

Contents

Acknowledgement	7
 1. Introduction	
Optimization as well as self-expression – about the role of the body in the Western neoliberal society	9
 2. State of the Art	29
2.1 Sociological perspectives on the body as a medium and place for self-formation	34
2.2 Self-formation in contemporary dance practice and choreography	42
 3. On Methods	
The gap between what we are & what we are not	55
 4. The first artistic research project “The bodies we are”	63
4.1 Preparing the research. A collection of bodies we are not	64
4.2 Theoretical perspective: How the body image can be influenced by action and perception	66
4.3 Artistic experiments: Appropriating unfamiliar actions and perceptions	69
4.4 Theoretical perspective: How the body image can be influenced by labeling and naming	77
4.5 Artistic experiments: Appropriating unfamiliar body descriptions	82
4.6 Theoretical perspective: The creative gap between sensory perception and processes of naming	95
4.7 Artistic experiments: Appropriating an unfamiliar method. The body image as a role in Method Acting	98

4.8 Conclusion first research project: The body as a sensitive container	111
4.9 Sharing the first artistic research project with an audience	114
5. A historical perspective on the body and the ability to play with self-distancing	125
5.1 The body as something natural and impersonal in the Ancien Régime of the 18th century	126
5.2 The body as an expression of the inner self in the 19th century	129
5.3 The non-social but intimate body in the 20th and early 21st century	132
6. The second artistic research project "Let's face it!"	137
6.1 Preparing the artistic research.....	138
6.2 Artistic experiments: On a face without a body	143
6.3 Theoretical perspective: Play as a process taking place "in between"	148
6.4 Artistic experiments: On a body with plenty of faces & bodies without faces	150
6.4.1 The practice of vanishing	152
6.4.2 The practice of perceptual transformation	160
6.4.3 The practice of playfully falling into and out of faces	165
6.5 Conclusion – Second research project	172
6.6 Sharing the second research project with an audience.....	173
6.7 Reflections on the utopian potential of playing with self-distancing	184
7. Conclusion.....	187
References	199
Image Credits	206