

*This interpretation is in turn effected through an association of ideas or memories of various cumulative experiences, muscular and tactile, and of visual impressions of color and size. This is due to memories of former experiences - movements of the eye, movements of the body in going towards objects and reaching them, together with tactile impressions of their shape, extent and textures derived from handling them.*

Mabel E. Todd, *The Thinking Body*

Our eyes are made for seeing movement and the movement of the eyes has an impact on the co-ordination of the movement of the body in complex and unconscious ways, as we constantly arrange ourselves to keep on looking. The *teleceptors* guide us through space and are described as the sensory nerve terminals - the eyes, ears and nose - that are special for being sensitive to *distant stimuli*, for finding connection with what is outside ourselves, away from the body - or at least at arms length.

We organise our own body in front of the body of the artwork, and that arrangement it seems is always in a state of transformation, sometimes it seems to be changing faster than ever. We are so drawn to the brightly lit screen, wherever and whatever size it is. Our vision, skilful, adaptable and highly evolved as it is, can also allow us to habitually narrow that viewpoint. We are now seeing whole new gestures and choreographies emerging in cities as crowds of bodies stand hunched over Smartphones on any station platform. The speed with which in recent years so many people in the street move with at least one small screen in their hand, or anywhere at any moment will keep one somewhere within reach, tells us that the capacity for the ways we are seeing, looking, watching are becoming different. Maybe we know better than ever how to watch experimentally.

Writing in 1937, Mabel Todd\* gave her attention to many aspects of the dynamic interactions we have in the world we inhabit with her emphasis on an organic and whole body experience. In her chapter titled Reacting Mechanisms, she discusses how the internal awareness brought by proprioception ("perceiving of self") works with the outer senses in forming "our idea of space and time". Under a section on Kinesthetic Consciousness, she points to the connections between eye and brain, how vision works with movement in order to interpret distances and space, relying on so much memory and previous perception.

In the *Small Matters* exhibition we are invited to relate to the works on "an intimate scale" and perhaps to view briefly, or several times, or to spend time and feel the duration. And here is the skill in much of this work, the understanding that the edit can allow for the long look or the passing glance. These days the tiny screen, the low-res, grainy or degraded image, the demand to view and hear different elements simultaneously seem like everyday aesthetics. Both the viewing conditions and myself easily adapt to an intervention in the movement of the image or a less familiar use of the means of framing itself.

A tiny screen flickers with glimpses of a half-lit dancer, Or an extreme close-up of a torso sweeps in and out of frame to become a brief yet intense movement study. The footfalls of the sixty-five people and the dog might be on their way to the exhibition themselves. Two pairs of bodies on the cool surface of a screen that becomes split - two or even four ways - strive to tell their visceral stories, or at least the sweat of the rehearsals and the performance as it turned out that day and as it synchs up now in front of my eyes.

There is also a particular invitation here to approach, view and handle the object of the screen as some kind of artifact, even if it is not the one I arrived with in my pocket or handbag. If I'm not one for actually downloading the app, I am reminded that I make this situation interactive simply by walking into the room. These hand-held and mobile devices employed by the artists offer different encounters with the work than projections and tv monitors might create for an audience. I discover different possibilities for approaching the

screen and viewing the images - as well as the alternative and potential new resources for the makers of what we sometimes still call "films".

#### NOTES:

\*Mabel E. Todd, *The Thinking Body*. Chapter II, Reacting Mechanisms, page 32. Dance Horizons 1968 edition.

Mabel Elsworth Todd (1880 – 1956) is known as the founder of what later came to be known as Ideokinesis, a form of somatic education that first came to prominence in the 1930s amongst dancers and health professionals. Todd's *The Thinking Body* (1937), is now considered by modern dance schools to be a classic study of physiology and the psychology of movement. Her work influenced many somatic awareness professionals of her day, and is often cited along with The Feldenkrais method for its focus on the subtle influence of unconscious intention and attention.