they are, rather than what they pretend to be, and concentrates her attention on the performers themselves, and what they can offer in rehearsal. She strips away the ornate exterior to uncover people.

The combination of that concentration on the subjective presence of her performers, who bring their own histories, ideas, knowledge, and experience to bear on each performed moment, and the very questioning of that arena of display in theater and dance leads to a form of presentation that consciously incorporates vast histories of social engagement and performance practice. Each moment is built on the same ground through which we perceive it, never innocently, but always in light of our own experience and history, expectations and awareness of the past. The present moment is built on a past that runs deep, and allows that moment to breathe its small gulp of air before it too becomes one more piece necessary for the construction of the next present.

All that is a longer way of saying that Bausch does not let us off easily. The moments she creates are the glistening tips of very large icebergs that bring with them the weight of intricate social and historical layering. Each moment can be appreciated for the glistening portion above the surface, but an awareness of the depth and intricacy of the precedents that keep that moment afloat can add a new level of understanding. We see Bausch’s pieces both from our own developed present, and within the context of the performed history they embody. Tanztheater develops out of the multiplicity of those influences, rather than as a further development of a specific performance practice. Bausch’s own life and creative development provide a model for the energies that lead to the essential difference that the development of Tanztheater contains. She carries that history with her, and the work is a constant reflection of it.

BAUSCH ON BAUSCH

Whenever I mention to people in the performing arts that I am researching and writing about Pina Bausch, the first question they ask is how she does what she does. It’s hard enough to describe precisely what it is that she does, but theater and dance artists can see it; they see something different in her works, something provocative that subtly changes the ground of performance practice. Still, the question lingers, “How does she do that?”

Many innovative artists spend years developing a method, a system of working, and often refine that process by writing about it throughout their lives. The attempt to get your ideas down on paper forces you to come to concrete terms, and perhaps come up with useful resources for others to draw on as they create their own ways of working.

Pina Bausch assiduously avoids talking about her pieces, let alone writing anything down. Even when she was young, she turned to dance to avoid speaking. “I loved to dance because I was scared to speak. When I was moving, I could feel” (quoted in Lawson 2000: 18). That early fear may echo her concern that speaking about her performances too much pins them down and robs them of the open interpretation she strives for. She wants an audience to bring their own ideas, histories, and connections to the pieces.
The expression happens on stage, and the work to uncover that expression happens in the rehearsal hall. Words merely become an inconvenient and poor substitute for the immediacy of expression that can take place through the dynamics of performance. In trying to explain how she began her work, she recently said:

I wanted to express something that I couldn’t express with words at all. Something I have to say urgently, but not verbally. These are feelings, or questions, I never have an answer. I am dealing with something that we all sense, that occupies all of us in a similar language. I am the audience as well. And when I see, I feel something. I can only come from my own instinct. When I trust my feeling, I believe it’s not only mine. I share it with others.  

(Bausch, 2004a, my translation: 9)

That sharing takes place in live performance, where she would like the piece to speak for itself. As she explained during what was supposed to be a lecture series at Stanford, “I don’t have many words because what I have to say I try to express through my work on stage” (quoted in Manuel 1999: n.p.). She proceeded to have her dancers perform small sections of the piece as her form of lecture. One of her favorite anecdotes is about when, after playing a piano piece he had composed, someone asked Beethoven what he meant by the piece. He simply turned back to the piano and played it again. She says the same thing about her own performances. “When we have danced the Sacre, we have nothing more to say about it. We have said it in our dance. Sacre, as a work, just is!” (Bausch 1985: 19)

But Bausch does speak, despite her reticence, and speak eloquently about the struggle to create, refining a way of working, and the importance of people in her process, in all their sad and vulnerable beauty. Even in describing Bausch’s reluctance to speak, I have tried to use her own words to bring out the feeling of her opinions. Clearly, live experience is the best way to come to an understanding of her work, both as individual pieces and as an oeuvre, but I hope there is something to be gained through Bausch’s words about the pieces, and particularly about her process; that persistent question of how she does what she does.

The model for this series of books is to provide a section outlining the performance practitioner’s written works. With no books, essays, or even lectures to draw on, analyzing Bausch’s own thoughts can be difficult, but she has given numerous interviews, in German and English, where she articulates an intricate process of developing her work. I have tried to let Bausch speak throughout this chapter, including a previously unpublished interview with Ruth Berghaus transcribed from an open forum discussion in Berlin in 1987. Bausch’s own words construct the fabric of her approach to her work, and help us to see its necessity and impact.

DEFINING PROCESS

In early interviews, Bausch often received questions about how she builds her pieces. You can almost hear interviewers longing for a method statement, hoping Bausch will reply with a definitive declaration about her treatment of the body in space and time, as many modern dance pioneers had before her.

The closest approximation to a method Bausch divulges is asking questions. Describing the process that developed during that pivotal period of redefinition during work on Bluebeard and then with actors and dancers on Macbeth, she says:

I went into retreat with four dancers in Jan Minarik’s little studio and we started work – with very few people. And then the others began to come back of their own accord – but only if they wanted to; I didn’t want anyone who wasn’t prepared to work. During this process I began to ask questions, to formulate my own questions within the circle – which was in itself a self-questioning for me and for the others as well. I could only dare to do this within a small circle. The method became clearly apparent during the work in Bochum [on the Macbeth project]. There we had four dancers, four actors and a singer – the dancers didn’t dance, the actors didn’t act and the singer didn’t sing. I’d made up my mind to use Macbeth as a basis for the work. It was a way of seeing how we could work things out together – I couldn’t just turn up with a complete movement sequence. That was a significant piece for the invention of this working method.

(Bausch 1995: 36)

Bausch began to uncover a working method during this time, and she has refined that process throughout the past thirty years, but the struggle to create still exists. Confronting the empty stage at the
beginning of rehearsals is always difficult, and devising a way to approach the work doesn't necessarily make things easier, nor does all of the praise she has received move her past the feelings of doubt which always plague her in beginning a new piece.

Nothing helps me. Not what I have already done. It is done. Each time, you are a beginner. I want to give up, actually, but I don't ... it's complicated. It all takes so much strength. I'm so fragile. It's emotional. I get little, sleep, you try to sleep, but you can't. I'm thinking too much. It's like my head is in the way. It seems simple, but I make it so complicated. It gets worse when I am coming out of a work. There comes a point when I think 'This is the last time. I am never going to do this again.' And afterwards, you think 'I should not stop now. I should right away do a new piece.' I go to all the extremes, deep down. It's so terrible, horrible, you go down, down, down, but you can't give up, because the dancers are always there and expect you to do something.

(quoted in Lawson 2000: 19)

What most choreographers have to hang on to in the midst of the downward spiral in the face of creative possibility is a means of creating movement. If you get to that point of being overwhelmed, you can always go back to the basics, create movement patterns, and let that drive you forward. Interviewers push at Bausch to define her means of creating movement, to articulate a "Bausch technique."

Bausch doesn't appear to understand the question, or at least shows very little interest in it. What does interest her, and what she comes back to time and again, are people. Beyond her career-defining statement "I'm not so interested in how they move as in what moves them" (quoted in Schmidt 1984: 15–16), early interviews are full of statements about the importance of people and the difficulties of dealing with all of their personality quirks, vulnerabilities, and needs. And yet this is exactly what the process is built on. Bausch's early work, and the fleeting snippets of description she allows in describing it, all emphasize the necessity of group process and individual input into the work. The answer to the question "How do I do what she does?" — which I have also asked myself time and again as I try to incorporate some of those methods into my own performance work — increasingly comes down to the importance of working collaboratively with a group of people with whom you build a relationship of mutually shared expression, exposure, and trust.

Performance qualities are less important than what each individual brings to the process, and objective qualities are irrelevant. Early on, she says, "I pick my dancers as people. I don't pick them for nice bodies, for having the same height, or things like that. I look for the person ... the personality" (Bausch 1985: 14). Each dancer's personality shines through in performance, more than simply in giving the movement a particular energy, but in the very makeup of the pieces themselves, and it is that personal material that brings out the underlying feelings of the piece. "Each of the dancers is, in a different way, important. Each has his own dances and his own way of dancing. It's not just doing choreography, but it's being aware of the feelings we all have and how we experience that. It's better just to see it" (quoted in Manuel 1999: n.p.).

Relying on what each individual performer brings to the process of creating a piece gives the work its depth and universality, but it also means coping with the vagaries of people's reactions and behavior: "I deal with human beings and all their complications, frustrations. They have private problems, jealousies. There are many different individuals in my company, and they all want to be loved very much and they are very sensitive. And each day you have to keep it alive, to explore and find a harmony. Every day it is a discovery" (Bausch 1999: 10C) But that doesn't mean she expects her dancers to simply open their lives and hearts to her. "I'm scared of people who do like this." She gestures a ripping out of her heart. "I like people who are difficult to open. Otherwise there's nothing special" (quoted in Mackrell 1999: C1).

Bausch emphasizes the importance of tenderness and respect in rehearsal, for creating an environment where people can open up, and for the kindness it takes to allow a piece to come into shape. She is just as involved in the delicate personal construction, and the dancers come to respect that as well. Working through a developed technique may provide a means to get the process moving, but it also often provides a screen, a structure to hide behind rather than deal with the raw vulnerability of wrestling with the questions she poses. Bausch explains the way people work in developing her pieces:

I don't have a technique. If I knew a better way to do my pieces, I would take it. It's not a principle. It is important that the base is confidential, that it comes out of a sense of what the dancers offer in confidence. I ask so many questions during the work, but I can't think of a single one at the moment. The dancers
need to have faith to answer what they feel — within the group, in front of everybody. And they need to have the faith that I will do something with it, but with respect, so that I have the freedom to ask them anything. Everybody has the same chances of contributing to the piece, suddenly one person becomes more important, in another piece it’s someone else. And when someone does something stupid, we all laugh. We laugh a lot anyway. In the end it’s about finding the right things. There is also the time when the dancers need to have a lot of patience with me when I am trying to do something with these extracts. Then I am penetrating and persnicket and I do the most stupid things. I’ll try anything possible, but I still may not find how it should work. Suddenly, I don’t believe in what I was thinking or what I had planned, I only believe what I have seen. It’s so simple. Sometimes I think I’m asking the wrong questions all the time. Somehow, I know where it wants to go. I can’t exactly name it, but when you find a form for it, you know it belongs.

(Bausch, 2004a, my translation: 5-6)

Bausch insists that all she does is ask questions, and watch. Of course there is a lot to even those seemingly simple activities, but the added dimension is not what she asks, but who she is asking. Her early work, and especially the move from the more dance-centered pieces to the developmental process based pieces starting with Bluebeard, echoes her efforts to distill a cohesive group around her and begin to define a collective expressive palette.

Bausch is the leader, but the efforts of the entire company are what make the pieces function. Bausch’s company taps into that collective energy, both providing a model for and echoing any number of companies working in this way, most from a theatrical perspective, from Theatre de Complicité to the Wooster Group, Forced Entertainment to STII Company. The group ideology and developmental process become driving forces and a vortex that draws company members in.

As one of Bausch’s dancers said:

You know, I love her and I hate her. She is remarkable, but she can drive you so hard. Sometimes she doesn’t seem to care that you are only human, that you can do only so much. At other times, she has the most concern you can imagine. I went away, finally, but I had to come back. Nowhere else can I have this experience as a dancer.

(quoted in Bausch 1985: 17)

HOW WE GET THERE

Once Bausch has filled the room with a diverse group of performers, all committed to the process of creation, the question of “What now?” still hangs in the air. Without a technique, and without a script to follow and respond to, how does the work in rehearsals proceed? This is where Bausch’s comments can feel particularly elliptic. She talks about asking questions, but how does that simple act work its way into a piece? What interviews reveal as the coalescing influence is patience, and the temerity to keep pushing at an idea until connections begin to emerge. That process is the fundamental question at the heart of Bausch’s discussion led by Ruth Berghaus in Berlin in 1987. She had described this process in previous interviews, but here she opens up the stages of development in more detail.

INTERVIEW WITH RUTH BERGHAUS, BERLIN, MAY 29, 1987 (TRANSLATED BY ELLEN CREMER AND ROYD CLIMENHAGA, AND EDITED BY ROYD CLIMENHAGA)

Ruth: In the wonderful performances we saw, the various elements of the production all come together and begin to impact each other. How do you develop this unusual expressive palette for dance?

Pina: The working process — how we put a piece together — has of course changed a lot. In the beginning I planned every move, very specifically. Out of fear. I wanted to make it good, and so I planned everything in advance — he is doing this, she is doing that — and then the costumes, the stage design, etc. Everything in its place. And while I was working I would suddenly see things that just happened and that interested me, and so the question came up: Do I follow my plan or do I follow what I just saw? I always followed what was new, never my plan. I always thought, this other idea, that I saw right there, might be more important, even though I had no idea where it was leading. At one point I had the courage not to make a plan at all. When I make a piece now, it is only out of what is present at the time. I try to feel what I feel.

I am the audience. Me alone. There is nobody else. I don’t even know who will come to the theater — people I don’t know anything about. For whom should I make this piece? I can only start from myself. I am sitting there and I am the audience, and I feel, and I laugh, and I am afraid or sad or whatever happens to me. I can only offer ideas and suggest, but I am the thermometer.
Also, when we begin we have no idea what we are going to do with the space, no set, no music, nothing else except us and how we respond in the moment. Only after a while when you notice where the piece is going can you ask: In what kind of space could or should something like this happen? Actually, it is the same with the music we choose. We play with things and then suddenly they are there where we think they need to be. There is something so specific about music. When you play through a scene with ten different musical choices, it's a different story each time. Sometimes I have music that I would like to use, but I can't because it doesn't fit into the piece. Sometimes, five years later, this music comes back into a piece where it fits. Matthias Burkert takes care of that. He asks me what I think might fit and then we look for it and sometimes we don't find anything for a long time. It's similar with the costumes. We get this huge pile of stuff (mostly second hand) and we try things. Someone tries this, someone else that. But the performers don't bring their own clothes, it is more organized than that. Marion Cito is in charge of that, and she has been my assistant since 1980.

Ruth: Where does the theme of an evening come from?

Pina: From a feeling from within. What I said before, I try to feel what I feel in the moment, and out of that I find questions for my dancers. All the questions come from me. After class we meet and I ask a question. We all think about it. The questions are very simple, everybody can give an answer or say something about it. We write it down or keep it in mind. Then there are more ideas that add to it and through what I see there are more new threads, new ideas. All of this material, in this initial stage, is not the piece. But there are different little things that come out of that and they have something to do with what I am actually looking for, but which has no clear image or form yet. So, there is no theme – except what presents itself. Ultimately, I'm always dealing with the same thing.

Audience: It seems that fear is a major theme in your work. Are you in a state of fear when you work?

Pina: You always look forward to starting a new piece because everything is so open. But somehow I am (I don't know how it is for others), but I am afraid, or I have to confront different fears. There is the fear that you won't be able to do what you want to, and the fear of not being able to deal with other people. But that is a different chapter.

I am not someone who just says nice things in rehearsal. I can't do that at all. Usually, I say very little, terribly little. And when you don't understand each other it becomes complicated. You become insecure and there are these things happening that you can't even talk about. You get stuck in these moments instead of progressing into the piece.

And when I finish a process, when I say I can't continue searching, when I begin to put things outside of myself more firmly, it becomes even more difficult. I'm always afraid to stop. I would like to keep pushing at it. But this process can't go on forever because we have to be finished, we have a deadline – opening night.

Audience: How does the text come together?

Pina: The texts come from the same process. For example, in the piece you saw yesterday [1980 – A Piece by Pina Bausch], the performers describe the country they come from in three words. That simply came out of a question in rehearsal about identity, how are you who you are? Sometimes it works like that, but sometimes we just have to keep looking because our first idea didn't fit. Or sometimes what people say has changed after a while in performance, or we change things because in Italy or France certain words may not be familiar. But I think that moment of description would work anywhere.

Audience: Do individual performers find particular words or phrases – and do those words stay the same no matter who may take on that role?

Pina: It depends on how the moment works. Usually what someone does connects with their personality. But it can also happen that everybody does what one person has created, or we can play around with it and when it doesn't fit with one character anymore, we give it to someone else. But most of the time the things you see or hear are performed by the people who came up with them. What you see in performance is only a small percentage of the actual material we develop, however. I look at the material during rehearsal and I let go of about half of it immediately. I push at and question the other half again. And then we repeat it, not in an order, but sometimes this, then that. Everyone should remember it all. That works pretty well.

After a while, I start to see the material more cohesively, because everyone can just do it and we don't need to wait in between things so much to think and remember. The material becomes smaller, even though it is still way too much. What I don't need at all is gone already. Then I say: Let's try to combine this and that, and let's see. Maybe I find something small that means a lot more to me. Then I'll find a different entry point. I never start from the very beginning. I don't work from the beginning to the end, but with small parts that slowly become larger, and so the piece slowly comes together and expands. And let's say I have ten parts that have already become large sections, and lots of single things. Only then can I start thinking of how I want the piece to begin. Only then. This has always been my method. But that doesn't mean anything, there are so many ways to do things. Unfortunately, I can't do it.
differently. I am extremely thorough. It is terrible because I turn everything around and I make it more difficult for myself. Terrible.

**Audience:** What were your impulses and motivations when you first started working? Did you want to find something different than classical ballet?

**Pina:** At one point I started doing something because I wanted to dance. I never thought I would create a complete piece or become a choreographer. I didn't feel challenged enough and I wanted to do something that I felt. There was time, there were people who wanted to join in. And so we did something. The only reason was: to dance. And that piece came into being like that. It was fun. And I must say I was never thinking it must be ballet or it shouldn't be ballet at all. I liked to move in this kind of way and when I set out to do something on my own it was in that particular form. It wasn't a sense of wanting to make something better or rejecting something else. When I came to Wuppertal, there was a ballet company. It was not about doing something completely different or to slowly do something differently, or looking for a smooth transition, it has never happened like that. I tried to do what I thought I had to do.

**Ruth:** When something new appears it is most often because it has to. The burden of creating something new, the difficulties, you only take that on if you have to.

**Audience:** Was there resistance in the beginning?

**Pina:** The opposite. I came to Wuppertal the very first time at the request of the director. He had the courage to say: Look, find a group, find people you want to work with. I didn't have the courage. I hadn't tried anything like that yet. I had only done very small pieces. I had no idea if I could do it or not. But he believed in me and kept asking until I said, "Yes, I will try." And that was a bold choice on his part, against the city, against many people. I think most of them didn't like the idea of my kind of work in the first place. It was mainly the director at that time, and later on others, who allowed me to work. It was difficult with the audience. I was lucky because none of the directors ever said: Can't you make things differently, or do something similar to what's already been done? No one has ever said that to me. I don't know how I would have reacted.

**Audience:** Are you able to let go of expectations and the pressure of the press and publicity in creating the work?

**Pina:** Yes. I have to. We always start at point zero. All of these expectations are stupid clichés.

**Ruth:** But you always run that risk in this profession.

**Pina:** Yes, always. One is always misunderstood. I can't avoid that. I felt angry about that quite often. But now it doesn't bother me anymore. Because I don't deal with it anymore. When you begin to deal with it you don't have time to work anymore. It's true, it eats you up otherwise.

**Audience:** How do you maintain the quality of your performances?

**Pina:** Through performing. When someone leaves it's very difficult to replace that person. The problem is, nothing is written down. No one has time to do that. We don't have anyone who is responsible for that. We have videos to keep things that would get lost otherwise, but we can only learn by performing, because it came into being through the group. So it only works if we hope that we stay together and don't forget it.

**Audience:** How do you choose the cast?

**Pina:** Usually, everyone participates. I only did two pieces where I wanted to work with fewer people. Otherwise there are as many people in the piece as we have in the company at that time. In Sacre du Printemps there were even more, some dancers from the Folkwang School joined us. If someone wasn't a part of a production it was only because that person had a specific scheduling conflict or needed a break. If that's the case, I suggest that they skip this piece, because I can't give anyone performances off.

**Audience:** Do you consider acting skills when you hire a dancer?

**Pina:** In an audition we do regular classical training and then everybody learns a phrase from Sacre, for example. Even there, I can already see a lot, but I don't see anything about how they might use language or any specific acting skills. That is always a surprise. I never just leave it at what I can see in their dancing. Of course I am hoping to find a good dancer, and sometimes I can only see afterwards those performance qualities that I choose more instinctively. Those qualities were why I said 'yes, we'll give it a try.'

And strangely enough, I've never gone wrong, even if everything seemed to go against my choice. Sometimes the group didn't understand why I hired someone. They couldn't see what I found so special about this person. Two years later, they could see it. That is always very difficult. I can only hope, I never know for sure.

But I am curious. I like them all and somehow I learn from all of them. Not in the sense of knowledge, but something else. Sometimes I realize that I have something similar in me and I didn't recognize it. I had always thought, this is who I am and suddenly I realize, here I have a little facet and here another one. Everyone has so many colors, you don't even know until you see them suddenly reflected in a new person. And I think we all learn through what we see. That is important.

For example, if someone is new and has been working in a group for a very long time, he will answer questions in the way he is used to. There are all these clichés, as you can imagine. It's not that easy to simply answer a question. You try to do it the best you can, but it doesn't always get at something
that is true for you. Sometimes it takes a long time before someone can get
beyond all of these clichés and simply answer from themselves. I have noticed
that new dancers in the group always go through this amazing frustration, and
they become incredibly sad and distraught until suddenly something from deep
down begins to come out. You can’t force it, it just happens.

REPRESENTATION AS PROCESS, PROCESS AS REPRESENTATION

Bausch’s approach to representation is essentially descriptive, but takes
as its starting point the condition of our bodies in the revelation of
experience. She probes the personal to find underlying behavior patterns
which point toward the universal. Joys and fears, frustrations and
confusions of everyday life are mined to find their kernel of hidden truth, and this truth is an active process of connection, dif-
erent for each audience member.

Most of the members of the ensemble, past and present, come with
substantial dance training, often in classical ballet technique. The initial
audition process is centered on movement qualities, even if Bausch is
looking beyond that movement to the person underneath. Some see
the new way of working more readily, and some struggle to shed
preconceived notions about what dance should be. As Bausch says, “To
understand what I am saying, you have to believe that dance is some-
thing other than technique. We forget where the movements come
from. They are born from life. When you create a new work, the
point of departure must be contemporary life — not existing forms of
dance” (Bausch 1989: 91).

Even working from that statement, it is possible to imagine a
movement-centered technique with an emphasis on personal expres-
sion. That is precisely what Mary Wigman worked toward throughout
her career. The move from that expressionist dance structure to
Bausch’s defining work required a different base, one that redefined
the possibilities of what could be dance. Bausch asks, “What is dance
anyway? First of all, dance is not only a certain style, there are so
many different styles, cultures, reasons to dance; we can’t only call
certain modern or ballet techniques dance, or say this is dance, this is
not. For me, much more is dance than other people think of” (Bausch

Figure 2.1 Nelken (1982). Photo by Bettina Stöß

What dance becomes for Bausch is a confrontation with behavior
and bodily presentation, it is an organization of action that addresses
life itself rather than an imitation created from the comfortable dis-
tance of an intermediary technique. Dance had always concerned itself
with the possibilities of physical expression, but never before has that
expression been extended to include the way in which we define our
selves through our bodily relationship to cultural codes. The dancer’s
body on stage is freed from the rules of a developed technique to
represent each individual’s physical connection to a world of his or her
own creation.

STRUCTURE

Bausch’s early work with Tanztheater Wuppertal was built on more
traditional principles of dance construction, and the rehearsal period
mirrored that as dancers learned complicated series of movements
handed down from the choreographer. Rite of Spring and the two
Gluck operas Iphigenie and Orpheus had begun to open up possibilities
of individual engagement, but were still primarily built on the model
of dance as a series of movements. As we saw in Chapter 1, Bluebeard provided the break for a new means of presentation, and it grew out of a new means of rehearsal and development. Company member Ruth Amarante explains, "I think it started with Brauniar. She started asking the company members questions, leaving it open as to how the person wanted to reply. You could answer in the form of movement, by talking, or by doing whatever you had in mind" (quoted in Fernandes 2001: 111). The questions begin to open up experience, and the work in rehearsals becomes the slow uncovering of the base operating principle of the idea or feeling in question. How do we experience love, loss, brutality, compassion, tenderness, and so on? Each performed moment in rehearsal becomes a possible avenue of further exploration.

The questions reveal the way in which the performers are contained through their experience, how they experience individual moments of connection. Amarante continues, "Many questions are about how it was in our countries, culturally specific questions; how was our childhood ... important people in our lives, about teachers ..." (quoted in Fernandes 2001: 113).

The process of questioning as a structural base for the pieces comes out of Bausch's growing confidence in her and her company's ability to enter into material more indirectly. As Bausch explains, "[At first] I wanted everything prepared because I was scared. I was afraid somebody would ask me, 'What do I do?' and I would have to say 'I don't know.'" (quoted in Manuel 1999: n.p.). But eventually, she is able to let go of those preparatory structures and open up new pathways to explore experience. "You have to just trust. We are there, the company and me, and life is there. And what do we do? We speak about life and love." (quoted in Manuel 1999: n.p.).

So now in rehearsal Bausch asks questions; questions of elemental purpose, allowing her performers time to answer with words, with movement, with a performed moment. "How do you cry?" A simple question, but built on different means than one expects in theatrical improvisation. Not "Why do you cry?" with all of its attendant psychological uncovering, but the more elusive "How?" She is looking for the way in which each individual contains his or her expression, how it lives in his or her body. Bausch uses tools of theatrical presentation to readdress the base assumptions from which interpretation arises, asking not only what moves us, but more specifically how we are related to the question at hand both as performers and as people in the world. The means of presentation themselves are questioned, always reconsidering forms of presentation to reveal how we are involved in the process of performance.

In response to a question on how the work on her pieces begins, and whether the experiences she and her company collect find a home in the finished piece, Bausch answers:

I can only make something very open. I'm not pointing out a view. There are conflicts between people, but they can be looked at from each side, from different angles. I don't know from where the piece comes. Even there, already something is there. It's not a picture, not a structure, but it has something to do with where you are in life at that period, the wishes, what you find scary.

(quoted in Hoffman 1994: 12)

The early stages of shaping a piece, she says, "are very naked, very sensitive. The dancers have to be patient with me, to try to follow me" (quoted in Hoffman 1994: 12). The model of dance as people interpreting the unifying technique of a charismatic leader (modern dance), or a stable system of expression reinterpreted for each succeeding generation (ballet), is unsettled in favor of a highly collaborative effort, where all contribute their own experience toward the metaphorical construction of the whole.

The mode of questioning and exploration that the rehearsal process embodies draws on basic assumptions: a concentration on experience as the way we are connected to the world, and a prioritization of process over product and content over technique. The questions are posed to lead toward an uncovering of experience rather than the way that experience may be expressed, and that process is revealed in the performance. How do we exist on stage, and how do we use the stage to approach the way we are in the world?

Raimond Hoghe discussed with Bausch her role in rehearsal:

During rehearsals Pina Bausch watches. She is very reticent with explanations to the performers. 'I don't want to take your thoughts away from you,' she says and encourages individuals to have their own imagination, to be more like themselves, to dare uncommon ways of thinking. "Just dare to think in all directions."

(Hoghe 1980: 67)
The process is not nearly so efficient as crafting a preconceived pattern on a capable performer – it takes time. Bausch gives her dancers time to explore the (self-)questioning initiated by her, time to arrive at answers of their own.

Very concentrated, very quietly she follows the quest of the group, the associations, proposals, histories of the various individuals. 'What I do – watch,' she says. 'Perhaps that's it. The only thing I did all the time was watching people. I have only seen human relations, or have tried to see them and talk about them. That's what I'm interested in. I don't know anything more important.'

(Haghe 1980: 68)

Bausch provides the stimulus for her dancers' explorations, and then stands back to watch and edit, push a little farther and look finally for a unifying thread on which the final performance might hang.

Bausch describes the beginning of rehearsals as follows:

I find it incredibly difficult taking the first step because ... because I know they, the dancers, are then going to expect me to tell them what I want. And then I panic. I'm scared of having to tell them because what I have is often so vague. It's true, I know I can always say, "Here I am – there are one or two particular things in my head at the moment," and I might even find some kind of word to describe it and then I'll say, "Right. Well, here's where we start from. Let's see where it takes us."

(quoted in Servos 2003, my translation: 309)

The initial idea comes out of the choreographer's and dancers' reaction to life, what's going on around them, and not just current events, but the very way in which they find themselves embedded in life and in their connection to others. The piece begins with a question. Schmidt asks Bausch: "Posing questions, has that become the point of departure for each work?" Bausch replies: "Yeah, that's what it always starts with. Everyone thinks it over and gives an answer. Sometimes it's got something to do with how its formulated, or with various things. Then we all take a look at them ... " Schmidt asks: " ... so the pieces do not begin, then, with a movement, but with a state of awareness, in the head rather than in the legs?" Bausch explains:

The steps have always come from somewhere else. They never came from the legs. And working on the movements – we always do that in between. And then we're always making little dance phrases which we keep in mind. In earlier days I may have started with a movement out of worry or panic, and dodged the questions. Nowadays I start with the questions.

(Bausch 1983b: 14)

Bausch watches and writes down everything. At first the performers had to rely on these scribbled notes to recall moments that Bausch wanted to bring back for further consideration, but more recently everything is videoed. Bausch then goes over the videos with the performers, making comments and asking them to repeat a moment, to join it with another from somewhere else in the process. The whole thing is incredibly laborious, with this first stage of exploration and collection of resources taking three months or more. During the process of gathering resources, Bausch also provides some movement patterns to be learned, or asks the performers to come up with specific movement-generated material. Movement days are interspersed with the catalogue of questions and responses until there is both a common base of physical language and an overwhelming array of individual responses to the questions of personal experience.

Describing the exploration that leads into rehearsals and the process for creating Nur Du, Bausch comments:

These weeks now, what we did, is just like finding material, just material. From this material, I'm using five percent maybe, and reworking it and doing it differently. And then we start to work on a piece. But I first create something which I can work with.

(quoted in Williams 1997: 76)

Long-standing company member Dominique Mercy continues:

She starts to ask questions. For instance, in one piece she says: "Tell me what you ate last night;" or something to do with Christmas, or six different ways to be sad or angry, and of course with time, because this lasts quite a while, the questions become more complicated. Each time it's always your own experience. Even if you take things from the outside, it's the way you see them. It's yourself which is on stage.

(quoted in Williams 1997: 76)
When asked how answers to all of the questions fit together into a piece, Bausch responds:

At first nothing fits together at all, and so you have this constant seeking further and collecting of material. During this time, of course, I work on other things as well. I take notes on everything; the dancers have to note down everything they do as well so that I can come back to them again later, and then I start sorting it all out ... That's where you have to keep totally alert, sensitive, receptive; there's no system.

(Bausch 1995: 36)

So how does all that become a dance? How does the overwhelming volume of material get trimmed down and placed into a coherent structure? And why should that collaged structure be called dance? Bausch adds:

That's ultimately the composition. What you do with the things. After all, at first it isn't anything. It's just answers - sentences, little scenes - which someone performs. Everything separate to start with. At some point or other, I combine something I thought right with something else. This with that, that with something else. One thing with various others. Then, when I've again found something that works, I've already got a slightly bigger little something. Then I go off somewhere completely else. It starts really small and gradually gets bigger.

(Bausch 1982a: 235)

This becomes Bausch's version of choreography, taking these elements that have been derived in rehearsal from responses to questions that all push toward some underlying theme or central idea, and arranging them into evocative sequences and finally a crafted whole that works to uncover the core of the piece. The way the piece unfolds reflects the conditions of its creation, and just as the dancers are shifted from objectified movers, choreography is reoriented beyond the sequencing of steps to become the overall condition of the piece and the dancers' implicit bodily engagement in the event. The structuring element becomes that central focus, though it may no longer be the initial impression that began the process. Bausch explains:

I have a lot of things, I don't know what they will become yet. Then, gradually, I begin to see where a work should start. What we have been working on is usually a big mess of things - a big chaos of things, materials, in relation to the finished piece. For a while, I'm completely helpless. And I do more and more and more. Then suddenly, I have something that works, and I can start building the piece. I ask myself: How should it develop from that point? I start organizing the material. I work out from the middle. I cut those things - even when I like them - which don't fit, since the piece is moving in a different direction. Or because I saw the dancers do something new, interesting, I move the pieces in that direction. Sometimes it takes off in a different direction entirely, and then I have to find new materials. In rehearsals, suddenly somebody is so beautiful, so right, I have to take a chance on the idea and use that.

(Bausch 1985: 18)

The structural integrity comes out of dance principles and the individual moments come out of theater. It is an inversion of the traditional structure of story ballets, for instance, that use a movement-centered language to tell a theatrical story. In this case, we take moments of theatrical presence, and put them together through dance construction principles.

Our work is a mixture of elements. I don't know what it is. They dance; people talk; others sing. We use actors, too. And we use musicians in the works. It's theatre, really. For us, the stage - the settings - are important, too. We aren't just dancing in a room, in a space. Where it is, the location, the atmosphere where the movement happens, that matters in my works.

(Bausch 1985: 19)

Instead of being built on the dancer's body as empty vessel to execute the movement, the structure is built on the personal investment of the dancers. In working through this level of questioning and development from the performers, the final piece is bound to show not only Bausch's life, but the personal perspectives of the performers from whom she draws. The structure of the work is built upon the process of inquiry into our lives and our connection to the world, upon the private investigations of the choreographer and the dancers, made public. But getting at that individual investment is not always easy, as Bausch explains:

The dancers always want to answer the questions slightly differently than I ask. They are avoiding the question. So, I don't ask straight to the point because they are shy. It's a very delicate process.

(Gausch, 2004b, my translation: 11)
The process is able to move past self-indulgent centering on specific performers by concentrating on the more universal motivating impulse that stands as the base of the work. Asked if she is trying to uncover something within the dancers or herself, Bausch replies:

Neither one, I want to find out something about us. Sometimes it's funny when you have to explain certain words. When someone asks what it means in Spanish. By trying to explain it you sometimes find out what you really want to know.  
(Bausch, 2004b, my translation: 11)

Christopher Bowen asked her if this might be a movement in late twentieth-century performance, people talking about their problems directly to the audience, but Bausch takes issue with the nature of that supposition.

What we are doing is still abstraction. It is not a private thing; there are certain feelings that belong to all of us. If you are honest, it's not private, because we all know these feelings. We all have the same desires; we all are scared. There are differences - the taste, the flavor is different. But we are all together and it is the richness - all our possibilities - that I celebrate in my pieces.  
(Bausch 1999: 11A)

Each of Bausch's initial queries at the beginning of a rehearsal process goes through natural selection, with only those ideas that generated the most vital connection to the performers' concerns and struggles surviving. If most of Bausch's pieces end up concerning mainly human relationships, it is because that is what most concerns her dancers and herself. Her popularity and longevity would indicate that it most concerns her audience as well. Each performed moment relates back not to a formulated technique, or way of moving, but to our connection to others and to life. The content of the piece is the base from which all is generated.

PRESENCE – THE CENTER

Though the questions Bausch raises in rehearsal move toward universal experience, they all center on individual experience. Bausch asks her dancers, "What is your experience of - ?" with the blank standing for whatever the particular theme of the work in process might be.

Because the question of experience is posed with specific people in mind and with those same specific people answering, there is never any question of a performer's aptness to fit the part. This, in part, is what gives Bausch's performers such conviction: they are not performing a part, though they may address the idea of performing, they play themselves. Being themselves is called attention to on stage. Real names are used whenever the dancers address each other in performance. Which is not to say that we really see the people up there on stage; they are performing, and as such enter the roles they have created of themselves, and in so doing call into question and explore the very idea of role-playing.

This level of role-playing is made especially clear and further complicated as the company has transformed and new performers take on roles created by others as the older pieces are kept in repertory. As Ruth Amarante explains, the process of taking on someone else's role begins as a formal exercise, but because of the highly charged experimental work out of which the piece is generated, formal bounds soon collapse and the individual is once again asserted as the new performer claims the experience in performance. In describing her work on 1980, she says:

I joined this piece long after it was completed. I mean, I'm doing someone else's role. So, in the beginning it is quite formal. You have to be in the right tempo, you have to take care not to get into people's way, you have to get the chair in the right time, you have to do the movements - you have to do a bunch of things at the same time ... After some time, you start relaxing and then getting the feeling; the thing starts to have a life of its own.  
(quoted in Fernandes 2001: 114)

This is different than more traditional taking over of roles in long-running shows. Rather than projecting into a role as other and making it your own, the original history out of which the moment was derived begins to transform to contain the new performer. In explaining taking over a moment where the original performer describes a scene from childhood with her father, Amarante says:

It is her history, but I take it for myself. So, it is as if it were mine. My father died a long time ago, too, so it is very related with the loss of a
close, dear person. It is not very far away. I incorporate the role of another person like this.

(quoted in Fernandes 2001: 115)

The underlying feeling structure of the moment is made relevant to the current performer and expressed as it is contained within her body. It is made corporeal, incorporated into the present moment.

In rehearsals, the dancers try to mold their experiences into performed moments that Bausch will later recontextualize and rearrange until something coalesces into what will be the final piece. “She wants us,” says Dominique Mercy, one of the longest standing company members, “to be as sincere and simple as possible” (quoted in Daly 1996: 10). In response to a question on how all of the events the dancers participate in and watch will translate into a piece about America in Nur Du, Mercy continues:

the American commission should not be taken as literal or descriptive. The point is much larger than the occasional flash of American imagery. There is also something behind those specific experiences that speaks to larger issues of human relations.

(quoted in Daly 1996: 20)

The pieces begin from and return to the central motivating impulse, and that is always a feeling, an impression as it is experienced in individual terms. Early pieces drew on outside sources as a base for the underlying feeling that the work tries to contain, while those of the fervent period of Bausch’s reinvention of form were more open explorations of feeling states. The pieces attend to a rhythm of experience, a way of being in the world, and address more fundamental aspects of emotional experience. “There is something in here,” she says, cradling her stomach. “But it has no words or pictures. I have to find a way to discover the things I’m feeling I don’t make plans; it’s always open. Something suddenly happens. It’s scary” (quoted in Mackrell 1999: C1).

The pieces together can be seen as a whole, a continual process of trying to uncover how we are placed in the world. As Bausch says:

I’m fighting for love, I’m fighting once again for love. I know what I want to say, deep down inside I know that, in my mind. But I have the feeling I haven’t
found it all yet. Sometimes there are moments when I feel something, when I
know, “that’s it, that’s what I really mean.” But it’s still very small.

(quoted in Schmidt 1990: 43)

Each moment needs to be pushed toward its metaphoric connection
to the underlying feeling. We are given access to our own feeling
structures, as they are contained in our own base of being, but the
doors to this ground of feeling comes from the open metaphors
derived from the company’s own individual experience. Bausch
explains:

I think it can only work if we avoid anything explicit — anything where we see
something and we all know what it means. We think oh, this is a sign for that;
you know it in your head. But if we avoid this and if the audience are open to
experience or feel things, I think there is the possibility of another kind of
language. It’s not only choreography, but for me the stage is important, the
space, the time, the music, the personalities; everything has to be brought
together. It is not only a question of “Why do you not dance? Why do you do
this?” Actually the reason is, I am interested in a certain feeling that I want to
express, something there is no word for.

(Bausch 1992: 15)

The search for expression results in individual moments developed in
rehearsal and all built on variations of the central thrust of the piece.
When asked if all of those moments then add up to the feeling she
wants, Bausch responds:

Yes, but it should not add up to “What did she think when she did this?” It
is going to a different level than an intellectual level, it is a feeling — but a
feeling which is very precise; it is not just some vague feeling, it is some-
thing absolutely precise. If you do it like this instead of like that, everything
changes.

(Bausch 1992: 15)

The way in which the moments found in rehearsal come together in
performance creates the underlying feeling structure for the piece, and
that is interpreted from the base in the audience’s own experience,
now given concrete form. It is particular for each audience member,
though there is a considerable area of overlap at the base structure of
what the performed moments contain. It is that area of overlap that
Bausch’s initial questions are seeking to expose.

IMPACT

The works are open metaphoric structures that tie us to the ground
of our own being in the world. Through her questioning methodology
and concentration on individual experience, Bausch creates open
points of connection to more universal structures of feeling. It
amounts to a new way of seeing, of opening up pathways of connec-
tion with the world. As Bausch explains:

I think it is important to be confronted with reality, because we so often forget
to look. When I go to our rehearsal studio between the peep show and the
McDonald’s, there is a bus station and all these sad people standing there.
This is our entrance – One has to practice magic with one’s work.

(Bausch, 2004a, my translation: 10)

That process of uncovering has been in place from the beginning, and
is in part what prompts the transition from more dance-centered
works into tanztheater. Bausch doesn’t set out to stake a claim in
formal revolution against existing forms of dance, she simply con-
centrates on how we are connected to the world and how we feel
what we feel. Her interest in what moves people rather than how they
move is built on this fundamental base, and turns her away from the
transporting illusion contained in previous forms.

Very few people know what happens within themselves, why they have certain
feelings, why they suddenly feel unhappy or content with themselves, why they
go through periods of depression, etc. Can we afford to waste our time with
“melodramatic diversions,” as if we already cleared all our problems?

(Bausch 1975, my translation: n.p.)

Any attempt at description of the work provides a surface level of
what happened, but what really took place, took place inside me. The
piece is felt more than perceived. My particular reaction, based in my
own experience, is called up by the way the images tap into more
 elemental states. When I saw Bandoneon (1984), I saw the aura of
dislocation the piece elicits from my own perspective. Having just
moved and being in a transitional time in my life, I felt the piece as a desire for connection and feeling outside of the physical tie to those I care about. While milling about at intermission, I overheard a woman remark to her friend, "I just started chemotherapy last week; that’s how it feels." The woman spoke with a great deal of admiration for the performance and its ability to capture her experience. From outside the event, the piece is a series of rather brutal and disconnected images, but as this spectator entered the world of the piece, she was able to see the images from within her own experience.

The woman was open to the possibility of involvement necessary to complete the event. We both felt the sense of physical disassociation and desire for a more holistic entrance into life that the piece engendered. I understood those feelings from my own frame of reference, while this woman apparently was able to find those same feelings in her more physically immediate experience. The piece provided the ground and the resources and freedom for both interpretations.

Bausch draws on her own experience as well, as the responsive base from which the pieces spring forth.

I look at myself as a normal person who reacts to everyday life just as everyone else does. I have to start from myself first, because I am the closest to myself, in my body and my heart. I am scared, content, I hope, just like everyone. Maybe this is why people react very strongly to my pieces, because they feel directly spoken to.

(Bausch 1998, my translation: 19)

In a press conference Bausch gave in 1984: before the performance of some of her pieces at BAM, she said that the work starts small, with little moments of life, but the pieces are all finally "about the relationships between man and woman. The pieces are about how much we want to be loved. We are all afraid of death" (quoted in Smith 1984: 36).

The moments Bausch creates out of these personal experiences all reveal the underlying current that connects our experience. The images are not didactic, they don’t tell us how to feel, but open up an experience into which we need to project our own meaning in order to complete, if meaning is what we are after. In Gebirge (1984), after a bout of frantic activity the performers all run off, leaving Jan Minarik silently standing over Beatrice Libonati, who kneels with her back to the audience, making herself vulnerable. She pulls her dress up to her head, revealing her bare back. Minarik whips her with what we realize is lipstick in his hand, leaving a red streak down her back. After each lash with the lipstick, Minarik looks out to the audience for approval, waiting for someone to contradict, implying a kind of who’s next? The woman does a slow ritualistic movement, head down, dress pulled out. She has big red marks on her back, they look horribly painful. Minarik walks away in silence, and the woman continues her ritual. We are left to decipher the image on our own, with only the other images of sexual oppression that surround it and our sense of and outrage at sexual violence to use as guideposts for interpretation.

Bausch is not trying to convince us of anything, so there is no felt morality. Because none is imposed on you, you have to find it within yourself. This, ultimately, is the goal of Bausch’s approach to representation, to demand of the audience an inner search for a way to approach the images she uncarts. Bausch is uncompromising in her display of the way we are connected to the world. She shows a harsh world in harsh terms. Your own response is either one of shock because you have isolated yourself from this reality or a feeling of connectedness in that you have struggled in this way too.

Rather than looking for a movement that might transport us, or a gesture that somehow captures authentic experience, tanztheater examines experience as it is lived in our daily connections to a larger culture and in our desperate search for connective meaning. It presents this experience as simultaneously real and metaphoric, for both the value of its real condition and for the larger truth to which it refers.

This means of representation exposes the theater as a place for the ongoing process of comprehending reality and creating self, rather than one where set meanings are given to an audience. Bausch forces us to question life and our placement in it, not by providing an alternative solution, but by providing a ground for exploration and a sense of the urgency of the problems she attacks.

In the preceding example of the woman whipped with lipstick, we must account both for the very real woman on stage going through what appears to be a horrid situation and for the larger idea of sexual oppression and violence to which her staged experience refers. The longing for resolving moments that might contain the stage image and keep it a part of the staged world are never provided. We must take
the unresolved tension with us to sort out each time we recollect the image, voluntarily or involuntarily. The contradictions of denying a resolving action that is acknowledged as desperately sought are fully recognized.

THE NEED TO ARTICULATE

Critic Anita Finkel claims that “Bausch will not allow us to deny nature, and we respond with anger. There are those who stay compulsively away from Bausch's theater because the spectacle of real flesh is too painful to bear, and they're right to abstain themselves – once inside, Bausch's sense of the body as vulnerable is inescapable” (Finkel 1991: 4). Bausch also reawakens us to the reality of our bodies, and this is not always a disheartening experience, even for dancers who are most often reminded of the all too real nature of their bodies through injury or old age. Schmidt discusses Waltzes, perhaps the most optimistic of Bausch's early pieces, arriving after the birth of her son. She responds:

I don't want to sound banal, but really that [birth and motherhood] is a miracle. At the moment, I'm discovering things practically every day which seem almost inexplicable, quite incredible things. I suddenly see how things connect within my own body. You run around with a pair of breasts all your life and of course you know what they're for, but all of a sudden you feel their function. These are very simple things. I know. But it is a tremendous experience.

(Bausch 1982a: 235)

By reawakening us to our bodies and our bodily connection to the world and society, Bausch also reconnects us to our human relationships, doggedly so. Jochen Schmidt describes two facets of audience attraction and repulsion to Bausch; one being her insistent content:

Virtually all of the choreographer's pieces deal with those basic questions about human existence which anyone, unless he's merely vegetating, must ask from time to time. They deal with love and fear, longing and loneliness, frustration and terror, man's exploitation of man (and, in particular, man's exploitation of women in a world made to conform to the former's ideas), about remembering and forgetting. They are aware of the difficulties of human co-existence and seek ways to reduce the distance between two (or more) individuals. They set out with a kind of brave desperation to develop a language with which to achieve the kind of communication that other languages and modes of speaking used up until now have failed to provide – and, if it's argued by some that all they've really produced so far have been piercing shrieks, that doesn't particularly disturb me; a work of art which shouts loud enough to shake people out of their lethargy is seldom enough.

(Schmidt 1984: 13)

The other facet of Bausch's art that Schmidt addresses lies in the quality of mercilessness which everyone must feel in the way Bausch asks her existential, social, or aesthetic questions. The conflicts dealt with in the pieces are neither paraphrased nor harmonized, but fully acted out. Bausch makes no excuses nor does she allow the spectator to do so. To everyone, her critics included, she is a constant reminder of our own inadequacy, a constant annoyance, forever calling upon us to abandon routine and dullness, to throw off our coldness and to start trusting one another, respecting one another, showing consideration for one another as partners.

(Schmidt 1984: 13)

Our bodies, as defined by society and as our connection to society, provide the ground from which content naturally emanates. Bodily experience is the spring from which all else issues, showing that theater's growth from and connection to dance, but dance reconfigured. Dance becomes the aesthetic articulation of the means by which we define our selves through our own embodiment, and necessarily moves toward the theatrical. But theater is now re-enlivened with real presence made manifest through human bodies in time and space. Bausch is not the first to engage this type of presentation and expression, but she is the first to place that bodily presence at the center of her presentational praxis. Rather than for a constructed present, the performer is present, and that presence both creates and addresses our own sense of self intertwined with others. Our own connection to the world is shown as a bodily process, necessarily fractured, but what is important is not so much the gaps created between ourselves and others, but the persistence with which we try to bridge those gaps. We may be lonely in the world, but there is grace and hope in our attempts to achieve context.
A critic once remarked on one of Bausch's long-standing themes as "the impossibility of communication between the sexes" (The Search for Dance 1994: video transcription). I asked Bausch how she felt about that statement, and she responded, "Not impossibility. Difficulty. If it was impossible we would stop trying, but we don't. We keep trying, always, to find each other."

KONTAKTHOF IN CONTEXT

WHY KONTAKTHOF?

In the fall of 1985, I sat in the opera house at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York as the performers described at the beginning of the book made their way downstage in Kontakt Hof. They simply walked forward, with an odd hip thrust, confronting the audience in their march of presentation, looking straight at us, and I felt at me in particular, despite my seat halfway up the balcony. That direct gaze was exposing, and exposure always feels self-consciously personal. I had come to see this piece on the promise that it would be different. I was searching for a means to reconcile my theater education, my experience in dance choreography and theory, and what I dimly imagined possible on stage. The singularity of a reimagined presence I saw on Bausch's stage drew me in immediately, and I felt — though I still had no idea how to approach it — that here was an entrance into performance that opened up possibility. Since then, I have worked to try to uncover that presence; in my research, in my theater going, and in creating new works for the stage myself.

Kontakt Hof has been performed throughout the world over the past thirty years in the repertory of Tanztheater Wuppertal, with some of the original ensemble members who created the piece in 1978 and new performers taking over roles as the company shifts personnel. Bausch