sciendo DOI: http://doi.org/10.2478/njd-2023–0002 • Nordic Journal of Dance Volume 14(1) 2023

Cognitive Ecologies of Presence(S) in Three Different Dance Forms

Sarah Pini

ABSTRACT

Presence is a central yet controversial topic in the study of performing arts and theatrical traditions, where the notion of 'stage presence' is generally understood as the performer's ability to enchant the audience's attention. How do dancers relate to the idea of presence in performance, and how do they understand, enact, and perform presence in their artistic work and practices?

In this article I offer an investigation into presence's variations in three different dance practices and choreographic contexts: the case of the *Ballet National de Marseille* during the staging of Emio Greco's piece *Passione*; Contact Improvisation in the case of independent groups of *contacters* in Italy and Australia; and Body Weather, a radical movement ideology developed by Japanese choreographer Min Tanaka in the context of the company Tess de Quincey and Co. in Sydney.

To illustrate how presence in dance practices emerges in relation to a complex and dynamic environment, I propose a cognitive ecological approach to the notion of 'stage presence', which considers both the co-presence of audiences and performers and the socio-cultural context of the performance event. By exploring how dancers articulate their lived experiences of presence in relation to their different dance contexts and traditions, I suggest framing phenomena of presence in an embodied ecological sense.

RESUMÉ

Nærvær er et centralt, men kontroversielt emne i studiet af scenekunst og teatralske traditioner, hvor begrebet 'stage presence' generelt forstås som performerens evne til at fortrylle publikums opmærksomhed. Hvordan forholder dansere sig til ideen om nærvær i performance, og hvordan forstår, iscenesætter og udfører de nærvær i deres kunstneriske arbejde og praksis?

I denne artikel tilbyder jeg en undersøgelse af tilstedeværelsens variationer i tre forskellige danse praksisser og koreografiske sammenhænge: tilfældet med *Ballet National de Marseille* under iscenesættelsen af Emio Grecos værk *Passione*; Kontaktimprovisation i tilfælde af uafhængige grupper af *contacters* i Italien og Australien; og Body Weather, en radikal bevægelsesideologi udviklet af den japanske koreograf Min Tanaka i forbindelse med selskabet Tess de Quincey and Co. i Sydney.

For at illustrere, hvordan tilstedeværelse i danse-praksis opstår i forhold til et komplekst og dynamisk miljø, foreslår jeg en kognitiv økologisk tilgang til begrebet 'scenenærvær', som både tager højde for publikums og udøvendes tilstedeværelse og den sociokulturelle kontekst af forestillingsarrangementet. Ved at udforske, hvordan dansere italesætter deres levede oplevelse af nærvær i forhold til deres forskellige dansekontekster og -traditioner, foreslår jeg at rammesætte fænomener af nærvær i en kropslig økologisk forstand.

Cognitive Ecologies of Presence(S) in Three Different Dance Forms

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Introduction: The classic model of theatrical presence

The concept of presence is a much-debated topic in the literature of the performing arts; in the history of theatre and theatrical practices, it is a central yet controversial notion which involves varied theoretical and methodological approaches (Goodall 2008; Power 2008; Fisher-Lichte 2008, 2012; Zarrilli 2009, 2012; Giannachi and Kaye, 2011; Macneill 2014; Trenos 2014; Sherman 2016) and specialised journals dedicated to exploration of the theme.[1] In the last decades numerous interdisciplinary projects in performance studies have dealt with deepening the understanding of phenomena of 'presence'.[2]

Drawing from the research I carried out during my doctoral project (Pini 2021), in this paper I focus on the notion of the performer's *presence* (in Western performance traditions: *stage presence*). This term refers to the impact of a performer on an audience, defined by the English Oxford Dictionary as "the ability to command the attention of a theatre audience by the impressiveness of one's manner or appearance".[3]

The view that considers stage presence a prerogative of the performer, and her ability to direct the audience's attention, is what Jon Foley Sherman describes as 'the classic model of presence' (2016). This classic version refers to "the sense of perceiving something about the performer, a unique truth about the performer magnified by the stage" (Sherman 2016, 2). According to Sherman, the classic model of stage presence conceals audience participation because it describes something that happens to them—the perceiver's perception becomes passive, more like reception. The limit of the classic model of stage presence is that it focuses primarily on the performer's agency and neglects the intersubjective and interactive aspects embedded in the performance event. These include how audiences are 'present' for the performers and how this mutual relationship shapes performers' experiences of presence.

This article addresses the notion of presence in three performative dance contexts to provide alternative theoretical and methodological approaches that challenge the 'classic' notion of presence in performance (Sherman 2016).

To provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of stage presence in its complexity, I extend the investigation to other performative traditions and consider its experiential situatedness in a specific environment and cultural context. Through a cognitive ecological and ethnographic approach, in this paper I present an investigation of *variations* of presence (Noë 2012) in three different dance practices and choreographic contexts: I briefly address the case of the *Ballet National de Marseille* during the transmission of presence and kinaesthetic knowledge in the staging of Emio Greco's piece *Passione* (Pini and Sutton 2021), Contact Improvisation (Deans and Pini 2022) in the case of independent groups of contacters in Italy (Bologna, Ferrara, and Arezzo) and Australia (Sydney, NSW), and Body Weather, a radical movement ideology developed by Japanese choreographer Min Tanaka in the context of the company *Tess de Quincey* and Co. in Sydney and Bellambi, Australia (Pini 2022; Pini and Deans 2021).

To illustrate how presence in dance performance practices emerges in relation to a complex and dynamic environment, this article proposes a cognitive ecological approach to stage presence which takes into account the co-presence of audiences and performers and the socio-cultural context of the performance event.

Cognitive ecological framework: An emergent distributed model of presence

Several performance scholars have argued that, rather than being a quality or a skill, presence is inherently a social event, and audience and performers constitute a performance event by their phenomenal *co-presence* (Fischer-Lichte 2008; Power 2008; Zarrilli 2012, 2009; Trenos 2014; Heim 2016). In the book *Stage Presence* (2008), Jane Goodall observes how the phenomenon of stage presence is intrinsically mutable and dynamic, a product of social constructions, shaped by the evolution of aesthetics and of scientific and political ideas across time (Goodall 2008). Scholars in theatre and performance studies have in fact pointed out how the sense of presence in performance can "be created through an interaction between actors, text and audience; that is, in the 'moment to moment' unfolding of the performance rather than the realisation of a metaphysical ideal" (Power 2008, 53). In this context *presence* becomes understood as an emergent phenomenon. As Philip Zarrilli emphasised, "the sense of stage presence emerged in the spatiotemporal realm of experience, embodiment, and perception shared between the performer(s), the performance score and its dramaturgy, and the audience" (Zarrilli 2012, 120). Zarrilli inscribes the phenomenon of stage presence within a specific 'spatiotemporal realm' of experience; locating it within a specific spatiotemporal performance context situates it in a specific place and context. Presence is therefore understood not only as a quality possessed by specific individuals but also as a perceptual and cognitive process that unfolds within different social actors, the performers, and the audience, and within a specific performance setting. In this sense presence is to be understood as a process, as a perceptual, cognitive, and cultural phenomenon that is context dependent.

Recently, in the field of dance and performance studies there has been an increased interest in analysis of performance practices through cognitive approaches (Paavolainen 2012; Sofia 2013; Blair and Cook 2016; Kemp and McConachie 2019; Vass-Rhee 2015; Weber 2016; Hansen and Bläsing 2017; Hansen 2022), particularly in the paradigm of the '4E cognition theory', a recent current in cognitive science that recognises the central role of the body in shaping the mind (Sutton and Bicknell 2020; Hansen and Vass 2021).

To provide an account of the phenomenon of presence that can encompass the multifaceted renderings inscribed in a complex event such as a dance performance, I suggest adopting a cognitive ecological framework.

Cognitive ecological theory provides a useful framework for investigating cognitive processes in the relationships between the social and the material (Leach and Stevens 2020, 98).[4] As cognitive anthropologist Edwin Hutchins has observed, cognition must be understood as co-constituted by the interaction and interconnectedness of perception, action, and thought among particular social beings and complex environments. He reminds us that "an understanding of cognitive phenomena must include a consideration of the environments in which cognitive processes develop and operate" (Hutchins 2010, 706). According to Hutchins, perception, action, and thought are to be understood as inextricably integrated with each other (2010, 712). Cognitive ecology, a growing field in cognitive science, is "the study of cognitive phenomena in context" (Hutchins 2010, 705) that understands cognition not as internal

to the individual but as constituted by the interaction and interconnection of perception, action, and thought across particular social beings and complex environments.

Evelyn Tribble and John Sutton have employed cognitive ecology in the analysis of early modern theatre and suggested that "cognitive ecology facilitates a system-level analysis of theatre: this model of cognitive ecology would posit that a complex human activity such as theatre must be understood across the entire system" (2011, 97). In this view cognitive ecology emerges as a valuable framework in which to address the multidimensional, perceptual, and interactive aspects of live performance.

Therefore, to grasp the phenomenon of stage presence in dance I suggest adopting a cognitive ecological approach, which can address and account for not only audiences and performers' perceptual relationship but the cognitive ecology of the performance event, which includes dancers' co-presence and how they construct meaning, the embodied experience of the performers and how this is shaped by different dance and performance practices and traditions, the socio-cultural context, and the situatedness of the aesthetic performance event.

Methodology: A cognitive dance ethnography of presence

Current interpretations of stage presence in performing arts oscillate between theory and practice, but they generally tend to infuse the lived experience of presence with more theoretical analysis. I believe dance can provide a more embodied account of the phenomenon of stage presence, allowing the practice of performance to inform philosophical reflection.

Also, if presence can be understood as a cognitive and cultural phenomenon, the direct experience of those who enact it, the performers, is missing from current interpretations. While the experience of spectating has been more broadly investigated, the lived experience of stage presence from the performers' point of view has often been overlooked or filtered through theoretical interpretations relying on philosophical accounts (see Lepecki 2004; Jeager 2006). Therefore, I addressed the experience of presence among diverse groups of dancers and performers by engaging in a multisite 'enactive' dance ethnography fieldwork in Europe and Australia (2014–2017). Enactive ethnography is an engaged form of participant observation termed by social anthropologist Loïc Wacquant (2015). This approach to research consists of conducting immersive fieldwork based on 'performing the phenomenon', which in my case means training and practising together with the participants of my study. This methodology aims to reduce the distance between the observed and the observer, enabling the ethnographer to gain a closer perspective and deeper understanding of the practices under investigation. I could access these practices thanks to my professional dance training in ballet and contemporary dance.[5]

Conceptually my work rests on a bedrock of ethnographic and phenomenological frameworks, including somatic attention (Csordas 1993), thick participation (Samudra 2008), carnal sociology and enactive ethnography (Wacquant 2015), apprenticeship and embodied learning as ethnographic methods (Downey, Dalidowicz, and Mason 2015), and phenomenology of the body and dance (Pini and Pini 2019; Ravn 2009; Ravn and Hansen, 2013).

In the next sections I will provide a brief introduction of three case studies and present evidence from my fieldwork to illustrate the ways in which different dance forms provide a more complex account of presence that diversifies, enriches, and expands the view provided by the classic model of stage presence.



Image 1. Dancers of the Ballet National De Marseille (BNM) in Emio Greco's Passione. Photo Credit: Alwin Poiana (courtesy of BNM).

Contemporary Ballet: Distributed embodied presence

I have addressed the notion of stage presence in Contemporary Ballet (CB) in the case of the *Ballet National de Marseille* (BNM) and the staging of the piece *Passione* by Italian choreographer Emio Greco and Dutch dramaturg Pieter Scholten. During my fieldwork I attended the version of *Passione* danced by seven dancers of the BNM ensemble and performed by the musician Frank Krawczyk in May and June 2017 at the *Theatre la Criée* in Marseille (Pini and Sutton, 2021). *Passione* was created and danced as a solo by the choreographer Emio Greco, and after he took the direction of the BNM in 2014, he recreated the piece for the company.

The directors Greco and Scholten developed a dance training method called Double Skin / Double Mind (DS/DM) which enhances physical and mental awareness to make intention and form coincide. The training method (DS/DM) constitutes the ground for the specific idiosyncratic movement vocabulary the directors developed, as well as the entirety of their choreographic production. The directors' vision is based on the power of the dancer's body, and in 1996 they published their artistic manifesto "The 7 Necessities",[6] which also provides the direction for *Passione*:

> *_I have to tell you that my body is curious about everything and that I am my body*
>
> *_I have to tell you that my body is escaping from me*
>
> *_I have to tell you that I can control my body and play with it at the same time*
>
> *_I have to tell you that you have to turn your head*
>
> *_I have to tell you that I can multiply my body*
>
> *_I have to tell you that I am not alone*
>
> *_I have to tell you that I am abandoning you and leaving you my statue*

Passione is a dance piece that consist of seven different solos; every solo embeds and is inspired by—among many other elements—one of the principles in Greco and Scholten's artistic manifesto. Thus, with this piece,

the dancers of the BNM are tasked to meet not only the audience's and the choreographer's expectations, but also to embody the choreographer's aesthetic, artistic vision, and conceptual framework.

The piece *Passione* involves a series of solos, as well as an explicit reference to the metaphysical presence of God, since it is a work based on *St Matthew Passion* and choreographed on the homonymous composition of Johann Sebastian Bach. Given these premises, from the dancers of the Ballet National de Marseille (BNM) I was expecting an account of presence similar to the version reified by the classic model. Nevertheless, as soon as I started conversing with the BNM performers about this piece, interestingly, a quite different picture began to emerge. Here I present some of the reflections provided by the dancers of the BNM about their experience of stage presence with this specific choreographic work:

> *He [Emio Greco] makes it really through the movement to make you connect with them [audience]. He doesn't really say like 'be present' but more like 'be aware', be aware they are there, be aware of your surroundings, and if you are aware of your surroundings, you automatically interact with the audience.* (Nahimana Vandenbussche, Marseille, 28 May 2017)

Reflecting on the dancers' strategies to achieve and enhance their presence when dancing this piece, one dancer of the ensemble revealed:

> *I think about going through the whole [unfolding] time of the piece, every time, and during the show I imagine myself going through every feeling [embodied in each different solo] and I try to keep it until the end, when I make my entrance running on stage, that's the moment, until I stop running, from the moment Denis [first solo] enters the scene, for me, in my mind, I run, I start running.* (Nonoka Kato, Marseille 02 June 2017)

Another dancer of the company explained that what she refers to as 'presence' is the atmosphere that emerges throughout the unfolding of the performance, from meeting with the energy of the dancers on stage, with the audience, in a mutual relationship with the space of the theatre:

> *I dance between Angel and Vito, actually Angel gives me a lot of energy, and every time is completely different […] For me Angel leaves atmosphere on the stage, and then I enter after him. The energy and the audience also, they watch him dance, and the audience also makes atmosphere, not on the stage, but in the theatre.* (Aya Sato, Marseille, 02 June 2017)

Drawing from my fieldwork among the dancers of the BNM, I suggest an interpretation of phenomena of presence in Contemporary Ballet as *distributed* and *embodied*. Expounding from the accounts of my interviewees, stage presence in this context of practice is understood not as an individual skill, nor as a quality of the singular performer, but as an affective state arising from the mindful interactions distributed across the various elements of the performance ecology: the presence of the audience, the specific atmosphere of the piece, the theatre space, the choreographic demands of the performance, the dancers' specific roles in the piece, the emotions embedded in each solo, and the energy that emanates from the other dancers of the company who perform the piece with them, which is felt strongly, even when they are not physically present on stage.

Contact Improvisation: Interkinaesthetic social presence

My investigation into variations of presence in performance also concerned Contact Improvisation (CI), a duet-system-based dance practice developed by Steve Paxton and Nancy Stark Smith, among many other US dancers and choreographers, in the 1970s and by members of the Judson Dance Theatre in New York (Banes 1987). Since its inception, CI has become a prominent expression of postmodern dance and performative art, with workshops, festivals, and jams sessions organised and practiced worldwide.

I conducted part of my fieldwork in Sydney, Australia, joining CI classes and a workshop led by CI teacher and choreographer Alejandro Rolandi. During one of our conversations, Alejandro provided me with this account of presence:

> *If Contact Improvisation can enhance presence, I think it is mainly because it forces you to notice, it pushes you to be aware of what is going on because you are interacting in real time with another person […] It is a reaching out, it is a sensorial extension that reaches out to what's happening beyond the immediate […] Presence is simply that ability to engage fully with your surroundings. (Alejandro Rolandi, Sydney, 23 March, 2017)*

During my fieldwork I took part in CI jams organised by independent groups of contacters in the cities of Bologna and Ferrara (Italy), and I attended the Global Underscore (GUS) 2017 in Arezzo led by CI facilitator Caterina Mocciola. The GUS is a framework for practicing and researching dance improvisation that has been developed since 1990 by Nancy Stark

Image 2. Contact Improvisation Global Underscore event in Arezzo, Italy, streamed live, 2017. Photo Credit: Sarah Pini



Smith (Koteen and Smith 2008) to guide dancers' experiences through the changing states of the jam. My informant Caterina gave me this definition of the Underscore in relation to presence:

> *The Underscore is a practice about presence, and there is a series of changes of states, of this presence […] I guess the presence can start from sensation, but it also becomes an awareness that you will create, and it changes, and it morphs while you go through the experience.* (Caterina Mocciola, Arezzo, 24 June 2017)

The GUS, a significant dance event for the Contact Improvisation community, happens once a year around the period of the Northern Hemisphere summer solstice. This special CI event was danced simultaneously and streamed live across all the GUS jams that took place in 55 countries around the globe.

> *During the Global Underscore this net expands out of the actual physical room where we are practicing, and we reach through what she [Nancy Stark Smith] calls the telescopic awareness. We reach the other sites by using the imagination, you connect to memories, sensations, experiences you shared, and everything kind of feedbacks in and out, it's a constant, it's a flux of information, technique, movement.* (Caterina Mocciola, Arezzo, 24 June 2017)

The kind of feedback loop enacted through the GUS jam is what Nancy Stark Smith calls the device of *telescopic awareness*. Several comparative studies addressing bodily perception and agency in dance have highlighted how Contact Improvisation presents some distinctive features characterised by an emphasis on certain sensory modalities, including privileging the sense of touch over vision (Bull 1997), challenging habits of movement (Pini, McIlwain, and Sutton 2016), kinaesthetic interdependency and *multiperspectivity* (Behnke 2003), and the cultivation of an interkinaesthetic sense of agency (Deans and Pini 2022). During CI jams, the 'stage', the space of the performance, is the entire space occupied by all attendees of the jam. CI dancers can decide to stop their dance and become audience at any point during the unfolding of the jam, and any member of the 'audience' is free to change her vantage point and join the dance whenever they feel is their time to join. Thanks to the interchangeable roles of both performers and audience, in this context of practice, a sense of presence emerges through an interconnected loop of mutual influence between the various elements of the CI jam. I call this phenomenon the *interkinaesthetic social presence* in CI, a term that I borrowed from phenomenologist Elizabeth Behnke (2003) to describe the experience of presence within the practice of CI.

Body Weather: Omnicentral situated presence

The third dance form investigated during my fieldwork is Body Weather (BW), a radical and anti-hierarchical movement ideology developed by Japanese choreographer Min Tanaka and MAI-JUKU performance group in Japan between the 1970s and the 1980s. BW presents similarities with Butoh, an avant-garde dance form developed in Japan in the 1960s by dancers who followed the artistic direction of Kazuo Ohno and Tatsumi Hijikata. Butoh is a dance form consisting of "an emphasis on the transformation of the dancer into something else, an intense physicality that may result in explosions of movement across the stage or a strictly contained tension beneath the surface of the skin, and a focus on themes such as death, marginality, and nature" (Candelario 2019, 12). Tanaka developed his solo work and movement methodology in dialogue with the work of Hijikata.[7]

BW is a training method and performance practice that investigates the interconnected relationships between bodies and their environments. The body in BW is not conceived as a fixed entity but like the weather, constantly changing and transforming. Another important concept in BW is the idea of the space as a dancing partner. BW methodology was introduced into Australia by the choreographer Tess de Quincey in 1989.[8] I conducted my fieldwork in Sydney and Bellambi (NSW, Australia), where I attended BW classes and workshops organised by members of the dance company *Tess de Quincey and Co* in Sydney. One of my interviewees, Sydney-based visual artist and performer Kirsten Packman, provided me with an interesting account that describes the relationship between space and the dancing body in BW:

> *When I see space beeing changed by the body, that's when I see presence, not just about the body but the spatial relationships, what's going on, so the activation across space, not just to other dancers but how the body is inhabiting space, it's almost as much as about the body as space, sculpted by space. (Kirsten Packman, Sydney, 01 April 2017)*

During an interview, choreographer Tess de Quincey mentioned how in "the Body Weather training, what's at the back, how is the space changing around you, in front of you, behind you, to your sides, feeling the sensitivity of an entire space, it has an impact" (Tess de Quincey, Sydney, 16/05/2017). This idea of the space as a dancing partner that shapes the experience of the performer was framed by Tess de Quincey, who told me:

> *The relationship to be danced by space, that space is not nothing, it is something, and Min [Tanaka] used to talk about the endless stories that are available through space, that everything in history lives there,*

Image 3. Body Weather workshop in Australia, 2017. Photo credit: Gideon Payten-Griffiths.



if you become danced… I was used to this expression 'cut the space with your arms' which we do in the ballet, but all of this is centred through the self-centering of the human, where if your arms get danced by space, by the intricacy of the stories, that in itself gives power to something beyond the human that also expands the presence, because one is engaging and in exchange with those histories and sensitivities. (Tess de Quincey, Sydney, 16 May 2017)

I call the experience of presence in *BW omnicentral* and *situated* to emphasise the salient features of this practice, which include a focus on the idea of groundedness and imagination and the development of a heightened sensory awareness, interoceptive sensitivity, and *omnicentrality* understood as blurred boundary between the performer agency and the environment in which she is immersed (Min Tanaka in Marshall 2006).

These aspects highlight how different dance forms are informed by specific traditions and cultural contexts, which in turn shape different dance artistic practices and methods that promote different ways of relating, sensing, and enacting presence in performance. With these examples issued from the device of the *telescopic awareness* in CI and the concept of *omnicentrality* in BW, and the distributed presence of the choreographer and performers in the case of the *Passione* piece by the BNM, I suggest more complex and interesting relationships between performers, bodies and senses, audience, stage, and environment than are included in the classic model of presence, which is centred merely on the performer's agency to enchant audience attention.

Conclusions: Cognitive ecologies of presence in dance

To address the complexity of presence as a cognitive, aesthetic, perceptive, and interactive phenomenon, I suggest considering not only the perceptive relationship between the artists and the audience, but also the overall ecology of the performance, which includes the presence of the audience and the artists, the ways in which they construct meaning and the specific 'situatedness' of the performance event in a given environment and sociocultural context. My research sought to explore phenomena of presence in context. To do so, I considered not only audiences' and performers' perceptual relationships but also the cognitive ecology of the performance event. As one of the *Ballet de Marseille* dancers powerfully outlined: "Stage presence is the capacity to blend together with energy, with the other dancers, with the atmosphere, with what we have to do, with what is being asked" (Angel Martinez-Hernandez, Marseille, 28 May 2017).

From my fieldwork it appears that dancers understand and experience presence not as an individual skill but as an emergent property that arises from interaction with the audience and context. With this paper I show how different forms of presence can be enacted differently across three distinct dance genres and how differently they depart from the classic model. Through my study I also illustrate how the exploration of dancers' lived experience can provide an alternative interpretation of the phenomenon of stage presence that moves away from the so-called *classic model of presence* to embrace and account for the situational, multidimensional, interactive, and intersubjective aspects of performing.

By focusing on the cognitive ecologies of different dance practices, in this article I have highlighted the importance of conducting a more comprehensive analysis of phenomena of presence in performing arts that considers both the lived experience of the artists, their situatedness in a particular environment

and cultural context, and the role that a specific performance ecology plays in shaping the experience of presence. By offering a broader understanding of the phenomenon of presence in different dance contexts, this article illustrates how a cognitive ecological ethnographic approach can provide adequate tools to address the complexities of phenomena of presence in performance.

Endnotes

1 For further information on the topic, see the International Journal of Presence Studies: Revista Brasileira do Estudos da Presença https://seer.ufrgs.br/presenca

2 Among the various research projects focused on the theme of presence in performing arts, see The Presence Project directed by Gabriella Giannachi and Nick Kaye of the University of Exeter (UK), in collaboration with Mel Slater (University College London) and Michael Shanks (Stanford University), active between 2005 and 2010. Further details can be found on the project website: http://spa.exeter.ac.uk/drama/presence/presence.stanford.edu/index.html

Another project was conducted by the research group Performativité et effets de présence directed by Louise Poissant and Josette Féral of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). The laboratory investigated various forms of presence in the interpenetration between the virtual and the real in theatre, dance, opera, and multimedia arts. For more information, see the website: https://effetsdepresence.uqam.ca/

In October 2022 the research group Performance and Cognition of the ICNOVA/NOVA University Lisbon, Portugal, held the conference Presence, Absence, Invisibility (PAI) to raise and address questions of presence that are central to the theory of performing arts and to the training of performers: https://lisbonpai.netlify.app/

3 Definition of stage presence, 2019, in English Oxford Dictionary. Retrieved from https://www.lexico.com/en?search_filter=dictionary

4 For further examples of cognitive ecology in relation to analysis of choreographic practices, see also Vass-Rhee 2015.

5 I was familiar with the environment of the BNM due to my professional dance training during the first edition of the international insertion program D.A.N.C.E. (Dance Apprentice Network aCross Europe, 2005–2007), which included an apprenticeship period at the Ballet National de Marseille. The company was directed at that time by Belgian choreographer Frédéric Flamand (2004–2014).

6 For more details on Emio Greco | PC choreographic methodology and The Seven Necessities artistic manifesto, see Pini and Sutton 2021 and Bermúdez 2007.

7 For further information on Min Tanaka's biography and artistic career, see a recent interview with the artist (Ozaki 2022) available at: https://performingarts.jpf.go.jp/E/art_interview/2204/1.html

8 For deeper insights into the practice of Body Weather in Australia, see Snow 2002.

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BIOGRAPHY

Sarah Pini is Assistant Professor in dance at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU). She works interdisciplinarily at the intersection of arts and health, cultural and medical anthropology, phenomenology of the body and illness, performing arts, dance, and embodied cognition. Her research focuses on the human body as a socio-cultural phenomenon, exploring the relationships between mindful dancing bodies, practices, environments, and cultural contexts, and how such entanglements shape processes of meaning-making, healing, and well-being. Sarah's research has been published in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Ballet, Synthese, Performance Research, Collaborative Embodied Performance: Ecologies of Skill (Bloomsbury), and The Australian Journal of Anthropology,* among others. *www.sarahpini.com spini@health.sdu.dk*