

Graduation Thesis
& Research Project
Ilse Leenders

Wandering Flock
A Bodily Exercise in Unison

Master Education in Arts
Piet Zwart Institute Rotterdam



Figure 01 (page 56) The participants of Wandering Flock # 06 walk concentrated in unison.

During the experience:
I thought about the trees and the wind
I did ...
I felt connected to my group of classmates,
not in an intellectual way but in a physical way.

During the experience:
I thought *collectively*
I did *look back*
I felt *part of a group*

Reflecting on the experience:
I need *more Jane ☺*
More space.
Being outside worked for me, it
was part of the physical experience.

Reflecting on the experience:
I need *slowing down*
Go out of the class worked for me

During the experience:
I thought *followed*
I did *try to move the group*
I felt *part of a system*

Reflecting on the experience:
I need *bigger space...*
to be outside and worked for me
not think

Figure 02 (page 50) Reflections of participants of Wandering Flock # 02.

While walking the Wandering Flock:
I felt *the whole*
I thought *sense of unity*
I did *was conscious of other people*

During the Wandering Flock:
I experienced these emotion(s):
1. *sense of unity*
2. *cooperativeness*
3. *as if we were one creature*

I think I felt this emotion(s) because I:
1. *tried to make sure everyone was on the same page*
2. *moved by following other people*
3. *Everyone moved while having the same purpose.*

After the Wandering Flock:
I felt in my body *universe*
this made me *(Real) sense of unity naturally.*

At this moment:
Right now I feel *I live in the earth*
and I want to *feel I'm a part of the cosmos.*

Feedback on the Wandering Flock:
The next Wandering Flock I need *more time to get used to*
worked for me.

Repeating with the same group would

Figure 03 (page 39) Reflection of a participant of Wandering Flock # 06.

「鳥のダンス」を歩きながら：
全体
統一感
周囲を意識
と感じ
と思い
した

「鳥のダンス」のあいだ：
これらの感情を経験した
1. 統一感
2. 協調性
3. まるで一つの生物のよう
これらの感情の理由はおそらく
1. 全員が意識して合わせようとしたため
2. 周りに合わせて動くため
3. みんなが同じ目的を持って動いたため

「鳥のダンス」の後、
自分の体の中で
それは私を
森羅万象
自然の流れと一体化
と感じ
にした

今：
今私は
そして
地球に住んでいる
自分も宇宙の一部と実感
と感じている
「はい」

「鳥のダンス」に対する意見・評価：
次回の「鳥のダンス」では
時間と慣れ
が必要
同じ集団で何度もやることに
なうまくいく。

Master Education in Arts Piet Zwart Institute
Graduation Thesis & Research Project

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A Bodily Exercise in Unison

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'In the realm of feeling, the productive orientation is expressed in love, which is the experience of union with another person, with all men, and with nature, under the condition of retaining one's sense of integrity and independence.'

- The Sane Society (1955) Erich Fromm

Abstract

My experience in higher visual art education suggests that there is an over-emphasis on the abilities of the mind, like learning to verbalize, think about and conceptualize one's actions and concepts. With the *Wandering Flock* I develop a method to understand how internal and external senses can be addressed and practiced to become a more integral part of higher visual art education alongside doing and thinking. The *Wandering Flock* -a bodily exercise in unison- is aiming to create a balance between the body and the mind while the individual is learning through a collective activity.

The *Wandering Flock* is embedded in a framework of educational systems related to Japanese Culture, Nature, Arts, the connection between the Body & Mind and the Collective & the Individual. Specifically the research connects to pedagogies of Black Mountain College were practiced based learning through the community was taught, Eurythmy an expressive movement art in Steiner education, embodied learning like *taiken*, *ki ken tai ichi* and *mimamoru* practiced in Japanese preschools and Zen Buddhist based arts and experiential learning in Forest Schools were is believed that the natural environment changes and develop the senses. The didactical methods that I refer to are elements of the Kolb cycle of experiential learning. And both derived from theatrical education; the Viewpoints techniques for bodily exercises and the DasArts Feedback method that I use for reflection to connect the bodily activities with the mind.

With the *Wandering Flock* I have developed a method where -through a bodily experience- internal and external senses are being addressed on a personal and collective level within a group of participants. The movements of *Flocking* starlings inspired me to create the exercise. The goal of the *Wandering Flock* is to conduct a moment of collective *flow*, whereas the moment in-between is as important and valuable, since personal awareness about ones inner bodily senses arises when personal discomfort is recognized.

The *Wandering Flock* method is important in higher visual art education alongside doing and thinking, it allows students to get awareness of their senses, supporting them to become independent and connected individuals simultaneously.

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External Supplement: Guidelines of the *Wandering Flock* method

Wandering Flock

A Bodily Exercise In Unison



Castillon, N. (2013) A Bird Ballet. [Video still]. Vimeo.

The *Wandering Flock* is a physical activity created by its participants arising from the development and awareness of the senses in the individual body and outward connections to the surroundings; the environment; and the other.

Relevance of the *Wandering Flock*

My experience in higher visual art education suggests that there is an over-emphasis on the abilities of the mind, like learning to verbalize, think about and conceptualize one's actions and concepts. With the *Wandering Flock* I develop a method to understand how internal and external senses can be addressed and practiced to become a more integral part of higher visual art education alongside doing and thinking.

For the development of the *Wandering Flock* method I explore the following questions in a pedagogical, artistic and practical framework:

How can participants develop awareness of bodily senses through a collective experience and create a better balance between cognitive, physical and affective learning?

- How can bodily experiences be balanced with cognitive knowledge, to allow students to learn in a more inclusive way?
- How can individuals learn through (and from) the collective, while communicating in a non-verbal way?
- How can awareness of bodily senses be developed while acting in connection to others and their surroundings?
- How can principles of Japanese and Shinto- and Zen Buddhist- based arts help to gain inward & outward awareness of the senses?

My hypothesis is that through an exercise –that I have titled the *Wandering Flock*- that challenges the participant to act, move and sense with the body in relation with others and a (natural) surrounding, participants will gain awareness of both personal and collective senses. Through the exercise –which is a non-verbal activity- the aim is to make participants become aware of personal (dis-) comforts, experienced through the body. In my analysis there is need to focus on the body to create a better balance in the approach of body and mind in (higher visual art) education. I believe the *Wandering Flock* can support the participants to become more conscious individuals that eventually will help them in daily life and within their studies.

Description of the *Wandering Flock*

With the *Wandering Flock* I have developed a method where -through a bodily experience- internal and external senses are being addressed on a personal and collective level within a group of participants. The visual and biological movements of flocking starlings inspired me to create exercise. The participants are asked to walk in unison through an open space and behave like the starlings: talking is not allowed; communication goes only through senses like seeing, hearing and feeling. There is no director or leader; everybody in the group can take initiative to change the direction of the group. But there are some guidelines for everybody to adhere to.

The goal of the *Wandering Flock* is to conduct a moment of collective *flow*; and the moment in between this experience of *flow* is as important and valuable as being in the *flow* itself. Since these in-between moments give the participant the possibility to gain personal awareness about one's inner bodily senses, for example in recognizing a personal struggle or over-thinking an activity.

The *Wandering Flock* Method is important in higher visual art education alongside doing and thinking, because it allows students to get awareness of their senses, supporting them to become independent and connected individuals simultaneously.

Wandering Flock in Practice

The *Wandering Flock* is an activity for at least six persons; the largest group I have worked with consisted of fifteen people, but the group could be as large as one hundred people depending on the location. The location should be outside and a large, open place like an empty parking lot, a playground or a field. The group can be an existing group or individuals making this group for the first time. In this latter case, the warm-up activity might need more time. It can be led by anyone, and indeed this text provides a framework for any educational group to enact the *Wandering Flock*. For the purpose of this description, however, I will write from the first person.

The construction of the *Wandering Flock* exercise consists of an introduction, the exercise itself and a reflection moment. The introduction starts with visuals of flocking birds and the guidelines of the exercise explained from within an inside location. The group then moves to an outdoor location with a lot of space. The exercise begins with three 'warming up' activities to develop group connections and to get used to communicate without words. The leader (in this case myself) joins the group in this process to create some 'safe space*'. Then the group starts with the actual *Wandering Flock*, starting with 1 minute, followed by a short break and of 30 seconds to one minute to give the participants the opportunity to let go of their first tensions and thoughts, to give them the ability to continue in a more concentrated way. We then continue with 2 minutes, followed by another short break (like before), and then the final session of about 12 minutes. Once these are complete, the group goes back inside to reflect on the experience, writing answers on reflection cards individually. These reflection cards

* Safe Space: Inclusive environment where students of any race, gender, sexuality, class and ability can go to find compassion and empathy while escaping the pressures of prejudice.

function to create awareness of the exercise. We finish up with a short group discussion to exchange experiences verbally.

For planning purposes, I estimate the first time, the entire process of the *Wandering Flock* takes around 1,5 hours. When the exercise is repeated with a consisted group (for example on a weekly basis) then it can become as short as 40 minutes (with warming up and reflection) to only 10 minutes if you will do only the walking exercise. The exact guidelines can be found in the External Supplement: Guidelines of the *Wandering Flock* Method.

Pedagogical Context

Introduction

The method of the *Wandering Flock* is aiming to create a balance between the body and the mind while the individual is learning through a collective activity.

I will explore historical and conceptual frameworks that have influenced my thinking in the research of the *Wandering Flock*, I combine various subjects of significance; Arts, Japanese Culture, Nature, the connection between the Body & Mind and the Collective & the Individual. The pedagogical context of the *Wandering Flock* is embedded in a framework of educational systems related to these subjects. Specifically my research connects to Black Mountain College, Eurythmy in Steiner education, embodied learning in Japan and experiential learning in Forest Schools in which the subjects of my interest are rooted. The didactic methods that I use are elements of the Kolb cycle of experiential learning, the DasArts Feedback method *and* exercises from the Viewpoints techniques both derived from theatrical education.

In the sections Body & Mind, Collective & Individual Learning, Outward & Inward Learning through Nature and Participant as Director or Actor, I describe a historical and critical analysis of these concepts and how they relate to the *Wandering Flock*.

Body & Mind

In this section, I will explore the relationship between the body and mind within education, which provides a rationale for the necessity of the *Wandering Flock*. With the method I want to integrate a greater *sensory awareness* into higher visual art education, by focusing on bridging the body and mind. I aim to give space to the students to let

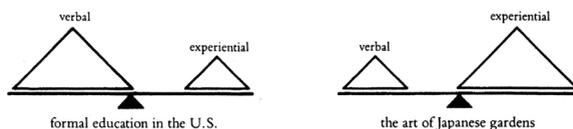
their *senses* play part in their learning development alongside thinking and doing. Since my experience in higher art education seems to suggest that there is an over-emphasis on abilities of the mind, like learning to verbalize and over-thinking (conceptualize) ones actions and concepts, in contrast the *Wandering Flock* is therefore a *physical exercise* emphasizing on the *senses* to balance the attention between the mind *and* body.

The body in various forms has been important throughout my life, first in my youth when I was fourteen I was a practitioner of classical and modern ballet, and seriously considered to attend the ballet academy. After that I have practiced among other things Argentinian tango, yoga and jogging. In my professional work, I have often worked with dancers to create staged photographs. Now with the *Wandering Flock* I want to do so in an educational form.

Educational approaches and concepts that are aiming for a balance between body and mind with focus on the body that I look into are; *taiken*, *flow* and *ki ken tai ichi* as practiced in Japanese education and performance arts. I also relate to the pedagogy practiced in Black Mountain College wherein the seemingly contradictions as 'doing and thinking' and the 'emotional and rationale' are recognized and believed to be important for the development of the students. To connect doing and thinking I refer to the didactic methods as the Kolb cycle of experiential learning and the DasArts Feedback method.

The Japanese culture is a source of inspiration throughout my life and within my artistic work. I feel a strong connection to cultural aspects that are grounded in Japanese philosophies of Zen Buddhism and Shintoism. For the *Wandering Flock* I explore the interconnectedness of the individual with his environment through bodily experience. Experience through the whole body has a specific word in Japanese: *taiken* (Hayashi & Tobin, 2015) and is grounded in disciplined body based arts rooted in Zen Buddhism and Shintoism like walking meditation: *kinhin*, martial arts: *budo*, tea ceremony: *chado*, calligraphy: *shodo* and theatre, like *noh* (Moore, 2013). *Taiken* has also emerged in experimental and embodied learning in Japanese preschools. Akiko Hayashi, post-doctoral in education at University of Georgia and Joseph Tobin, educational anthropologist and professor of early childhood education at University of Georgia did research together about Embodied Learning in Japanese preschools.

They emphasize that experiential learning is valued throughout Japanese Preschool education, by explaining that there are three words in the Japanese language that translate into 'experience' in English. *Kemmon* or *kembun* is the combination of the two kanji 'to see' and 'to hear', which translates as experiencing through hearing and seeing. Then there is *keiken*: experiencing through the passing of time and *taiken*: which can be explained as experiencing through the whole body. The kanji for *taiken* are 'body' and 'testing', so exploring 'through actual experience involving the whole body and all its senses is a more inclusive way to experience' (Hayashi & Tobin, 2015, p. 47). 'Experiencing through the whole body and all its senses' is something to (re-) learn and in my opinion this needs attention and recognition in higher art education in The Netherlands and become as important as in the Japanese educational system were experiencing through the whole body: *taiken* is recognized as most important learning method (Hayashi & Tobin, 2015). The figure of David Slawson on The Learning Process of Japanese and Western teachings illustrates this very accurately.



Slawson, D. (1987) The Learning Process. Learning: Western and Japanese models. [Figure]. Secret Teachings In The Art Of Japanese Gardens: Design Principles Aesthetic Values.

The interplay between *taiken*: experiencing through the whole body and *flow* (*mushin*): an experience of focused awareness in the present, is the base for the *Wandering Flock* method. I follow the Japanese teachings of experiential learning *taiken* because among other things with this 'inclusive way of experiencing', it is possible to experience *flow* (Hayashi & Tobin, 2015). The participants of the *Wandering Flock* work consciously towards a moment of *flow* when they are asked to mimic the movements of the flocking birds.

Katrina Moore, lecturer in Anthropology at the University of New South Wales in Australia writes how Mihaly Csikszentmihayi (1934) a Hungarian psychologist has described *flow* 'as an experience of focused awareness' (Moore, 2014, p. 77). The Japanese word *mushin*, equals *flow*, Moore writes in her book 'The Joy of *Noh*: Embodied Learning and

Discipline in Urban Japan' how her peer *noh** student Emiko experiences *mushin*. Emiko said: 'When I train in *noh* dance, there are times I can experience *mushin* [no-mind]. I am conscious of my body but my mind is quiet. This is the first and most important thing' (Moore, 2014, p. 77). She describes that through *mushin* the emphasis is on the bodily experience. Moore writes that *flow* only arises when 'thoughts, intentions, feelings and all the *senses* are focused on the present' (2014, p. 77). Being aware and focused while doing the *Wandering Flock* exercise is therefore very important.



Kogyo (1922) A *noh* actor in role. From the series, '100 *Noh* Plays'. [Ukiyo-e, Japanese Woodblock Print] Japan Print Gallery.

**Noh*: Traditional Japanese masked drama with dance and song, evolved from Shinto rites, performed since the 14th century.

Another form of 'physical-mental awareness' is the practice of *ki ken tai ichi*. This is described and explored by Henk Oosterling (1952) a Dutch philosopher, educator and *kendo* practitioner: *kendoka* who follows the concept of *taiken* as well: he made 'a new expression' by combining the words doing and thinking in Doingthinking. In his book 'Waar geen wil is is een weg: Doendenken tussen Europa en Japan' ('Where there is no will there is a way: Doingthinking between Europe and Japan') he writes about the concept of *ki ken tai ichi* an important philosophy in Japanese martial arts: *budo*, it means that the physical-mental awareness engages rather than intervenes or understands. He explains this by writing that the energy: *ki* is carrying the connection between the body and mind, and that it is not the ratio but it is the *ki* as human agency that controls the actions (Oosterling, 2016). Following the concept of *ki ken tai ichi*, it is clear to just do the *Wandering Flock* as an action and engage with the movement. When following the Japanese philosophies described above the participants are invited to enjoy and trust their bodies and let the energy move within their bodies and minds during the exercise. The exercise supports the participants to be in the 'here and now', since it quite demanding to move around while paying great attention to all *senses* and be aware of the surroundings.



Olrik, G. (1868) Japanese art of fencing. Drill with long sabres. [Photograph] National Museum of Denmark.

As in *budo* I ask the participants of the *Wandering Flock* not to look at one specific thing during the exercise, but at everything that is surrounding him. *Kendo* teacher Oosterling told beginners to imagine that there was a 'sprout' hanging behind their head and they had to look at this imaginary 'sprout' as well as to their opponent. He told so to help their gaze to not become fixed but to become able to move between the *inner and outer awareness*. The *kendoka* must 'remain fully involved', without giving attention to specific matters. When doing so the body and mind are one: *shin jin ichi nyo* (Oosterling, 2016). With the *Wandering Flock* the participants should become aware of everything surrounding them, thus like the 'sprout' also towards that what is behind them. The awareness that is going alternately *inwards and outwards* trains the body *and* mind to work together.

In Forest Schools the approach of both body and mind is encouraged through experiential learning. Different from *flow* or *ki ken tai ichi* where the calmness of mind is important, it is believed in Forest Schools that the body is the starting point to achieve cognitive knowledge. The Forest School is developed in Laona, Wisconsin by H. L. Russell, dean of the College of Agriculture at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1927. In the 1950s, the idea of Forest Schooling was introduced in Europe and especially in Denmark and Sweden it became a success. Nowadays the Forest Schools are widely spread throughout the world (Forest School Wales, 2017). Kraftl follows Amato and Krasny when he writes that in Forest Schools it is considered that 'behaviour change' is generated through 'the connection between knowledge and action' (Kraftl, 2015, p. 61). The body is important in this action Kraftl writes that Thrift, Connolly, Kraftl and Adey all believe that 'kinds of tacit and experiential knowledge' like 'the material, the bodily (and) the emotional' are all potential power tools complementing cognitive knowledge (Kraftl, 2015, p. 47). This connects to the approach of the *Wandering Flock* where mental awareness is generated through the bodily action.

The connection with Black Mountain College (BMC) lays in the artistic curriculum of this school that was founded by John Andrew Rice (1888–1968). The school was located in the rural Southern Appalachian town of Black Mountain in North Carolina and functioned from 1933 to 1956 (Reynolds, 2010). BMC is important for my research, since the curriculum is grounded by the ideas of experiential learning by John Dewey (1859–1952) a philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer.



Black Mountain College (1938) Sue Spayth (left) and unknown students in front of Lee Hall, Blue Ridge Campus. [Photograph]. Copyright and courtesy of Western Regional Archives, States Archives of North Carolina. Sleek 2016.

Experiential learning was key of the curriculum and organizational structure of Black Mountain College, wherein the development of physical and mental awareness was of importance as well. John Dewey emphasized a life-oriented approach in education that 'demands action as well as thinking' (Ellert, 1972, p. 144). Dewey believed that arts had the power to bring emotion in relation to disciplined thinking. The students of BMC were aware of the holistic approach that was taught. Former student Alexander Eliot said that 'the affective element and the discipline element also represented two polarities: the emotional and the rational, the hedonistic and the ascetic, which had to be bridged' (Eliot, 2010). With the *Wandering Flock* method the focus is on creating awareness of the *senses* but within the whole structure of the method I aim for a balance and 'bridge' between the two poles as Eliot mentions here. Like Dewey I believe that arts is the discipline to embrace feelings and the art student is often sensitive towards this. When there is space to develop and experience (and re-learn) awareness of one's *senses*. I believe that through the training of the *Wandering Flock* -a disciplined method- freedom within the participants will arise. The participants can only perceive this by experiencing it themselves.

This again relates to the ideas of the BMC teachings, as Robert Sunley, former student said 'innovative and experimental teaching aimed at guiding students into thinking and experiencing for themselves' (Sunley, 2010).

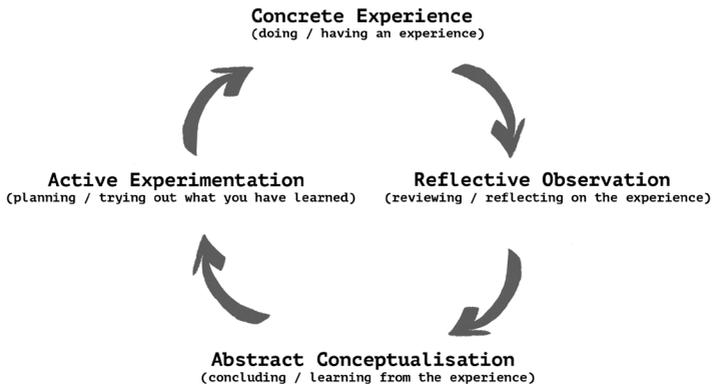
Josef Albers artist and educator (who taught at the Bauhaus till it was closed by the Nazi regime) worked at BMC from 1933 -1949, he agreed with Dewey on the importance of experiencing with both the body and mind. He writes in the Black Mountain College Bulletin in 1934 that 'all creative work, moves between intuition and intellect, or possible between subjectivity and objectivity' (Albers, 1934). Albers believed that the importance of intuition or the intellect changes constantly from one to another and also always more or less overlap (Albers, 1934). The *Wandering Flock* exercise also moves between and connects continuously intuition and intellect so is therefore in line with the ideas of Albers. He stressed his theory by his believe that every person is enriched with all the physical *senses* as well as 'all the *senses* of the soul', even though this would be in various degrees for every person (Albers, 1934). The structure of the *Wandering Flock* focuses on all bodily *senses* and creates awareness in mind afterwards through the reflection on the experience.

The course description of Black Mountain College 'stated that students would first seek to solve intuitively problems they could not immediately solve intellectually and then as an evaluation apply objective criteria' (Harris, 1987, p. 15). With the *Wandering Flock* method the participants start with doing and through this action they learn 'intuitively' to rely on their *senses*, what is neglected often within higher visual art education. While becoming confident with one's personal *senses*, and understand their meaning a student will be clearer on an intellectual level, this links to the method of BMC that was 'designed to give the student "insurance against being victimized by undirected emotional approaches or over-formalized and cold intellectual approaches" along with some sense of security in working with the "process of change" rather than his concept of preconceived ideas of a static solution' (Harris, 1987, p. 16). I notice that in higher visual art education there is 'fear' to give space to the *senses* and therefore the conceptual is overemphasized, the focus is on cognitive teaching and learning through the body is hardly present. Therefore the emphasis of the *Wandering Flock* is on physical training. By implementing a bodily exercise like the *Wandering Flock* in the curriculum, I aim for a

connection between the cognitive and affective in higher art education. The exercise is developed to create a better balance between sensing and thinking, the body and mind. To achieve this, the construction of the *Wandering Flock* method is inspired on the Kolb cycle (also known as the cycle of experiential learning) developed by educational theorist David A. Kolb (1939).

The four 'activities' in the circle are summarized in succession:

1. Concrete experiencing through immersion in the exercise.
 2. Reflective observation of the effect of the exercise.
 3. Abstract conceptualizing by explaining and getting insight of the effect.
 4. Active experimentation by applying the exercise in a different context.
- Like Kolb I do believe that reflection - a mental activity - is important to understand the bodily experience. I also do believe that reflection (on one's own actions) through observation is important to start actual learning (Kohonen, 2007). It is important first to gain awareness subsequently to understand one's personal learning process. Within this research I have focused on the first two aspects of the Kolb cycle. Future research is needed to the third and fourth.



Kolb, D. (1984) *The Experiential Learning Cycle*. [Model] Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Prentice-Hall Publisher. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

For the reflection I use parts of the DasArts Feedback method. This is a feedback method developed by DAS – Theatre; Master in Performance Arts in Amsterdam in collaboration with philosopher Karim Benammar (1966) who was lector Reflection on Action at the Staff Division of Education Research & Development from the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences from 2003 -2007. (I was introduced by this method in the didactic training (HKU University of the Arts Utrecht 2016). The DasArts Feedback method combines various feedback approaches in a specific order and for all elements a specific time is set. The method is developed for projects that are in progress but can also be conducted in the last stadium of a project. The aim of the method is to get feedback in a productive way that 'goes beyond judgements'; where the personal and emotional do not interfere (A Film About Feedback, 2013). The whole feedback method takes about 2,5 hours and has a strict framework wherein the feedback givers can respond to the work in 10 distinct formats like: 'What works for me is ...; 'As a.... I need...' and Tips & Tricks for example. Due to lack of emotional and personal interference in this method, I experienced it as a constructive and stimulating way to receive feedback. I tested out how it works when you only use some parts of the method (when time is limited) with my peers at Piet Zwart Institute and in my lessons at the Royal Academy of Art The Hague (KABK). I also used the method for my personal research and development of the *Wandering Flock* and experienced it to be effective to gain awareness and knowledge in a constructive way.

After they have experienced the *Wandering Flock* I give the participants reflection cards containing some elements of the DasArts Feedback method. Different from the DasArts Feedback method, where feedback givers give feedback on someone's project, the participants are asked to give themselves feedback on their personal experience of the focking movement. This way they gain awareness of their *senses*. The DasArts Feedback method is working towards a deliberate way of thinking and therefore the participant/feedback giver is able to react in a quick and focussed way. The DasArts Feedback method is 'expanding the boundaries of the learning process' (KreativKultur, 2017). The reflection cards give feedback and insight to the participants in their personal development.

Collective & Individual Learning

Here I describe the connection between Collective and Individual learning and how the *Wandering Flock* method provides a context to explore new processes within these relationships. I follow pedagogical ideas of Black Mountain College where the community played an important role, I look into the Marxist views as propagated by Paolo Freire and explain individual and collective learning in Forest Schools. I also describe why I use the Viewpoints technique as a practical tool for the *Wandering Flock* method.

John Andrew Rice, the founder of Black Mountain College, based his ideas on the principles of John Dewey, believing that life in a community enriched the development of the individual. The community played therefore an important role in the curriculum of BMC (Kurtz, 1944). With the intention that through working, learning and living as a close community. The development of both the intellectual and the emotional side of the students was supported (Harris, 1989). With the *Wandering Flock*, a group activity, the participants create a temporary community. The focus of the individual is aimed towards the group, wherein the exercise everybody should agree to work towards a collective *flow*. I follow Dewey who recognized that the qualities of an individual flourished while working on a project together with others.

The philosophies of BMC connect to the ideas of Paolo Freire (1921-1997) a Brazilian educator and philosopher, whose theories 'of both individual and collective autonomy (are) rooted in Marxist, community based notions of emancipation' (Kraftl, 2015, p. 29-30). Kraftl writes that Freire agitates against power structures and claims that 'educations is a form of conscious-raising fomented not out of a 'teacher-pupil' relationship but out of 'culture circles' that aims at fostering group debate around problems arising from the everyday lives of group members' (Kraftl, 2015, p. 29-30). With the *Wandering Flock* exercise there is no authority. Every person can change the direction of the group and be the leader at any moment. It is for the participants themselves to find their personal position in the exercise. In this sense it connects to the theory of Freire, since the *Wandering Flock* has the aim to create consciousness out of the (temporary) community and it isn't a teacher-pupil, but a peer-to-peer or group learning moment. Different from Freire the method isn't fostering 'group debate', but

it is rather a method that fosters individual awareness through the collective. The aim is not to overcome any power structures, but related to the principles of Rice to become aware of personal *senses*. Rice claimed 'that learning happened by experiencing, observing and understanding a full range of intellectual and emotional possibilities' (Reynolds, 2006).

Learning through the group is also encouraged in Forest Schools. It is believed that 'independence, teamwork, practical skills and imaginative play' are learned while experiencing 'relationships with others (and) engaging in conversation' (Kraftl, 2015, p. 63 - 64). In the *Wandering Flock* the participants engage in a non-verbal conversation on a pure physical level. By the interaction of the self and the other (surroundings) 'independence' and 'teamwork' are addressed simultaneously. Kraftl quotes Oberski writing 'that independence is a form of autonomy: not egotistical self-centredness, but rather, a self-consciousness that enables an individual to critically reflect upon their place in and responsibilities to the world' (Kraftl, 2015, p. 77). With the *Wandering Flock* I aim to arise self-consciousness, to let her become aware of one's autonomy during this collective exercise.

With the *Wandering Flock* the interaction between the individual and the collective is experienced on a pure physical level. To ground the physical and performative part of this research I explored the Viewpoints techniques developed for actors, performers and theatre-directors by Anne Bogart (1951) in the Experimental Theatre Wing of New York University in 1995 (Herrington, 2000). The technique helps the participants to increase their focus into the present and to create openness towards their surroundings; like the others of the group. Through the exercises the participants develop a flexibility of their awareness (Bruynzeels, 2015).

The Viewpoints techniques are exercises for actors, teachers and directors. Bogart & Landau write 'Viewpoints is a philosophy translated into a technique for; training performers, building ensemble and creating movement for the stage' (2005, p. 7-8). For the *Wandering Flock* I am especially interested in the philosophy of building an ensemble, to create a group, a collective. Siti Company writes 'the Viewpoints allow a group of actors to function together spontaneously and intuitively (...). It develops flexibility, articulation, and strength in movement and makes ensemble playing really possible' (2016).

I use Viewpoints as a practical tool within the *Wandering Flock* method. Like the DasArts Feedback method the Viewpoints technique exist of multiple exercises and I apply three exercises: 'High Jumps', 'Five Images' and 'Run to the Center' as warming-up for the *Wandering Flock* method. The three exercises are focusing on building ensemble, on 'function together spontaneously and intuitively' (Siti, 2016). They are rather playful and intent to create unison in the group on a non-verbal level by gaining awareness of the body and that of the other. (See External Supplement: Guidelines of the *Wandering Flock* Method).

Outward & Inward Learning from Nature

How awareness of the other (the collective) is important for the *Wandering Flock* method I have discussed in the previous section on Individual & Collective Learning. Here I describe how the (natural) surroundings are relevant for the *Wandering Flock* method, I follow herein the Japanese teaching methods and education of Forest Schools both focusing on the awareness of human connection towards their (natural) surroundings; like plants and animals.

The idea of learning through nature in an embodied manner is present in both Forest School as in Japanese educational methods that I follow. The Forest and Nature School organization in Canada (2014) root their ideology in Aboriginal learning (in Canada, the preferred term is 'First People' rather than Aborigines) that is linked to the land, and which reflects who we are. This connects to the ideas of the Shinto philosophy of Japan that teaches to revere to nature. In Shintoism it is believed that nature; plants, animals, mountains and rivers are deeply connected with us humans. Everything that is surrounding us has a soul and is 'alive' (Yamakage, 2006).

According to the researches of Richard E. Nisbett the focus of most Japanese people is (rooted in the beliefs of Shintoism) outward looking towards the surroundings and the other. Richard E. Nisbett (1941) social psychologist and professor at University of Michigan has done considerable researches on cultural influences and methods of thinking. His researches on how 'Westerners' and 'East Asians' perceive the world in a different way, is bundled in the book 'The Geography of

Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently... and Why'. Mc. Taggart, follows him when she writes; 'As children, East Asians (and also indigenous cultures, like the Moken) are brought up with such a strong sense of connection to others that they can see the self (and objects) only in relation to their context' (Mc. Taggart 2011, p. 168). In contrast Mc. Taggart writes 'from the moment he is born a Western child is taught to work toward independence' (2011, p. 167-168). She continues to write that in western countries children and youngsters are taught that autonomy is most important, she refers to anthropologist Edward T. Hall who 'called this kind of thinking the outcome of 'low-context' society, by which he meant that our identity is independent of our context. We view ourselves as an unfettered free agent; take you or me out of our society, plant us somewhere else, and we will still be the same person' (Mc. Taggart, 2011, p. 167-168). Within the exercise of the *Wandering Flock* the participants are forced to focus on their surroundings, without this focus it is impossible to create the flocking movement.

The pedagogy of Forest Schools focuses on the surroundings, nature and 'temporalities' too (Kraftl, 2015, p. 20). In Forest Schools they 'work from an ethos that the natural environment is an appropriate setting to change habits, emotions and relationships for the better' (Kraftl, 2015, p. 63). I follow this idea by practicing the *Wandering Flock* outside. Different from the Forest Schools the location is often in 'urban nature' like on a school square instead of a forest. By changing the location from indoors -where most of the classes are taught- to an outdoor location, I believe like the ideas in Forest Schools the change of 'habits and relationships' of the participants is stimulated, since natural all the elements, like wind and temperature are interfering in – and become an integral part of – the experience.

The Forest School follows herein ideas of Western European Education that arose since the 18th century by 'alternative' thinkers and educators like Rousseau, Froebel and Montessori, who 'all advocated the benefits of learning in the natural environment and insisted that children need to play, to experience space and movement and sensory stimulation for healthy development' (Forest School Wales, 2017). The *Wandering Flock* exercise is a form of playing. Through the movement that the participants create together they experience the space that is surrounding them. Through this external awareness the self is addressed, this is described as 'collaborative autonomous learning' in

Forest School education (Kraftl, 2015).

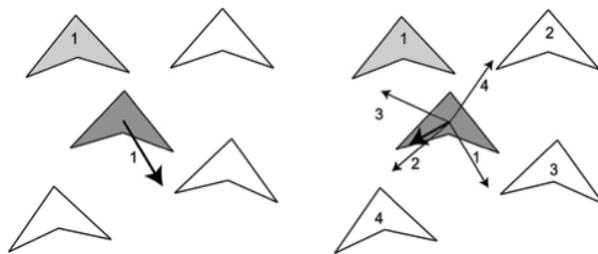
The exercise starts literally with looking outwards, to a natural phenomenon; the flocking of birds. The participants are asked to mimic them and form a swarm, a self-organizing group, moving freely in an outside location. As in Forest Schools the 'bodily movement and repetition' of the movement as well as 'taking time' for the exercises to explore the (natural) 'boundaries' of the location and internal 'boundaries' of oneself are essential for the *Wandering Flock* (Kraftl, 2015). Through the exercise an understanding of ones personal needs and struggles is developed. I follow herein the ideas of the Forest School as Kraftl writes outdoor activities improve the *senses* of well-being and happiness and bolster self-esteem (Kraftl, 2015). With the *Wandering Flock* I eventually hope to develop self-esteem within the participants, through doing the exercise repetitively and developing awareness of one's actions and *senses* during the exercise that arise with help from the reflection cards.

The guidelines of the *Wandering Flock* come from a research on group self-organization of social systems by professor Charlotte Hemelrijk of the faculty of Mathematics and Natural Science from the University of Groningen. In this research she examines 'the interaction between individuals and their social and physical environment'. She discovered through computer simulations how colonies of starlings, bees and herrings are organized. When they form a large group 'twist and turn, repeatedly creating new shapes and patterns' they appear to have a life of their own (University of Groningen, 2016). The individual becomes one with the group and seemingly loses ones autonomy within the created movements.

Hemelrijk discovered that the individuals follow a set of guidelines to move in unison. I use them for the *Wandering Flock* method (see External Supplement: Guidelines of the *Wandering Flock* Method).

The guidelines are:

1. Move in the same direction as the other individuals in your vicinity.
2. Don't crash into other individuals; keep distance.
3. Stay in the group, stay near to the individuals in your vicinity.



Hemelrijk, C. & Hildenbrandt, H. (2015) Directory and distance of an avoidance movement for 1 or several neighbours close-by. [Figure] University of Groningen.

Participant as Director or Actor

As creator of staged photographs and educator I am used to take the position of director. For the approach of the exercise of *The Wandering Flock* I have chosen to take a different position, that of the outsider. I let the movement arise by the participants themselves. To ground my ideas I refer to educational approaches of Eurythmy in Steiner education, *mimamoru* in Japanese preschool education and Black Mountain College.

Rudolf Steiner (1861 -1925) an Austrian philosopher, pedagogue, social reformer, architect, esotericist and the founder of the Steiner School (also sometimes called Waldorf School in Germany and Vrije School in The Netherlands) in 1919 was an educator who has combined ideas from Western Christian origins and Eastern philosophies in his school system. In the curriculum of the Steiner School, the education of arts plays an important role. I focus on Eurythmy that Rudolf Steiner developed together with his wife Marie von Sivers (1867-1948) and has become part of the curriculum since the opening of the first Steiner School. Eurythmy is 'an expressive movement art' that can be practiced in three directions: artistic (as performance), pedagogical and therapeutic. The pedagogical approach of Eurythmy is to guide movements by music and poetry (Astrosophy Research Center, 2012).

The idea of Steiner to implement an artistic movement course like Eurythmy in the curriculum next to gymnastics shows that he distinguishes the exercises focusing on purely the physical body in gymnastics with Eurythmy that, - as Steiner puts it- focuses on the whole human being, the physical and etheric body (Steiner, 2004). I aim for a spot in the curriculum of the *Wandering Flock* as Eurythmy does, so that through bodily exercise the *senses* and the 'whole human being' will be addressed in higher art education.

Kraftl writes that when specific bodily movements become embodied habits particular goals of Eurythmy are achieved, he specifies this by continuing 'over time, balanced growth –comprising physiological, embodied, emotional, reflective and spiritual components– a process of "bringing forth", more clearly expressing, whatever it is that makes a person unique' (2015, p. 77). Like Eurythmy the *Wandering Flock* aims for personal growth through being aware of ones personal the *senses*.



Steiner, R. (2015) Eurythmy Figures by Rudolf Steiner with different angles of hatching representing different colors. [Pen and Ink Drawing] Rudolf Steiner Web.

Steiner brings the performative, emotional and physical together with Eurythmy, writes Kraftl, not only to educate creativity, but also to encourage the development of feeling and intuitive thinking through imagination (Kraftl, 2015). For example children learn the alphabet through bodily movements guided by words, poetry, stories or music. This generates that 'the educational experience in a Steiner school takes on a flavour of 'performance art' (Kraftl, 2015, p. 77). The *Wandering Flock* is not a 'performance art', since the movement is not choreographed beforehand and it will not be performed for an audience. Also in the *Wandering Flock* there are no 'cues', like words or music, to move on, instead the participants are in charge of the rhythm and the direction of the movement themselves. Everyone in the group can take the initiative to change in a non-verbal way the movement. Therefore the participants can take both the role as actor and director in the exercise.

The educational approach used in Japanese preschools called *mimamoru* is another method that gives the participants the possibility to learn from each other, without guidance of a teacher or director. Instead of only holding back the teacher also 'keeps an eye on' the situation in a 'nurturing concern' rather than a surveillance way (Hayashi & Tobin, 2015). Hayashi & Tobin write that teachers who are practicing *mimamoru*, occasionally intervene when they sense *flow* is about to

break down. More often teachers hold back and don't intervene in order to allow students to experience discomfort and have the opportunity to restore order on their own' (2015, p. 104). I agree it is relevant that the participants -who are moving in unison in the *Wandering Flock*- become aware of their own struggles and joy during the exercise and restore the movement themselves.

Hayashi & Tobin write that the reason for this low intervention approach is to support the 'social-emotional development' of students and to strengthen 'the value of learning about emotions through embodied experience' this connects to the educational approach of Black Mountain College were self-direction, self-discipline, initiative and the development of the whole person including the emotions were emphasized (2015, p. 47). Robert Bliss, former student, stated: it 'was a self-motivated and self-directed educational experience' (Bliss, 2010) and Will Hamlin (former student BMC) said that 'to a large degree, we were directing each other and ourselves' (Hamlin, 2010). John Swackhamer (former student BMC) agrees with Bliss and Hamlin as he recalls that the peers were very important for his personal development; 'the central notion that all learning must be self-motivated and that this is best accomplished through peer pressure, was and is for me, the most noteworthy feature of BMC' (Swackhamer, 2010). Through group pressure the actions of the individual students were disciplined, this way discipline and freedom existed simultaneously. In the *Wandering Flock* exercise the tension between openness and freedom (where to move to) and fixed guidelines (how to move) provoke the creation of a self-organizing group like the flocking birds. As in Black Mountain College every individual is encouraged (but it is not mandatory) to participate in the activity (Black Mountain College Project, 2010). How the group moves depends on the peer-pressure and the motivation of the individuals.

John Dewey believed that art is the only discipline that puts the student in the role of an actor. He believed that in other disciplines like history, science and sociology this isn't the case (Ellert, 1972). Being an actor is explicitly the case within the performance arts taught at BMC. Other than performance art the participants of the *Wandering Flock* do not play a role other as themselves. The exercise demands from the participants to take position in the group, and forces to take the role of for example follower (actor) or leader (director). The reflection afterwards help the participants to become conscious about their position(s).

Artistic Context

The *Wandering Flock* relates to artworks from artists like John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Anne Hoetjes, Raúl Hott, Anne Teresa Kearsemaker and The Russian Avant-garde Movement.



Hott, R. (2012) *Silence and Noise*. [Installation view] Courtesy of the artist

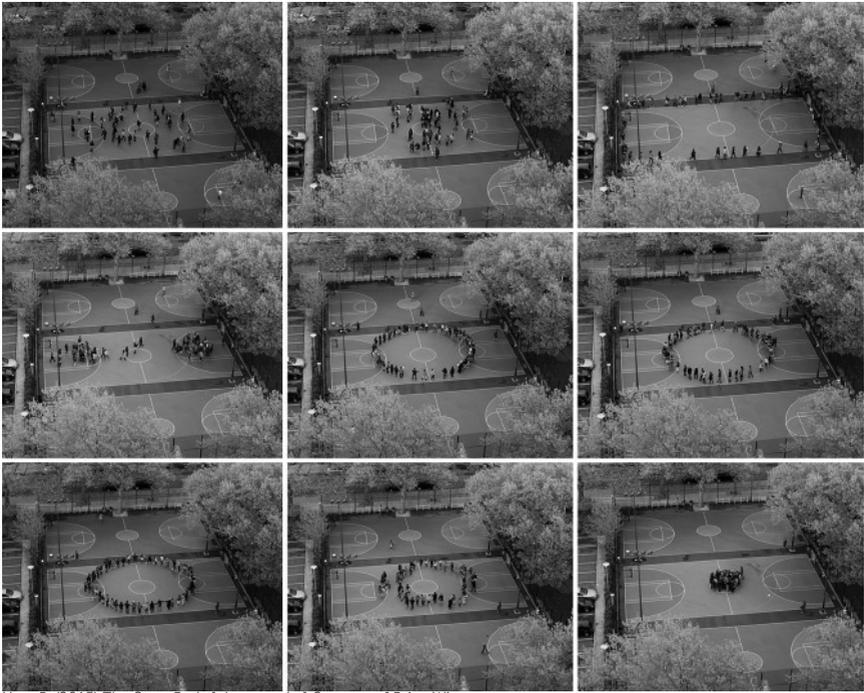
Raúl Hott is an architect, artist and educator who works mainly with the body, he designs 'collective experiences for public spaces and natural environments'. He states 'we live in a "Post-Body" era' (Hott, 2013) and it seems he has started to work with the body out of personal needs, before he started to create (educational) experiences. In his work *I'll Become a Body* (January 2013) he started to run in Brooklyn for two months every night, he tracked his runs with his smart phone. The work *Silence and Noise* (13-04-2012) is a multidisciplinary project where he created a carpet, a lay out for the walking route of the walking meditation: *kinhin** at the Brooklyn Zen Center, that was practiced that night for two hours by its members. As Raúl Hott I also feel an urge to use my body and to move around, especially during this period of writing. In both of these works by Hott moving in space is practiced in a conscious way, in *Silence and Noise* by following the route and direction of the carpet and in *I'll Become a Body* by tracking the route of the runs digitally. The experience of walking attentively through space is practiced in the exercise of the *Wandering Flock* as well.

**Kinhin* is often practiced between sitting meditation: *zazen* in Zen Buddhism, it is either possible to walk very slowly or in a jogging tempo, the idea is to walk within a breathing tempo and be very conscious where you place your feet. The group walks often synchronized.

The dance company of Anne Teresa de Keirsemaeker (1960), a Flemish choreographer, experimented with conscious walking too; the group organized a Slow Walk at the Day of Dance on 24-04-2016 in the streets of Brussels. It was open for everybody to join, for the whole duration of five hours or for a shorter period of choice. Dutch Artist Esther Polak (1962) was one of the participants and wrote about her experience in Stadsleven. The tempo wherein they walked was 300 meter per hour or in other words 5 meter per minute. There were five groups starting from the borders of the city all walking like a pentagram to the city centre, the Grote Markt. She writes that she becomes conscious that the slow walking had a 'reality and elegance' for her that was only present in that moment (Polak, 2016). She becomes aware that walking, a seemingly easy, everyday task gets a different meaning when practiced consciously and in a group. The awareness by walking in a conscious way that arises in those three works connects to the *Wandering Flock*. But other than the Slow Walking and Silence and Noise, no direction is given to its participants. The participants will choose their own path, while staying in a group.

In another work of Raúl Hott: The Open Body fifty-four people came together at a basketball court at the Pratt Playground in Brooklyn on 08-05-2013 (Hott, 2013). It was a live performance with a 'participating audience' (as he calls it), where Brooklyn rapper Al Pierre performed 9 songs wherein the instructions of movements that the participants had to follow were announced. The *Wandering Flock* will be executed as well with a group of people, but the movement will arise without the use of verbal language, nobody will talk or give verbal directions, the participants have to be very conscious about each other in order to move together. What relates to The Open Body is that there will not be an audience and everybody will participate.

The Open Body is followed by the project La Unión (Union) an experience that 'can be activated by millions of bodies that are moving together and in unison (...) a massive exchange of bodies moving and dancing simultaneously' (Hott, 2017). La Unión has been performed with four different groups on various locations in Chile, where he worked with non-professional dancers moving on music. He writes it is 'a lived experience, it is a celebration, fiesta, social dance and mass meditation': (Hott, 2017). With La Unión he is continuing his research to 'create utopian moments' what he calls 'the essential manifestation of a culture', while he is seeking for a positive and happy moment within



Hott, R. (2013) *The Open Body* [photography] Courtesy of Brian Wittmuss.

all the participants (Hott, 2013). The *Wandering Flock* is also ‘a lived experience’, but different from *La Unión*, the *Wandering Flock* is not a work of celebration. Hott writes that experiencing *La Unión* ‘produces feelings: ecstasy, joy, bliss, euphoria, empathy and freedom’, the idea is that the *Wandering Flock* as well produces feelings, but not necessarily only happy and euphoric ones. As in a Walking Meditation or in Slow Walking it is more about creating awareness of your own body and how the surroundings is of influence; the *Wandering Flock* can provide thus all kinds of outcomes of *senses* and feelings. The *Wandering Flock* is not aiming on a prescriptive what the participants should feel, but much more about creating awareness about there *senses*, so both ‘negative’ as well as ‘positive’ feelings. As Ab Dijksterhuis writes only when something goes ‘wrong’ we become conscious about our behaviour (Dijksterhuis, 2007).

Hott writes *La Unión* is a chain of events and a work in constant transformation, with a high element of chance and chaos, in which it is

the audience (participants) who determines the final form of the dance. (...) It is not taught: it is merely planned, and evolves, continuously transforming'. With this approach he steps in the footsteps of John Cage and Merce Cunningham, in the summer of 1952 at Black Mountain College they created Theater Piece #1 based on the principle of chance. Martin writes that in historical context is referred to 'the first 'happening' in the performing arts' (1994, p. 46). John Cage (1912 – 1992) a composer, music theorist, writer, philosopher, and artist said about Theater Piece #1 'the thing had not been rehearsed. It had simply been planned. In fact, that very day before lunch it was planned, and it was performed before dinner. And we all simply got together and did these things once' (Larson, 2013, p. 251). As these works of Cage and Hott, the *Wandering Flock* is merely planned, and other then some chance elements or 'guidelines' -as I call them- there is no rehearsal needed (see External Supplement: Guidelines of the *Wandering Flock* Method). Therefore the movement will be different every time it is executed, as with the 'happenings' and in Theater Piece #1 and La Unión chance and chaos are embraced in the *Wandering Flock*.

The 'open structure' of Theater Piece #1 came forth from the teachings on Zen Buddhism that John Cage had read by D.T. Suzuki writer and professor (1870 –1966). Later Cage experienced the classes on indeterminacy by Suzuki. 'Indeterminacy means literally: not fixed, not settled, uncertain, indefinite. (...) Inspired by Suzuki's class, Cage had been exploring ways to write music that was indeterminate both in original intention and in outcome. By using methods of divination (his favourite was I Ching, the Chinese book of Changes) Cage could write music with the help of chance. In that way he could begin with an intention and open it up to the unpredictable' (Larson, 2013, p. 19).

As John Cage I am interested in the Eastern philosophies like Zen Buddhism. With the *Wandering Flock* I am looking for the unpredictable, not by acting like a choreographer or director but by letting the movement arise by the group of participants. I do this by asking the participants to be very conscious about their environment, the surroundings, were nothing is fixed or settled and everything is always uncertain and indefinite like in the indeterminacy of Suzuki. William Fetterman writes in his paper on John Cage's piece Water Music 'that the I Ching answered Cage's need for both structure and selection of events. The use of chance is complex: simultaneously subjective and objective' (Martin, 1994, p. 47). When I use the guidelines

of the *Wandering Flock*, I work with chance as well; the guidelines give structure and are the starting point of the movement. In case of the *Wandering Flock* the guidelines start from the research on group self-organization of social systems by professor Charlotte Hemelrijk of the faculty of Mathematics and Natural Science from the University of Groningen (as described at page 25). The starting point of the *Wandering Flock* exercise is imagine to mimic flocking birds. I follow herein Merce Cunningham (1919-2009), dancer and choreographer who worked and lived with John Cage together. He often used an image from nature (for example an animal) to describe his intentions to his dancers. This way they could imagine what to do and how to move (Martin, 1994). I ask the participants to emphasise with the powerful movements of flocking birds, by imagine them to imitate the motions. This way the participants can build an intention towards the movement from a visual and an internal awareness.

The guidelines are the basis for the participants to move in unison, as I have described before I will not be a director and there will not be a choreography made beforehand. As for example in the work *The Open Body* by Raúl or with the Japanese synchronized walking: *shuudan koudou* translated as Group Action where the participants get verbal keys (Msiddiqui135, 2010).

I associate moving in unison with the synchronized and collective movements created in the mass choreographs, in former GDR, USSR and contemporary North Korea. I have always been interested in these events where unison is created with a tremendous amount of people. Anna Hoetjes (1984) a film, video, performance and installation artist created a project inspired by these mass choreographies; *TURN!* (2012). In a stadium in Leipzig she created in collaboration with choreographer Heike Hennig (1966) a choreography with a group of volunteers that see films from different perspectives. The outcome of *TURN!* is a video installation in a loop of 11 minutes. I have also recorded from various perspectives the movements of several *Wandering Flocks* but merely for research purposes. The motivation of Anne Hoetjes to create the work is rather political when she states that she wants to investigate 'the possibilities for synchronized, collective movement in a space that is loaded with the history of mass-movement parades during the socialist GDR' (Hoetjes, 2012).



Hoetjes, A. (2012) TURN! [Still of 2 channel HD video installation] Courtesy of the artist.

The mass choreographies studied by Anna Hoetjes have their origins in The Russian Avant-garde Movement (1890 – 1930) where ‘The New Human’ was an important theme for many artists. ‘More than ever before, the human body became the subject of artistic experimentation’ (Sirotkina & Smith, 2017). After the revolution in Russia the avant-garde focused on the ‘new, free human’ (Sirotkina & Smith, 2017). The dancers and choreographers of the Choreological Laboratory of Dance and Movement worked in collaboration with the Russian Photographic Society to communicate the concept of the ‘free human’ and ‘free dance’ through photography and film for exhibition and teaching purposes. There were radical performances (for audience or recording devices) with the naked body and with ecstatic abandon known as *Danse Plastique*. Free dance flourished only till the 1930s, when the communist administration closed the dance studios. But it ironically ‘did not prevent Stalin’s regime from later using all sorts of choreographic elements in films and the mass gymnastic displays that characterised this political regime’ (Het Nieuwe Instituut, 2016). So from the ideas of the Russian Avant-garde Movement to free the body, eventually with mass choreographed propaganda events the body became material for dictatorship. Anne Hoetjes writes that ‘individualism is a norm and a totality in Western society’ with the work *TURN!* she recognizes that ‘this individualism needs to be questioned just as much as the norms and totalities within state-socialism needed to be questioned’ (Hoetjes, 2012). One goal of the *Wandering Flock* is that the individual is trained through the other (the surroundings) to gain awareness of one’s *senses*.

The aim to become aware of one's *senses* connects with the ideas of the free body of the Russian Avant-garde Movement. Sirotkina & Smith describe that in the Avant-garde Movement sensing is associated to being aware, they write 'to be is to sense, to feel; in that sensing and feeling, to know, to be aware. All sensing is movement' (2017). Claiming that sensing is perceived through the movements of the body, which they say is connected to nature. Sirotkina & Smith illustrate this when they describe the photo by Rybin from Vera Maya's studio they write 'if mind is to culture as body is to nature, this leap is close to nature' (2017). Like the free body practiced in the Russian Avant-garde Movement, the *Wandering Flock* -starting with flocking birds- is inspired by natural movements.



Rybin, S. (1927) Studio Vera Maya. [Photograph] Courtesy A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum, Moscow.

Analysis

Introduction

I describe here how the *Wandering Flock* method is developed through the theoretical research and practical analysis.

As a result of the practical research and experiments I did with various groups of participants, I learned the conditions that are important for the method. Therefore the *Wandering Flock* now consists of three parts: Introduction, *Wandering Flock* and Reflection. Here aspects of the theoretical research are affected like: the connection between Body & Mind and being in a *flow*, Collective and Individual Learning, Outward and Inward Learning through Nature and Being an Actor or Director. All these elements have the intention to let participants become aware of senses in their bodies and attentive towards outward connections while cognitive, physical and affective learning is balanced in the exercise.

The context of workshops where the *Wandering Flock* method is originated, developed, improved and realized:

The *Wandering Flock* # 01 was held on 4 June 2016 with 6 participants at Studio Babel in Amsterdam.

The *Wandering Flock* # 02 was held on 2 July 2016 with 13 participants at Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam.

The *Wandering Flock* # 03 was held on 5 November 2016 with 7 participants and 4 filming spectators at Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam.

The *Wandering Flock* # 04 was held on 28 January 2017 with 6 participants at Akiyoshidai International Art Village in Japan.

The *Wandering Flock* # 05 was held on 13 February 2017 with 15 participants at Yamaguchi University in Japan.

The *Wandering Flock* # 06 was held on 04 March 2017 with 6 participants at Yamaguchi University in Japan.

Body & Mind

The method is built up in three parts: Introduction, *Wandering Flock* and Reflection, one important reason is the aim to create an experience wherein the body and mind are balanced.

The physical exercise -the *Wandering Flock*- is the main activity, but through the whole method (all three aspects) the participants will experience a balanced learning of the body and mind. I therefore explored how to bring the introduction to the participants. I started to give an extended theoretical framework as introduction of *Flock # 01*. I was aware that it was more than needed to do the exercise, this was also reflected by the participants. So at *Flock # 02* I did the opposite and gave a very brief introduction. I got response from the participants where some said it was too brief, whereas others said the visuals worked for them.

I understood that apart from how extended the introduction was, the participants had various needs for the introduction. Therefore I have created an introduction wherein I use verbal, non-verbal (body) language and visuals (film of flocking birds), to address the various groups of learners and give them the possibility to have a successful experience during the *Wandering Flock*. I also recognized that how I communicated and what I said influenced the exercise, for example when I emphasized on the word group, in the reflections it became clear that a lot of participants had focused on the group. In the exercise I am the outsider and therefore will not influence the movement, but with the introduction I have a clear position as director and therefore have influence on the group activity.

From *Flock # 04* I have practiced the introduction as described above (and more extended in the external supplement: Guidelines of the *Wandering Flock* method). Since the introduction was brief and clear there was space for interpretation by the participants, which resulted in an organic movement that at one point almost resembled a group of flocking birds. For example the participants felt free to switch places, but still stayed together in the group. The space for interpretation and chance also present at Theater Piece # 01 and 'happenings' of John Cage and Merce Cunningham created cohesion in the group and it was visible that the participants enjoyed it.

The time frame of the *Wandering Flock* exercise is carefully built up in several rounds from 1 minute, 2 minutes, 5 minutes to 12 minutes, for the reason that the participants get used to the exercise by experiencing repetition of the movement. I realized that repetition of the exercise is important to let the body create 'muscle memory' and the mind get used to the 'awkwardness' of the movement in unison. For example in *Flock # 03* two girls were laughing together during the first two practices of 1 and 2 minutes, but during the movement of 5 minutes they didn't laugh anymore, the tension was gone and they started to concentrate fully. There was one person in *Flock # 06* who bumped into someone in an inattentive moment during the first movement (of 1 minute), this resulted that he became very focused and conscious about his movements in the following *Flock*.

Another participant said afterwards: 'The 2 minutes felt long, whereas the 5 minutes movement didn't feel long'. She got used to the exercise and therefore experienced it different. Some participants of *Flock # 06* describe as well that the length and repetition of the exercise changed their experience of the exercise; 'I experienced fun as soon as I got used to the exercise', 'It became interesting at the moment I got used to the exercise' and 'I felt resistance to be in front of the group, but I got used to it and later I could walk without the feeling of resistance'.

In the philosophy of Japanese martial arts: *budo* of physical-mental awareness: *ki ken tai ichi* the connection between the body and mind is generated by the energy: *ki* that controls the actions and not the ratio. This is expressed in the sentiment of a person who wrote 'I felt that I became part of the group and started acting without thinking'.

I worked with amateur practitioners of the karate and *aikido* club of Yamaguchi University in Japan to understand if it would be easier for them to perform the *Wandering Flock* than people who didn't practiced *budo*. Since I was able to work with both practitioners and non-practitioners I could compare this, but other than I had expected, I didn't notice a big difference between the participants. I learned that it is more important that the participants want to join the exercise voluntary. Two participants of *Flock # 06* write about experiences that come close to an sense of *flow*, 'an experience of focused awareness', where 'the emphasis is on the bodily experience'. One participant writes 'from the middle part of the exercise I experienced a pure feeling, I acted in a reflex and didn't think a lot' and another writes 'I felt that I became part

of the group and started acting without thinking'. The bodily-knowledge of *budo* might have helped them to gain this awareness after one *Wandering Flock* experience, because their training focuses on 'thoughts, intentions, feelings and all the senses on the present'. I assume that more participants are able to experience this sense of *flow* when they train the *Wandering Flock* exercise repetitively. (A future research is needed.)

The method aims for to a connection between body and mind, the exercise itself focuses to activate the body, to let the participant become aware of all senses. The reflection after the exercise activates the mind to let the participants become conscious what they have experienced during the exercise. In this way the body and mind are balanced in the *Wandering Flock* method.

The awareness to understand and communicate with others in a physical way gave some of the participants of *Flock # 05* energy. Reactions were; 'after I finished the exercise I felt in my body the fun of understanding each-other without talking, this made me feel energetic'. Afterwards someone else felt 'a kind of connection (towards the group) and this made me feel warm'. Another positive but more general reaction was 'I feel enriched to have experienced the movements of flocking'.

The reflection cards that I introduced and developed give the participants the possibility to become aware about their (bodily) experience. The moment of individual, silent reflection gives meaning to what happened during the exercise (see Figure 03).

Individual & Collective Learning

With the *Wandering Flock* I balance the focus of the individual towards the collective. I follow Dewey who recognized that the qualities of an individual flourished while working on a project together with others. Since the participants can only communicate in a non-verbal way, the exercise encourages connecting to the group while disciplining the bodily senses.

The guidelines of the *Wandering Flock* show the importance of the group:

1. Move in the same direction as the other individuals in your vicinity.
2. Don't crash into other individuals; keep distance.
3. Stay in the group, stay near to the individuals in your vicinity.
4. Every individual can change direction of the movement, no matter the position in the group (in front, middle or back).
5. Everybody moves in silence.

The movement of the *Wandering Flock* can therefore only be performed with at least 3 people, but I suggest a group of minimal 6 participants. I worked in my research with groups of 6 to 15 persons and I believe it would be interesting to work with larger groups as well. I observed that the movements of the smaller groups were more fluent. It suggests that the awareness of others demands more concentration and practice in a larger group.

I initially thought that it would be easier for an existing group to do the exercise. I did experiments with both existing groups and groups specially created for the *Wandering Flock* consisting of different (small) groups and individuals. I experienced that for only a few individuals it was difficult to do the exercise with unknown people, most of the time it was not a problem as long as there was the will to participate voluntarily.

For example in *Flock # 05* was a group formed from members of the *aikido* club and the *karatedo* club. I observed that the guys of *karatedo* club stayed together and were laughing nervously. One of them describes 'I felt it was difficult, since there were also members of the other club participating' and another wrote 'the group including my friends worked for me'. Therefore it was difficult for them to concentrate on the movement. Whereas for the members of the *aikido* club -especially the girls-were moving dedicated and serious, even though they had to laugh sometimes, you could see they enjoyed it. It was reflected in their written experiences like this one; 'I found the exercise interesting, because I normally never do this'.

With the exercise the participants build a temporary community, I follow herein the ideas of Rice who believed that life in a community enriched the development of the individual. Being part of the group is a strong element within the exercise, as in BMC the group is (partly) created

through peer-pressure. This was also the reason that the person - a member of the *karatedo* club- who wrote 'yes, finally it has ended, this made me feel free' participated.

I introduced the warming up exercises of the Viewpoints techniques in *Flock # 06* with the aim to create cohesion in the group. With as aim to increase the focus, concentration and dedication during the movement. I noticed that with the warming the participants got used to each other and the unfamiliar exercises. To increase the feeling a 'safe space' I joined the warming up (see Figure 04). It was not only joy to participate, but indeed a connection was built. I noticed joy and dedication by the participants when the group started the movement of the *Wandering Flock* together (without me), they moved around in unison in a serious and focused manner.

The physical way to be part of a group was something a lot of participants revered to; they wrote 'I felt connected', 'to be together worked for me', 'I thought of being a collective together', 'I felt part of a group' and 'I felt part of a system'. One person who was aware of her body in connection to other bodies, she wrote 'I felt connected to my group of classmates, not in an intellectual way but in a physical way' (see Figure 13). Some of the participants became insecure by the challenge of moving in unison in a non-verbal way only relying on one's senses. They wrote 'I experienced the exercise to be difficult, because I couldn't talk to anyone' and 'it is difficult for the people in the back to start or change the movement, because the people in the front wouldn't notice so easily'. Others described the exercise to be difficult they wrote down 'although it looked simple, it was actually quite difficult', 'It was difficult to maintain a group', 'it was difficult I couldn't get my timing right with the others'.

There were some consistent experiences of the *Wandering Flock* were throughout all the *Flocks* (# 01 - # 06) with various participants. That is to say there were participants who experienced discomfort whereas others from the same group experienced calmness and comfort in the exercise. The participants who experienced various forms of discomfort, like anxiety, boredom or frustration in the exercise, they remarked things like: 'I wanted to release my frustration over losing a rhythm', 'I thought we needed more concentration' and 'I felt frustrated'. Some students' felt insecure about their actions they wrote 'I felt uneasy about how I should move', 'I didn't know if someone was following me or not', 'I felt a

little cold and insecure' and 'I did not always know if I should respond'. Participants who experienced senses of comfort, calmness and joy while doing the exercise wrote things like; 'the silence worked for me and therefore I felt relaxed', 'consciously walking and breathing worked for me, I felt calm'; 'I thought nothing, I did my best to be aware and I felt relaxed' and 'I felt the fun of walking together and sensed the security of the group'. Other than Forest School the *Wandering Flock* is not aiming to 'improve senses of well-being' but it aims to gain awareness of all senses, this includes senses like struggle, irritation or discomfort. Therefore the *Wandering Flock* connects more to experiences of walking meditation: kinhin or the Slow Walk by Anne Terresa Kearsemaker.

There was a moment when something went 'wrong' collectively in *Flock # 05* (existing of 15 participants) the group split in two parts. Half of the group in the back turned direction, while the other part kept walking in the initial direction (see Figure 09) . The group that turned noticed soon that the rest of the group was not following and they returned and joined the others again. This movement of separation and union resembled for me as outsider and observer the movements of flocking birds in the sky. It showed me how the participants can go in and out a *flow* in an organic way. One person writes about this moment 'I thought it was funny, since everybody was starting to turn in different directions'. Ap Dijksterhuis writes that when something goes 'wrong' we become conscious about our behaviour. I agree with Dijksterhuis and embrace these moments, since it gains awareness and perhaps this awareness result in a faster or more profound consciousness than a 'positive' experience.

Outward & Inward Learning through Nature

The *Wandering Flock* forces the participant to connect inward and outward simultaneously. The outward connection is present since the exercise can only be executed in a group, but the awareness of participants of the surroundings is also significant. Therefore the movement is practiced outside to stimulate the senses.

I follow the ideas of the Forest Schools where the students learn in natural surroundings, outdoors. The location of the *Flock* is preferably in nature, but even an large urban outside space (for example a school playground) has proven to work (see Figure 12). The change from indoor- to outdoor location is most important because it changes the atmosphere and mind-set of the participant. Several peers have mentioned after *Flock # 02* that this was something that worked for them after being in a school class all day.

I researched what kind of outdoor surroundings would fit to the exercise. *Flock # 01 - # 03* were executed in relatively small spaces and I noticed that the surroundings functioned as an obstacle for the exercise, instead that it was helping the participants to open the senses towards the movement. I experienced myself in *Flock # 01* because of the small space obstacles as walls predicted the change of direction. In the film footage showing feet of one participant in *Flock # 03* is clearly visible that the participant is slaloms between bikes and borders of the playground (see Figure 05). The awareness of the surroundings is definitely here, but the obstacles disturb the possibility of a free movement. What inevitable reduces the possibility to experience *flow*.

It was clear that the activity should be executed in a large space. In *Flock # 04 - # 06* I observed that in a large and open space the movement of group becomes more organic like the birds in the sky (see Figure 06).

The natural surrounding according to the Forest Schools foster 'change in habits, emotions and relationships for the better', I indeed noticed that the natural surroundings opened the trivial bodily senses people wrote; 'I felt cold' and 'I felt it is getting warmer outside'. And there was one person who participated in *Flock # 05* and *# 06*, both performed in different locations. In the first location the ground consisted of asphalt and the second time of sand, he wrote; 'This time I noticed that when someone changed direction, this produces sound (on a sandy ground) and therefore I could heard when I had to turn'. He was using his hearing senses in a conscious way to move around.

I was happily surprised by one participant who interestingly focused on birds. Through the exercise he started to identify with them. He wrote 'it is good that birds don't have a leader, I want everyone to be a leader' and 'right now I feel that birds are wonderful and I want to watch birds'.

He made a literal connection between himself and his surroundings. Another inspiring reaction was from one person who wanted to integrate his experience of the *Wandering Flock* in daily life. He wrote 'I now want to be more aware of the surroundings in everyday life as well'. This is an idyllic outcome of the exercise if indeed it is practiced outside the *Wandering Flock*.

The title *Wandering Flock* suggests that the group can wander off anywhere, but remarkably the participants stayed in the unset boundaries. For example they didn't leave the football field and only moved on the street and didn't use the neighbouring pedestrian path.

Participant as Director or Actor

The *Wandering Flock* invites the participants to choose a role in the exercise; as director (leader) or actor (follower); the participants are able to conduct both roles during the exercise. I have the position as outsider and observer.

I follow the technique used in Japanese preschools called *mimamoru*, where a teacher 'keeps an eye on' of the situation. This way the participants become aware of their own position, role and actions within the group. I observed that the role the participant takes in the exercise varies from person to person. Some participants focused on leading the group and changing the direction, others were only following the group. It was visible that there were some natural leaders who turned the direction of the group multiple times, whereas there were also people who never tried to change the direction and just followed. For example in *Flock # 04* there was one person that took the position of an outsider, she was always a bit distinct of the group and was also the one that took often the initiative to turn the direction of the group, the role of the leader.

A lot of participants wrote down 'follow' to describe what they were doing and how they experienced the activity. They wrote are: 'I did follow and felt followed', 'I did follow the people ahead of me', 'I did what everybody else did, and I followed', 'I thought I should stay in the group', 'I thought I should go along with the movements of the others' and 'I must not disturb the harmony in the group'. One person wrote 'I did as

little as possible'.

There was one participant who was aware how the connection with the group influenced her, she described her experience as; 'I felt freedom and simultaneously ruled by the group'. The flexibility that the exercise generates to choose one's own position generates this feeling. The participant can decide to follow or lead.

Participants who took an active role in the movement wrote 'I did try to move the group' and 'I tried to make sure everyone was on the same pace'. There was also one person who regrets that he didn't dare to lead during the exercise he writes 'right now I feel I want to move the group and I want to have the courage to be a leader', I consider this awareness valuable since it can be adjusted to daily life and other practices.

Conclusion

I have created the *Wandering Flock* because I believe that through the emphasis on cognitive teaching and learning in higher visual art education nowadays, the educational system is missing an important and valuable way of learning, namely through the body *and* in relation to the other. Therefore I have developed a bodily activity, wherein learning through the body and bodies is key; the *Wandering Flock* method, inspired by the movements of flocking of birds.

The exercise has proven to stimulate various learning conditions; it challenges to converge to bodily knowledge and it trains to become aware of one's senses. Through the collective (the other) participants are forced to take position and urged to refine their awareness towards the surroundings as practiced in Zen Buddhist & Shinto-based arts.

The visual image of flocking birds -the starting point of the exercise- has showed to foster the imagination of the participants, with as result that the participants are able to 'do' the activity right away. Through the physical activity the method accommodates knowledge and awareness of the senses by the participants. The exercise targets what is lacking in education, that is to say the synthesis of the body and mind. Here the exercise has proven to be significant in bringing about that synthesis. With respect to this, the (cognitive) reflection on the physical experience is key. The reflection afterwards generates consciousness about the bodily senses – like senses of discomfort or relaxation depending on the individual – as they were experienced by the participants.

The movement of the *Wandering Flock* can only be created within a group; the participants have to move in vicinity of each other, therefore the relation towards the other becomes sensible through the whole body. The exercise stimulates the participants to relate in a different (new) way to their body, the other (bodies) and the surroundings. Since the *Wandering Flock* requires to walk in unison without the use of cues (in verbal language or music). Additionally the participants should be aware about what is happening behind them since everyone (also the one's in the back) is able to change the direction of the group. This contrasting way of communicating with each-other challenges the participants to be focused and attentive in physical way. It also forces

them to take a clear position in the group as actor (follower of the group) or director (leader of the group).

This concept, derived from Japanese philosophies as Zen Buddhism and Shintoism and practiced in various Japanese traditional arts, demonstrated within the exercise the ability to train the awareness of senses of the participants. This showed itself in the movement of the flocking especially in those moments when all participants were concentrated and motivated. When some of the members of the group appeared less focused *flow* seemed to break down, for example when a group broke in two, but after this brief moments the group restored the awareness and continued moving in unison.

The *Wandering Flock* method as I have developed functions on these various levels and I consider it to be of value in education. Future research will have to focus on the longer-term effect of the exercise, or on its effects once it is repeatedly performed.

Continuation

I have developed and created the *Wandering Flock* method that I consider as a valuable tool in higher art education. Since I am interested to discover what the possibilities of the method. I want to explore the method further. I am for example interested how the exercise functions if it is trained on a regular basis, with a steady group in the context of higher visual art education.

I am interested to understand how the *Wandering Flock* will function when conducted with the same group various times, for example on a weekly basis as part of a curriculum.

I have question like;

- How will the *Wandering Flock* evolve as movement?
- How will the *Wandering Flock* influence the individual?
- How will the *Wandering Flock* support the participant in the other (conceptual) courses from the curriculum?
- How will the *Wandering Flock* affect the creative process?

I am therefore interested to extend the research in the context of a visual art school.

Appendix

Practical Research & Development

With the following descriptions I give insight in the development of the *Wandering Flock* method. I have combined my personal observations and thoughts with the reflections of the participants.

Wandering Flock # 01

The *Wandering Flock # 01* was held on 4 June 2016 with 6 participants at Studio Babel in Amsterdam. Here I tested the *Flock* in combination with the DasArts Feedback method. I invited people from a wide field connected to my research; two visual artists/teachers, a camerawoman/teacher, a psychologist and a visual artist/food specialist with interest in the body and mind and also participated myself.

My questions for the first *Flock* were: How would it be to experience the exercise for myself and for the participants? How does the location function? What does the time do to the exercise? How much theory and guidelines are important to understand the *Wandering Flock*?

I held a verbal introduction of my theoretical research supported by visuals and a film of the flocking birds. I chose to be as precise as possible to give the participants a theoretical framework before we would experience the *Wandering Flock* together; I did this to understand how the theory influences the bodily experience of the participants.

I was aware that I wouldn't give such a profound theoretical framework as introduction in a 'real' situation, so of course there were some comments about it. But it was also interesting for me to hear from some participant and also experience myself that the mind was taking over during the exercise. I also got aware that some participants were happy with the exercise whereas other preferred to have started the movement without a framework. One person wrote; 'I need a clear framework about what we are going to do' and in my opinion is that the most important, so for *Flock # 02* I prepared a clear introduction that illustrated the ideas of the exercise and gave the guidelines. I reflected: 'in education there are various needs within people, the doers, the

thinkers and the feelers. With the creation of an effective framework I need to take this in account and find a good balance in how I will build up the introduction’.

The first *Flock* I joined the group and we moved together in a ‘closed’ area, a roof-terrace. At one hand this created a safe space, which allowed us to freely execute the movement, but on the other hand we also experienced the space as restrained and thus not free. It was so small that the movement to change direction became predictable; it was simply not possible to continue walking (see Figure 07) . It was really clear that *Flock # 02* should be executed at a larger space.

Since this *Flock* was combined with the DasArts feedback, the reflection was naturally profound. I noticed that it gave insight to understand the experiences of the others and add them to my personal experiences; it helped me to develop the *Wandering Flock* method. Someone said the ‘reflection afterwards is essential’ and it indeed is the moment of awareness. I wrote ‘I will develop guided reflection as the DasArts method, clear and quick to use’.

We performed *Flock # 01* about four times for a short duration from about 30 seconds to one minute, the last (and most serious) flocking we did had a duration of 2 minutes. In reaction on the experience one participant said ‘I need a large space and a lot of time’. I wrote down that the time frame should be set clear from the beginning and that it should be longer than those 2 minutes.

Wandering Flock # 02

The *Wandering Flock # 02* was held on 2 July 2016 with 13 participants at Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. The participants of the *Wandering Flock # 02* were my classmates and some of the teachers of the Master in Education in Arts at Piet Zwart Institute, the exercise was held outside the school building at the ‘play-ground’. The difference was that this time it was a larger group and not all the participants were interested in a bodily exercise. I decided not to participate myself from this time on. I did this to let go of directing the movement (to let it really originate by the participants), there was one remark by a participant after the first *Wandering Flock* who wanted to ‘do it right’ since I was walking next to her. So, to avoid my influences on the group I stood aside and observed the activity. This ‘outsider’ position gave me the opportunity to really see what was going on with the group of

participants. The consequence of not participating myself is that I am not experiencing the process. I will have the position as an educator that let the students learn from each other, connecting among other things to the *mimamoru* educational approach of watching and not intervening.

In contrast with *Flock # 01*, I held a brief explanation. I only explained the Guidelines to move in unison and showed the flocking birds movie (to have text and visuals). I noticed that this time the explanation was too limited and therefore some of the participants were not really concentrated and the flocking became therefore messy. Three persons wrote that they needed more and a clearer instruction whereas two others wrote that the movie of flocking birds was very helpful and clear to them. It became clear to me that the limited time, we could only practice one time of 2 minutes had also to do with the confusion with some participants. Earlier I wrote down on my personal experience of *Flock # 01*; 'repetition is important to overcome some kind of resistance or irritation', and someone said 'I need to do this again longer'. This connects with *budo* training, the concept of *flow* and education in general. For the *Wandering Flock* 'I therefore want to create a time frame where I build up the length of the exercise, to get repetition'.

I made reflection cards to find out how and what the participants were thinking, sensing and doing during the practice (see Figure 02). The participants of *Flock # 02* described that they felt belonged to the group; words as 'collective' and 'connectivity' were written down often. Someone wrote 'I felt connected to my group of classmates, not in an intellectual way but in a physical way' and another 'I did my best to stay in my place in the swarm'. The exercise demands from the participants to take a position within the flocking group, in the reflection afterwards a lot of participants used the word 'follow' to describe what they were doing and how they experienced acting in unison. Some examples of what they wrote are: 'I did follow and felt followed', 'I did follow the people ahead of me;', 'I did what everybody else did, and I followed'. The other reactions were different; one person wrote 'I did as little as possible', another 'I did look back' and someone else wrote 'I did try to move the group', so she took the position of a leader instead of a follower. These examples demonstrate the various actions that are taken by the individual participants, but illustrate also how the participants experience the exercise all in a different way and therefore learn all something unique.

The overall personal experiences were very diverse. Some described the experience as something 'troubling' and 'difficult' to do, while others experienced it to be 'relaxing' and 'fun'. Descriptions that illustrate the personal struggle of the activity are 'I felt how difficult it is to really stay attuned to others', 'I thought about my distance to others' or in one word 'unfamiliarity'.

The change of the classroom where I gave the introduction to the playground outside where the *Wandering Flock* was practiced, was mentioned by several participants as something that was helpful and worked. The reason for the change of location is to let the participants get in another 'mood' or action, from thinking during the explanation inside to doing the activity outside. The fact that most 'lessons' are held in a (school) building helps to go outside and change the perceptions of the participant. I believe it helps to open up the body and mind for an exercise that is essentially different from the other 'courses'. The type of weather immediately addresses the senses of the participants, this stimulation is important to practice the inward and outward connections. One person described 'to be outside and not think worked for me'.

With the *Wandering Flock* # 02 I made it clear that the exercise was 2 minutes long. Two people out of 13 wrote down they needed more time to do the movement, it was enough for me of course in connection to the theory on noh theatre by Moore that it is important to 'take the time' to come in a certain concentration.

Wandering Flock # 03

Wandering Flock # 03 was held on 5 November 2016 with 7 participants and 4 persons who filmed the *Flock* at Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. The *Wandering Flock* # 03 was conducted at the playground of Karel Doormanhof of PZI, the same location as *Flock* # 02. The participants were my fellow classmates and one of my teachers. This group experienced the exercise for the second time now. This time I noticed a better concentration, I was hoping that a moment of *flow* might appear within the movement of the group, since repetition and training is key to be able to experience *flow*. And indeed it happened for a brief moment of about 45 seconds.

Within this test my aim was to understand how I am able to record the research project of the *Wandering Flock* in a practical and visual manner. I asked my classmates to bring their smart-phone or another recording device, like a digital film camera with them. I asked four people to record the flocking movement from various positions from the playground, to have an overview of the movement from various angles. The 7 participants that conducted the flocking I asked to film from their point of view, or their face (Robin, see Figure 11) or their feet (Felix, see Figure 05), I took the position of the spectator (no recording device) so I was able to observe what happened. The recordings were important for the development of the research and function as illustrations of the research.

From the first two exercises I learned to prolong the duration of the flocking. I did so this time to 4:30 minutes. I also prepared the introduction with precise description. Both the introduction and the longer duration of the *Flock* worked well. I decided to divide the structure of the didactic methodology of the *Wandering Flock* in the following parts: 1. Introduction 2. *Wandering Flock* 2. and 3. Reflection.

The space was again the small playground and as reflection I wrote: 'I am positive it would work much better in an open space that will allow the movement to become more organic, like the flocking birds. In the film footage made by Felix during the *Wandering Flock* # 03 you can clearly see that he is struggling and slaloms between the bikes and other obstacles on the playground. The small spaces used so far created a 'safe' feeling because walls and gates surrounded them. The large space should feel safe as well and be open at the same time.

I therefore prolonged the duration *Flock* # 03 to 4:30 minutes. I knew I had to stretch the time frame to understand if an amount of time is needed to be able to come in a *flow* (as Emiko described before). The 4:30 minutes time frame was very successful for my research, I could see the uncertainty and doubt in the beginning of the movement. For example Annemarie who was leading in the beginning looked backwards all the time, but she stopped doing so after some time. Around 2:30 minutes there was a moment of about 45 seconds that the group really moved in a *flow*. The lines the group made became more fluent, curvy and organic it was interesting to see this happen. Shortly after this moment this connection of the group was disappearing again. This was probably a result of the rain that was softly starting to drop; I think this external element disrupted the concentration.

The duration of the movement is of great importance for the experience. I will create a time-line and prolong the exercise from 1, 2, 5 and 12 minutes to prolong every time the movement.

Wandering Flock # 04

Wandering Flock # 04 was held on 28 January 2017 with 6 participants at Akiyoshidai International Art Village in Japan (AIAV). At the Open Studio day at AIAV I gathered a group of six visitors to participate to walk *Flock # 04* together. The group consisted of 5 adults between ± 20 - ± 45 years old and a teenager, from which one person came from the UK and the rest were natives from Japan. This was not an existing group; there were three people that knew each other, a group of two and one individual woman.

I introduced *Flock # 04* with the film 'A bird ballet' from Neels Castillon. I explained the guidelines briefly and then went with the group outside to a large square in front of the building. I started to let them walk to explore the area and the pace of the group as a warming-up. Then they started to walk for 1 minute and as I had pointed out in the introduction they indeed used the whole space, but they did not turn on the axis, so I figured that wasn't clear yet. After this minute I showed them with mostly body language that everybody of the group could be in charge to turn the group (and be a leader), during the second round of 2 minutes this made the movement immediately more organic and at one point it almost resembled as a group of birds flocking.

The participants started doing the act without hesitating and I noticed enthusiasm and joy to try it out. This is not something to draw conclusions on after one test but it was interesting to see how they started walking in a rather vast space, that was remarkably different from what I saw from the tests I did before in The Netherlands. The guidelines I gave this time were less extended than in the previous *Flocks # 01 - # 03*. The group might have felt therefore free to switch places, but they kept together as a group. I observed that it gave a more organic and bird swarming like look. But this might also be possible since the location was larger as the previous locations and due to the instructions that I gave like; 'use the whole space' and 'there is no wrong everything is alright'. I found it liberating to see that with the less strict instructions the participants moved in a more free way.

The communication in the introduction; the specific language, words that I use, but also body language and visuals influence how the

participants act in the movement and whereon they react during the reflection. This was very clear to me in *Flock # 04* where I worked as much as possible with body-language since I was not sure how exact my words were translated into Japanese. This gave me insight in how to prepare the introduction as written in the external supplement: Guidelines of the *Wandering Flock* method. I noticed that showing the visuals and the communication with body language were very helpful to communicate the guidelines to various groups of learners.

Flock # 04 was the first flocking movement that was built up in the time scheme from 1 minute then 2 minutes to end with a session of 5 minutes. After every walk I got together with the participants to shortly give reflect and give them a moment to 'ventilate', we concluded with a short verbal evaluation at the end of the experience. Time is experienced different by the participants of the *Wandering Flock*, someone said: 'the 2 minute dance felt long, whereas the 5 minute dance didn't feel long'. This was not the case for the rest of the group I observed that during the 5 minutes movement suddenly the pace of the group became slower, somehow the energy got out of the group of participants and this stayed so till the end. The British girl said that 'in the beginning she was thinking, later on she was feeling more what the group did I heard similar reactions in The Netherlands before.

The two young girls were laughing together during the first two practices of 1 and 2 minutes, they needed some time to get related to the weirdness of the exercise, in the last movement in unison of 5 minutes they didn't laugh anymore. This meant that the time frame functions to get related to the exercise. The following *Flock* I want to experiment with a warming up exercise to do before the actual flocking to take out some of these reactions and feelings within the participants.

What position the participant takes in the movement is very personal. In *Flock # 04* there was one person that took the position of an outsider, she was always a bit distinct of the group and was also the one that often took the initiative to turn the direction of the group and therefore also took the position of the leader. This woman group said 'it was interesting because it was so different every moment.' Another woman who took more the position of a follower said: 'I felt freedom and simultaneously ruled by the group',

Wandering Flock # 05

Wandering Flock # 05 was held on 13 February 2017 with 15 participants at Yamaguchi University in Japan. The experience of *Flock # 05* was with students from the *karatedo* club of Yamaguchi University, spontaneously the *aikido* group joined. So the group consisted of two existing groups together. A wide sports field was available to create the flocking, after the introduction in the rather cold dojo we went outside to this location. We started the flocking 1, 2, and 5 minutes, but the sandy floor was quite wet and this interfered in the concentration of the movement (see Figure 10) . So I decided to go to a smaller, but dry asphalt square to do the final flocking of 12 minutes. This worked better but the rather 'messy' start had interrupted the concentration in the group. There was a difference visible between the guys of the *karatedo* group that had been asked by their leader to join and the *aikido* group that joined voluntary, the latter was much more enthusiastic and seemed to go into the exercise more serious.

I observed some kind of fear, some guys from the *karatedo* group they were sticking together. One of them describes 'I felt it was difficult, since there were also members of the other club participating' and another wrote 'the group including my friends worked for me'. I learned from *Flock # 05* it is important to create cohesion in the group before starting the *Wandering Flock*.

Some participants said they had the need to experience the *Wandering Flock* another time, just to repeat it or specifically to have another experience. A person who did the exercise for the second time wrote 'at the moment I feel tired but happy that I have participated and I want to do the *Wandering Flock* some time again', this person started to find joy in the exercise. Someone else who apparently was not really motivated during the exercise wrote 'right now I feel I want to do it again someday and I want to do it with joy'

If some individuals don't have the will to do the *Wandering Flock* it disturbs the movement of the collective. This was especially visible in # 02 and # 05 both times the groups existed of 15 participants. It seems that peer pressure in both cases was for some participants an important motivation to join, more important than personal motivation. To motivate the whole group and create cohesion especially when dealing with a large group I will start with warming up exercises and I will participate to create a safe space.

From *Flock # 05* on all participants were asked to fill in a comprehensive reflection card at the end of the workshop (see Figure 08) . To create awareness by the participant of the senses that have been addressed during and after the *Wandering Flock* and also for the development of my research (see the external supplement: Guidelines of The *Wandering Flock* method). Their answers combined with my observations gave me insight in the various ways the participants perceive the exercise (see Figure 03). The focus of the questions is on the senses of the participant during and after the exercise. In answers like 'I felt cold', 'I felt hungry, because I did not eat breakfast' and 'I felt it is getting warmer outside'. Someone had various feelings afterwards 'fatigue, a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of hunger', the awareness of very trivial senses was clearly present.

Wandering Flock # 06

Wandering Flock # 06 was held on 04 March 2017 with 6 participants at Yamaguchi University in Japan. It was not an existing group, two art students and four *karatedo* members from which two guys attend for the second time. The large sandy field was dry and I started for the first time with the three warming up exercises from Viewpoints techniques as described in the guidelines (see Figure 04) . I joined the group to create a safe place. Everybody participated fully, the warm weather helped the motivation and doing the warming up together increased the harmony in the group. The flocking went very smooth and all the participants were very dedicated and serious towards the practice.

All these external things influenced the performance of *Flock # 06*. Also the fact that the translator was better prepared since she knew the procedure now. Initially the group of *Flock # 06* was supposed to consist of 15 participants but it turned out to be a group of six people. From these participants several reflected afterwards that the next time they would 'need more people' to participate. I observed thought that the exercise is easier for it participants when the move in a smaller group. They were much more concentrated and in unison than when I worked with larger groups (see Figure 01). But one person said: 'the 'things' I feel during the *Wandering Flock* would become larger if there are more people involved' suggesting that the experience with a larger group would be more intense. I am very interested to find out if this is the case and therefore I want to research the exercise further with larger groups. Originally I wanted to work with the same group two or more times. I organized this for *Flock # 05* and # 06, but unfortunately only two

persons were attending in both of these *Flocks*. I still believe that repetition of the exercise is important to let the body create 'muscle memory' and the mind get used to the 'awkwardness' of moving in unison in a group. Continues research with a steady consisting group is therefore important.

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Guidelines

Wandering Flock A Bodily Exercise in Unison

Ilse Leenders

Guidelines

The *Wandering Flock* method is divided in three parts:
1.) Introduction, 2.) *Wandering Flock* and 3.) Reflection.

Context of the *Wandering Flock* method

Duration: ± 90 minutes

Location: Two locations that are in walking distance from each other: an inside location, like a classroom with projector and an outside location: a large space like a sports field.

Group: A group of minimal 6 participants.

Part 1: Introduction

Duration: ± 15 minutes

Location: Inside Location

Props: Projector

The Introduction of the exercise consists of showing a film with flocking birds and explaining the guidelines for flocking. You minimize the use of verbal language as much as possible to prepare the participants on the non-verbal exercise, when possible use visuals and body language.

You start with showing a film of flocking birds to give the participant's visual inspiration to connect to (e.g. 'A bird ballet' by Neels Castillon <https://vimeo.com/58291553>).

Then you point out the guidelines that are important to move in unison like the birds do (as described below).

1. Move in the same direction as the other individuals in your vicinity.
2. Don't crash into other individuals; keep distance.
3. Stay in the group, stay near to the individuals in your vicinity.
4. Every individual can change direction of the movement, no matter the position in the group (in front, middle or back).
5. Everybody moves in silence.

After the introduction everybody moves to the outside location to do the physical activity.

Part 2: *Wandering Flock*

Duration: ± 40 minutes

Location: Outside location

The *Wandering Flock* exercise starts with a warming up to help the participants to gain awareness of their body and their surroundings and to create cohesion in the group. The warming up consists of three exercises of the Viewpoints Techniques by Anne Bogart & Tina Landau: 'High Jumps', 'Five Images' and 'Run to Center', as described here below.

Warming Up Exercise: High Jumps

Standing in a circle, the group jumps in place together, as high as possible. The jump is not initiated by any individual but, rather, happens because of a shared consent. The goal is to simultaneously jump as high as possible, to land together in the same instant, and to land on the floor with as little noise as possible. At the height of the jump the feet should be tucked up under the buttocks so that as much space between the floor and the body as possible can be achieved.

This exercise should be repeated until the group has discovered together how to accomplish the task.

Warming Up Exercise: Five Images

While running in place, still in a circle, introduce a series of five images (see list below), one at a time. The participants should try to visualize each image as fully as possible in their bodies. Finally, all five images should be experienced simultaneously.

1. Imagine a beautiful goldien band around your head pulling gently upward.
2. Use soft focus
3. Loosen your arms and shoulders.
4. Imagine that your legs are strong and muscular and that your bare feet are accustomed to working in the soil. Feel the sense of descent into the ground.
5. Place your hands on your heart. Find the beating of the heart. Extend the arms outward and imagine working with an open heart. Repeat these instructions so that all five images are present at the same time (the fifth image can now exist without touching the heart or gesturing outward).

This exercise is a reminder that the body forms a line between heaven and earth, a line that unites the two. Encourage the participants to return to these images whenever they become exhausted or confused.

Warming Up Exercise: Run To Center

Form a very wide circle facing inward and begin running in place. One person can at any moment initiate a run into the center of the space (make sure that feet are not stepped on). In that split second of initiation, everyone should run toward the center together in such a way that someone watching would not be able to tell who initiated. After everyone has run to the center, everyone should run backward to re-establish the wide circumference of the circle. After some repetition of this exercise, each participant will experience first hand that anything can happen at any time and that s/he needs to be completely present in the moment, ready to move in response to stimuli. Repeat this exercise until the group is successfully communicating moment to moment.

To create a 'safe' place for the participants, you can participate with the warming up. The duration of the warming up depends on the group size. When there is cohesion in the group, the group can start with the *Wandering Flock* exercise. You might need to repeat the guidelines for the *Wandering Flock* again.

The *Wandering Flock* Exercise

The exercise of the *Wandering Flock* will be repeated several times, this gives the participants the opportunity to grow into the activity. The exercise is therefore built up in a time-frame from 1 minute, 2 minutes and 5 minutes to maximum of 15 minutes. Between these movements you gather the group together to briefly let the participants mirror their experience, to let go of tension, before continuing with the next (longer) round. You can skip the reflection if you work repetitively with a group.

During the exercise you will have the position as outsider and observe the participants, you are in charge of the 'clock'. The group will act by itself; this gives the participants the possibility to find out the movement and positions they take in as leader or follower by themselves.

When the *Wandering Flock* is performed for about 4 times everybody will go inside again to reflect on the exercise.

Part 3: Reflection

Duration: ± 30 minutes

Location: Inside location

Props: Reflection cards (see next page)

The reflection on the *Wandering Flock* exercise is important for the participants to become aware of their thoughts, actions and senses, during and after the exercise. So the (unconscious) experiences transform in a conscious experience.

There are two types of reflections an individual reflection written on reflection cards that you find in the following page and a collective verbal reflection. This way the participants gain awareness of the experience on an individual and collective level. The individual reflection starts in silence so the participants can connect inwards and sense for themselves how they perceive the exercise.

The *Wandering Flock* method completes with a group discussion. The exchange of experience might bring new awareness among the individuals and therefore the experience becomes more profound. You complete the session with thanking the participants for sharing the experience.

Repetition

You can repeat part 2 & 3 with one group for a set period of time (e.g. on a weekly basis for 6 months). The duration of part 3 can become shorter when a group trains together repetitively and becomes attuned faster. Through training the participants might be able to use the awareness they gain of their senses for their personal (and study) development. The repetition of the *Wandering Flock* has to be researched further.

Reflection on the *Wandering Flock*

While walking the *Wandering Flock*:

I felt

I thought

I did

During the *Wandering Flock*:

I experienced these senses

1.

2.

3.

I think I felt these senses because I

1.

2.

3.

After the *Wandering Flock*:

I felt in my body

this made me

At *this* moment:

Right now I feel

and I want to

Feedback on the *Wandering Flock*:

Next time I do the *Wandering Flock* I need.....

..... worked for me.



Figure 04 (page 41) Participants of Wandering Flock # 06 do the warming up exercise Run to Center.



Figure 08 (page 56) Participants of Wandering Flock # 05 fill in reflection cards.



Figure 09 (page 42) The group of Wandering Flock # 05 splits for a brief moment in two.

Figure 07 (page 49) The directions of the movements in Wandering Flock 02 become predictable because of the small space.



Figure 10 (page 55) Participants of Wandering Flock # 05 walk on the wet floor.



Figure 11 (page 52) Attentive concentration is visible in the eyes of a participant of Wandering Flock # 01.



Figure 12 (page 43) Participants of Wandering Flock # 03 use the whole space.



Figure 13 (page 41) The connection towards the group visible from the bodily perspective of the participants of Wandering Flock # 05.

While walking the Wandering Flock:

I felt ... it's difficult to keep personal distance
 I thought ... I should perceive the position of each other from
 I did ... tried to be calm

↳ people's breathing and eyes

During the Wandering Flock:

I experienced these emotion(s):
 1. ... A sense of hitting each other
 2. ... Sad
 3. ... Security
 I think I felt this emotion(s) because I:
 1. I scared of hitting people
 2. I almost left the group
 3. We faced same direction

After the Wandering Flock:

I felt in my body security
 this made me a bird

At this moment:

Right now I feel gratitude
 and I want to say thank you

Feedback on the Wandering Flock:

The next Wandering Flock I need cooperativeness
 synchronizing worked for me.

Figure 03 (page 39) Reflection of a participant of Wandering Flock # 05.



Figure 05 (page 43) Participant of Wandering Flock # 03 slalom between the obstacles.



Figure 06 (page 43) Participants of Wandering Flock # 04 walk in unison.

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Figure 01 (page 54) The participants of Wandering Flock. # 06 walk concentrated. In unison.

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Wandering Flock
A Bodily Exercise in Unison

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Rotterdam
June 2017

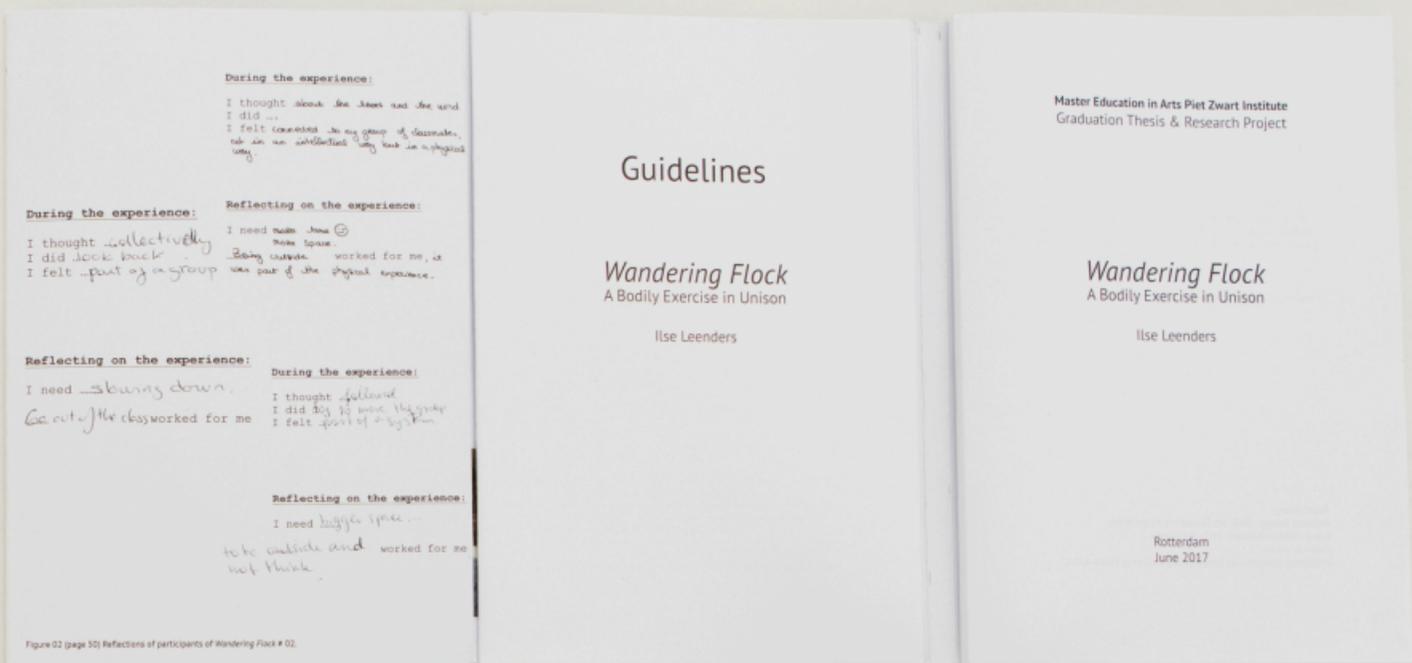


Figure 02 (page 50) Reflectors of participants of Wandering Flock # 02

During the experience:

I thought about the lines and the word I did ...
I felt connected to my group of dancers, not in an intellectual way but in a physical way.

During the experience:

I thought collectively
I did look back
I felt part of a group

Reflecting on the experience:

I need more time ☺
More space.
Being outside worked for me, it was part of the physical experience.

Reflecting on the experience:

I need ... being down.
Go out, the class worked for me

During the experience:

I thought followed
I did try to move the group
I felt part of a system

Reflecting on the experience:

I need bigger space ...
to be outside and worked for me
not think

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While walking the Wandering Flock:
I felt: the whole
I thought: cause of unity
I did: was curious of other people

During the Wandering Flock:
I experienced these emotion(s):
1. sense of unity
2. cooperativeness
3. as if we were one creature
I think I felt this emotion(s) because:
1. I had to make sure everyone was on the same
2. moved by following other people
3. Everyone moved while being the same purpose

After the Wandering Flock:
I felt in my body: universe
this made me: (feel) cause of unity naturally

At this moment:
Right now I feel: I live in the earth
and I want to: feel I'm a part of the cosmos

Feedback on the Wandering Flock:
The next Wandering Flock I need: more time to get used to
.....worked for me.
Reported with the same group would

Figure 03 (page 39) Reflection of a participant of Wandering Flock # D6.



Figure 13 (page 41) The connection towards the group visible from the bodily perspective of the participants of Wandering Flock # D5.



Figure 05 (page 39) Reflection of a participant of Wandering Flock # D6.

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Figure 04 (page 41) Participants of Wandering Flock # 06 do the warming up exercise run to Centre.



Figure 05 (page 43) Participant of Wandering Flock # 03 slalom between the obstacles.



Figure 06 (page 43) Participants of Wandering Flock # 04 walk in unison.

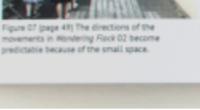


Figure 08 (page 34) Participants of Wandering Flock # 05 fill in reflection cards.



Figure 09 (page 42) The group of Wandering Flock # 03 splits for a brief moment in two.



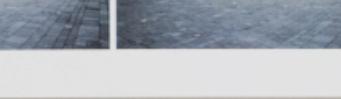
Figure 12 (page 43) Participants of Wandering Flock # 03 use the whole space.



Figure 10 (page 33) Participants of Wandering Flock # 05 walk on the wet floor.



Figure 11 (page 32) Attentive concentration is visible in the eyes of a participant of Wandering Flock # 05.



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