

# SNDO

 **Academy of Theatre and Dance**  
Amsterdam University of the Arts

## BA in Choreography

All dance and movement courses given in the SNDO are set up in the perspective of students becoming choreographers. Dance technique is hardly taught as the artistic equation of dance, but to provide students with skills for the organization of the body, research (through) physicality, develop focus, expand thought and movement registers and in general adopt investigative attitude towards the diversity of ways of moving (in and through) the space, (in and through) the concepts, (in and through) own and other's bodies and (in and through) time.

Different techniques are in the curriculum also to provide the students with relevant references and understanding of the developments in the section of the so-called 'contemporary dance' field which the school is in dialogue with and which the school and its graduates actively shape and transform already for more than forty years.

Course: Movement Research

Teacher(s): Esther Arribas

Year group: SNDO2

Study year: 2022-2023

Period: Weeks

Time:

Hours:

Total amount of contact hours:

Total amount of self-study hours (reading, writing, homework tasks, etc.):

Starting date:

Date of completion:

Study points: Student acquires credits/study points based on minimum of 90% participation in the course (in case of additional unavoidable absence the minimum required is 70% presence). The full course study points are awarded if student participated in the above mentioned amount and in relationship to the quality of participation and development expected for the course.

Content (concept and week to week outline):

The focus of this practice is to explore movement as a continuous search for novel corporealities, new body-mind possibilities; a practice that I call Corporeal Soft Questioning. Soft Questioning refers to a continuous work on modes of attention within and on the edge of consciousness, providing practicing bodies with tools to perceive, feel and understand their presence as a constant transformation. The search of corporeal novelty as learning and learning as producing knowledge.

My sessions are based on task-oriented techniques that develop over time. These techniques work at different levels such as somatic and spatial awareness or affective plasticity. A central technique is the creation of movement by letting a small part of the body direct the dynamics of the whole body, which opens up many details in the understanding of the body in motion and in relation. Somatic fictions is a technique that works more directly at the affective level. It consists of infusing an "emotional state" (anger) to a part of the body (angry toe) and letting the transformation happen, bodily, emotionally and relationally, however that might look.

An important aspect of this practice is exploring the connections that are present in our body and behavior patterns. The goal is not to find those patterns, but to discern, while practicing, what feels

habitual from what feels unknown or less familiar. What are the body and surrounding conditions, gestures, postures, reactions that feel comfortable, familiar, and taken for granted?

As we acknowledge these familiar patterns, habits, and tendencies, we work on using / abusing / transforming / breaking / ignoring and forgetting them, while allowing space for and trying to capture the unknown and the unfamiliar.

Other important element of Corporeal Soft Questioning is verbal articulation in the form of feedback. The feedback talk is organized in pairs (or trios) and focused on specific tasks. It is usually proposed that this takes place after a limited time of moving/watching (5-7 min). A person of the duo will be moving, the other watching and making notes. Specially for the person watching, it is important to always acknowledge that their perspective is subjective and their feedback is never disconnected to a certain taste, pattern, daily mood, etc. In this conversation, we articulate and exchange different understandings of body, habit and pattern, relations, connections, references, interests, tastes and wishes. How do we like to move and look at someone moving? How does your experience look like to me? To frame the watcher's feedback, we frame the talk always relating to individual wishes and desires, understanding those as a part of one's universe, but never detached from the here and now. To be specific and play around, wishes become suggestions for the mover to apply during a second moving session. What happens when my universe collides with your universe?

Corporeal Soft Questioning feeds from notions of somatic awareness derived from embodied anatomy practices, which serves for expanding the awareness of the sentient body. It also builds on improvisation, play, somatic fictions, verbal articulation in form of feedback and diverse forms of writing. I've developed this practice thanks to various techniques studied at SNDO but specially following the line of Gonnie Hegen (trained at SNDO in the 80s and core teacher until 2014), who developed her movement practice focusing on body alignment (Alexander Technique) and rapid change in action to overcome preconceived movement ideas.

Objectives and assessment criteria: (the student is able to..):

Gain ease for accessing body-mind and movement connections that feel unknown, understand movement research as a place of study, play and pleasure; gain confidence on rapid choice making, develop awareness on performative presence and embrace the pleasure of acquiring diverse tools for research. Develop verbal articulation around movement research and interact with peer to peer feedback. Develop own and common commitment to the movement practices.

In order to construct the students assessment, I will rely on the daily dialogues and feedback happening in each class, both individually and collectively. Obtaining the credits will depend on presence (80%), unless interest or behavior issues interfere with the class.

Literature, websites, background: (as reference or actual course material):

Teaching format:

- x task directed education
- x individual advising
- x instruction, self-study, feedback
- x peer to peer feedback

Form of students output:

- x process

Assessment by whom:

- x teacher

Assessment:

Progress oriented

Which competences of the seven described below the course contributes to (for further reference on the competences, check the page 18 of the SNDO study guide):

I CREATIVE POTENTIAL – The graduate is capable of making choreographic work that expresses their personal artistic vision.

II CRAFTSMANSHIP – In their work the graduate applies expertise and broad range of instrumental skills in a professional way.

IV POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH AND INNOVATION – The graduate has the ability to constantly develop and deepen their artistic practice and way of working and thereby contribute to the development of their professional field and society.

Conditions:

Remarks: