

MA PROJECT REFLECTION

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A_(ttention) DEFICIT DELIGHT

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The wealth and richness of the world seem to be challenged by the wealth of our perceptual and embodied apprehension, our understanding, interpretation and imagination. The world exceeds our possibilities of comprehension and creation, but at the same time, our imaginative creations extend that world and seem to surpass it.

Kathleen Coessens

INTRODUCTION	6
PROBLEM STATEMENT	7
STRUCTURE AND MAIN CONTENT	8
POSITION IN THE DANCE FILED	8
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND REFLECTIONS	10
ADHD & HYPERSENSITIVITY	10
ATTENTION DEFICIT.....	10
HYPERSENSITIVITY / SENSORY PROCESSING SENSITIVITY	12
ADHD, HYPERSENSITIVITY & ME	12
MEETING THE WORLD WITH ADHD AND SENSORY PROCESSING SENSITIVITY	13
MEANING MAKING IMMERSION AND PRESENCE	14
THE WORLD HAVE ATTENTION DEFICIT	15
THE PROCESS / ATTENTION	17
UNDER THE HOOD	17
WORKING METHODS.....	20
EXAMPLE OF TASKS:.....	22
PLAY	24
TECHNIC = DIMMER.	26
CHALLENGES AND REFLECTIONS	27
DANCERS REFLECTION.....	29
PERFORMANCE.....	31
LINK FOR THE PERFORMANCE:.....	31
ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE.....	31
DESCRIPTION	32
AUDIENCE ENTRANCE.....	32
LISTENING	33
SOME SCENES IN THE LISTENING PART.....	34
MEDITATION.....	37

THE MESS	38
THE END	39
AUDIENCE RESPONDS.....	39
CONCLUSION	41
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	43

Introduction

The first time I visited the national theater in Oslo, was with my daughter a few years back. The feeling of grandeur accompanies the entry to the National theater. The building is old but in a good way. Just before entering the theater, Ibsen's statue welcomed us. The theater is inspired by Roman architecture. Four columns support the theater front, and above them, NATIONALTHEATER is carved into the stone in one word. Entering the theater placed me in a defensive mode, I feel small compared with the grandeur of the building as if I'm not good enough to enter. As a child, I avoided these kinds of monumental buildings. I felt that I needed to feel something, and I felt guilty about not getting what this something was.

Two large promotional banners hanged on the sides of the building, reducing from its significance, grandeur, and nostalgic allure. In an instant, the importance of the theater dissipates as the plastic banners take prominence, transforming the space from a place of cultural significance to just another commercial structure compete to sell its wares. My mind wanders from ancient Rome to perceiving the building as nothing more than a marketing tool. I felt the same contradiction between these two pulling forces when we entered the theater. On the one hand the magical experience of the theater, red chairs, the huge hall, and the stage and on the other hand the displeasing feeling the lights, projectors and all technical equipment that was hanging over the grand gold decorations.

Even throughout the performance, I struggled to immerse myself fully. Instead of being captivated by the artistic presentation, my attention fixated on the technical aspects of the production. I found myself tracing the movement of ropes that manipulated the scenography and gazed at the actors positioned in the side wings. Occasionally, I became momentarily engage in the dialogue, but maintaining focus on every word proved exceedingly difficult.

In general, and regardless of the grandeur of the theater or the magnitude of the production, I rarely find myself truly absorbed in a theatrical piece. I'm a dance artist and a choreographer and I attend a large number of dance performances each year. In some dance performances, I feel the same as going to the theater, apathic to what I suppose to

feel. But on other performances, I'm sucked in, becoming one with the performers. I sense and feel and sense the performance with my skin, flesh, bones and mind.

These two strong aspects of experiencing stage performances have followed me daily for as long as I can remember. As a kid playing with others, eating dinner with my family, socializing and as a grown person in intimate setting. Experiencing the world is always a challenging task, as I notice things that were not intended to become the main story in those particular experiences. In 2011 at the age of 33 and after a long process I was diagnosed with ADHD.

In 2021 I started to study for my MA in choreography in the art academy in Oslo (Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo / Khio). At that time I was already an experience dancer and established choreographer. But still, the meeting with the educational system reminded me of my teenage years. Back then as now, I felt stupid, I was struggling, mainly with reading and writing, and it made me angry, frustrated, and full of guilt. This brought me to work with ADHD and hypersensitivity as a creative engine. This work is a resistance to the system of rules, and it is using ADHD characteristic as a creative force and celebrates Neurodivergence. Furthermore, I wanted to develop tools for all dancers to work with regarding their heightened state of mind and performativity.

Problem statement

In this MA reflection paper, I delve into my artistic exploration centered around ADHD and hypersensitivity as influential factors. The paper delves into the background of these themes and their profound impact on the creative process and the embodiment of dancers in their performances. Additionally, it investigates how ADHD and hypersensitivity can shape the audience's experience, particularly in terms of immersion and self-perception.

Motivated by a resistance to the external world and a desire to embrace myself without judgment, I set out to explore the following questions:

- I. How can a performance effectively simulate ADHD, providing individuals without the condition an opportunity to comprehend the sensations associated with it?
- II. How can attention deficit suggests a dramaturgy?

III. How can heightened sensory perception, or over-sensing, serve as a valuable tool in the creative process?

Structure and main content

Overall, the paper delves into the intersection of ADHD, hypersensitivity, performativity, and audience experience.

In the first part, I start by talking about ADHD and hypersensitivity and how it is manifested and affects me as a person.

I continue by explaining the working process and methods that are inspired and derived from hypersensitivity and ADHD, some of the challenges in the project, and the dancer's experiences during this process.

Lastly, I'll describe the performance and talk about the manifestation of the project.

Position in the dance field

A Deficit Delight engages in choreographic and performative discourses and methodologies concerning the state of mind, performative presence, tension, effort, listening, and availability. I have been working with some of the methods in this project in the past few years as a teacher and choreographer, and they are a direct continuation of my experience while dancing and the way my brain is wired. These methods, this process, and the result performance are in the spectrum between somatic practice, presentation techniques, and an art installation. "Somatic movement" in dance refers to methods whose primary focus is the dancer's individual, physical experience rather than her enactment of the tasks or the audience's experience of watching her. In this project, somatic practices are the departure point for developing a stage expression without ignoring form, shape, composition, and intensity and with a clear intention of creating kinesthetic empathy. Ideas and concepts were manifest through virtuosic movement coupled with suggestive abstract images, voice, text, and smell and layered by costumes and set designs.

On a national level, the work resonates with the visual aspects of some Norwegian artists and their minimalistic and clean stage set-ups such as Eva-Cecilie Richardsen (Moving Targets) and Stian Danielsen. And on an international level, the work has certain affinities with the

artists Lia Rodrigues and Marlene Monteiro Freitas concerning the state of minds and exhaustion of ideas and Ohad Naharin in relation to the virtuosity and eclectic range of movement his performers manifest on stage.

It is worth mentioning that my early practice with active meditation, mainly but not limited to Osho (Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh) affected my work with the senses and perception.

Taking a Gaga class, particularly while dancing next to choreographer and dancer Sharon Eyal, broadened my understanding and deepened my experience while dancing and enabled me to “*give in*” and indulge in sensations.

Theoretical background and reflections

In this, I examine the themes of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and hypersensitivity, examining their manifestations both in myself and in the world around me. I begin by providing an overview of the clinical terms associated with ADHD and hypersensitivity, offering insights into the symptoms and characteristics of these conditions. Drawing from personal experience as an individual diagnosed with ADHD, I then explore how this diagnosis has shaped my journey and its relevance to the artistic project at hand. Furthermore, I delve into the concept of hypersensitivity and its connection to sensory processing sensitivity (HSP), highlighting the heightened sensitivity to physical and emotional stimuli experienced by individuals with ADHD. By delving into these topics, I aim to shed light on the interplay between ADHD, hypersensitivity, and the creative process, as well as how they impact the experience of a performance for both the performer and the audience. Additionally, I examine the wider societal context, discussing the challenges of attention regulation and sensory overload faced by individuals in today's technology-driven and overstimulated world. By acknowledging the shared experiences and challenges of managing attention in this context, this chapter seeks to foster a deeper understanding of ADHD and hypersensitivity and their relevance to our contemporary reality.

ADHD & Hypersensitivity

Attention deficit

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder has been recognized since 1902. Until the eighties, it was recognized as a behavior problem mostly in younger boys. In 1980 the name of the disorder was changed to include the words attention deficit. It was recognized as a problem with the brain's management system; its executive functions.¹ ADHD is not one problem; it

¹ [Thomas E. Brown, PhD, discusses ADHD diagnosis, ADHD symptoms, available ADHD treatment options, and ADHD medication.](#)

is a set of conditions that include a wide range of characteristics. People with ADHD show a persistent symptoms of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity.²

ADHD is marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development. People with ADHD experience an ongoing pattern of the following types of symptoms:³

- **Inattention** means a person may have difficulty staying on task, sustaining focus, and staying organized, and these problems are not due to defiance or lack of comprehension.
- **Hyperactivity** means a person may seem to move about constantly, including in situations when it is not appropriate, or excessively fidgets, taps, or talks. In adults, hyperactivity may mean extreme restlessness or talking too much.
- **Impulsivity** means a person may act without thinking or have difficulty with self-control. Impulsivity could also include a desire for immediate rewards or the inability to delay gratification. An impulsive person may interrupt others or make important decisions without considering long-term consequences.

Although people without ADHD may experience some of the symptoms associated with the condition, it is essential to note that ADHD is not an all-or-nothing condition. It is similar to depression in that regard, as occasional feelings of sadness do not guarantee a diagnosis of depression. The characteristics of ADHD, such as difficulty with focus and organization, are challenges that everyone faces at times. However, those with ADHD experience these difficulties more frequently and with greater intensity. They are not always within their voluntary control, and willpower alone cannot completely overcome the challenges of ADHD.⁴

² American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition. Arlington, VA., American Psychiatric Association, 2013.

³ [National Institute of Mental Health](#)

⁴ [Thomas E. Brown, PhD, discusses ADHD diagnosis, ADHD symptoms, available ADHD treatment options, and ADHD medication.](#)

Hypersensitivity / Sensory Processing Sensitivity

Another condition relevant to this work is Hypersensitivity and/or Sensory Processing Sensitivity (HSP – highly sensitive person) which are attributes found in a high degree in people with ADHD. Symptoms of hypersensitivity include being highly sensitive to physical (via sound, sight, touch, or smell) and/or emotional stimuli and the tendency to be easily overwhelmed by too much information.⁵

To understand hypersensitivity Imagine that you are having a conversation with a friend, colleague, or your spouse. While you talk to them, you are having a sharp stone in your foot. They talk and you hear them, but your attention is going back all the time to this annoying sensation in your foot. Hypersensitivity disorder is a stone in your foot without the possibility to take off your shoes. The stones are always somewhere in your body, when you socialize, when you read, when you write, when you watch a performance, when you listen to your teacher and even when you interact with your lover.

In the contemporary dance practice scene, and particularly in somatic work, the ability to perceive signals from the sensory system is crucial. This begs the question: Can heightened sensory perception, often referred to as over-sensing, serve as a valuable tool in the creative process for a dance performance? By exploring this question in this project, I aim to uncover the potential benefits and implications of embracing and utilizing heightened sensory perception within the context of creating a dance performance.

ADHD, Hypersensitivity & me

Writing about ADHD in relation to myself presents a challenge as it is impossible to separate my identity from the condition. At the same time, ADHD does not define who I am entirely. There exists no distinct boundary between where ADHD begins and where I exist without it. ADHD serves as a label that has aided me in navigating institution's demands like the art

⁵ Maria Panagiotidi, Paul G. Overton, Tom Stafford, The relationship between ADHD traits and sensory sensitivity in the general population, *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, Volume 80, 2018, Pages 179-185.

academy and in this specific process of creating A Deficit Delight. It functions as a means of negotiation, allowing me to explore and understand my experiences within the context of ADHD while acknowledging the complexity of my individuality. The general secretary of ADHD Norge Gry Lunde wrote:

I wish that all of you with ADHD out there would take more credit for what is actually truly owned by you, namely your personality. All qualities that you have, whether you are creative, funny or have lots of good ideas, do not need to be attributed to the ADHD diagnosis. If you're funny, you're funny, not your diagnosis. ⁷

'I'm not keen on anything, so I do everything,' 'Jack of everything and the master of none,' and 'I work with the potential that I might be a dog' are some phrases which I encountered during my research on ADHD. 'What interests me?' and 'What would I like to work with?' Are challenging questions to answer on due to my tendency to constantly shift my focus and interests among various subjects. I never found it possible to invest in just one direction.

Meeting the world with ADHD and sensory processing sensitivity

I believe that my way of experiencing performances is affected by the mix of sensory processing sensitivity and my attention regulation. I sense my body all the time, I have pain and I move constantly. I'm overly aware of the constant chatter between my mind and body and my inattention is dividing and chopping long scenes into short stories. Furthermore, when having a conversation, sitting in class or watching a performance, every small detail potentially can become the beginning of a new thread of thought and few minutes of "spacing out". Most of the time, scenes and ideas are changing their meaning because of gaps in attention and focal jumps. These small gaps in different situations effects the way I experience performances and especially what kind of performances I like and appreciate, can stay tuned to and experience presence in.

⁷ [Ingen Superkraft, Gry Lunde, generalsekretær ADHD Norge. Published on NRK 19. mai 2022](#) (translated from Norwegian)

Meaning making Immersion and presence

In the book *Production of Presence*, Hans Gumbrecht is seeing presence as mainly a spatial relationship to the world and its objects less as a temporal one. He claims that “present” things are tangible which implies they can have an immediate impact on human bodies.⁸ He uses the word production as a reference of ‘bringing forth’ an object to space.

“Therefore, “production of presence” points to all kinds of events and processes in which the impact that “present” objects have on human bodies is being initiated or intensified.”⁹

The effect of “things of the world”, as he calls it, can be classified in two categories: “presence effects” and “meaning effects”. He claims that when we attribute meaning to a thing that is present, try to understand it and form an idea of what this thing may be in relation to us, we are degrading the potential impact that this thing can have on our bodies and senses,¹⁰ hence, we are not experiencing “the presence”. Presence effects, according to Gumbrecht are appeal only to the senses and therefore cannot be connected with imagining what is going in another person’s psyche or judging their skill.

While watching a performance, when we are positioning what we see with things that we already know, trying to theorize them and compare them to things that we already seen. This judgment can relate to any aspect of the performance, “*things of this world*”, from costumes, the performers’ skill to lighting etc’. To my understanding, to experience aesthetic presence, Gumbrecht claims that one need to experience the world through the senses and less through the mind.

⁸ Hans Gumbrecht. *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Kindle Locations 39-40). Kindle Edition.

⁹ Hans Gumbrecht. *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Kindle Locations 41-45). Kindle Edition.

¹⁰ Hans Gumbrecht. *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Kindle Locations 46-48). Kindle Edition.

*presence will be best served if we try to pause for a moment before we begin to make sense-and if we then let ourselves be caught by an oscillation where presence effects permeate the meaning effects.*¹¹

Gumbrecht's claim that "experiencing presence" happens through the senses and not by charging meaning onto things can explain my experience of watching a performance. According to Gumbrecht, the emphasis is on sensory engagement rather than assigning meaning to objects or events. In my experience, the constant sensory awareness, the pains, the continuous movement and the constant chatter between my mind and body, indicating a heightened sensory processing sensitivity. Additionally, my attention regulation, which involves dividing and chopping long scenes into shorter stories, aligns with Gumbrecht's notion of experiencing presence through direct sensory encounters rather than intellectual interpretation.

Furthermore, my experience of small gaps in attention and focal jumps changing the meaning of scenes and ideas supports Gumbrecht's claim. Gumbrecht emphasizes the significance of sensory experiences in the present moment, and my attention shifts and sensory input can shape my perception and interpretation of a performance.

Taken together, Gumbrecht's ideas on experiencing presence through sensory engagement and my personal experience with sensory processing sensitivity and attention regulation appear to be in line with each other.

The world have attention deficit

This is a short text that Asher Lev¹² wrote in the performance program:

In this age of 'smart technologies', many of us are living today in cultural contexts that are rich in stimuli and with increasing demands on our attention and time. As such, it is becoming increasingly important for us to develop coping mechanisms and skills for managing our focal point, concentration ability and stress levels. Since the appearing of the smart phones our mind is being

¹¹ Hans Gumbrecht. Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey (Kindle Locations 1349-1350). Kindle Edition.

¹² Asher Lev, Choreographer and dancer 24. April 2023. <https://www.asherlev.com/about>

distracted from endless availability; receiving calls, notifications, and messages that can draw away our focus from the task at hand. Additionally, smartphones often come with access to social media and other apps that can be tempting to check.

Individuals without ADHD may find it difficult to fully grasp the challenges faced by those with the condition. However, living in today's overstimulation era, even people without ADHD can often find themselves experiencing symptoms like those associated with the condition. The constant bombardment of stimuli can overwhelm the senses and disrupt one's ability to focus and concentrate effectively. It is becoming challenging to maintain attention on a single task or activity for an extended period. The incessant distractions and the pressure to multitask leads to a fragmented and scattered focus which mirrors the attention difficulties experienced by individuals with ADHD. Moreover, the addictive nature of technology and the desire to stay connected can further contribute to a sense of restlessness and impulsivity, similar to what individuals with ADHD may experience.

In this context, it is important to recognize that the challenges faced by individuals with ADHD are not exclusive to them. The overstimulation and information overload present in today's society can induce symptoms that resemble those of ADHD in individuals without the condition. By acknowledging and understanding these shared experiences, this project relate and address both individuals with ADHD and those who may temporarily experience similar difficulties in managing their attention and focus in the modern world.

The process / Attention

In this part, I describe the working process on the performance. The meeting with the dancers, Developing of working methods in regard to the theme, and the meeting point between these working methods and the dancers.

The rehearsal process for our work was broken down into three distinct periods. The first period consisted of a one-week workshop, followed by two weeks, and finally, a five-week rehearsal period with five performances scheduled at the end of that period.

Looking the part helps get the chance to fill it. But if you fill the part, it matters not if you look it.

Malcolm Forbes

Under the hood

One of the initial challenges we faced was that all the participants were either current (six) or former (two) students of mine, and as the performance was intended to be largely improvised, the performers' ability to work with a playful state of mind was crucial to the success of the project. Therefore I had to work from the outset to challenge the state of mind that students often come with, trying too hard to please, impress, or do the right thing. I hoped to have playful, careless, sensing, available-to-react performers for this performance.

In her article *Effing the Ineffable*, Eleanor Bauer writes: "*One who gives an instruction always gets something else back*"¹⁴. She speaks about the difference between "language thought" and "dance-thought" and the unpredictability of what comes back when talking about a task to a dance practitioner. As performers, can we truly grasp this idea that there is always a gap between the instructions we receive and our interpretation? How do our abilities change when we're in a state of mind where we're "*trying to do what we've been*

¹⁴ Bauer Eleanor, (2018): *Effing the Ineffable*, Movement Research Performance Journal #51

told" versus a state of mind that acknowledges that "*what we're doing is always something else*"? Can recognizing this can help an improvising performer?

In working on this project, the performers needed to recognize and trust the value in the gap between what I asked for and what they were doing. I was curious about what this gap can provide the process, as a choreographer I wanted to be surprised. The dancing of a task will always be different than verbalizing the task, and one should let go of the urge to try. We strived to work with a state of mind that's not focused on trying too hard to do the right thing. I believe the presence of an outside eye in dancers is profoundly ingrained and starts early in their education. Dancers are constantly critiqued on the shape of their bodies, which can lead to confusion between technique that helps achieve a particular ability or effectiveness and the aesthetic preferences of teachers and fellow students.

To achieve canceling of the outside eye, judgment, and "studently" state of mind of "trying," we established several base guidelines to anchor the performers in their work:

1. Listen >>> be available.
2. Avoid leaning on the meaning of things.
3. When in doubt, return to technique.
4. Play with the task - don't do the task.
5. "yes" attitude ("yes, and..."¹⁵) – everything is usable for artistic expression including the meaning of things and doing the task.

Listening was an essential practice for action throughout our rehearsal process. By shifting our focal attention to our senses, in other words, we listened to the senses and enabled availability to react to them, allowing us to use what we felt and sensed for artistic exploration and expression. All of our tasks were designated to heighten the body's sensory

¹⁵ NathanMinns (2022-10-30). "What does "Yes, And..." In Improv Really Mean?". Green Light Improv. Retrieved 2022-10-30.

signals toward the mind. We also avoided working with the meaning of things, instead choosing to concentrate on the physical task at hand to prevent our decision-making process from being bogged down by a search for meaning. Also, meaning-making and researching logic in a task oppose the jumping focal attention of attention deficit. We searched for a way to enhance and listen to the body's sensory signals and to keep changing what we are acting upon.

When doubt appeared while improvising, the performers had two options: they could use it for artistic expression (adopting a "yes" attitude), or they could bring their attention back to the technique, to what they felt and sensed. This approach legitimated the use of stress, fear, over-awareness, embarrassment, and anger as engines for creation, research, and expression. As Julia Cameron said, "*Anger is meant to be acted upon. It is not meant to be acted out.*"¹⁶ Finally, the performers were asked to play with what they were told rather than simply doing it. This approach allowed us to shift from research to playfulness. Researching playfulness had a more significant value than researching the physical task. Playfulness was vital in this work not only as a creative force but also as a performative state of mind. "serious art is born from a serious play."¹⁷

As a collective, we engaged in two workshops facilitated by external teachers. Being an active participant in these workshops allowed me to reconnect with the feelings and emotions associated with being a performer within a creative process. Moreover, it served to diminish, to some extent, the hierarchical structure inside the group. The workshops provided an alternative perspective and entry point into the themes we were exploring.

¹⁶ Cameron, J. (2020). *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. United Kingdom: Profile.

¹⁷ Cameron, J. (2020). *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. United Kingdom: Profile.

During one workshop led by Asher Lev, our focus centered around the voice. Asher's approach differed from my own, as he emphasized the significance of words and their meaning to evoke a specific quality in the body.

Another workshop was conducted by Elin Ambika Haugen, an Osho practitioner who had experience leading guided active meditations. By incorporating elements of active meditation, we explored new ways for self-awareness within our creative process.

Overall, these workshops offered diverse perspectives, expanding our understanding of the themes at hand, and provided a valuable starting point for this project artistic exploration. The collaboration with Asher and Elin brought fresh insights and broadened our range of possibilities and what is “allowed” to do.

Working methods

The starting point for this work is ADHD and hypersensitivity, which serve as a basis for this research. As I have ADHD and experience a constant shift in focus due to (also) my sensitive sensory system, had led me to believe that exploring my own methods of working and the reason behind can also be beneficial to the process. At the same time researching the condition of ADHD and hypersensitivity and translating some of their characteristics into choreography is also beneficial in this process. Although this work does not follow a conventional theatrical storytelling format, it is also autobiographical in nature.

Our bodies are constantly sending signals back and forth between the brain and the body¹⁸. The nervous system is responsible for sending complex instructions to the body on how to perform actions, including the intensity and speed of movements. Meanwhile, during an

¹⁸ <https://nhi.no/kroppen-var/organer/nervesystemet/>

action, all the senses in the body send countless signals back to the brain, informing it of the body's position, movement, and other sensations.

Although this information flow is constant and happening parallel in both directions, we can shift what we are paying attention to. An example to this regular shift in the attention to the flow of information one can find regularly in the professional life of a stage performer. When talking with performers, if that will be dancers or actors, they describe their state mind in the first 10 minutes of a performance as very self-aware. They pay attention to how much they are stressing, to how much energy they invest in each movement, their face expression and have a general sensation of a strong external eye watching them. Some described this as if they are looking at them self-doing the things they do. This beginning of the performance feeling can be described as mind to body flow of information. They need consciously to remember what to do, in what intensity, speed and to what direction they need to do it. The more the performance is unfolding, and they performed a few actions and scenes, the brain is starting to receive back relevant signals from these actions. The performers are starting to use this information coming back from the body and “ride” it. They don't need to actively think on their doing, at least not in the same intensity as before. Their body sensations and the ‘conversation’ of the mind-body-mind is a familiar territory and when their focal attention is pointed to their senses the worries from the outside world seems to disappear.

For highly sensitive people, this constant communication between body - mind - body can be overwhelming. To convey these sensations to the dancers, in this project, we played with shifting between the flow of information Mind to Body and Body to Mind consciously.

During our first week of workshops, we focused on several tasks that emphasized awareness with a playful approach, with the goal of enhancing our sensory perception. By creating physical actions that engage multiple senses, we aimed to increase the awareness of the flow of information from the body to the mind and the use of it.

Example of tasks:

Here, I will present two tasks that aim to shift our focus towards the flow of information between the mind and the body:

Repetition State of Mind - this task is designed to heighten the flow of information from the body to mind and to explore the relationship between movement and a person's state of mind. The task consists of two parts: in the first part, the repetition part, practitioners repeating for a while a short, repeated movement with one area of the body. In the second part, the dance, they break into a more extensive movement improvisation. These two parts, repetition into dancing into repetition is done many times. In the Second part, the movement improvisation, is based on certain characteristics that arose from the repetition, such as sensation or feeling, enabling the mind to follow the sensation of the body. The repetition part can differ in length, energy, and intensity and determined by intuition and conscious decision. This part aims to invite sensation from the body to the mind, creating a physical state that feeds into the mental state and encourages exploration of new movement possibilities and different states of mind. After each short dance solo, the dancer finds a new repetition to continue the cycle.

In connection to the repetition task and shaking in general I find this quote from Bauer Eleanor inspiring and beautiful:

*"When we move, we shake our dirty containers, we run our imperfect processors, we invite forces to pass through our multiple filters and rattle them, making visible and sensible the many things, beings, teachers, influences, desires, histories, fantasies, ancestors and ghosts who populate us, who have shaped and continue to shape us."*¹⁹

¹⁹ Bauer Eleanor, (2018): Effing the Ineffable, Movement Research Performance Journal #51 p 80.

Describing Task – this task is designed to heighten the flow of information from the brain to the body and to explore the connection between verbal instruction and physical movement. The task is to describe each movement aloud and communicate with the body through the voice, it involves describing every movement the practitioners will do or are currently doing, providing detailed instructions to their body. For example, a solo “dance” can sound like this: I'm standing in fourth. My hands are resting on the side of my body. My head is looking forwards. I'm turning the head to the right, my right shoulder blade is contracting and getting closer to the left shoulder blade, and then in a circular movement, is going up and pulling the rest of the body into straight legs. I'm starting to bend my legs slowly, and I'm stretching them suddenly. By vocalizing their instructions, the practitioners enhance the mind-body connection and encourage a deeper level of mindfulness in their movements. The focus is not only on executing the movements accurately but also on experiencing and exaggerating the sense of control and care over their body. Dancers who have engaged in similar exercises have provided feedback that this type of movement practice can evoke a feeling of being in control over their body. However, they have also noted that it can be frustrating and slow, as it challenges the speed and efficiency of their movements.

ADHD characteristic as engines

The characteristics of a person with ADHD of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity offered a range of possibilities for exploration and artistic expression. It opened for a wide movement palette and was a key component in making the dancers feel free to suggest and offer ideas.

Inattention: The difficulty in sustaining focus and staying organized was embraced as a source of inspiration for creating a fragmented choreography. The Dancers were encouraged to follow and leave physical ideas. We have used the analogy to “musician in an orchestra” that suddenly can have a solo or make a loud sound. They could weave in and out of movement phrases, where encourage to use unexpected shifts in direction or rhythm,

and we were playing with stillness and sudden bursts of energy, mirroring flow of attention (brain farts).

Hyperactivity: The performers were in constant movement and we were learning by doing. Instructions were short, and we were constantly moving. The dancers were prompt on exploring wide range of movements, incorporating rapid shifts, quick footwork, and spontaneous gestures. As we were not working with the meaning of gestures, this hyperactive energy was used to hopefully capture the audience's attention by being unstable, erratic, and unpredictable.

Impulsivity: We compared the inclination to act without thinking and the difficulty in self-control to playfulness. When asked not to Play with the task – don't do the task, we invited impulsive decision-making in the the creation of the movement vocabulary. This resulted in unexpected interactions, improvisational sequences, and unpredictable patterns.

Play

*Engage in an activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose.*²⁰

Playing unites the sensory and the rational and lets them control and affect each other in a state of playing.

*"Through playing the relationship between perceiving and performing enters into aesthetics, which ties the aesthetic process to presence"*²¹

²⁰ Oxford dictionary of English.

²¹ Sauter, Willmar. Aesthetics of Presence: Philosophical and Practical Reconsiderations (pp. 76-77). Cambridge Scholars Publishing . Kindle Edition.

In one of my conversations with Janne-Camilla Lyster²² she mentioned that the performance and the way we, the performers and I work, came to resemble a game – in the sense that I'm employing certain principles and parameters, which acting as a set of "rules." The indeterminacy (her word) of this "game" generates the immediacy of the experience for both performers and the audience. In other words, the performance is perceived as immediate, acute, and here-and-now. This observation by Janne-Camilla resonated with me and affirmed the significance of incorporating elements of play into the project. By embracing a game-like approach, the performance gains a dynamic quality, allowing for unpredictable outcomes within a defined framework. The concept of indeterminacy emphasizes the uniqueness and freshness of each performance, as it cannot be replicated exactly. This unpredictability contributes to the immediate and acute nature of the experience, creating a sense of presence and engagement.

Playing was crucial also in tasks. During the process, we employed a scale (and a dimmer / see technic) that ranged from research to play as a method for approaching tasks. On one end of the scale, we had research, where individuals were deeply engaged in analyzing and contemplating their actions. On the opposite end, we had play, where performers were fully immersed in enjoyment and spontaneity. Our aim throughout the creative process was to transition from research to play, ultimately reaching a state of playful research. This allowed us to strike a balance between intellectual exploration and creative expression, fostering a dynamic and engaging approach to our work.

Furthermore, our approach was to prioritize the experience and the impulsivity of signals from the body rather than researching a specific quality. We aimed to bring the sensation to the forefront of the performance rather than searching for it, meaning sensing as a performative state of mind not researching as a performative expression. Similarly, the movement material was not solely based on research, but rather on the embodied movement language of the dancers in combination with the various tasks. We used the

²² Janne-Camilla Lyster, external mentor, from a conversation during the process, 12. April 2023.

term "technique" to describe different qualities, incorporating both physical and mental performative states. We were looking for ways to bridge "technic" into mental performative state.

Technic = Dimmer.

The "dimmer" is a technical scale that served as an independent task or incorporated into other performative actions. It involves a range of opposing technical qualities such as light/heavy, fast/slow, and thick/thin. The objective is to select two or more qualities to experiment with. The rehearsal process began with researching these qualities and then progressed to playful exploration. Our focus was not on the research state of mind, but rather on the playful state of mind that generates ideas related to the selected qualities. This served as a foundation for all of the dancers' mental states and situations throughout the rehearsal process.

We worked on many tasks during the process and it will be too detailed to go over them all. But here are a few to mention:

- Texts – All texts were describing a meaningful event from the perspective of the perceptual body. The theme of the text is the body and his sensory system.
- Sounds, intensity and stomping (inspired by Lia Rodrigues)
- Tasks into composition / Student suggestions composition and the making of short performances.
- Excel sheet Score – served as a tactic for overcoming planning. The excel sheet was used for composing.
- Turning on their senses
- Listening and making sounds, listen to yourself talk.
- Moving attention to feeling and sensations.
- No meaning.

- Power poses²³ into improvisation.
- Multitasking as a key word - overwhelming – not able to control the amount of information.
- Working with the notion of exhaustion and effort to find a clear state of mind of presence.

Challenges and reflections

Here I'll share some of the challenges that we faced during the process, how I tried to solve it and the student's reflections regarding this process.

As a choreographer, I often struggle with a catch-22 regarding the performers' performativity. On the one hand, I want them to be spontaneous, surprising, and fully present in the moment, and I want them to feel free to make choices and take risks that will enhance their performance. On the other hand, my complex tasks, desire to maintain control, over-explaining, and showing how I do it often lead to the opposite outcome. Dancers become overly focused on meeting expectations and ensuring that they're doing "the right thing" rather than fully immersing themselves in the tasks. I recognize that this dynamic can hinder the authenticity and vitality of the performance. I'm ultimately seeking a sense of presence where the dancers fully engage with the movement, the task, and each other, creating a seamless and dynamic performance.

I addressed this issue with Janne-Camilla Lyster who is one of my supervisors in this project. One of her suggestions was to explain and to demonstrate less. Although I found this approach difficult as I'm a dancer myself and demonstrating feels natural to me, I have decided that for this project I'll try another approach. In the past, I've taken on a more

²³ Carney DR, Cuddy AJ, Yap AJ. Power posing: brief nonverbal displays affect neuroendocrine levels and risk tolerance. *Psychol Sci.* 2010 Oct;21(10):1363-8. doi: 10.1177/0956797610383437. Epub 2010 Sep 20. PMID: 20855902.

traditional leadership role, where I focused on driving the success of the performance itself and I was constantly explaining what the dancer should do and even feel. I know for a while now that my old approach didn't yield the results I was hoping for, and in fact, seemed to create a lack of spontaneity and creativity in the performers.

I found similarities between Janne-Camilla's suggestion and the concept of a "servant leadership" and for this project I have concentrate my effort in supporting the performers.

A servant leader shares power, puts the needs of the employees first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.²⁴

I prioritize the needs of the dancers above my own and strived to create a collaborative and supportive environment where everyone can thrive. I have done so by actively sharing power in decision-making with the dancers, giving them a say in matters such as composition, casting decisions, solo tasks, script and text, costume choices, movement material and other choreographic choices.

By adopting a servant leadership approach, I've found that the dancers were more engaged and invested in the project. They felt empowered to make decisions and took ownership of their roles, which in turn has led to a more dynamic, nuanced and authentic performance. Ultimately, I believe that this approach has helped us create a more successful and fulfilling project for everyone involved. The feedback I received after the performance from professional dancers and teachers that know the performers affirmed my believe.

²⁴ Sendjaya, Sen; Sarros, James C. (September 2002). "Servant Leadership: Its Origin, Development, and Application in Organizations". *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*. 9 (2): 57–64.

Dancers reflection

Here are a few reflections from some performers in the process relating to the way they took choices during the process and performance:

*The concept of not having everything set at all times made me a bit stressed in the beginning, since that is what I'm used to from previous pieces. On the other hand, I have learned tools that help me make choices on the spot which I think is so much fun.*²⁵

*This process has also been good for waking up my intuition, and how to work with intuition without blocking with overthinking tasks. I found this flow where the task and ques were in my body and a part of everything, but not taking over my experience of the material. The play was always really close, and the lightness of expressing material through my experiences was a big part of the last weeks of this project. It felt like playing and being the whole way through.*²⁶

*One of the things I have worked on personally in the end of the rehearsal period as well as the performances has been to let go a bit of the idea of “doing well” or “being good”, and rather put more emphasis on just being where I am and embracing what is present. Yaniv has talked a lot about this idea of using what is present as an enginee and I found it quite difficult in the beginning of the process, but I feel like I am now more able to be more “free” and playful in the things I do and the decisions I make and that has given me a lot more confidence as a performer.*²⁷

²⁵ William Vikan, 28. April 2023, performer in A Deficit Delight. Reflections about the creation process.

²⁶ Edith Strand Askeland, 20. April 2023, performer in A Deficit Delight. Reflections about the creation process.

²⁷ Aasa Frøystein, 1. May 2023, performer in A Deficit Delight. Reflections about the creation process.

In this section I have explained my choreographic working process , working method and the collaboration with the dancers. I have shared the methods employed to enhance sensory perception and playful exploration, and the incorporation of ADHD and hypersensitivity characteristics as a basis for artistic expression which I'll talk about next.

Performance

Link for the performance:

<https://vimeo.com/yanivcohen/aficitdelight?share=copy>

In this part, I will explain the elements of the performance. I'll then dive into transcribing some of the scenes, how they are connected to the working process, how the research was manifested into the performance, and how it was explored in front of a live audience.

I'll start by describing the performance itself, the connection to the theme, and how ADHD characteristics are manifest in the performance.

About the performance

A Deficit Delight is a performance that consists of (sometimes overlapping) five sections: Audience entrance, Listening, meditation, a messy scene, and an ending.

- Audience entrance – entering the world, turning on the senses.
- Listening – Simulating attention shifts.
- Meditation – a breather and a humoristic comment on well-being.
- Mess – Simulating overwhelming sensorial input.
- The end – open to interpretation although suggesting a circular dramaturgy.

The performance space is a 10*10*5 meter (W, L, H) cube made of semi-reflective material where the audience is led blindfolded and seated facing each other. The piece features eight dancers who are constantly working on enhancing their sensations and embodying the restless energy and hypersensitivity associated with ADHD.

Throughout the performance, the dancers engage in various tasks aimed at activating their body sensations which in turn influence the transmission of information from their bodies to their minds. They rub themselves against surfaces, whether it be the floor or other dancers, to generate tactile awareness. Power poses are utilized to intentionally shape their mental state before engaging in improvisation. Slow walking is used to heighten their attentiveness to auditory and perceptive stimuli. Repetitive movements are used to amplify the signals derived from bodily information. These tasks have been extensively explored and developed

during the creative process, contributing to the overall sensory experience and embodiment within the performance.

The dramaturgy of the performance is designed to enhance the audience's senses and simulate ADHD-like attention changes. The performers suggest scenes, then constantly disturb or break them entirely and re-contextualizing them. Sounds and actions appear sporadically during the scenes, created live by the dancers, physical objects on stage, the set itself, and pre-recorded sounds and music from the six speakers' surround sound system. The text in the performance uses sensory language where the performers describe how they experience meaningful events in their life through their senses.

The dancers move mostly in solos, and although they are occasionally synced, their individuality is at the front of the performance. Colorful clothes and personal make-up support their identity. The stage design and the lighting add to the overall sensory experience, with bright colors, flashing lights, and reflections that amplify the sense of sensory overload. The set and light are intended to create a sensation of entering another universe, another set of rules, and one that might surprise and disorient the spectators.

The music and sounds played during the performance are inconsistent with a single style or period. They varied from pop to rock, techno and specifically composed music by composer Rebekka Andresen. The performers talk, shout, stomp, and create sound also with the scenography while traveling in and out of the silver cube. Outside the cube, many noises and activities are occurring, some only audible to certain audience members.

Description

Audience entrance

The performers greet the audience before their entrance into the stage. In this part, the audience is explained how they will enter the stage and receive practical information about where and how to put their belongings. The entrance to the performance space is with a blindfold. Each audience member is led to their chair by one performer. The audience is

sited inside a cube made of semi-reflective material. They are sited inside the cube with their back to the material and facing each other.

The blindfolded entrance function as an enhancer to the other senses.²⁸ While canceling out the sight, the audience tunes to their other senses. The sense of touch was heightened regarding how the performers were touching and leading the audience and how the audience's feet were touching the ground. Secondly, the audience was greeted with burnt Palo Santo wood incense on stage, and many audience members mentioned the change of smell while entering the space.

After the audience was seated in their place, they kept blindfolded a little longer to tune into the sense of hearing. Some sounds appeared from outside the silver paper cube. The giggling of keys, rolling of balls, bells, paper squeezing, opening a soda drink, and music from the speakers. And as they explained earlier, a gong sound marked the removal of the blindfolds, and they discovered the space with their eyes.

During the audience entrance, we removed the sense of sight to amplify the other senses. By blindfolding the audience, we create an experience of entering a different space, providing a temporary detachment from their previous surroundings and activities. This intentional deprivation allows them to immerse themselves in the performance, engaging with their heightened senses and anticipation of what they will experience next.

Listening

In this segment, the performance aims to simulate the shifting nature of attention as it jumps from one element to another. The performers present scenes and intentionally disrupt or dismantle them, reflecting the way attention can be easily diverted or

²⁸ Storrs, C. (2016, June 9). Was Mom right? Are your eyes 'bigger than your stomach'? <http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/08/health/eating-without-seeing-dining-in-dark/>

fragmented. This process mirrors the experience of individuals with attention regulation challenges, where seemingly insignificant details can capture more attention than the actual focal point of a situation. In his work from 2017 Unimages, Florin Fluera writes in his program:²⁹

“Unimages are deviations from Plausible body states and self-presentation, performative anomalies that affect the automatic reading and perceptions. Representations are not allowed to stabilize, actions withdraw from images, constantly escaping readings, playing tricks without minds and bodies.”

Fluera's performance description reminded me of how I experience situations where they have no grip over my attention. The way of an ADHD brain work “affects the automatic reading and perception” of every given situation. While Fluera's work relates to the constant state of mind of one performer, In A Deficit Delight, we aim to disturb the “state” of the scene. When a scene seems to be understood or forms a coherent image of what is in front of our eyes, a “disturbance” is added and recontextualizes it.

Some scenes in the listening part

Aasa enters the cube and begins sharing her personal encounter with vomiting. Like all the text in the performance, her narrative incorporates sensory-related words, emphasizing the sensory systems:

When I was little I was afraid of dinosaurs. I was quivering while trying to hold back the cough that wanted to escape through my throat. My hands were clammy and felt sticky as I was rubbing them together. My stomach felt heavy and I could no longer resist the force of liquid that wanted to slide out of my throat. It felt like an explosion

²⁹ Florin Fluera, Unimages 2017 | <https://www.ffluera.ro/2018/06/unimages.html>

going through my body. Suddenly, there was a burning sensation in my throat and my nostrils were filled with the smell of vomit.

From another cube corner, another dance emerges and begins dancing without any accompanying music. Aasa leaves the cube. Just after, a group of dancers slowly enters the stage, forming a line as they traverse the space.

Amidst their deliberate steps, a few sounds and actions punctuate the atmosphere. Marbles drop to the floor, a bouncing ball rolls across the stage, and a performer seated amongst the audience answers a phone call, recounting their experience of watching a performance. The "Take on me" song is played and stopped a few times infrequently on the sound system from different directions. Suddenly the dancers are breaking their slow walk and starting walking around the stage until they stop unanimously. Their movement stirs the air, causing the reflective material and walls of the room to become alive and rustle audibly. As the audience's gaze becomes immersed in the swirling motion, a commercial begins playing from another speaker. The dancers walk slowly backward, tapping on their feet, playing with the intensity of their feet' sound while walking, jumping, and stomping. When they stop, another dancer starts her text while rubbing herself on the frozen group of dancers in the corner of the room. The text is not fluid, as her attention oscillates between her spoken thoughts and the sensations arising from her contact with the other dancer's body. Abruptly, she launches into a solo accompanied by the song "Ice Ice Baby." This is already the 4th known song that is played, and At this juncture, it becomes evident that the music encompasses a range of genres, deviating from a singular style.

The solo finishes when the rest of the dancers are joining Ida's stomping. They also shout, contract their muscles, and slowly travel out of the silver cube and back again from another corner. During that time, Oskar stays inside and dances a solo on the rhythm of the stomping sound that the group feet produce. As the group travels around the cube, the stomping sound's source keeps changing direction.

The group and Oskar meet again for a diagonal turning line in the cube's center. All the dancers are touching each other while the line is turning. Edith is starting to talk, and during that time a Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody is beginning to play, first low and from one speaker and then louder and louder while the source of the music is traveling. Edith is talking louder and louder, trying to be heard in what can see as a dogfight for attention between the music and her story.

The touching line scene with Edith's text abruptly stops to a cover of the "take me to church" music track which is playing loud from all the speakers at the same time while the dancers are repeating a fast-dancing sequence as they cross the stage in a messy line. It is clear that they are performing the same dance routine although they are not synced. This scene is also suddenly ending with a high-pitched text performed by Aasa while walking out and around the cube.

The "Listening" part of the performance aims to depict the fluid nature of attention, where it constantly shifts between different elements. Scenes are presented and intentionally disrupted, reflecting how attention can be easily diverted or fragmented. "A Deficit Delight" seeks to disturb and recontextualize scenes that appear understood or coherent. Various scenes unfold, while sounds and actions appear sporadically accompanied by changing music genres and parts of songs. These scenes create a sense of dissonance and challenge the audience's attention and perception.

At this point, I would like to jump forward in time and skip a few scenes to the meditation scene, which starts when William is finishing his text about the experience of breaking up with his boyfriend.

Meditation

The meditation scene serves as a comedic interlude, drawing inspiration from a five-minute YouTube video clip intended for kids.³⁰ In the background, a female voice guides a meditation, describing child-friendly imagery. Meanwhile, the dancers crawl on the floor, rubbing their bodies against it. This task of pressing their skin, flesh, and bones against the surface was employed during the creative process to shift the focus to bodily sensations and foster a connection with the present moment. Shifting attention to the sensations of the body serves as an anchor for awareness, a practice commonly found in well-being and anger management techniques.³¹ Gradually, the dancers move to one side of the cube and position themselves under the audience chairs, with only their legs extending outward. This placement introduces a new way for the audience to experience the performance, as they are now prompted to look beneath themselves.

Some of the meditation text:

Hi there and welcome to this five minute meditation for kids now imagine you're meditating on top of a mystical mountain you were sitting cross legged your back is up straight and your eyes are closed your hands are resting on your knees in any way they feel comfortable that's great you look just like a Yogi master soon you will feel like one too you know your mind is very powerful you can train it to focus on your energy field now with your eyes closed start to focus on your breathing good just notice how the air feels flowing in went out of your nose and mouth now just like a Yogi master focus your mind on the energy of your body even though you were sitting still you may feel how much amazing energy there is in your body brilliant allow your belly to relax now imagine looking out from the top of your mystical mountain what is the view like from up here it must be pretty amazing you are so high up you are above the clouds in fact you are above thoughts any worries or thoughts you may have had just watch them float by underneath you like the clouds all that exists here on top of your mountain is your awareness of how you feel and a deep sense of peace just continue to breathe and enjoy meditating here high up on your mountain.

³⁰ [5 minutes Meditation for kids | You Tube](#)

³¹ <https://hminnovations.org/people>

Around halfway through the meditation scene, all the dancers, except one, are crawling out of the cube. One dancer, Panissara, crawls back from underneath the chair and asks one of the audience members for their blindfold. She gets up to the cube's center and declares: "I'm going to show you something", covers her eyes with the blindfold, and starts a solo. In the solo, she plays with the dimmer task shifting between thickness and softness qualities in her muscles. It is the first moment of the work where the atmosphere is relaxed, and the tension is dropped, but it doesn't hold for long. A small object is hitting the mirroring foil, gradually getting louder and more intense as the scene evolves. Some audience members mention that it sounds like heavy rain. The rain stops, and a traveling humming from outside the cube begins. Small flashlights are turned on, and the dancers are singing "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen in a scene resembling the song's original video clip. These hard shifts in the scenes were a challenge for me to do, but they directly represent how I work. On the one hand, I enjoy diving into a scene such as Panissara Solo, which allows me to let go and relax. On the other hand, my associative thinking and sensing constantly break into a new direction, which might seem irrelevant to an outside eye.

The mess

The chaos scene takes all the previously introduced elements and throws them into an organized mess that might perceive as random. Movement, text, sound, and light intertwine as they reappear in a chaotic order. The stage becomes a collage of layered elements, each iteration adding more complexity to the mix. As the scene climaxes, the atmosphere becomes frantic, filled with a jangle of sounds, scents, dynamic and very slow movements, random text, and half stories. It's a sensory overload that intends to immerse the audience in an overload of stimuli.

The chaotic scene of layered elements reflects what individuals with ADHD frequently face in trying to manage their attention and regulate their impulses. This unpredictability and inattention lead to sensory overload and difficulty in prioritizing and filtering information.

After the performance, the audience reaction was varied - some were overawed, some irritated, and some felt at home and wanted more elements.

The end

In the end scene, the whole song “the hills are alive with the Sound of Music” is played while all the performers are “stuck” in a repetitive movement for the duration of the song. The repetitive movements are exhausted for a while. Other elements in the scene are changing; It is done while a song is playing in the background, then without sound, then while a commercial is playing, and then again on a song that is playing and passing through the surround system around the audience. During this last song, the performers slowly lift their gaze and open out towards the audience while the repetitions get smaller. It is as if the performer's attention is leaving the body and a go outwards toward the audience. A sudden blackout mark the end of the performance.

Audience responds.

As I was not sure how to measure the success of this project in connection to the questions that I have presented in the problem statement I thought to share two reactions from audience members. The first from a mother who's child is diagnosed with ADHD. The second from a person with ADHD.

1. 29. April 2023

Hello Yaniv,

I want to congratulate you and your cast on a very powerful performance today. I felt that I was taken into the consciousness of another person (you) with a sure and sensitive hand. It certainly helped me to be more understanding of those who have this different way of perceiving the world and took me back to incidents when bringing up our son, xxxx. I wish I had seen this piece sixteen years earlier! xxxx and I are on the waiting list to see it tomorrow at 14.00 and I hope very much that it will help us as a family to talk about xxxx (and xxx) experience of

living with this condition. I believe that this piece needs to be seen by a wider public and wish you the greatest of luck in the future! Warmest wishes,

2. 29. April 2023

Congratulation Yaniv!

Just a beautiful piece that resonated so much with what is going on in my head. I felt the piece like a bridge to be able to explain for my nearest what this all about. Like xxx for example. AND you manage to tell it in what I feel; a shutter way. I really enjoyed it thank you so much.

In this chapter, I explored the performance of "A Deficit Delight" and its connection to the theme of ADHD and hypersensitivity. The dancers, embodying the restless energy and hypersensitivity associated with ADHD, engage in tasks aimed at activating their body sensations and and the playful approach to the tasks simulating attention shifts.

During the performance, scenes are presented and intentionally disrupted, reflecting the fluid nature of attention and the challenges faced by individuals with attention regulation problems. The performers utilize various techniques to enhance their sensory perception and engage with the present moment. The stage design, lighting, music, and sounds contribute to the overall sensory experience, amplifying the sense of sensory overload.

I have transcribed and discussed specific scenes from the performance, showcasing the diverse elements and their connections to the working process.

I have quoted two audience members reaction to the performance.

Conclusion

In this MA project, I have embarked on an artistic exploration centered around ADHD and hypersensitivity as influential factors on creative processes and performances, and the audience's experience of these. The project aimed to delve into the background of these themes, understand their impact on the creative process and embodiment of dancers, and investigate how they shape the audience's experience in terms of immersion and self-perception.

The project's theoretical background and reflection provided an overview of ADHD and hypersensitivity, exploring their clinical terms, symptoms, and characteristics. Personal experience as an individual diagnosed with ADHD was shared, emphasizing its relevance to the artistic project. The concept of hypersensitivity and its connection to sensory processing sensitivity (HSP) were also examined. The wider societal context, including attention regulation challenges and sensory overload, was discussed to foster a deeper understanding of ADHD and hypersensitivity in contemporary reality.

I set out to explore two main questions. Firstly, whether a performance can serve as an ADHD simulation, and if it can provide those without the condition an experience of the sensation of having ADHD. Second, if oversensing can act as a tool for a creative process. The project's process involved a creative journey that embraced research and playfulness. Working methods were developed, incorporating guidelines such as listening, avoiding attachment to meaning, returning to technique, playing with tasks, and maintaining a "yes" attitude. Workshops and collaborations with external teachers expanded possibilities and explored themes of voice and active meditation. The process aimed to enhance sensory perception, shift attention, and tap into the immediate nature of a performance experience.

The performance, titled "Attention Deficit Delight," was the last stage (except from this paper) of the project, presenting the manifestation of the research and working methods. My aim was to effectively simulate ADHD characteristics, offer insights into attention deficit dramaturgy, and demonstrate the value of heightened sensory perception in the creative

process. Through the performance, both performers and audience members were immersed in an experience that challenged perception, engaged the senses, and shed light on the complexities of ADHD and hypersensitivity. This “embodied experience” provided the audience/individuals without ADHD with the opportunity to comprehend some of the complex sensations associated with the condition.

Based on the above, as well as on feedback from the audience and the performers, I conclude that a performance can serve as an ADHD simulation, and provide those without the condition an experience of the sensation of having ADHD. And second, oversensing and charging the body with overstimulation was the base of creation for all the movement material and scenes in this project.

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