



AALTO

SUMMER 2019

ARKISTO ISSUE TWVO

EDITOR'S LETTER

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My first notes for spring and summer 2019 started with simple keywords – womanhood, wellbeing, power, *sisu*, speed. This season explores something that is perhaps the strongest and most positive force in the current times – the power of femininity.

In spring, the AALTO woman was an athlete pushing her physical boundaries, power-walking on the track and the runway. For the summer, her arena is the office, or business in its broader sense. It is a challenging environment which has been dominated by men, while pushing women into a cliché. In this collection, the rigor and the uptight conservatism – or perversity – of the office dress code get a radical update, from colors (intense orange, yellow, Patagonia blue) to volumes (deconstruction, naïve flat structures) to textures (wrinkled, terry, technical stretch). What defines the new officewear is its freedom. There are no more barriers or limits; what really counts is the attitude.

Channeling that freedom, organic lines can be found in tailoring, in the form of the asymmetric wave lapels. The wave as the AALTO symbol is further explored in intarsias, prints, bias cuts and appliqué drapes. Minimalistic drape placed as a giant flat pleat is a recurring theme across the garments, sometimes functional,

sometimes an exaggerated seam allowance. Sharper attitude is signaled by the cowgirl-ish mother of pearl snaps that decorate trekking-inspired capris, waistcoats and jackets.

The officewear has its fair share of functions – sometimes comfort, sometimes attitude – and the accessories follow suit: sock-like wrap ballerinas and high heels, aerodynamic reading glasses and out-and-about bush hats.

On the cover of this issue is Kati Outinen, the legendary actress and the ultimate incarnation of the Finnish woman. In her iconic roles in Aki Kaurismäki's films she comes out as hard-working, quiet, even reserved, but full of *sisu* – the particular Finnish type of perseverance, stoic determination in the face of difficulties. When met in person, she feels much more approachable, kinder and softer, but the strength is undeniably there. The type of power that she embodies no longer means toughness or ruthless competition. Here, the power means freedom, involvement, meaningfulness, comfort and balance.

Also in this issue, Joakim Ojanen, a Swedish painter and sculptor who dreams up fantastical, cartoon-like creatures, gets a presentation that is long overdue. His work has already provided the inspiration for prints in the Spring 2019 collection; for Summer 2019

the collaboration continues with bleached shadow tees, woven label patches and graphics screen printed on pleated dresses and tops. Joakim's universe is a parallel world inhabited by characters that are at once humans and animals, old and young, happy and sad. We never quite know what's going on in their inner world, but one thing is for sure – they are strangely relatable.

Further, Mimi Xu, the sound designer behind the music for the AALTO shows, shares her ongoing research into the relationship between sound and our moods. Trained in classical piano from the early age by her acoustician father, it's safe to say that she has grown up with sound.

And finally, the Spring 2019 campaign images taken in Milan with the Italian athletes who walked the Spring 2019 runway, premiere on the pages of this fanzine.

TUOMAS MERIKOSKI

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SUMMER 2019

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WE WISH TO THANK SÉBASTIEN JOFFREY MONFORT FOR PROVIDING THE SHOW'S JEWELRY AND MYROIR FOR PROVIDING THE EYEWEAR.

SPECIAL THANKS TO JOAKIM OJANEN, KATI OUTINEN AND MIMI XU FOR THE TIME AND EFFORT DEVOTED TO THE MAKING OF THIS FANZINE.

THE SPRING 2019 CAMPAIGN WAS STYLED BY VITTORIA CERCIELLO AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOHAN SANDBERG.

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SOFT FEMINIST KATI OUTINEN

Kati Outinen is nothing short of a legend. Aki Kaurismäki's actress of choice, she portrayed dozens of unbreakable women in his films. Her performances in the '90s masterpieces *Match Factory Girl*, *Drifting Clouds* and *The Man Without a Past* are perhaps the most familiar to the broader public, but nowhere near exhaustive when it comes to her acting career. The embodiment of the Finnish woman, on screen she comes out as hard-working, quiet, even reserved, but full of *sisu* – the particular Finnish type of perseverance, stoic determination in the face of difficulties. When met in person, she feels much more approachable, kinder and softer – a "soft feminist" is what she calls herself, after all – but the strength is undeniably there. At 57 years of age, still as active as an actress as ever, she poses vital questions about the movie industry today: where is the female cinematographic gaze? Why are women not making the decisions? And, most importantly, is there any space for a female performance artist at 60? For me, there's no doubt about that – for Kati, there will always be space.

I THINK PEOPLE ARE VERY CURIOUS TO KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU, AND WHAT FINLAND IS FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE. IN A WAY YOU BECAME THE FACE OF FINLAND THROUGHOUT YOUR CAREER AS AN ACTRESS, NOTABLY IN ALL THE AKI KAURISMÄKI MOVIES. TELL ME A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT YOURSELF – WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO, WHAT KIND OF CHARACTER ARE YOU?

What kind of character? I have no idea. I hope I'm friendly and open. In my profession you have to be interested in other people. That's originally why I chose acting above all other arts – I was interested in it and I had some talent, but mostly I chose it because it's so close to other people. Theater and movies, it's teamwork. It's where you try to learn every day what it means to be a human being in this world.

P EOPLE PROBABLY SEE YOU AS QUITE SOCIAL, AT LEAST IN FINLAND.

I think so too. They are surprised that I'm like that, because in Aki Kaurismäki's movies I'm very... well, my characters are not so talkative. They're not so socially-skilled. And I'm a feminist too, and it's so interesting nowadays because women are like... Once I was talking about the climate change. We have known that it was happening for 20, 30 years now, and five years ago if you talked about it it was like "women's stuff."

L IKE A NERDY THING.

And now everyone is talking about it. It's the same with feminism. Five years ago it still felt like it was just regarded as somebody's hobby, you know? And now, last year there's been an explosion of people being aware that there's something that needs to be done. I'm so happy, because there are really good things happening in the world. That's my personality. I always try to find something positive and something that gives you, me, and everyone else a reason to be alive, and to struggle with everyday life.

D O YOU THINK THAT YOU'RE A FEMINIST BECAUSE OF YOUR PROFESSION, OR IS IT JUST SOMETHING THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF YOU?

I've always been a feminist because of my family. My father and mother shared the household chores equally, like cleaning and cooking. They shared everything. My father was at home taking care of the children because my mother was studying when I was young. When I started dating as a teenager, I was amazed that not all men and young boys were like that. It was a shock to me that my family was extraordinary.

D ID YOU GET ANGRY ABOUT THAT?

I got confused and a bit sad. For me equality was natural, and it was a shock to find out that it's not really happening. I guess I've been a feminist since I was six months old.

I S IT MORE EQUAL AMONG ACTORS?

Well, it's better now, but still... I saw a study that said that in the movies and theater in Finland, less than a fifth of the workers are women. It's really a male profession.

I CAN DRAW A CONNECTION TO FASHION HERE. IT ALWAYS SURPRISED ME THAT MOST OF THE BIG FILM DIRECTORS WERE MEN, AND THEN WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF FASHION, MOST OF THE FASHION DESIGNERS HAVE BEEN MEN TOO, THOUGH THEY WERE DESIGNING FOR WOMEN. WHY ARE THERE SO MANY MEN DIRECTORS, AND SO FEW WOMEN?

The money comes from men. Those who decide about the money, the financing of the projects, they're mostly men. So of course they want to see films about themselves, or about subjects that they relate to. It's quite natural, and they can't understand why people are interested in independent cinema and like seeing other kinds of films.

H OW IS IT WITH AKI KAURISMÄKI? HE, I GUESS, IS A QUITE CLASSIC, SPECIAL FINNISH MAN.

He's a feminist... In his films, my characters have always had a life of their own. They are related to the main character, often a man, but they have their own life too. And they have their own opinions and ways they see the world. I think there too I've been working with a feminist.

Kaurismäki didn't have a problem with changing a role from a man's role to a women's role. For example in *Drifting Clouds*, the main character was supposed to be played by Matti Pellonpää. But he died, and Aki was thinking really hard about who on Earth could play that role, because he had written it especially for Matti. Then he realized that I could do it. He just changed the name, he didn't change the script that all. It was a character, who was all the same regardless of whether it was a man or a woman.

I DON'T THINK IN LIFE IT SHOULD CHANGE ANYTHING NOW EITHER. MAN OR WOMAN, THEY HAVE TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULTIES. IT SHOULD BE THE SAME.

I call myself a feminist but if you ask the real feminists, I think it will turn out that

I'm the wrong kind of feminist. I think I'm soft and I accept that life is like that, and there is this kind of people and that kind of people. I'm not angry if someone is not a feminist. I'm just sad. I don't go around and fight.

I T SOUNDS LIKE A VOICE OF REASON AND MATURITY, I THINK. I AM GETTING INSPIRED... I THINK I'M GOING TO CALL MYSELF A FEMINIST FROM NOW ON, BECAUSE IF KAURISMÄKI CAN CALL HIMSELF A FEMINIST, I CAN CALL MYSELF ONE TOO.

He doesn't. I don't think he calls himself a feminist, I call him a feminist.

D O YOU PREFER THEATER OR FILM, OR IS IT THE VARIETY THAT'S INTERESTING?

Well, I'm 57, and there are not so many offers out there. That's why I started to do productions on my own. I work both for others and for myself. Now I'm in a play in the Finnish National Theater in Helsinki. All the other people, the director, decorator, lighting technician, everyone is young. I'm the grand old lady among them. It's so nice to work with them, because they see the world a little bit differently, and I can learn from them.

E XACTLY. THAT'S WHY TEAMWORK IS GREAT AND KEEPS US ON OUR TOES.

And I think that this play is really difficult. Everyone was like, "You can't do a theater play from that book. It's impossible." And we did it. I'm so happy. Now I'm doing my own production about the artist Helene Schjerfbeck because my daughter, who is a playwright, wrote a play about her. It's about being a female artist, so it's very close to me. It's something I'm thinking about a lot right now. I'm 57. I don't have roles. I don't know if I want to act in the kind of business that filmmaking and theater is nowadays. But I'm doing it, and I managed to find really nice people to work with. That's my saving point. I don't know however if there's any room for being a female artist when you're 60? When your art is performing?

I T'S BETTER TODAY BUT YOUTH IS DRIVING EVERYTHING, FASHION AS WELL. DO YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH FASHION? OR IS IT SOMETHING THAT IS THERE BUT DOESN'T REALLY TOUCH YOU?

I think about it in ecological terms. Young designers are speaking out against consumerism and take-away fashion. I think it's a really, really admirable thing. Every time I have to buy something for myself, first I go to young designers to see what is there. So, yes, it has become more important for me, because I'd like to support them.

MY CHARACTERS HAVE ALWAYS HAD

I was playing in this movie some time ago. It was happening in '61, and it was so hard to find Finnish clothes from that time, because in Finland everything was worn until it couldn't be used anymore, as anything.

F INLAND HAS ALWAYS BEEN, FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, STRANGELY PRACTICAL IN EVERYTHING. EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE USED UNTIL THE VERY END. FINNISH PEOPLE, I THINK, HAVE ALWAYS PREFERRED LASTING THINGS OVER STYLE... HOW ABOUT NATURE? IS NATURE IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Yes, it is. As a matter of fact, it's the mushroom season, so whenever I'm not at the theater or doing something to earn my living, I'm in the woods to collect mushrooms and berries. But for me, nature is really, really important because with my profession, I need a place that has nothing to do with other human beings. I must be alone from time to time in order to calm down and gather the force to keep going.

D O YOU HAVE A FAVORITE MOVIE OR ALBUM, OR SOMETHING THAT GETS UNDER YOUR SKIN?

I do. I love Beethoven. I love Bach and Mozart but I also love pop music. And I love Bjork and Mari Boine, who is a singer from Norway. And my favorite movie... I was raised with old school films, film noir and American movies, like *Casablanca* from the '50s. They are really close to my heart. I love small, but super artistic things. Right now I'm watching a lot of TV series, the quality ones. I'm quite disappointed with the movie industry these days. Sometimes there are pearls, but most of the films are awful. Actually, I can't even say what kind of films there are in the world right now. Finland only has one distributor and it only imports mainstream movies that are believed to draw masses of young people to theaters.

I READ SOMEWHERE THAT DREAMS AND DANCE ARE QUITE IMPORTANT FOR YOU.

Yes, it's really true. It's because of my profession. Sometimes people lie with their words but they can never lie with their body, and for me it's really interesting to read the body language. I go to a dance theater and understand things without words. I love circus too, nowadays.

T HAT'S INTERESTING. I LIVE NEXT TO A CIRCUS.

Really?

Y EAH, IT'S THE CIRQUE D'HIVER IN PARIS. I TAKE MY KIDS THERE AT CHRISTMAS TIME. IT'S A BEAUTIFUL PLACE...

A LISTEN, I'M HAPPY TO HEAR THAT YOU IDENTIFY QUITE STRONGLY AS A FEMINIST. IT'S AN INTERESTING POINT OF VIEW, BECAUSE FOR ME FINLAND IS STILL ONE OF THE FIRST COUNTRIES THAT CLAIMED EQUALITY IN POLITICS. BUT IT STILL SEEMS TO ME THAT FINLAND IS NOT REALLY LIKE THAT IN EVERYDAY LIFE.

It's really an old fashioned country. And the decisions our government has made in the last four or five years have reduced the economic equality between men and women. It's really, really old fashioned.

I T'S TIME TO CHANGE THAT. I CAN SEE THE REAL EQUALITY GETTING CLOSER, AND IT'S BECOMING NATURAL. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE WRITTEN IN THE LAW, IT JUST HAS TO BE LIKE THAT. HOPEFULLY THAT WILL COME TO FINLAND TOO. FINLAND IS ALSO A VERY EXCITING COUNTRY, AND IT'S BASICALLY RUN BY POWERFUL WOMEN. BUT WHAT REALLY MAKES ME A PROUD FINN IS THAT FINLAND IS CRAZY.

It's a positive thing. And you can never get enough of the forests.

KATI OUTINEN

IN CONVERSATION WITH

TUOMAS MERIKOSKI

A LIFE OF THEIR OWN

SISU



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KATI OUTINEN









IMAGINARY FRIENDS

JOAKIM OJANEN

Joakim Ojanen's work leaves one puzzled. Cheerful at first glance, on closer examination the characters he paints and sculpts reveal a layer of enigmatic sadness and disorientation, as if stunned and helpless at the incomprehensibility of the world around them. The creatures may be the artist's alter egos, but who doesn't find this mix of a carefree appearance and inner anxiety easily relatable? Neither female nor male, young and old at the same time, they come from no particular country or culture, ready for everyone to see a part of themselves in these humans / animals / wonders of nature. Masterpieces of profound emotional expressions achieved with seemingly humble means, they leave the viewer pondering the eternal question—why is *The King of Nature Having Another Bad Day*?

Artwork courtesy of the artist

Y **OU HAVE A BACKGROUND IN GRAFFITI AND ARE A FAN OF RAP MUSIC, YET THE CHARACTERS YOU CREATE SEEM TO LIVE IN A FANTASY, PASTEL-COLORED WORLD. HOW DO THE TWO AESTHETICS INSPIRE EACH OTHER?**

One point where the two meet may be the fact that hip hop and graffiti are not in the mainstream, they're a part of alternative culture—or at least they used to be 10 years ago when I was doing graffiti. They offer an outsider perspective and I think the characters in my work are also a bit of outsiders. They're by themselves, walking away from the crowd and into the corner where they can be alone. They have their outcast position and they're trying to deal with that. That's the way I see them.

W **OULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTERS AS HUMANS, ANIMALS OR A COMPLETELY NEW SPECIES?**

It's a mix. They are humans, animals and nature at the same time. They're not like people I see in the street. As I'm making them, I'm trying to find an expression or a feeling in the material, and step by step I find a new character almost every time. I see them mostly as self-portraits. They could be me when I was 10 but at the same time they can be me when I'm 32. Somehow, they're also everything in between. I think in the Western culture we're really fixated on age, it's all about living in the moment and right now. Sometimes I can feel that I'm still the 10-year-old myself and that person is also inside me. I think the past is also within us and it's happening at the same time.

T **HERE ARE CERTAIN FEATURES THAT HAVE BECOME YOUR VISUAL VOCABULARY: EYES POPPING OUT, VERY LONG EARS, DUCK BEAK, SHOES THAT COME ALIVE. IS THERE ANY SYMBOLISM BEHIND THIS?**

I think for me it's been a way of finding a visual language. I started to do long ears sometimes, I tried to make them a little longer every time and suddenly they were almost not ears anymore. The next time, I didn't even think that it's a strange ear because it's the usual ear I'm doing. It's all about pushing my own boundaries. I don't think that it looks odd in a way. The duck beak began as a reference from comics. I remember vaguely the first time I did my Donald Duck beak and I was really satisfied with it. Maybe 15 years ago I started drawing from my memory, just trying to remember how Donald Duck looked like and drawing him without looking at an image. I have a really bad image memory so he turned out a little funky. It's a fun exercise, you should try it. Draw comic book characters from your memory because they always look fun when you do that. Some things have stuck in my head, like the beak and the eyes, when I'm drawing them without looking at the original it turns out in a different way and I can use

that as a starting point to find something new. I think it's like building a library with different elements. Sometimes I don't use certain elements from the library all the time but I can go back to them again maybe two years later, see a new potential and start evolving from there again.

IS THERE A CERTAIN CHARACTER WHO YOU PARTICULARLY LIKE TO PORTRAY AND WHO COMES BACK IN DIFFERENT ARTWORKS?

A couple of years ago every character was unique but last year they started to come back more and more. The dog is a character that comes back quite often. That's one of the creatures I'm doing that's not a self-portrait. They're more like the psychic, and that's why the same type of dog comes back more than once. The dog is like the best friend. I don't have a dog yet so maybe it's an imaginary friend.

Y **OUR CHARACTERS MAY SEEM FUNNY BUT THERE A CERTAIN DOSE OF SADNESS AND MELANCHOLY IN ALMOST ALL OF THEM. WHERE DOES THAT COME FROM?**

When I work, I always try to find contrasts. For example, when I started using ceramics, I had the image of the typical boring vases in my head, something that didn't interest me aesthetically at all. I wanted to use that boring material in a way that interested me, and that's where the material contrast comes from. Another contrast is that the characters look funny but also unhappy or sad at the same time. I really enjoy working with that. I don't want the character to be one only thing that's super easy to point out. I want the thoughts to bounce around a little bit when you see the work. So that you can't really say for sure what's the right way to see them.

A **SCULPTURE THAT CAPTURES THAT CONTRAST REALLY WELL IS THE STONE HUGGER. ON ONE HAND, IT'S A CUTE LITTLE BOY, BUT THERE'S ALSO SOMETHING PROFOUNDLY SAD ABOUT HIM HAVING THE STONE AS HIS FRIEND.**

At the same time, he's hiding behind the stone, looking sad or maybe feeling a bit scared of what's in front of him.

T **HE STONE HUGGER IS ALSO A GREAT EXAMPLE OF HOW YOUR TITLES MAKE THE SCULPTURES COME ALIVE.**

I think I'm getting more and more free with the titles. A few years ago, there were a lot more sculptures that were untitled, or the titles were just describing what you see. Usually I don't give them titles until I exhibit them. In the studio,

I work on a few characters at the same time. I start working on a new piece while the other is still drying and waiting to get fired. When I do an exhibition, I can look at them in a new place that's not my studio, which is really messy. And also, it's been a little time since I made them so I can take some distance. Before my last show I had a lot of fun writing the titles. They're telling a story behind the sculptures.

W **HAT TYPE OF EMOTIONS DO YOU THINK YOUR CHARACTERS INSPIRE IN THE VIEWERS?**

A pretty usual thing that I hear is that people want to take care of them, almost have them as a little spirit animal. But I don't really think about what people are going to say about them because in the studio I'm just trying to find something that interests me. One thing that surprised me is that people of all ages really like them. A lot of older ladies like them a lot and that's a crowd that I didn't expect at all. The characters have quite a lot of expression, so the contact you get with them is really instant. After that of course not everyone likes them but those who do, usually like them quite instantly. Then you get closer and read the title, and the story comes a little bit later. Maybe you fall in love with the visual first and then you discover that it's not only happy, it's also a little sad. The more you look at them, the more doors open.

Y **OU GREW UP IN SWEDEN, BUT A PART OF YOUR FAMILY IS FROM FINLAND. DO YOU USE ANY REFERENCES FROM THE FINNISH CULTURE IN YOUR WORK?**

A lot of things are unconscious. My grandfather was Finnish and we have a summer house there so I go to Finland every year but it's not like some of the characters are Finnish. And I don't see them as Swedish characters either. I try to make them without borders, like something that works for the whole humanity. I don't think that they belong to this or that culture. I've been showing them in a lot of different countries and the viewers don't see them as creatures coming from Sweden, they just get them as themselves. But at the same time, I see them as self-portraits so it's a little bit of both I guess. They have some Scandinavian melancholy in them that's really typical of Sweden and Finland.

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PHOTOGRAPHY JOHAN SANDBERG

IRMA KUBISTY

IN CONVERSATION WITH

JOAKIM OJANEN



JOAKIM OJANEN

OIL ON CANVAS, 2017





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MODEL **HUANG** Marilyn Agency

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WORDS
BY

MIMI XU

PORTRAIT
BY

JOHAN SANDBERG

Mimi Xu is a DJ, sound designer and researcher responsible, among others, for the soundtracks of the AALTO shows. A daughter of the French-Chinese acoustic architect Albert Yaying Xu, she got an early introduction into both classical and experimental music, which she rejected as a child only to rediscover this valuable knowledge in her adult life. For her guest lecture at the Oberlin College & Conservatory in Ohio, USA, she investigated our mind's relationship with sound—the essence of which is presented here.

SOUND IS A VIBRATION GOING THROUGH A FILTER CALLED EAR,

and this filter turns a physical phenomenon, the vibration, into emotions. Music or sound can have profound effects on our emotional state. It's believed that this is because of the analogy between the way that music works (tone, rhythm, melodic leaps) and the way our body moves and feels in different emotional states. Music can be an instant link to a time, place or emotion. A specific song can take you back in time and feeling.

SOUNDS CREATE VISUAL IMAGERY, mental images, and automatic projections. So, for example, if you are in a street and you hear the sound of an approaching motorbike, you expect to see a motorbike coming around the corner. If it turned out to be a horse, you'd be very surprised. Your brain has already created the image of a motorbike by hearing the sound. Auditory input enables the visual system to predict incoming information and could confer a survival advantage. We can hear danger coming. Scientists studying brain process involved in sight have found the visual cortex also uses information gleaned from the ears as well as the eyes when viewing the world. When you hear sounds, you automatically trigger the visual part of your brain but the other way around is not so systematic.

WHEN WE NEED TO DECIDE THE TIMING OF EVENTS, we turn to our hearing. Our ears are incredibly sensitive to the rhythm of the world around us, helping

us to track what happens when, and therefore judge cause and effect which is how we learn to predict the future. Auditory reaction time is faster than the Visual reaction time. Research shows that an auditory stimulus takes only 8 to 10 ms to reach the brain, while a visual stimulus takes 20 to 40 ms. Therefore, since the auditory stimulus reaches the cortex faster than the visual stimulus, the ART (Auditory Reaction Time) is shorter than the VRT (Visual Reaction Time). We might not remember it but we feel it straight away. It's instant...That's why music and sounds can be appreciated without any background knowledge. It's visceral. You love it or you hate it immediately.

HUMAN COGNITION IS HIGHLY INFLUENCED BY THE INTERACTION BETWEEN MIND & BRAIN, sensorimotor capabilities, body, and environment. Following this, we can approach music (or musical involvement) by linking our perception of it to our body movement. One could postulate that our bodily movements reflect, imitate, help to parse, or support the understanding of the structure and content of music. Corporeal articulations could be influenced by three co-existing components or concepts: "Synchronization," "Embodied Attuning," and "Empathy." However, "Synchronization" forms the fundamental component, as synchronizing to a beat is easy and spontaneous. The beat serves as the basic musical element, from which more complex structures emerge. Therefore when the body "follows" the beat, the physical effort seems more natural and effortless.



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