



Memoria Saltationis: The Memory of Dance - 5 June 2020

Individual and collective movement dynamics predict dance aesthetics

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Movement is a common feature of all performing arts, including dance, theatre and music. In this talk I will present a range of studies on how movement speed, acceleration and synchrony predict affective responses to dance. The dynamics of individual human movement produce distinct biases in the subjective experience of time, effort and speed. In the lab, we studied how variability and predictability of movement are related to dance aesthetics. In the theatre, we studied social and affective effects of performing and perceiving movement synchrony. Participants performed a set of movement tasks that were either performed as a group or individually. During execution (dancers) and observation (spectators) of these tasks, we assessed movement synchrony based on performer acceleration and spectators' psychophysiological responses using wrist sensors. Synchrony among performers was associated with group affiliation among performers and predicted spectators' heart rate and enjoyment. In line with an evolutionary function of dance in group communication, individual and collective movement dynamics in dance convey social signals that are extracted by dedicated brain mechanism and predict spectator affect.