Positions through Contextualising

LMA (Laban Movement Analysis)

(Personal Research)

Laban/Bartenieff movement analysis is a method and language for describing, visualizing, interpreting and documenting human movement. It is based on the original work of Rudolf Laban, which was developed and extended by Lisa Ullmann, Irmgard Bartenieff, Warren Lamb and others.

Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) is a theory that categorises, describes, visualises, interprets and documents human movement in a contemporary way. In this written response, I applied LMA theory to analyse the movements within the project. Firstly, LMA allowed me to examine movement from both a functional and expressive perspective. I also categorised each movement using the concepts of "Combination of Efforts"as well as kinematic and non-kinematic elements. This comprehensive analysis led me to define 'complex movement'. I concluded that complex movement involves functional and expressive movement characterised by the interplay of four components: time, force or weight, space and flow. This framework allowed me to explore how the body interacts with external environments and elements, focusing on both the process of creating a movement and the external influences that affect it afterwards.

STRANDBEEST

Theo Jansen
2016-2019
(Project)

Bruchum Primus
pulled by an Adulari
2016

This reference focuses on the iterative experimentation aimed at evolving species within kinetic art. Each generation exhibited common characteristics that were refined through continuous experimentation, resulting in artificial organisms with specific purposes. Observing the mechanical movement in the legs of one species inspired me to focus on 'rotation' as a specific goal. I experimented iteratively, adjusting the number and positions of axes and designing movements to optimise rotational efficiency. This approach allowed me to create various geometric trajectories of rotation. Additionally, I evolved the concept of rotation by introducing minor changes to these trajectories, such as modifying axis connections and changing pivot points.

This iterative and evolutionary methodology enabled me to gather functional data on the optimal placement of axes and the potential for trajectory expansion through element connections. Using this data, I was able to develop a wide range of variations in the work.

Bauhaus Costumes
Courtesy of The Charnel House
Karl Grill

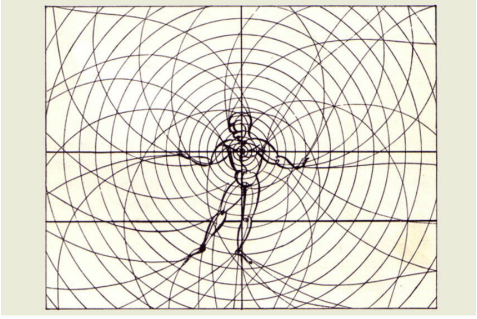
How the Bauhaus School Gave Life to Performance Art Movement?

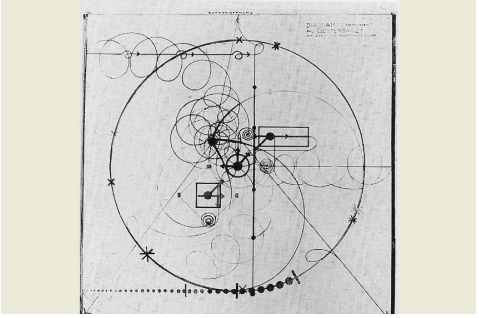
Smirna K
WIDEWALLS
2017

(Project)

The Bauhaus's performance art sought to comprehend space by integrating diverse artistic forms. They emphasised that the subject of movement serves as the central point from which the geometry of all space extends outward. The subject enables the pure form of space to be translated into possibility, and around this subject, the entire design space evolves. I have been investigating the interconnections between different artistic forms and how they are translated from one to the other.

In the initial phase of this investigation, I commenced by examining the mechanical movement of the subject, with a particular focus on the phenomenon of rotation. Subsequently, I proceeded to examine the manner in which movement derived from the subject extends, organises and fills space. In doing so, I endeavoured to visually illustrate movement through the utilisation of a novel element, namely space, in conjunction with the established linear patterns observed in Bauhaus performance art.





(Left)
Figure in space with plane geometry and spatial delineations
Oskar Schlemmer
1921

(Right)
Gesture Dance Movement Diagram
Courtesy of Bauhaus School
Oskar Schlemmer
1926

Realist Magic: Objects, Ontology, Causality

Timothy Morton
2013
(Personal Research)

"You are making or studying causality. The aesthetic dimension is the causal dimension." (...) "Paintings have always been made of more things than humans. They have been made of paint, which is powdered crystals in some medium such as egg white or oil. Now when you put the painting on the wall, it also relates to the wall. A fly lands on it. Dust settles on it. Slowly the pigment changes despite your artistic intentions. We could think of all these nonhuman interventions as themselves a kind of art or design. Then we realize that nonhumans are also doing art all the time, it's just that we call it causality"

In analysing tightrope walking as a central movement, I considered the recoil transmitted through the tightrope, the angle of the knees that this causes, the point of force that the swaying of the tightrope exerts on the feet, and the many factors involved: the hands and fans that create the wind, the audience and the clown, and the singing and performance. The interactions between these factors were explored in all movements that humans perform to maintain balance, and the causal relationships between them were investigated and considered. Additionally, the potential for non-human interventions that are not intended by humans to cause other causal relationships was considered.

In the initial exploration of this process, which focused on the movement of a subject in a state of rotation, it was recognised that the movement of a subject is influenced by other factors. This was expressed by considering the motion produced by the rotation of a straight line connected to one axis and how this interacts with other axes of rotation. This allowed us to consider the existence of a 'force' or 'effect' which is necessary for 'rotation' to occur, and at the same time analyse the overall movement, including causality.

'Protocol, Control and Network'

Alexander Galloway and Eugene Thacker
Grey Room
2004
(Reading List)

Protocol control challenges us to rethink critical and political action in a new framework, one centred on the multi-agent, individualised nodes of metastable networks: protocols are not about *power (confinement, discipline, normativity)*, but about *control (modulation, distribution, flexibility).*

Complex behaviour can be defined as a collection of different behaviours, analogous to the computer term network, which indicates that one behaviour is connected by interacting with another. From this perspective, we can see that complex behaviour is an area where many different interactions occur.

"Today's conventional wisdom cajoles us into thinking that everything can be subsumed under the warm security blanket of interconnectivity. But it hasn't yet told us quite what that means, or how one might be able to draft a critique of networks."

It is therefore necessary to recognise the manner in which interactions are formed and how they affect each other. In order to do this, designers must understand the interrelationships between all connected movements, such as networks, and set up the appropriate conditions and rules to regulate them more generally.

"If networks are the structures that connect people, then protocols are the rules that make sure the connections actually work." In this context, protocols are the devices that facilitate networks and the logic that governs how things work within them. By applying these concepts as a guide, graphic design should act as a protocol in order to understand and facilitate the interrelationships between one or more movements.

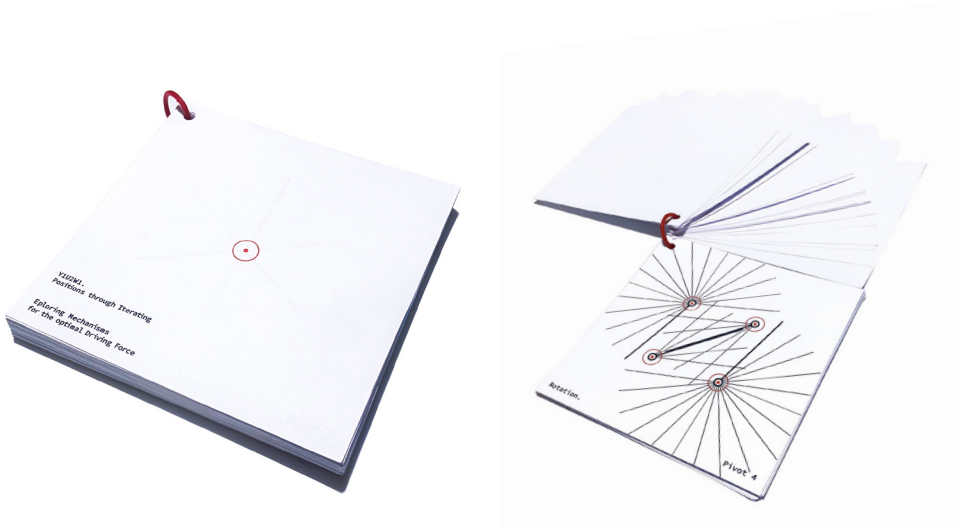
Conditional Design Workbook
Andrew Blauvelt, Luna Maurer, Edo Paulus, Jonathan Puckey, and Roel Wouters
2013
(Reading List)

While analysing and exploring a single complex movement with reference to various theories, it became necessary to explain the basis on which the graphic was created. This highlighted a lack of a system to clearly communicate the multiple influences derived from a single movement, especially when visualising a movement such as tightrope walking. Designers communicate with the public by modifying existing graphics or creating new ones. In this process, designers need conditions and systems to condition their visual language and share it with the public.

By imposing rules and conditions on random, expression-driven graphics, it is possible to transform them into usable components and enable them to achieve expanded outcomes. Overly free graphics can lead to ambiguity, which can limit communication. It became evident that a system was required to control this and facilitate understanding.

RE-ORIETING POSITION

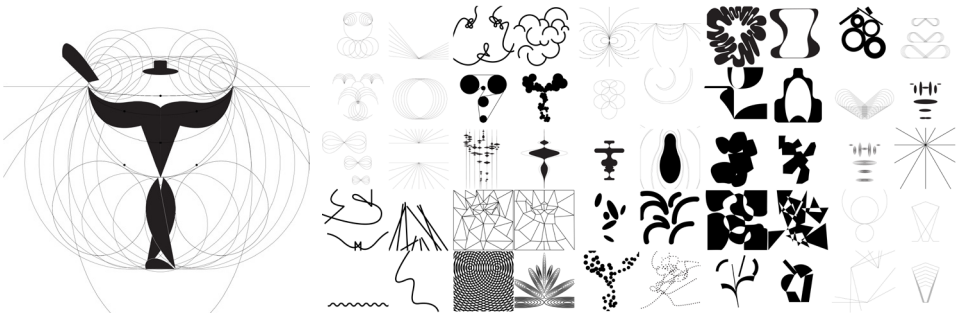
At first I saw movement mechanically. I concentrated on how each element worked and what influenced it to produce physical 'movement'. However, while studying the chained movement of tightrope walking, I began to think about the expressive meaning of physical movement.



(Left)
Exploring Mechanisms for the optimal Driving Force
Cover Page
Positions through Iterating
Week. 02

(Right)
Exploring Mechanisms for the optimal Driving Force
Pivot 4 Page
Positions through Iterating
Week. 02

This led to the idea that 'movement' acts as a bio-medium, influencing and being influenced by everything that happens in space. I then decided to focus my research on 'movement' as a method or medium for transmitting and receiving content, rather than as a message in itself.



(Left)
Geometrical Representation of the Movements
Main Graphic ot the Body
Positions through Iterating
Week. 03

(Right)
Geometrical Representation of the Movements
Iterative Explorations
Positions through Iterating
Week. 03

AERIAL
White Cube, New York
Antony Gromley

AERIAL

Antony Gormley
White Cube
2024
(Project)

AERIAL
White Cube, New York
Antony Gromley

In AERIAL, Anthony Gormley places thin aluminium installations in the space to restrict the audience's movement, forcing them to be aware of their position, movement and orientation. Through their bodies, the audience simultaneously feels and experiences the 'seen' and the 'unseen'.

"The body's innate capacity to sense and perceive its position, movements and orientation in relation to itself and the environment."

To adopt the terminology of French philosopher Merleau-Ponty, the body serves as the conduit through which we perceive the world and the site of perception itself. The experience of the body is not merely a passive reflection of external stimuli; it imbues our interactions with the world with a depth of meaning that extends beyond the immediate sensations. Perception is a fundamental aspect of our existence, influencing our understanding of the world, our ability to navigate it, and our capacity to recognize ourselves and others. The world is not simply an object that the body perceives; rather, it is an 'understanding of the body' that emerges from the body's dynamic interaction with the world. The body experiences its own perceptual processes, which are constantly changing, within the context of the world it is in. We tend to believe only what we see in a fixed space.

In the context of the decline in critical thinking, my objective is to facilitate an exploration of the interconnectivity between the visible and the invisible, through the medium of the body. This entails an investigation into the potential for awareness through experience, in conjunction with conscious thought, to liberate us from the constraints of a fixed space.

Anti-User Friendlyatial delineations
Yehwan Song

Touch My 4 Fingertips

Yehwan Song
Anti-User Friendly Series
(Project)

The concept of 'movement' is both influenced by and affects the entirety of events that occur within a given space. This implies that movement functions as a conduit for the conveyance and reception of content, thereby acting as a medium of communication. Movement is the means by which the computer, an artificial medium, communicates with the biomedical medium.

The advent of digital devices has led to the establishment of user interface design systems, which have become the norm for users. Yehwan Song's *Anti-User Friendly Series* represents an attempt to challenge the prevailing standardised UI design. The work required users to place their fingers on buttons in order to receive information, prompting me to consider the gestural origins of human movement rather than the gestural adaptations to the digital environment.

Conversely, the user-friendly interfaces currently in use are derived from human movement, in a manner analogous to ergonomic product design. The deliberate discomfort of these interfaces may not be a consideration in the commercial viability of the design, beyond its aesthetic appeal. This led me to think about the question: *'How can I use subtle movements to convey messages in human-friendly design?'*

'Beneficience and contemporary art: when aesthetic judgment meets ethical judgment'

Barbara Bolt
The Meeting of Aesthetics and Ethics in the Academy: Challenges for Creative Practice Researchers in Higher Education
2021
(Reading List)

Contemporary artists are those who make familiar situations or behaviours unfamiliar. The series of shocks that are delivered through their work help the viewer to pause and look at what is happening in the world. This brings certain situations that the viewer may have looked at unconsciously into the world of awareness. Bolt emphasises that art can shock audiences aesthetically, allowing them to see the world in a new light.

"Shock is par excellence, the evidence of (something) happening, rather than nothing at all. It is suspended privation." (...) "Thus, the aim of the work of art is not to please its receiving community or bring it 'into a process of identification', but rather to provide a shock to the senses (Lyotard, 1984: 39)."

Art can contribute to society in a variety of ways, sometimes in subtle and quiet ways, and can have a profound impact. This opens up a deeper discussion of the role of art in society, as it is no longer necessary for art to shock in order to have an impact. Instead, art can lead to ethical reflection and social change through its enlightening role.

In addition to contemporary art, it is necessary to address ethical challenges and responses to them across a range of creative disciplines, including design, documentary filmmaking, journalism, socially engaged art, and visual arts. How can designers effectively raise awareness when confronted with critical societal issues that threaten fundamental human rights?

Nothing to See Here (Dispersal)

Catherine and Amy and Ashley Dyer
2014
(Personal Research)

Nothing To See Here (Dispersal)
Festival of Live Art
Adulari
2016

"The strategy employed by the artists was inspired by Jacque Rancière's analysis of social control, which posits that political order is not merely maintained by political repression, but rather is effected through strategies of controlling visibility (to see is to believe) and the flow of people in public spaces."

The work Nothing to See Here (Dispersal) illuminates the manipulation of society through control, revealing to the viewer what they do not see when it comes to the maintenance of public order in our society. The behaviour of the security guards surrounding them at a protest in a public space disrupts the flow of the crowd and limits their visibility.

The very nature of public space, which is designed to allow us to see and share 'everything', prevents us from suspecting the restriction of access through the control of our visibility. Fragmented individuals, disrupted by strategies that disrupt people's solidarity and break up groups, become intimately connected to mass society, a society that is manipulated by the invisible. Designers who are in close proximity to mass society must expand their horizons and work to create spaces that are not merely manipulated public spaces. Instead, we should strive to create spaces that foster solidarity and agency.

'In Defense of the Poor Image'

Hito Steyerl
The Wretched of the Screen
2012
(Reading List)

In the data society, analogue images are digitally converted into data. These images, which are combinations of 0s and 1s according to binary logic, are edited, transformed, and reproduced. In a digital world that views 'resolution' as a measure of value, images created through reproduction and duplication lose data and become poorer images with progressively lower resolution. *"Focus is identified as a class position, a position of ease and privilege, while being out of focus lowers one's value as an image."* The image is released from the confines of cinemas and archives, yet its very essence is lost in the process, becoming a mere shadow of its former self. This phenomenon can be observed in the context of digital uncertainty, where the image is perceived as a mere conduit for information, rather than an entity in its own right.

"The poor image is no longer about the real thing– the originary original."

In her essay, *'In Defence of the Poor Image'*, Hito Steyerl posits that the poor image can serve as a catalyst for re-evaluating the role of art in the digital age. In this project, I also identified poor image as a means of evading the gaze of major capital. Images of randomly fragmented pixels and text that is unintelligible due to low quality do not align with the image production system of major capital. Consequently, these images can be employed as an alternative mechanism to circumvent surveillance and safeguard privacy. In other words, poor images that AI is unable to comprehend may be excluded from the data society, but they can evade data manipulation. From this perspective, it is necessary to redefine the value of images, or more precisely, to create a new perspective on images. In addition to resolution and exchange value, we can also imagine another form of value defined by speed, intensity, and diffusion.

"It (Poor image) builds alliances as it travels, provokes translation or mistranslation, and creates new publics and debates."

As a medium for communicating with others in the data society, images are instantaneously produced, transmitted, and circulated. However, I find myself questioning the speed and immediacy of this circulation. Is the poor-quality, low-capacity image, which can be seen by the many and created by the many, truly the revolutionary device of our time?

In our contemporary 'circularist' society, where not only images but also people, capital, objects and information are constantly in motion, I aim to challenge the immediacy of communication in order to promote critical thinking through momentary stasis. Poor images are *the contemporary Wretched of the Screen*, the detritus of audiovisual production, the rubbish that washes up on the shores of the digital economy; they spread pleasure or death threats, conspiracy theories or piracy, resistance or folly. By focusing on the indeterminacy of these poor images, it will be possible to continue to question whether they can 'represent truth' in the digital hierarchy, given that they are invisible.

CAPS LOCK: How Capitalism Took Hold of Graphic Design, and How to Escape from It

Ruben Pater
2021
(Personal Research)

The contemporary society is undergoing a rapid transformation, with a shift from analogue to digital. This shift has implications for the design field, which must explore different strategies that take into account the modern situation. As data becomes the source material of society and specialists begin to manage, maintain, and collect data, companies expand their data infrastructure and collect personal data. In addition, through algorithms that utilise this collected data, giant companies are directing individuals to specific products or policies. As a result, we have become the product itself.

"People supply the data-the raw material-which is then refined into data profiles. Detailed data profiles can predict what you desire, but also what you will desire in the future."

In this era, designers are increasingly engaged in the publication of data, the facilitation of corporate-public relations, and the manipulation of algorithms. This process entails the collection of personal information, which is then handed over to large corporations that provide design tools, such as Adobe, Apple, and Google.

"The tools that graphic designers use are owned by companies that answer to shareholders: Adobe, Apple, Google, Facebook, and Linotype. They create the code, standards, platforms, colours, and filters that shape a lot of graphic design."

Has the world become something to be consumed and enjoyed by technology rather than something to be understood? What is the designer's place in this mechanism? In CAPS LOCK, Ruben Pater discusses the designer as a hacker. In his book, he states that a 1984 glossary for computer programmers defines a hacker as *"a person who enjoys exploring the details of programmable systems and how to stretch their capabilities, as opposed to most users, who prefer to learn only the minimum necessary"*. This demonstrates that designers need to be hackers and think outside the box, decoding and hacking the tools ourselves to make them our own.

In order to avoid confining the concept of hacking to the realm of computer science, I sought to expand its scope to encompass a broader social context. This led me to consider the question 'How can we use hacking to secure the privacy and data sovereignty of individuals within the mechanisms of control?'

In a world of data, computers are the medium through which information is collected. However, what if the medium became unable to take in information? In other words, what if computers made it impossible for us to understand what we see? This would result in a language that only humans with a common set of rules could discover. To achieve this, I conducted research and analysis into how computers perceive images and text, in accordance with the principle that *"designers can learn from hackers that in order to use tools critically, they need to be understood, adapted, and customized"*. They then reproduced images and text that they did not recognize. By hacking into the computer's perception, a tool of intelligence gathering, they sought to evade the invisible gaze of the large corporations that were after their personal data. This leads me to the question of what kind of images are unreadable (unintelligible) to computers, and whether we can achieve sovereignty over our personal data.

"Anja Groten from Hackers & Designers sums it up: 'Hacking is a way to emancipate users of technology from being passive consumers to becoming critical makers.'"

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