

Moving through space as knowing-alongly:
implications in dance dramaturgy and
spatial design

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PhD

*A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the Universities'
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the co-
tutelle programme 'Mobilizing Dramaturgy'*

September 2025



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Abstract

This research project is an investigation into dance dramaturgy practice, by thinking through concepts and practices of movement through space. My dance dramaturgy practice provides a starting point for the investigation, through the question 'what is it to move as a dance dramaturg?'. Through 'experiments' of writing, conversation, moving, artefact videos, and critical theoretical discussion, I practise and investigate my dance dramaturgy and research practices of attending-to, making-sense, questioning, understanding, organising, and encountering.

In scholarship and in writings on practice, dance dramaturgy is often discussed in relation to spatial and bodily ideas, including tropes such as the 'outside eye', and spatial relational ideas including inside/outside, proximal/distant, and in-between. To consider movement, my research responds to these discussions by proposing the idea of 'dramaturg as wayfarer', drawing on theoretical ideas from anthropologist Tim Ingold. His ideas of wayfaring, and the related concept of 'knowing alongly', become core threads along which the research proceeds, both in terms of thematic content, and in terms of research methods. I also draw on theories, concepts, and knowledges about moving through space in spatial design fields such as architecture, urban design and mobilities design. I further draw on scholarship in practice research and design research to contextualise my movement inquiry methodology.

My concept of 'movement logic' becomes an approach through which I take movement seriously in considering all aspects of my research project, especially in experiments of writing and of conversation. This manifests in the thesis as a site of practice research. I develop further Ingold's concept 'knowing-alongly' through considering time-space implications of movement logic, supported by theoretical discussions from scholarship in dance and dance dramaturgy, post-qualitative inquiry, philosophy, and human geography. Through this I propose that my thesis attends to the encounter with the reader through 'expansive chronological linearity', and ask what dance dramaturgy could be if, through conversation as movement of thought, there is no destination. Finally, implications of my findings for spatial design practice and design theory reveal a future horizon for continuing the thread of my movement logic investigation.

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