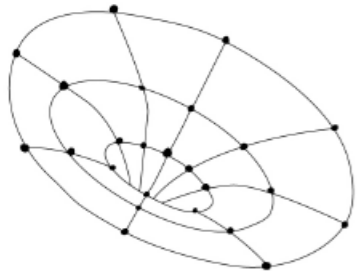


Gravity

is a Sharing Event in which we have invited a group of dance artists together with dance professionals simply to gather and to share.

The aim of *Gravity* is layered; it is firstly to create an incentive for artists to come together, introduce their work and express their needs. We suggest this through inviting directors, programmers, mentors and friends as resources that could potentially help the artists develop their processes.

It is also our intention to slowly create an artistic portfolio for the dance community in Iran by informing one another about our creative processes, research methods & artistic urgency.



Wednesday 28 August | 10:25 PM | Maryam Bagheri Nesami

Poetics and Politics of Solo Performance

for an Iranian woman contemporary dancer

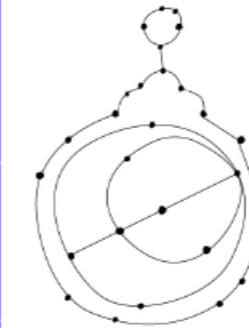
Maryam is a contemporary dancer, choreographer, and dance researcher based in Auckland, New Zealand. She holds a B.A. in Artistic and Cultural Management from Soore University of Tehran, and her M.A. in Art Studies followed by a thesis on comparative mythology at the University of Art. Currently she is in the final months of her PhD in Dance Studies at the University of Auckland and plans to submit in April 2020.

Her background as a dancer was established in Iran. Underground, Maryam received training from local and international practitioners in Iranian urban dance, Iranian national dance, basic ballet techniques, modern dance (Graham, Limon, Horton), Iranian folklore dance, and more comprehensively, contemporary dance. She also achieved public recognition as a 'physical theatre performer' who has performed in many shows in public theatre venues, in Iran.

As a choreographer, Maryam has devised a number of solo works including: *'Imposed Mulebrity'* (August 2014, Tehran), *'My Mind Is Fooling me'* (March 2015, Tehran) *'Parenthesis'* (a video, March 2016, Tehran, Auckland), *'The Missing Score'* (July 2017, Auckland, Utrecht), *'Zaar Breath the Air Around You'* (September 2018, Auckland) and *'The Edges of Effortless Power'* (since April 2019 in progress, Auckland). These all address the question of subjectivity through a queer and feminist perspective. Such experiences provide her with an embodied archive for her PhD area of research. Focusing on solo performance, Maryam's critical and creative practice research method entwining self-narrative writings, draws upon local body politics within the Middle Eastern context, and communicates and connects to the 'global' international.

She envisages her research extending beyond the PhD thesis and would like to develop a body of scholarly that looks at dance within the context of exile, migration, reparative strategies, strategies of resistance, practice of freedom, dance of minority and marginalized groups.

Alongside her solo works, Maryam has collaborated on a numbers of diverse research and performance projects around the world. She has been invited to present her creative work at local and international venues in Iran, New Zealand, Italy, Netherlands and Lebanon. Recently, she has been granted an artistic residency by IDOCDE (International Documentation of Contemporary Dance Education) in Vienna over July and August 2019.



Thursday 29 August | 12:40 PM | Astr*lab Movement Research Formation

is a Movement Research Formation that looks at questions evolving around Movement Research, Somatic Practices, Embodiment & Choreography. Focused specifically on young dance practitioners, this formation exists and is active throughout the year as a way of keeping the research aspect related to artistic body-based practices alive.

Annually, different dance practitioners and academics both from Iran and from all over world drop by and join Astr*lab while the formation continues its own life and movement.

The very first Astr*lab formation was born in October 2018. Sina Saberi invited 5 young dance artists (Alireza Bahramizadeh, Kourosh Mohammadi, Sepideh Molavi, Nima Hosseinzadeh and Shakiba Soltani) to meet several times and began a series of prepositions and topics of research.

Unfortunately we had to say goodbye to Koroush very quickly as he had other artistic commitments and priorities. Throughout this first period which took place between October 2018 and March 2019, several artists and practitioners were invited to the process to contribute to and take from the research.

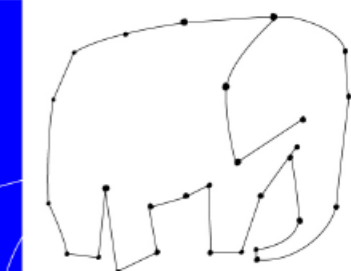
Some of these names are: Maryam Bagheri Nesami, Lynda Rahal, Rosa Omarsdottir, Parwin Claudia Hadinia among others.

Elephant

After our Astr*lab together, we decided to take a period of 5 months to archive our discoveries from the research period and look at how this material could be shared or demonstrated physically with those who have not been part of the process.

Between April and August 2019, we continued our 3-times-a-week gatherings in the studio to find a sharing modality. Elephant is our effort in sharing our process for the very first time with an audience.

This is an ongoing process of research and archiving. Some of us will soon leave Iran and this formation will lose the physical presence of some of its participants. However, we would continue looking for ways to keep it alive and one day present it as a creation.



Kah KESHAN

is a community-based organization dedicated to dance research & creation.

our idea is to create a meeting place to address the needs of performing artists in Iran who are one way or another dealing with moving bodies.

our intention is to acknowledge & strengthen the potential Iranian dance scene despite the lack of an organized support for the art form.

we rely on the idea of togetherness to create motivation to study our bodies, looking at subjects such as movement research, somatic practices and choreography. this happens through a range of activities throughout the year.

Gravity 8/3 | 27-30 August, Tehran

Tuesday 27 August

10:00 AM | Opening
11:00 AM | Shirin Farshbaf
11:35 AM | Alireza Bahramizadeh
12:10 PM | Mitra Ziaee Kia & Hiva Sedaghat
12:40 PM | Shakiba Soltani

Wednesday 28 August

10:25 AM | Maryam Bagheri Nesami
11:00 AM | Nima Hosseinzadeh & Sima Kahaki
11:35 AM | Alireza Keymanesh
12:10 PM | Mostafa Shabkhan
12:40 PM | Sepideh Molavi

Thursday 29 August

10:25 AM | Armineh Astanbous
11:00 AM | Kourosh Mohammadi & Maryam Farahi
11:35 AM | Hiva Sedaghat & Mitra Ziaee Kia
12:10 PM | Alireza Mimohammadi
12:40 PM | Astr*lab Movement Research Formation

Friday 30 August

Final Gathering at 11:00 AM

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(info@) Kahkeshan.dance

Tuesday 27 August | 11:00 AM | **Shirin Farshbaf**

Shirin Farshbaf is a dancer, choreographer, actor, and director based in Tehran. Shirin holds a bachelor's degree in Theater Direction from Soreh University of Tehran. Since she entered University until now, she has been working with many groups to gather experience in several areas of performing arts. She was a member of *Indra Theater Group* in Tehran for 8 years which is one of the pioneers of physical theatre in Iran. Since she decided to work individually in 2014, she has worked on several projects. *Turn Back, Look at me* which is an awarded interdisciplinary piece that won a prize during Fajr International Theatre Festival in 2016. *Metaphor* which is a solo dance performance that was created in 2018.



no title

These days she has been working on a new piece; A duet based on the situation that she is living in. She mainly concentrates on the obstacles and their impacts on people. The diversity of obstacles changes our behaviors and reactions toward each other. We are living in a world full of inputs, thoughts, and notions. Almost all of them has come from the Others. We Undoubtedly are affected by them. The question was raised when she thought: *What if we want to go back and be in that situation again and try to follow ourselves?*

Is it possible to get rid of all the data which we carry with us? And why aren't we able to get away from those barriers that are shaped in our mind through our life, those that we don't like to follow us?

Along the same line, she has been working on a research based on The Theory of Complex Systems and its relation to our complex movements. She especially is considering women and the impact of culture, society, economy, customs etc.

Tuesday 27 August | 11:35 AM | **Alireza Bahramzadeh**



My name is Alireza Bahramzadeh. I'm 29 and it's been around 10 years that I put dancing in my life as an expression. The first 6 years of this period I only did b-boying and for the next 2 years I also experienced contemporary dance. It is now 2 years that I have focused only on contemporary dance and now I'm getting ready to be a part of a 3-years professional dance program in Milan's Danshaus.

The reason I started dancing is simple: to be seen as a skillful person. Everyone needs to be seen and I am no exception. dancing is healthy and beautiful and helps me enjoy my body. It took years to change my reason from just to be seen to finding myself and the world around me through dancing. I am here to gain more experience as a performer.

Treatment

There are always different types of lifestyles in different layers such as economy, culture, belief etc. If you want to stay alive, you should be a part of them. When you choose each type of states to be defined. Others treat you based on what they perceive from your category. Usually we are in relation with people that are the same in layers and manners like us. Sometimes we change so fast, so we get new ideas and new manners with new kind of lifestyles and relationships. But the point is that the previous situations and people from our previous lifestyles are still perceiving us as the person they knew before. So, they treat you like the old times. My concept is about that huge "gap" between ideas when we place them in between.

The "Gap" that makes us grow so fast but sometimes it breaks us (spiritually). It makes us aged. Sometimes makes us more fragile.

Tuesday 27 August | 12:10 PM |

Thursday 29 August | 11:35 AM |

Mitra Ziaee Kia



A graduate of acting from Samandarian Acting School, Mitra has been on stage as a performer in various performances in Iran and other countries. She also has several experiences with the camera. In recent years, acting and expression took her on a different path. Her love for the world of movement and the body drew her attention toward workshops in classical ballet, folk and contemporary dance. She is currently one of the members of MaHa Collective which is the outcome of the efforts of her and all other members in the field of contemporary dance. This collective has created several projects. Also, in recent years, she has worked with Maqamat Dance Theater and performed in a collaborative dance creation with them called *Zaafaran*. Recently she made a duet with Hiva Sedaghat, *Through the Skin* which is a co-production with Maqamat. After this, together with Hiva, they made their second piece, *Azhi Dahaka*. Both these collaborations are currently touring.

Azhi Dahaka

The performance is based on and spired by Zahak, an evil figure in Persian mythology, evident in ancient Persian folklore as "Azi Dahaka"; a tale in which a man with human qualities, shape shifts into a terrifying dragon that feeds on human brain as soon as he's faced with pain, agony, sorrow and fear. We've been trying to answer some questions raised during the process of our creation: In today's social and political circumstances, our bodies experience a full spectrum of emotions such as anxiety, being unsafe, imbalance, envy, greed and anger. How does the body respond to all the affects that these inevitable situations make on it? If we could physically see the pain our bodies go through every day, what would it look like? Could the body and all its human qualities shapeshift into a monster at some point? Does the body keep being a human body then? Or does it also change? Being inspired by this ancient Iranian myth, we'll try to share the experience of a human slowly turning into a monster because of pain and will explore this via taking the audience into a dark, heavy atmosphere with us.

Tuesday 27 August | 12:10 PM | & Thursday 29 August | 11:35 AM | **Hiva Sedaghat**

A graduate of architecture engineering, Hiva started practicing the Kamancheh for 5 years. In 2012 she became familiar with contemporary dance and took part in numerous local and international workshops to learn it. She has been in various projects as a performer and choreographer. She continues her activities in the field with MaHa Collective in which she made her choreographic piece, *Room* in Iran's first body movement festival which took place in March 2016 in Tehran. Hiva practices Yoga and Pilates. In 2017 she participated in *Takween* summer intensive initiated by Maqamat Dance Theater in Lebanon. It was during this time that they created the duet, *Through the Skin* together with Mitra Ziaee Kia. They premiered it in the BIPOD festival the following year. They continued their collaboration to a second collaboration called *Azhi Dahaka* which is also presented in *Gravity 8/3*.



Through the Skin

In this performance we portray our personal experience about love and pleasure, pain and suffering, through our bodies. We've placed ourselves inside a net; fragile and delicate, yet limiting. This net separates our bodies from the outside world, a limitation that might as well be broken at any moment. When one fully experiences a sense of utter 'completion' in a relationship, they start feeling like being inside a safe bubble; a sensation similar to what our skin makes us feel by holding all our organs. We, as a whole, move inside this skin. By extending our movements, we reveal separate body parts of this body. The development of these movements then unveils the two separate bodies, revealing more of the deep emotional experiences that might at times be painful. Eventually, the two bodies part ways and start rebuilding their own separate memories and experiences, though they still join a times. The movements & sounds in this performance all grow bigger, probably exactly the same way our feelings & presence grows in a relationship & moves us from the depth of our bodies, somewhere beneath our skin. This piece has been presented in BIPOD Festival, Beirut, Theater Spektakel, Zurich & Spring Festival, Utrecht.

Tuesday 27 August | 12:40 AM | **Shakiba Soltani**

Shakiba Soltani holds a bachelor's degree in Theater and Dramatic Literature from Sooreh University of Tehran. She has taken part in several dance training workshops in Tehran including those with Mostafa Shabkhan and Ehsan Hemat (Fying Low). She works as a supervisor and trainer in a collective university program. Shakiba has also done collaborative dance projects and is currently developing her own choreographic practice. Since October 2018, she has participated in several initiatives of Kakhkeshan such as the *Asr'lab* Movement Research Formation and several of their *Constellation Exchange Modalities*. Shakiba recently got the scholarship for the DanceWeb summer intensive in Vienna.



Spaces

Dancing and moving as a performer are the most talk-able way which I could share my opinions, communicate and also hear the others. I've participated in many different workshops and processes since I started dancing and still, I couldn't find myself in any of them, then I tried to work on my own sensations and ideas. One of the most important things in creation is how to present yourself to the public.

One of my process that I want to present it, is not irrelevant to the subject of presentation. Spaces is about how people present themselves in different spaces in society. What is the real meaning of me? What is the effect of these different spaces on me? and...

Spaces comes from my recent research and observation about different layers of my personality which are shown in society. I'm working on a combination of video-art, sounds, words and also the body.

Wednesday 28 August | 11:00 AM | **Nima Hosseinzadeh & Sima Kahaki**

Nima Hosseinzadeh, born on 22 October 1995 calls himself a Movement researcher, dancer and pianist. He says: "In the past my dad was involved in theater and my mother was involved in painting. My parents were the main reason why my sister and I got involved in the arts. My sister got involved with classical singing and eventually modern singing. She encouraged me to play the piano and after joining a group focusing on Physical Theater, my position in the arts gradually changed from a musician into a dancer. After a while, we formed a small group and performed the Opera, of Dido's Lament. Afterwards, I continued with Pilates, Ballet, some Modern Dance techniques and finally Contemporary Dance. But I couldn't find what I was looking for in myself in the adopted dance styles of my country. So, I came to research.

After experiencing two years of holding a contemporary dance class, someone named Sima and I got involved in research about our experiences. We archived the subjects in our class and analyzed the subjects and examined each of them in detail in order to understand what was going on. One of our most interesting topics was "Introducing". Sima Kahaki, born on 26 March 1992 calls herself a Painter, Sculptor and Industrial Engineer. In her own words: "I am very interested in trying to discover my life and its valuable concepts as an experimental, clear and adventurous person who is free from judgements. I am a realist painter and sculptor who has been working in this field since 2010 and has devoted her time for human concepts and truths in her works and creation. My bond with my body, movement and dance came from my reconciliation with my body and my observation of myself as a human being. This led to the introduction of contemporary dance through him in my body, work and life. I also found a new perception of gender, sexuality, body, my movements in loneliness and in the community, which I did not separate from the field of my work, but I found a relatively inseparable link.



Introducing

This is the first of tens of titles that we archived as of May 2019. These titles include all the movements & conceptual experiences that have been subjected to physical-mental analysis over the past two years. We chose "Introducing" as the first of these archives & we began our cognitive path around it.

Our questions in the practical process:

- How does the body of the performer introduce him/her?
- What is the viewer's perception of the same movement phrase of two different people?
- What information does the performer's movement phrase give to the observer?
- How do the movements introduce us?
- Is there a moment when our movements do not represent us?
- Are human movements alone accurate enough to provide us with as much information as words do?
- How do the similar movements of two people define them in the audience's mind? Or how is the movement of the performer perceived in two audiences' minds?



Thursday 28 August | 12:10 PM | **Alireza Mirmohammadi**

Alireza Mirmohammadi is a dancer, choreographer and director. He was born on 8 April 1986 in Tehran. He has a BA in Drama from the University of Tehran. Since 2005 he has participated in numerous international workshops with Julie Flier, Bara Sigfusdottir, Gilles Polet among many others. He has also worked with Iranian directors like Mehdi Feraidjpour and Atefeh Tehran.

As a director he did a dance/theater project called *Faust* in 2011 and also lead a large group of dancers for Bahman Farmanara's 2018 feature film, *I want to Dance*. In 2016 he made the dance film *Nature Exploration* in different parts of his homeland. In 2017, he founded the Iranian Performing Arts Community (IPAC) which acts as a communication center for the performing arts community in Iran.

Since 2017, he has worked with Icelandic choreographer Bara Sigfusdottir for her creation being which is a production of GRIP/Jan Martens and he is currently working on his new piece, mourning that has so far been in residency with Workspacesbrussels and PACT Zollverein.

Lullaby

This project looks at death. Focusing on the organs' decomposition as well as the memory of the deceased in the mind of their family and friends. The research also includes the idea of dancing with the dead through imagination, focusing mostly on Iranian and Islamic rituals related to mourning for the dead. It is also an effort to understand the condition of the dead person by imitating their situation after being dead. One of the materials used is also folklore lullabies whose text is usually about losing loved ones. In the current phase of this research there is also video material.



Wednesday 28 August | 12:10 PM | **Mostafa Shabkhan**

Mostafa Shabkhan is one of Iran's leading performing artists who specializes in contemporary dance. He started his career as a theater actor in his hometown, Kashan, in 1998 and he moved to Tehran in 2006, where he began exploring physical theater and modern dance techniques. He was nominated for International Critics at 28th Fajr International Theater Festival (2011) and in 2014 he co-founded MaHa Collective which is an independent performing arts collective based in Tehran.

Mostafa has been researching the body and movement ever since. He has worked in various cities across Iran as well as across Eastern and western Europe as a dancer, choreographer, workshop facilitator and director. His latest awards and nominations including Best Male Performer nomination for Ehsan Hemat's *I Put A Spell On You* and Best Choreography nomination for Asghar Dashti's *(Fore)named* at the Fajr International Festival, in 2019. His choreographic solo, *Zoorokhaneh* has been presented in Iran as well as abroad. This piece is a rich research project looking at the traditional Iranian gymnasium and athletics.

Se Danah [Trilo]

Mostafa is currently leading a project working with three young Afghan women who were born and raised in Iran, yet are viewed as "the other" or as minorities. The project's main focus is exploring the complexity of being a minority in Iran. This project is currently in production; the choreography is developing as the dancers bring their personal experiences and struggles of being a minority within the urban landscape of 21st century Tehran to the forefront of consciousness, where Mostafa molds these experiences into movements and routines that can transcend and push forward beyond the dancers & into the audience. Within this project the concept of minority, specifically that of being a minority in



Iran, is aiming to shed light on the very raw experiences of first or second-generation Afghan women born in a country that has not granted them a national identity. Within this context, the cultural pull to Afghan culture, the divide between modern Iranian culture as well as the struggles of living in poverty, abandonment and the inevitable struggles of wanting to be a performing artist are all explored and used to develop the performance.



Wednesday 28 August | 12:40 PM | **Sepideh Molavi**

Sepideh Molavi is an actress, dancer & director. She was born on 25 May 1997 in Tehran, holds a BA in Drama (Acting and Directing) from the University of Tehran. Also as she was studying drama in Art School Since 2016, She participated in numerous international workshops with Dominique Dupoux Vaudeville, the director of Ecole Point Fice. Among the workshops were *Le Clown*, *Le Masque Neutre & Contemporary Dance*, Bara Sigfusdottir and several exchange formats (such as *Constellation*) that have been organized by Kakhkeshan in Tehran. Also, she has participated in the EurAsia Dance Project Auditions in Tehran and been awarded a scholarship to study dance in the Hamburg's CDSH as of 2020 for 3 years.



As an actress she has also performed on stage and in a series and has worked with Iranian directors such as Hooman Seyyedi. As director she did some short pieces (video, live performance) during her 4-year studies. For her thesis project she worked on a project called *differAnce*.

DifferAnce

This project looks at the impact of the audience on the dancer. Focusing on the feeling that the dancer could have experienced and the impact of the feeling on their body. The main idea of this project came from a moment that she saw dancers reflecting on their own work and the experience that they had on stage (especially with the foreign audience and the impact of their gaze). In the first step she grouped the audience into Family, Work, Friend, Foreigner). In step 2, we fixed a short movement piece that should be performed in front of these different groups of audiences. In step 3 we performed. Until now she has experienced this with 1 dancer and she found out there is some difference that happens subconsciously in the body of the dancer. In the future she needs at least 4 Iranian dancers to experience this research.



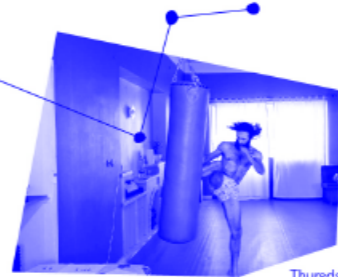
Thursday 29 August | 11:00 AM | **Kourosh Mohammadi**

Kourosh Mohammadi was born in 1995. He considers himself as a director, performer, rollerblading trainer (speed, dramatic, freestyle), he has a diploma in Animation and a BA in Theater. He works as an assistant to Alireza Keymanesh and is a winner of the honorary diploma of acting from the Acting School of Iran & the winner of the acting award in *Sharnae Festival for Marekeh dar Marekeh*. He has taken part in different theater pieces such as *An Tan Gooneh*, *Khoon va gole sorkh*, *Ay, John & Joe*, *Bari Adam*. Also, he has acting experience in movies such as *The Jackal*, *The Butcher* and *the others behind the door* as well as the series *Papillon*.

As a choreographer he has the pieces *Shade in the Field* which is a music video by *Banafsh* band. He was also part of the successful experimental short movie, *Flatland and 1001 Nights Apart* by Sarvnaz Alambeigi which will premier in 2020. He started his dance training in the long-term course of "body mind" under Alireza Keymanesh's supervision, "flying low" under Ehsan Hemat's supervision as well as other workshops focusing on Ideokinesics, Viewpoints, Pantomime etc.

Flicker

This project is a dance theater piece directed by Kourosh Mohammadi and Maryam Farahi. We have been studying on the issues of community pressure on humans, the strategies of Sun Tzu and Nader Shah Afshar, as well as the history of dress formation and its impact on the mind and body. At times people are subconsciously under the pressure of a community in which they live. And this pressure from the community can sometimes make people passive. The starting point was to deliberately focus on the issue of pressure. In this project, "clothing" is one of the tools. We look in the research at the direct impact of clothing on the body and the body on the mind and we discovered that choosing the type of clothing from the community could be considered as a layer of pressure. The choreography is based on the strategy of warfare. Because we think the strategy of war can show different ways to deal with our pressure.



Thursday 29 August | 12:10 PM | **Alireza Keymanesh**



Alireza Keymanesh was born in 1985 in Tehran. With a BA in acting from Tehran University of Art, he is an actor, director, dancer, choreographer & acting teacher. Since 2009, he has held year-long courses, training dancers and physical actors. He's a member of 84 Theater Group, lead by *Ali Akbar Alizad*. Recently together with his artistic partner he established 33 Projects. He's been awarded in the European Film Festival Mainstream & Underground in Moscow, Calcutta Cult Film Festival in India and Feel the Real Festival in England for an experimental short movie called *Flatland* co-directed with Amir Pourzi. He won a Best Actor Award from the Iranian Theater Forum's 14th Annual Actor Ceremony in 2017 and the International Jury's Laudatory Prize at the 35th Fajr International Theater Festival in 2017 for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He has appeared in plays like *The Maids*, *In Praise of Theater*, *Romeo and Juliet* among many others and also in several films. In 2013, he started a field research project entitled *The Society's Influence on the Human Body* in the context of partaking in dance, choreography and DAI (Dutch Art Institute) courses at ArtEZ University in the Netherlands, among his works in Performance and Video are: *Protector of Love*, *Death Dance & Onions*. He has given lectures on the *History of Persian dance* at P.A.R.T.S School for contemporary dance & a lecture performance called *Self-accusation of a rebellious Artist* at RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts) in London.

Back Up Side Down

This is a dance-theater performance with the subject of self-alienation. In this piece, we encounter a character who repeatedly accuses himself in his (internal) monologue. He even accuses himself regarding some neutral matters or actions that he has had no role in, such as his own birth. It was initiated six months ago based on this thought that what we observe in others' behavior that causes us to be attracted to or repulsed by them are in fact our own attributes mirrored by others. If we like those attributes in ourselves, we are attracted to them when demonstrated by the people with whom we associate, and if we dislike and therefore avoid an unpleasant attribute inside our own self, encountering it in others creates the sense of hate toward the one we are communicating with, which is actually indicative of our own self-hate. *Back Up Side Down* is a confrontation with one's self and bad attributes which leads to alienation from one's own mind as well as possibly a physical separation. Maybe this quarrel between the mind and the body causes a contention among the limbs. I've gone through several materials including the Austrian playwright Peter Handke's *Self-accusation*, *Offending the Audience and Kaspar*, taking the process into a number of open dance sessions with voluntary participants based on the relation between words and body, a mind-body research on the movements of sorcerers from ten thousand years ago and looking at the book *"Magical Path"* written by "Carlos Castaneda". The hypnotizing, fighting, and defending manner of those movements would give me the opportunity to sublimate the concept, which at first felt too violent and made it more tangible.