



# COCOON DANCE

MOVEMENT GLOSSARY

[www.cocoondance.de](http://www.cocoondance.de)



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## THE GLOSSARY OF COCOONDANCE IN THE THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF DANCE

The search for suitable ways of describing movement, taking notes, drawing and recording movement is an integral part of the artistic and scientific research of dance. Since the 16th century various notation forms were developed, such as word abbreviations, drawings of the floor movement (positions of the feet), stick figures, music notations and abstract characters, which should make movement readable and writeable. The different attempts at notation were always confronted with the volatility and complexity of the movement in its parameters of space, temporality and dynamic of the movement. In addition, they did not lead to a universal way of recording dance movements, so that the dance did not gain access to the knowledge culture mostly dominated by the scripture. Up to the present, we can follow attempts to develop a universally applicable notation. Besides the probably best-known analysis method of the Labanotation, which is widely used in the choreographic practice in addition to the Benesh movement notation and the Eshkol-Wachmann notation, studies have also emerged in the academic context with the intent of

## MOVEMENTS IN THE MOMENT

differentiating the representation of individual movement parameters in the writing and sign systems (Janet Adshead, *Dance Analysis* 1988, Susan Foster, *Reading Dancing* 1986). More recently, online platforms have been developed, such as *Synchronous Objects* (2009) and *Motion Bank* (2010) by the William Forsythe Company, to translate choreographies into digital online scores.

The different models always have to be considered in the context of changes in the choreographic methods and aesthetic concepts of movement within the dance itself. With the rise of contemporary dance the complexity of the dance creation processes and forms of manifestation of movement has further increased, which also raises the question about the description in a new and different way. At the same time, dance is more than ever required to describe itself and to reflect about itself in writing; with the growing interlacing of theoretical and practical input, working methods in educational institutions and the increasing importance of grant application writing, announcements and documentations of dance, the sharing of dance and choreographic knowledge has become the focus of interest.

The question of description and describability of movement takes as a result on a high priority and has increasingly become the subject of a choreographic debate (see Schreibstück, Thomas Lehmen, 2002, *Human Writes*, William Forsythe 2005, *Reportable Portraits*, Deufert & Plischke 2007, new work, Christina Ciupke 2015). The potential of this and other contemporary dance productions lies in a critical revision of the existing concepts of writing and writing about movement, in which the movement usually plays a

secondary role. In fact, the artistic engagement with writing reveals new ways and means of negotiating movement and writing at the same level, of finding and inventing new forms that are working along the interface between theory and practice and enabling a wide-ranging access to and interaction with dance.

Against this backdrop, the work of CocoonDance can also be situated. The company has been dealing for some time with the understanding, conveying and recording of movement through language. In search of an appropriate form of presentation of choreographic principles and motoric practices, the dancers explore, along with choreographer Rafaële Giovanola and dramaturge Rainald Endraß, the spectrum of linguistic, written and graphic forms in order to describe movement.

An insight into CocoonDance's research lab shows the complexity associated with translating movement into the medium of speech and writing. The continuous and processual movement requires the describing persons to be always in the moment: each slightest movement of the body, the lifting and lowering of their limbs, the twisting and turning of their trunk or head, the shifting of weight, every step and glance - every smallest temporal and spatial change in the movement brings up the challenge to look at the whole picture in detail and the detail in the whole. This means letting the gaze wander as well as being able to describe with every glance what happens.

With its glossary, the CocoonDance ensemble has perfected the work of a „moving glance“ (Jeschke 1999). It provides a toolbox to capture and describe the complexity

of movement in connection with sensation, quality and motoric. This is not about fixing movement through description, but about communicating it and generating a suitable glossary. The project's aim is not just to archive the company's own choreographic movement practice, but to make it available to others, which leads to a very unique form of observation and description of movement. The view is therefore always focused on the ‚receiver‘: How can I convey a certain feeling, a mood, a picture of movement to make it comprehensible to others? How to describe an impulse of movement that sets in motion a whole chain of actions? What is the special characteristic of this movement? What motivates others to pick it up and perpetuate it? And how does it sound? The last question invokes an entire new aspect in the description of movement: the acoustic dimension, which not only accompanies our perception of dance, but also conveys a certain idea of the execution of the movement.

In addition to the title that describes each respective form of movement in the glossary, the in comic-like wording specified sound offers the reader the opportunity to transfer the sensation, quality and motoric into his own movements. Deviations are included - and welcome. Therein lies the candidness of this glossary, which takes into account the fact that --contrary to the loss-oriented debate about the fixation of the volatility of dance-- the movement can never be completely caught up with through its description. On the contrary: precisely in the difference between language and dance, between description and movement, lies the potential for an ‚art of description‘, which the other way around can provide new impulses for the dance.

In the process, the possibilities of descriptions can be made fruitful at various levels:

1. as a (self-) reflection of the artistic process
2. as differentiation of movement parameters
3. as an archive of choreographic and motoric practices
4. as communication of movement knowledge and forms of expression
5. as an artistic generation of movements through language

The description of movement goes beyond the definition of terms and sharing of predefined knowledge, because it contributes to finding and inventing movement through language. Moreover, the descriptions not only stimulate movement, but also stimulate a debate on fundamental questions affecting the teaching of dance in art, science and society. And the beauty of it is: the solutions provided by CocoonDance's glossary is as complex and differentiated as the movement repertoire of the company itself.

*Dr. Isa Wortelkamp, University of Leipzig*



# A SHORT EXISTENTIAL GLOSSARY OF MOVEMENT

10

How does one bring a choreographic language into being? How is it to be seen and shared? Taking up the gestural vocabulary that has been in creation since 2016 with *No Body But Me*, *Momentum*, *Vis Motrix* (2018), *Ghost Trio A* and *Ghost Trio B* (2017/2018), and *Dream City* (2019), these are the questions that Rafaële Giovanola, Rainald Endraß, and their artistic team have sought to tackle. In these creations, technique serves an impulsive gestuality, gestures that are primary in the sense that they appear to arise before any meaning takes shape. We felt it is the existential rather than the intellectual that animates this work of creation and research: corporal movement revolves around the body itself, as opposed to the content behind it.

The glossary stage of around 12 word-movements took the form, for us, of a poetic evocation. Corporality is a way of existing; two dancers who interpret the same word, the same «task», is our proof. There is no formula. The body moves and existence unfurls, always in a singular way, with its own tonality, and this is precisely what interests Rafaële Giovanola and Rainald Endraß, in our view. The living body is of the order of the possible – it is not substantial.

With this in mind, we approached the selected movements with words – words like bodies, living and existing – so close and intimate that they often remain in silence. Words like bodies that sketch a world. Bodies like words without limits, bearers of a journey. Words like places without a centre, in perpetual decentration. Words that, like living bodies, are conveyed each time by a particular mood that manifests an understanding of the world.

The movements found in the CocoonDance's glossary contain and deliver the enigma of their emergence, which we have tried to reproduce in writing. This choreographic language was gradually articulated as a cohesion of «corners» and «climes» – it's there we found our points of reference, and where we ended up settling. Thus, for us, this glossary turned into a project of an anthology of daily movement: landscapes that attract or repel like real forcefields, an arrangement of space as a way of existing, an arrangement of our territories – a topography. These movements deliver experiences, places and paths, echoing the Greek word *chora*, “which gives space to things that have their own place”.

*Mélisende Navarre,  
Public Engagement & Education, Theatre Crochetan, Monthey  
Agustin Casalia, philosopher, Lausanne*

# RETRACTING

12

- Sensation:** dive (under), being invisible going away from the present moment
- Quality:** continuous movement with one tempo without a clear direction
- Motoric:** constant body weight shift with an articulated pelvis as the motor of the movement in order to move through space and different levels



## **Contre-courant marin**

*Se laisser porter*

*Sans lutter*

*Se dérouler en arrière*

*Se laisser dissoudre par les remous continus*

*Se fondre au rythme régulier*

*Si doux*

*Sans fin*



Wrurwrwrwrwrwr



Vidosequence RETRACTING  
<https://vimeo.com/325594942>

# SINK AND SLIDE

14

- Sensation:** mechanical movements of falling body parts, redirecting them in space
- Quality:** angular and linear movements created by sliding, pushing, sinking body parts
- Motoric:** push to expand articulation to the maximum. Sudden break of one articulation causes a change of direction



## **Glisser**

*Sur le côté*

*Se balancer*

*Flotter au vent*

*Sans ligne droite*

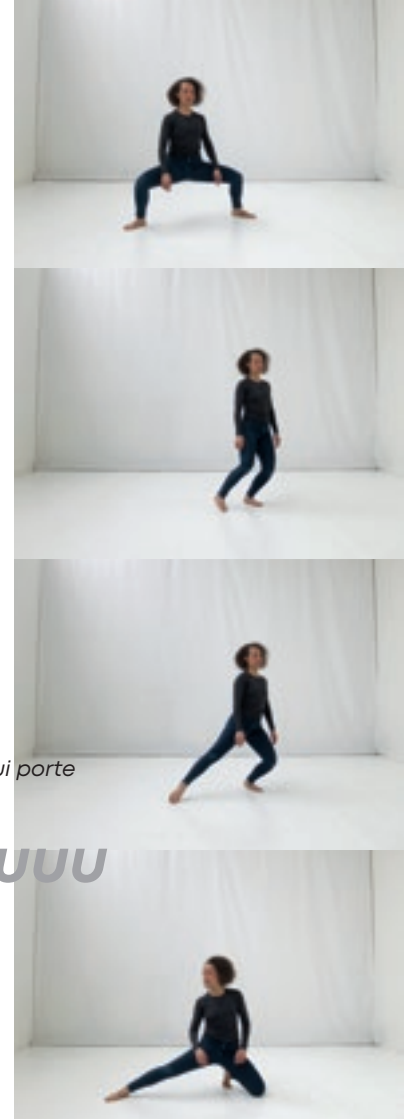
*Rester dans ce qui porte*

*Berce abrite*

# DongFuuuuu DongFuuuuu



Vidosequence SINK AND SLIDE  
<https://vimeo.com/325621260>



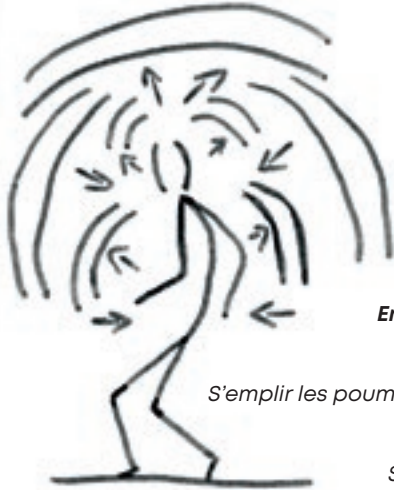


# INFLATING

16

**Sensation:** filling body parts with air to their full extent and deflate them

**Quality:** slow controlled dense continuous movements  
**Motoric:** process of gradually expanding upper body parts to the maximum of their form before recovering



**Emplissement au ralenti**

*Diurne*

*Nocturne*

*S'emplir les poumons, gonfler la poitrine*

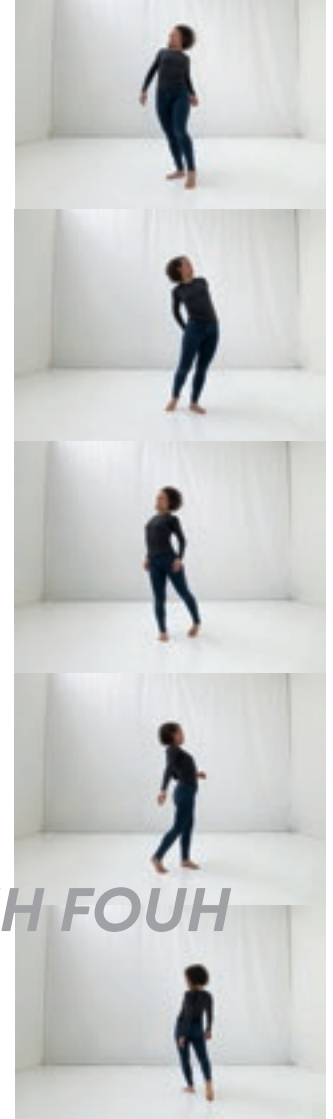
*Inspiration étirée*

*Jusqu'au bout*

*Se ramasser, récupérer*



Vidéo séquence INFLATING  
<https://vimeo.com/326826624>



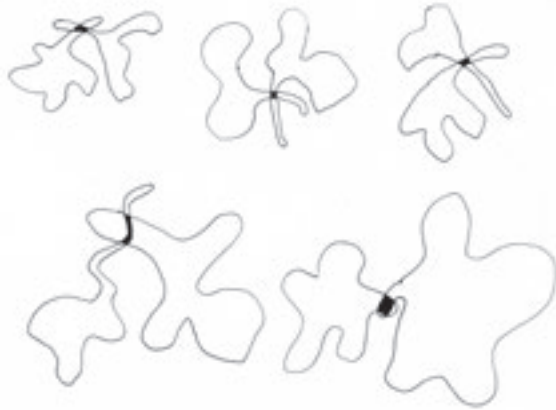
**FOUH FOUH FOUH**

# CLOUD

18

**Sensation:** floating in the air, following as well as taking responsibility

**Quality:** airy continuous movement, soft body texture  
**Motoric:** movement in between two persons is created by guiding and listening through a contact point. The point of contact is placed in the forearm



*Hmmm Hmmm Hmmm*



Vidéoquence CLOUD  
<https://vimeo.com/325619777>



## **Nuage**

*Fonder un monde vivant  
A plusieurs  
Solidaire, mobile, organique  
Délimiter un extérieur  
Sans l'avoir cherché  
Un eux et un nous  
Donnerons-nous envie de nous rejoindre?  
Faudra-t-il apprendre?*

# CATCHING THE DISAPPEARING

20

- Sensation:** constant process of remembering a movement, being in a contemplative state, always following the invisible
- Quality:** soft body tonus in contrast with sharp movements
- Motoric:** following the blurry memory of a movement in contrast with sudden clear full shapes

## *En prise avec la disparition*

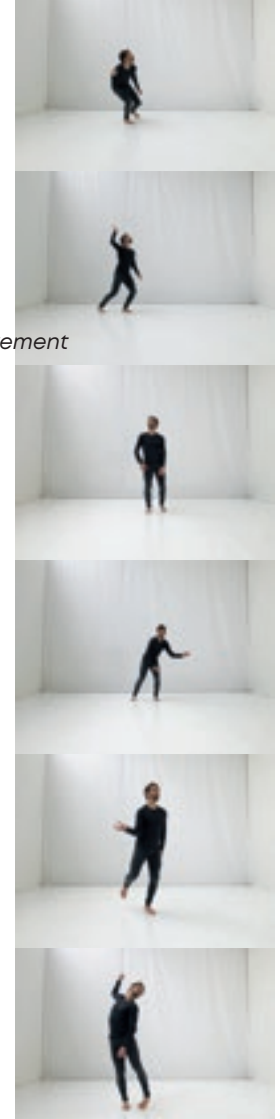
*Faire avec ce qui a été et sera  
Saisir l'émergence et la fuite  
Projeter ce qui n'est plus  
Et se raviser  
Suspendre la tendance exprimée  
Embouteillage, paralysie en mouvement  
Puis redémarrer  
Contrariété de ce qui se dérobe  
Nostalgie de ce qui aurait pu être  
Pourtant si proche  
Essayer encore*



*mwah...namuA...AJAmurh...HA*



Videsequence CATCHING THE DISAPPEARING  
<https://vimeo.com/325595188>





- Sensation:** directing the focus of the viewer on specific body parts, creating a visible path
- Quality:** each picture has its own timing, controlled clear, detailed movement
- Motoric:** specific body parts are moving in single actions

***Ut pictura poiesis***

*Primauté de l'image sur le mouvement*

*Décider où se poseront les yeux*

*Sans croiser les regards*

*Dévoiler une partie du corps*

*Pour qu'on s'y attarde*

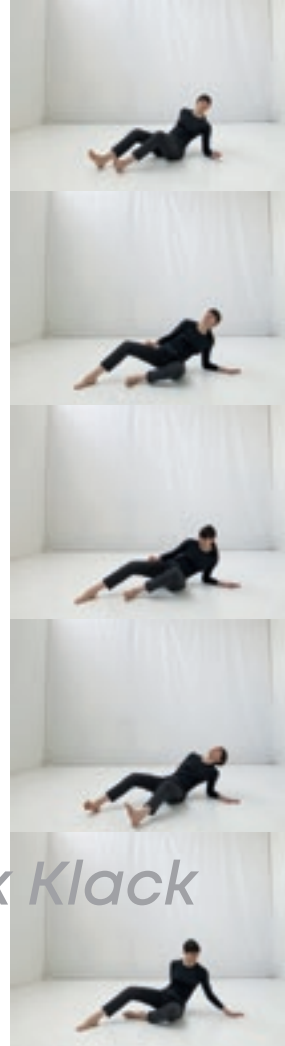
*Connaître l'effet produit*

*L'air de rien*

*Et l'offrir*



*Klack Klack Klack Klack Klack*



Vidosequence PICTURING  
<https://vimeo.com/325596047>

- Sensation:** collapsing and recovering by internal (or external) rubber bands that connect all body parts
- Quality:** contrast between releasing and recovering using all articulations
- Motoric:** full body moving through articulations in unexpected directions and levels



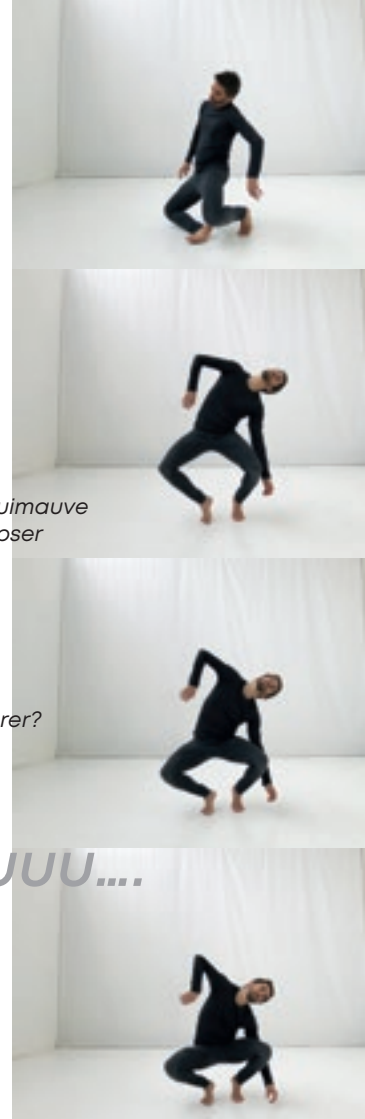
### **Wacouwa**

*Structure stable aux genoux de guimauve  
Porter toute son attention à s'écrouler  
s'affaisser, s'écrouler  
se reprendre sans repos  
Et s'écrouler à nouveau  
Décentrement permanent  
Implosion qui s'expose  
Sans répit  
Combien de temps cela va-t-il durer?  
Faudra t-il se saisir soi-même?*

*Blu... BLU... Bluuuu... BLBLBLUUUUUUUUUUUU...*



Vidéo séquence WACOUWA  
<https://vimeo.com/325593018>



# ASYMMETRICAL TOUCHING

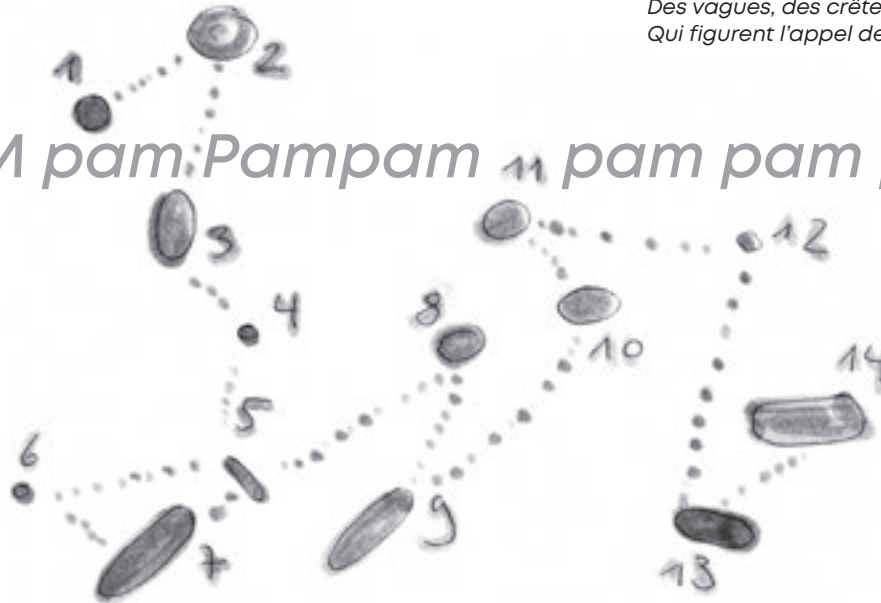
28

**Sensation:** connecting to the surrounding  
**Quality:** successive isolated clear movements  
**Motoric:** placing body parts one after the other on surfaces (body parts, floor, objects) giving each movement its own value

## **Pulsion de l'appel**

*Ça pulse  
Le sang bat régulièrement  
Le cœur dirige, rythme  
L'extase au sol  
Le flux  
Des vagues, des crêtes  
Qui figurent l'appel de la terre*

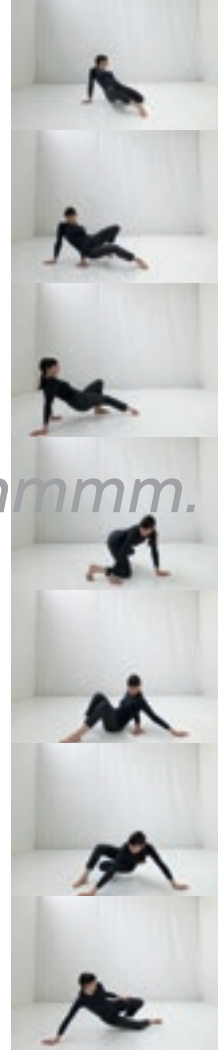
*PAM pam Pampam 11 pam pam papammm.*



Vidéoquence ASYMMETRICAL TOUCHING  
<https://vimeo.com/325594108>



Vidéoquence  
ASYMMETRICAL TOUCHING  
WITH BOUNCING  
<https://vimeo.com/325594769>



- Sensation:** hanging and falling  
**Quality:** contrast between dropping and rebounding the body weight  
**Motoric:** dropping the center of mass vertically towards the floor in order to rebound in any direction

## DOING DOING DOOOING



### **Même pas mal**

*Sans savoir d'où vient le coup  
 Tomber  
 Projeté par l'impact  
 Se relever comme si de rien n'était  
 Ça arrive sans crier gare  
 Malmène  
 pousse, secoue, jette  
 Mais toujours se relever  
 Pourquoi ne pas rester au sol?*



Vidéosequence RAGDOLLING  
<https://vimeo.com/325593317>



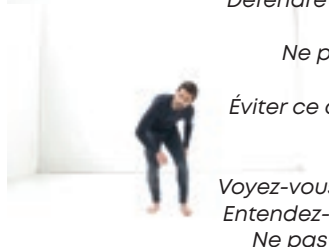
**Sensation:** avoiding imaginary objects coming towards one from all possible directions

**Quality:** fast reaction, peripheral watching

**Motoric:** use all range of movements and levels to evade the imaginary objects. Play with the speed and the amount of objects



*Tschou...schtsch---- Faich*



**Face à la pluie d'astéroïdes**  
 Défendre son intégrité physique  
 Flexible, alerte  
 Ne pas incorporer de coup  
 Vif agile  
 Éviter ce qui ne peut être digéré  
 Porté en avant  
 Prompt, à l'affût  
 Voyez-vous ces corps propulsés?  
 Entendez-vous leurs sifflements?  
 Ne pas pouvoir les combattre  
 Juste les éviter



Videosequence ESQUIVAGE A  
<https://vimeo.com/325620335>



Videosequence ESQUIVAGE B  
<https://vimeo.com/325620890>

# TETRIS

(Game for a minimum of two participants)

34

**Sensation:** geometrical feeling. Always ready to react.

Being part of an organism

**Quality:** sharp, clear movements, constant full body tension

**Motoric:** shift of placement while keeping the same body shape. Single actions in reaction to the others. The spatial relation is either parallel or perpendicular



## **Organisation cellulaire**

*Suivre les règles*

*Parallèle ou perpendiculaire*

*Au sol*

*Trouver des solutions*

*Provisoires*

*Stimuli de créatures terrestres*

*Chacune son tour*

*Se libérer de l'ennui*

*S'imposer à soi-même ses propres lois*

*Créer une forme*

*dGuut dgut dgut*



Vidosequence TETRIS

<https://vimeo.com/325596350>



The task of recording, clarifying, differentiation and archiving of movement has been a core element of the artistic research of CocoonDance for a number of years. Since 2016, the company has been creating a steadily and dynamically growing glossary which is functioning as an open archive. This glossary not only stores the company's collectively accumulated practical knowledge, but it is also continuously dialogically reviewed, complemented and modified.

The long-term goal is to develop a tool out of this work that is not only useful for other dance creators and choreographers, but for everyone who is working with movement. The ultimate goal is the development of an app that contains a living archive of movement knowledge, freely available to all interested parties as an inspiration and tool to store movement data and its verbalization.

An app is an easily accessible, popular and networkable medium that ideally combines the possibilities of creating an online archive for our purposes with practical guidance and support to others through interactive features which allow ongoing adaptation and updates.

First, this digital app would serve as an invitation for the users to explore and expand the (physical) space of possibilities of their bodies by learning about dance terms and their explanations. How the individual user and body then creatively interprets these linguistic explanations and movement descriptions is deliberately kept open. Over time, new terms, concepts and their movement implications can be incorporated - our expressive wish is that our glossary app will eventually transcend the movement knowledge of CocoonDance and that other choreographers and dancers,

especially non-academically trained performers, will also leave their mark there.

In the long run, we would like to develop an interactive tool that will serve a large number of „movement practitioners“ to generate and explore movements, and to facilitate an open exchange with others without a claim to universality. All this is occurring against the backdrop of our collaboration with non-professional dancers in the past years which has been enormously fruitful experience for all parties involved.

The work on the glossary is at the same time a means and a purpose, because in addition to the creation of a practical apparatus for artists to be passed on, it is also important for us to get in contact with a wide variety of groups and to spark interest for our own work. Artistic work and mediation are thus no longer considered the opposite, as two separate areas to somehow reconcile, but connecting organically with each other in a mutually beneficial way.

*Daniela Ebert (Artistic Management)*  
*Rainald Endrass (Dramaturgy)*

**Agustin Casalia** is a philosopher. He previously studied law, practiced at the Bar in Buenos Aires, and worked in Madrid, Paris, and Bern before moving to Lausanne. He gradually fled the academic world and the self he too often encountered there to invent another practice of philosophy. Now he identifies as an independent philosopher and works in cultural institutions such as the Printemps de Sévelin in Lausanne, at home, or in collaboration with graphic designers, architects or anyone else who desires to be confronted with philosophical thought. [www.agustincasaliaphilosophie.com](http://www.agustincasaliaphilosophie.com)

After 4 years with Cie Linga at the Théâtre de l'Octogone, **Mélisende Navarre** has been working on projects for independent companies in francophone Switzerland since 2010. She has been in charge of public engagement and education at the Crochetan Theatre in Monthey since 2012, where she develops projects and mechanisms that aim to make culture and the arts accessible to be shared and questioned by all.

**Isa Wortelkamp** is a dance and theater scholar who currently holds a *Heisenberg* position of the German Research Foundation (DFG) at the Institute for Theater Studies at the University of Leipzig. After completing her studies in Applied Theater Studies in Gießen, she completed her PhD at the University of Basel with a thesis entitled „*Viewing with a pen in the hand - the performance in the lettering of the recording*“ (Sehen mit dem Stift in der Hand – die Aufführung im Schriftzug der Aufzeichnung, Freiburg im Breisgau 2006). She is doing research on the interferences of artistic and scientific processes of dance, on the analysis of movement in dance, theater and performance as well as the aesthetics of dance photography.

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Performance, pictures and video stills: Fa-Hsuan Chen, Álvaro Esteban, Susanne Schneider / Concept, graphic, lay-out: Inge Paeßens



# COCOON DANCE

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