

Report residency at the Choreographisches Centrum Heidelberg, CC-HD 2020
31.08-18.09, **“Go Ask the River”** by Joan Ferré Gómez.

Music composed by Brant Peije Teunis
Voice recorded by Josh Lowe with the help of Martina Pedrini
Poster’s photography by Oliver Sigloch
Poster’s graphic design by Alex Zalacain
Performance video and Teaser by Sade Mamedova

Choreographed by Joan Ferré Gómez and danced with Erika Poletto.

CHOREOGRAPHISCHES CENTRUM HEIDELBERG

FREITAG 18 SEPTEMBER 2020 19H
KARTENRESERVIERUNG UNTER: INFO@CC-HD.DE



During the last 5 years I have been working as a dancer and performer for different choreographers and companies, sometimes I felt connected and related to their work and other times less, and I always kept with me what made me feel good, and gave away what didn't. Same with other things in life. Last year I decided to become a freelancer in order to have more time and freedom to chose the experiences I wanted to be part of, work and also non work related.

In that moment I felt attracted to the idea of having time to explore what has changed, left, developed, transformed... inside of me during the last years. And I thought that making a choreography would confront both my dance experience and also my personal one.

I wanted to create something which had a deep personal meaning for me, and in that moment I was reading the book "Siddharta" by Herman Hesse. That book encouraged me to trust my feelings and emotions and it connected me with life in a way that I didn't experience before. So I decided to write a choreography concept that would force me to have the book in mind all the time while creating.

I applied for the residency at the Choreographisches Centrum in Heidelberg and I got selected.

I was very eager to make the most out of it, finally I had the opportunity and incredible conditions to work for myself, and I set a quite ambitious list of goals.

I asked Erika Poletto if she wanted to join me, I never worked with her before and I thought that it was a good idea to share this project with someone who doesn't have past experiences with me, so that the sharing can be as pure and as related to the present and concept as possible.

After few months living in Barcelona (Spain) with tough restrictions because of Covid, I could not have been happier to begin this project.

Week 1. Exploring, sharing, getting to know each other.

We departed the research by me introducing the project to Erika. It was very important for me to have a very extent conversation about what we were going to do, what was going to be our main wheel for the coming 3 weeks.

- Why do I want to create?
- Go Ask the River, why?
- Collaborations with other artists
- Goals,...



Coming from a lock-down, I had a lot of time to think and find ways to transform ideas from the book into physicality, I shared them with Erika.

First I wanted to find a common vocabulary for the piece. I wanted to recreate the movement of a river with our bodies. If anyone who sits down by the river and looks at it can have a different interpretation of its movement, I wanted the audience to have the same sensation while looking at us moving, we wanted to be seen as that river where you can see all your past experiences, wishes, fears, pleasures,...

We talked about the qualities of the water and the river. Always the same yet new in every moment, vulnerable and adaptable yet clear and direct, for the river time doesn't exist.

During the week we created little scenes where we were exploring the river in different shapes. It was our playground week: "Side to side/Boat", "Following Shadow", "Sliding", "Stopping the River", "Waving phrase" and "Showering".



Every morning I would give a research class where we would work into letting go tension and unnecessary layers in our bodies and minds. It was the way to become as free and clean in order to start the day.

Some days we meditated, when you practice meditation your brain develops a certain coordination that helps you connect with the present moment, and that was very beneficial for the work we were doing.

We finished the week with a bunch of tasty and exciting ingredients.

Week 2. Confronting, shaping and putting things together.

Before we started the second week my instinct was already telling me that this week was going to be the toughest, and I was correct about that feeling.

Everything before that week felt very good and comfortable. But having to create a story line and putting all the ideas into a shape, beginning-middle-end, was my toughest challenge.

Sometimes I would think ahead of the process and force some stuff in order to move on and have a result, and at the end I would always have to retreat and start all over with a clean mindset.

It took me the whole second week to understand that If I was so courageous to stick to the principals of the book while moving, I had to be as courageous while thinking and creating the composition.

We took the ideas from the first week, made them into small scenes and put them into an order. Some of them evolved into new ideas, other ones completely changed. We ended up the week with around 8 minutes of material.

The movement was there, the thinking was there, but the feeling was not. At the end of the week I was feeling a bit insecure, something inside that composition was off and it didn't feel as natural. Luckily a very dear friend of mine came to visit us that weekend, she watched what we had so far and she gave me her feedback, which was the first impulse to bring the process to the next level: let the river guide you, start loving what you created and listen to what the piece needs.



Excerpt from Sade Mamedova's video footage

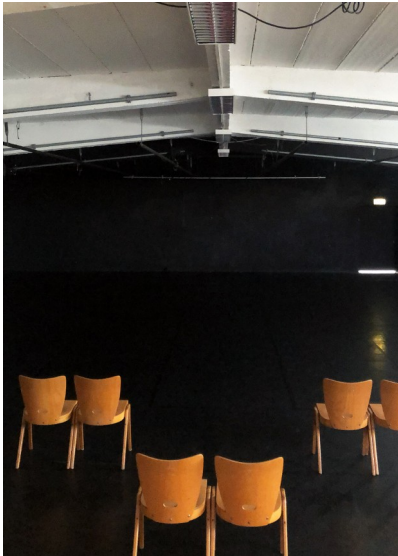
A part from all the choreographic work, it was also a very busy week finding out other aspects from the piece.

- We looked into costumes for the presentation.
- We did some video recording with Sade Mamedova, who made a beautiful teaser of the piece.
- We did a photoshoot with Oliver Sigloch, who captured some beautiful images for the poster.
- We worked with Alex Zalacain, who designed the poster.
- We worked with Josh Lowe, who recorded himself reading a fragment from the book, which we ended up using as part of the music for the piece.

Since the beginning of the lock-down in Barcelona (March 2020), Brant Peije Teunis, a Dutch composer friend of a friend, and I started working on the music for the piece. I told him about the concept and the style of music I had in mind, we shared some references and we started our own interpretation of what became the track for "Go Ask the River".

In that second week we ultimate some details and made some changes to adapt the song to the choreography. In general it was an amazing process of exchange between music and dance.

Week 3. Trusting the process, understanding and presentation



I started the week with clear new set of goals, I took away unnecessary pressure and decided to enjoy the last week.

We realized that one of the problems we had the week before was the misunderstandings within our vocabulary. Sometimes we would use the same word and the meaning of it was not same. So during that week we specified our vocabulary and we came with our own special one. That helped a lot in our communication and with the intentions while interpreting the piece.

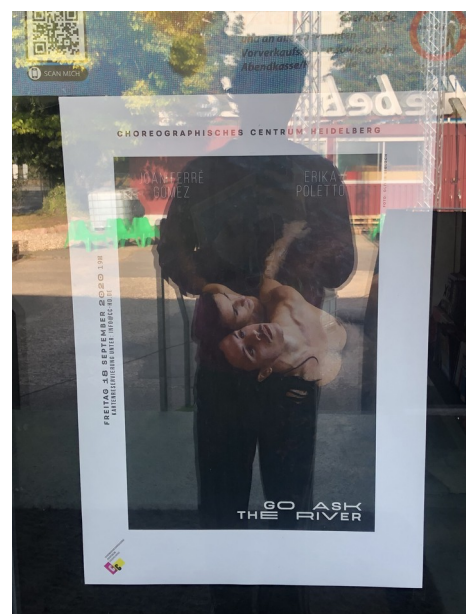
Some other friends of us came to watch rehearsals and helped us with feedback. It was hard for us to analyze things that you can only get when you see the piece from the outside.

Day by day the piece kept on growing, we started to feel more comfortable and I started to get the trust back. Movement, thoughts and feelings started to become aligned and that realization made me very happy.

It was not about the result anymore. It was about the understanding in which we arrived; between Erika and me, between me and myself, between the piece and the book... I felt very completed.

Every day we refined a little bit more our intentions and we had more space in our bodies and minds to be more in the moment, to connect with every part of the process.

I feel that after 3 weeks we got a very specific and powerful understanding, way of moving and being, which has still a lot more room for growth. We created 13 min. duet with a specific shape, which I think has still room for growth as well, but that can serve us very well as a first sketch for a possible future evolution. I am very excited to continue with this research and see how far and how deep we can get.



I am very thankful for this opportunity that Choreographisches Centrum Heidelberg offered me. Also I want to thank Jai and Bernhard for giving us so much trust and freedom to explore and have fun.

I want to thank everyone who was involved in this project, for the courage to listen to my ideas and let her/himself be moved by the river.

And thanks also to Erika Poletto, who has been an incredible support and teacher to me. Thanks to her trust and transparency the river brought us very far.

Can't wait to continue!

Joan



Oliver Sigloch