

## 7.2. The multiple legitimacies of Tentacle Tribe, a dance company

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### Abstract

According to Hugues Bazin (2002), hip hop dancers working in theatrical settings have a "double legitimacy" as they gain acceptance in two contexts with different expectations, criteria and values. In this case study, we researched how an emerging dance company negotiates artistic identities in the entertainment, street dance and theatrical art worlds, finding acceptance across competing discourses. Tentacle Tribe, a dance company comprised of Emmanuelle Lê Phan and Elon Höglund, operates simultaneously in hip hop, contemporary dance and the entertainment world of companies such as Cirque du Soleil, receiving commercial, street and critical attention. In 2013, we interviewed them, observed their performances, rehearsals, and pedagogy to analyze their success at traversing these different contexts.

We introduce the conceptual framework of "multiple legitimacies." Multiple legitimacies are the result of a changing cultural climate where high/low art divides have been slowly blurring, and a new model has emerged, motivated by sustainability and professional survival. Artists and practitioners have often traversed different contexts in their performing careers. However, we suggest that these activities are now providing a model of sustainability that is structured around new ways of organizing experiences and legitimacies. Importantly, multiple legitimacies may be observed and experienced at the level of bodily techniques and aesthetic choices. This conceptual framework allows for the reading of representations and reifications of the artist across various contexts that might otherwise seem contradictory.

**Keywords:** hip-hop, urban dance, multiple legitimacies, habitus, identities.

Tentacle Tribe, the Montreal-based dance company comprised of Emmanuelle Lê Phan and Elon Höglund, operates within the hip hop, theatrical and entertainment dance worlds, receiving both popular and critical attention. Both members of the company have performed with various companies including the well-known Cirque du Soleil. The starting point for our research was to ask what this particular group does that makes them successful with audiences and communities across a range of contexts.

The focus of this question was not the reaction of the audiences but rather the movement strategies of the dancers themselves. In paying attention to the detail of the physical movements the dancers chose, we hope this research has currency not only for a theoretical understanding of the dance company that we studied, but also within the broader implications of aesthetic choices. The results have provided the basis for further sociological thinking about the professionalization of artists who traverse popular art worlds alongside the established art

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worlds. We became especially interested in how the company modified their movements slightly so as to fit into various dance contexts whose values and aesthetics are not only distinct but also sometimes conflicting. Our contribution involves a detailed movement analysis that contributes to the theoretical underpinnings of such arguments about aesthetics. We do not consider a movement analysis to 'reveal' some essential truth about the movements and their 'proper' contexts, but rather use this form of analysis to think through aspects of performance. Movement analysis also raises questions about how the 'rules of the game,' found in divergent practices, are navigated, played with and at times even mocked.

In 2013-2014, we conducted interviews, and observed performances, rehearsals, and classes with Tentacle Tribe. We also researched the history and critical reception of Tentacle Tribe. We discuss our methods, positions and roles in the study a bit later on in this paper. However, one of the remarks of Elon during an interview captures how identity might be tangled up with our questions about changing professional contexts and aesthetics:

...hip hop dancers, I feel like maybe they think it [our style] is quite contemporary and contemporary dancers think it's very hip hop so we are some place between and for me since I started performing that is always what I have been, this weird between animal so it's like you don't really belong anywhere but you belong everywhere. It's good because you can get jobs, I've been in circus shows, I've been in contemporary dance shows, I've been in hip hop performances, battles... you can be everywhere but at the same time everyone thinks you are kind of weird or different.

In the quotation above, Elon speaks about his experience navigating between the street dance (hip hop) and contemporary dance worlds. Although he claims to be perceived as "weird or different" the simultaneous presence and success of Tentacle Tribe within these worlds attests to a very different reality - one marked by acceptance within communities with drastically divergent values, disparate aesthetics and radically different histories and agendas. This enviable cultural position shows that the artistic entity known as Tentacle Tribe navigates successfully in very different cultural environments by fulfilling the expectations of different social/cultural groups. Thus, a case study of a small dance company touches on contemporary notions of belonging, legitimacy and identity. Through our analysis of the research, we introduce the conceptual framework of "multiple legitimacies."

Before we can adequately define and describe our thinking about shifting legitimations in contemporary art and how they are addressed at the level of the body, we will first set the stage by introducing some key ideas that we are responding to through our findings. The question of legitimation has always been tied to aesthetics although this position is difficult to address sociologically. One area that has been more commonly accessed is artistic elitism (Frith 1996). Elitism is typically evidenced in discursive practices, and is also found in street or popular cultural practices alongside practices legitimated through formal institutions (Thornton 1995).

Howard Becker (1963) sets the agenda for discussing both the sociological understanding of "art worlds," and the processes by which deviance and/or outsiders get labeled. Early in his professional career he investigated phenomena such as drug use and deviance - studies which would produce a mode of thought called "labelling theory." Becker also contributed to the study of art and artists, and used his ideas regarding labelling to constitute a theory of arts production. In *Art Worlds* (1982) Becker researched the systems of arts production rather than art objects themselves (prior to this time art objects were often considered sites of cultural meaning and works of individual genius). The art object was understood to be a part of a system of collective production, and, as in Becker's work *Outsiders* (1963), he attempted to label artists and the art production systems of which they were, or were not, a part. In our

case study, we are interested in how one set of artists can negotiate, mutate and embody various traits to fit in to divergent art worlds. Howard Becker's various models contribute to our set of questions in this regard.

Most sociological studies of artistic practices and (post) subcultural identities are also indebted to Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu (1984) invests in the habits of the body that take place on a physical level, and in how these habits are formed over time, through repetition and education, telling us something about not only where a person has been but also what has shaped their bodily experience. In fact, the history of dance is similar to many other art traditions, where the tastes of audiences do, indeed, "classify the classifier." In an attempt to move beyond the silos of the 'social' and 'aesthetic' theoretical considerations, Bourdieu developed the concepts of 'habitus' and the 'field.' His theory of fields explores the ideals of different types of positions that artists take in tension with each other. This is a major distinction between Becker and Bourdieu. Where Becker focuses on the collaborations of many people to create art (from the person collecting tickets, to the producer and artist), Bourdieu focuses on the tensions between artists that, he argues, create their positions in the field in relation to each other. Artists then take their positionality as their own creation, and yet, he would argue, these are in some ways determined by class. For Bourdieu the field of cultural production, like a sports field, was always a contested space, where participants (i.e. artists) are engaged in constituting and contesting their position, in an attempt to displace and consolidate their cultural power - vying for the elusive prize of legitimacy. This power, called "capital" in a nod to Marxist thought, was substantially affected by the quality called charisma.

Both Simon Frith (1996) and Sarah Thornton (1995), approach the study of popular culture from positions informed by Bourdieu. For Frith, a sociological perspective makes aesthetic theory possible because it grounds the research in the pragmatic realities that inform meaning-making. For Thornton, club goers often demonstrate elitist mindsets and codes of conduct. She argues, building on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "cultural capital," that this behaviour of performing distinctions through bodily practices and verbal articulations of taste is "*subcultural capital*." What Frith and Thornton both articulate is that distinctions are not only made between high and low art, but also *within* popular cultural forms and expressions.

These perspectives are valuable to our study because they recognize that those participating in street dance cultures are, at times, as elitist as 'ballet' fans about their tastes, and distinctions, and similarly, "street" about their affinities and preferences, while often still benefiting from a top-down model of arts funding and desire for recognition. Studying the discourses of the intersections of each world reveals the value of sociological underpinnings to any understanding of aesthetic possibilities, trajectories and meanings.

We suggest that this elitism within popular culture is an emergence, which has allowed for a pairing of sensibilities across the popular and theatrical divide. This sharing of notions about superior art-making allows for the current climate where high/low art lines are blurred a particular resemblance. Those that earn the respectability of different crowds have a legitimacy that speaks to their ability to navigate successfully the rules of more than one game.

In France, where hip hop dance was introduced to the proscenium stage quite early on in the development of hip hop theatre, and was supported by artistic directors, social workers, choreographers and the state, sociologists have begun to research legitimation in the arts happens. Roberta Shapiro (2004), one of the first sociologists to study this phenomenon in depth, became interested in the critical acclaim for 'hip hop dance,' especially how theatrical representations of the dance were being discussed as "art" in the media. Similarly, Hugues

Bazin (1995) has questioned how legitimation works for dancers that participate in street dance culture, at the same times as in theatrical performances on proscenium stages performed for a different audience. Building on Becker's model of 'art worlds,' Bazin suggests that those dancers that take part in the 'battles' of street dance, often in clubs, also take part in theatrical productions, achieving a sort of 'double legitimacy.' Thus, they are able to reap the benefits of two different 'art worlds.' Later, in the analysis portion of our paper, we will further Bazin's concept, 'double legitimacy,' to consider a theoretical framework for 'multiple legitimacies.'

## Methods

Tentacle Tribe was chosen as the subject for this study during their artistic residency at York University, Toronto in October through November of 2013. During this period, Tentacle Tribe were occupied with creating a dance piece on the York University dance ensemble, facilitating movement classes, acting as artistic mentors for student choreographers enrolled in a interdisciplinary arts course and performing their new artistic creation at university events. Their uncanny ability to navigate these heterogeneous situations was noticed early on in their residency by both faculty and students. This ability was complemented by the appeal that their work had for students and faculty of divergent artistic sensibilities and cultural backgrounds. These rare social and artistic distinctions in tandem with two projects developed by a doctoral and a senior undergraduate student prompted several discussions and eventually crystallized into a concerted multi-researcher study of the work, methods, strategies and identities of this unique collaborative team.

Members of the research team were: Professor Mary Fogarty, the organizer of the residency, course director and research facilitator and practicing street dancer; Jonathan Osborn, a first-year doctoral student and former professional dancer and choreographer, and Deanne Kearney, a senior undergraduate dance student interested in journalism and archival studies. Research consisted of observation of Tentacle Tribe in their many roles during classes, rehearsals and performances, participant observation during movement classes, two interviews, both approximately one hour in length - one conducted in November of 2013 and another in April of 2014, and movement analyses of classes and archived videos from different dance worlds (breaking battles, industrial productions and small scale contemporary dance performances). Each researcher brought specific skills, histories and perspectives to the study and their subject positions within hip hop, contemporary dance, movement analysis, theatre and cultural studies were reflected in the process.

The three authors were able to access Tentacle Tribe and their artistic and pedagogical work from different perspectives, depending on their manner of interaction with the company and their personal histories. During classes taught/facilitated by Tentacle Tribe, all three researchers participated in the classes as dancers at some point, one researcher observed dance classes, and one researcher interviewed Tentacle Tribe about their pedagogical practices at the beginning of the study. This was followed by an interview with Tentacle Tribe near the end of the study with all three researchers, where ideas from the study were shared, clarified and modified. The combination of these perspectives enabled the formulation of a complex, symbiotic aesthetic and social situation of Tentacle Tribe. Theoretical ideas generated by the group were reached through a consensus of opinion and reflect an agreement between

persons with varying degrees of familiarity with various dance forms and dance communities and different cultural and educational backgrounds.

## The case study

*That is why we chose the octopus, because  
we are able to adapt in any situation.*  
Elon Höglund

The case study began by building on Bazin's thinking about 'double legitimacy' for street dance practitioners who are investing in paid, stage performances for contemporary programming and audiences. We first asked how Tentacle Tribe were able to navigate so smoothly between various art worlds, and navigate different positions in different fields, to work successfully across multiple spheres of entertainment (Cirque du Soleil, Cirque Eloize), street dance communities and contemporary dance worlds. In this section, we describe the case study. In the next section we demonstrate what movement analysis brings to a study of sociology of the arts, and then contribute some theoretical terms to explain our findings in the analysis section.

Although Tentacle Tribe officially formed in 2012, Emmanuelle and Elon have worked together since 2005 after being cast in Cirque du Soleil production *The Beatles*. Both dancers trained in a variety of disciplines including contemporary dance, martial arts and several street dance forms. They describe their choreographic creations as a combination of contemporary dance fused with concepts from various street dance styles. Informed by intricate partnering, a daring and flowing physicality accented by nuanced details and a strong and specific relationship to music they have garnered critical responses. They have recently been referred to as "rock stars" within Canadian dance. Their first collaboration was a duet in 2005 for *Cirque Du Soleil* in Quebec City. This duet was then produced into a short film by Natalie Galazka entitled "Elon and Emmanuelle." In 2012 they created "When They Fall" for the *Festival Quartier Danse* which was adapted the following year for a site specific performance with a live trumpeter. In 2013, they created "Nobody likes a Pixelated Squid" which was presented at *Tangente* as well as the *Toronto Urban Dance Symposium*. In 2013, they accepted a residency at York University's Dance Department where they were able to facilitate an interdisciplinary class with Professor Mary Fogarty, create a new group work, perform and serve as mentors. Their most recent dance film entitled "Vanishing Points" directed by Marites Carino was completed in early 2014. More recently they have performed in London, England at Sadler's Wells for *Breakin' Convention*, an international festival for contemporary hip hop performance.

As may be evident from this history, Tentacle Tribe does not perform exclusively for one type of community or audience. Their first production would fall under the category of industrial or commercial work, having been made as part of a large production by the "circus" company Cirque du Soleil. Their second work "When They Fall" premiered at a venue in Montreal usually reserved for contemporary dance and for an audience typically comprised of artists and professional dancers invested in non-commercial dance endeavors. Their third work "Nobody Likes a Pixelated Squid" also premiered at a venue dedicated to experimental contemporary dance and was subsequently shown at a festival for urban dance. Simultaneous to these productions is regular participation in local, national and international hip hop events.

This participation consists of various activities and responsibilities including competing, judging, and organizing events, and practices.

Although both dancers have been committed full time to Tentacle Tribe since 2012 their artistic histories are dissimilar enough to merit mention:

Elon Höglund, was born in Stockholm Sweden into an artistic family of Romani lineage. He began his physical training through exposure to various styles of martial arts included Kung Fu, Capoeira and Tae Kwon Do before studying various hip hop dance styles including breaking and popping. Before creating *Tentacle Tribe*, Elon toured with *Bboyizm Dance Company*, *Rubberband Dance Company*, *Cirque Eloize*, *Cirque Du Soleil* and *Norwegian State Theatre*. He remains an active member of the hip hop collectives *Fresh Format Bboy Crew* and *Concrete Kingz Sweden*.

Emmanuelle Le Phan's training differs in that she was versed in ballet and contemporary dance before becoming active within the street dance world. She attended the dance program at De La Salle High School in Ottawa, Ontario, and obtained her BFA in contemporary dance from Concordia University in Montreal. During university she began dancing as B-Girl Cleopatra and has competed successfully at breaking competitions in Canada, the United States and Sweden. Before *Tentacle Tribe*, she co-founded *Solid State Breakdance Collective*. She also has been a part of *Rubberbandance Company*, *Cirque Du Soleil*, *Cirque Eloize*, and *Bboyizm Dance Company*. Like Elon, she remains active in the breaking community through the female hip hop collective *Legendary Crew*.

## Movement analysis

The following movement analysis is concerned with four videos which serve as examples of different contexts that Tentacle Tribe inhabit. The first two videos highlight the movement proclivities of both Elon and Emmanuelle individually, the third illustrates their tendencies while performing contemporary dance and the fourth is an example of a performance for commercial theatre. In general this analysis reveals a focus by Tentacle Tribe on performing movement in a direction appropriate to specific contextual conventions while retaining a general vocabulary derived from a hip hop sensibility. In short, these aesthetic conventions are:

- i) **Breaking**: social, combative or competitive spectacular movement, fast rhythmic work punctuated by explosive gestures that erupt as often as possible; duration is short and part of a series of competitive exchanges between participants; virtuosity is continually demonstrated.
- ii) **Theatrical**: conversational, organized into abstract, relational scenarios; organized around one or more movement theme; space is perceived of as fluid. Spectacular movement is a result of relations, duration is long; virtuosity is often concealed or sublimated to structure.
- iii) **Industrial or Entertainment**: declarative, conventional, affirmative and self-evident; predictable according to an emotional agenda; utilizes relational strategies that are symmetric or geometric. Space, although not restricted by actual barriers is limited and contained but movements appear expansive or spectacular; virtuosic movement is strategically displayed, accented, and mediated by theatrical conventions.

There are obvious limitations to such a typology and there are also possible resistances to such formulations even amongst the researchers. These resistances to categorization reveal interesting aspects about the various art worlds and their tensions in relation to each other. For example, b-boys and b-girls have traditionally distanced themselves from the “spectacular” elements of their dance in various conversational discourses shared about the dance. The feeling amongst hip hop dancers that specialize in breaking is that the media and commercial interests in the dance (read as inauthentic) would focus only on the spectacular moves of the dance such as the head spin or windmill, and edit out aspects of the dance that showcase musicality, dancing, nuances in footwork, etc. Even with this resistance, b-boy and b-girls are aware that their “power moves” and the spectacular qualities of their dance are the movements most valued by a general audience and there is, for the purposes of commercial work in the entertainment field, an interest to appease their employers and audiences.

The following movement observations, while certainly not exhaustive in terms of their analytic scope, allow for a comparison of Tentacle Tribe’s performance strategies in different work contexts as demonstrated in video examples available on the sites Youtube and Vimeo. Although our study did not limit itself to these sources (as live observation of performances, classes and rehearsals was a vital component of the research), many of the trends we observed are present and evident within these videos. A short list of definitions for terms utilised are:

- *Vocabulary*: The physical events or actions performed, related to existing canons of movement and their histories and form.
- *Posture*: The manner in which the body, particularly the spine is habitually held, presented or displayed; a vertical spine is often associated with the concept of neutrality, a concave one with a defensive positioning and an extended one with formal presentation.
- *Levels*: The space, organised on a vertical axis, which the body inhabits during the course of the performance. Low level - refers to ground level, Mid level - to normal standing level and High level to jumps and gestures which are organised above the shoulders.
- *Duration*: A time based term describing the overall period from beginning of a particular dance event to the end. Short - under 5 minutes, mid-length - under ten minutes and long - over ten minutes.
- *Speed*: the rate at which vocabulary is executed.
- *Focus*: the relationship between the performer and space outside the body, often relatable to an audience or on stage events.
- *Quality*: the manner in which a vocabulary is executed and performed expressed as adjectives.
- *Use of space*: the expansion and retraction of the body within the kinesphere of the body and the relative stage space available -similar to levels but organised on a mainly horizontal axis.

The video “bboy Wandering Spirit”<sup>2</sup> is a collection of short sequences which feature Elon Höglund dancing in a hip hop context. The dances are all improvisational and although individually each may be related to themes iterated by nearby dancers at the time there are key aspects to the dances which continually manifest themselves. These aspects go beyond the level of individual moves, choreography or vocabulary, and also include posture. It should be noted that many of these aspects are intrinsically related to the form, aesthetic and

<sup>2</sup> “bboy Wandering Spirit” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Zdog5iztPQ> [Accessed July 1st 2014]

conventions of hip hop dance and to several martial arts forms Höglund trained in during his youth. The video is comprised of short excerpts from various b-boy social events and competitions - generally the sustained dance would be relatively short due to the physical effort required and conventions of the breaking community.

Generally, the legs, arms, shoulder and back are all used as supports and the body moves in a forward motion when upright and when transitioning to the ground. The limbs do not often extend out from the body when upright although on occasion they reach for the ground or stretch out during held poses. Turns occur on both a horizontal, diagonal axis and vertical axes. The dancer does not physically come into contact with other dancers. The vocabulary is comprised of many of the conventions of hip hop including footwork, drops to floor, use of arms and legs for support, limited extension of arms and legs except during stalls and balances, body rotation along a diagonal axis and small springs. There are several examples of the use of diagonal methods of approaching the floor using the side space. The posture is concave with the pelvis tucked and the upper spine, head and shoulder slightly curved forward. The dance consists of upright movement around the space and movements on the ground occurring near the centre of an imagined circle. As such, the low and middle levels are accessed and use of the high level is absent. The speed of the movements is rapid and occasionally frozen or held when in an extended position. There are brief moments when small qualitative changes occur and the body decelerates or accelerates. The focus is habitually down towards the ground or out towards either an individual or small group. The dance occurs in a limited space and this is similar to a circle in shape. In general circular pathways are utilized. The dominant movement qualities are "sharp" and "indirect".

Like "bboy Wandering Spirit", "B-Girl Cleopatra repping in 2011"<sup>3</sup> is comprised of several clips. The first set of clips is from an all-styles battle, the second is from music video inspired by the video game "Street Fighter" and the last is from formal hip-hop battles. In this analysis we were concerned mainly with the third section of clips, as the first and second section demonstrate an approach to movement outside of the conventions of hip hop settings, one which is concerned with hybridity and the other with similitude. Also like "bboy Wandering Spirit" the third section of clips demonstrates an approach to movement characterised by adherence to many of the conventions of hip hop dance. Again, the sustained dances would be relatively short due to the physical effort required and conventions of the breaking community.

During the dances the legs, arms, shoulder and back are all used as supports. The body generally moves in a forward motion when upright and when transitioning to the ground but there are exceptions to this during springs onto the back or hands. The limbs extend out from the body when upright during gestures and kicks but do not reach upwards. Arms extend fully to reach for the ground or when executing cartwheels and springs. Turns occur on horizontal, vertical, sagittal and diagonal axes. Momentum is generated through torquing the body against itself. The dancer does not physically come into contact with other dancers. The vocabulary utilised consists of fast footwork with homolateral arm movements alternating with drops, rolls and spins on the floor. Also executed are back handsprings, cartwheels, springs and turns. The spine is held in a curved position with the pelvis tucked under and the upper spine, head and shoulder slightly curved forward. The levels utilised are mainly low and middle.

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<sup>3</sup> B-Girl Cleopatra repping in 2011 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGNtwU-yLUA> [Accessed July 1st 2014]



The focus is primarily out or projected towards a competitor. The dance occurs in an extremely small area which in some cases even delineated by a light source. The main qualities of the dance are “strong” and “direct.”

Comprised of excerpts from their full-length theatrical work of the same name, “Nobody Likes a Pixellated Squid”<sup>4</sup> (2013) displays several moments of a dance which utilises a hip hop vocabulary but articulated in a manner informed by contemporary theatrical dance. The full dance is comprised of three sections (or movements) demarcated by changes in music. The overall duration of the full dance is over twenty minutes and would be considered long.

The dance is generally vertical with bodies suspended, balanced and counterbalanced and movements are both sequential or simultaneous. Legs are used for weight bearing and arms are used to gesture, extend and reach out into space, amplifying core movement and articulating paths of flow. The body is used as a transmitter of force or energy and actions may effect one or both bodies. The fluidity which characterises much of the dance is occasionally contrasted with stillness or sharp punctuated gestures. Attention is given to the articulation of feet, hands, eyes, neck and head. Large movements and partnering sections are not accented but engineered to flow in and out of other movements. The vocabulary consists of body waves which travel through the core and extremities, suspensions and balances, pedestrian walking, gestures in which there is a dynamic relationship between one part of the body and another, space holds, partnering developed through contact and weight transfer, and small pulses. The posture is, in contrast to that adopted during breaking, upright with the pelvis, rib cage, shoulders and head balanced on top of each other and the chest and neck open and exposed. However, the bodies continually modulate through shapes and the spine often extends backwards and flexes forward and laterally. The levels utilised are predominantly low and mid with frequent, fluid changes between them throughout the dance. One body may remain for a period at low level while the other inhabits the mid level or vice versa.

The speed varies throughout the dance. However, the general speed is moderate with multiple episodes. This highlight acceleration, deceleration momentum and stillness. Small pulses and arm, head and feet movements punctuate a general lugubrious quality. The performer’s foci is outwards or inwards depending on the movement. When outwards the focus appears to go past the audience or follows arm, leg or torso gestures. When inward the focus appears contemplative or reflective rather than confrontational. The dancers favour an asymmetrical relationship with regards to each other and the stage space. The dance travels around a large area of space that is accessed in circular and direct fashions. The dance also travels around the space sideways, forwards and backwards periodically pausing in certain areas during solos. Space generally expands while both performers move and contracts when one dancer is featured. In many respects there is no front to the movement and the body is displayed as a three dimensional, articulate object. The dominant qualities are “fluid”, “weighted” and “indirect.”

“Elon and Emmanuelle”<sup>5</sup> is a short film produced in collaboration with the filmmaker Natalie Galazka. and is an iteration of a choreography created in 2012 for Cirque du Soleil production “Les Chemins Invisibles”. The audience for this work would be familiar with the spectacular and large-scale works associated with Cirque du Soleil. Poor quality footage of the

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<sup>4</sup> Nobody Likes a Pixellated Squid <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BT-U6-LHDA> [Accessed July 1st 2014]

<sup>5</sup> Elon and Emmanuelle: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QImRIYZTEMQ> [Accessed July 1st 2014]

original show can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afj4SZMUSKM>. The duration of the work is under five minutes and would be considered to be of medium length.

The body is generally upright and presented frontally or on a slight diagonal to allow the head, and chest to be seen throughout the dance. Spectacular moves common in circus such as rolls, jumps, turns, flips, cartwheels and partnering are utilised. The vocabulary consists of body waves which travel through the core and extremities, suspensions and balances, theatrical walking, running and standing, gestures in which there is a dynamic relationship between one part of the body and another, space holds, partnering developed through contact and weight transfer. Posture is upright and presentational and in line with theatrical convention. Extension is frequently accessed during spectacular movements (such as jumps). Flexion is used in a utilitarian (rather than presentational) fashion. The use of levels varies with several notable accented moments in high space. The body is most often found in the middle level. The body accesses the low and high spaces during moments of bodily dialogue between the performers. The speed is moderate with occasional dramatic pauses for the purpose of emphasising a gesture, or glance, or dramatic moment. Movement is executed so it can be seen, digested, and related to the general action. The focus is out towards the “audience” or towards one another at eye level. The dancers maintain a symmetrical relationship with each other and the stage and do not inhabit the periphery of the stage or the backspace. Dominant qualities are “light”, “quick” and “direct.”

|                    | Posture                      | Levels           | Duration   | Speed                                | Focus                          | Quality                         | Use of Space          |
|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Hoglund in Battles | curved in slight flexion     | low and mid      | short      | fast                                 | down                           | sharp and indirect and circular | circular, small       |
| Le Phan in Battles | curved in slight flexion     | low and mid      | short      | fast                                 | down and towards challenger    | strong and direct               | circular and small    |
| theatrical work    | neutral spine that modulates | low and mid      | long       | variable, fluid spectacular poses    | inwards or towards space       | indirect                        | large, and asymmetric |
| Industrial work    | slight extension             | low mid and high | mid length | moderate sustained spectacular poses | outwards or towards each other | direct                          | large symmetric       |

## Conclusion

There is clear intention for the movement modifications that occur as Tentacle Tribe choose to “fit” into different worlds. Their general success at achieving quite different statuses in these different environments is without a doubt a result of their high level of competency across these different domains. To use a biological analogy: the vocabulary of Tentacle Tribe can be considered to be the body of an organism - its limbs and navigational system. This “body” for the most part remains intact with the same movements present regardless of the context. Our chart shows the specialised cells (focus, quality, speed, etc.) allow in the organism to transform to context. Thus the chart could be looked at as depicting aspects of

"ornamentation" or "camouflage". Tentacle Tribe demonstrates an uncanny social perception about molding movement to suit different social scenarios according to aesthetic expectations. Tentacle Tribe make decisions and distinctions based on the venues which each attract radically different audiences. Tentacle Tribe are able to adapt to and negotiate temporary membership within a variety of communities usually characterised as heterogeneous and disparate through a process of applying alterations to a basic set of movement principles.

In hip hop contexts, Tentacle Tribe are seen as contemporary dancers, and in contemporary dance contexts they are labeled hip hop. In both contexts, they are seen as successful for contributing new approaches to movement invention and practices from another domain. As dancers with well-developed bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, they also create minor movement modifications to adapt to their changing environments resulting in their abilities to blend into various scenes and performance contexts.

This appears in our research to be a strategy that is both intentional and instinctive. Its instinctive element draws on an identifiable determination by outsiders to 'fit in', a determination that is observable in the natural world through techniques of camouflage. This camouflage is characterised not as a subterfuge for infiltration, but as a technique of integration that absorbs and responds to the environment. The social critique here places the various art worlds inhabited in an *equal* relationship, so there is no sense of a popular or vernacular style attempting to legitimize itself. On the contrary, this strategy demonstrates the potency of those elements of movement that are alien to each circumstance: their power to transform the inhabited space. We conclude that this strategy is only possible for those who can maintain the integrity of each style-space, while performing a transformative move into that current particularity from elsewhere. This is the act of gaining multiple legitimacies.

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