?

We debated shortly, whether awareness was something within consciousness, or the other way around. [In French these are the same word, said Stephanie.]

I, Kees, argued that I consider awareness to be a larger concept, because there are things I can be subconsciously aware of, which I might bring into (my) consciousness but don't necessarily need to : "the subconscious is aware, but not conscious(ly aware)". Enikö however countered this, because she considered consciousness to be the bigger concept of the two. ...It could nevertheless be that we are referring to similar or the same concepts, only with the labels (words) for those concepts switched around.

We concluded with Benno that for ourselves it is maybe not needed or important to define these things ...only it would facilitate exchanging further ideas if we all used the same labels or terms (words) for the same basic concepts.

Besides the above concepts, Sabine defined 'mindfulness' as: "consciousness, but with the inclusion of compassion and empathy".

And we kept on using 'consciousness' and 'awareness' like we each did before.

See attachment: Diagrammatic drawing of focused and widened attention, within the realm of awareness/consciousness

reference: Jörg Lemmer Schmid's PHD-dissertation: More Quality of Life through Flow-Experience and Mindfulness

### **Going into the dancing with a shared practice that might support a spiritual experience:**

Sabine led a stand, with breathing + motion exercises:

"You are standing and close your eyes. During breathing in, the body as whole leans to the front and you expand to the front. With the breathing out you come back to normal standing. You do the breathing in and out with the movement several times.

With the breathing in, your body as whole leans to the back and you expand to the back. With the breathing out you come back to normal standing. You do the breathing in and out with the movement several times..

With the breathing in, you expand to one side and open one side in bending the knee of that side a bit, shifting the weight to that side and bringing one arm up on that side. With the breathing out you come back to normal standing. You do the breathing in and out with the movement several times.

You do the same thing on the other side, several times.

You expand downwards, in bending both knees and bringing the pelvis closer to the floor. With the breathing out you come back to normal standing. . You do the breathing in and out with the movement several times.

During breathing in, you expand upwards in bringing the skull up leaving the jaw, where it is. With the breathing out you bring the skull back. You do the breathing in and out with the movement several times.

Finally you expand into all directions at the same time with the breathing in and come to normal with the breathing out.

Now you explore expanding with the breathing in, in different directions (one after the other) and let a dance evolve from that. You open your eyes. You get more and more aware of the others in space. Free dance improvisation and contact improvisation."

### **Ending circle-sharing of experiences and conclusions**

Kees:

Might a spiritual experience be: when I become consciously aware of the mere presence/existence of that which I can stretch my awareness/consciousness into (...i.e. becoming physically aware there is a 'that' in which Lemmer's outer circle is drawn: what is outside of that circle?)? 'God' dwells in the details as much as in

'the whole': a widening of attention as well as a focused attention might give me a physical sense of this 'moreness'...  
Like as if this 'space' loops back on itself in either of these 'ways' I can look.

Muriel:

She found it was more difficult for her to have the whole awareness, without her daily-life thoughts destroying the whole. So she had put her attention on one thing at the time, like rhythm or falling, which worked better for her.

Vera:

She found several answers, and shares five:

1. to be in the flow
2. to be touched
3. to be connected
4. to be part of a system (universe/space)
5. to be larger than I really am; larger than my body

Stephanie:

There is a level of energy needed for this level of active perception...  
She says the breathing is not her habitual way, and it did not work for her yet. She instead found a dialogue with the space through the eyes, and also the ears: sounding the space a useful way for embracing the whole space.

Didier:

He found that breathing brought him 'up'; it gave him frustratingly little attention on the lower body ....so he also went to the floor. Yet the proposal of the breathing stayed with him though, even after he stopped thinking about it. And it helped to close his eyes ...this had him not-choosing. It allowed an extension of the body.

Benno:

He tried focusing on the space above him and imagining something there that moved

him. Closing eyes had helped him too, yet it irritated him that he could not tell whether someone was a man or a woman and how to relate. For his spirit it does not matter, but for himself he's not so sure.

The space was widening enclosing more people than only him. He felt touched in the heart: thinking felt inside of him, while the heart and the spiritual experience felt larger than him.

Sabine:

She experienced width and lightness in the dance supported by the breath. Keep the lightness and the expansion, reach, when she takes the weight of somebody, is important to her.

Touch was important. Letting herself be touched, also by the divine.

Enikö:

She could feel the inner state of the others. The intention to make connection.

### **Recommended reading:**

- Jörg Lemmer Schmid: PHD-dissertation: More Quality of Life through Flow-Experience and Mindfulness
- Jon Kabat-Zin: Mindfulness Meditation

a 2-hour lab TM 15  
facilitated by Sabine Sonnenschein  
Report by: Kees Lemmens

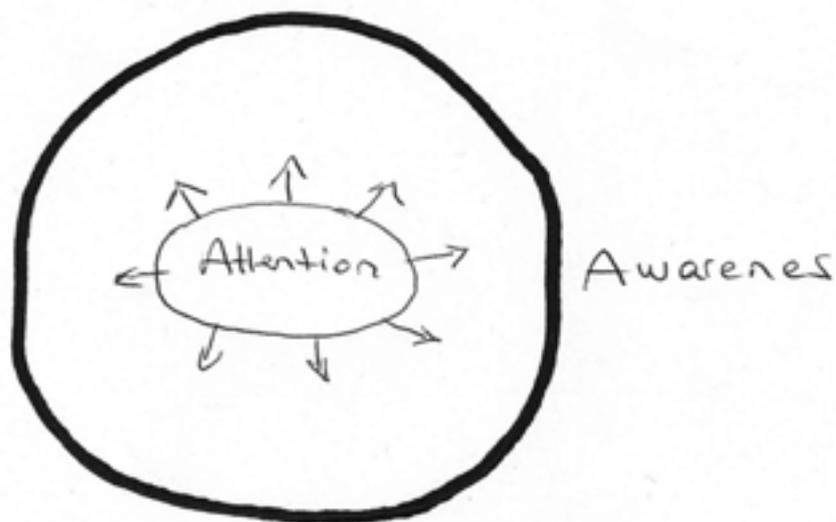
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# MEDITATION :

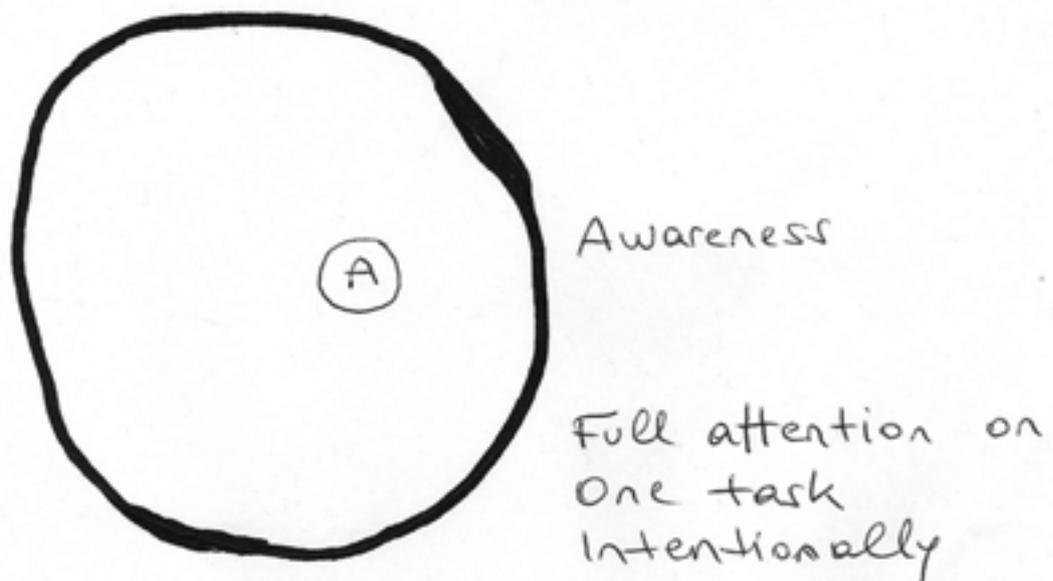
Spiritual experience in CI - TM 15

## 1. OPEN :

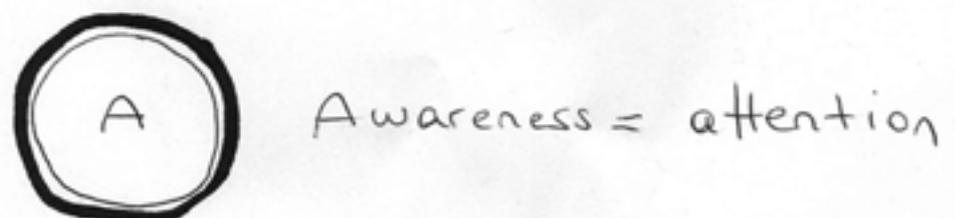
Widening your attention, for example in small dance



## 2. FOCUSED:



## Flow:



Falling into the future.

## Rhythm in CI

Sabine, Heike, Muriel, Natividad, Malaika, Jo

### **Seeds: Why are we here?**

Gesine. Two things: 1) I feel so many rhythms are possible in my body—connected to the physics of my body—that I feel like I need to wake them all up so I then have them accessible so they can be there and available for the inspiration that comes from the outside. 2) What makes me really happy in a CI dance is when I am in connection with my dance partner and we are experiencing different rhythms and we are experiencing the connection in that.

Sabine. I enjoy a lot when a rhythm or the changes of the rhythm is found together organically, from the body. It can be boring sometimes if rhythm changes out of an idea. Sometimes I also have the experience that a partner makes stops happen, in a slightly dictatorial way, and this is also not satisfying for me.

Jo. Suzanne Cotteau says, CI is about invention!!! You should be constantly inventing.

Malaika. I am interested in performing CI and the rhythmic aspects of performance. Jonathan Burrows says that interest is maintained not only through change, but importantly through changing the rate of change.

Muriel. I originally enjoyed club dancing, and missed music in CI.

Natividad. I find a lot of CI at this 'flow' speed that I call 'ba-ba' a word in Spanish which translates to 'drool' or 'saliva'. So I am interested to discover rhythm more in CI.

Heike. With my ageing body I find things need time to develop from a slow place, and my own rhythm is also finding time to start lying on the floor, and allowing time for that to make other things possible from that space.

= = =

20 minutes dancing with these questions in a defined small space.

= = =

### **Talking:**

Gesine. What was so satisfying for me is that no one in this group expected any particular kind of dance—so what happened is that I felt every kind of rhythm available in my body.

Heike. It has to do with knowing about the space and just to do with improvisation in the space. For me in the 'attention' lab, the duet we did with a watcher was most satisfying when I ignored the watcher.

Sabine. For me the very important aspect is to have a satisfying dance—some lightness or softness. I can really enjoy when I get to a particular dance quality.

Muriel. For me I get to invention when I fix a limitation for myself, e.g. I can only use one arm. From the beginning there was lots of movement, and only short stillnesses.

Jo. I think constant invention is equally boring as constant CI 'flow'.

Gesine. I think that is one reason that I invented the dance dates, because in the dance dates it is possible over one hour to feel many different rhythms.

Jo. That reminds me of a score I use to keep people in contact. I call it 'Constructive Obstruction'. One person moves, and the other person finds as many ways as possible to obstruct the mover. It's not fun if you totally obstruct, so keep it fun. It's a game, so the game is, how do I make it really fun to obstruct? It's reverse engineering through a game. I often start by inviting people to push each other over, without hurting each other.

Sabine. I found that I have the tendency to adapt to the rhythm of the other, and I enjoyed not doing that. E.g. G moves slowly through tabletop and S is frenetically puppy-like shaking her back on G's back.

Natividad. For me this improvisation was very CI, because we were very present.

Gesine. Can you start a dance together with someone in a jam in which you have totally different rhythms?

M, G, S. Grazing can give the possibility to maintain your own rhythm when you begin a dance with someone. So you don't solo in one rhythm, and then find a point of contact with someone and lose your own rhythm, but prioritize the point of contact.

10-8-2015 TM Lab  
Facilitated by Gesine Daniels  
notes by Malaika

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## WATERCONTACT

Participants: Bronja, Laura, Dalila, Didier, Markus, Andjela, Heike

### Beginning:

- Circle: to breath in together – breath out under Water
- Solo: Using Breath for sinking in the Water, exploring and finding points of interests

### Collecting ideas and interests

Explorations:

With Relaxation of the mind or/and body you can stay longer under water not using to breath.

A) Quartett: A is passiv – the others are holding the body over water, giving a massage and doing bodywork. Developing to take the person under the surface, diving and moving completely in the water.

B) Duetts: Activ – passiv: – pulling pushing, – torso contact.

Dito in equal roles

C) Purzelbaum (out of a seastar coming to an embryoposition and turning in the water) without moving the arms/ legs

----- helping each other to go for it with little supporting movement, impuls or touch

D) Open jamming

E) Jamming in a Waterstream, using the walls to push or change directions.

----- Hooking with feet, legs

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TM Thursday 13th Aug 15 Facilitator: Muriel

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10x5

## 10 x 5 Sunday

### 1. Heike Kuhlmann

Spoke about kids and adults doing CI together. She decided to do it because she is the mother of a now 7 ½ year old. As she is working, she needs to find caretaking for her daughter, how could she also find time to do, what she loves together with her daughter. They had a desire to do things together. The jams are often late in Berlin, and her daughter has to go to bed. So Heike started a family jam. In the beginning it was in order to have a space where to dance together with other teachers and their kids, but they didn't come, but other interested parents, who didn't know about CI. So she started to run a class and a jam. She is teaching in Berlin and at festivals. There are many implications of kids' jamming with adults: They are different sizes, small and big. Ideally we are listening to each other to create something, but there is a hierarchy between adults and kids. How do you create a non-verbal space with kids? How do you create a space of improvisation, and educate the children - especially since there are different philosophies of educating a child. The parents are present while you are educating the children and sometimes they do not like the way you propose. She wanted to create a space outside the normal parent and child role, like small and tall pairs in jamming. People often use children's developmental movement, but somehow this is outside of the dancing space – how to create awareness that everyone is included in the jam? How many rules are needed? Researching how can we find dancing together that it is really an art form?

### 2. Romain Bige

Is a researcher and philosophy teacher who encountered CI 3 years ago. He had never danced before, then realized it was the same thing as doing philosophy and teaching philosophy: changing perception. Whether using reasoning and logic, or in contact, counter-posing bodies. He sold the idea to a university and is now doing a phd in Contact Improvisation as philosophy.

He uses texts by Steve Paxton and confronts them with a text from philosophy – sometimes contact is enlightening philosophy, other times philosophy is enlightening contact.

He is still writing his phd, the main idea is the concept of movement, an obsession since before encountering CI, and one which is a growing topic in the particular branch of philosophy, phenomenology. William James and Whitehead. What is movement? There is no answer in philosophy except from Aristotle...

He gave an example using the concept of 'sharing', which has 2 meanings that are opposed. One is 'having in common', and the second is 'separating' (e.g. sharing a pie) He takes it seriously that the same verb can mean both to create or to individualize, and individualize through the other. He is finding that what he is doing through the contact of the other, finding self as subject through detour of the other – the detour is the shorter way (main idea). Movement is always something that is creating me and creating other. If the movement is not creating the other I am not creating me.

3. Laura Hicks

Finished her thesis read a lot of things, thinking about what would be interesting to share with others. She really enjoyed an article by Bruno Letour, a French philosopher. He asked, what is the opposite of body? The responses were 'dead; or 'to be unaffected'. Letour defines: to have a body is to learn to be affected. Using a story as an example, in the French perfume industry he (Letour) argues for the term of articulation instead of embodiment. (Embodiment is problematic – to become embodied you would need first to be absent of a body.) In the perfume industry, you gain a nose through articulation, by gaining sensitization to difference.

(Romain says): you don't learn to do you learn to sense – articulating new sensory input eg learning to make things out of wood is learning to follow wood. We are articulating ourselves with more sensory organs (in CI), pelvis is able to feel like hands are able to feel.

Laura continues about affect, wondering if Letour's use of affect can imply the Deleuzian understanding of affect as the product of encounter between bodies (human, non human, thought, concept, collective. Can we learn to be affected in this sense by tuning in to differentiation with all the 'bodies' we encounter?

4. Peter Pleyer

(Made a map) Starting with the end of the timeline, so that he would not miss the end (due to time limitation): recent events in the last 6 months, teaching regular CI classes to the company of Meg Stuart to premiere in new production, teaching CI in queer festival with 60 gay men in a studio, using simple exercises getting into moving, and

the oil action Keith Hennessy facilitated in Ponderosa this summer with 38 naked people dancing and being in contact for an hour in warm coconut oil.

(Talked about previous times at contactfestival Freiburg):

2000 Cathie Caraker, Deiter Heitkamp, Ka Rustler, Mark Tompkins intensives

2001 A participant, performed a duet with Eszter Gal, (which turned up almost 10 years later on Facebook through Marina from Russia), met Ray Chung & Martin Keogh

2013 Came to Teachers' meeting as former teacher and Festival, met Paul Singh, they fell in love, he invited him to come dance in Visible Undercurrent – new project using dance history from the 80's & 90's coming from NY to Europe – Saw traces of this history, and CI as a major influence, in the work of Meg Stuart and Sasha Waltz

CI in 80's, performance of Ishmael Houston Jones – what is CI in performance, performance identity, Jennifer Monson, tackling with Yvonne Meier influential for the piece we choreographed

Paul found image in CQ, from naked contact dance with Ray Chung and Martin Keogh – Paul wanted to try that, there is a naked CI duet in Visible Undercurrent

5. Stéphanie Auberville

Stéphanie created a sabotage manual with Karen Schaffman, both from their lab at last years' TM (2014) and the documentation notes. There were further sabotage labs after Freiburg TM, in Paris and at ECITE.

Why sabotage? Sabotage arrived as a topic at first from being bored with her own topics for labs, and wanting to sabotage her own expectations.

People get very excited with this idea. We love to gather together to practice – why are we so excited to sabotage our expectations? To keep the dance alive, because of struggles with a sense of community, to shake the frame in order to be able to step into it, just to survive - and this idea of utopia (Romain spoke about the body and utopia) as horizontal with no hierarchy, in harmony. It is normal that there are expectations and hierarchies in any social setting. She needs to sabotage her way of going inside of things. We build the contents within the frame, and we can change our way of looking at it. Perhaps we can learn from activists how to challenge and change our patterns. She says it's about sabotaging my inner tyrant, inner authoritarian, and too much politeness.

#### 6. Noam Carmeli

How CI affects life outside studio. CI organization in Israel, their organization was established in 2009. 40 teachers are working together, and out of this 40 there is a core team that is running the festival. It's interesting to find freedom, to follow what is going on, and what is the interest of the whole group? Also activities outside festival, and the balance between private people, and the team working together. How do we deal with the conflict in Israel? The last day of the festival 2008, there was another war. At the end of the festival it was clear we were never dealing with this issue before. Since 2009, we are looking at how to deal with conflict – how much should it be part of the festival? Not to acknowledge it brings questions and more tension. Some dance organisations from the occupied areas do not want to have anything to do with the Israeli festival. Our CI organisation found

a way to support Israeli arabs, by offering a discount to arab dancers to come to the festival. It was amazing to dance with them, and to see how they opened themselves, like any other dancer. It was a great experience for him to dance with them.

#### 7. Nita Little

Writing a dissertation for her phd in performance studies, with the title

Articulating Presence: creative actions of attention in contemporary dance.

It is about the possibilities for physical, mental, and relational engagement in movement practices. Her reason for writing this, after 36 years of doing CI (the date of returning to get an academic degree was 2008), was that she had learned so much from this dance form, and from attempting to integrate the attentional states with modern dance into a whole movement package that needed sharing. This came about, in part, because as practices their attentional states were initially conflicting. She studied modern dance improvisation with Judith Dunn whose form was influenced by musical ideas derived from black jazz - music improvisation. CI came from a completely different investigation. These two forms were, at the time, required completely different actions of attention. She wanted to know, what is it about attention? How can I bring these things together?

Her dissertation is composed of 5 Chapters:

The first chapter describes the beginning of CI and the conflict that it presented to her as a post modern dancer. It begins the discussion of the mindbody as one action rather than two distinct structures of being. The 2nd chapter talks about

different articulations of presence through actions of attention. It delineates attentional skills. The 3rd chapter talks about how attention impacts presence, and the tactility of attention. It proposes new actions of identity that arise when attention is weighted towards touch. (How is it we can talk about being in the mindbody? Writing the dissertation was difficult and interesting because prepositions used in everyday language don't work in terms of relational mindbody experiencing. They are object oriented rather than action oriented.)

Chapter 3 delineates the kinds of presence as developmental. The 4th chapter is about attention in time. It questions how we understand time and notes the influence on physicalmental possibility that are determined by our time practices. It proposes a theory of experiential time. This was one of the most exciting chapters to write.

(Bells sounds for 5 Minutes)

“But there were 5 chapters!”

#### 8. Bronja Nowack

For the past 10 years, she is working with Katarina Eriksson and Susanne Martin. They made up the country Craniosacria, formed a dance group, perform folkdances that don't exist! Welcome to Craniosacria, the country that lives inside of us! They have started to organize a festival, the Ambassadorsfestival! where 'ambassadors from cranio sacra' are inviting improvisers to come join improvisation with the origin from CI practice. They want to spread their festival. If you want to include improvisers in your town, you can invite the ambassadors and

they will bring this festival to you, creating a festival that involves your improvisation community or any wish you have ?

#### 9. Lea Keiffer

Lea is part of a gang of ninjas – with one main ninja collaborator. They are 6 people, and the core group is 2. They play ninja, living with this world inside of them. After delving into the pop culture appropriation of 'ninja', they realized that many people 'think ninja', and they invited more people. All of them had a deep connection to the word, which means that they are somehow nearly ready to die, but will find a solution in the last minute. Lea says it is still very fresh (new), and a filter she is living with at the moment.

#### 10. Angelika Dony

Wanted to touch on 'innocence', and why she is dancing CI. She said her mind is not innocent, but she lives surrounded by innocence. She talked about how as a girl she would be found with her mouth open, staring, with no thoughts in her mind. She started to breathe this way again lately, and showed us how she takes sweet tiny breaths with an open mouth. The mind can play games in this territory of innocence.

## 10 x 5 Monday

### 1. Mamen

First stated, I'm not a teacher – any resemblance to a teacher is purely coincidental. If you see in her the reflection of someone else, you are probably right, but she is not a teacher. She wants to talk about Teacher Archetypes.

Mamen showed us 2 main positions: one which was 'Christian catholic – jesu cristo' (she kneels with arms to the side like a cross bearer) that you can do when you hear a description of one of the teacher archetypes and you know 'This is me! It's me.' And the other, 'the wailing wall of Israel', (she bangs the back of her wrist on her forehead) If at some point you know someone who fits this description, you can bang your wrist on your forehead.

- The HOOK man (or now also the HOOK woman). That guy that is so good. He wants to talk to a girl, and immediately you know you are in love with him and he is in love with you. Every workshop he takes take one girl, (or she takes one guy). It is always a beginner.
- The FAIRY teacher. She comes with an assistant, he has to be young and beautiful. The man does all the work, but he makes her look good.
- The PLEASED TO MEET MYSELF teacher. Is always telling stories about himself, and relating everything back to how he started doing CI, or his CI practice.
- The 30/60 partnership, co-teachers. She by herself will not get pupils but with him, she will get pupils. He is famous, maybe he is doing all of the work, and she plays the music. Or she's doing the job, and he brings the name.

- The OLD PRINCESS teacher. She was teaching a lot when she was young, then she had a family, and was out for several years. She came back, and she is connected with the roots of CI.
- The SPONTANEOUS teacher. Is always giving feedback during the dance, 'can you give me more weight' etc. This teacher is teaching all of the time, and surely at the end of the class or intensive, will announce, 'I'm giving a workshop near here tomorrow morning'.

### 2. Adrian Russi

Listening – important in teaching, technique is based on listening, training in cranio sacral biomechanical approach and now biodynamic approach

So subtle always feels challenged in perception – a fantastic training for humility putting the ego back, efferent (central nervous system to periphery) actively searching for sensation and afferent (periphery to central nervous system) not searching for sensation, letting my perception happen. I don't need to fulfill anything as a therapist.

If the therapist wants to feels something the client's system might shut down – as a student this is interesting, challenging, transition into CI, putting the ego far back, sensing own body – always tells students to keep their solo, don't look for something to happen in client's body – training is confirming what he teaches

Try to get neutral in own body, invites client's system to do same – once it is calm you can start to work. Also why he needs calm in his own system for class, to jam. When he has opportunity to calm down then creativity develops amazingly.

### 3. Ruslan

First thanks for invitation. It is said that truth is simple. CI gets more difficult than it is – a lot of spices added and not enough bases or skeleton – we have a challenge to find out what kind of CI dancer – 3 questions: what is CI for you? Is it less than dance, dance, or more than dance? Result is usually that it is less than dance is from dancers; CI is not actually a dance, not respected. Generally all friends think contact is dance, these people are my type, close to me – It's a physic, movement, artform. For whom it is spiritual practice, making a joke we call them 'people from space', but that is a joke. Once Eszter told them CI appeared like a performative form, so they went to different cities to show their performance, we think it was like that, now it is gone somewhere. We have one performance night the rest is all jamming, classes, jams, not performance, no audience, but it seems to me audience gives the energy. In Kiev we organise festival of improvisation. It consists of 5 improvisation evenings, every night. The atmosphere is great. It is far away from the feeling of the jam dancing. Our festival is open for collaboration with other festivals; we want to make a free exchange of participants. Send one of us to your festival and send one of yours to our festival – so we can exchange one participant, if you are interested... thank you.

### 4. Eszter Gal

Involved in IDOCDE (International Documentation of Contemporary DanceEducation) project, set up in 2011 and founded by EU fund Leonardo Life Long learning. The first impulse for setting up the project was by Kerstin Kussmaul, who was interested in how to document our teaching and artistic work. Kerstin lives in Vienna and had been involved with ImPulsTanz.

There had been 12 partners in the Pilot Project the first two years (Ponderosa, Enikő, Peter, Robin has also been part of it). 1st 2 years was about creating the website itself, basic questions were to answer why how for whom what are we documenting? In the field of contemporary dance education there was a gap. There are dynamic exchanges, strengthening the community, and an online platform open since 2.5 years. We do need further funding to continue, we do have to have offline meetings, peer-to-peer exchanges, get to know who you are talking to. Important to apply for further European funding. The second two year had been the LEAP project (Learn Apply Exchange Practice) Project. In 2013, in the 2nd year of the project, there was the first IDOCDE Symposium in Vienna.

The activities of LEAP has been Teaching residencies – 1 week research in 1 country, another week in another country, educators and artists. All we have been doing in the dance studio has been documented on the [www.idocde.net](http://www.idocde.net). You can sign up as a user or get invited. Teachers create a profile page, upload documentation of their work. Further steps to have institutional profiles (needed for running European project) also connecting teachers to institutions. To run a European project is difficult without hierarchies – a year ago there was an important meeting in France by the Project Team to find our claim: (why we do it) Make your work visible. It is your legacy. There are many ways to connect to the platform.

You can come to the yearly Symposiums, payment and price is lower for IDOCDE teachers, but you do not have to be a member. Next application has been sent in and it is deeply focusing on the diverse process of documentation, called 'Reflex Europe'.

#### 5. Malaika Sarco-Thomas

I'd like to tell you about a project that has taken a lot of my time recently. Last November I moved to Malta with Richard, smallest country in Europe, Malta is a small European country in the Mediterranean. If Italy is a boot, and Sicily is a football, then Malta is the chunk of turf that fell off when the football was kicked. It is an archipelago of 140 square km with a population of 400,000 and one university. I have joined the new dance studies department there, which was begun five years ago. It is an exciting opportunity, and I will become Head of the Dance Studies department in the School of Performing Arts at the University. There is also Music and Theatre as well. The concept of the BA programme is that dance practice & theory are equally rigorous and integrated throughout the study, supporting students to become researchers at undergrad level, and also to prepare them for work as professional dancers. If you know people interested in undergraduate programmes for dance studies, please share, as we recruit internationally. For the Masters degrees we offer three strands:

Master of Performance Studies (Dance), which is a taught low residency programme, directed at people with practical experience, dedicated practice. Students don't need to move to Malta as it is delivered in six 2-week blocks over two years. There is also an online preparatory course that includes reading texts and writing assignments to get up to speed with academic writing and research. This is for candidates with professional experience but who may have been out of higher education for some time. The study units include dance and community practice, Dance Education, Theoretical Frameworks, Choreographic Skills, and a Dance Research Project and Dissertation.

Secondly is the Master of Arts by research, which is a low residency degree in which candidates design and conduct a dance research project with supervision.

Finally, we offer supervision for PhD research in performance studies through the School of Performing Arts. Supervisors include experts in Dance Education (Professor Joanne Butterworth, who wrote and directed dance programmes at Leeds and Fontys University in the Netherlands, Dr Brandon Shaw whose expertise is in partnering dance and comparative literature in performance, and myself who is researching improvisation as a performative and ecological practice. Researchers are invited to join us in this new adventure!

#### 6. Carolina

Disabled people and CI – Carolina has been doing dance with a special school in Spain, disabled people, giving special support for them. When she began to dance, she realized that would give them the support to dance with her, and to dance with themselves. They would double what they dance with; they used CI with tools, canes, wheelchairs... understanding the objects and how they move, and falling in love with that other part of themselves. They started to fall in love with the integrated human being they are – CI gave the possibility to awaken that. Previously, they were not even touched by the teachers in the school. We have fear of hurting them; we don't know how far we can go with touch. They got more confidence how far they can go with 2 wheelchairs, etc. We would take them to jams, but it was not accessible for them. Their families put more fear into them than society – the work to take them to events makes the family fearful. In Madrid 1 jam per month was integrated. "Let's make this normal." How many people with disabilities are coming? They want more classes, they want to get more integrated.

7. Martin Keogh

Martin sent out an email 4.5 years ago saying he was “retiring from teaching contact improvisation.” Several people wrote back to say: „I don’t believe you.“

He was supporting a family of 6 on dancing salary, and was touring too often, and was exhausted. He had advanced arthritis, could barely walk and needed special shoes. Three surgeons said he needed surgery for the bone spurs in his feet.

Martin and his wife Liza decided what they really needed was a year to be on retreat. And while it was not a ‚practical‘ thing to do they found a house sit in Mexico and spent a year where they woke up every morning and asked, „what do I want to do today?“

Martin would walk (slowly) their son Dylan to school, and then ask ‚what now?‘ Almost every day he walked out of town into desert. After three months he had a realization that he was still trying to “colonize” his experience in the desert. What would happen if he tried to let the space colonize and penetrate him?

Suddenly he realized that the place was filled with animals. As he got more quiet the animals began to approach him and to teach him things about that particular place in the desert.

After a year, he realized he could walk faster, he could jump again and he could dance again. The bone spurs in his feet had disappeared. Getting to know this place made him want to defend it and he joined the board of directors or this reserve and botanical gardens.

Martin wondered about taking this approach to walking in the desert to dancing CI: to allow the dance try to colonize him rather than the other way round.

He realized he was not done with dance. Liza had taken her retreat to enter a major inquiry into the pelvic floor for her yoga teaching. This inspired Martin to investigate the pelvic floor and the dance.

Two surprises came of this: the more we can isolate and normalize and inhabit our pelvis – then as we fall the more time before we need to save our self-- time widens, time dilates.

The other surprise: This attention to subtlety – allows the subtle motions in a partner’s body to amplify in our body into something quite dynamic. The image prepared that CI is a banquet with marvelously prepared dishes from fabulous locally sourced foods. The dance is not a potluck. If I bring all my own dishes, I must wipe the table of what is already being so generously offered. How can I let what’s already there in the dance, amplify through in me?

He is back to touring the world and they have now lived in San Miguel for four years.

## 5 x 5 Wednesday

### 1. Rachel Dean

Spoke about her research of solo within duet form

Link to article published in CQ:

[http://www.contactquarterly.com/contact-improvisation/newsletter/view/entwining-solo-pathways-through-a-duet-form#\\$](http://www.contactquarterly.com/contact-improvisation/newsletter/view/entwining-solo-pathways-through-a-duet-form#$)

### 2. Niklas

It started out as a way to defend himself - but now he has something to share. He has a very soft body, likes to do acrobatics, used to do breakdancing. Sometimes he takes a pause from dancing, goes and does some acrobatics, and then goes back to dancing. Here comes the defense part – should he not have done this? Somehow he got further. In some dances, there are acrobatics in his dancing, and sometimes he gets a small applause. He wants to use this material in his dancing, and it's problematic because sometimes his brain tells him that this is not part of the vocabulary of CI. You might also feel the wish to do a pas de bourré sometimes. I might wish for more pas de bourrés. It does not only mean he wants to do his tricks, but that he wants to put them into the dancing. Normally when he does tricks, people want to do capoeira with him. He wants to dance! It is not a role-play. That is something else that he is not interested in. He wants to bring it into the dancing, not step out of the dancing. He wants to make it richer.

### 3. Gretchen Spiro

When she was 42 years old her life was really full and busy, her body felt good, and nothing felt „missing.“ She and Steve (her husband) had many talks about whether to have a child. There was no room in her schedule to have a child--it wasn't like there were spaces waiting for „child.“ She went to therapy. Having so much trouble with the decision, the therapist says, „Just flip a coin‘. „Oh no, she said, ‚this is Too Important to simply flip a coin!‘ In reply the therapist said, ‚it seems you're very invested in not-deciding.‘ He was right. How does one make the decision to turn toward the total unknown? Why would we have a baby? It doesn't make sense financially, the world doesn't need more people...etc. Steve said, ‚let's think about what is important in our lives; what our lives are really about.‘ She said ‚you go first.‘ Steve said, ‚my life is about experiencing the fullness of human experience.‘ Gretchen said, ‚me too.‘ They decided to see what would happen if we made it possible to have a baby, without ‚trying‘. She got pregnant. One morning at 6am she peed on the pregnancy test stick, started screaming...(big scream.) Steve called from the other room: ‚What's wrong?‘ She replied (still screaming), ‚The stick turned blue! Oh my god the stick turned blue.‘ Steve: ‚Uh, what stick? Gretchen: ‚I'm pregnant!‘ Steve: ‚What's wrong?‘ Gretchen: ‚I'm not ready!‘ Steve: ‚What do you mean not ready? You're 42.‘ Gretchen: ‚Well, I'm just not ready.‘ Steve: ? Gretchen: ‚Well, my office is not organized! How can I have a baby without everything organized? I'm freaked out.‘ Steve: ‚Obviously.‘ They didn't tell anyone for 4 months, and she started wearing baggy clothes. She thought being pregnant would be wonderful; she thought pregnant women were beautiful. But it wasn't enjoyable in any way. She was uncomfortable, didn't feel beautiful, felt like a whale, felt heavy and her feet hurt. She thought, but when I'm actually having the baby I'll do it really well; I'm good at

athletic endeavors. The 3 other members of her dance group (plus Steve) was at the birth. The night before she went into labor she did some CI dancing. The labour lasted 73 hours; she thought they would have to shoot her to get the baby out! She was at home, there were no drugs, she had the baby. After she had her she felt like she still didn't do it ,right,' because even though she had a natural birth in her mind she wanted drugs. A few weeks after the birth she tried some yoga. She couldn't hold herself in plank her abs were so weak. When she was dancing she couldn't roll up and kept falling off. Being a mama in contact with her baby all the time-babywearing, co-sleeping...her desire to be in contact with other dancers went basically away. And her courage for risky moves became less. The hunger to be in contact is just starting to come back now. She is not as hungry for contact like she was before being a mama. When she heard other teachers talking about performance projects and festivals and the doing lots of dancing, she felt like she didn't have a ,project' to speak about. But then she realized that Quill (her daughter) is her giant creative project. ,My project is running around on 8-year-old legs!' ,Being a dancing mama is not so easy, but it's so amazing and the most amazing love and project I've ever done. It's so good.'

#### 4. Adrian Russi

I often struggle with structures in such events. So much time deciding what to do, and so little time to do what we decided. In Berne research event, 25 people 3rd time last May, before the Bernese jam. I was really happy about the structure that developed. It was not democratic, not what the majority wanted to do. Simple timeframe: 10-1 and 3-6. Juri from Slovenia took the 10x5 structure from Freiburg and suggested 'let's make a sharing at the start

of the research week with 3 minutes each for 25 people'. The meeting had an open structure with dancing, shared cooking. It was very open and focused at the same time. I'm working on contact improvisation all of the time. We had one big space, one smaller, and it hardly happened that someone wanted the smaller. There was a friendly co-existence. People could be working on their own interests in the same space, and there did not need to be consensus in the whole group about what to do. Another good thing about the structure was that we kept a 2-hour lunch break, with free time and available space after dinner. This means people have time to connect. Please pick up this idea if you want to have your own meeting.  
20-25 x 3 (20 to 25 people for 3 minutes each).

#### 5. Ecki Müller

Global CI online resource, to co-ordinate web calendars, since this year decided to create one calendar that will be multi lingual, and that can be used from any other webpage. Calendar could be ready this Autumn, not sure yet where and how, but project is a community project. Nancy Stark Smith, Colleen Bartley, Deiter Heitkamp, Ecki. Who owns it? Who takes care of it? Who maintains it? They hope to open it up to the community to take care of it, with a rotating team to take care of calendar. They will invite everyone to use it. Within 3 months they want to see that the calendar is representing the global events (regular classes and jams, etc.) They will need support to do this. It feels like it is still not clear – do we need this resource? Facebook groups serve local places. We can serve a bigger overview to people who travel a lot.





## **LISTS OF THEMES AND TOPICS**

## Teachers' Meeting LABS 2015

### Sunday 9th

Gretchen & Steve  
Tried & True Exercises

Eric  
Anatomical Imagery

Mathilde  
Voice & CI, Language

Laura Hicks  
Scores for 'Not Knowing, Part 1

### Monday 10th

Adrian Russi  
Nancy Stark Smith's Trio Feedback Score

Malaika and Richard Sarko-Thomas, Nita  
Little  
Paying? Attention: CI in Performance

Sabine Sonnenschein  
Spiritual Experience in CI

Peter Pleyer  
Ageing

Noam and Nita Little  
CI as a Political Action

Peter Pleyer  
PILES

Vega  
Breathing

### Tuesday 11th

FREE SPACE

Rajendra Serber  
Authentic Support: Group support solo  
dance with contact  
small groups, a score, intuitive, innerspace  
support

Martin Keogh and Angelika Dony  
Subterranean Aspects of Teaching CI

Gesine Daniels  
Rhythmical Patterns and Satisfying Dancing

Laura Hicks  
Scores for 'Not Knowing;, Part 2

TM 2015  
Report from Mary Pearson

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TO CONTINUE...