

Konzeptpapier Labor „Skin“ Tanzquartier Wien Oktober 2003

Titel: „now you can have the body you've (n)ever wanted“

(Quellenangabe: aus Medienkörper/Körper-Medien .Erinnerungsspuren im Zeitalter der „digitalen Evolution“  
Marie-Luise Angerer)

oder: second skin

Die Haut ist unser größtes Sinnesorgan, über das wir auch visuelle Reize wahrnehmen. Haut ist Oberfläche und Hülle, die den Körper gleichsam verhüllt und zeigt. Sie ist Trenn- und Kommunikationsfläche zwischen dem internen Körper und dem externen Raum.

Wie kann Haut als Hülle und Umriss des menschlichen Körpers mit den Kommunikationsmitteln Tanz und visuelle Medien heute gedacht und wahrgenommen werden? Wie gehen wir um mit dem Potential der digitalen, scheinbar grenzenlosen Bearbeitung unserer körperlichen Oberfläche? Welche Qualitäten bürden mediale Blicke auf und durch die Haut? Kann Haut als Begrenzung durchlässig gemacht und somit ein anderer Körperraum enthüllt oder ent-deckt werden?

In dem zweiwöchigen Labor kommen KünstlerInnen aus den Bereichen Tanz und Medienkunst zusammen, um sich diesen Fragen zu stellen. Praktisches Experiment und theoretische Reflektion ergänzen sich bei dieser Untersuchung. Vorträge und ‚open labs‘ bieten Interessierten einen Einblick in das Labor und seine Thematik.

TeilnehmerInnen am Labor sind 6 ChoreographInnen aus Wien und Europa, Markus Wintersberger und 6 StudentInnen seines Seminars „Digitale Choreographie“ an der Universität für Angewandte Kunst in Wien und Nik Haffner.

(Geplant ist zudem die Teilnahme von Dr. Marie-Luise Angerer und 4 ihrer StudentInnen der Kunsthochschule für Medien in Köln sowie Scott deLahunta und 2 seiner StudentInnen der Amsterdam School for the Arts / Masters in Choreography.)

Dates:

first day October 20th

last day October 31st

(I guess people travelling to Vienna would arrive on the Sunday, 19th and leave again on Saturday, Nov 1st)

There are two ‚open labs‘ scheduled, both on Thursdays. The first would be Oct 23rd, the second one on Oct 30th.

We will work both at one of the studios at Tanzquartier ([www.tqw.at](http://www.tqw.at)) and at the Universitaet fuer Angewandte Kunst Wien/university for applied art ([www.angewandte.at](http://www.angewandte.at)).

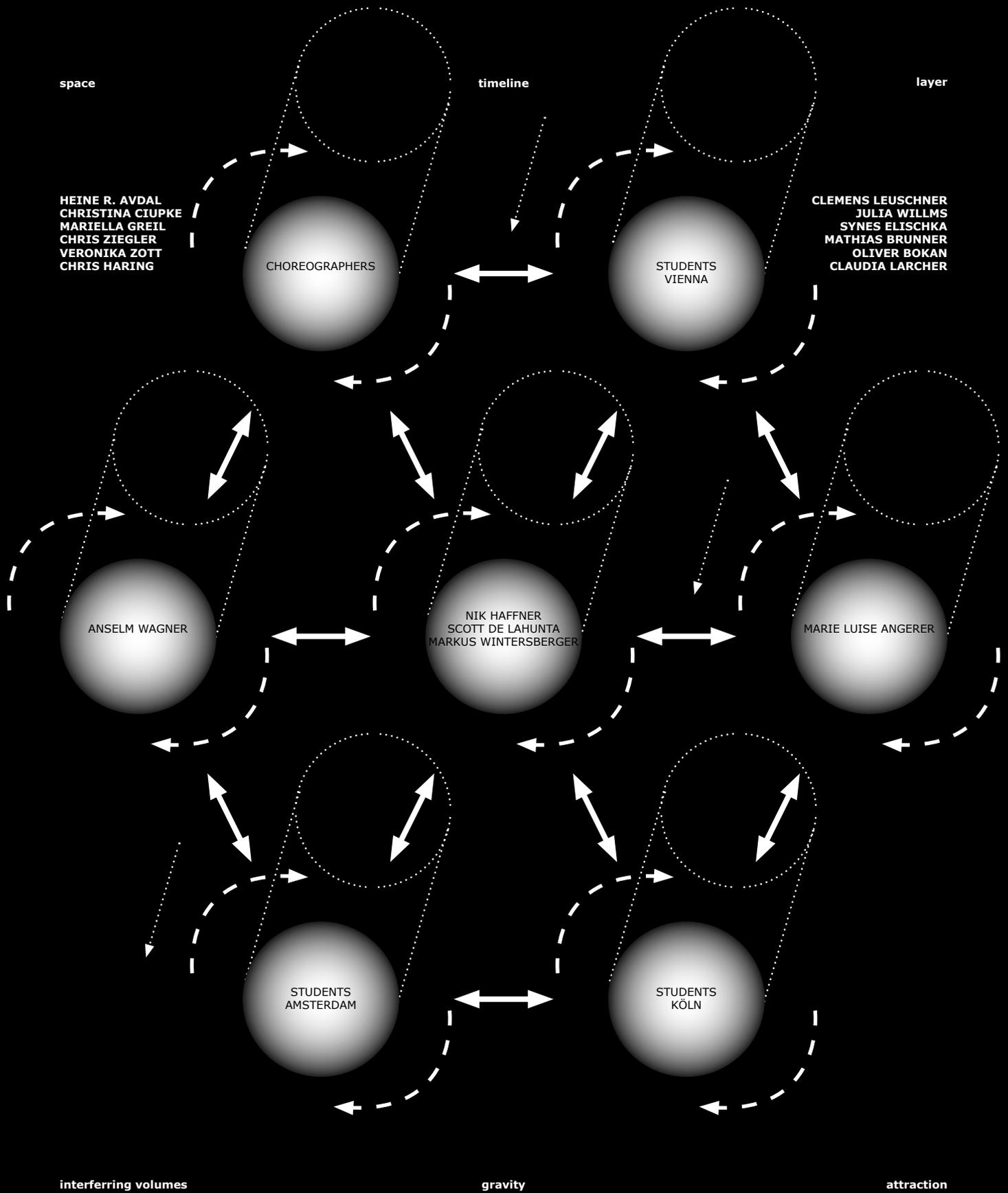
Could you please send your bio to both Silke ([s.bake@tqw.at](mailto:s.bake@tqw.at)) and me? Thank you.

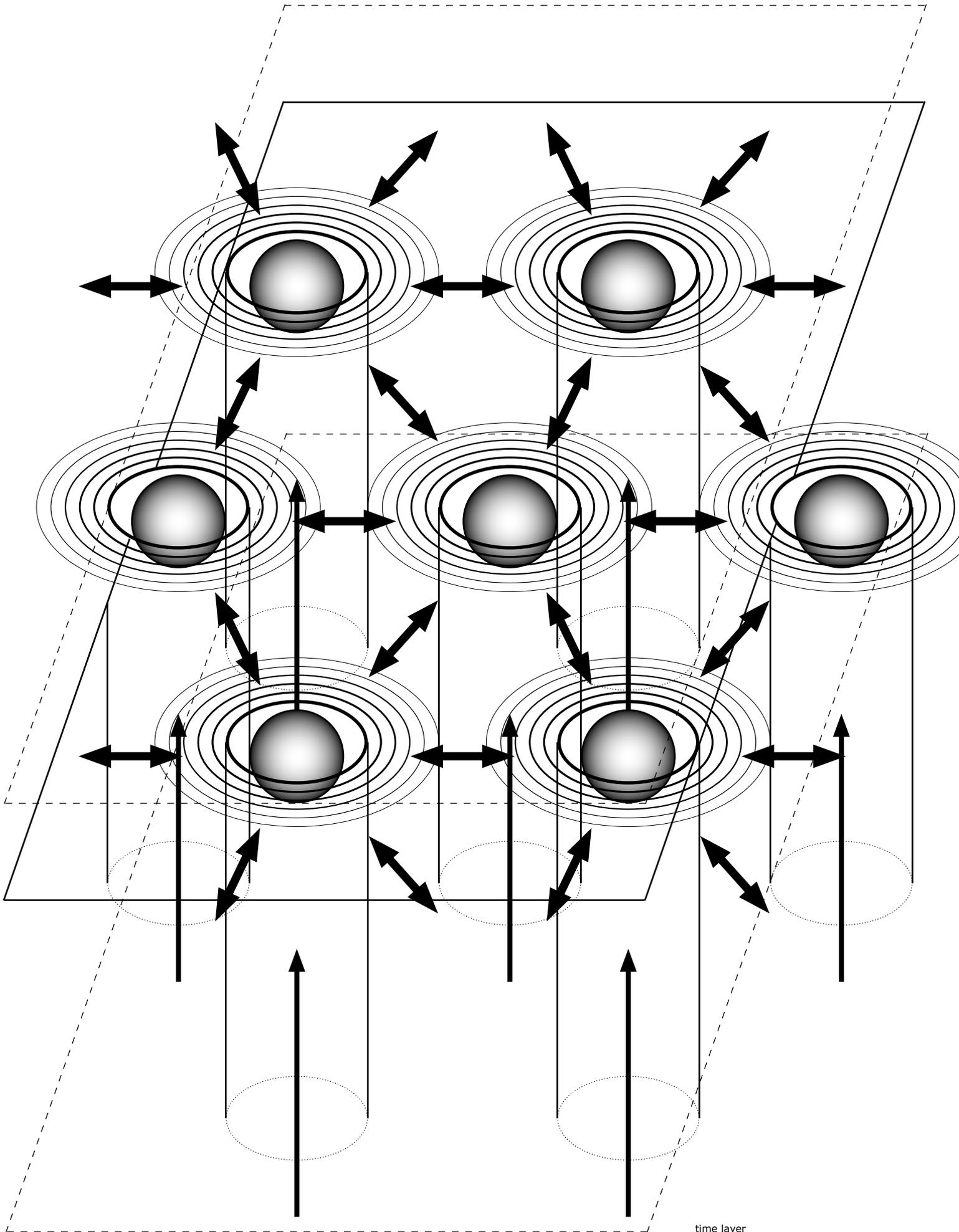
Thats all for now. Hope you are well and enjoying the summer...

Nik

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time layer

LABOR



Nik Haffer / Scott de Lahunta / Markus Wintersberger

CHOREOGRAPHERS



Heine R. Avdal / Christina Ciupke / Mariella Greil / Chris Ziegler / Veronika Zott / Chris Haring

STUDENTS VIENNA



Clemens Leuschner / Julia Wilms / Synes Elischka / Mathias Brunner / Oliver Bokan / Claudia Larcher

STUDENTS COLONE



N.N. / N.N.

STUDENTS AMSTERDAM



N.N. / N.N.

GUEST LECTURE I



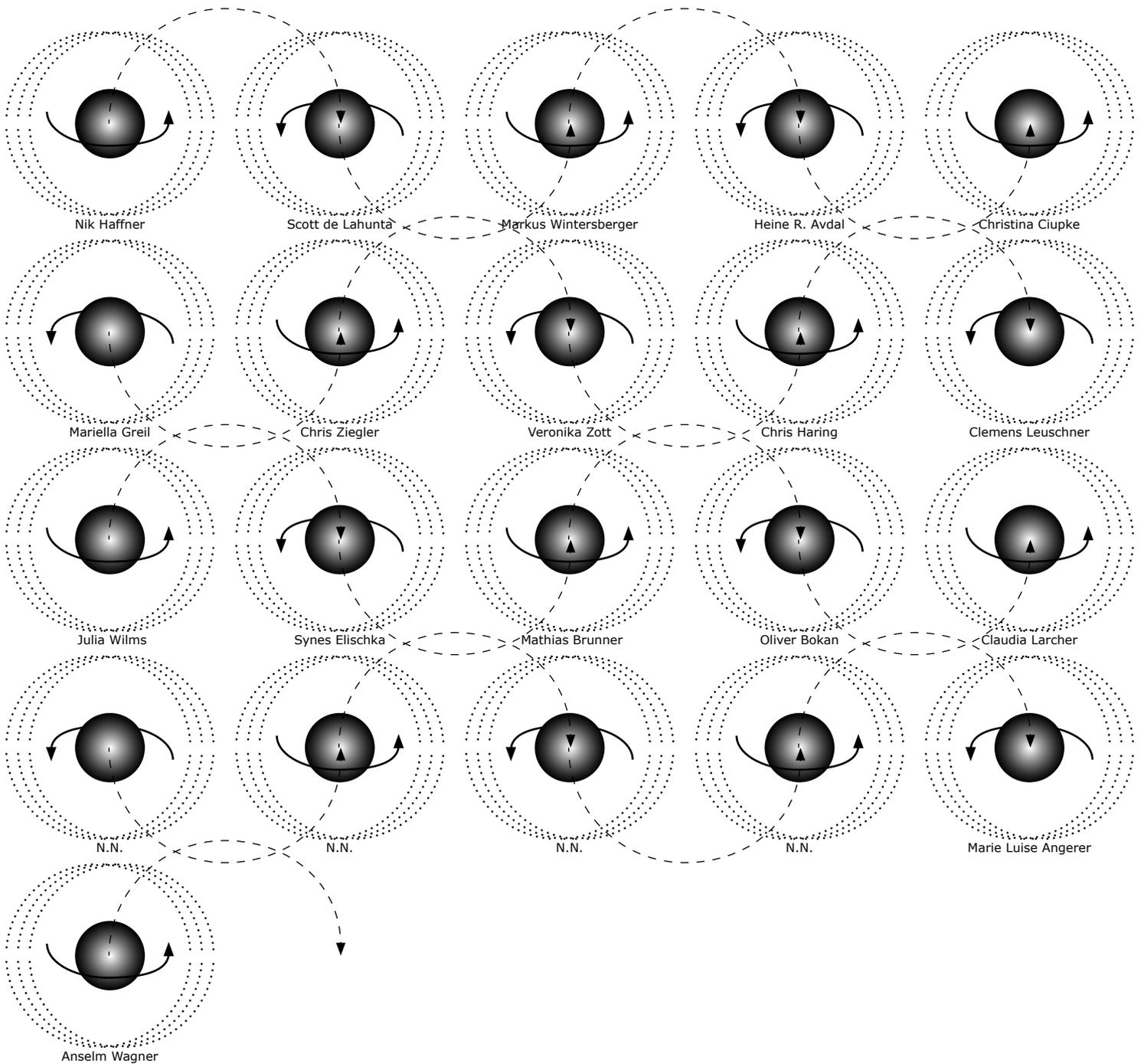
Marie Luise Angerer

GUEST LECTURE II

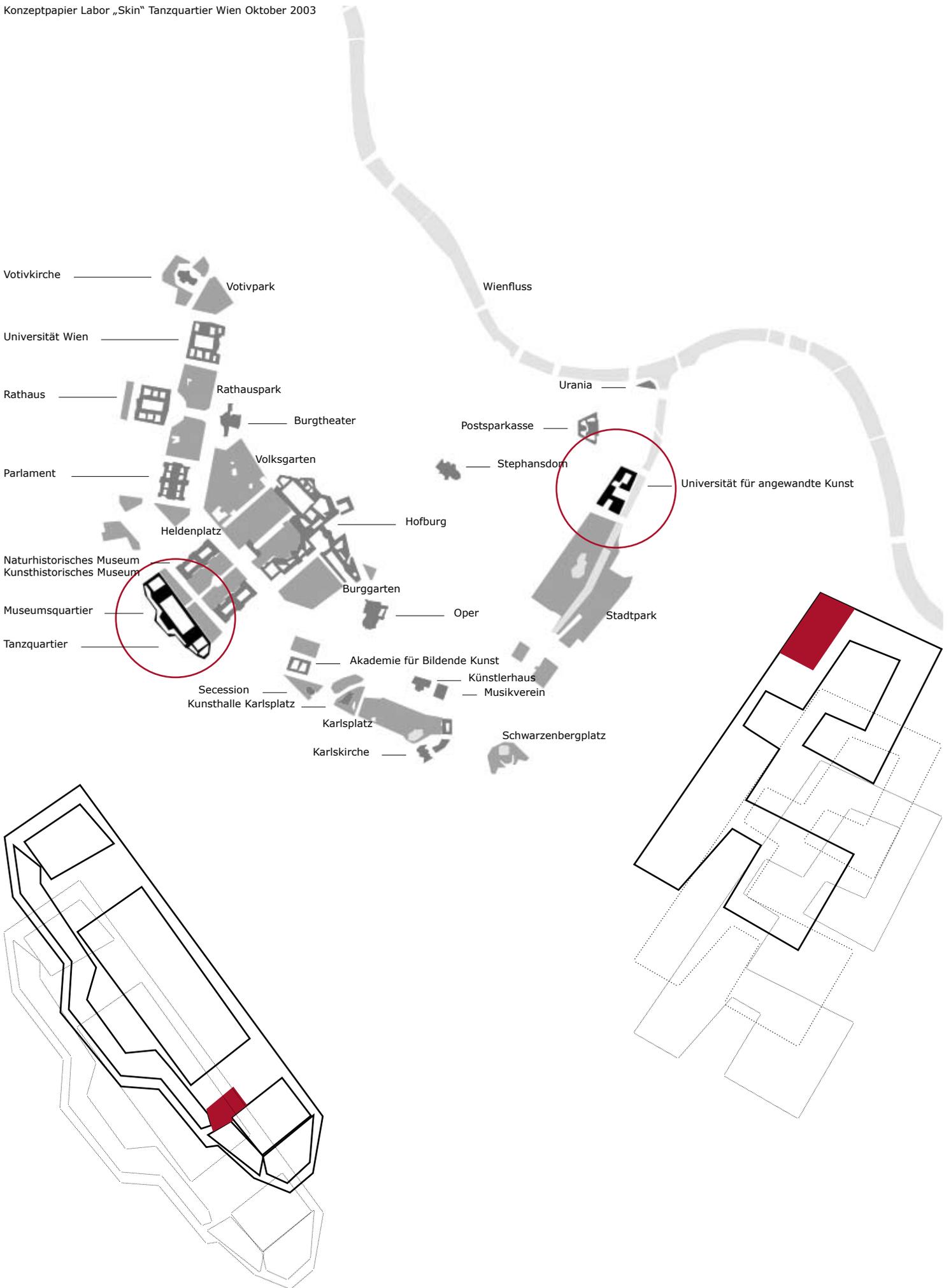


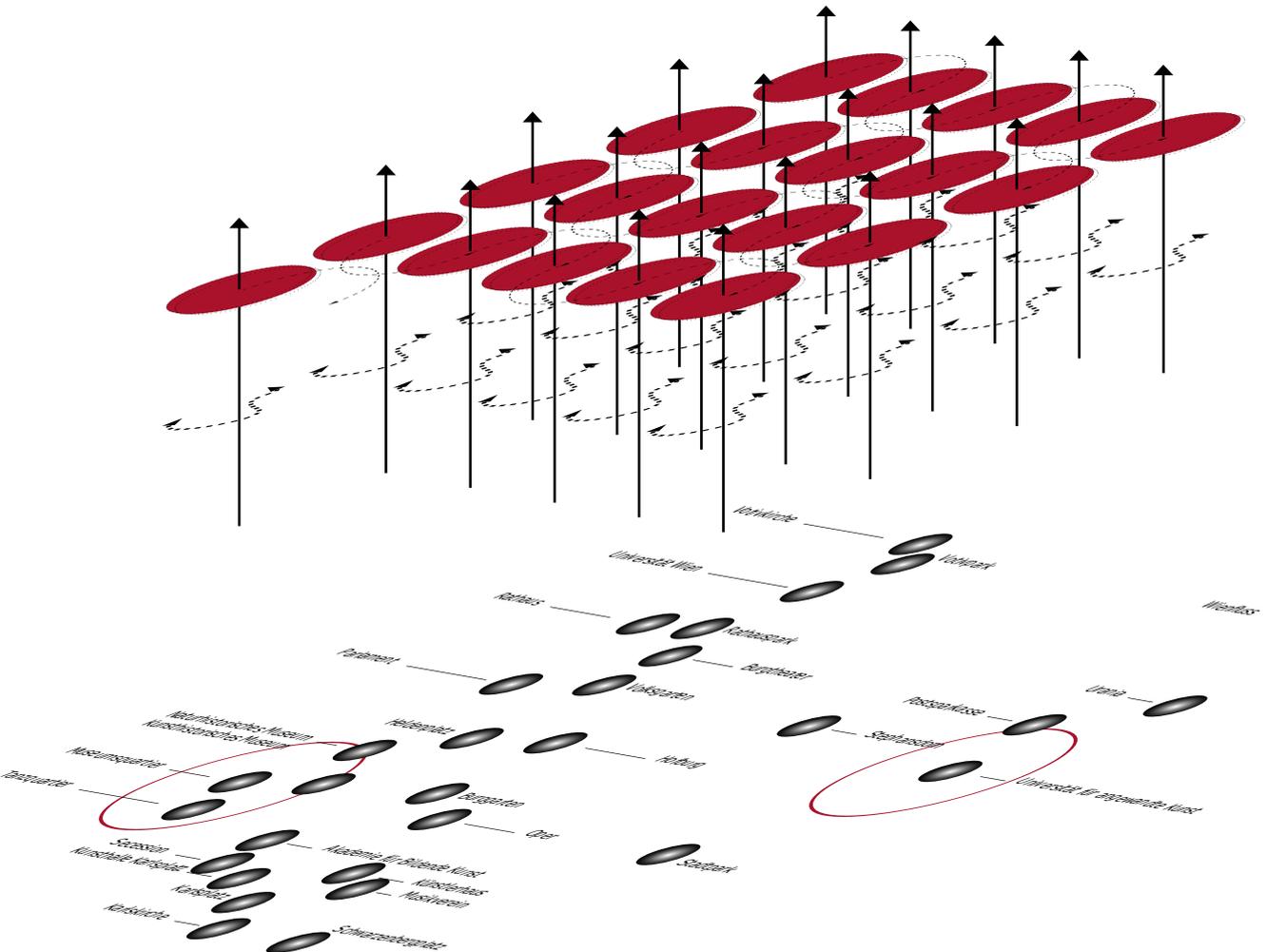
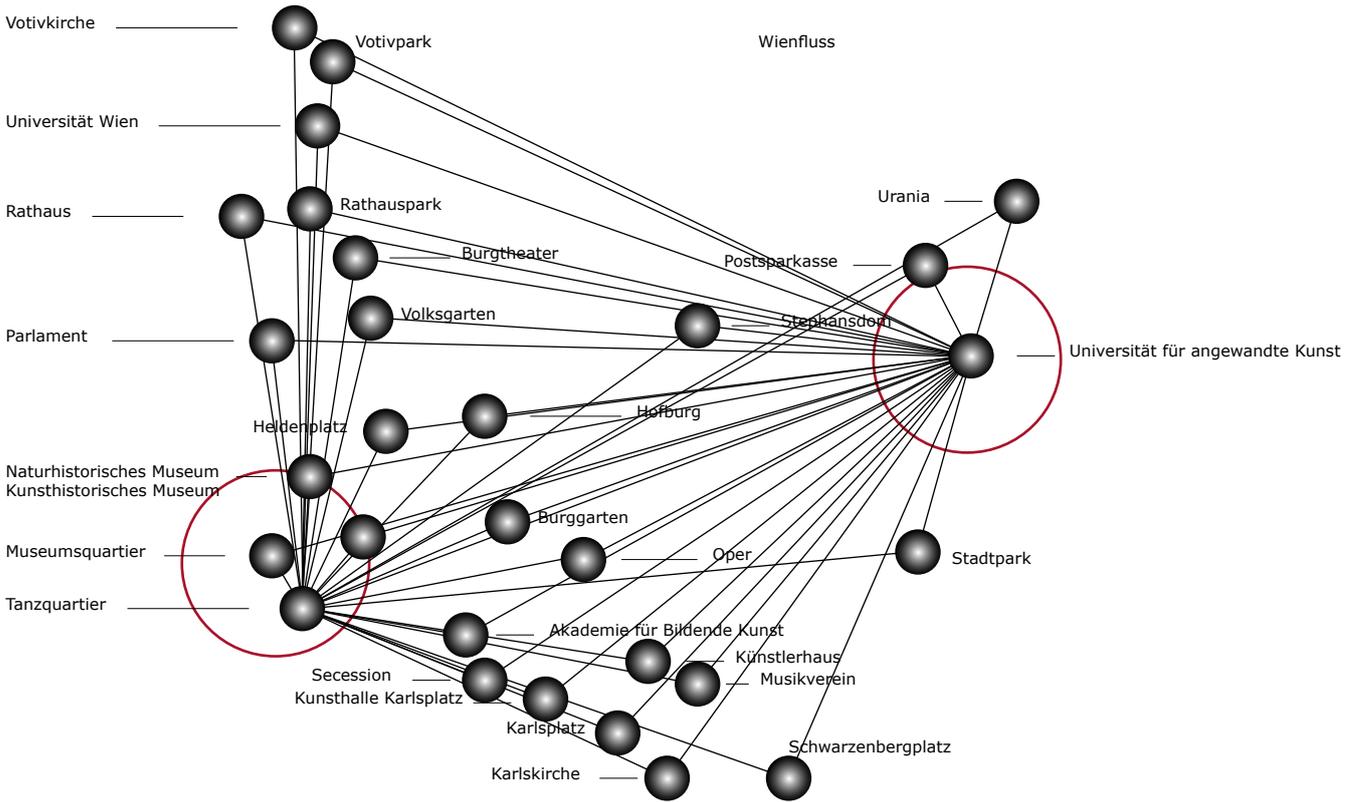
Anselm Wagner

LABOR\_building playgroups

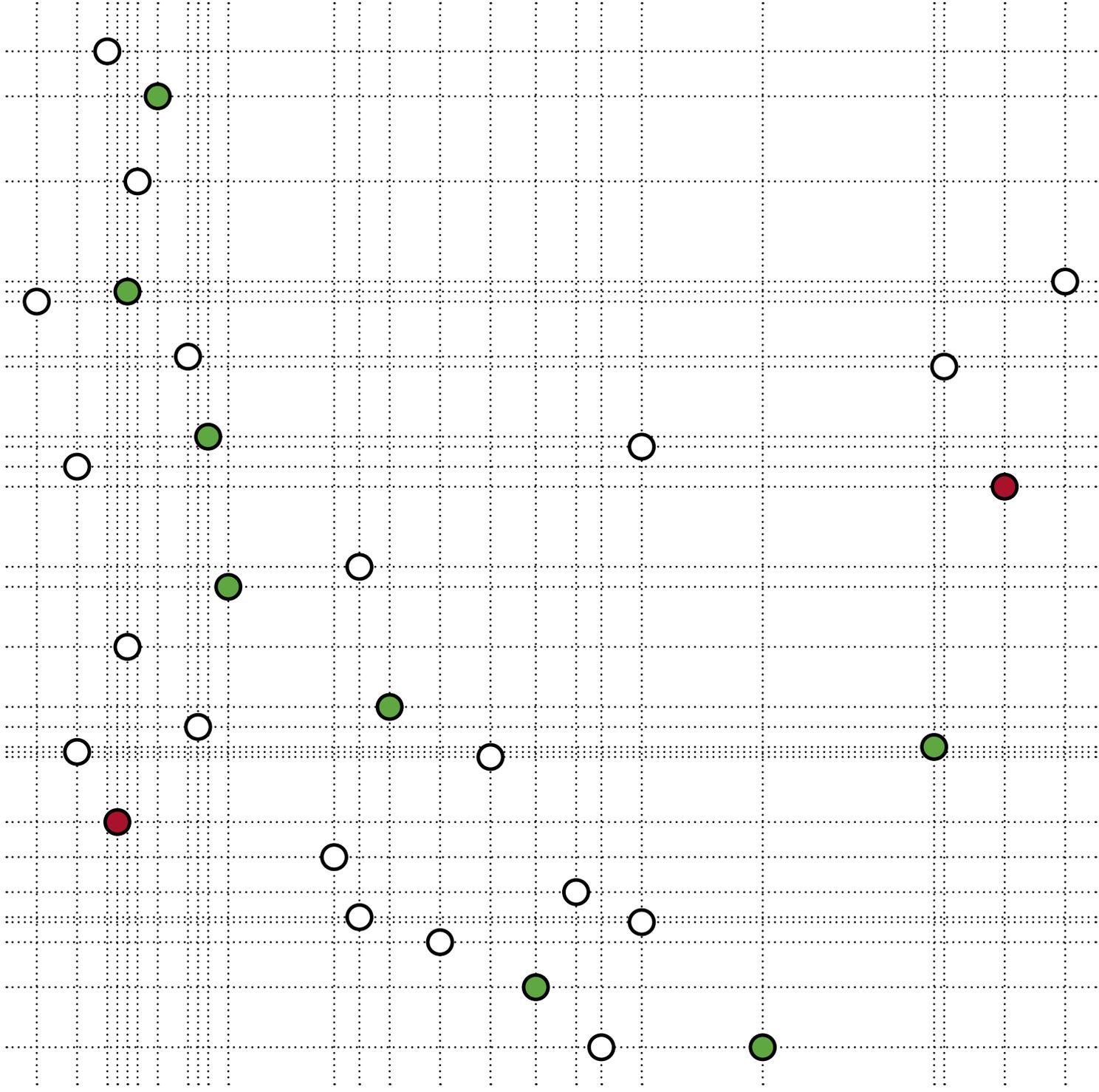


aim is to work peer to peer/ artist to artist -- once everyone arrives. no teacher/ student hierarchies





aim to at least in the initial days to work together making things quickly and in small clusters constantly forming and reforming



Rathaus

Museumsquartier

Parlament

Votivkirche

Naturhistorisches Museum

Rathauspark

Universitäts Wien

Votivpark

Burgtheater

Kunsthistorisches Museum

Volksgarten

Heidenplatz

Akademie für Bildende Kunst

Secession

Hofburg

Burggarten

Kunsthalle Karlsplatz

Oper

Karlsplatz

Künstlerhaus

Karlskirche

Musikverein

Stephansdom

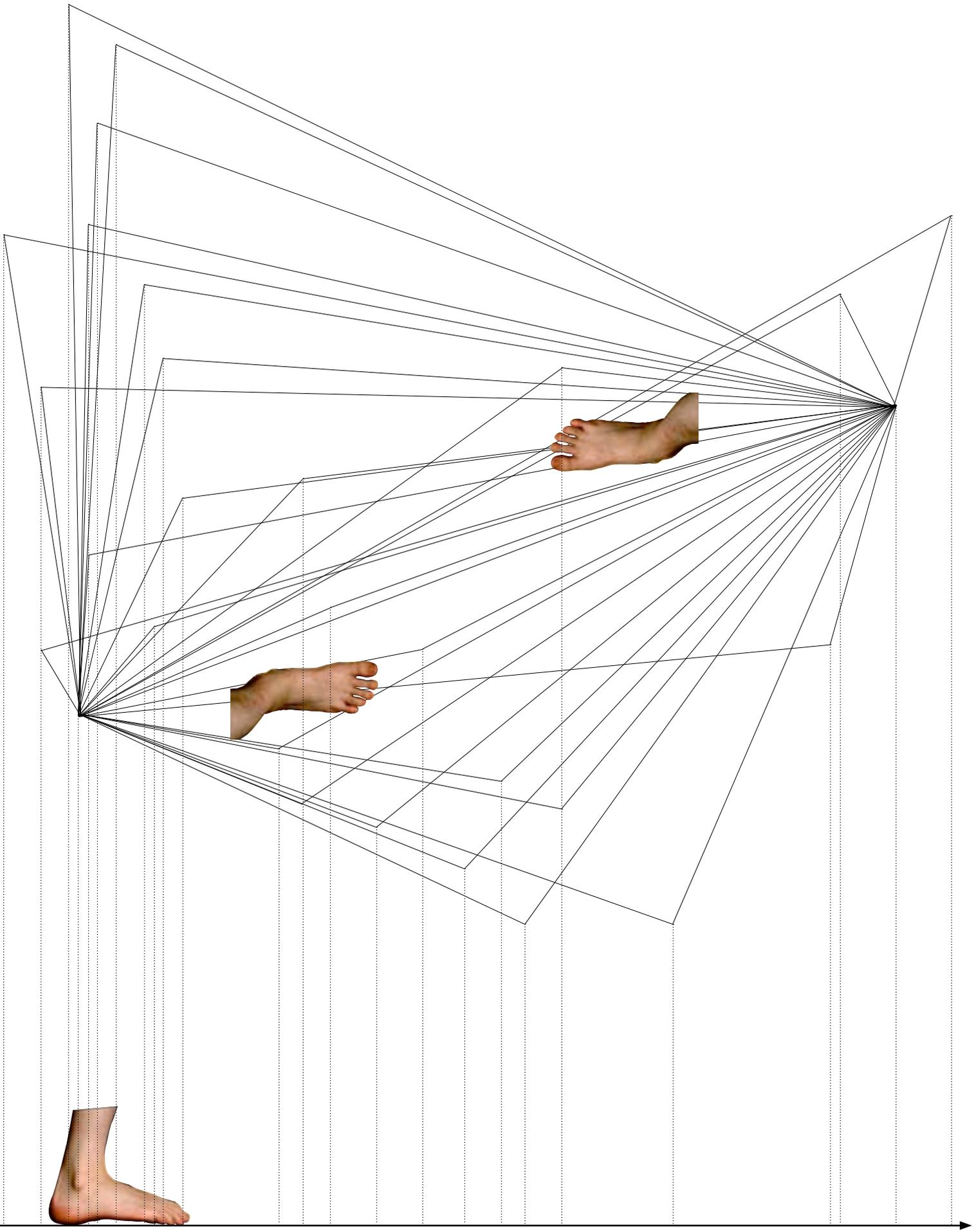
Schwarzenbergplatz

Stadtpark

Postsparkasse

Universität für angewandte Kunst

Urania





skin\_senses / breathe / communicator / age / memory / border / filter / surface / drawing / architecture / landscape / cloth / story / poem / sign / history / camouflage / mask / interface / container

„The title of this book, *The Skin of The Film*, offers a metaphor to emphasize the way film signifies through its materiality, through a contact between perceiver and object represented. It also suggests the way vision itself can be tactile, as though one were touching a film with one's eyes: I term this *haptic visuality*. Finally, to think of film as skin acknowledges the effect of a work's circulation among different audiences, all of which mark it with their presence. The title is meant to suggest polemically that film (and video) may be thought of as impressionable and conductive, like skin.

...

The very circulation of a film among different viewers is like a series of skin contacts that leave mutual traces.

...

For example, the limits of visuality are a question for many film- and videomakers. Embodiment and sense perception have become concerns for many artists, and also issues in the reception, theory, and criticism of film. Haptic visuality shows up in other cinematic genres, such as feminist film and video, experimental film and video that deals with perception, and experimental sexual representation, and indeed I would suggest that it is a growing trend among artists disaffected, for one reason or another, with optical visuality.

...

All of us hold knowledge in our bodies and memory in our senses. Experimental and mainstream narrative cinema are increasingly interested in representing these kinds of knowledge and memory.

... the body is a source not just of individual but of cultural memory.

...

Deleuze's theory of cinema relies on the work of Henri Bergson, and I return to Bergson in later chapters in order to begin to understand the role of the senses in cinematic representation and spectatorship. I will suggest that Deleuze's theory of time-image cinema permits a discussion of the multisensory quality of cinema, given its basis in Bergson's theory that memory is embodied in the senses. This exploration branches from Bergson to phenomenology, and in turn to neurophysiology, in order to explain how sense memory is embodied. In addition, the theory of haptic visuality branches from Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between the haptic and the optical, which they connect to „smooth space“, or a space that enables transformation, and „striated“ or codified space. Perhaps my basic debt to Deleuze, and to Guattari, is for their model of thinking as an open system, always ready to make connections where they are most productive, rather than most expected.

...

Ultimately I argue that our experience of cinema is mimetic, or an experience of bodily similarity to the audiovisual images we take in. Cinema is not merely a transmitter of signs; it bears witness to an object and transfers the presence of that object to the viewers.”

from: *The Skin of the Film. Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses.* Laura U. Marks. Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2000

## PREFACE

„The turning point in my interest came, I believe, the day Stiles introduced to the seminar a visiting lecturer: Chris Burden. As he spoke, I kept looking back and forth between the slides of his performances and the actual person standing before me. Burden was calmly talking about crawling across broken glass or having nails pounded through his hands, but his short descriptions did not match the overwhelming power of what I was seeing. At that time, I was confused and a little anxious. Now, I think that what Burden was saying—precisely by not saying it—was what Stiles had been saying in her lectures: we, as viewers, are an active part of the artist's work.

...

The „it's me“ quality of the body is particularly palpable in masochistic performances, not only because of the enormous attention the artist brings to the body but also because of the focus on the performer's skin. One could say that skin is the denotative aspect of the body. Or, as psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu has observed, it is the body's only „external sense“ that functions reflexively. Touching oneself, Anzieu writes, renders the sensation of „being a piece of skin that touches at the same time as being a piece of skin that is touched.... It is on the model of tactile reflexivity that the other sensory reflexivities (hearing oneself make sounds...looking at oneself in the mirror), and subsequently the reflexivity of thinking, are constructed.“(Didier Anzieu, *The Skin Ego: A Psychoanalytic Approach to the Self*, trans. Chris Turner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 62.)

from: *Contract with the Skin. Masochism, performance art and the 1970's.* Kathy O'Dell. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. 1998. page XII, XIII

...

HIS MOUTH HER SKIN (Vito Acconci 1970)

Sitting naked on the floor of a photographer-friend's loft one day 1970, Vito Acconci enacted a series of contorted poses in front of a camera. Repeatedly, he twisted his body and craned his neck as he bit deeply into his arms, legs, and shoulders. In addition to causing pain, the bites left impressions of the teeth. Ac-

conci then covered these indentations with printers' ink and used them to stamp various surfaces, thereby producing signs of the body's attack on itself-the „trademarks“ that gives this performance its title.  
from: Contract with the Skin. Masochism, performance art and the 1970's. Kathy O'Dell. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. 1998. page 17

...  
The end of Acconci's text for Trademarks underscores the spatial dimensions of these ambivalences while providing „reasons“ for moving on to the next stage of psychic development:

*Reasons to move: move into myself-  
move around myself-move in order to  
close a system.*

*Reasons to move: show myself to  
myself-show myself through myself-  
show myself outside.*

*Make my own outside-send my inside  
outside (I can slip outside, because  
I am still moving inside).*

from: Contract with the Skin. Masochism, performance art and the 1970's. Kathy O'Dell. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. 1998. page 19 f

...  
Anzieu's theory of the „mothering environment“ hinges on the belief that skin plays an important metaphoric role in psychic development. In fact, the mothering environment, the functions of the skin, and the role of metaphor are interlocking but virtually invisible elements that form the foundation of masochism. Examining Anzieu's theory in detail will make these various elements clearer.

Skin, according to Anzieu, serves the purposes of containment, protection, and communication:

*The primary function of the skin is a sac which contains and retains inside in the goodness and fullness accumulating there through feeding, care, the bathing in words. Its second function is as the interface which marks the boundary with the outside and keeps that outside out; it is the barrier which protects against penetration by the aggression and greed emanating from others, whether people or objects. Finally, the third function-which the skin shares with the mouth and which it performs at least as often-is as a site and a primary means of communicating with others, of establishing signifying relations; it is, moreover, an „inscribing surface“ for the marks left by those others.*

When Anzieu speaks of the skin's function as a boundary or as a medium for sending messages, he is speaking of the metaphoric character of flesh, not its physical properties. But the crucial metaphor for him is that of the „skin ego“, an image that is similar to but different from flesh. „By Skin Ego,“ Anzieu explains, „I mean a mental image of which the Ego of the child makes use during the early phases of its development to represent itself as an Ego containing psychic contents, on the basis of its experience of the surface of the body.“

The „early phases“ that Anzieu refers to are the elemental psychic stages which, when taken together, constitute the oral stage. What Anzieu has to say about this stage foregrounds both the skin (of the mothering figure) and the mouth (of the child) and always takes into consideration the institutionalized context of the mothering environment. The latter is the space in which maternal caregiving is performed, especially that care referred to in psychoanalytic theory as anaclisis-the propping up of the child against the skin of the caregiver. In the oral stage, „skin“ typically means the skin of the mother's breast, but not always. Anzieu implies that much of the typically gendered activity of the oral stage can in fact be performed by male figures in the mothering environment. In other words, his skin may fulfill oral-stage needs for physical support as adequately as her skin; the notion of mothering, then, is tied more to a relation to skin and to the activity of caregiving than to the gender of the caregiver.

Central to Anzieu's theory is the notion of the „attachment drive“, which holds that a child forms attachments to the mothering figure during the oral stage by relying on her (or his) skin to the point of feeling that the skin is shared. If the attachment drive is satisfied „sufficiently and at an early enough stage,“ Anzieu argues, then the skin's containment, protection, and communication functions will be internalized by the child after separating from the mothering figure and her environment. But there are many ways in which this internalization process can be disturbed, because each distancing moment evokes anxiety-ridden fantasies that may not be overcome. Anything from genetic deficiencies to inadequate parental attention can produce failure-inducing disturbances. One such disturbance, „primary masochism,“ is described by Anzieu as „a sudden, repeated and quasi-traumatic alternation, occurring before walking, the mirror stage, or the question of language, between overstimulation by the mother or her substitutes and deprivation of physical contact with her, and thus between satisfaction and frustration of the need for attachment.“

All of these anxieties and fantasies-their repetition as well as their interruption-follow a particular development pattern, which Anzieu charts. Before the fantasy of sharing a „common skin“ with the material object materializes in the early oral stage, the child is caught up in what Anzieu terms the „intra-uterine phantasy,“ which includes a refusal to be born and a desire to return to the „phenomenon of mutual inclusion.“ If anxieties regarding this phantasy are not resolved, one simply does not move on to the fantasy of the common skin, produced through anaclisis, and thereby risks undergoing versions of autistic development in which the

individual „withdraws into a closed system, that of an egg which will not hatch out.“

The common-skin fantasy marks the beginning, Anzieu believes, of an individual's ability to „open out“ on the mothering figure. This dependency is surpassed only as the fantasy of the common skin is suppressed. It is the struggle inherent in this passage that many masochist performance artists, especially those focusing on the mnemonic device of the mouth, address in their work.

The intensity of the struggle is symbolically poignant text he published a few years later. Alongside a string of tiny black-and-white photographs of his mother in his 1973 limited-edition book titled *pulse* (for my mother) (*pour sa mère*), Acconci writes:

*You couldn't understand why I took these  
photographs  
You'd tremble if you saw this, you'd stay alive to  
think about dying  
I'm fading away from you, I'll bring you back  
You'd say this will bring bad luck, but I won't believe  
you  
I'll keep you alive, you won't die, I'll wish harder  
When I turn away from you, I'll be sure to come  
back...  
I've got to come closer to you than ever before  
You're always ahead of me  
I'll stay on you, keep up with you  
I'm slipping past to you, it's only human to drift away  
You'll stay alive to see that I'm watching you, talking  
to you  
I'll push my luck, push past superstition  
No one can pull me away, I'll start again, toward  
you.*

from: *Contract with the Skin. Masochism, performance art and the 1970's.* Kathy O'Dell. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. 1998. page 20 ff

...

*(The body is) the irreducible core of the human being, its most fragile part. This is how it has always been, under all social systems, at any given moment of history. And the wound is the memory of the body; it memorizes its fragility, its pain, thus its „real“ existence. It is a defence against the object and against the mental prosthesis. (Ezio Quarantelli and Gina Pane, „Trafels with St. Francis,“ *Contemporanea*, November-Dezember 1988, 46)*

from: *Contract with the Skin. Masochism, performance art and the 1970's.* Kathy O'Dell. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. 1998. page 27

...

#### MY MIRROR

In a 1976 performance by Ulay/Abramovic titled *Talking about Similarity*, Ulay sat down, stared at the audience, opened his mouth wide, closed it, then took a needle and thread and methodically sewed his lower and upper lips together. After he did this, Abramovic took questions from the audience, replying as she imagined Ulay would if he could speak. The piece ended when Abramovic sensed that her answers had become less similar to Ulay's views than to her own.

from: *Contract with the Skin. Masochism, performance art and the 1970's.* Kathy O'Dell. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. 1998. page 31

...

In Vito Acconci's *See Through*, filmed in the fall of 1969, he performed a boxing match with his image reflected in a mirror, punching at the glass until it broke. It is the earliest work in the cluster of performances I am discussing that indicates a trend toward masochism. And as with *Trademarks*, there was no audience. I am trying to suggest that such works responded to the tenuous position of the body in society in the time, specifically in terms of what was being said and what was being meant about bodies and violence. In the midst of the Vietnam War, Acconci tacitly challenged viewers to take a look at the psychodynamics of the mirror stage as he jostled with the reflection in an actual mirror.

A photograph of *See Through* (a still from the film) and a accompanying text were published in the same issue of *Avalanche* in which *Trademarks* appeared. The text ends with a forthright declaration of the body's possessibility, suggesting that the institutions into which the body is contracted are often economic in nature. This exchange value of the body is made even more apparent when one performs or, as Acconci says, „moves“. Acconci writes:

Reasons to move: move toward what  
belongs to me-move to have what  
belongs to me.

Acconci's near repetition of phrases indicates his complex understanding of one's mirrored identity as a possessible object. But recognizing the body as a possessible entity („what / belongs to me“) is not exactly the same as taking possession of it („hav(ing) what / belongs to me“).

This distinction recalls sociologist Bryan S. Turner's fundamental observation that we both are and have bo-

dies. „Our embodiment is a necessary requirement of our social identification,“ he argues, „so that it would be ludicrous to say „I have arrived and I have brought my body with me“.“ Turner also speaks about alienation. In a discussion of the body's conflicted status as „a natural environment“ that is „socially constituted,“ he asserts:

Despite the sovereignty we exercise over our bodies, we often experience embodiment as alienation as when we have cancer or gout. Our bodies are an environment which can become anarchic, regardless of our subjective experience of our government of the body. The importance of embodiment for our sense of the self is threatened by disease but also by social stigmatization.... The body is a material organism, but also a metaphor; it is the trunk apart from head and limbs, but also the person (as in „anybody“ and „somebody“)...The body is at once the most solid, the most elusive, illusory, concrete, metaphorical, ever present and ever distant thing—a site, an instrument, an environment, a singularity and a multiplicity.“  
from: Contract with the Skin. Masochism, performance art and the 1970's. Kathy O'Dell. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. 1998. page 38/39

Artists: Robert Morris / Bruce Nauman / Rebecca Horn / Günter Brus / Chris Burden / Hans Bellmer / Otto Mühl / Nobuyoshi Araki / Douglas Gordon / Mona Hatoum / Felix Gonzales-Torres / Marina Abramovic, Ulay / Robert Gober / Valie Export / Vito Acconci / Dennis Oppenheim / Gina Pane / Marc Quinn / Stelarc / Jasper Johns / Dorothe von Windheim / Shirin Neshat / Annette Messager / Jenny Holzer / Jana Sterbak / Orlan / Jochen Gerz / Carolee Schneemann

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Vladimir Tatlin. Retrospektive. Hrsg. Anatolij Strigalev und Jürgen Harten. DuMont Buchverlag Köln. ISBN 3-7701-3250-5  
Tanz in der Moderne. Von Matisse bis Schlemmer. Kunsthalle Emden  
Der Körper und seine Sprachen. Hrsg. Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs. Athenäum Verlag Frankfurt. ISBN 3-610-04736-4

Key Concepts/ Structure/ Schedule\_Scott De Lahunta

1. working at and in between „tanzquartier“ and the „angewandte“
2. dates all arrive sunday night the 19th october and depart saturday the 1st november
3. aim is to work peer to peer/ artist to artist -- once everyone arrives no teacher/ student hierarchies
4. aim to at least in the initial days to work together making things quickly and in small clusters constantly forming and reforming
5. materials primarily movement/ body, video, projection, constructions (built) -- perhaps working with software like isadora but in general to avoid complicated/ fragile/ time consuming sensor technologies, etc.
6. THEME IS „SKIN“
7. we will invite warm up sessions from a select group / the „warm up“ will be preparation for working whether with media or movement
8. there would be two ‚open house‘ moments -- one in first week one in second
9. lunch will be simple, in house -- bread/ cheese, etc.