

Erasmus+ Report

During my Erasmus+ mobility, I took part in a Contact Improvisation Festival in Corfu, Greece. The festival took place in a beautiful natural environment, which had a strong effect on the whole experience. For 14 days, I was surrounded by the sea, nature and the calming sound of cicadas. The environment itself created a feeling of slowing down and being more present.

The programme included a pre-festival programme, the festival itself, and a post-festival programme. We worked with contemporary dance, Contact Improvisation, improvisation, body awareness, attention, partnering, weight sharing, bodyworks, and the relationship between the body and the environment.

One of the special things about this festival was that the natural environment was not only a background, but became part of the dance practice. There were classes in the sea and in a warm swimming pool, a water intensive, and a large shared beach jam.

For me, the mobility was not only about learning new dance techniques. It was also a personal and artistic research process. During the workshops, I found many questions that are connected to my own practice: How does movement start? How can I find new ways of moving? How can I connect with another body? How can I lose and find connection again? How can I listen to another person through movement?

Pre-festival (Feldenkreis with Thomas Kampe)

One of the main topics of the pre-festival programme was finding new ways of moving. We explored how movement can start from different parts of the body and where one movement can lead us. We worked a lot with the hip, pelvis, centre and head. One question that stayed with me was: "What is the hip doing?" We explored how movement can start from the pelvis and how it can travel to other parts of the body. I found it interesting that the pelvis does not have to be moved separately. It can also invite movement into the upper body and create new movement pathways. We also worked with contact and partnering. An important part of the work was not only learning how to connect with another person, but also how to lose the connection and find it again. This made me think about connection as something that is always changing, rather than something stable and permanent. Another important topic was weight transfer. We worked with the feet and explored how we shift our weight and how two people can share and transfer weight between each other. This also made me think about stability. I realised that stability does not always have to be the goal. The body is always changing and adjusting. Instead of trying to stay completely stable, we can also learn how to move through instability.

We also explored how one part of the body can activate another part without directly moving it. For example, the pelvis could invite movement into the upper body. This gave me new ideas about how movement can start and develop.

Main festival

Anjelica's practice

In Anjelica's work, the main topics were attention, weight and slowness. We explored where our eyes are looking and where we place our attention. I became more aware of how much my attention affects the quality of my movement. One sentence that stayed with me was: "Weight is a gift." This gave me a different way of thinking about weight. Instead of thinking about weight as something we always have to control, we explored how we can give our weight to another person and receive their weight. We worked with very small and slow movements, including the Small Dance. We paid attention to the weight of the head, leaning, shifting and sensing our own body. For me, the most important focus was slowness and attention. Moving slowly gave me more time to notice small changes in my body. I could feel where my weight was and how my body reacted to another person's movement.

One of the most important experiences for me was the Fascia Listening practice. The practice was very slow. We used our hands to guide another person's body in different directions. Then we also experienced what it feels like to be moved by someone else. I found this very interesting because it opened up a completely new way of moving for me. I started to explore how a movement or direction can travel from one part of the body to another. Instead of consciously deciding every movement, I could follow an impulse and see where it would take me. When I was receiving the movement, I could strongly feel the experience of being moved, instead of always deciding to move myself. After the exercise, we created a dance from this experience. I felt that completely new movement forms appeared. The slowness was very important because it gave me enough time to feel the movement and respond to it. This was one of the strongest moments of the whole programme for me. I felt that a completely new movement world opened up, and I would like to continue exploring this kind of work in my own practice.

Water practices

One of the most special parts of the festival was the work in water. The water intensive sessions started on the beach. We began on dry land and slowly moved towards the sea. For me, the transition from the land into the water was a very special experience. It felt like slowly being carried into another environment. The most difficult part was when the waves were pushing us back towards the shore. At these moments, there was a real physical struggle with the water as an element. We had to listen to the waves and find a way to move with and against them. During this of the practices, we placed a large piece of material together in the water. We could lie on it, move under it and experience the water and the material around our bodies. For me, this created a very strong feeling of being in the womb. The water, the floating material and the movement created a feeling of being held and surrounded. Other water practices took place in a warm swimming pool. These were very intimate and gentle experiences. We used floating supports around our legs, which allowed us to float on the surface. From there, we explored turning and moving through the water. The sessions often ended with small jams. Because the body moves differently in water, these jams created completely different movement possibilities from dancing on land.

The festival also included a large shared beach jam. This was very special, but it had a different atmosphere from the regular jams. It felt almost like a free picnic where dancing could happen naturally between conversations, resting and being together.

The session started with a short ritual. We entered the water together, at the same time, in one line. This was a very powerful moment of collective movement. After entering the water, however, everyone's journey became different. Each person stayed with the water for a different amount of time and found their own way back.

These water practices also reminded me how important water is for me personally. I feel that I need to be close to water and to spend time in it; being in water always has a positive effect on me. I feel calmer, more present and more connected to myself when I am in the water. During the festival, the sea became more than just a place where we danced. It felt like an environment I deeply needed and naturally connected to.

Axis Syllabus

During the Axis Syllabus work, we focused on the relationship between the body and the floor. We explored different landing surfaces and how the body meets the floor. I became more aware of how I land, how I transfer my weight and how the floor can support my movement. This helped me to think about movement not only through its visual form, but also through the physical relationship between the body and the floor.

Ido

In Ido's practice, we worked with fast footwork and rooting. We used the image of a tree and explored how we can feel connected to the ground while moving quickly. This was an interesting contrast to the slower practices. It showed me that being grounded does not mean being still. We can stay connected to the ground while moving quickly and dynamically.

Jamek – Underscore and Jams

The programme also included Underscore and evening jams with Jamek.

The jams became one of the most important parts of the festival for me. At the beginning, it was very difficult for me to engage in the jams for a longer period of time. I often found it hard to stay in the movement and fully allow myself to be part of what was happening. However, with every day I felt more and more that I dared to go further. I became more willing to enter situations without knowing where they would lead. I started to trust the movement and my own reactions more. The jams felt almost like a simulation of life. They reflected what was happening inside me. They showed me how I react when I do not know what is going to happen, how much I try to control situations, and what happens when I allow myself to let go. In this way, the jams became a kind of mirror for me. They were not only dance experiences, but also opportunities to see myself more clearly. By the end of the festival, I felt much more free. I could enter the movement more easily and allow myself to flow with what was happening, instead of constantly trying to control or understand it.

Post-festival – Bastien Auber

After the festival, I took part in a three-day post-festival programme with Bastien Auber.

Bastien has a background in geology, and this strongly influences the way he thinks about movement. He often takes inspiration from natural movements and processes. During the three days, we explored movement through ideas such as roots, landscapes, spirals, balance, imbalance, gravity and the relationship between earth and sky.

A strong focus was on finding the connection between the centre of the body and the movement of the periphery. We explored how the centre can influence the precision, acceleration, deceleration and size of our movements. We also worked with different levels and directions in space, and used the landscape around us as inspiration. Another important part of the work was the use of spirals. We explored spirals through the body and in relation to another person's body. This could then develop into a dance. I found it interesting how a simple physical principle from nature could create complex movement possibilities.

One of my favourite exercises was a trio exercise called "two stones and a river." Three people were kneeling next to each other. The person in the middle was the river, with closed eyes, while the two people on the sides were the stones. The stones did not manipulate the river. They only supported it. I learned a lot from this exercise. I realised that I do not always have to position myself exactly where I think I am needed in order to support another person. I do not necessarily have to actively work underneath them. If I wait and listen, the river will eventually find me. This was a very strong experience for me. It taught me something about patience, trust and support. Sometimes it is enough to stay present and wait instead of trying to control the situation.

The post-festival work helped me connect movement with larger natural processes. Balance and imbalance, gravity, support, spirals and the relationship between earth and sky became not only physical ideas, but also ways of thinking about dance and connection.

Reflection

The natural environment of Corfu also became an important part of my learning. The sea, the beach, the water, the sand and even the sound of the cicadas influenced the way I experienced the festival. For 14 days, I had the opportunity to live in an environment where nature and dance were closely connected.

The mobility strengthened my understanding of dance as a practice of listening, sensing, connecting and letting go. I can connect with my own body, another person's body, the floor, the water and the environment around me. I would like to bring these experiences into my own artistic practice, especially my work with improvisation, Contact Improvisation, body awareness and connection. The Erasmus+ mobility gave me not only new tools and experiences, but also new questions that I would like to continue exploring in my future work.



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