

CI Science Day 2022

14/07/2022, Warsaw



The relevance of contact improvisation goes beyond the domain of performative arts or aesthetics. People engaging in CI often experience a heightened sense of connection with one another and with themselves. CI becomes a social practice where basic themes of human interactions and sociality are exhibited, perhaps more vividly than in everyday situations. For these reasons, it draws the attention of researchers wanting to study topics such as somatic and embodied communication, interpersonal coordination, social cognition, empathy, closeness and togetherness, group dynamics or looking for effective educational, therapeutic and social interventions.

During this meeting, we would like to approach CI dance as a laboratory situation, creating opportunities to study the foundations of human connection. We invite dancers, researchers and scientists to join us for a full day workshop/seminar exploring this topic.

The programme includes:

- Keynote: **Nita Little**, *Right Relations: What more can be present when we touch* (online lecture), *Right Relations: what we bring to touching* (online workshop)
- Workshop: Mini introduction to the **PRISMA** (Julian Zubek & Klara Łuczniak)
- Round table discussion on methods to study social phenomena through dance/performative arts.
- We invite proposals for sharing/presentation and activities from participants.

We are looking forward to hearing from you about whether you would like to join us and if you have some particular ideas or practices for sharing. If you are interested in participation, please fill in the following form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf-AHG01Q16C3dJKRrmmEva2Q808tAHimxY2mtLKNldgK4w4w/viewform>

We intend to invite approximately 16 people for the full-day seminar but hope to open the keynote lecture to more. We will send you confirmation of participation by the 15th of May.

For practical reasons, this day will be held in English only.

Keynote: Nita Little, PhD**Right Relations: What more can be present when we touch**

Two things change the lived meaning of human touch – our attentional practices of time, and our actions of conception, the ground of which lies in our imagination and our ability to tap the creative powers to conceive something that is not present to us in the moment. The former allows us to be in communion with our partner. The latter, to recognize what communion can be and so be moved by it. Both of these gifts offer to us an ability to move beyond responsive participation with our partners and to gain a practice of what Thich Naht Hanh called “interbeing” and what Karen Barad calls reconfiguring “intra-actions” of being. Dancing, we could call the touching we do communion – the root of which means “sharing.” However, one wonders if that term goes quite far enough into grasping the entangled nature of our engagements. How we dance is how we are present to one another as human beings, to the more than human we also are, and to the great mother herself, the earth, in which we arise. This presentation takes us through the conceptual to the practical in an offering that studies our relational practices in a call to move beyond cultural determinants and hopefully, if not finally, “get it right,” by unpacking what can be meant by “right relations!”

Keywords: right relations, tactile attention, co-creation, emergence, intra-action, interbeing

Right Relations: What we bring to touching

This workshop will introduce students to a critical understanding of the value of attentional practices in our touching relations. Following from the keynote address, our dancing will focus on the impact of our time practices and our conception of individuation, difference, and the flesh in the formation of our moving contact. Our work aims to enhance the quality of our somatic communication through developing the physicality of our tactile attention. We will come to understand communication as communion, question the limits of our cultural models, and engage with creativity, not as something achieved, but as something already present and ready to be activated.

Bio: Nita Little is an activist for relational intelligence through improvisational dance practices that began with the emergence and development of Contact Improvisation (CI) in 1972, a path provoked by Steve Paxton. Nita has remained on the cutting edge of this practice for 50 years, training generations of Contact Improvisation practitioners and teachers worldwide. A dancer, teacher, choreographer, and dance theorist, Little received her PhD in Performance Studies in 2014. She now returns to international touring invited by dance companies, festivals, conferences and universities to teach, lecture, and compose emergent events. Her writing investigates ecological actions of attention and the creative potentials present in entangled relations. She directs an international network of dance research ensembles – the Institute for the Study of Somatic Communication (the ISSC) which has remained in suspension with the pandemic, but will return to practice soon.

Workshop: Mini introduction to the PRISMA (Julian Zubek & Klara Łuczniak)

PRISMA is a method for studying the embodied aspects of social interactions. It draws from the phenomenological tradition and somatic practices. During the PRISMA experiment researchers use their own experience of embodied interaction as a tender instrument for studying intersubjectivity. In this workshop we will perform experiments in small groups and discuss the results to get a taste of the potential of this method.

De Jaegher, H., Pieper, B., Clénin, D., & Fuchs, T. (2017). Grasping intersubjectivity: an invitation to embody social interaction research. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 1-33.

This workshop is co-hosted by Dr Julian Zubek and Dr Klara Łuczniak.

Dr Julian Zubek is a research fellow at the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Warsaw, a Human Interactivity and Language Lab member. He researches the border between psycholinguistics and artificial intelligence. He is fascinated by the dynamic aspects of interpersonal interactions and explores people's ability to coordinate on many levels and time scales. He treats movement coordination that occurs spontaneously between people as the key to understanding the basic social mechanisms that determine the formation of language and culture. He dances CI and practices Chinese martial arts.

Dr Klara Łuczniak is a research fellow at the School of Psychology at the University of Plymouth (UK). Her research interests focus on how people collaborate, exchange ideas and inspire each other while creating together. She uses open-score group improvisation structures to learn about spontaneous group dynamics. Having a strong background in psychology, cognitive science and dance, she has developed an eclectic, multiple disciplinary approach to her studies, as she seamlessly shifts between being a researcher and a dance practitioner.

CI Science Day is a satellite event of 13th edition Warsaw CI Flow festival:
<http://www.polandcontactfestival.com/en/>

Media patronage: Avant (<http://avant.edu.pl/en/>)

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952324.



Human Interactivity
and Language Lab

