

INTRODUCTION

This document will reflect on the making process of GUT, a durational performance in which the audience can visit a *guthuman*. This *guthuman* is a fictional character, a being who comes from a society where the gut has taken over the bodies of humans and therefore dictates how these humans behave. The audience visits the guthuman in an inbetween room, where he sits on a chair, is in his own world but also communicating to us, drinking a lot of black liquid, dancing to songs, and looking at himself in the mirror. The performer of GUT adheres to a score consisting of very specific snippets of behavior that he can choose from, as well as compositional rules for combining these snippets, which are released by the trigger of a gutsound. The guthuman can only show activity when triggered by a gutsound, if there is no gutsound, there is no activity. The performance is the result of a preceding series of 4 performances in which different relations between audience, performers, and gutsounds were explored. The findings of these 4 preceding performances which informed this final form are discussed in this reflection as well.

In this reflection, knowledge, findings, experiences, wordings, interpretations, and concepts are used which came into existence in collaboration and conversation with the performers, dramaturg, artistic advisor, and tutors Manuel Groothuysen, Erik van de Wijdeven, Asya Deinekina, Gerben Vaillant, Fabián Santarciel de la Quintana, Elowise Vandebroecke, Vladimir Miller, and Bart van den Eynde. In addition, the book *And Then it Got Legs: Notes on Dance Dramaturgy* by Jeroen Peeters heavily informed the reflective process.

There is a difference between the fictional reality that the audience perceives, and the working reality which the performer experiences. When I speak about the guthuman, I am talking about the fiction of the performance from the perspective of the audience. When I speak about the performer, I am speaking about the rehearsal and performance reality from the perspective of the performer, director, and collaborators.

The making process of GUT entailed generating a list of internal and external behaviorisms from which the performer can choose when the trigger (a gutsound) occurs. We worked on how this guthuman reacts, what it thinks, and how it moves when a gutsound releases activity. The score, however, does not differentiate between the *type* of gutsound. Rather, the score treats

gutsounds purely as a trigger, as beats, while keeping in account that the performer sometimes needs to change his *threshold of affection* and filter the amount of triggers when too many gutsounds occur.

Control plays a central role in the process of GUT. The movements (both muscle movements and inner movements, like imaginations) were heavily fabricated and thoroughly rehearsed with the performers. The gutsounds, on the other hand, can not be controlled. The sounds act as an unknown other which dictates when and how much the performer is activated. The gutsounds may decide to make only one sound each two minutes, or multiple sounds a second. For the performer, there is an element of *honesty to the gut*: even though the score does not differentiate between the type of gutsounds, the performer stays open to what the specific sounds do to his body, that is, which movement the specific sounds make him choose. This honesty has an enigmatic element for everyone involved, except for the gut. It is not as straightforward as 'a loud gutsound triggers a large movement', or 'a liquid sound provokes a legato movement and a pop sound provokes a staccato movement', for example. There is an element of improvisation at play within the borders of a clear system of behaviors. In a sense, the creation process of GUT is a compositional technique where control and chance relate.

Not only for the creators of GUT, but for the audience control plays an important role as well. Control plays a different role for the fictional reality of the audience than for the reality of the performer. For the audience, it looks like the gutsounds are controlling the guthuman. However, for the performer the score is in control and the gut sounds trigger an option of this score. This reflection will look at the process of creating GUT through the lens of *control*:

What role did control play in generating the fictional audience reality as well as the practical performers-reality?

Even though this reflection will look back on the creation process of GUT in retrospect through the lens of control, *control* was not the leading subject during the process of making the performance. Rather, the core of the process can be seen as forming languages in the fiction of the performance as well as the working process. For GUT, we have been building a mini-culture of behavior based on an unknown other, the trigger of the gut. Creating the behavioral score was, and still is, an iterative process. In the rehearsal studio, gutsounds trigger behaviors of the performers based on a provoked imaginary, and sometimes fictional space. These behaviors

are then selected, altered, specified, and categorized, and slowly become the score. It grows in a system of call and response, and becomes more precise over time. The building of this system goes hand in hand with building and reshaping a working language between the performer and director through reporting and feedbacking. Even though GUT has been regularly shown for over a year, the guthuman is still in the making. We still tweak the set of reactions that the performers can pick from. We are recomposing the score live.

THE ORIGIN OF GUT

The origin of GUT is a vague, messy, and chaotic web of intuition, motivation, thought patterns, and themes. Dance Dramaturge Jeroen Peeters expresses how 'often a so-called theme is only a placeholder for an intuition, words that allow you to speak to producers and funding bodies as well as among collaborators'. While the motivation and thematics that come with this motivation have been a motor during the process, it is always a placeholder for the actual work and many aspects of these thematics have not survived the process of creating the work.

What brought me to gutsounds, starts with a fear of death and my reaction to it. When I feel afraid of death, my reaction is to dive as deep into my living body as possible, to be reminded that I am alive, that things are okay. I am sure many people relate to this, as many methodologies for surrendering to aliveness exist: meditation, working out, having sex. What interested me about diving into body parts is that 'being inside' these body parts offers a meeting point for contradicting tendencies: in the material of a body part I find reassurance, aliveness, comfort, as well as confrontation with the very idea that I am afraid of: we are made of material. I found amplifying gutsounds the most effective way to dive into this materiality: they're loud, meditative, but most importantly, they're hard to control and predict (versus heartbeats and breathing). The gut, and your body, has its own plan which cannot be controlled. The fear of death has no meaning for the gut, it just does what it needs to do. It interested me that this fact has both a soothing and worrying element. In the world of the gut, you just need to let go.

A confrontation with the materiality of a human body brings me to the absurdity of societal existence. I find it extremely dark but also funny that we are bags of flesh and bacteria who grew into the most absurd behaviorisms, from using a fork, to using language, to shaking hands, to having heart break, all as a pile of bacteria, fiber, bubbling guts. It is also funny to me how the insides of these bags of flesh are part of an entire inner and outer ecosystem which cannot be

controlled, while the behaviors of these bags of flesh try to navigate through a society where they try to control the way things should be.

Gutsounds therefore offered me a place where all these thematics and intuitions can meet. I felt very challenged by the idea to use gutsounds as a catalyst to formalize these thoughts into a performance. I wanted to create a meeting place for these thoughts, the comfort and pleasure of surrendering to being a living body and its meditative effect (materiality as a gateway for pleasure), the confrontation with the fact we are organic matter (materiality as a collapsing prison which we cannot control) and part of an entire ecosystem, and the socialized absurd manners that this fleshbag has learned (materiality as an absurd reminder). I wanted to render a body and its behaviors into material.

I wanted to create *humanoids* who carried these different tension fields of materiality and absurdity. Under guidance of my tutors, I used a science fiction model as a method to go about this, even though the outcome might not be a science fiction-performance, whatever that means. The thought experiment that got me going was: *what if there is a society where humans always have their gutsounds amplified, already for generations? What does that do to the way they think, communicate, eat, breathe, sleep, and move?* I chose to focus on the behavior of the humanoids more than on the way the infrastructure of the society looked.

THE ENIGMA OF GUIDING IMAGES

According to Jeroen Peeters, 'marking a theme/formulating a question is in itself not enough to get started. It is important to encourage a shared appetite for fantasizing about the work in the making'. He calls this a guiding image, an image that seems to know more you do at that time of the process, and which will slowly grow into a conceptual landscape.

'A guiding image is a symbolic marker that offers clarity and perspective. It also seems to know more than you do: probing and expanding it into a full blown conceptual landscape rich with material requires time and attention throughout the process. Such a conceptual landscape is not to be confused with the work to come; it is a placeholder that is discarded once the work takes on its final material form.'

Before the start of the rehearsal process, I had shared my thoughts, motivations, desires, and thematics with my collaborators. When we actually started rehearsing GUT 3 with performer

Gerben Vaillant and artistic advisor Fabián Santarciel de la Quintana, [I shared a video of 'Performance Capture' by Ed Atkins with them.](#) I did not realize before showing them how much this fragment would resonate. Something clicked, the atmosphere and thematics came together. The disconnect and connection between the rational behavior and the visceral matter of the beings inspired us. Fabián described the movements of these bodies as the tail of a cat: automatic, balanced, unintentional and intentional at the same time. The body has its own will without this will being registered. This video, and the tail of the cat became the first two guiding images. Ed Atkins' work in general, and the way he and others spoke about his work, are guiding elements for my work. For example, the sentence 'Hovering in space, the nameless protagonist quivers with existential doubt, desire, and hubris' by Natasha Hoare on Atkins' work has been a sentence we went back to along the way.

Not only an image can be a guiding factor in the creation process. The amplification of the gutschounds was actually a very important guiding 'image' as well. The statement that a 'guiding image seems to know more than you' was very applicable to the gutschounds. Like described in the introduction, I had a strong feeling that, within gutschounds, all the elements I wanted to talk about existed: death, decay, socialization, absurdity, humor, ego/anthropocentrism. How exactly the gutschounds would bring us there, was unknown. In addition, which thematics were actually at the core (as the list above may be too much) was not known to us either. The gutschounds therefore functioned as a fruitful and enigmatic driving force. The gutschounds is a collaborator with its own, very demanding, will. A will that we could not control whatsoever, and that was the point of it being there. A collaborator to which we had to position ourselves constantly. Even though you have an idea what the gutschounds will say next, as they come out of your body and you are familiar with the type sound, you do not know exactly when the next sound will be, and what the next sound will be. The tension between familiarity, alienation, control and letting go was an interesting driving force.

Later in the process, other guiding images emerged. Sometimes they were more of a motor for me than the performers, or the other way around. The thematics, and materials that derived from these images have not all survived the performance, even though some might still exist as an underlying subtext.

GENERATING MATERIAL

While the conceptual thematics and the guiding images were with us, we started trying out many different relationships to the gutsounds. From the start, the technology was ready to be used (even though we also encountered many problems), as the gutsounds were the force we had to abide by. The device with a microphone was strapped around the performer's belly, and his gutsounds were perceived through the speakers in the studio. We started trying out a few different 'what ifs'.

- what if the gutsounds are music beatdrops and you try to dance to them, you anticipate them
- what if you are trying to fulfill a task, grabbing a glass of water, and the gutsounds don't let you (the sounds de-route your pre-planned movement)
- what if the gutsounds are the sounds of you rooting in the ground like a tree
- what if each gutsound is a source for pleasure
- what if the gutsounds are a sixth sense
- what if the gutsounds are your voice and you are lip syncing to your own voice
- what if the gutsounds is your lover talking to you and you have a pillow-talk conversation
- what if the gutsounds in the space make that the entire space and the walls become your body, you take care of it, you share secrets with it
- what if you want to lie down but the gutsounds keep you upright

Some of these 'what ifs' were tried only a few minutes before we knew there was not much to find there. Other exercises stuck with us longer.

The vague concepts and thematics flowing around have to sometimes be simplified in language in order to create material. Quite soon in the process we started identifying two actors at play: the 'ego' and the 'gut', and we started materializing different relationships between the two. We called it a negotiation between the ego and the gut, as two forces debating within the body of the guthuman. It is important to note here that I am speaking about fictionalized forces. When I speak about the actual gutsounds and the decision making of the performer, I will say 'gutsounds' and 'performer', not 'the gut' and 'the ego'. Ego-gut relationship became a key relationship from which material was generated.

THE EGO: the performer, his thoughts, his desires, wants to fulfill tasks, wants to make sense of things, wants to know what is going on, concrete, linear, wants to hold on to things, wants to keep things as they are, preserve, existential protagonist, efficient, wants to be in control

THE GUT: rippling, chaotic, erratic, it just 'is', ambiguous, instinctive, all over the place, decomposing and living matter, instinctive animal, inefficient, fearfully indifferent¹, cannot be controlled

The *what if's* in the rehearsal studio started to grow more specific to the ego-gut debate:

- What if the gut is bringing your gaze all over the place and the ego is trying to hold on to points into space because it is too overwhelming.
- What if the ego is standing in an empty apartment and wants to take measurements for decorating it, and the gut does not allow the ego to finish the tasks.
- What if the ego starts rooting itself into the ground by using the gut because it's too overwhelming?
- What if the gut says: it is what it is, and the ego says: I don't want it to be what it is?
- What if the chaos of the gut makes the ego inefficient?
- What if the gut does not let the ego grab a glass of water?
- What does it look like when the gut overwhelms the ego?
- What if the gut says what the ego should do?
- What if the gut is your body decomposing and the ego is aware of it?

At one point, between all the what-ifs, when we were letting the attempts sink in, Gerben looked out of the window while wearing the gutsound device. On each gut sound he looked in a different place outside, so all I could see were tiny head- and eye movement on the gutsounds. Then suddenly one gutsound brought his gaze back in, he looked over his shoulder and it seemed like he communicated to an imaginary person something along the lines of: 'shut up I am trying to think', and the next gutsound brought his gaze immediately back out of the window. He seemed completely in sync with his gutsounds, as if he knew which sounds were coming and exactly what the sounds were 'thinking'. In fact, it seemed like the gutsounds and the performer were one. At this moment, we both felt we found something.

¹ John Berger

CONSTRUCTING A WORKING LANGUAGE

At moments like these we had a good reporting session. To understand as a director what is happening internally in the performer, and as a performer to understand how his actions translate to a viewer. Gerben reported that he was working thoughts: he was using gutsounds as triggers to release a thought. While 'thoughts' was the language Gerben and I were working with, it was very specific to his way of performing. After working with other performers in the later stages of GUT, it became apparent that the 'thought' mechanism was not necessarily a transferable building block of the score, but rather a specific tactic of a specific performer. In the end, the performance score has more to do with embodied mental states, internal foci, and images, rather than thoughts. In this text, I will mix thought, mental images, foci, and register as terminology, since different stages with different performers meant using different languages.

Establishing a shared language through reporting back and forth is central to the way I work with performers. Once we both have an idea about what is happening in the mechanism of the performer's body, we can start having a conversation about where we want this mechanism to go. We create a shared language and then use their language to direct. This shared constructed language becomes even more apparent when guests visit the rehearsals, we had people coming in who had no idea what the performers and I were talking about when we were working.

Naming this is part of constructing this shared language. Naming things, according to Jeroen Peeters, is a way to guide the material in the direction you want the work to go. At the same time, it can also close the process off and give unnecessary weight to things. I see it as making temporary radical choices, in the form of fictions. Later you might let go of them.

An example of a name that I found very useful during the process was *rudimentary organ*. We imagined how, in a world where gutsounds become the most important element of behavior, other elements become rudimentary. For example, facial expressions, language, but also thoughts. In fact, we started thinking about the 'ego' as a rudimentary organ. In a far future where the ego is not necessary anymore because the gutsounds rendered the ego unnecessary. The gut is that which communicates, not the ego. What we witness in the guthuman are the last convulsions of the ego. We are in a transitional generation from rationality to viscerality. The ego, the performer, is a rudimentary organ that wants to say something but the guts take over. In a sense, the ego became a victim of the organism. The guthuman speaks

a sort of pre-verbal but future language. Everything except the gutsounds are rudimentary organs, rationality barely gets a chance anymore. The human language and social mechanisms as we know it still shimmer through.

This naming occurs because a problem needs to be solved. For example, when the body is an empty vessel who is taken over by the gut, some problems arise: why would the gut speak to us in a 'human' way? Doesn't it have its own language? In addition, the performative quality became too creaturelike, and also too absent, and empty when the performer was merely an empty vessel, with an empty gaze.

The language and names are in constant reconstruction. Manuel Groothuysen, the performer who is currently performing GUT, does not use the rudimentary organ as a fiction. The fictions keep on changing and are still in negotiation. The details in these fictions matter a lot, again depending on the performer embodying the fictions.'The gut uses a human body to speak to the audience' will have a different result than 'I have a gut living inside me and I am translating what the gut is saying'.

As sometimes the rehearsals can get lost in technical and internal conversations and practice, words offer, according to Jeroen Peeters, a way to steer away from the technical and give the performers nutrition and inspiration to embody the performance. It also has to do with control, naming things is a way to hold on to elements that work, but they also open up a new world which is interpreted differently by each performer.

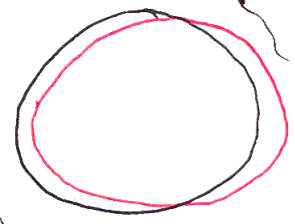
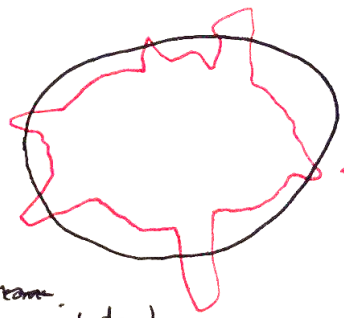
In constructing the ego-gut debate and our working language around it, we have named many materials, both as a way to refer to the material, as well as a way to feed the material: ***desire anemone, gut crucifixion, digital laughing, sexual rooting, the sensorial womb, Peaceful Eternal Cosmic Chaotic Ecosystemic Death Collective, dinner party gossip, troubling awareness, troubling dissociation, arriving to the party, nest formation, brutal ego-gut debate, holistic being.***

EGO
GUT

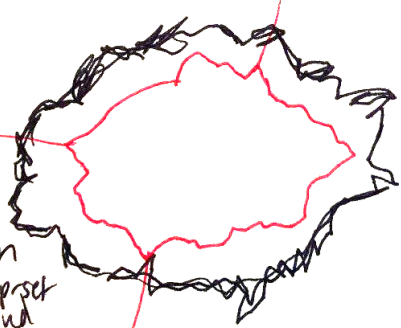
denk/raam
scene



→ de wil
in te richten /
te dalen/te ram.
(nee dat gun ve met dan)



meter/inrichten
puppet/wel sprak
warm/woord



pillow talk



doorzake
momenten
Edissontati



einde/
knijp
12



In the final version of GUT, the gut-ego relationship that survived is the *holistic being*. The *holistic being* is completely constructed on the moment Gerben linked his thoughts to the gut sounds at the window, and thus on each gutsound releasing an embodied thought. Constructing the fictional gut-ego relationship was essential for developing the final score, but in terms of naming, the moment we decided the holistic being is who will be left, we started using the ego-gut language less and less. As in the holistic being, the ego and gut are completely balanced, one or the two should not stick out. After going through different nuances in this gut-ego balance, such as 'you *are* the gut', 'the guthuman is a given, a fact' and 'your ego is a rudimentary organ', we ended up in the area of an undead guthuman. The fiction became seeing the guthuman as an undead person taken over by his gut. The gut takes over an empty vessel and speaks to us through it in a language from which we recognize it was once a human. Even though the ego-gut relationship became less important in this undead guthuman (as the ego does not exist anymore in an undead person), the ego-gut relationship had to be established in order to let it go later. In addition, the 'ego-part' of the undead guthuman still plays a part: the gut has taken over the human body and speaks to us using the language of what the ego once was.

In order to bring this undead guthuman to life, an extensive behavioral score was created.

COMPOSING THE SCORE

Starting from the holistic being, we identified that the performer uses the triggers of the gutsounds for animated, physical thinking. Put simply, the animated thoughts represented the ego, whereas the dynamics of the gutsounds represented the gut. An extremely important aspect here was that the gut was bringing the thoughts all over the place. It should be an erratic, chaotic, train of thought where efficiency is not what it looks like to us. The holistic entity is erratic by definition, as it is a holistic marriage between the rational, socialized behaviors of the ego and the erratic and illogic dynamic of the gutsounds. To attain this erraticness, we found out the performers had to activate different inner registers and let those manifest physically. Each gutsounds allows for small new step in such a register. As we wanted to find a balance between completely erratic switching between registers and room for small growth in a 'logical' path (I see a an object + it is a tree + I want to touch the tree), the rule came to be that only 3 gutsound in a row could be the continuation of one little story within a register. This does not only apply to thinking patterns the guthuman has, but also to activities such as reaching for a drink.

One method we tried to bring forth these different embodied registers and its erratic switching, was by writing an internal monologue and performing this monologue in an embodied manner, on the dynamics of the gutsounds. For example, the following inner monologue was written and, in small parts, triggered by the gutsounds of one of the performers Erik van de Wijdeven:

STARCH! in my fingertips. oh you dropped something! stranges fumes rising up around me. you disappoint me. SQUEEEEEAL! there really is no danger in hiding from reality, you see... EVIL RUINS EVERYWHERE!! So nice to see you!! the endless vacuum of space time. Can I borrow some money? crows flapping into my mouth. my insides melting like cheese. wanna dance? a mirroring plane slicing through everything and everyone.

Even though the idea of the inner monologue me and the performers a lot, strictly adhering to a monologue with actual language was too limiting. There was too much control, both from me towards the performers, but also from the performers towards the manifestation of their mental/internal foci. The mental foci and its order were completely precomposed and too specified. Therefore, we started using a compositional method with more freedom. We identified different levels of focal realms in which the performers switch between, instead of dictating what the mental foci should be and which order they should be in.

1. relational/communicative → I am speaking to the audience/imaginary people or asking questions
2. situational → I am imagining situations in here or in my head which are not here (there an ocean splitting in half behind the audience)
3. character morphing → I am suddenly someone else (a devil, an old man)
4. spatial → I am seeing things in the room, seeing the audience, having opinions about them

The mental foci got together with movement. In a sense, the inner state of the performer is pasted together with a movement of the body within a specific movement code. Of course, what the performer mentally embodies informs his movement. There is a lot of room for stretching and improvisation in what the movements could be exactly. The way the performer 'pastes', is up to the performer and hard to control: does the mental image come first, the movement, or does the movement ignite the next mental image? The performer engages in movement that is

informed by the embodied mental state, but stays within the movement code below. To perform the guthuman convincingly, the movement qualities and rules have to be let go and become part of the performer at some point, so that the performer is not performing an empty shell of predetermined rules. In order to let things go, the movement quality was heavily trained until it became part of the motoric memory of the performer. The movement qualities came about by searching for what the movement translates. Each gutsound brings out one small step in a movement. The performer stays in the position the gutsound left him, empties himself and waits in a state of alert relaxation for the next gutsound, avoiding planning what this next sound will make him do.

movement code

reasoning

<p>The performer's 'home base' posture is seated, an alert but empty body, erect spine, hands on his knees, waiting for his gutsounds to trigger the score. Movement never starts from the spine, legs, or shoulders, but only from the head/face/arms/hands. The spine and legs support the performer, and he is conscious how his body parts are all interconnected.</p>	<p>If the movement starts from the spine or the legs, it seems like movement comes literally from the guts, instead of it being a trigger for mental pathways and its bodily manifestation.</p> <p>Movement from the spine comes across as startling, which is an opinion about the gutsounds. As in the guthuman there is only one agent, the gut, opinions about the sound do not have a place.</p>
<p>Most mental images go together with a change in direction of the head (the gaze). A gutsound launches his gaze into a direction, initiated by the movement of his head. The performer is weary of his head-neck-spine connection, which makes his neck and spine follow in accordance to the direction of his gaze. Head and eyes move at the same moment. The performer does not know where his gaze will land once the movement is launched. A single gutsound can only trigger the direction of the gaze, what the performer finds in that direction (be it the eyes of an audience member, a wall, an object in the space, the guthuman has to wait for the next gutsound to relate to this audience member, wall, or object.</p>	<p>The reason why most gutsounds go together with change in focal direction, is that the rational socialized ego and his thoughts is best represented by the head and face of the performer. To paste this together with gutsounds makes an interesting marriage between the ego and the gut. A dramatic change in direction underscores the erraticness of the gut.</p> <p>The eyes quickly come across as agency and opinions that are not controlled by the gut. If the eyes go first and the head follows, it reads as an agent present that is not the gut. The same goes for the scenario of the head going first and the eyes staying behind. The gaze needs to lie in the skull in a relaxed manner, to have the gut tell what the body should do and the guthuman not to have an opinion about it.</p>
<p>The movement quality is launching: the gutsound <i>releases</i> the movement at a certain speed, which decelerates until halt. This launching quality does not apply to walking, thinking, muscle movement within the face, small reflexes, and to 'dying out of the arms'</p>	<p>This quality depicts a sense of not being bothered by the sound, not being overwhelmed. Somehow it also feels like there is a gut-like element to this launching quality.</p>

<p>Arm movements die out after a few seconds</p>	<p>depicts the idea that the body only has vitality because of gutsounds. The dying out does not apply to moments when the performer is busy with the tasks of grabbing a glass / putting on the radio</p>
<p>movements should not literally related to sound or the gut (no closed eyes, no hand on the belly, no 'logical' reaction to audible gutsounds)</p>	<p>this is besides the point of the ego and the gut coming together</p>
<p>Hands and arms move from the source of the metal images, as well as communications, halfway reached gestures, and minor movement due to awareness in the arms and hands</p>	
<p>Facial expressions go along with the embodiment of the mental registers, most of the time the facial expressions are 'realistic', but sometimes the facial expressions are grotesque due to the underlying mental image or pulling of the muscles (see next point)</p>	<p>The grotesque thoughts are dangerous but necessary, they should not occur too much. If there are many gutsounds and you can switch a lot between activities, the grotesque thoughts can occur more often as they disappear right as they appear. A calm but steady rhythm of gutsounds lends itself less well to grotesque thoughts. The balance is very important here: How funny, cheeky and cute can this bizarre creature be?</p>
<p>Pulling of the muscles, unrelated to mental images, may occur, such as random movement in the face muscles, random pulling of the arm up</p>	<p>This came to be during 'decomposition improvisations': what if the gutsounds are the sounds of your decomposing body</p>
<p>Activities can occur at the same time. The performer can take a step while his gaze is triggered in the opposite direction and his arm rises up.</p>	
<p>Hand movements do not start in the wrist</p>	<p>This becomes too creature-like</p>
<p>Movements can also be related to activities in the room: drinking, dancing, walking, looking in the mirror, changing the position of the chair</p>	<p>The performer keeps the rule of being 'distracted' after 3 gutsounds bringing him closer to the task. In order to make it be possible to fulfill the task, the performer can for example implement: three gutsounds reach his hand to the glass, one or two gutsounds bring his gaze and thoughts elsewhere (hand stays in place), next three gutsounds go towards the drink again. Here, the performer needs to find a balance between not getting things done and getting things done.</p>

HONESTY

In the book of Jeroen Peeters, there is the following quote of a dancer that made a lot of sense for performing GUT:

'As a dancer, I am constantly synthesizing. Even when I repeat a movement a hundred times in a hundred different situations, I'm synthesizing all those situations. There is no way to name that. experience exceeds the moniker. no matter what i have named it, my physical experience will outgrow the name, and I will continue to synthesize and my experience will continue to change, even though it tethered to that name. which after a while starts to frag and no longer holds its position or meaning. I think there's always a subtext and you know that there's always a subtext and it will continue to arrive and continue to change.'

We trained a score and movement quality quite heavily, which became a logical way of being for us. However, as important as this training is *honesty* to the sound. What does the sound give you in this very moment, within the code that is created? The performer lets the gutsounds affect him, he learns a strict code and from that world he assesses what the guts tell him to do. Being honest does not necessarily mean that a louder gutsound creates a louder movement, as the score does not differentiate between the type of sound and the type of thoughts and movement. However, for the performer these types of sound and types of movement matters in his honesty to the sound. Within this honesty, it is also important to keep taking risks, without trying to make things interesting for the sake of being interesting, or from fear of being boring. The honesty to the sound is still an enigmatic element, which I also like to keep enigmatic. Sometimes, a tiny gutsound can make a very far reaching launch of the gaze, other times, it can not, it becomes insincere. Honesty also has to do with the prerequisites of his state of being. Being in a state of *zero*, having a porous body, being available and relaxed, breathing deeply, being soft, open, and playful. Each gutsound offers a chance to be reborn.

CONCLUSION

Control plays a central role in my practice. Together with the performers, I like to design a strict code to heavily train until it becomes part of the performer's bodily memory. For GUT, this strict controlled code was applied to the trigger of uncontrollable gutsounds. In this sense, I played with applying a controlled system to an uncontrolled system. In the fiction of GUT, the ego represents a controlled system and the gut an uncontrolled system.

The question is, however, how controlled the controlled systems really are. As a fiction, the ego of the guthuman spoke to me about control: making sense of things, trying to hold on, efficiency, linear and rational thinking pathways. Looking back at my process, I am wondering if this is true, especially regarding the *linear and rational thinking pathways*. Even if the thoughts are banal, rational, and linear, are thought patterns not as much uncontrollable as the gut?

Not only as a fiction, but in the rehearsal studio, the question rises as well how much we are applying performative control over the uncontrollable gutsounds. As a director, I can go too far in trying to control what the performer does. To make this performance, and other performances, successful, it is important to let go of control in places and have the performer embody the system in their own way. The performer, as well, needs to let go of control. For example in planning what the next move will be. The performer does not, and should not, have complete control over how he applies the theatrical code. The director should do this even less, but create the right conditions for the designed code to flourish in the performer. Like Jeroen Peeters expresses, the beauty of a work is when it speaks back to you in unexpected ways, if the work grew its own legs. My role as a director is to create the conditions for the work to grow its own legs, which includes controlling the system of the theatrical code but more importantly it includes designing it in such a way to allow room to go beyond the borders of control and play within the reality of the fiction.

The question if the fictional ego and the application of theatrical code are as uncontrollable as the gut, still remains unanswered (and will probably remain unanswered). However, the director does have control over establishing relationships between two uncontrollables. In GUT, this was done through the building of a shared language in the rehearsal studio, through reporting and naming things. A name can function as a specifically designed image, to be interpreted slightly differently per performer, per moment, per day, per circumstance. Therefore, the meeting point between control and letting go of control exists in the construction and use of this shared language.