PEDAGOGICAL GUIDE

FROM TECHNICAL MOVEMENT TO ARTISTIC GESTURE

THE TRAMPOLINE, TRAINING SUPPORT FOR PROPULSION

TEACHING MANUAL

FROM TECHNICAL MOVEMENT TO ARTISTIC GESTURE

THE TRAMPOLINE, TRAINING SUPPORT FOR PROPULSION

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INTENTS

FEDEC
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A brief summary of the INTENTS project

The INTENTS project was born out of the necessity and desire to give structure to the professional circus arts training, to harmonise it, and to increase its professionalism and credibility; the INTENTS project specifically addresses the training of circus arts' teachers.

BACKGROUND

A teachers' consultation launched by FEDEC in 2011 (SAVOIRS00) highlighted the lack of teaching tools and common methodologies with regards to initial and continuous training for circus arts' teachers. A need also emerged to define the profession and to meet on a European level in order to exchange know-how in the context of continuous professional development. Starting from a shared concern and wish to define the learning achievements and to give a framework to the skill strengthening by teachers in the continuing professional training sessions organised by the FEDEC network. These issues are at the origin of the INTENTS project and its two main components: defining the teacher's profession (SAVOIRS01) and organising continuing professional training sessions.

These continuing professional development sessions aim at being innovative in their approach: cross-disciplinary, divided by theme, across different professions, international and intergenerational. By adopting an innovative cross-disciplinary approach, the project develops new teaching methodologies for a practical application of the teaching of a cross-disciplinary theme.

The teachers' continuing professional development is key to ensuring a richer and evolving training method for their students. For participants, it will require going beyond the exchange of practices between professionals and highlighting the artistic and pedagogical innovations linked to their disciplines, in order to develop the teachers' and the students' professional skills.

The new continuing professional development training sessions also aims at approaching the technical and artistic sides as a whole, to go beyond the diagrams of moves and stages of learning tackled in the previous FEDEC manuals.

INTENTS 2014-2017

The project's main objectives are;

- Outlining a European profile of the circus arts teacher profession.
- Updating skills through thematic sessions of continuing professional development.
- Developing innovative teaching tools for the initial and continuing professional training.
- Support for a better professional recognition
- Strengthening the collaboration between partners and the sector.

The main activities are:

- Carrying out 3 pilot sessions of continuing professional development
- Drafting 3 teaching tools linked to pilot training
- Carrying out two publications:
  1. SAVOIRS01: European competencies framework
  2. Tangrame - designing, conducting and evaluating continuous training programmes (provisional name)

The Fédération Française des Écoles de Cirque and the European Federation of Professional Circus Schools have joined forces in order to coordinate and complete the project. FEDEC and its second reflection group were at the origin of the concept. The project has also been made possible by FEDEC's members, 34 official partners located in 12 different countries including 2 federations, 2 research organisations, and 30 secondary, professional and higher education circus schools.

Foreword

By **Arnaud Thomas**, teaching coordinator of the lifelong training session
“Propulsions: starting from the trampoline, transfers and artistic developments”, March 2016, Berlin

The lifelong learning session INTENTS, which brought together approximately twenty professional circus teachers specialised in disciplines with propulsion, trampoline and other disciplines, has shown to what extent and at what speed teaching practices of propulsion disciplines have evolved in just thirty years. With little or no presence in circus schools in the 1980s, trampoline imposed itself over one generation as a favoured training tool for aerial acrobats.

The skill of guiding the body in aerial acrobatics developed through learning the trampoline is transferable to all disciplines where the body is brought into play in space. Training on the trampoline means engaging with propulsions more quickly, in a safe and reliable way.

The alternating technical and artistic presentations as well as several round table discussions allowed participants to tackle teaching practices through the prism of cross-disciplinary debates.

The link between the acrobatic movement’s technical quality and its artistic potential was clearly defined, both in terms of the quest for meaning and dramaturgy, but also its aesthetic or development of the aerial acrobat’s personality and originality.

Analysis as to which of the artistic qualities of an acrobatic movement are objective, observable and an integral part of teaching, can help in reducing the recurring opposition between technique and artistry in circus arts.

A pedagogy and teaching of acrobatics that takes into account the final objective of presenting to an audience no longer raises the issue of a dichotomy between technique and artistry. The whole learning of dangerous jumps and twists has that goal. This issue becomes secondary because it is resolved in the daily rehearsals, where the acquisition of a technique is not separated from its future use in the vocabulary of a circus work.

They are testimony to the richness, quality, and variety of shows that chose aerial acrobatic disciplines for their creation, since the Arts Sauts of the 90s to the numerous teeterboard and trampoline collectives performing around the world in 2016.

Our gratitude goes to Agathe Dumont for her work, thanks to which this manual reflects the wealth of debates and shared ideas that abounded for six days in Berlin.

Happy reading!

Introduction
Propulsion: definitions and issues at stake

This teaching manual gives an account of an exchange between circus teachers on the issue of propulsion. During the discussions, some themes emerged and they constitute the raw material of this manual. On the basis of findings in the field and real teaching issues, we suggest several texts to gain a deeper understanding, clarity or to question concepts.

The subjects tackled are illustrated by examples of teaching practices collected during interviews with the training session participants and completed by the teaching coordinator, Arnaud Thomas. Each discussion or debate subject between circus arts teachers has therefore been observed and analysed in different ways and enriched with reading suggestions, definitions borrowed from several artistic and scientific disciplines, like a toolbox that everyone can draw ideas and resources from. The manual is also an opportunity to give a precise definition of certain terms (associated with movement and the body) and raise new teaching questions.

Circus teachers see propulsion very differently. Often considered as projections of a body in space once it departs from the ground, propulsion also relates to the feeling associated with an aerial trajectory made by the body once it propels itself or is propelled (by a partner or apparatus). The propulsion exists at the smaller level with simple **weight transfer** which is a part of the most spectacular flights on the trampoline as well as the teeterboard, banquine or Russian swing, to name just a few.

This teaching manual attempts to explore the different definitions of propulsion, both from the point of view of technique and biomechanics and its poetry. **The first part** suggests observing different stages, possible transfers and teaching issues in the teaching of propulsion disciplines. The concepts of risk, safety, but also a qualitative and quantitative observation, are essential concepts in the teaching of these disciplines. **The second part** suggests looking at bringing into play the artistic side of a technical movement. In the teaching of propulsion disciplines, a sensitive approach to movement is often necessary to find the right track. This approach opens up creative questions that we articulated around the concepts of presence, improvisation, composition and finally staging. Observation also plays a role. Learning how to observe a movement means both understanding it better in order to perform it and making it one's own in order to see it through the eyes of a spectator and create one's circus identity as an artist.

They are more than methods imposing rules and protocols. Through these considered approaches one can formalise practice, at any given moment, and pass it on. However, they go beyond spoken and written words and only manifest themselves fully when the body is brought into play. The suggestions are transferable from one apparatus and practice to another and allow a cross-disciplinary reflection on circus art skills and a reflection on the way teachers tackle the difficulties and issues at stake when working on propulsion.

Learning how to observe a movement means both understanding it better in order to perform it and making it one's own in order to see it through the eyes of a spectator and create one's circus identity as an artist.

TEACHING PROPULSION DISCIPLINES MODALITIES AND TRANSFERS

01

A review of trampoline's place in the teaching of circus disciplines

According to a representative panel of European secondary, professional and higher education schools (FEDEC), it seems that most schools today use the trampoline as a general teaching tool for acrobatic work and for propulsion disciplines in particular. It is used especially for teeterboard and other propulsion disciplines, but also for floor acrobatics, handstands, wire or aerial disciplines like the trapeze. Almost every circus school owns a trampoline today. This piece of gymnastics apparatus is also a prop and a teaching tool that allows users to dissect complex figures and work on specific elements (the aerial phase after exiting the apparatus, for example).

If the interest of this methodology is generally shared by all circus teachers in secondary and professional schools as well as higher education schools, the methods of teaching can vary depending on the type of school.
In a general sense, working on the trampoline allows students to develop:
- A rich and complex acrobatic vocabulary
- Body awareness
- Control over the body in the air (spatial-temporal control)
- Specific competencies for certain disciplines

Awareness of **time** (in the suspension of the flight time), **space** (needed for reference points), **body** and **body patterns** are intertwined when learning on the trampoline. "The trampoline allows you to do very precise, small exercises to understand how a rotation begins, which part of the body is working and which part must not move", explains Aurélia Brailowski[1].

In addition to **preparing for motor skills**, **physical preparation** can be implemented on the trampoline. It can be fully integrated into a warm up, increasing the intensity and movement complexity little by little and it can also be useful for physical conditioning with specifically selected exercises. In this way **the apparatus is better comprehended** by students and integrated into their daily work. Work on propulsion can be worked on at different levels from the start.

The trampoline is an apparatus that is conducive to varying teaching practices, freeing the body, developing the skills of less technically solid students. It is also a tool for research, discovery and invention by the possibilities and freedom that it offers. Trampoline sessions can thus end up with "play", a more personal exploration of movement.
The trampoline is often used in the first years of teaching to help students **build acrobatic form and shape**, necessary for all disciplines. The trampoline can be used as an effective route for students as they master new movement patterns more quickly and work with more precision. Movement can be broken down into stages and technical difficulties can be isolated.
In particular, trampoline work will carry benefits into aerial training particularly with exiting the apparatus.
Mastering figures and basic sequences on the trampoline leads to skills, which are wholly transferrable to aerial acrobatics. For example a mastery of double somersaults on the trampoline will assist students to control the triple somersaults on the Hungarian teeterboard or Russian swing, thanks to the apparatus' powerful force.

1 See list of participants to the INTENTS training session on propulsions, p. 71

Finally trampoline work can also help students develop their **autonomy** in the training space. On the trampoline, the acrobat is responsible for his/her own movement and push. If the trampoline suggests learning in a step-by-step fashion, it also involves a fundamental **cognitive learning** in the acrobatic disciplines and especially the disciplines of propulsion. For this reason, access to trampoline for free practice can be the subject of debates in schools.

Here we present the main teaching positions set out by participants during the round table discussions dedicated to the subject, during the session.

- The majority of schools offer specific and tailored trampolining in the first year
- Most schools have at least one open trampoline accessible, for acrobatic training of all students.
- There are approximately 2 to 4 hours of trampoline tuition every week and sessions are often divided into two during one week,
- In some schools, working on the trampoline in the first year accounts for 30% of training or is offered during the first 3 or 4 months of learning for the basics of floor and trampoline acrobatics
- For other schools, the trampoline in an integral part of the professionalisation curriculum and covers 50% of teaching in the propulsion speciality, until the end of training.
- The majority of schools make trampoline courses compulsory regardless of the specialisation chosen.
- For general training, basic figures are learnt at small heights. The height is then directly linked to the mastery level. Generally speaking, we gain approximately one metre per year of practice.
- The most technically advanced students can train alone when following the teacher's training instructions. The figures that the students can independently practice should be specified by the teachers.
- The safety conditions for the students vary when working with the trampoline depending on the school's resources and facilities (a trampoline installed in a pit or on its wheels which are to be unfolded)

Although necessary, **free training** on the trampoline also poses some safety issues. It is the teacher's responsibility to teach students to manage these free training sessions and match them with their physical and technical limits. The opportunity for students to engage in independent (free) training is not and should not be a given. Such a programme should be discussed within the teaching team and accurately explained to students. It is worth noting that, due to reasons of safety and responsibility, some schools forbid free training on the trampoline.

Methodology of technical progression on the trampoline

By **Arnaud Thomas**, Centre national des arts du cirque, France

Acquiring a global aerial acrobatic skill and understanding through trampoline gives direct access to all propulsion disciplines like teeterboard, Russian bar or swing and, generally, **to all those disciplines where the body leaves its points of support and has to control figures in space.**

It is thanks to different types of landing (on the feet, sitting down, on the stomach or the back), that the trampoline offers a huge repertoire of acrobatic figures. The breakdown of complex figures in ¼ somersaults and in ½ turns will require a lot of precision in managing the body's rotation and twists in relation to the height at which skills are performed. Combining figures will help cement learning with the speed of jump sequencing and the need to control body angles with the bed very precisely at each reception and take off with the risk of being ejected from the apparatus.

We often talk about **teaching tools** for movements that land on the stomach or back. These are **moves in their own right** and it is their meticulous and methodical learning that helps student build a **rich vocabulary** and reach a mastery of the body in space which is transferable to any other aerial acrobatic situation presented.

It is not by repeating the same move a thousand times that one becomes an acrobat, but by learning simultaneously the whole repertoire of positions, from simple to complex. **A threshold effect** takes place when the acquisition of skills becomes transferrable. Ideally one should carry out several short sequences on the trampoline tackling as many elements as possible in one session. Learning is fuelled by practicing and making mistakes in the myriad of positions available.

After learning one position and then another, it is advisable to use **the methodology of systematically learning routines.** It is the safest way to teach the desired mastery level. Sometimes the lack of time pushes acrobats to just settle for learning isolated figures with little scope. The transferability is therefore reduced to analogous movements of the figures overall shape. Taking the time to learn routines on the trampoline means making the most of a major asset in order to obtain a perfect control of the body in space.

The motor control of individual moves' becomes more automated as the learning progresses, this is not the case for the control of routines, which always requires a high alert state and adaptation for each landing on the trampoline's bed. This point is especially important for efficient trampoline teaching and learning that helps build an **acrobatic know-how**.
The fundamental principles of technical precision for somersaults and twists are few and simple. **The pathways to reach them are endless.** That is where all the teaching variations take place, from one teacher to another and from one learning culture to another.

One of the peculiarities of trampoline techniques is that positions allowing a visual reference point of the bed are preferred. The emblematic move is Barani: a front somersault with a half twist spread across the whole somersault so that the bed can be seen constantly. *The Barani out system* is the set of double rotations with twists ending with a Barani. **The constant spotting of the bed** is critical in knowing precisely one's position in the air and piloting the move with ease.

Learning is fuelled by practicing and making mistakes in the myriad of positions available.

TEACHING PRACTICES

Progression on the trampoline

Some basic principles:

– **The verticality of trajectories**.
Especially when learning basic moves. As the height and difficulty increase (double rotations) moving slightly, 50cm to one metre, in the direction of departure (forward or backward) increases the power of the rotation.

– **The body's alignment during twists.**
Is maintained by keeping shoulders, pelvis and legs aligned that it is easier to accelerate, stop and control twists.

– **Opening to a high "dead point"**.
Exiting acceleration in a tucked or piked somersault at the peak of the trajectory by stretching out the body completely.

– **Starting and guiding somersaults with leg action**.
Together with a fixed head and shoulders in the vertical direction, this action guarantees an effective and correct take off trajectory.

Some typical mistakes:

– **"Pulling" the head during the somersault**.
This action gives the illusion of going forward in the rotation but it only reduces the legs' action. As a general rule, the head must remain in its place regardless of the move.

– **Screwing the arms and shoulders during a twist**.
On the contrary, it is exactly by keeping the body aligned by starting a twist with the pelvis and legs that the arms can accelerate the twists.

– **Using the return energy of the springs to steer the thrust to benefit the rotation in the somersault**.
Very effective, but to the direct detriment to the quality of the trajectory. It is therefore necessary to prioritise a full extended straight jump after leaving the bed and create rotation by shifting the centre of gravity as well as using a leg action that is part of the somersault.

For a table of moves and trampoline terminology, see annexes, p. 66.

In summary…

Generally, we can say that today the trampoline enjoys a strong presence in secondary, professional and secondary circus schools, especially in the first year of training, regardless of the students' specialisations.

The trampoline:

– Is used within a general training of the basics, to develop body awareness, placement and spatial-temporal reference points
– Facilitates the learning of acrobatic technique and complex figures
– Trains technical discovery, playing and invention to develop creativity
– Allows students to work on a specific physical and cognitive preparation
– Will be used more specifically later on for other propulsion disciplines and during the following years of training

The technical movement: mastery and safety

Propulsion disciplines carry significant risk. This aspect therefore forms part of the technical teaching and is strictly linked to it. Risk and fear management are elements in the construction of technique.

The trampoline is a useful apparatus to prepare students for managing risk. The fact they can do straight jumps allows them to have that **preparation whilst being in motion,** which is interesting. The trampoline allows students to start a technical move whilst exploring the continuity and fluidity of the gesture - skills which will be as useful to the acrobat once he/she is on stage.

The technical difficulty in propulsion disciplines has increased in the last few years. **Whilst technical construction is the key element in learning**, trust is necessary in order to work on propulsion apparatus.

Trust between the acrobats and between the student and the teacher is vital and the structure of a session entirely depends on it.

Training and building trust in a high-risk discipline: which methodologies to adopt, how to organise a training session?

- Start the lesson with people taking turns speaking.
- Take stock of the previous day: number of training hours, difficulties, nutrition, number of hours of rest and sleep, any aches and pains…
- The lesson – its stages and challenges – can be adapted as a result of the students feedback gained at the beginning.

DEFINING THE LESSON'S OBJECTIVES

- In a high-risk discipline, the goals must be clear and, most importantly, achievable to avoid taking unnecessary risks.
- Excellence does not necessarily mean reaching one's limits and goals which are too high as that can have a negative impact on the student's performance.
- Physical preparation work can be integrated so that it dovetails with the goals.
- The level of fatigue has an impact on work and concentration. Risk taking must be assessed and progression must be based on the student's signs of fatigue.

THE PROGRESSION

It appears to be important to work on the technical basics in a systematic way and over the long term for students to gain trust in their physical abilities and then free themselves from technique.

We can list the following main teachings:

- The repetition of basic moves and working on learning goals
- A step-by-step progression breaking down the work to identify difficulties and obstacles, if necessary
- When elements are added one by one, confidence builds progressively and allows students to reach high difficulty levels
- Wanting to go too fast or jumping stages is what puts students in danger and makes them face the risk of getting lost on the apparatusAccording to Denis Hauw, the risk in acrobatics is more often linked to the way performances have been learnt than to the difficulty of the performance. The work's progression and environment are therefore elements to be taken into account to guarantee a safe practice in the long term.
- A progressive learning of difficult techniques also enables students to protect the body from premature wear and tear. Some pieces of equipment requires you to maintain a certain rigidity, while softness can be trained on others, learning how to train step by step reduces the need to force movement thus reducing fatigue.

READINGS

The psychological environment and its consequences

In sports and dance science, the psychological and cognitive aspects of performance are widely studied. Studies have been carried out on several notions: excellence, fatigue and practical advice for teachers.

Establishing smart goals

The more the set goal is clear and simple, the easier it is to achieve it. We can lean on four great principles.
The objectives must be:

1. **Specific:** the more precise the goal, the easier it is to establish a step-by-step procedure.
2. **Measurable:** in order to identify progress, the goal must be **measurable, either quantitatively or qualitatively.**
3. **Achievable:** in order to maintain motivation, only achievable goals work. Remembering the context (the year of study, preparing a show…) is important.
4. **Realistic:** this notion goes hand in hand with the previous one as it allows us to take into account the acrobatic student in his/her learning context.

In addition, goals are always set in a **given timeframe,** which also allows assessment of progress or re-evaluation of the teaching approach.

Creating a favourable psychological environment

If excellence is a characteristic of activities like circus or dance, wanting to achieve a goal at any cost leads to fatigue or even overtraining. The body no longer responds and dissatisfaction sets in. It is a physical and mental state of fatigue. The teacher must therefore be alert to signs of distress in students whose goals are too high and that can lose confidence in themselves, which leads to taking higher risks.

"The work environment plays a very important role in learning […] It can have positive or negative effect on health […] We generally distinguish between several types of learning contexts, a **self-centred environment** (more geared towards the performance at any costs) or an **open environment** (more geared towards the acquisition of competences).
In a schematic way, an **open environment** makes it possible to approach the notion of individual effort differently, based on the reference points mastered by students and an understanding of their mistakes that are part of learning. On the other side of the spectrum, in a self-centred environment, the progression is measured in the comparison with others, skills are overrated and mistakes are not allowed.
An open work environment, where the student is involved, is recommended to guarantee **well being and safety**. Research studies in sports science show that when students perceive an **open work environment,** positive adaptations bring more satisfaction therefore more effort, a better self-esteem, less seeking of an unsuitable perfectionism and less anxiety. On the contrary, self-centred work environments have negative effects: lack of concentration, less self esteem, an incorrect evaluation of one's skills, a feeling of restlessness, physical and emotional fatigue."

Source: Edel Quin, Sonia Rafferty, Charlotte Tomlison, *Safe Dance Practice. An applied Dance Science Perspective,* Human Kinetics, 2016, p. 167-168

"WE INVITE PEOPLE TO TAKE RISKS"

This is how we could define one of the roles of the teacher in propulsion disciplines. This observation leads to customisation of their work, listening to students' profiles. But there are often multiple notions of risk. Teachers do not all define and manage risk in the same way in their teaching.

We could start from quite a simple definition of risk by anthropologist David Le Breton:
"Risk is the haphazard consequence of a situation but from the angle of a threat, a potential damage […] Risk is a quantified uncertainty, it demonstrates a potential danger that could be issued from an event or a set of circumstances but it is just a possibility. It can not take place in a planned situation." [1]

The balance between the student's safety and the necessary risk taking in the discipline is therefore at the heart of teaching as it is partly the teacher that evaluates the risk potential of a situation and analyses the student's relationship with risk taking.

We could divide acrobats at a learning stage into three categories:
- A "measured" student agrees with the teacher and his/her recommendations in terms of the difficulty level to be achieved
- The student that does not have enough awareness of danger and wants to go beyond what the teacher suggests
- The student, who is scared, had no confidence when faced with risks suggested by the teacher. The teacher's work involves paying attention, reassuring the student and helping him/her take the risks he/she can handle.

There are also differences between disciplines where the acrobat is alone facing his/her own risk (*for example, on the trampoline*) and apparatus like the teeterboard where the risk is shared: hence the importance of a trust relationship between acrobats and between the acrobat and the teacher.

The teacher must be as close as possible to the student and what he/she can achieve, the risk he/she can take, not too low and not too high. The teacher must use their approach to safety wisely: too many warnings can engender fear. One of the solutions of facing risk is respecting stages of progression as closely as possible. The trust relationship can be built up over time in order to understand the time necessary to evaluate the risk the student can take or thinks he/she can take. Even if the teacher is present, the student is the one that makes the move. The **accompanying process in risk taking must result in autonomy.**

SAFETY AND EQUIPMENT

There are divergent opinions among teachers on the issue of safety but a trend seems to emerge:
- Working with a landing mat is preferred to working with a lunge, because the mat allows students to take risks whilst guaranteeing safety.
- Nevertheless, the lunge remains a solution if there are no mats available.

Depending on the equipment and safety level, the students' confidence level will change which in turn will alter their physical and mental state. It is important to include an element of risk from the outset, for example on very basic and easy moves, to allow students to face the dimension of risk in their activity.

1 David Le Breton, *Sociologie du risque*, PUF, coll. "Que-sais-je?", 2012, p. 3-4.

A COMMON LANGUAGE

To work on **confidence,** it is necessary to develop a **common language** between the teacher and the student and having a dialogue with:

- Precise terms to initiate an action
- Warning signs to manage risk (for example, placing the mat)
- A technical terminology understood by the student
- Finding the words to help students find a suitable physical state (letting them know when they are tense, for example).

This sharing of **knowledge** (empirical and/or formalised) between the student and the teacher also enables them to:

- Work on mistakes
- Work on the student's strengths and weaknesses

Other tools can be part of this shared language like sounds, vocal clues (onomatopoeia) to initiate twists, rotations and openings. These signals offer students a sound reference point as well as the visual reference points at times of impact and it can have an impact on the quality of the movement being trained.

It is often when students feel what doing the figure is like, **visualising** the figure and the **indications** given by the teacher, that something clicks and students start making progress.

TEACHING PRACTICES

What is the teacher's job for safe practice?

"Mental preparation also means managing apprehension. When we start new tricks, for example we work with a large mat, to give students an environment where they feel confident and at ease. If a student needs more time, we take that time!"

GILLES DÉCHANT[1]

"You have to be there physically and mentally, have a relationship with a partner, a group. In doing so you learn something about life too. As a teacher, as a partner, you have to be aware of your responsibilities. I talk a lot about it during the course. This is done through **speaking and analysing.** When there is an issue, we try to analyse the situation. If a problem reoccurs, we need to analyse the factors that make that problem reoccur – it is often a mixture of things. I talk about my experiences. I pass them on to them so that one day they can do the same."

YURI SAKALOV

"The idea is to make students reach a high technical level, but also a technique which is completely safe so that they can have a long career after school. They understand they need to have a specific physical preparation for the teeterboard, for example, to make this possible. It is also very important to understand about anatomy, the body's physiology and what happens in the muscles when they are in a particular position."

JAN ROSÉN

It is often when students feel what doing the figure is like, visualising the figure and the indications given by the teacher, that something clicks and students start making progress.

1 See list of participants to the INTENTS training session on propulsions, p. 71

A specific mental and physical preparation

In propulsion disciplines that are very physically demanding (impacts, repetitive movements, pressure on the joints of the lower limbs and spine), it is essential to have a solid body to maintain a long career. A **specific physical conditioning** is therefore necessary as well as developing **a subtle awareness of movement** in order to work as much as possible with an **economy of movement** and to preserve the body's structures as much as possible.

From the point of view of physical and mental preparation, some tools help to meet the demands of the apparatus which requires a good physical form, similar to that of a high level athlete; it must be specific to propulsion disciplines and focus on different elements:

- Speed, tone and explosiveness, are the quality of the jump
- Muscular strength, which can be worked on with floor acrobatics, which allows students to start working on another relationship with space.
- Proprioception work, including other circus disciplines like juggling.
- Placement, which can be trained on the trampoline, essential to protect the spine to partly absorb the shocks when landing on pieces of equipment such as the teeterboard.

On the trampoline or another apparatus, preparation essentially lies on **repetition of basic exercises. "**The body must be prepared for the impacts caused by propulsion. The teeterboard, for example, is violent on the body. There is a strong impact on the back", explains Aurélia Brailowski[1].
We can certainly work on a rigorous and athletic physical preparation without taking the competitive approach. The demands are the same, but the objectives are different, which places less physical and mental limits on the acrobat. "Work like a gymnast but think like a circus artist", summarises Simon Progin[2].

Mental preparation is just as essential in propulsion disciplines. In sports practice, we make a distinction between two motor skills:

- closed skills, performed in a stable environment with no uncertainties
- open skills, when spatial, environmental, temporal or event-based conditions change.

Acrobatics is generally considered as a **closed skill**. However, in circus arts, the **environment can change in a show condition**, which requires a significant cognitive preparation.

Taking into account that closed skill, the acrobats can work on memorising shapes during their mental preparation.

Mental preparation is practiced in high level sports disciplines with tools borrowed from **sophrology**, **visualisation techniques** or **relaxation**. These different mental approaches can reduce stress and anxiety and avoid **missing moves**, frequent in aerial acrobatics and propulsion disciplines.

Developing different forms of **attention and or focus** is important because depending on where the attention is brought, the performance will be different.

Different kinds of focus create a different relationship with the move and above all significantly impact the performance. **Somatic practices** can be a gateway into this kind of work.
Reducing stress, anxiety can be achieved by incorporating **control techniques** such as relaxation, visualisation techniques or the development of reflective feedback loop. This work can be done while staying still, on the apparatus or the floor. It is about looking for **alternatives to physical work.**

The acrobat can also work on a **more open motor skill**, when you introduce different **stimuli**: visual, sound etc. which can initiate the moves.
Changing reference points (the space where they practice, for example), **changing the sound environment** (working with music), **talking or singing while performing a movement** (principle of the double task: cognitive task/motor task) can also help them develop **an adaptation skill**, necessary in circus in a show condition, unlike in sports.

1/2 See list of participants to the INTENTS training session on propulsions, p. 71

In summary…

- It is essential that **the acrobat manages risk and develops awareness of their feelings**. This is key in the technical construction of propulsion disciplines.
- On the trampoline, one can develop body and spatial awareness and students can **develop self-correction tools** that will help them manage risks. Confidence in propulsion can thus be learnt and developed on the trampoline.
- Risk management and safety awareness can be integrated into teaching and sessions can be planned according to the parameters that are linked to it: **excellence, fatigue, confidence, student's physical and mental state or equipment available**.
- This requires a constant adaptation from the teacher to the actual situation during the session. A long-term step-by-step progression which is flexible and in continual evolution seems therefore to be the most appropriate.
- In order for the notion of **listening** to be possible, and have a positive impact the building of a high level of trust between the student and the teacher and between the students of the same group appear to be necessary. Accepting that in order to develop self-knowledge **being observed by others** is essential to take on physical and creative risks with confidence and pleasure.
- Different teaching strategies can therefore be implemented to **mitigate situations where risk is present**, **and to teach students how to integrate this into their training**.

READINGS

The transmission of risk

In order to analyse risk in transmission, the sociologist Florence Legendre suggests defining first of all what risk is apparent in circus then observe different teaching practices. Her work is based on the observation and interviews with several FEDEC circus school teachers.

"The transmission of risk management

A part-formal transmission

[…] When we ask them which contents are transmitted to them regarding risk management, teachers first address their formal teaching practices, in particular those concerning the transmission of sports techniques, less often the management of the material or the equipment […] Whether teachers come from sport or professional circus, the transmission of these techniques is carried out in a relatively organised and formal way, starting from a gradual mastery of the elements taught and their repetition. […] Some teachers address other teaching content. Physical maintenance and healthy lifestyle have been highlighted as important elements that contribute to risk management. They form part of the formal training content.

A part-informal transmission

[…] Beyond the formal dimensions of managing risk taking, teachers often refer to the psychological dimensions such as self-confidence or conquering fear. It all happens as if there were risks which are controllable and others that are not, which is a departure from the formal transmission suggested by the school. […] According to some teachers, self-esteem can be transmitted in interpersonal relationships. It is about building it in to the relationship with others, with their partners, but also with their teachers. […] The transmission of the management of risk taking, especially in its emotional dimension, appears to be variable and customised, depending on the actors, the situations, the interactions and the contexts."

Excerpts from: Florence Legendre, "La transmission de la gestion du cirque dans les écoles supérieures de cirque en France", *SociologieS* [online], La transmission du métier, article published online on 7th March 2014; https://sociologies.revues.org/4554


Trainer

Transfers from one discipline to another

By **Arnaud Thomas**, teacher specialised in aerial and propulsion disciplines,
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Circus acrobats are multiskilled. They often develop the ability to go from one technique to the other or one piece of equipment to the other even if they are specialised. During the training, the trampoline can be used not only in propulsion disciplines (teeterboard, Russian bar…) but also some aerial disciplines (aerial cradle, trapeze…). In floor acrobatics the feeling is not the same as when we propel ourselves or are propelled by a trampoline or an apparatus ***and*** a partner.

Once students identify their reference points on the trampoline, it is much easier for them to control the aerial and landing phase and compared with other propulsion pieces of equipment. It is on the trampoline that students can work on their **skill to guide the body in space and control rotation.**
Once these technical skills have been acquired and developed on the trampoline, the know-how is transferable to other pieces of equipment.

The trampoline is a discipline where learning optimises the training of aerial acrobats in every circus discipline where the body is in space.
Its mastery authorises the transfer of acrobatic skills. Thus the learning of new disciplines will be mostly set on learning how to gain momentum, exiting the propulsion apparatus and landing on bases, mats or nets.

There are several benefits to the trampoline compared to other pieces of equipment:

- Acrobats contact the bed for less than 2/10 of a second at each jump **so they must control their trajectory in the air** the rest of the time. It is the only acrobatic discipline **where the body is in the air continuously throughout**.
- With landings and take offs on the stomach and the back, **the moves can be deconstructed in ¼ jump and ½ twist**. Controlling the rotations demands a high precision when landing on the stomach.
- The quantity and great variety of moves builds solid and adaptable teachings.
- The teaching method that favours **visual reference points on the trampoline's bed**, facilitates and improves the body's spatial awareness.
- **The ability of making a sequence of somersaults** multiplies the necessity to control trajectories and produces an impressive number of somersaults and twists in a dozen rebounds. The speed at which a sequence of double or triple linked rotations takes place will give a remarkable ease to the aerial acrobat having to do just a single somersault on the Hungarian teeterboard or flying trapeze.

TEACHING PRACTICES

Which adaptations are needed when transferring from the trampoline to other disciplines?

The teeterboard example

According to Simon Progin[1], the key is undertaking an important trampoline training. For one or two hours on the trampoline, students are no longer artists but trampolinists, who are not in competition. The question is not so much "being a trampolinist", but working as the trampolinist does, feeling the figures better. Once trampoline moves are mastered perfectly, working on the teeterboard seems easy. It is about building a tempo. Once the teeterboard tempo is really understood, the transfer to another apparatus or technique can be done easily.

The Russian bar example

Transferring from the trampoline to another discipline requires adaptation to gain momentum. For example, working on the trampoline can be supplemented by floor work for body positioning and alignment.
In the transfer, one must not lose sight of safety issues. Yuri Sakalov gives the example of the Russian bar. This apparatus requires a very high level on the trampoline to work at a height because the acrobat goes very high. Also, because of this height, landing is also more dangerous and needs to be worked on outside the trampoline, as the parameters are very different.

Disciplines like teeterboard, Russian bar and the swing have outputs very similar to those of the trampoline.

Similarly to the springs, it is the partner(s) who will transmit the thrust given to the flyer by the propulsion equipment. The flying technique is based on reducing the weight of the aerial acrobat perfectly synchronised with the push by his/her partner(s). This timing is the essential element that an acrobat that has already trained on the trampoline has to master in order to perform other disciplines.

For students making their debut on the trampoline and teeterboard, training for an equal amount of time on the two pieces of equipment in the weekly schedule seems like a good balance in order to make a harmonious progress. At the end of training, the feeling of propulsion from the trampoline or the teeterboard will be quite similar.

The trapeze example

On the contrary, for trapeze students, as Yuri Sakalov[2] points out, the transfer from the trampoline to the trapeze is simpler. On the trapeze, the acrobat performs a ¼ or a ½ turn, unlike on the trampoline where he/she performs ¾ turn. Rather than training and repeating the same falls on the trapeze, the student learns much more quickly and easily on the trampoline. The transfer is therefore very positive and the students can gain in confidence and technical stability. Several trapeze teaching aims can be worked on the trampoline.

As far as the aerial cradle or flying trapeze are concerned, exits occur from the suspension with a circular momentum.

We move away from the support of the feet and vertical jumps. The flight time from the trapeze to the base, much shorter than on the trampoline limits the complexity of the moves. The base/flyer timing will be equally precise and important during training. The creation of rotations during the somersaults and twists will be different from the trampoline. It is in the aerial phase that the flyer can find the control and steer the moves he/she acquired on the trampoline.

The handstand example

The alignment sought in the handstand training on the hands can also be trained on the trampoline. If the action is not the same as the hand balancer pushes on to the floor to support himself/herself and does not push away, the sensation of the body line on the trampoline can nourish the handstand practice. This line is at the heart of acrobatics in general. Michael Standen explains that the feeling of balancing on ones' hands and that of hanging by the feet is a feeling we can find on the trampoline.

1/2 See list of participants to the INTENTS training session on propulsions, p. 71

The floor acrobatics or acrodance example

The same goes for Aurélia Brailowski[1], who explains that floor acrobatics allows students to feel things before moving onto the apparatus, especially in a recreational school. A well-placed wheel, for example, where the extremities of the body are stretched in an active stretch, is an exercise that will protect the body.

Conversely, for Teresa Celis, the trampoline enables the artist to have more time up in the air to understand a movement because in floor acrobatics actions happen quickly, sometimes in less than a second and there are many actions to perform. On the trampoline, one second becomes two seconds; suspension allows gaining of some time.

> For students making their debut on the trampoline and teeterboard, training for an equal amount of time on the two pieces of equipment in the weekly schedule seems like a good balance in order to make a harmonious progress.

The time needed to train a flyer on a trampoline is long, from 3 to 5 years of daily practice. Aerial acrobatics is precise and its learning is rigorous and meticulous.

We gain roughly one metre per year of work so it takes 4 to 5 years to go up 5 metres on the trampoline. The time spent every day on the trampoline will be made profitable by the number of circus disciplines it prepares for. Once students have acquired a precise control of the body in space, only specific exits and landings specific to the disciplines need to be learnt.

In summary…

- The trampoline allows students to develop the ability to pilot the body in space, which is essential for propulsion disciplines.
- Each discipline has its peculiarities in terms of output and reception, the learning of which can be very different (for example, the flying trapeze).
- If used primarily at the beginning of learning, the trampoline remains a useful teaching tool throughout training and learning. We will therefore go back and forth between the trampoline and the apparatus several times to correct a posture or a move.
- The simultaneous progression on the trampoline and in a propulsion discipline gives very good results.
- The concept of transfer is not simple and each teacher will adapt his/her teaching on the trampoline according to the technical needs, the equipment and the student.

1 See list of participants to the INTENTS training session on propulsions, p. 71

Observing the body moving through the air

As we already saw, working on the trampoline and other propulsion pieces of equipment requires a specific physical conditioning and training body awareness. To do this, we can rely both on **scientific knowledge** (objective) and on tools for the **subtle observation of movement** (subjective). This knowledge will be useful to teachers in their pedagogical approach but can also part of the students' work in order to develop their autonomy and learn how to observe themselves and others; "Knowing how to *push* it is also about analysing and correct the flyer", explains for example Yuri Sakalov [1].

Quantitative analysis of a movement is based on objective measurements and scientifically proven principles. Quantitative analysis can help understand movement and its parameters. Thus, one tends to observe one parameter in particular.

The **qualitative analysis** of a movement is a more subjective estimate of a move. Rather, it seeks to understand movement as a whole and to analyse its validity. The observation is therefore complex, multiple and larger, not merely visual. It includes a wide range of sensory information.

OBJECTIVE OBSERVABLES OR QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Scientific knowledge of biomechanics allows objective observations of the realisation of a figure and to analyse it by understanding its organisation and its mechanics. Definitions are therefore based on physical laws. The important notions in propulsion disciplines are the following:

- The impulse
- The aerial trajectory
- Rotational dynamics
- The moment of inertia
- Preservation of angular momentum

The impulse

During a propulsion, the jump begins with an impulse.
The impulse results in **an acceleration of the centre of gravity.**
Acceleration is produced by the **application a vertical force** (the plié).
In order to propel himself/herself, the acrobat must exert an external force on the body during a given period of time in order to communicate a **variation of speed** to the body, which allows him/her to take off.

In biomechanics, or in mathematical language, it is said that **the impulse represents the variation of the amount of motion undergone by the system (the body). It is the sum of the external forces that are applied to the system in two instants of time**. In other words, **the impulse results from the forces exerted on the system** (the body) **for a given time** (which varies, in circus, depending on the apparatus and the discipline).

In the case of propulsion with an apparatus or partners, **the sum of the external forces** will include not only the **force produced by the acrobat** but also the **forces of the apparatus and/or partner.**

The aerial trajectory

The aerial trajectory draws the path of the centre of gravity at the moment when the body takes off.
A priori, this trajectory is set: the centre of gravity always makes a **parabola**.
This parabola solely depends on the **initial conditions:** the body's position at the time of take-off and the take-off speed. The body's trajectory in the propulsion is therefore predetermined by these initial conditions.

Once the impulse is over, the **amount of angular motion** by the acrobat remains unchanged throughout the duration of the flight. One speaks of **conservation of the angular momentum.** The work of the **impulse** on the apparatus is therefore very important: mechanically, it all plays around that T moment.

1 See list of participants to the INTENTS training session on propulsions, p. 71

BUT…

In the aerial phase, unlike a solid, the human body has the ability to change the terms of the equation by balancing and creating a shape.
The variation of speed is zero in the aerial phase (the **angular moment is constant**, unless one works outdoors, for example, where the wind can change the situation, which is an important dimension to be taken into account for acrobats working on the street).
What will vary is the **inertia** of the movement. The acrobat will create a **kinetic moment** by his/her movement.

The moment of inertia
Inertia is linked to the mass and distance of a body with respect to its axis of rotation; inertia gives resistance to rotational motion.
Creating a moment of inertia during propulsion is what allows the rotation of the somersaults or twists (**movement of the segments**). By reducing the moment of inertia, the acrobat increases his/her **angular velocity.** By increasing the moment of inertia, he/she reduces their angular velocity.

One also talks about **transfer of the angular momentum.** It is this mechanical law that makes it possible to **transform from rotation to somersault in rotation to spin (to transform the rotation to somersault, the rotating somersault, the rotation in a twist OR to pass from the rotation to the somersault, from the somersault to rotation, from rotation to twist) without having to regain support.** For example, when adding a half twist at the end of a double front rotation (*barani out*)[1].

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENTS OBSERVED OR QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

If knowledge of physical laws governing acrobatic movement is important, in teaching, the observation of movement and conveying instructions are often more subjective. They are related to experience and **empirical knowledge**.

The development of a subtle observation of movement in order to teach **body awareness and self-feedback** are therefore equally important.

This analysis work can be carried out with students **on the basis of a video**, in small groups. With visible markings on the body, on the equipment or in space, this learning enables the student to identify problems related to:
– Body posture in picking up momentum
– Reference points or landmarks in space
– Body posture when landing
– Identifying postural habits

The work of **analysing and observation of the sensation of movement** can also be done in practice and will depend very much on the instructions given by the teacher. Different techniques are developed by circus art professors to develop an awareness of body and space when students are in the air. This dimension is essential in the teaching of propulsion disciplines, unlike working on the floor or on aerial pieces of equipment like the pole, rope, tissue or trapeze, physical contact is not possible.

In this work, the link between **posture and vision** plays an essential role. This is why the **reference points** given to students will play a large part in executing them. The function of these reference points is twofold: they help with **postural** positioning and thus technique (improving performance) and help with **safeguarding the body.**

One can therefore distinguish, depending on the issue at stake and elements being trained:
– **Reference points or landmarks in space (visual)**
– **Reference points on the body (visual and sensory)**

The reference points taken on the body allow students to have a better awareness of body patterns. The students can be questioned about the internal reference points for action (*are they capable of naming actions?)*, and their feelings. Reference points for **postural control** can be directly marked on the student's clothes (with adhesive tape) to learn to place the gaze, as proposed by Jan Rosén.

For reference points on the body, *feeling the body's internal spaces and the body in space*, we can talk about **kinaesthetic principles** whose training can be done in part by working on **proprioception. Visual reference points taken in space**, especially in relation to the floor, can be trained on the trampoline. Once the reference point on the floor has been integrated, it is then possible to master moves without that help.

1 See annexes p. 66

READINGS

Some typical features of acrobatic movement forms

"The shapes in acrobatic movement are traditionally rotations around longitudinal and transversal axes. *Freestyle* practices use axes of rotation that break with these traditions. For example, acrobats turn their inclined body to one side without the buttocks going above their heads.

The rotations are traditionally performed with the body tense in tucked or piked position. An intermediary body shape is the "puck" (flat back, pelvis at 90° to the knees, contraction of "tuck"and "pike" *A/N*). This is often used on the trampoline because the *puck* position makes it possible to turn quickly both into a somersault and a twist. *A/N*). In *freestyle*, the "grab" forms are also used. The trajectories of the centre of gravity are subjected to gravity: acrobats fight against gravity to rise and "consume" the potential energy related to their position on the aerial trajectory during the moves. For example, to cross a fixed bar in the "drop", one must have gathered sufficient momentum in the descending phase of the "giants" (gaining kinetic energy) therefore avoiding deceleration in the ascending phase (fighting against gravity) bringing the centre of gravity close to the bar in order to raise above it.

The rotations are, in most cases, created by pushing: once in the air, the possibilities of creating rotation are limited to the "houla hop" principle *(the body's capacity to turn in the air, A/N)(*. For example, the simple fact of tucking in the air during a vertical jump doesn't turn into a somersault! This rotation must be created by inclining the trunk forward a little when pushing off the ground for a front somersault. In the air, acrobats are in most cases subjected to the law of the conservation of the angular momentum: in other words, the momentum of rotation initiated at take-off remains constant until the acrobat touches the floor again (this statement must be considered in relation with acrobatic activities where aerodynamic factors exist: for example, parachutists see their angular momentum vary depending on the air resistance that has a significant impact on the rotation). In the air, acrobats can change their movement shapes, speed up or slow down the rotation, distributing the angular moments along axes of rotation. For example, by tucking during a somersault, the speed of rotation is accelerated and vice versa."

Source: Denis Hauw, "Comprendre l'organisation du geste acrobatique" in *L'acrobatie*, Éditions EPS, coll. "Pour l'action", 2010, pp. 46-47.

READINGS

Reference points to develop an acrobatic performance

"[…] The construction of possible orientations in space involves developing a series of reference points that make the acrobatic situation non enigmatic for the practitioner. This area of intervention is hardly visible to a layperson. In fact, it refers to the world of acrobats.

The arrangement of these reference points' is guided primarily by a visual perception: participants say what to look for (for example, staring at a spot at the beginning of a rotation, and then at the landing) and not seek to see (the course of the rotation, for example). The other perception components are constructed 'naturally' by practice and during practice. Thus, except for astronauts, there are no specific tools to train or prepare kinaesthetic tracking systems. […] It should also be highlighted that mental training or self-comparison practices integrate the consolidation or change of reference points in training."

Source: Denis Hauw,
"Le développement de la performance acrobatique", in *L'acrobatie*, Éditions EPS, coll. "Pour l'action", 2010, pp. 86-87.

Certain elements can be approached through feeling, for example, to understand the triggering *timing* of an action. For the flyer/base couple, understanding what happens in the other person's body at the time of the impulse (push for one, flying for the other) is interesting in order to refine the movement awareness. An exploration of **weight transfer** can also help. On the other hand, when working with a partner, attention and vigilance are essential. **Knowing how to read the partner's trajectory** in order to be able to react is a skill that the acrobats need to acquire. This skill can be acquired by working as much as possible on body awareness and developing observation skills.

We can also evoke with students the **sensations** felts in different stages of the acrobatic move and put them in parallel with the reality of technique:
- Sensation when exiting the apparatus
- Sensation during the flight time (gravity, drop etc.)
- "Weightlessness" sensation
- Sensation during the fall and landing, etc.

These observations can also be arranged into **main categories or factors of movement:**
- The body's internal and external **space**, the three dimensions of space
- **Time**, an awareness of time and the unfolding of the movement in time (its musicality)
- **Weight**, weight management, weights transfers, supports (in the air or on the floor)
- The movement's **flux** or **energy** and its density, particularly at the time of take-off.

The acrobats in action are simultaneously both in a real consciousness of their movement, in the image they project and the movement they imagine.

It is interesting to work with **adjectives** that qualify these elements in order to **refine and verbalise** how the movement feels.

On this subject, it should be pointed out that **the notion of body also includes the notion of imaginary body or image-body.** The acrobats in action are simultaneously both in a real consciousness of their movement, in the image they project and the movement they imagine.

- **The perceived body**: what I feel when I am working
- **The relational body or perceived in relation**: what I feel when I propel someone or to be propelled by someone
- **The ideal body**: the model to which I aspire to when working on one technique or the other
- **The demonstrative body**: the body in representation, a specific and unique body, owned by each acrobat who "interprets" a technique

READINGS

Several bodies in the self-correction practice

"Training therefore creates two bodies: a perceptible and tangible one, the other aesthetically ideal [….] The two bodies can be constructed in tandem, each one influencing the development of the other. Both come from the training act, such as observing the movement or discussing it."

Source: Susan Foster, "Dancing Bodies", in Meaning in motion, Duke University Press, 1997.

TEACHING PRACTICES

Observing and talking about the moving body - which methodologies?

Synthesis of the round table on observation

– **A deductive methodology**

"I work a lot with the students' wishes, desires, aesthetic visions, whether in terms of technique or creativity. Starting with technique, I give exercises for body awareness. Working with sensations, reference points. I ask many questions about sensations in different parts of the body: what is felt during an action? Where do the eyes look during the movement? I try not to give all the answers even if I know them from a technical point of view. This places the students in a position to observe and pay attention to what they are doing."

ADRIAN RICARDO MARTINEZ [1]

– **An inductive methodology**

"The teacher knows what works for a move. If the student does not manage to feel it or see it from a technical point of view, it is difficult and not productive to leave them in the dark. I prefer to give the essential key to the movement so that they can analyse it *afterward,* make it their own and play with it."

SAMI MAAOUI [2].

Some rules cannot be changed because they are to do with safety or the fundamental principles of technique, while others can be ignored: that is where we find a form of personalisation and artistic elements.

In observing the students, we notice a shift **from a global approach to the interpretation to a more detailed one**, that allows the artists to work on **the state of their body** (*breathing, tension*) and energy.

According to **Adrian Porter**, these elements can be incorporated from the beginning of learning **in order to have the perception of what one does from the beginning** (working on voice, breathing, music, rhythm, etc.).

Observing oneself in the slightest details

"One can understand and hold body shapes, either leaning against a wall or lying down on the floor, a mat or even the trampoline itself – it doesn't really matter as longs as the body is released from tensions. The body can work to the fingertips every day, even when we are sitting down, lying down, there must always be connections. When I work on body awareness and space with my students, they must be able to stop all of a sudden, perceive the volume of their body, understand how far the movement can go and where the outlines of the body end […]. Sometimes I work with six body points: two arms, two legs, two eyes. Everything is connected. If we put our hands at the back of our neck, we feel that just by moving the eyes muscles are activated. The optic nerve is directly attached to these muscles. A small eye movement can create a placement of the head and compromise the placement. We can learn to dissociate the eye movement from the movement of the head."

MIKE WRIGHT

Working with different bodies. On the necessity of observing

Summary of the round table on different body shapes

How to work with different body shapes and physical qualities and how to rely on them? In a group of students, the perception of the same instruction, the sensation of a movement will vary greatly depending on their ability and body shape.

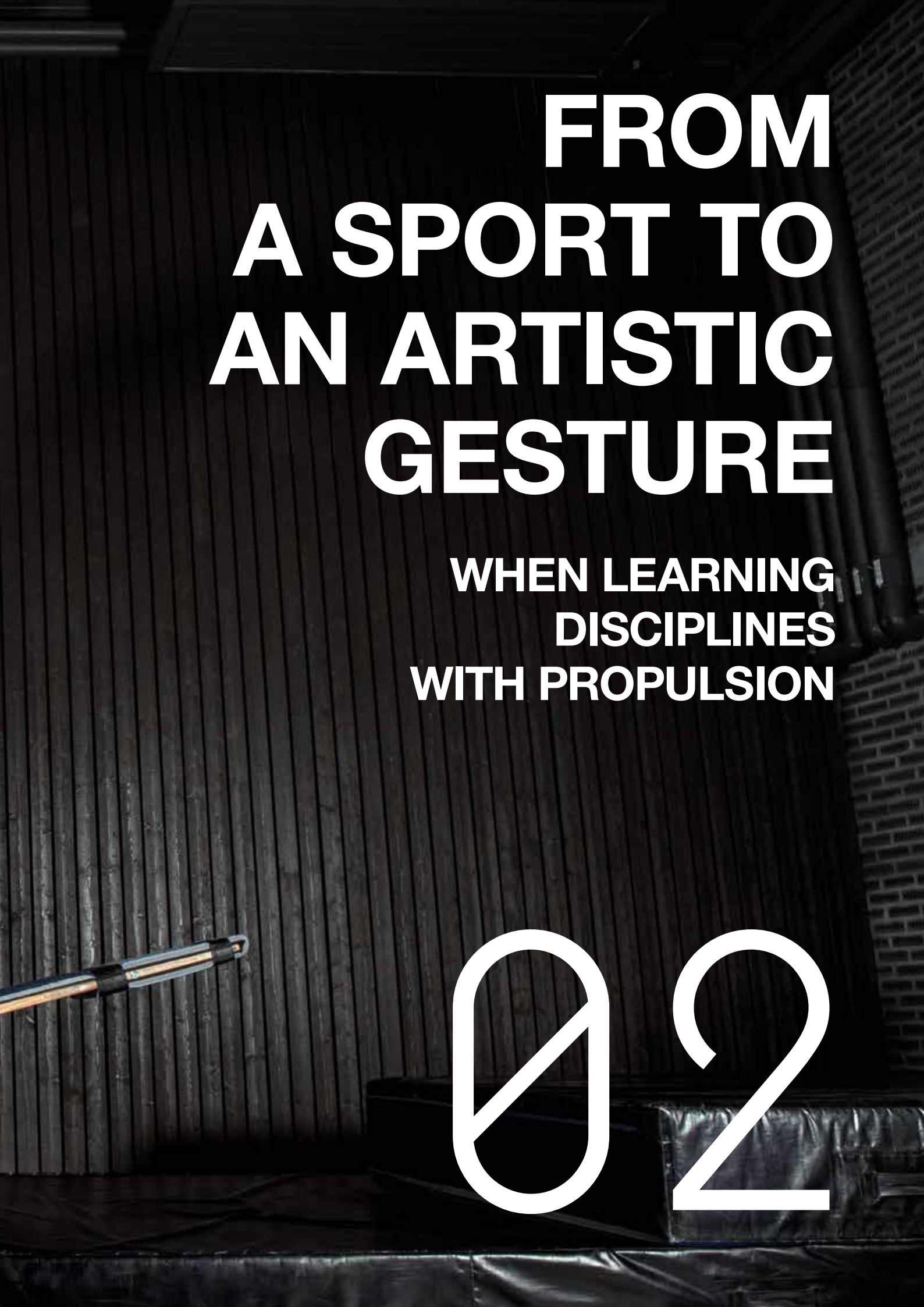
– Is there a specific body shape for the apparatus?
– Each body has an aesthetic richness in the development of movement. Does this richness also bring different body states?
– Are there contraindications to certain body shapes? The main answer seems to be keeping up the student's motivation and pleasure as a way to circumvent these contradictions.

Regardless of the body shape, several important points emerge from this reflection: the role of the teacher is to identify the students' ability to progress and let students make that choice, as some students are physically ready, others not yet and some will never be.
The work of observation and analysis facilitates speaking to students to set goals and exercises, especially in physical preparation and training.
There is therefore a responsibility for the teacher in relation to the physical risks but also to the psychosocial risks caused by the wrong guidance.

1/2 See list of participants to the INTENTS training session on propulsions, p. 71

In summary…

- The movement observation work based on **scientifically quantitative** and **qualitative knowledge** nourished by experience is important in propulsion disciplines and in acrobatics in general.
- Knowing the **physical principles** of the movement and conveying them allows students to understand what happens when they are in the air and then analyse it.
- If the physical laws of the acrobatic figures are known, each acrobat will then develop his/her own way of doing that move: **starting from their own sensations and reference points in space or on the body**.
- Acquiring observation methodologies can help refine **their body awareness and develop self-feedback tools to correct their mistakes**. Observation is also useful in analysing the students' abilities leading to a strategic assessment of their needs.



FROM A SPORT TO AN ARTISTIC GESTURE

WHEN LEARNING DISCIPLINES WITH PROPULSION

02

From an athletic to an artistic jump: questions of intent

A DETOUR BY GESTURE ANALYSIS

Defining what can be artistic in technique allows one to approach the acrobatic act in a generic way. In some so-called "artistic" sports (artistic gymnastics, figure skating, trampoline), we can see that technique takes on another dimension in the execution of moves, that is where the artistry is played out.
In sport all the elements that make up the sequences are codified and assessable. **In circus there are no rules or competitions. The only result is what the audience feels**. Sports technique is contained by a very precise code, which makes in possible to differentiate the competitors. **Circus disciplines are open to all technical and artistic suggestions, the codes of the circus are those of a live spectacle.**

It is remarkable how the technical elements shared by sports and circus rigorously respond to the same teaching methods. The artistic objectives of circus are included in the technical mastery of goals for each acrobatic element. This added value may seem secondary but it is essential. **The technical work and artistic work are merged in teaching** if we bear in mind the goal of a circus student during the training years: to be in the spotlight to present (or represent) to the public the author's intentions, making a physical intention their own and putting it at the service of a performance.

Secondarily, within professional circus schools and higher education programmes, propulsion techniques have evolved as it has come into contact with contemporary circus aesthetics and also *fun* sports in that are trending.

For some circus teachers, the other free and often urban acrobatic disciplines where propulsion is involved (in *parkour,* for example*)* modify the technique and force to question new ways of doing. In these very creative disciplines, **impulsions** often use a support and involve many more lateral or thoracic rotations. The body changes its axis of rotation and the combination of moves is thus modified: a somersault to the side already involves a twist and so on. In this kind of move, the **landing** is modified, weight transfers will be different as well as the feet position when landing.

These **technical variations** are not possible as the sports' vocabulary needs to be respected, but they are possible in circus and open up a field of artistic development of technique.

In order to better understand and analyse the artistic qualities of a movement, we can refer to the **methods of analysis of an expressive movement**, allowing us to articulate technique and expressiveness. We could also talk about the **musicality of movement.**
In the analysis of movement, one will above all observe the **qualities of movement**. To do this, one can observe **the management of body weight**, which determines a posture, itself a vector of conveying emotion and expression.
Like the weight transfer, the nature of impulse conditions will influence what happens in the air. In this short moment of impulse, acrobats can already **give some artistic colouring** to their gesture putting an **intention** in it. Once in the air, the trajectory of their centre of gravity will be defined biomechanically, but it can act on accelerations, the openings, the slowing down and thus give another colouring to its course.

READINGS

Jumps, between art and sport: different points of view
History, anthropology, aesthetics

From an historic point of view, the acrobat comes from the figure of the **saltarine**, which, unlike the dancer, is able to jump and take flight: it is powerful and changes the appearance of the human figure thanks to the propulsion. **The gesture of jumping is therefore potentially creative in itself.**

This is for example what the anthropologist Myriam le Peignist tells us:

"If the word *ballerine* (*dancer*) goes back to the verb 'danser' ('to dance'), the *acrobat* insists on a slender jump, contorsion and 'hip twist', associated with an ardent **moment, hence the nuance between 'saltarine' and 'ballerine' (dancer)."**

Source: Myriam PEIGNIST, "Inspirations acrobes",
Sociétés, n° 81, De Boeck Université, third trimester 2003, p. 23.

The anthropology of body and movement can also help to contrast the performance aspects to the aesthetic aspects of the jump. It is necessary to go back to a distinction between a jump in dance, an acrobatic jump or a sports jump:

"When these aerial rotations constitute the finality of the movement, we leave the domain of the jump in its strictest sense and despite the terminology used (*full twists*, somersaults, etc.), we enter into the domain of acrobatics, or more generally speaking, acrobatic sports. If the aesthetic and expressive research takes precedence over the technicality of the moves executed in the aerial phase, we approach the field of dance."

Source: Françoise K. JOUFFROY,
"Le saut, ou l'art de ne plus toucher terre."
in Odette ASLAN (dir.), *Le corps en jeu* [1994],
third edition, Paris, CNRS, 2003, p. 40.

Aesthetic analysis, will rely above all on the movement's sensation and its poetics. The acrobat working on propulsion, experiences **sensations** that are a source of **creativity**. In order to understand the nature and virtuous impact of this movement, let us examine the kinaesthetic sensation generally produced by jumps through the words of Wilfride Piollet that describes it as follows:

"It is a movement that cannot exist without a certain exhilaration. Dancers must concentrate on a point, which is where they momentarily go past their whole being. More generally, the moment of momentum is a source of emotion. In the jump, we feel not only the thrill of the ascent but also the fall. We must therefore release the body to the exhilaration of not touching the floor."

Wilfride PIOLLET, *Rendez-vous sur les barres flexibles* [1999],
second edition, Paris, Sens & Tonka, 2005, pp. 147-148.

In an acrobatic propulsion, **two corporeities** are joined. The body philosopher Michel Bernard suggests the notion of **corporeity,** being inspired especially from the **phenomenology** of Merleau-Ponty. He looks particularly at performing arts to explain what is "corporeity" as opposed to the "body".

- **Corporeity is linked to practice**
- **Corporeity is linked with imagination**
- **The body is mechanics and anatomy**
- **The body is objective, corporeity is subjective**

In propulsion disciplines, acrobats are both in a sports corporeity which goes back to technique, they feel like "athletes", their performance can be measured objectively and is regulated by technical rules that guarantee the execution of the move and its safety (height, the codification of the figure, etc.). But they are also in an **artistic** or dance corporeity they feel like "artists". Their bodies change endlessly, changing their relationship with time and space and the parameters of their performance are no longer measurable**. The move then becomes an aesthetic object** (not measurable)**, a representation which is not uniquely and objectively measurable.**

On the teeterboard, for example, we talk about a clear **distinction**. The technical aspect takes precedence over the artistic one as soon as the action begins, as the body must be fully physically and mentally engaged in the execution of the move.

One can imagine that little by little, during learning, the **artistic** dimension will take over from the **sporting** one and that the movement is not just formal but also sensory. Therefore, in propulsion, there is a difference between a jump of an **athletic** nature and a jump of an **artistic** nature: the movement's **directions**, the body's **position** in space, the **weight management**, the movement's **intention** and the **emotion** induced at preparation stage will mark that difference.

These variations don't prevent **precision.** One must not confuse what is formal (a codified language) with what is precise. Similarly, a movement can be **technical *and* expressive**.

READINGS

Impulse and pre-movement. Gesture analysis

In propulsion, the pre-movement takes place before the impulse. This is what we call in neurophysiology **anticipatory postural adjustements**. This pre-movement takes place at a very deep level in the body. Part of the poetry and movement's intention lies in this pre-movement, the instant before the body begins to act and the acrobat takes off, in the **weight transfer.**

"We will call 'pre-movement' that attitude towards weight, gravity, which already exists before we move, merely by standing, and which produces the expressive initiation in the movement we are going to perform."

Source: Hubert Godard, "Le geste et sa perception" in Isabelle Ginot and Marcelle Michel, *La danse au XX^e siècle* [1995], Paris, Larousse, p. 235-241. Larousse, pp. 235-241.

If it seems necessary to master a solid technical base in order to achieve artistic freedom, we can see how the artistic components can be worked *within* technical work.
In students' learning, it is necessary to develop a great awareness of the body through a discipline to then **move the technique** to another purpose in another environment.

In an acrobatic figure, which parts of technique does the artistic side emerge?

- In the way we take off and land a somersault, the change in rhythm and range
- In the intention behind movement which potentially defines a dramaturgy
- In what triggers off the action, the reason for the action
- In the feeling of suspension and the relationship with the air
- In the relationship with the partner, the apparatus, the gaze
- In the metaphorical investment of the artists performing the move (what it represents to them in their conscious/unconscious experience, the momentum, jumping, taking flight, falling, etc.)

From a pedagogical point of view, there are several strategies to search for a specific body state at the moment of impulse, in the suspension and in the triggering of actions, which will allow the figure to be executed whilst working on **quality of movement** and its specific **intention**. Technical execution often goes through images, sensations that are part of the artistic qualities of the movement, whilst guaranteeing some solid technical foundations.
This is what we find in different teaching practices using **sensation** and **visualisation, images** or **games**, to achieve a technical goal.

Learning therefore sits between technique and expression, between the application of a technical corporeity and an artistic one.

In summary…

- From the point of view of analysing movement, **the impulse plays a fundamental role in working on the movement's qualities** at the moment of propulsion. That is where intention can come into play even if the move could be worked qualitatively in the aerial and landing stages.
- There are different techniques to work on **movements' qualities** during learning: **working on sensations and mental images**.
- **Technique can also be artistic**: some indications given by the teacher already lead the students to carrying out **proprioceptive** work.
- As a result of the difficulty and risk in propulsion disciplines, acrobats oscillate between a more **sporty and technical** approach to their movement and a more **artistic and expressive** one. The challenge lies in bringing the two approaches together.

TEACHING PRACTICES

Going through sensitivity to tackle technique

Mental images, visualisation, qualities of movement, disruption of motor habits:

A 3D sensation

"The trampoline is interesting for working on the movement's intention because it allows the artist to train the qualities of movement within the constraints of the momentum. The session can be focused on the energy or sensation of the movement. Different images can be useful: body supported in the air, the idea of having eyes and senses everywhere or eyes in the back of your head. It is a quest for a 3D sensation – that is where we touch on the artistic act in the technique."

GÉRARD FASOLI[1]

Images as triggers of a technical move

"Shooting up in an invisible balloon, touching the mat with your feet, imagining having chewing-gum underneath your feet…. These are some odd visualisations that work with some students but the intention must be adapted. My aim is for them to feel the movement developing from an image, triggering off an action. In a rotation for example, the feet must always go up. We are going to shoot up in a balloon. The student will try and go forward with their tiptoes, which will trigger a rotation and if it is activated in the right place, it will continue until the end. This gives a feeling of action and a quality to the movement."

GILLES DÉCHANT[2]

1/2 See list of participants at the INTENTS training session on propulsions, p. 71

The feeling of propulsion, different relationships with the floor

"From my observations, most circus artists used to be gymnasts. So we have always learnt how to push off the floor and bounce off. Dancers know how to absorb the shock, get into the ground and then extend into a jump. There is a big difference. I find that dancers have that ability to go up in the air. Circus is more demanding, faster, more aggressive. It is difficult for the two of them to come together but that is what can be interesting, watching how propulsion is at work in other practices."

MICHAEL STANDEN [1]

Understanding pushing and propulsion via images

"A good technique is one where we use specific muscles at the right time, and which uses a lot less effort. I work with images. On the teeterboard, for example, I ask them to imagine that they have a weight on their body, at the level of the sternum and that weight goes down to their feet at the time of pushing. With that image, they must bring the teeterboard to the ground. On another hand, we work on the opposite, which is lightening the weight. On one side, the hammer, on the other, a feather. The idea is to understand that the feather must become lighter so that the hammer can go down. Little by little, we feel that push and lightening. I know how to make myself feel heavier or lighter."

AURÉLIA BRAILOWSKI [2]

Changing stimuli and metaphors to develop the qualities of movement

"When we change a stimulus to trigger an action: with the voice, a reference point, we change the movement's quality. Sound has an impact, for example. I also use a lot of metaphors: I talk about the floor burning, the body having to become lighter because it cannot stay on the floor."

TERESA CELIS [3]

Identifying the musicality, the movement's rhythm

"In a sequence, if you have a good rhythm, if you listen to what is happening with your reference points, you understand a lot. I work a lot on *puck*, on the rhythm *pam pam*, I give images so the students understand how the shoulders must be locked in, so that the pelvis can develop lift.

Then, I tell them there is a wall and the shoulders are blocked against the wall so to be able to go above it afterwards. But we can find this (the trajectory of shoulders N/A) in dynamics, by understanding rhythm."

SAMI MAAOUI [4]

Developing listening in students

"I develop many exercises on the apparatus to learn how to understand their partner, which then allows them to begin the direction and the process of technical research. There are also psychomotor issues. For that I work on changing sequences. When you always have the same rhythms and habits, you lose concentration. We work with automatisms and we no longer think. I try to complicate situations starting from simple elements: changing the direction and the order of crossing. We can go up to five or ten moves, then change their order to enable an analysis, a reflection and an adaptation"

YURI SAKALOV [5]

1/2/3/4/5 See list of participants at the INTENTS training session on propulsions, p. 71

Defining and developing an acrobatic presence

By **Arnaud Thomas**, Centre national des arts du cirque, France

When we ask circus artists, actors or directors about the concept of *presence*, it is its mysterious and subjective aspect that is brought forward. This mystery is apparent if we compare the different effects made on the public by two actors for the same role. The same goes for two acrobats performing the same sequence.

Presence is the performer's ability to capture and retain the public's attention. It is the sum of all the qualities of a performance sequence, which will define the level of the acrobat's presence.

The parameters that help to objectify the presence on stage are multiple:

- **Technical mastery** is one of the fundamental elements that allow the interpretation of an acrobatic piece. The mastery of an acrobatic movement is defined by the amplitude of the movement, its difficulty, its complexity, its motor coordination, the balance between its relaxation and its tone, the shape of its trajectory, the awareness and the precision of its behaviour in space and its landing.
- **Originality, singularity, and technical innovations** contribute to the presence of the acrobat

IN THE ARTISTS' WORDS

Presence

"As an artist on stage, my experience is that the benchmarks on my own presence are uncertain and distorted in my perception. By playing shows more than 300 times, I see that my sensation of *presence* during the performances, sometimes corresponds, and sometimes does not correspond to the public appreciation of this said *presence*, indifferently, depending on the evenings. I deduced from this that I could not trust my inner impression of being present. **What is called presence is the strength of the viewer's interest or empathy towards the person (or object) on stage.** This term is often used to vaguely name the mystery that surrounds the magic of what captivates attention, and which has not been fully interrogated (yet)."

MAROUSSIA VERBEKE DIAZ, *circus artist.*

"**The presence of an artist is the ability to reveal the present moment in its intensity** […] If one takes a set of acrobatic figures as a text, one can say that the text is a pipe that would allow the channelling of energy, which would cross this pipe, going from the artist to the public. This energy is awakened invisibly by the inner actions that we make through the figures: going to touch the moon, breaking the ice on the ground beneath which a loved one is imprisoned, breaking a window. These actions, we choose them according to the figures, they are like the profound reason for it."

FRANÇOIS CERVANTES,
author and director of L'entreprise company.
Statements collected in March-April 2016

– The **morphology** of the acrobat draws his/her body in motion and contributes to its presence. The size, weight and shape of the body vary greatly from acrobat to acrobat and generate different qualities of presence. One can push the reasoning until questioning the presence of an elephant on a trampoline!

Watch the video:

https://vimeo.com/76692543

7 tonnes 2, a film by Nicolas Deveaux, 2005.

– Acrobats' awareness of the relationship **between the interior of a sensation and its exterior through movement** is of great importance for their ability to interpret. François Cervantes gives an explanation: "Two people are going to do a jump, the first will come to present the move to the public, the second will come to meet the public, feel this emotion, and perform a jump out of it. These are two very different ways of performing the same move."
– The interactions between writing the qualities within a composition and the acrobats' ability to interpret them will define the level of their presence.
– The **writing and composition** of the sequence will have a decisive influence, especially in all its rhythmic components such as: the holding and the duration of moments of **immobility, accelerations, fluidity** of figures and transition gestures, **accentuations, breaks in rhythm**.
– The **staging of the sequence** completes the **presentation of the proposal**. Scenography, music, silences, the creation of lights and costumes will be associated with **the narrative, conceptual, dramatic, poetic, choreographic or musical sense developed by the circus work**.

The last thing to be taken into account, which characterises the **unobservable and unquantifiable part - the mysterious part -** is the fact that, according to the well-known formula, **the whole represents more than the sum of the parts.**

READINGS

The notion of presence in performing arts

The notion of presence is the subject of much research in the field of performing arts. It is difficult to define it, to understand it… Yet the practitioners often refer to it: is presence a technique, an aura…? Some definitions can be useful to combine the presence of the acrobatic movement with stage presence.

"[…] In the field of the performing arts, more precisely in theatre and dance, the use of the term *presence*, applied to the actor, is coupled with an additional meaning, evoking this time the quality of the actor's presence. A quality that would be characterised by being present in a particular way and would differ from a banal and everyday behaviour. It would then be a matter of *being present*, or even of being in the present, an expression that many directors use with actors. There is already in this *being present* by the actor more than some person's ordinary being. […]
Some directors see in it an exceptional faculty that few posses, whose nature would be elusive. Perceived by others as a state of grace, or as an animal quality, or even as a form of sex appeal, it is also a sexual charm and evokes a force of attraction and a radiance of the person, a power that imposes the breathing rhythm of the actor on the spectator. In any case, it seems to be very related to the personality of the actor and manifests itself essentially in his/her performance."

Excerpt from: Josette Féral (dir.), *Pratiques performatives, body remix*, Presses de l'université du Québec / Presses de l'université de Rennes, 2012, p. 11 and 27.

How to develop the acrobat's presence during learning?

Acrobatic performance is one of the fundamental principles for the writing of circus work. It is related to the complexity and difficulty of the figure. More important than the difficulty, the level of mastery with which the figures are made is paramount. The notion of virtuosity radically changes the perception of a movement by the public. In aerial acrobatics, there are several facets: height, amplitude of the trajectory, release, the effectiveness of the actions of rotation, the absence of interfering gestures that would counteract the movement, the flexibility and accuracy of landings. All these parameters intervene and combine, which is why a simple jump that unites all these qualities becomes more impressive than a triple jump performed in a mediocre way.

- **Increasing the physical qualities of strength and flexibility** By training in the discipline and with specific physical preparation one can make figures and sequences with more speed, power and height, which naturally highlights the performance.
- **The easier the acrobatic movement seems to be, the more the apparent release of the body emphasises the ease of the aerial acrobatics** and the greater is the impression made on the spectator. Once the student has worked through the stages and gained confidence for a new element, they arrive at a point wherethey are released from focusing only on the technical aspects thus they give the impression of control and freedom.
- **The moment of suspension generated by the opening of tucks, pikes or pucks is a key moment in the development of the jumps**. It is also the place where you can add twists to increase the difficulty of the exercise. This moment is very visible for the viewer in contrast to the speed of rotation of the jumps where the body tends to disappear behind the acceleration. **Everything that makes this moment of extension of the body alive and open gives presence and ease of interpretation of the figure**.
- **The awareness of the dead spot at the top of the trajectory is related to the quality of the openings**. This is the moment when the movement slows down. This is a particularly visible moment for the public. Made with gestures which are only directed upwards, this is part of the illusion of hanging in the air, a frozen image. It seems to increase the length of this "dead spot" at the top and tend towards a moment of weightlessness.
- **From the first technical acquisitions**, students can be faced with the creation of sequences in a search for meaning and thus make a direct link with the objective of presenting themselves to the public. The quality and artistic potential of a simple straight jump can be observed and differentiated at all stages from beginner to expert.

The acrobat's virtuosity is an additional support to develop movement and acrobatic presence. Virtuosity must not only be considered as technical excellence but rather as **the students' ability to reinvent the framework in which they evolve.**

The virtuosity is not only spectacular, it also qualifies a performer whose finesse of movement meets the artistic demand, whether he/she is motionless on stage or capable of the most difficult figures.

By integrating this dimension into the course, **one also trains the ability to adapt** to the students. **They can become interpreters of their technique.**

There, the body is at the entire service of the feeling I am trying to achieve, it is a tool of my vision.

IN THE ARTISTS' WORDS

"What I look for is a state of suspension in the body. Reaching a light point where the body remains still and hangs in the air. The suspension is an interruption of the ascending movement. It means working on tension, release, even a certain form of violence depending on the position in which the body is suspended, depending on the figure, the image that is created in the air. In my small dances on the trampoline, there must not be any unreliable movement. There, the body is at the entire service of the feeling I am trying to achieve, it is a tool of my vision."

Mathurin Bolze, circus artist, *MPTA Company*.
Danse, *Arts de la piste*, n°23, January 2002, p. 26.

TEACHING PRACTICES

Technical work to develop a presence
Guidelines and technical corrections become artistic guidelines if they are related to the concept of presence. It is the link between the **'how to do it'** (for example keeping the shoulders fixed in the rising trajectory) with the **'why to do it'** (to achieve a better trajectory and a better presence.) **It is thus possible to have a permanent to and fro between technical construction and artistic construction in the learning process.**

Some pedagogical instructions, which appear to be purely technical, actually serve the future acrobatic performer's ability to project presence directly:

- **Going up into a figure**. Directing all actions for the creation of somersaults and twists in an upward vertical trajectory.
- **Directing all parts of the body in the direction of rotation**. Actions that are more effective, require less force and show an ease of muscle use. The interfering gestures are suppressed, which makes the gesture more fluid, more easily interpreted and therefore more present.
- **Holding their legs to create and drive the rotations**. Beyond an aesthetic that could be described as gymnastics, it is the possibility of acting effectively with the lower body to launch and drive somersaults and twists releasing the upper body for the benefit of the trajectory.
- **Knowing the position of their hands and feet** for the duration of a figure**.** To be conscious of its extremities means not only having access to the body's shape in space, and therefore what it represents, but also to be able to verify that it is the legs that initiate and control the movement, and that there is no other superfluous movement.

Far from being a fixed format, it is the precision and the quality of the fundamental technical principles in somersaults and twists that will be the best enabler for creation. **Rather than being opposites, technique allows creativity in the circus, especially in aerial acrobatics where the creation of every figure is translated in terms of technical vocabulary.**

READINGS

The acrobatic figure and virtuosity: between mastery and adaptation

High-level training aims to transform the movement's complex skills into virtuosity. It is the greatest skill, the ability to modulate in all possible nuances and variations. It allows you to play with the range of a figure, its speed, rhythm, duration and intensity. The greatest possible complexity is sought. […]

This ability to bring qualitative and quantitative differences to the realisation of a sequence of figures, according to their intentions, emotions, and the visual or mental representations of their actions, is the virtuoso's skill. The virtuoso can adapt to all circumstances, work in diverse environments without this disrupting his/her abilities.

Excerpt from: Philippe Goudard, *Le cirque entre l'élan et la chute*, Éditions espaces 34, 2010, p. 31.

In summary…

- It is the **wealth of vocabulary** that will allow the richness of the compositions and the unfolding of possible interpretations. This underlines the importance of receiving a **thorough and progressive teaching** method that covers the important field of trampoline figures.
- It is **the way in which moves and sequences** are mastered that will give the artist the potential of an acrobatic presence on the stage.
- **The higher the level of mastery, the more rich and varied the technical vocabulary, the greater the freedom to deviate from the acquired form**. The freedom of interpretation and the possibilities of creation increase with the level of awareness of the gesture.
- **From the first technical acquisitions**, students can be faced with writing and composition of acrobatic sequences in a search for meaning.

Artistic research on propulsion pieces of equipment

From improvisation to staging

The training of artistic and expressive qualities of movement in the course of technical learning does not only concern the qualities of the movement or the performer's presence but also the **artistic research around the apparatus and figures.**

The **research on the apparatus** will allow one to refine the perception of the movement and its rhythm as well as other supporting principles. Aside from trampoline and the other propulsion discipline, this training on sensation can also be done with the partner (s). It is therefore a collective research, hence the importance of the trust relationships mentioned above.

The freedom offered by circus allows one to make numerous inventions, once the technique is absolutely mastered and safe. By giving qualitative variations to the movement, by working on presence and developing their creativity, the acrobats "transcend" the movement and give it another dimension.

This dimension is used during technical learning, particularly in the search for unique movements and new sensations.
Several questions can be addressed to students in order to guide this research:

- How to enter and exit a figure?
- How to change rhythm and scope?
- How can one feel the "urgency" of movement, a state and a reason?
- How to deconstruct the expected movement?
- How to play with gravity and other forces on (in) the air?
- How to work on the relationship with the partner, the apparatus and the public
- How to develop one's own relationship with play and define one's identity in relation to the equipment and / or the partner?

Finally, it is a matter of developing **creativity,** starting from a known and mastered technical language.

Creativity can be defined as an intellectual ability characterised by the ability to consider a wide range of solutions to a problem, to produce new shapes, to imagine new, original combinations of elements to be developed which leads to a unique production.

This creative technique training can be done in different ways by way of **improvisation, composition**, or by asking questions related to the **staging**. Which from a didactic point of view amounts to proposing to the student to cover three roles in the pedagogical device that can be thus delineated?

- **The role of the interpreter**:
  developing the qualities and expressiveness of movement, for example through improvisation
- **The role of the author**:
  developing the skill to organise movement, its internal logic and dynamics in space
- **The role of the spectator**:
  to be able to observe in other's or in one's own practice the elements of staging, dramaturgy, or what creates meaning in the acrobatic act.

These three roles can be implemented during the same session or be the subject of different sessions. They may also allow, where necessary, the alleviation of the physical burden through working for example, on composition or observation.

TOWARDS IMPROVISATION

Improvisation is a gateway to develop creativity, to feel free in technique and create another relationship with the technical code, performance and virtuosity. The improvisation allows one to explore the qualities of the **interpreter**.

- To stimulate creativity in teaching, **some time must be devoted to researching new movements, new axes of rotation deviating from somersaults and twists**. In order to do this, it is necessary to broaden the sessions' composition between classical learning and the research of new forms.
- **The improvisation work can be introduced using the space of the trampoline's bed as a play area**. Carrying out research on meaning starting from movements or combinations of acrobatic gestures or, conversely, searching for movements from an idea, a sensation, a story, a way of moving, a piece of music etc can be the doorway.

Watch an example:

Mathurin Bolze, Louis Sclavis, Elise Dabrowski - La Voix est Libre, 2013
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfV53yHKD48
Mathurin Bolze (trampoline), Louis Sclavis (clarinet) and Elise Dabrowski (voice and double bass) improvise within the *La voix est libre* event, at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, Paris, France, May 2013.

IN THE ARTISTS' WORDS

On the rebound

The trampoline becomes a way of exploring a new state of the world where one climbs the walls and walks upside down as if nothing had happened: "We are no longer in normality or order," says Mathurin Bolze. "The relationship with one's body in a space that is upside down is a way of questioning the real, of extracting one self from it. For example, juggling on the trampoline with a bottle of water and showing it in weightlessness creates a sense of freedom. A new time opens up, a mental and physical space too, with very different body states. The spectator is invited to share an intimate narration that frees itself from ordinary logic to bring forth irrationality. Against the logic of performance, it is that of the dream that prevails. But the trampoline itself is nothing; basically, it is not the important thing.

Mathurin Bolze, circus artist, *MPTA company*. Statements collected by Rosita Boisseau in *Arts de la piste*, n°31, March 2004, p. 40.

The improvisation work also allows one to change habits and to put into play another type of cognitive work:

- How does one learn how to work on **breathing awareness**? How can we add anything else to the usual sequences like **singing or speaking**? These tools will reduce the stress on physical exertion, while remaining within technical mastery.
- We can also start from **very simple and well-known exercises**: from three very simple figures, students will have to look for three ways to enter and exit the figure and three ways to link the movements between them. They will use their technique but may twist the codes.

READINGS

What is improvisation? Between known and unknown.

The interpreter who improvises goes back and forth between the known and the unknown, between what is familiar and reliable and what can not be anticipated or foreseen," explains Susan Foster in an article on the links between the body and mind in improvisation.
What is "known", she says, is the framework of improvisation, the number of people and space; this may be a partition or some rules. There is also a "known" implicit or unconscious knowledge of the interpreter: his/her way of moving, the techniques he/she has incorporated, a tradition, a placement of the body, a kinaesthetic sensation, a physical pattern. The interpreter knows what has just happened. "**The unknown," she continues, "is precisely that and more. It is what was unimaginable before, which we never thought of doing afterwards. Improvising forces us to go beyond or elsewhere, to pull ourselves out of what is known.**

Source: David Gere and Ann Cooper-Albright (dir.), *Taken by surprise: A dance improvisation reader*, Weyselan University Press, 2003, Article by Susan Foster, "Improvisation in dance and mind", pp. 3-4.

IN THE ARTISTS' WORDS

Improvisation, writing and repertoire

Improvisation work allows one to explore different tracks. Artists must be technically free in the improvisation research because they can easily replace a single backward somersault with a double when creating the act. Improvisation work based on an idea, a piece of music or a painting will always lead to interesting things; allow us to leave the beaten tracks, to provoke the unexpected, to emancipate oneself.
Sometimes the improvisation is the final show. Artists must then be aware that this will require a strong commitment whenever they perform in public. Any artist experiencing moments of fatigue or weakness and not being able to rely on a written score in those moments can result in a poor performance or even putting himself/herself in danger. Experience can mitigate these risks because it allows artists to master the scenic presence and the artistic purpose.

Unlike dance, circus does not have a written system of notation. During the various creations, I was faced with this question: how could one find a sequence of movements that serves the dramaturgy? When should I favour notation over improvisation? Should my act on the trampoline be different if it's at the beginning or the end of the show? Who am I before mounting the trampoline? These questions are obviously related to the artistic direction of the project and artists cannot be monotonous in their physical and emotional vocabulary. Note-taking thus becomes a good way of carrying out precise work, on the rhythm and quality of movement. It can also help to focus on the artist and his/her interpretation.

Excerpts from Gaëtan Lévêque's présentation,
Circus artist and artistic director, Compagnie AOC
INTENTS training session on propulsions, Berlin, March 2016.

TOWARDS COMPOSITION

The propulsion equipment offers a wealth of options in terms of **composing sequences**.
In traditional circus, there is an action dramaturgy placed on an act. The dramaturgy lies on sharing emotions with the public and the composition allows one to play with these emotions. Working on a **circus composition** allows one to tackle the question of technique differently, by becoming aware of the options offered by the apparatus, by the mastery of figures and their sequencing, or working in a team.

The figure is no longer an objective in itself, it becomes an element of language at the service of creating a piece of work.
Let's take the example of the teeterboard

- On the teeterboard one can work on the poetry of balance of an object, of two partners and thus play with the consequences of imbalance in a sequence.
- The teeterboard can show very different qualities and body states in the same sequence since the acrobats on the teeterboard have both the ability to be in a state of tension or relaxation. The body state will already provide many elements of interpretation: it is the difference between a relaxed and a tight somersault.
- Finally, the Korean teeterboard, for example, allows many changes of direction, as well as different compositions in the air. Moreover, the fact that the acrobats on the teeterboard are without a lunge often allows a greater freedom of movement than on other apparatus.

The same applies to other propulsion techniques, with or without apparatus (banquine, for example). In the end, the creation process is a way of organising a physical matter, alone or with others.

– Questions regarding propulsion can also be tackled in a group, especially including playing with taking alternate turns, or role exchange between bases and flyers (found in Korean teeterboard). This dimension can be explored on the floor, with improvisation exercises that make it possible to train these alternating turns and exchanges.

Watch an example:

Compagnie XY, *Il n'est pas encore minuit*, 2014
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fV2sIEq0d4A
In its work, the XY Company explores the issue of a collective. Listening and trust in the group. The role exchanges are at the heart of the artistic process as we can see in the show *Il n'est pas encore minuit* (2014) where the possibilities offered by the group are trained for bases and propulsions.

Moreover, in order to work on composition whilst learning the technical aspects of propulsion disciplines, one can also borrow the composition methods from the choreographic field, which will be adapted to the type of apparatus:

– **Repetition**: doing an action several times, a phrase
– **Accumulation**: repeat a sequence of movements by adding a different movement each time (a, a + b, a + b + c, a + b + c + d…)
– **Opposites**: what you do on the right side or facing front, you do on the left or facing back…
– **Transposition**: perform the same figure at different heights
– **Demolition**: deconstructing a sequence and creating a new one
– **Combination**: to make associations of different elements each time, to give different orders of succession.
– **The juxtaposition**: putting different elements next to each other (two movement phrases or two gestures) without worrying about the link between them
– **The amplification**: to play on the amplitude of a gesture, its intensity or the number of acrobats concerned by the same action
– **The simplification**: to purify the movement to retain only one characteristic

On the trampoline, for example, because of the repetition of the rebound, the combinations are very numerous and the composition can really bring another dimension to the technical gesture.

Watch an example:

Compagnie Yoann Bourgeois, Fugue / Trampoline, 2011
https://vimeo.com/125609574
In his work on fugues with *La Fugue Trampoline* (2011), on a musical score by Phillip Glass, Yoann Bourgeois explores multiple variations of the same movement, playing with the repetition of the rebound on the trampoline and on the hanging/fall cycle.

IN THE ARTISTS' WORDS

The point of suspension

"The point of suspension that we speak about and that interests us is to be understood in a broader sense. Fundamentally it is a jugglers' notion to define this precise moment, this instant, when the object they launched into the air reaches the highest point of the curve, just before it falls. It is a voluptuous place where the weight disappears, and a perfect balance of forces is present. For me, the main challenge of any show is that 'something happens'. This 'happens' should not equal 'I do' something. That 'something' is always a little mysterious. So I'm trying to set the conditions in order for something to happen. And this research is directly linked with this point of suspension."

Yoann Bourgeois, circus artist, *Compagnie Yoann Bourgeois, co-director of the National Choreography Centre in Grenoble.*
Statements collected by Christiane Dampne for *Mouvement.net*, 2011

TEACHING PRACTICES

Arnaud Thomas, specialised teacher in aerial and propulsion disciplines, *Centre national des arts du cirque, France.*

Figure and composition

A double backward tucked somersault or piked open at 12 o'clock, meaning the feet pointing up in the air, the head pointing down, at the peak of the trajectory following a strong rotatory acceleration, will be more appreciated by the public than a triple somersault with little height, a constant rotation speed, which is just enough, with a late opening towards the ground. It is also likely that it will be difficult for a layperson to distinguish the number of somersaults. And if one introduces twists with these somersaults, it will be even more difficult to judge the number, and to notice a bad landing from a complex figure.

Apart from the quantifiable and objective difficulty of the movement, it is clear that it is the quality of its shape, its virtuosity, which will give it its circus value.

The composition and the choice of the figures of an acrobatic combination will directly influence its ease of interpretation. For example, a very classic trampolining sequence will demonstrate the handling of backward somersaults without twists:

1. Tucked somersault
2. Tucked double-somersault
3. Piked somersault
4. Piked double-somersault
5. Layout/straight
6. Double layout/double straight

Very clear, very easy to interpret, very visual.

Like a progression of twists on a simple somersault that focuses on reading twists by adding a half twist to each somersault:

1. Straight back
2. Barani (front somersault + ½ twist)
3. Backward somersault with full twist
4. Rudy (front somersault + 1 ½ twists)
5. Backward somersault with 2 twists
6. Randy (front somersault + 2 ½ twists)
7. Backward somersault with 3 twists

All these elements contribute to work of a technical nature but also help with artistic development, quality and ease of interpretation of what is being shown.

TOWARDS THE STAGING

Finally, there is the question of **staging**. Developing the perspective of the spectator allows one to gauge what is at stake and the place of the propulsion apparatus on a stage and imagining what the meaning of an acrobatic act could be.

Far from being a fixed artistic and cultural form, the circus has always been open to influences of feats of various origins. The circus arts always renewed itself when coming in to contact with other inventions and expressions. Thus, even in disciplines with high risk and high level of technical mastery, **fusion** and **innovation** are possible.

From a dramaturgical point of view, the act of flying is already a very strong one on the stage and the student can quickly assess it.

Acrobatics is indeed a **dramaturgy of action**, where little mediation is possible, especially in techniques where physical engagement and risk-taking are important.

We can thus envisage several questions to ask in this "spectators" experience regarding staging:

- Which **relationship(s)** do the acrobats have between them? What is the **dramaturgic** work developed: benevolence, a form of violence on the act of flying, fear, fun etc..?
- Why is the body "sent in the air"? What do we seek through this act: an overcoming, leaving something, seeking a mental or physical transformation?
- Is the internal state the same after acrobatics? How to make it appear on stage if we want to communicate it?
- What does the equipment represent on the stage? What is its place in relation to the acrobats?
- What dynamics is involved in performing the acrobatic act? For example, it is not the same thing to start from a pedestal to propel the acrobat or to run along the stage to land on the teeterboard.

Here we propose to illustrate these creative concepts by using some examples in which the work on propulsion and the apparatus enable the artist to approach technical work in a different way.

- The apparatus and its place in space are sources of invention and the development of creativity. We can create new uses or invent new propulsion equipment, which are also good ways of stimulating acrobatic creativity.

Watch an example:

19th year group of Centre national des arts du cirque de Châlons-en-Champagne, *Une part de nous*, 2008, au Festival CIRCa, Auch, France

www.cnac.tv/cnactv-249-Une_part_de_nous___CIRCa_2008

The use of a trebuchet, a Medieval war weapon becomes a propulsion apparatus in Odilon Pindat's work (around 1'32''), *Une part de nous*, 19th intake of the Centre national des arts du cirque in Châlons-en-Champagne at the CIRCa festival, Auch, France, 2008.

Watch an example:

Cirque Inextremiste, *Extension*, 2015

https://vimeo.com/146112438

For Cirque in extremis, a mechanical digger on the stage becomes a propulsion apparatus in *Extension* (2015). The research on the apparatus opens up a research on the body whose technique has changed and has to be reinvented.

We can work on issues of space: for example playing with the trampoline and the wall, adding objects to the trampoline, reflecting on the very format of the apparatus (around trampoline for example) to use it differently. The trampoline bed becomes a space to play in.

Watch an example:

Compagnie Les Hommes Penchés, Espèces, 2004

http://www.leshommespenches.com/especes

In *Espèces* (2004) by the company Les Hommes Penchés, the staging includes two trampolines: one on the floor, the other hung on the back wall, like an open box, that lets the body bounce. This mirror effect creates a space for playing that is both circular and vertical. The trampoline becomes an object that we go through, on which we bounce to go elsewhere.

In the staging process, pieces of propulsion equipment are also part of a general dramaturgy. The presence of a trampoline on stage can be a vector of meaning or an emotion. The rebound on a trampoline or the propulsion of a teeterboard are powerful actions on a stage. How, then, can one integrate them in the continuity of a show, how can these pieces of equipment bring another level of interpretation of a show?

Watch an example:

Le GdRA, Nour, 2009
https://vimeo.com/31897402
In the documenting research carried out by GdRA for *Nour* (2009), the rebound takes the relay from words in a questioning about identity (around 2'05''). The relentless repetition brings about a loss of reference points, raises questions and shows a type of urgency or an impossibility. There are many body states which are another way of "saying" but above all "feeling" what is revealed by the documenting work carried out for this show.

A device such as the teeterboard immediately creates a dramaturgical situation where imbalance can occur at any moment. When the apparatus becomes an integral part of a set, the acrobatic act is inserted in the progression of an idea, a journey. It is no longer just a propulsion apparatus, it becomes an actor in absurd, funny, strange situations.

Watch an example:

Collectif de la bascule,
Rien n'est moins sûr (mais c'est une piste), 2012
https://vimeo.com/85336314
For the Collectif de la bascule, even if the teeterboard has a central place in the name of the company, it is part of the universe of the show, like an element of staging or narration. The teeterboard projects the body in the air but the object itself can have different functions. This is how working on an object can open up new perspectives in creative work, especially in *Rien n'est moins sûr (mais c'est une piste)*, (2012).

Watch an example:

Baro d'evel Cirk, *Betchout',* 2003
http://www.rueetcirque.fr/app/photopro.sk/hlm/detail?docid=208701
Baro d'evel Cirk sees the teeterboard in *Betchout'* (2003) as a poetic element. Jumps and flights allow one to escape from reality and transform it. Without necessarily looking for the feat, the propulsion gives a breather or an escape in the narration.

Pieces of propulsion equipment also transmit the spectacular, which can lead to an interrogation on the performance, the virtuosity and the invention of all forms of propulsion.

Watch an example:

Race Horse Company, *Super Sunday*, 2015
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wzu2c2Qfcvg
In its show *Super Sunday* (2015), Race Horse Company constantly tries to push as high as possible, regardless of the apparatus or propulsion methods used. The collective exploit the use of risk at the heart of its dramaturgy and questions pieces of propulsion equipment to show which purpose they serve, playing with the emotion provoked by the somersaults – real body transformation tools.

The notion of propulsion is part of the poetic language of the circus. It can also be considered in different forms and be translated with other means other than the body. A creative work of artistic research can then be carried out around the idea of propulsion: a body part, an object, oneself or another.

Watch an example:

Collectif AOC, Question de directions, 2005
http://collectifaoc.com/spectacles/question-de-directions/
In *Question de directions* (2005), it is not just the body being propelled, but all sorts of objects. While the trampoline already has an important place in acrobatic language and staging developed in the previous act, *La syncope du 7*, the machinery imagined in this new piece of work asks fundamental questions like what is a propulsion, its unforeseeable part and surprising transformation of bodies and objects propelled.

IN THE ARTISTS' WORDS

Scenography

Scenography is a central element of the circus creation. The presence of equipment on the stage imposes a reflection on the organisation of space. For equipment which is hard to move one can try to build around it or give it an important place on the stage. Taking these pieces of equipment into account can lead creators to reinventing disciplines.

The anticipation of the construction of the scenography offers acrobats the chance of bringing these objects to life – there is nothing worse than seeing an omnipresent object being poorly exploited!
Johann Le Guillerm made it the central axis of his artistic project, with the object itself becoming a work of art. The choice of a scenographer for a creation is difficult. He/she must be able to understand the technical constraints as well as the space requirements related to circus practices. Scenographer, decorator, builder, engineer - how to put together all these trades? The scenography remains a strong dramaturgic tool and supports the artist during the creation.

Staging acrobatic practices

The propulsion disciplines have the distinctive feature of being rich in possibilities for the director. They offer speed, height, flexibility, changes of direction and also tension. They evoke a spirit of freedom linked to the lack of lunge and the distance imposed by the equipment like the teeterboard, the swing or any other equipment that allows the viewer to approach the dream of every man: flying.

The downside of circus sometimes is the desire to explain everything. Too much story telling can lead to an overlapping of layers that plunges the viewer into a superficial story, detaching the spectator and the artist from all subtleties.
The acrobat's physical state gives many indications, a relaxed jump does not express the same thing as a tense one. Regardless of the number of jumps, finding the right identity for the project is the most important.

Statements extracted from Gaëtan Lévêque's presentation,
Circus artist and artistic director, Compagnie AOC
INTENTS training session on propulsions, Berlin, March 2016.

Shows that have the trampoline, teeterboard or any other form of propulsion apparatus on stage allow us to envisage the **different uses of the equipment and techniques** from a **dramaturgical and scenographic** perspective, in order to approach the musicality or the poetics of the gesture in a different way and question the **creative process** in the propulsive disciplines.

Observing these stagings can thus also constitute **a pedagogical tool or a source of information** for a creative approach of the technique.
We can try to identify:
- The movement qualities
- The relationship with music
- Work in space
- Intentions within the body
- Handling time and rhythm
- Developing a sequence
- Awakening the sense(s)

Therefore, developing an observers **competence** and **learning how to look** at circus arts including within the technical course, are part of the artist-technician's knowledge. These skills help us to better understand movement from the physical point of view and to consider it artistically.

READINGS

Developing the “spectator’s” role during learning. Another way of observing movement

The value given to an object, a gesture, a performance is related to social contexts. What are called social contexts. What is called “artistic value” in gymnastics is thus not of the same order because it is not on the same scale as what one might expect from a circus or contemporary dance performance: body cultures, the social uses of space, time, music, objects or devices are not the same, and the meaning given to a performance differs. There are, of course, many similarities between artistic and gymnastic activities: putting the body into play involves a projection towards the gaze of another person; the student composes; the spectator is led to experience emotions and to appreciate what is on show. The appreciation of the gymnastic activities is done through the measurement of noted performances. […]

To engage students in a creative process relies on their commitment to the “game”, to the meaning of acting as a playful device, starting from constraints on different drivers (space, time, images, texts, ambiance…). Respecting the instructions will mean knowing how to turn a constraint into a driver to create. The students-”spectators” must then learn to develop in heterogeneous appreciation frameworks and to qualify what they appreciate according to these frameworks which are sometimes foreign to each other; when they need to track a technical fault, on the one hand, or play with their faults and exploit their mistakes, on the other hand.

Excerpt from Magali Sizorn,
“Sous le regard de l’autre: voir, observer et évaluer”,
in: Betty Lefèvre (dir.), *L’artistique*, Éditions EPS, 2016, pp. 105-121.

In summary…

- What happens before and after an aerial acrobatic moment has a strong influence on the continuity of interpretation of the moving body. The **dramaturgical, choreographic, poetic or musical** qualities of creation will give more or less emphasis to purely acrobatic moments. This is fundamental for propulsion disciplines, such as the Hungarian teeterboard, where the time spent in the air amounts to seconds in a whole show on this specialty.
- Beyond technical mastery and intention in the gesture, **all the elements of the composition** influence at one level or another the perception of the acrobat’s presence by the audience: sets, costumes, lights, music, silences, rhythm, etc.
- Without starting an actual staging process, **improvisations, composition** work or the **observation** of show excerpts are all gateways to creativity.

CONCLUSION

In circus, in physical and artistic disciplines where risk-taking and commitment are important, exchanges and the sharing of knowledge are particularly important. As the circus arts continue to develop on the current stages, techniques are evolving and embracing an increasing number of fields. Taking stock of the variety of teaching approaches also enables us to reflect on developments in the teaching of circus techniques. While teaching methodologies are often empirical, they are not less shareable because of it. The various reflections collected here, resulting from the training session, made it possible to have an overview of the current situation but also to question the practices. It is their diversity that makes them rich and it is in the exchange of ideas that one arrives at common definitions. The technique is then nourished by an artistic sensibility and, conversely, the creativity of movement is also tied into the complexity and the mastery of the techniques.

The themes explored here reflect the work done by FEDEC on the key skills of young professional circus artists as part of the MIROIR[1] project. The skills identified in this study are physical, theoretical, creative, analytical, organisational and more generally artistic. The work carried out within the framework of INTENTS with the teachers of different European circus schools shows to what extent the interweaving of these competences is at the heart of their pedagogical reflections and to what extent it is essential to favour a global or holistic vision of the circus arts students, regardless of whether they intend to pursue a professional career.

If these notions are known to everyone and may seem trivial, questioning them means asking questions about the circus language. It is attempting to grasp what they mean “in the body”, in the intimacy of each practice and what is at stake in transmission. To question oneself about the parameters or principles of the movement that are internalised, is handing over the work back into the profession, to question the teachers’ practice and their knowledge, anchored in the body.

The different themes explored are, above all, points of reflection intended to arouse curiosity, to lay the foundations for a more global reflection and to awaken the desire to explore certain themes. For this reason, it was decided to leave the questions open, as discussed at INTENTS. The tools, testimonies and readings presented here are in no way prescriptive and are not intended to act as recipes. Rather, they are materials, ingredients, to be prepared or mixed, perhaps, inventing new tools and passing them on. We are therefore very grateful to those who contributed to the development of these reflections by their input and their testimonies, and it is our hope that other professors, artists and students will continue to fuel the debates. Departing from the INTENTS session or navigating the reflections, experiences and testimonies gathered here, how can we rethink our practice, question our movements, have a broader vision and keep advancing?

1 FEDEC, MIROIR project, Second part. Analysis of key skills of young professional circus artists, 2009.
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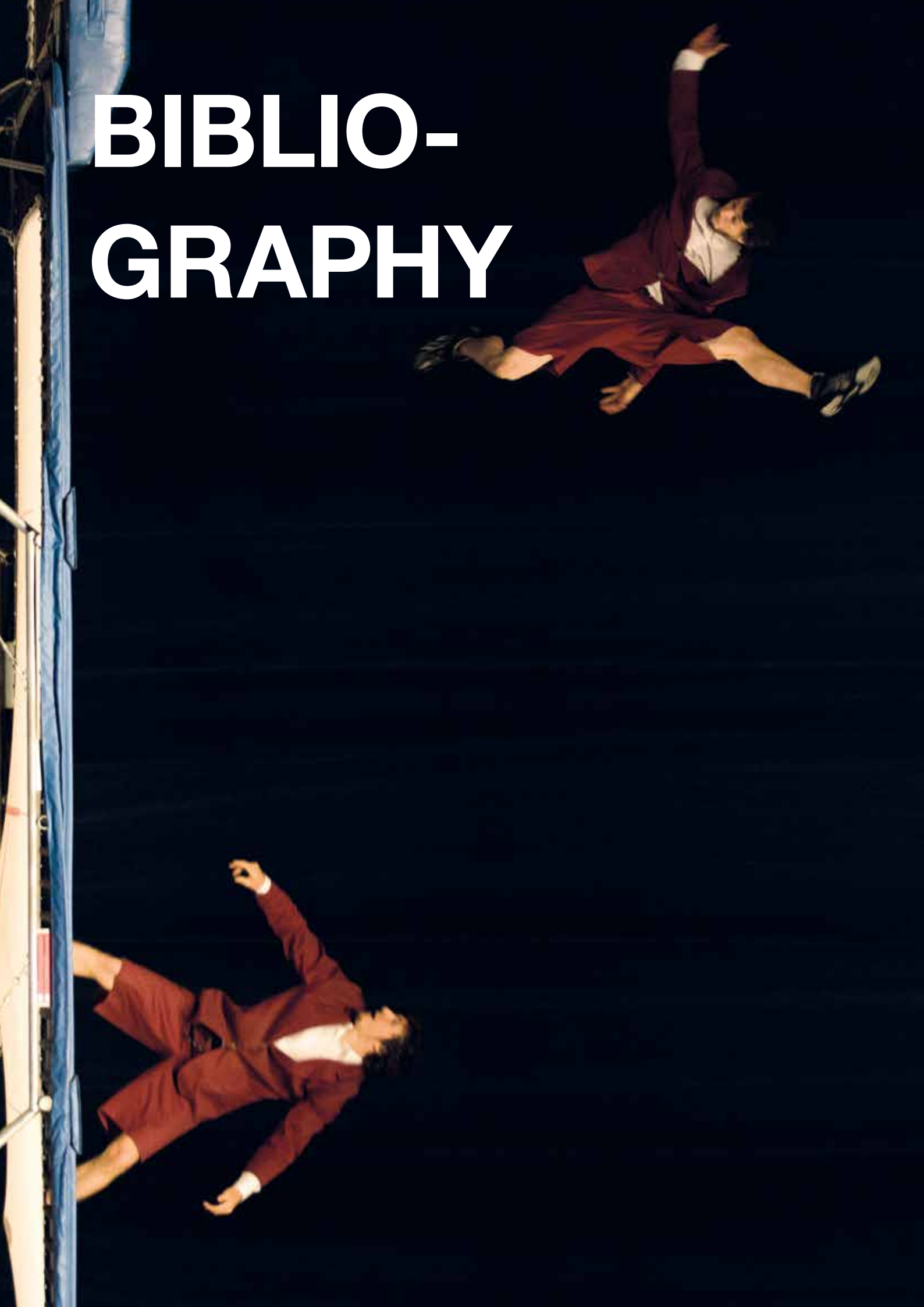

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It is not comprehensive but simply offers some ideas for reflection on the basis of various readings.

ANNEXES

By **Arnaud Thomas**, Centre National des Arts du Cirque, France

TRAMPOLINE'S TERMINOLOGY

Of American origin, the trampoline terminology is a system that can describe all the double and triple rotations in somersaults taking off and landing with the feet.

Simple somersaults:

Back = backward somersault
Half = backward somersault + ½ twist
Full = full twisting straightback somersault
2 full = double back somersault with full twist
Front = forward somersault
Barani = forward somersault + ½ twist
Rudy = forward somersault + 1 ½ twists
Randy = forward somersault + 2 ½ twists
Ady = forward somersault + 3 ½ twists

Once the name of the simple somersault has been determined, the convention is to add "in" for the first somersault and "out" for the second one. Thanks to this, any double somersault with at least one half twist can be named. They are the fliffus which constitute the **Barani out and the Rudy out system.**

Examples:

Front in Barani out = a double front somersault with a half twist in the second (Abbreviation = out!)
Back in full out = double back somersault with a full twist in the second.
Barani in full out = double front somersault with half twist and a full twist in the second
Full in Full out = a double back somersault with a full twist in each somersault
An exception: Half in Half out should have been called Half in Barani out
Half in rudy out = double back somersault with half twist in the first with a double back somersault with one and a half twists in the second
To name the triple rotations, the **Triffis**, we can add "middle" for the second somersault or simply line up the names of each of the three somersaults.
A triple forward somersault with a twist in the second somersault and a half-twist in the last one becomes Front in Full middle Barani out or, more simply put, Front Full Barani.
The famous backward triple somersault with a full twist in each is therefore called full in full middle full out and becomes the **Full Full Full**.

SOME FIGURES AND ROUTINES

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
Tuck jump, straddle jump, piked jump	Front-drop, to stand	¾ back, piked, straight
Seat bounce to stand	½ twist to back, ½ twist to stand	Forward somersault with ½ twist tucked, piked
Seat bounce, ½ twist to stand	½ twist to front-drop to stand	Barani puck, straight
Seat bounce, ½ twist to seat bounce	Pull over to 4 point kneel	Backward somersault to back pull over to front
½ twist to seat bounce, ½ twist to stand	Pull over to front	Double cat twist
Bouncing in 4 point kneeling	Back-drop ½ twist to back-drop (Cradle)	Pull over full twist to front
4 point kneel, front drop, 4 point kneel	Pull over ½ twist to back	Front Cody
Seat bounce, front drop	Backdrop full twist to backdrop (Cat twist)	Porpoise full twist early puck
Backdrop, to stand	Full twist to backdrop	Porpoise full twist late puck
Backdrop, ½ twist to stand	Backdrop 1 ½ twists to backdrop (Corkscrew)	Crash dive to tucked and piked Barani ball out
Seat bounce, ½ twist to back	Back pull over to back	½ twist crash dive
Back bounce	Back-drop to front somersault to back-drop (Porpoise/bounce-roll)	Back somersault full twist
Pull over	Front-drop ½ twist to front-drop	Crash dive full twist
	Frontdrop full twist to back	Barani to back pull over
	Back somersault tucked, piked, straight	Front somersault to front-drop, tucked and piked
	¾ straight front somersault (crashdive)	Front somersault with ½ twist tucked and piked
	Front somersault tucked, piked	
	Back somersault to back pull over tucked and piked.	

BASIC ROUTINES:

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2
Tucked jump	½ twist to back-drop
Seat bounce	½ twist to front-drop
½ twist to seat bounce	Tucked jump
½ twist to seat bounce	½ twist to seat bounce
Straddle jump	½ twist to stand
Front-drop	Straddle jump
Standing	½ twist to front-drop
Back-drop	Stand
½ twist to stand	Pike jump
Pike jump	Tucked jump

SERIES OF SOMERSAULTS (BOLLINGER):

- 2,3 then 5 linked tucked back somersaults
- 2,3 then 5 linked piked back somersaults
- 2,3 then 5 linked straight back somersaults
- Back somersault tucked, piked, straight, Barani, backward somersault tucked, piked, straight.
- Back somersault tucked, piked, straight, Barani, back somersault piked, barani, back somersault straight, barani, full twisting back somersault.
- Back somersault tucked, barani, full twist, Rudolph, 2 full twists.
- Back somersault tucked, double back somersault tucked, piked, double piked, straight, double straight.

THE BARANI OUT SYSTEM AND PREPARATORY EXERCISES

Forward

- Tucked and piked front somersault to front
- 1 ¾ tucked and piked front somersault
- **Barani out** tucked and piked (double front + ½ twist)
- Barani to back in puck
- Barani to back + ½ twist front in puck
- Barani to back + ½ twist front + pass the head arrive on back in puck
- Barani to back + ½ twist front + pass the head + ½ twist stand = **Barani in full out in puc**k (double front ¾ twist in 1st somersault - ¾ of twist in the second somersault)

This move and its preparatory exercise are also performed in straight position or very slightly piked.

Backward

- ½ twist front somersault to front
- ½ twist 1 ¾ front somersault land on back
- ½ twist double front ½ twist = **half in half out**
- The second somersault is a barani.

This move and its preparatory exercises are also performed in a piked position.

- Back somersault + ½ twist land on front in puck
- Back somersault + ½ twist land on front + going over the head landing on back in puck
- Back somersault + ½ twist land on front + barani = **back in full out in puck**
- Double back somersault ¼ twist in the first ¾ twist in the second.

This move and its preparatory exercises are also performed in a straight position.

- Back somersault with full twist + ½ twist land on front in puck
- Back somersault + ½ twist to front + going over the head landing on back in puck
- Back somersault + ½ twist to front + barani puck = **full in full out in puck**
- Double back somersault a 1/4 twist in the 1st somersault, ¾ twist in the second.

This move and its preparatory exercises are also executed in straight position or by going through the pike position before ½ twist in the second somersault.

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FROM TECHNICAL MOVEMENT TO ARTISTIC GESTURE

THE TRAMPOLINE, TRAINING SUPPORT FOR PROPULSION

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