

**Embodied Knowledge Bureau / Core Group:** Micaela Terk (Sandberg Instituut, Design Department, 1st year student), Sheona Turnbull (Sandberg Instituut, Design Department, 1st year student), Yotam Shibolet (PhD Researcher & Lecturer at Utrecht University, Department of Media and Culture)

### Short Description

The *Embodied Knowledge Bureau* aims to reconceptualize students' creative practices and research methods from embodied and enactive approaches. In this interdisciplinary course, we seek to produce new forms of knowledge rooted in central constructs of embodied cognition, and based in experiential research and diverse practices of making.

Through workshops rooted in visual arts, somatic practices, and movement research, we will seek out new forms of researching and knowledge-sharing. We will collectively explore unfamiliar practices of thinking and making through the body, in dialogue with artists, designers, researchers, and scientists whose practices and research use embodied experience as a launchpad. We are excited to suggest this platform as a tool for uncovering practices and educational models which pose potent alternatives to Cartesian models of artistic education, research, and practice. Particularly at a time when the limit as to how far our mental experiences can be divorced from our corporeal ones is nearing, and the dangers of this limit are growing increasingly clear, we are very excited and curious to see how the student body (and bodies) will engage with the topics at hand. We will also extensively cover the political forces on being a body in the world, and learn about embodied forms of resistance.

Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to keep a sketchbook and create visual and written documentations of their research and experiences. Selections of these materials will later be published in the *Embodied Learning Lexicon*. We will collectively create this A-Z Lexicon, based on the terminologies and experiences which arise throughout the course. In order to encourage giving voice to students' interests and research, we will personally assign specific words from the lexicon, about which they will be asked to prepare a short 15-minute presentation on. They are warmly encouraged to engage with this word in any way that feels most interesting and engaging.

The *Embodied Knowledge Bureau* will touch on a diverse range of topics from the lens of the body. Topics from the list include: relationality, ecology, technology, economics, power, politics, and feminism.

### Planning — Class schedule attached below

**Branch 1:** The course will begin with both physical and “cognitive” introductions to embodied cognition and somatic learning, and will seek to familiarize students with any background, at any level of experience, and any physical ability, *how the body shapes the way we think and create*. We will also introduce the students to an array of visual and written tools for describing their own embodied experiences and research.

**Branch 2:** In this section of the course, we will dive more deeply into meaning-making and expression from the lens of embodiment. This section focuses on providing students with new toolkits which are rarely available to practitioners from outside of the dance and performance communities. During this part, the students will engage hands-on with choreographers and somatic practitioners based in Amsterdam (SNDO) and abroad.

**Branch 3:** Building on the embodied and theoretical knowledge from the first semester, in this section we will begin collectively reflecting on how these insights might inform our own practices. This process will

begin by critically framing the body (and making from the body) within different discourses, focusing on the effects of capitalism, gender, and colonialism on both individual and collective bodies. We hope to introduce the students to new ways of rethinking these systems from deeply embodied perspectives.

**Branch 4:** We will tie together practical examples of design and arts practices that use the body's knowledge in order to engage differently with humans, audiences, users, citizens, etc. We hope that this will inspire students to critically revisit their own practices, and perhaps question the accessibility and inclusivity of their work from an intuitive and informed position rooted in a vast range of embodied experiences.

Topic	Lecturer	Description	Format
Introduction to Embodied Cognition	Yotam Shibolet	Understanding the basic notions of this cognitive theory (dualism, computationalist approaches, 4E)	Lecture & Discussion
A Dualist History	<a href="#">Yotam Rozin</a>	A playful history of the body-mind separation and the evolution of this model, in both western and non-western cultures	Lecture & Collective Exercise
Introduction to Somatic Learning	Micaela Terk & Sheona Turnbull	How the body shapes the way we learn. We will begin a collective Embodied Learning Lexicon which will underline the interrelations between writing, drawing and embodied meaning making.	Movement & Writing Workshop
Embodied Metaphors	Yotam Shibolet & Sheona Turnbull	How our grasp of language is tied to embodied frameworks and the ways in which our understanding of 'abstract concepts' always relates to tangible dynamics of movement	Lecture & Collective Exercise
Somatic Toolkit for Artists	<a href="#">Barbara Droubay</a> / <a href="#">Merve Purde</a>	An introduction into somatic awareness and embodiment, specifically tailored for creatives and makers	Movement & Drawing Workshop

Zoom in: Release & Voice Work for Artists	<a href="#">Ria Higler</a>	A movement workshop which will introduce Ria Higler's movement research and practice	Movement Workshop
Cultures of Embodiment	Yotam Shibolet	How can we find balance between treating the body as a common ground for shared experience, while accounting for the immensely diverse range of embodied experiences? From body politics to accessibility and queerness, how can critique of the "naturalized" view of the body open space to imagine new forms and techniques of embodied learning?	Lecture & Discussion
Pleasure Activism & Body Politics	Micaela Terk	A zoom in on the shapeshifting body as subject to capitalism, racism, colonialism, and heteronormativity, and how pleasure can be a radical form of activism.	Lecture & Discussion
The Microbial Body & Mirror Neurons	<a href="#">Monika Gravagno</a> & Micaela Terk	Looking at the body as an ecological and cosmological map, beginning with the microorganisms that make up 90% of our bodies! We will also dive into embodied experience as a model for empathy, interpersonal understanding, and experiences of art.	Presentation & Movement Workshop
Microbial Decision Making	<a href="#">Ashley Jane Lewis</a> & <a href="#">Prof. Jamie Lorimer</a>	Ashely will share her artistic research on <a href="#">Slime Mold</a> , and Jamie will share his recent research on microbial ecologies. We will	Presentation & Discussion

		reflect on decision making, resource division, ecology, and urban planning from a microbial perspective.	
Choreographing Urban Landscapes	Micaela Terk & <a href="#">Failed Architecture</a> / <a href="#">Romi Mikulinsky</a>	This session will focus on how technologically mediated urban planning can account for the safety and wellbeing of a wide(r) range of bodies, and will conclude with a sensorial city walk based on <a href="#">Aitana Cordero</a> 's methodology.	Workshop & City Walk
Rethinking HCI from an enactive perspective	Yotam Shibolet & Katharina Nejdl	Rooted in the interdependence of virtual and physical realms, this class will consider embodied approaches to HCI. We will discuss how narrative is understood through movement, and what interactive digital media can teach us about designing around this connection. Katharina will share her work, which uses play in order to make digital tools more engaging and accessible to a wide range of users.	Lecture & Workshop
Movement Workshop & Collective Making	Sheona, Yotam & Micaela	We will leave this opportunity open to find closure and begin collating the Embodied Learning Lexicon which each student has created material for throughout the course.	Workshop and end-of-course celebration

## Final Presentation

We will collectively develop the *Embodied Learning Lexicon*, a publication which expands from the lexicon format as a means to amalgamate the knowledge shared and produced during the program. Throughout the course, the students will be encouraged to speculate on how technological, urban, or socio-political systems might be approached through more deeply embodied perspectives. The publication will aim to

highlight some of the insights from collective making and discussion, and may be launched with a movement workshop / celebration if possible.

If desired, there is an option to publish this in collaboration with [Goodbye Books](#).

**Recommended reading list available upon request :)**

**Budget**

Working Student (0,2 FTE)	€6,200
Guest Teacher (60 hours)	€2,100
Guest Lectures (30 hours)	€1,050
Materials*	€600
Publication	€3,000
Unforeseen	€550
Total	€13,500

\*Any unused material funds will support a student-run workshop and/or party for the publication's launch

**Target Audience & Intended Outcomes**

The *Embodied Knowledge Bureau* aims to engage Sandberg and Rietveld students with the various impacts of embodied experience on how we think, create, and engage with our surroundings. The course is designed for a student body at different stages of their practice, who may have a wide variety of interests, levels of movement experience, and physical abilities, and aims to engage with different forms of knowledge which are too often limited to specific disciplinary practices. By targeting students who are visual/spatial thinkers and are curious (but not necessarily experienced) in working the body in dealing with social issues, we hope our course will be highly relevant for both the Sandberg and Rietveld communities. We further hope to make new forms of knowledge and experience accessible, and encourage students to experiment with their own embodied expressions, languages, and styles. We are excited about developing an inter-departmental community around topics which may often seem intimidating, inaccessible, or simply unaffordable.

The course will strive to balance theory and experience, in order to allow the students ample space to reflect on the impact of their experiences on individual practices and interests. We have drawn on our experiences with similar workshops and courses that we have individually led at Sandberg, HKU, and Utrecht University. Within the Sandberg Instituut, we were happy to find that these workshops were met with great enthusiasm and interest from both students and teachers. We are happy to share that several students and faculty members have shown great interest, and asked to be kept up to date if the course proposal is successful.