Savoring Spatial Negotiations
Using choreographic research to enhance our appreciation of – and ability to create – inviting environments
Choreographic research:
Responding to spatial circumstances and others in real time
Exploring one’s environment through positions and simple actions expressive of relationship
A toolkit for making choices:
- Space
- Time
- Form
- Gesture
- Movement
- Setting

Spatial Relationship Score

Beginning from simplicity of grid organization:
In order to discover the resonance and significance
- place
- location
- genius loci

Baseline Practice:
- the balance of awareness to peripheral boundary and other
- focus and presence in dialogue with position and movement
- observe your choice making process - impulses to move or to stop

Basic Compositional Unit:
[stillness - perception - action - stillness]
[stillness and movement of equal value]

Parameters of Movement and Observation
- walking and stopping
- simple locomotion
- change of position
- forwards, sideways, backwards
- change of orientation
- change of velocity
- change of level
- grouping and re-grouping
- possible diagonals (shifted grid)
- possible circular motion

Identifying Tendencies
- how are you making decisions?
- how much do you respond?
- how much do you provoke?
- what does the space need?
Choreographic research: Responding to spatial circumstances and others in real time
Values of a good space:
Feel safer – more of self freed up for other things
Values of a good space:

Greater sense of connection, belongingness, moment-to-moment presence
Literature: Erving Goffman

- Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings (1963)
- The dramaturgical model of social life
Locations Urban
Taiwan, 2012

Literature:
Edward T. Hall

- *The Hidden Dimension* (1966)
- Cultural norms for proximity, territoriality and spatial boundaries
Transgressing social distances in public space. Contrasting places for being with ways of going across.
Precedent: William Whyte

- Groundbreaking use of film and analysis to study human behavior in urban settings
Precedent:

Jan Gehl

- Focus on improving quality of urban life by orienting design towards pedestrians
Precedent:

**Synchronous Objects**

“...ways of visualizing dance that draw on techniques from a variety of disciplines.”
What if we use choreographic research techniques to examine public space...

Precedent:

**Synchronous Objects**
Precedent:
Block House, Sou Fujimoto

What if we look at inhabiting space as choreography...
A series of films and graphics exploring qualities of inhabiting public space. Experimenting with architectural representation to describe narrative and interaction in space.
Going forward...

• Documenting Seattle Waterfront Use

• Workshops for young designers

• Experimenting with expressive representation of data
To Take Away…

• Do I feel fulfilled by my choice about where I am in space?

• If not, can I make another choice?

• If so, can I savor it more?

• Can savoring be a source of presence and happiness?
Thank you!

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Kurt lived and worked in Europe, dancing, choreographing and teaching contemporary dance from 1988 – 2012.

He designed and directed the Masters Program in Contemporary Dance Pedagogy at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Frankfurt.

His current research focuses on embodying intention, empathically listening while physically interacting and examining our way of navigating spatial circumstances. His interest is in exploring how a deepened somatic sense of the world can enhance how we create and inhabit our surroundings.