

WORK PROPOSAL – Research Proposal

HIIT (working title) is the most recent research-project from the artists Vilja Mihalovsky and Simone Gisela Weber. In this project they are looking into *pushing limits, sweat* and the *transformation of the (female) body*. Mihalovsky and Weber met during their studies at the HZT Berlin, which they graduated in the summer of 2019. Through working and spending time together, they found out their common interest in workouts and sweat. As they got more into the habit of working out together, they started to get more intrigued by the choreographic-performative aspect of these practices, which normally might be overlooked as “just training” in the field of dance and performance.

The female body has always been under a scrutinizing gaze --and not only from men, but other females too-- as we look through our social media feed, magazines or Netflix Original Series. The fitness industry, on the other hand, has been big since the early 2010's, but the pandemic brought it to a new boom: social media platforms (e.g. Youtube, Instagram) were filled with lockdown home-workouts, the ones you can do from the safety of your living room in 20 minutes. As today's ideal female body is a healthy looking, toned, muscular but not too bulky, aka the *fitness body*, these quick and easy workouts got increasingly popular, while the pandemic prolonged its stay among us. But what actually lies behind social media, the fitness, the transformation?

HIIT exceeds the mere fitness oriented aesthetics, it proposes a very choreographic structure.

HIIT is a work of research that deals with a body on the edge of its physical limits. “HIIT” is a term that we borrow from the context of fitness. HIIT; High-Intensity Interval Training is a fitness workout that pushes the body very quickly to its limits and is great to improve one's endurance and cardiorespiratory fitness. In HIIT-training, one executes vigorous movements (e.g. burpees, squat jumps or sprinting) at one's maximum pace in intervals of work and rest. The time frame of HIIT makes it --from a choreographic point of view-- a very set score. We are interested in researching the possibilities of these “time-scores” as choreographic-performative platforms.

Using HIIT as a frame, we ask what it means to push limits. How can pushing be seen as a transformative power that engages space and time? What does it do with the space within the

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body and around the body? How can transformation be seen, and what is actually considered to be one? What is it that made us so drawn to workouts? Is it the fitness industry surrounding us? What is necessary and what is purely aesthetics? What body-aesthetics are there and why are they so different? How is the (female) body perceived and why is there so much shame and insecurities hidden in the fitness world? Why is there so much shame around the body?

And then: what lies behind it, beyond the aspect of fitness: is it the bodily transformation or is it the interest in pushing our limits in a dance studio? And what is the relation between a workout and choreography? What is the choreography within a workout structure and how can this be applied performatively?

As we already lightly started with this topic in the pre-pandemic time of 2019, we now will pick up from where we left and continue with the research. During the Old Mine residency, we will research the topic in different ways and also want to refine and conceptualize a workshop around it. We will follow a workout plan and put our own bodies to test -- dive into the ways of these transformations. We will create an Instagram account, which will act as a platform for us to document our research. We will also be tracking our internal transformation with fitness trackers and so follow our bodies not just through the mirror but also through what is actually happening in real time: heartbeat, blood oxygen levels and calories.

We both have a warm relationship with Outokumpu: Vilja graduated from the dance department in 2017, and Simone took part in the residency in 2020. Together we also taught a workshop "From many to one" for the dance students of Outokumpu in 2019. During our residency time we would be happy to continue our relationship with the students and would like to offer to share this new artistic research on HIIT with them. We also want to open our practice and the studio for the city, for Outokumpu. In the frame of "Open Studio"- sessions we want to invite people from outside, from different backgrounds to share our research and thoughts on the subject/research and invite them to join our "fitness parkour": to explore together the technologies of fitness, transformation and their choreographic/performatic relevance and create a conversation around the aesthetical trajectories of the female body through time.

The residency is a great chance to build a sustainable relationship to Outokumpu as well as to build a connection to its Dance community through mutual learning.

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WORK PLAN

We are applying for a 3 weeks residency either in April/ May or October/November. For our project we can work in either Kiisu Theatre or Kiisu Hall.

Week 1:

During the first week we start to pursue our daily training. We will document the bodily effects by writing, and by taking video and photos. We will share these documents from day 1 continuously throughout the whole residency on instagram, our dedicated research- diary. Furthermore we investigate the time-score of a workouts in its relation to a choreography of pushing limits. The first days are also structured in reading sessions about the female body under fitness mania and divers fitness technologies.

Week 2:

In the second week we start to structure and develop our Open- Studio Session in which we want to explore with locals the “fitness-parkour” and its performative qualities. And we continue our workouts and choreographic investigation.

Week 3:

Using the feedback and exchange from our Open Studio Session we develop choreographic scores based on altered fitness technologies and develop a first draft of a performance. At the end of residency, we want to share our work in progress in the frame of a public showing for interested people in the community of Outokumpu.