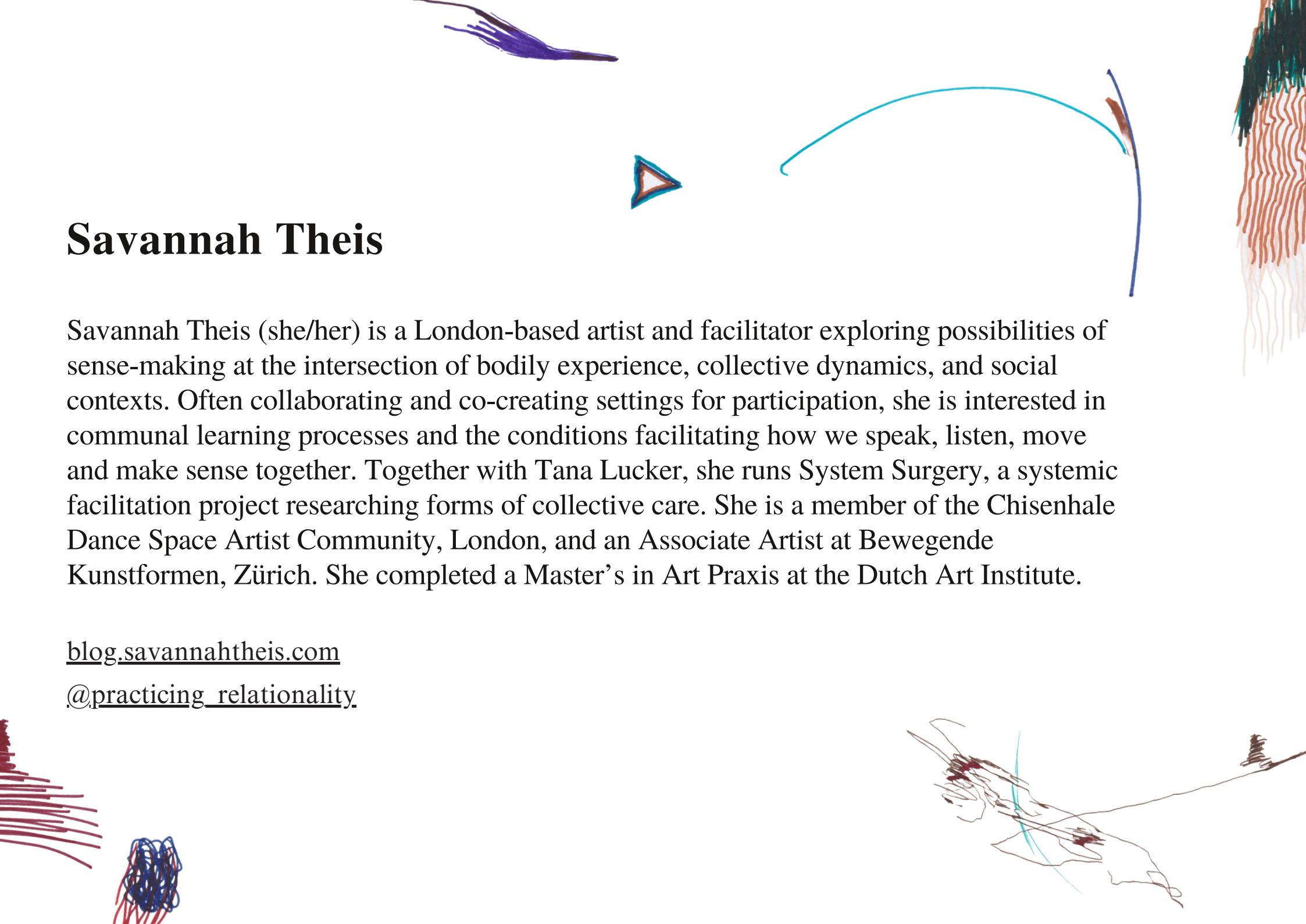


Savannah Theis



Savannah Theis (she/her) is a London-based artist and facilitator exploring possibilities of sense-making at the intersection of bodily experience, collective dynamics, and social contexts. Often collaborating and co-creating settings for participation, she is interested in communal learning processes and the conditions facilitating how we speak, listen, move and make sense together. Together with Tana Lucke, she runs System Surgery, a systemic facilitation project researching forms of collective care. She is a member of the Chisenhale Dance Space Artist Community, London, and an Associate Artist at Bewegende Kunstformen, Zürich. She completed a Master's in Art Praxis at the Dutch Art Institute.

blog.savannahtheis.com

[@practicing_relationality](https://twitter.com/practicing_relationality)

between readings (2025)

Collaborative performance developed with Shuyi Gao.

Commissioned by Alternative Roots: Festival of ESEA Performances and Communities, curated by Kakilang and Ming Strike.

The first presentation of between readings took place at Hoxton Hall, a site layered with histories of gathering, listening, and exchange. Once a music hall and later a Quaker meeting house, the space carries an enduring resonance of attention - a tradition of listening on multiple levels: internal, relational, and environmental.

In this evolving performance, Shuyi Gao and Savannah Theis engage in readings: of light and dark, stillness and movement, presence and blur. Reading becomes a form of listening, an act of interpreting gestures and attuning to what exists between presence and absence.

Bodies move through these readings: repeating, breaking, beginning again. Between balance and imbalance, fragility and strength, the artists invite the audience to gather, listen, and read together.



between readings performance, Hoxton Hall, London (2025)



between readings performance, Hoxton Hall, London (2025)



between readings performance, Hoxton Hall, London (2025)

SOMNARIUM (2025)

Together with members of bewegende kunstformen, I co-developed SOMNARIUM for the Festival der Regionen in Braunau am Inn, Austria. Responding to the 2025 theme 'Realistische Träume,' SOMNARIUM was a translucent pop-up installation merging architecture, sound, drawing, movement, and Processwork-inspired philosophy. Passers-by entered to participate in guided sessions of embodied dreaming and drawing, with their dream images forming a living archive on the installation's walls. Two experimental workshops further explored collective aspirations through playful engagement. As voice performer and script writer, I created a meditation to guide participants into a liminal, wakeful-dreaming state, using drawing to access emerging insights. Rooted in the belief that dreams offer meaningful guidance, the project encouraged reflection on dream meanings, connecting personal and communal visions through collective sharing.



SOMNARIUM installation, Festival der Regionen, Braunau am Inn (2025)



SOMNARIUM installation, Festival der Regionen, Braunau am Inn (2025)



SOMNARIUM installation, Festival der Regionen, Braunau am Inn (2025)

Symptom Scores: movement research workshops (2023 - ongoing)

Symptom Scores is a workshop process and movement research method I have been developing since 2019. It draws on tools from art, somatic practices, and facilitation approach Processwork, to explore body symptoms through drawing, movement improvisation, choreographic exercises and reflective practices. Guiding participants in different modes of perception and interchanging between roles of performer and observer, the sessions foster a sensitive approach and invite active listening, 'embodied dreaming,' and experimentation through individual, pair and group exploration. The workshop centers on transforming participants' drawings of bodily symptoms into movement. These visual representations serve as choreographic guides, with the symptom itself acting as the choreographer in generating movement possibilities. As a choreographic as well as relational process, themes of collective care, ritual and embodied cognition inform the project. The workshop is part of a larger research project comprising movement workshops, collective sense-making processes and experiments in participatory performance.



Symptom Scores: movement research workshop, Chisenhale Dance Space, London (2024)



Symptom Scores: movement research workshop, Rote Fabrik, Zürich (2024)



Symptom Scores: movement research workshop, Rote Fabrik, Zürich (2024)



Symptom Scores: Sensing with the trouble, Antiuniversity Now Festival, Conway Hall (2023)



Symptom Scores with team exploring a shared question, House of Annetta (2023)

Symptom Scores: collective sense-making practice (2023 - ongoing)

In a world increasingly shaped by cultural, economic, and technological systems treating subjects as disembodied minds, I've been interested in the potentials of Symptom Scores as a collective sense-making practice. Part - skillshare, -embodied 'divination,' -sensing school I have offered the process in various communal settings, including experimental education events, artist residencies, and with members of an activist network. These gatherings explore how Symptom Scores can be applied within a group or team - as a method for learning and embodied guidance - where participants reflect on an individual or shared question related to their work. Participants are invited to consider, "What if the sensations or perceptions you experience through your body offer insights into your question?" Viewing this practice through the lens of systems and field theory, participants are encouraged to trust their sensory experiences and investigate how these perceptions connect to their chosen theme. The process provides tools for cultivating embodied, perceptual, and relational capacities, surfacing less tangible experiences and understandings.



Symptom Scores, Delfina Foundation (2024)



Play forms workshop, Atelier Gouwstraat 17, Rotterdam (2023)



Play forms workshop, Atelier Gouwstraat 17, Rotterdam (2023)

Play forms workshop series (2023)

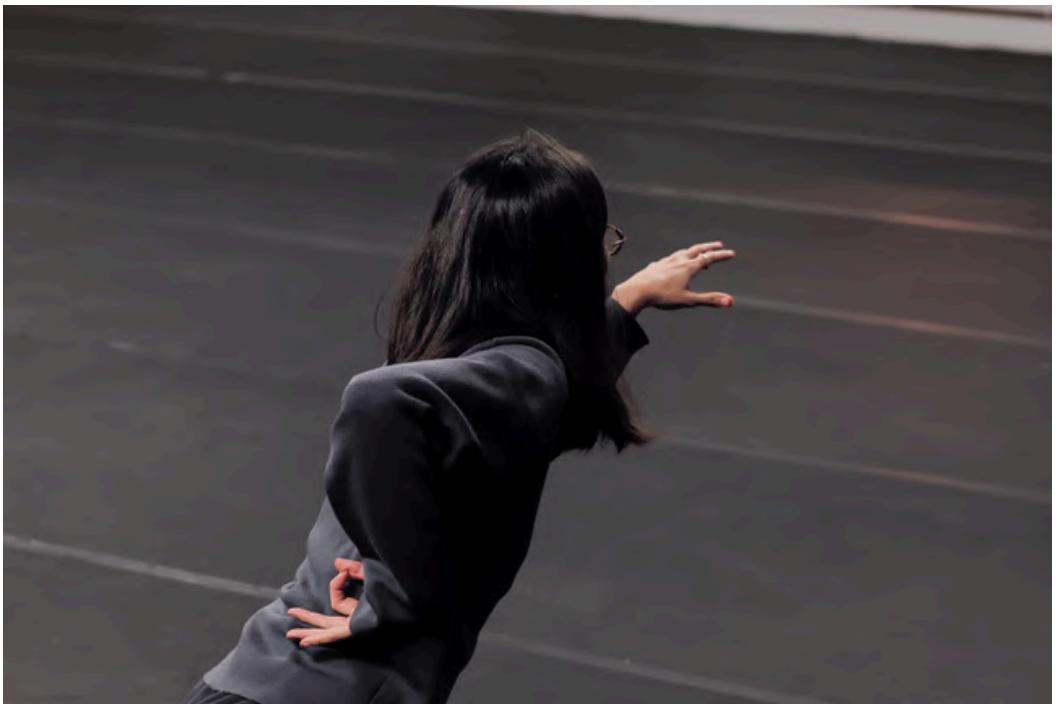
As part of a design research project supported by Stimuleringsfonds, Rotterdam based artist Maike Hemmers commissioned me to devise and facilitate a series of workshops for a small group of designers with backgrounds in fashion and architectural design. Exploring what a collaborative design process involving body knowing could look like, we experimented with interactive exercises, shaping our embodied understanding of the conditions supporting freedom and play. Broadly informed by research into play forms and Sara Ahmed's concept of queer phenomenology, re-directing our bodies and perspectives, our experiences of where and when we feel playful acted as a guide for creating forms through movement, drawing, processes of translation, and interaction with different materials. This collaborative process generated designs for an interactive installation of Maike Hammers' work at Drawing Center Diepenheim. Feeding into this were questions such as: What do we produce when we move through an embodied process together? How does the experience of play come into form? How might such forms invite new or unexpected interactions and relations?



Play forms workshop, online (2023)

Symptom Scores R&D Lab (2022)

A Seeding Space Talent-Development bursary from London Performance Studios supported me to lead a research and development lab with movement and arts practitioners to deepen the creative directions of my Symptom Scores research. Informed by a somatic and political lens, the project explores possibilities for experientially unfolding information within bodily symptoms and reflecting on their relationships to collective and socio-environmental dynamics. During the lab we explored transmitting experiential information through different sensory registers, including drawing, touch, voice and movement improvisation, experimenting with the choreographic potentials of the process. Some of the questions guiding this included: What forms of information are expressed in our symptoms? How to make the information in our body experiences more available? What happens when you enter an experience on my behalf? What is held in our symptoms for us collectively?



Symptom Scores R&D Lab, London Performance Studios (2022)



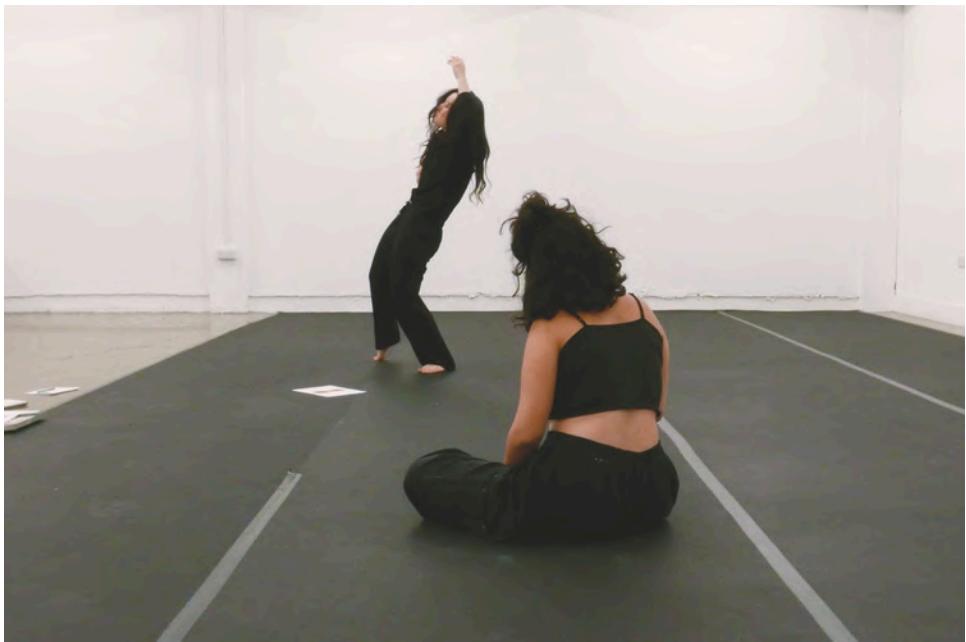
Symptom Scores R&D Lab, London Performance Studios (2022)



Symptom Scores R&D Lab, London Performance Studios (2022)



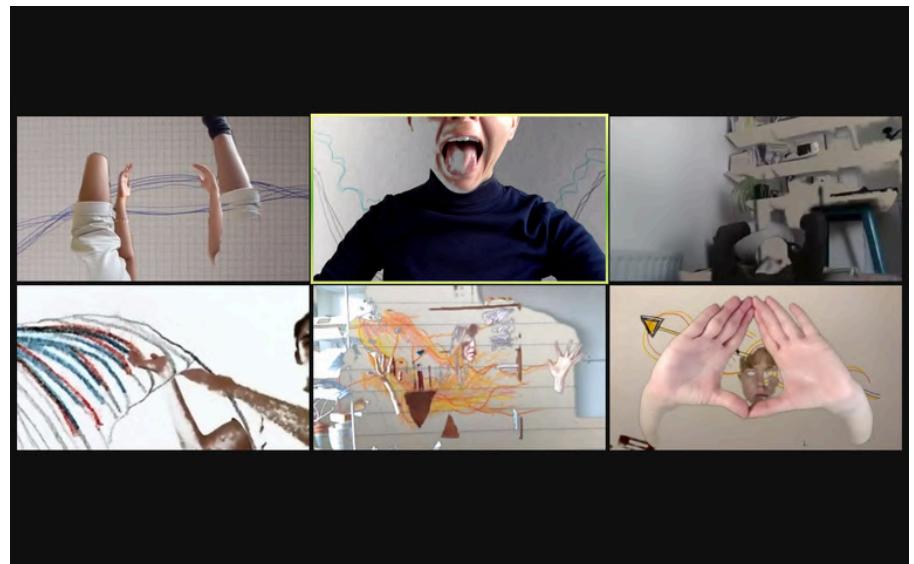
Symptom Scores workshop, Derbyshire Artist Residency Programme (2022)



Symptom Scores workshop, London Performance Studios (2022)

Symptom Scores (2021 - ongoing)

Since 2019 I have been developing participatory community workshops for collectively researching creative ways of relating to symptoms and body experiences. Exercises involving improvised processes like drawing, moving and interacting guide embodying and expanding information within symptoms, like a form of dream-work. Underpinning the sessions is the idea from somatic facilitation paradigm, Processwork, that symptoms have a social context and are not only our own, but expressions of a wider field of experiences and relations. Exploring together offers a space of mutual care, inviting noticing differences and correspondences within the shared field of experiences, and providing some relief from the isolation often brought upon us by our symptoms. Structured with time for personal and shared reflection, the sessions invite discovering different ways of perceiving ourselves and the world by considering the relationships between bodily symptoms and the social and cultural environment in which we live. Doing this together supports communal consciousness-raising, imaginative consensus-building and tools for new 'response-abilities', enhancing a sense of shared ownership of experiences and moving away from pathologising the individual.



Symptom Scores on Zoom, online workshop series (2021)



In the encounter we become something else workshop for Maike Hemmers' This Deep Becomes Palpable exhibition, Kunstinstituut Melly, Rotterdam (2022)

In the encounter we become something else (2022)

In the spirit of love, friendship and shared interests in creative practices, two groups were invited by Maike Hemmers for workshops lasting a few days. The groups used drawing, movement and somatic methods from Processwork, facilitated by artist Savannah Theis, to explore personal sensations and symptoms, support, collectivity, and colour. Each workshop moved from mapping sensations felt in the body through drawing, to focusing on a specific area, translating these observations into a movement, and exchanging this with another participant. These steps facilitated slowing down, trusting, and perceiving different ways of relating to bodily information. Evolving from this, every participant took turns in interacting with the soft sculptures to support their momentary needs and desires. With each of these interactions, new configurations and possibilities for what the sculptures could offer were discovered, which went on to shape the installation of sculptures on view. Embedded in this were the group's investigations of the potentials of the soft sculptures for activating support around our individual and collective needs and experiences.

Exhibition hand-out, Kunstinstituut Melly

Sounding Group, Psychosis Therapy Project (2021)

Running from July – August 2021 at the Psychosis Therapy Project, I facilitated an online space exploring voice and listening through conversation and collaborative writing. Shaped in collaboration with those attending, the sessions involved group reflection, storytelling and collaborative song-writing.



Sounding Group, online workshop series, Psychosis Therapy Project (2021)



Correspondences. A Broadcast on Bodily Sensing Delivered in Voice Packets, a voice message project (2020)

Correspondences. A Bodcast on Bodily Sensing Delivered in Voice Packets (2020)

Collaborative project co-produced with Valentina Curandi

*Published online by ‘a voice message project’, curated by Ines Marita Schärer
Read the transcripts and listen to the Voice Packets on the project website:
<https://www.0800001216.ch/archive/>*

A series of voice packets unfolding the theoretical and experiential proposition of organ speech and sensibility, in the complexity and diversity of sensorial bodily experiences interpreted as a shared body of sound.

Using sound to channel and map bodily sensations, archiving day by day – or response by response – two female voices articulate a discourse on the body that tries to challenge notions of its ‘sound state’ as societally proper, normal and healthy. By sensing inner bodily movements – or their coinciding happenings –, pains, sensations and symptoms are listened to in their emerging qualities of signalling. They are then explored as signals with which to work through one’s condition and the social conditioning one is immersed in. The voice packets navigate the topics of Body as compass; Archives of bodily sounds; Organs speaking metaphors and Organ speech; Symptom/Sensation; A Sound state; Interlacing narratives on body parts; Patient and Therapist Canon; Belief systems; Conflict Bodies; Public Feelings; Dream Figures.

The experiments and the literary references exposed in the audios intend to cast a light on the psychosomatic nature of the body as a continuum of relations and interdependences. The interlacing of theory and practice is in debt to the research and the writings of authors such as Elizabeth Wilson (Gut Feminism), Ann Cvetkovich (Depression. A Public Feeling), Audre Lorde (Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power), and adrienne maree brown (Pleasure Activism). Underlying principles from the therapeutic-activist paradigm, Processwork, guide this experiment.

Working at first as material in a process of exchange, the voice packets created in sound editing and post-production address new listeners and potential new experimenters. In the effort of embracing a shared body of sound, correspondences are found in the voices aiming to reveal patterns for subjective shared modes of existence.



Bodymind Space/Time workshop at Lordship Hub, London (2019)



Bodymind Space/Time workshop at Lordship Hub, London (2019)

Bodymind Space/Time workshop series at Lordship Hub, London (2019)

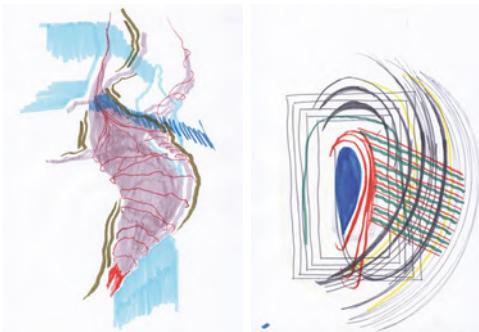
Workshop sessions offered at my local community hub throughout 2019. Drawing from a range of fields including movement, art and embodied somatic practices, participants were invited to experiment with creative exercises in relating to themselves and one another. Searching for possibilities to reclaim space/time within the constricting conditions of a city where time and space are relentlessly commodified, the ongoing aim of the series was to explore how affinities and practices of mutual support are materialised and sustained, and how our bodies might guide us in this process. The sessions provided a space for exploring the multifaceted ways in which people can be supported to come together and listen to themselves and one another.



Participatory Performance with Merso Art School students, Acropolis (2018)



Participatory Performance workshop, Merso Art School (2018)



Participant body sensation drawings, (2018)

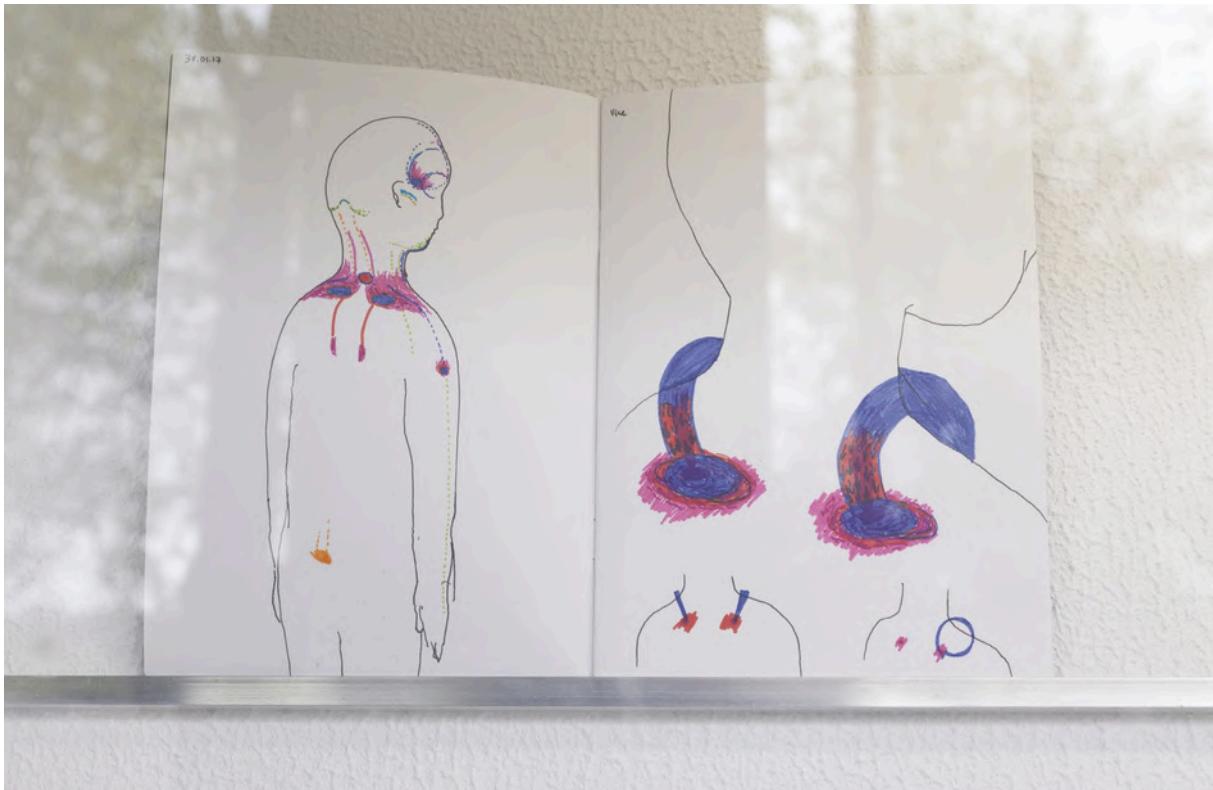
Participatory Performance workshop at Merso Art School, Athens (2018)

In March 2018 I was invited by artist and educator, Despina Sevasti to lead a process-led participatory performance workshop with her students in Athens. Structured with a series of exercises based on my continuing exploration of the knowledge emerging in the body, the workshop facilitated embodied sensory processes involving drawing, movement, collaboration, dynamics of relationship and voice, leading to a participatory performance overlooking the Acropolis.



Body Sensation Notebooks (2017 – Ongoing)

Theis' body scan drawings have evolved over years of daily practice, in which she documents her bodily sensations. They are as beautiful and evocative as they are disconcerting data visualisations, which emphasise, distort or exaggerate aspects of the body we recognise from our own subjective experience. They have both spiritual associations - forms extending outside the body, as in Symbolist art and aura photography - and medical associations - similar to infra red and ultrasound scans, which emphasise aspects different to those we recognise as the body. These graphic representations demonstrate her interest in mapping the body as landscape, and the influence of Fluxus event scores in the visualisation of movement, gesture and sensation. *Excerpt from text by Sophia Kosmoaglou*



Body Sensation Notebook, de Kijkdoos, Amsterdam (2017)



In Support: Violence of support, de Kijkdoos, Amsterdam (2017)

Body Sensation Notebooks (2017 – Ongoing)

Exhibited as part of In Support: Violence of support Group Exhibition, de Kijkdoos, Amsterdam curated by Baha Görkem Yalim

“Providing support and being supportive implies not only being in contact, but being right up against the subject of concern, and taking it on-board, making common cause with it.”

— Céline Condorelli, Support Structures

The installations in this second strand of In Support address the violence that comes with or is caused by support as well as the idea of vulnerability and its relation to assemblages.

Vulnerability and assembly here are concepts supported by Judith Butler's body of work. As Isabelle Lorey, borrowing from Butler, explains: “Vulnerability becomes an extension of birth because initial survival already depends on social networks, on sociality and labour.” Resonating with this, the installations presented in the vitrines are of a very fragile nature, delicately poised yet powerfully transmitting their demands.

Savannah Theis's notebooks contain drawings of bodily sensations made as part of a daily drawing practice, a technique of recording and translating the corporeal into visible forms. Presenting the drawings as they are, within notebooks, demands a different kind of attention to the act of exhibiting, since selecting one page/drawing from a notebook means obscuring all the others, and further evokes the violence between the private and public in relation to support and communizing causes.

Excerpt from exhibition text, de Kijkdoos

Practicing (How to follow the individuating process?) (2017)

Savannah Theis cartwheels across stage, energetically bringing the audience's attention to the stage and herself. Her laptop is set up so that she can show drawings from notebooks projected via webcam on a larger screen behind her. She introduces what she is about to do, share some of her drawings in her notebooks. She calls them "practices" and says, "I wanted to share with you some notes on my thinking and reading with the body." The development of her drawing practice takes form in six books, where the colors, shapes and lines help identify the quality of the experience she was having when she drew them. She presents the drawings by interacting with the webcam, deliberately moving selected pages towards and away from it. Talking about the internal conflict of speaking and not speaking, she says, "my inhibitions to speak affect my ability to speak up, so I want to practice."



Practicing (How to follow the individuating process?), lecture-performance as part of Maelstrom Slow Dance ~ Graduation Acts, Huis Oostpool, Arnhem (2017)

She shows drawings that look like energy radiating out of the throat area, asking, "how to follow my body and experience?" and, "How do I know that my experience is reliable?" These self-searching questions appear in Savannah's live observations of her own body. Sometimes the connection between her body and the things she is doing are very simple: she says that her mouth is dry and drinks water. Partway through the lecture performance she puts the laptop on her lap and turns it to face the audience while looking through a notebook from her own perspective, going into the feelings ascribed to and associated with colors, textures and line qualities. Beyond the close-up of the pages, the audience sees itself projected on the screen. In the last, most recent book, she tells us "this is the first time I drew my impatience" and "another headache, but drawn from another angle", "feeling inverted, a few days before coming here".

Ray Brassier remarked "The line drawings are enveloped in performance charting affective states of physical and psychological sensation. This prompts a question about how to follow an individuation process (psychological and ontological) and reminds us that Lacan distinguishes between the 'I' (the subject of enunciation, the pace from where one speaks) and the self. It could have been solipsistic, but it wasn't because the affects she shows are experiences of the 'I' and not of the 'self'. They are charges of the 'I'. This 'I' could be anyone's 'I'. The junction between the I and the self is foregrounded. What's forceful in this piece is its simplicity and directness."

Text by Marianna Maruyama, Dutch Art Institute



Line Exercise, Aït Ben Haddou, (2017)



Line Exercise, Aït Ben Haddou, (2017)

Line Exercise (2017)

Participatory performance, performed during On Praxis – If I Can't Dance Research trip presentations (DAI), Aït Ben Haddou

In physics, a wave is a disturbance transferring energy from one point to another through matter or space. Taking as a starting point a conception of the world as composed of interrelating phenomena co-arising and interfering with one another, Line Exercise is a score for moving in space in relation and reliance on other bodies.

With eyes closed, a group stands side by side creating a line. The line begins to sway side to side and maintains this movement throughout the exercise. The participants try to synchronise their movement and pay attention to the material impact of their bodies on one another. Once this process has been given significant time to deepen, the person at one end begins to walk, keeping their eyes closed, to the other end of the line and joins it again, using the other bodies as a guide to find the way. When the next person in line senses the first has completed this action, they too make their way to the other end with closed eyes. This repeats with each person leaving and rejoining the line sequentially until the group has traversed an agreed upon distance. Through this sequence, the line redistributes across space.



Practices in Conversation: What happens when we destabilise our habitual points of reference? (2015)



Practices in Conversation: What happens when we destabilise our habitual points of reference? (2015)

Practices in Conversation: What happens when we destabilise our habitual points of reference? (2015)

Process-led performance exercise, performed for The Kitchen, Not the Restaurant Forum at Dutch Art Institute, Arnhem

The forum space was cleared of furniture and the 50+ audience invited to stand shoulder to shoulder, back to back along the length of the room, and begin to sway side to side with closed eyes. Facilitated prompts, drew participants' attention to specific aspects of the situation. What happens when you concentrate on the way in which the movement moves through the line? What happens when you relax or when you apply pressure or force to the movement? Along some parts of the line, quiet conversations and distractions took place.

The audience was then asked to explore the room, visually and sensorily, becoming aware of the edges of the space, where the wall meets the floor, what the texture is of the surfaces. They were instructed to close their eyes again and move through the space if they wished, sensing concrete effects taking place in the body when moving through space with other bodies. Different patterns of behaviour began emerging, some people moved to the edges of the room, observing what was happening. Others kept moving with eyes closed, sometimes encountering other participants, navigating through touch.

Following the exercise, participants were invited to reflect on the experience. Someone commented on the use of language to mediate and manipulate a set of social relations, and how this might compare to a market, yoga class, or auction house. Another person showed curiosity about the types of conversation arising from a collective embodied state of mind, and what facilitating such states might offer as a method for dialogue. Somebody else shared it wasn't important for them to participate and they would rather observe as an audience member what happens when vocal instructions are given to a line of performers, how the words affect the movement and how the actions of the individuals performing have an effect on the rest of the line. A fourth individual observed the dynamics occurring between people despite or in reaction to the instructions given – laughing, joking, stepping out – could be seen as little acts of resistance. What would it be like to amplify these responses, emphasising the emergence of multiple voices and complexity arising through the activity?

CURRICULUM VITAE

SAVANNAH THEIS
(she / her)

NATIONALITY
DE / CH

CONTACT
info@savannahtheis.com

EDUCATION

GROUP FACILITATION & PSYCHOTHERAPY DIPLOMA
Research Society for Processwork, London, UK, 2016 - 2025
MASTER IN ART PRAXIS
Dutch Art Institute, ArtEZ, Arhem, NL, 2014 - 2017
BACHELOR IN DRAWING AND APPLIED ARTS
University of the West of England, Bristol, UK, 2007 - 2010
EXPERIMENTELLE GESTALTUNG, Erasmus Exchange Semester
University of Arts & Industrial Design, Linz, AT, 2009

SELECTED
WORKSHOPS
TEACHING
FACILITATION

SYMPTOM SCORES *workshop*
Delfina Foundation, London, UK, 2025
TOUCHING WORDS *workshop*
Chisenhale Dance Space, London, UK, 2025
SYMPTOM SCORES *workshop*
Rote Fabrik, Zürich, CH, 2024
SYMPTOM SCORES *workshop*
Chisenhale Dance Space, London, UK, 2024
BRING IT TO THE TABLE *workshop & teaching*
Antiuniversity Open Day, London, UK, 2024
MOVING CONDITIONS *workshop series*
The Room, London, UK, 2024
PLAY FORMS *workshop series*
Atelier Gouwstraat 17, Rotterdam, NL, 2023
SYMPTOM SCORES - SENSING WITH THE TROUBLE *workshop*
Antiuniversity Now Festival, London, UK, 2023
SYSTEM SURGERY: EXPLORING STUCK-NESS *workshop*
House of Annetta, London, UK, 2023
Horizontal Practices, SYMPTOM SCORES *workshop series*
London Performance Studios, London, UK, 2022
IN THE ENCOUNTER WE BECOME SOMETHING ELSE
workshops series with Maike Hemmers
Kunstinstituut Melly, Rotterdam, NL, 2022
OUR CHANGING CLIMATE *Open Forum Series*
Processwork Scotland, online, 2021
SOUNDING GROUP *workshop series*
Psychosis Therapy Project, online, 2021
COLLECTIVE-BODY-DREAMS *workshop series*
Independent project, online, 2021
BODYMIND SPACE/TIME *workshop series*
Lordship Community Hub, London, UK, 2019
PROCESS-LED PERFORMANCE *workshop & teaching*
Merso Art School, Athens, Greece, 2018

SELECTED
EXHIBITIONS
PERFORMANCES
PRODUCTIONS

AWARDS
RESIDENCIES
GRANTS

PUBLISHING

BETWEEN READINGS *performance with Shuyi Gao*
Alternative Roots Festival, Hoxton Hall, London, UK, 2025
SOMNARIUM *installation*
Festival der Regionen, Braunau am Inn, AT, 2025
SYMPTOM SCORES *performance*
Ugly Duck, London, UK, 2023
SYMPTOM SCORES AT DARP *performance*
DARP, Derbyshire, UK, 2022
KEEP IN TOUCH *dramaturgy & voice performance with Maja Renn*
Schauspielhaus Zürich, Switzerland, 2021
CORRESPONDENCES. A BODCAST ON BODILY SENSING
DELIVERED IN VOICE PACKETS *voice performance & audio series with Valentina Curandi*
a voice message project commission, online, 2020
LINE EXERCISE *participatory performance*
Merso Art School, Athens, Greece, 2018
IN SUPPORT: VIOLENCE OF SUPPORT *group exhibition*
de Kijkdoos, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2017
PRACTICING (HOW TO FOLLOW THE INDIVIDUATING
PROCESS?) *performance, Maelstrom Slow Dance-Graduation Acts*
Huis Oostpool, Arnhem, The Netherlands, 2017
LINE EXERCISE *participatory performance*
Aït Ben Haddou, Morocco, 2017
C~C *group exhibition*
Tate, St Ives, UK, 2015
MOLECULAR REVOLUTIONS *group exhibition*
Casa de Pova, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 2015

Early Career residency, Ugly Duck
London UK, 2023
Seeding Space, London Performance Studios
London UK, 2022
Derbyshire Artist Residency Programme (DARP)
Derbyshire UK, 2022
On Praxis - If I Can't Dance Research trip (DAI),
Espace Darja Casablanca & Aït Ben Haddou,
Morocco, 2017
De Liceiras 18
Porto, Portugal, 2016
Schuurman Schimmel-Van Outerden Stichting Scholarship
The Netherlands, 2016
Molecular Revolutions (DAI), Casa de Povo
Sao Paulo, Brazil, 2015

THE BODY IS A TEACHER *selected text (forthcoming)*
Small Holdings Zine, UK, 2026
FALLING TOGETHER AT BODILY THRESHOLDS *selected text*
The Catalogue of Failures: Issue-3, UK, 2023
ON DISAPPEARANCE *one of 12 selected contributors*
published by SpellBoundPages, NL, 2018
TO AFFECT AND BE AFFECTED: A GOETHEAN WAY OF
SEEING, IN DIALOGUE (chapter contribution, INLAND Volume)
published by Dutch Art Institute / Casco Projects, NL, 2016