



Laura Brera

Abstract

This research sits at the intersection of different fields of knowledge, with the intent of bridging the gap that keeps cultural studies, specific body practice in performance art and contemporary science separate by finding a language that can translate singular peculiarities into common key aspects. The term “subtle body” refers to the complex system of energetic fields that surrounds and underlies all physical reality. This research investigates the relevance that this energetic field, when vibrating and emitting invisible waves, has during a live performance art event. These “subtle” energies, forming the subtle body, are indiscernible to the five senses, yet they emanate from all things and create reality. Science is beginning to recognise that, whilst immeasurable, they are connecting everything and everyone in this Universe and beyond. All matter, from molecules to emotions, is made of energy, even the human body is composed of cells that are electrically charged. The mathematical theory of quantum mechanics, which is the science that accounts for the world of the very small, the subatomic world called microworld, ultimately underpins all phenomena of life. This research focuses on developing a more concise theory of the subtle body as a practice for performer training and/or healing to show how the two relate and also affect audience’s reception of the performed piece. It is a practice lead research that encompasses the creation of a dance piece for one performer which is the canvas that allows me to analyse my own practice as choreographer and practitioner whilst investigating how it relates to the questions on the subtle body and how the choreographic process may evoke a cathartic experience for the performer and the audience. With this research I am looking at the definition of these energies from the Eastern approach to health and exploring the relevance of them in performance art, through dance, ultimately to find a concise theory of the “subtle body” that will merge all these different definitions into one. With the occasion of this conference I want to present the dance solo I am choreographing, that is based upon the arrays of movements I use during a session of therapeutic massage which is conducive to promote healing, together with the practice of Reiki, a Japanese healing technique, and the way that an internal martial art like Aikido has of deflecting the energy of the attacker and embodying that very same energy. This is the starting point for a discussion on the themes this research is focused on.

Bio

Laura is an artist-researcher and choreographer interested in the perception of what is “invisible” to the eyes, but relevant to our life especially in an extra-ordinary setting as in performance arts. She holds an MA (hons) in Philosophy and a Postgraduate in Performance Innovations that led her to direct a pan-European dance company through which she intertwines creative research with technology and cognitive science, and is currently studying for a PhD in Dance at University of Surrey. Her artistic training started with the rigour of Ballet guided by teachers from the Vaganova Academy of St. Petersburg and continued with the exploration of different approaches to performing art as well as the training of a Japanese martial art. She has worked extensively as artist and choreographer in theatres in Europe and the UK. Alongside it, whilst working as massage therapist, became Master in the Reiki system of Natural Healing.