

moving words in space

A multidisciplinary teaching and artistic practice Language & movement

INTERVIEWS RESIDENCIES WORKSHOP-LABORATORY TEACHING CHILDREN SYMPOSIUM DOCUMENTATION

Moving words in space intends to be a time of reflection and experimentation around a teaching approach Agnès has been developing for the last twenty years. This practice focuses on a dialogue between movement exploration and language acquisition. In which way a foreign or unfamiliar language can start making sense while moving? How can it resonate within the body and initiate a dance?

This practice offers an ongoing dialogue between movement and words, starting to find their own shape within the body and through space. Here we're talking about an embodied experience.

This project is organised around several areas: **INTERVIEWS**, **RESIDENCIES**, **A WORKSHOP-LABORATORY**, **TEACHING CHILDREN**, **A SYMPOSIUM**, **DOCUMENTATION**.

MOVEMENT
EXPLORATION
&
LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

1. Returning to the origins, making new connections (Fall 2021-2022)

In the Fall 2022, Agnès will immerse herself in the early stages of such a learning approach by means of conversations and **INTERVIEWS** with American artists and university professors who have played a key role in the development of this practice.

It is in 1998, while pursuing her studies for her MFA in dance at Bennington college, VT, USA, that Agnès began a collaboration, between the dance program with Susan Sgorbati¹ and the Regional center for languages and cultures with Isabelle Kaplan², to develop a cross-disciplinary course which simultaneously addressed dance improvisation and French acquisition.

This teaching approach arose from her experience in teaching French to young children, but also from her dance practice, in particular dance improvisation, related to Logomotion, an artistic practice by American dancer and choreographer Simone Forti³, for whom movement and words emerge from the same source.

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

SUSAN SGORBATI

ISABELLE KAPLAN

SIMONE FORTI

¹ Susan Sgorbati - Dancer, choreographer and director of the Center for Advancement of Public Action at Bennington College.

² In 1998, Isabelle Kaplan was, and until she retired some years ago, the director of the Regional Center for Languages and Cultures at Bennington College.

³ Simone Forti - Dancer, choreographer and writer, prominent figure of post-modern dance in the USA. In the 80s, she started developing her practice of Logomotion, News Animations and Moving the Telling.

Agnès wishes to collect the words of these three women, each one involved and pioneer in multidisciplinary teaching approaches, using as a guiding thread language and/or dance improvisation.

An other series of **INTERVIEWS** will take place as the project develops, with the wish to open up to other practices, and thus meet people involved in diverse approaches at the intersection of movement and languages. This research aims to go further into a practice, but to also make new connections. These **INTERVIEWS** will take place as new encounters and questions arise.

2. Teaching (January to June 2022)

Teaching being at the core of this practice, Agnès will continue **TEACHING CHILDREN**⁴ in school settings - primary and high schools - within the frame of **Jump'n Turn**,⁵ a children's workshop she has been developing since 2016, in France. Agnès will also work with university students and adults during workshops offered within the frame of different **RESIDENCIES**.

In parallel to these **RESIDENCIES** periods, Agnès will set up several **WORKSHOP-LABORATORY** modules (3 weekends) conceived for people involved in a movement practice, with a strong interest in teaching a language. During these working periods the participants will take several workshops in learning English through Movement, as well as other workshops with invited guest artists. It will also be an opportunity for each participant to play around with this teaching approach and propose some experimentations in the language of their choice.

How does this teaching approach in a workshop with children or adults manifest? It first takes place as a full immersion experience in the taught language. Then there is the setting up of a place, an environment opened to playfulness. An invitation to the exploration of movement and second language, which takes the participants all the way to a state of dance. We are involved as much into a cognitive learning as into a creative process. We are feeling the words, we are in a thinking-feeling zone.

Agnès is hoping that these studio work periods with children and adults will help her to define and specify already existing teaching tools, as well as creating new ones.

⁴ This teaching in school takes place within artistic and cultural education programs set up in collaboration with Regional Directorates for Cultural Affairs, Departmental Services Directorates for National Education in Gironde, La Manufacture CDCN, and Espaces Pluriels.

⁵ Conceived by Agnès Benoit, Jump'n Turn workshop offers children, as early as 4 years old, a playful way to learn English. Exploration of language and movement take place simultaneously. It is while turning that one understands the word « turn » and not by translating it ! By following physical instructions the child breaks free from any foreign language learning apprehension. The experience becomes playful, unobstructed from any tension in the body. This workshop is exclusively taught in English.

3. Two days of **SYMPOSIUM** (Fall 2022)

This period of reflection and experimentation will result in a two days **SYMPOSIUM**, where the people already involved in the project and new guests will have the opportunity to come and share their own practices. These two-days meeting will be organised around dialogues with artists and scholars who are working on multidisciplinary teaching approaches, at the crossroad of language learning and movement. These two days meetings will take place at La Manufacture CDCN, in Bordeaux, France.

4. **DOCUMENTATION** (Fall 2022 - Winter 2023)

After these exchanges, collect of experiences, teaching periods and during a **RESIDENCY** at Espaces Pluriels, in Pau, France, Agnès will stretch, play with and against the notions she has been working with for the last twenty years. This will take the form of written documents, audio and video recordings. The final outcome is yet to be imagined.

5. Biography

For many years Agnès Benoit shared her life between France, England, the United-States and Germany. Whether it be during her studies, teaching or presence on stage, sharing and reflecting around the moving body have always been her anchor point, playground... She starts her dance training at an early age with Jean Masse in Bordeaux. She received both her BA and MFA in dance from Bennington College, in the U.S. She takes numerous workshops in the U.S and Europe with Mark Tompkins, Julyen Hamilton, Simone Forti, David Zambrano... From her long practice in improvisation arises a series of interviews (On the Edge/Créateurs de l'Imprévu, Contredanse, 1997), as well as a multidisciplinary and experimental approach to language learning through movement. Agnès taught in the Program of Dance and Movement at the University of Rochester, NY, (2000-2006). She moved to Berlin in 2007 and initiated Books on the Move, a traveling bookstore specialised in dance and performance studies. Since 2013, Books on the Move moved to France. Within this project, and in collaboration with journalist Stéphanie Pichon, she initiates different types of workshops and events where reading, dance and dialogues are addressed simultaneously.

AGNES BENOIT

Moving words in space is initiated by **Agnès Benoit** in collaboration with **Books on the Move**. The project is developed with the support of French institutions **Espaces Pluriels**, **La Manufacture CDCN**, **Centre national de la danse** (Aide à la recherche et au patrimoine en danse 2021) and DRAC Nouvelle Aquitaine.

INSTITUTIONAL
PARTNERS