

# Vergänglichkeit

By Henrike Lechler and Riccardo Marracini

## Preamble

The piece is created around the **SHIFT OF REALITY**. Vergänglichkeit discusses the moments that pass that we can't hold onto. It shows a space that shifts into another dimension, letting the floor disappear under our feet, going against the principle of time, and overcoming the here and now. Our feelings that transform and our mind that is always changing are shown as fragments, little pieces, fading away like memories. It shows situations that appear, dissolve, ending in endlessness.

## Background

We, Henrike and Riccardo, met during our first year of study at ACAPA in Tilburg. We started sharing the same discipline and classes, sharing our own vision and way of seeing our common practice, but also of circus and life. Henrike's work focused on movement research and stage presence, while Riccardo's focused on technique and dynamic research. Everything started with games and playing around. Having fun, we started to create and decided to perform together. Our



work shows our complementary backgrounds, this symbiosis enriches and fills the stage.

During our first year in ACAPA we created, an act called “Let’s find the title later”. This was our first research together. We focused on a playful setting, putting on stage the dynamics of our normal training. During this act we started to create a “duo language” using synchronicity, Chinese pole technique, and choreographed movements.

In the second year of studies, we created “Encounters”, during this creation as a Duo we developed some new tools and movement vocabulary, patterns, and infinite loops, that became a stable part of our duo work. For future projects, the stage setting is clear and planed, lighting and soundscape were included and became as fundamental a part of the act as the movement. Emotions, feeling and the meaning of the piece came through the movement quality and the stage setting. Laban technique became an important tool for this part of research.

Those previous projects built a base of our language that we are now integrating and using to develop this act. We developed our practice in a self-built scenery, a ramp, merging it with our previous research and tools, creating one organic practice and language.

Repetitions, loops and shifting reality in the here and now of the performance, are characteristics of the Duo work.

## Research Questions:

How can we work with a ramp to shift reality?

How can we use the slope to create new movement patterns?

How can we bring the feeling of transience on stage?

## Method and Research

To explore the shifting of reality we focused on different aspects of it. The laws of physics define the rules of the world, how we experience and perceive it. We are not allowed to change them, but what we can change is how we perceive them, tricking human perception so that physical laws appear to be altered, thus creating a science fictional ambience

Shift of gravity: Gravity is the force that attracts a body towards the centre of the earth, or towards any other physical body having mass. We use a ramp with an inclination of 35 degrees to modify our weight and how gravity influences our movement, allowing us to use suspensions and falls in a more controlled way to create the illusion of a different gravity.

Non-linear time: Humans perceive the time in a linear way, due to our mortality we see a beginning and end of time, we can live the present and see the past only through glimpse of memory, but we are not able to perceive the future. The second law of dynamics also hints that time could be linear but quantum physics, quantum mechanics and general relativity can interlace space and time, creating a new vision of it. Without entering in scientific theories, in the dramaturgy of our

act we imagined seeing time in a non-linear way. Present, past and future coexist, everything happens at the same time, but we can focus on one of them at the time. (Present past and future are just different sides of a table, we sit in the middle, but we can only see the side that we choose to focus on.)

**Infinite space:** Space on stage is defined by what we see, we are used to seeing the stage as the reality and existing part of a live performance. We decided to modify this and make the “empty” space a performative and living part of our dramaturgy. The backstage and the space behind our ramp will hide our presence from the audience but will not break our existence, falling back of the ramp is nothing more than going somewhere else, using the side wings of the stage to reenter from the opposite side is just our normal and continuous path. Space does not have an end, rather it is continuous and curves in on itself creating a different reality.

Not only with the stage setting, but also with loops and repetition, we integrate our bodies in the shift or reality.

Another important part of our research is Laban theory, Laban was a choreographer and dancer of the 1940<sup>th</sup>, that theorised dance and movement expressions, creating a notation system for it, and analysing how it could create different feelings and moods. In our work we often use the eight efforts of Laban, a notation for movement qualities and which states they create, dividing the movement in 3 categories with 2 choices for each one: Weight - Firm or gentle, Time - Sudden or sustained and Direction - Direct or indirect. Changing and combining the aspects of these categories provides 8 different qualities of movement that we use to create and enhance our intention through physicality.

## **Practise based Part**

Our practice started already during our past work, where we started to explore the shift of reality and time. We wanted to take this further and build scenery that supports our ideas and brings them to the next level. We thought about gravity and that a ramp could bring a shift that might fit inside our way of working. Looking through a folder on our laptops, where we save inspirational images, led us to taking the decision to start realising this idea.

We started to plan the ramp and one week later we had a built ramp in our practising space to explore it for the first time. We spent the first week creating images, pictures and Phrases that we liked. This slowly got more defined. After a week of exploring, we realised that the fading away of scenes was the most prominent tool in our practice. We wanted to enhance what our practice thinks, so we decided to create around the topic of transience.

Little Fragments and stories arrived, then turned more into emotions and overall feelings. After analysing these pieces we started to rework and clarify the fragments using Laban's movement theory.

## Structure

### Stage set up

In the middle of a black stage there is a Chinese pole, a 6 meter long pole covered with rubber. It gets held by ropes that attach on the top of the pole and anchor on 3 points on the floor outside the stage. In front of the Chinese pole there is a white ramp. The higher side of the ramp is almost touching the pole, the slope of the ramp is facing the audience, so that the lower part of it will be closer towards the audience. The ramp itself is 1,45m high on one side and the slope has an angle of 35 degrees. The surface of it is covered with slippery wood, which allows the performer to slide. Behind the ramp there are big soft mats, where the performer can land on.

This set up gives the opportunities to play with the unknown behind the ramp, never being there and never ending. The verticality of the chinese pole and the slope that can get used to walk up or glide down contribute to the play of endlessness.

### Time and storyline

Vergänglichkeit doesn't have a linear timeline. It shows fragments of stories filled with emotions. It's like flipping through a photo album. A captured moment awakens, old memories come to life and fade away, but never end.



## **Relation of the two performers**

Different aspects of a familiar relation between two people are shown. It is a relation that siblings have. It can be sad and lonely but also hopeful, supportive and playful.

The beginning of the act shows loneliness within our society. Characterised through light, sustained and direct movements, a glide.

It continues in a discussion between siblings which will be shown through a pressing movement, firm, sustained and direct.

The next part plays with hope, an always upwards seeking movement, that will be shown through a float; gentle, sustained and direct.

The playful scene is characterised by a gentle, sudden and indirect movement, a dab.

The finishing scene shows surrender in our lives. It recaps moments of the whole piece shown through a press.

## **Music**

Music: Goodbye – Apparat

We chose a song that give sustain the feeling of transitory of time, a song where the lyrics melt with the instrumental part without taking a strong lead letting us to be the focus. Listening to the text the song talks about memories and moment that past but to which you can never say goodbye.

The song has been used as the theme of a Netflix series “dark” where the main topic is time traveling.

## **Positioning**

From the stage building aspect there are people already exploring and creating around the physics that a ramp can give. Every work is dealing with different questions and different movement material.

Our work fits inside these schemes but differentiates itself by our way of working. The loops, repetitions and the shift of time and space, are typical for our work and shape the piece and its uniqueness. The ramp will give us a tool to shift gravity and reality. We are working with a science fictional atmosphere in the here and now of a performance.

Skid, a dance performance is created on a 10m long slope on a 34 degrees angle. The people performing on it are mainly dancers. Researching the freedom of movement on it an exploring the world of a never flat ground. Their research started by creating movement martial on this slope.

## **Skid**

Another performance crated with dancers is Diavolo. This project is led by a Architect that is exploring architecture in motion. He created the structures that will be explored by the performer. Not giving much guidance but working more as an observer he starts his creation without any clear directions but lets the performer explore their new environment.

## **Diavolo**

Join Nate builds art sculptures that people can explore by walking and climbing on them. Being in a so close contact with art are one of the motivations for Join Nate. His Ideas come from Skateboard ramps and transform from their into the things he is creating. His way of working ifs building smaller versions of the sculpture to try out and get a feeling for it's dimension.

### **Join Nate and his Skateboard Scuptures**

Yoann Bourgeois – Claire de la lune and Celui qui tombe, the stairs with the trampoline and the swinging platform created images that visually inspired our work and creation.

## **Sources**

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