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‘These Gymnasts Do Not Simply Perform Gymnastics’ –
An Analysis of Visual Representations of the Gymnastic Body

By Tiffany Boyle

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Birkbeck College
University of London
November 2019

Declaration

I declare that the work contained within this thesis was undertaken by the author alone. Whole or any part of the work has not been submitted before in order to qualify for any other academic degree. The content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the date of approval of the research program. All procedures and guidelines have been followed properly whilst preparing thesis.

Signature:

Name: TIFFANY CHARLOTTE BOYLE

Date 11 November 2019

Abstract

The shape of the Olympic discipline of Artistic Gymnastics is a legacy distilled from a wealth of gymnastic forms of movement, practiced against military, didactic, medicinal, political, dance and aesthetic objectives. Gymnastics is a form of movement for which no complete, global history exists. It has largely been neglected by research in the arts and humanities, with sports history largely contributing studies of specific gymnastic leaders, or regional or national practices. The majority of existing research derives from sports science, focusing on biomechanics, issues of bodily development, nutrition, eating disorders, and sports psychology. This thesis seeks to add to the modest existing literature a visual analysis of the manner in which the gymnastics body has been represented, tracing the genealogy of these representations back to the re-invention of gymnastics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Specific areas of analysis cover the whiteness of gymnastics; the relation of this whiteness to the reverence for classical imagery and the statuesque; gender; posing; performativity; movement notation; the tension between stillness and movement; the various clothing worn for gymnastics; and ways of watching and capturing gymnastics. This thesis takes a thematic methodology, consulting a range of interdisciplinary resources and literature, and stems out of my own childhood experience of competitive gymnastics. A range of archives have been consulted, as well as items from the sport's visual culture: from gymnastics magazines; posters; and advertisements; to competition coverage; commentary; fan montages; leotards; badges; coaching manuals; teaching aids; and films. A practice-based thesis, specific lines of enquiry from the thesis have been explored in exhibition texts and curated public programming, with a particular focus on film, artist moving image, and exhibiting items of dress designed for the body in motion.

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My curatorial practice before starting out on this thesis was exclusively as part of a duo, with my collaborator and true friend Dr Jessica Carden. Every aspect of my curatorial knowledge has been learned through this partnership, and I would never have reached this point in my career without her – I shall always cherish this special bond. For her guidance and support, pragmatism and trusted opinions, I would like to thank Dr Emma Balkind, who also first highlighted the 2016 ‘Posing the Body’ conference which informed the fourth chapter.

This thesis stems from my childhood experience of competitive gymnastics, and a close cohort of friends and mentors from this time have provided information, links, archival documents, and guidance in the preparation of this thesis. To David, I would like to extend my gratitude for first making me aware of the notation system for judging gymnastics, which informed the fourth chapter. Most significantly, I would like to thank my childhood gymnastics coach, whose belief in me, ambitions and ethics have left an enduring imprint upon my adult life.

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Figure 2.37

The 2012 USA Olympic team leotard, produced by GK Elite, worn by Jordyn Wieber. The fabric of the leotard has a nylon-spandex base (therefore essentially plastic), covered in small foil dots, and embellished with glass crystals.

Image Accessed:

http://www.slate.com/content/dam/slate/blogs/five_ring_circus/2012/07/31/olympics_gymnastics_uniforms_are_team_usa_s_glittery_plastic_looking_leotards_really_made_of_plastic_/149577856.jpg.CROP.rectangle3-large.jpg

Figure 2.38

A precursor to current leotards, with both lycra and foil sequins, worn by Svetlana Boginskaya who competed for the Soviet, Unified and Belarusian teams. Date unknown, personal estimate early-90s.

Image Accessed: <http://www.theapricity.com/forum/showthread.php?90645-Classify-Belarusian-athlet-Svetlana-Boginskaya>

Figure 2.39

Chinese gymnast Shang Chunsong wears a hardened head of glitter hairspray, long a staple fashion choice of female gymnasts. Still from BBC coverage of the Women's All-Around Final World Championships, held in Antwerp, 2013.

Image Accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEr400o4M04>

Figure 2.40

Russian gymnast Aliya Mustafina sporting metallic eyeshadow, another frequent fashion choice for female gymnasts.

Image Accessed:

http://24.media.tumblr.com/665aa367fa6f87c629984c5f37432eea/tumblr_mx3uiwjUnX1sjmcn0o1_500.gif

Figure 2.41

An excerpt from Howard Schatz's photographic study and book *Athletes*, published in *Sports Illustrated*, October 14, 2002, page number unknown. Alongside basketball players, swimmers and athletes, the US gymnast Shannon Miller is pictured, second to the left. Note the position of her legs in comparison to that of the other sportswomen.

Image Accessed:

http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_s4dD78yYZ4Y/R51mDWU6x3I/AAAAAAAAArg/WdTzj0DAF2I/s400/realwomen4.jpg

Figure 2.42

Still from the video *Can a Bodybuilder be a Gymnast?* produced by *FIT Media Channel* with UK Muscle Mania 2012 Champion TY O-G, as part of a test in the 'functional strength' of bodybuilders.

Image Accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJx7wjqjPPg>

- Figure 2.43** A wedding picture of the USSR gymnasts Valentin Mogilny and Olga Bicherova, witnessed by fellow gymnasts Natalia Yurchenko and Dimitri Bilozerchev. It has long been rumoured that such marriages – between athletes – were encouraged by the Communist state.
- Image Accessed: Photograph credited to Moscow News, featured in *International Gymnast* magazine, March 1988, pg. 38. Original copy in personal collection of the author.
- Figure 2.44** Front Cover, *Gymnastics in Perspective*, Federation Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG): Moutier, Switzerland, 2000. Photo credit Eileen Langsley, former FIG Official Photographer.
- Figure 2.45** The 2004 Olympic Gold-Medal Winning Romanian Team, standing in height order, Octavian Bellu.
- Image accessed: <http://romgym.ro/continut/uploads/2010/05/Bul.-inform.-2004.pdf>
- Figure 2.46** Rhythmic Gymnastics newsletter circa 1910s. From: Lausanne Musée Olympique, *La mise en scène du corps sportif : de la belle époque à l'âge des extremes*, Musée Olympique: Lausanne, 2003.
- Figure 2.47** Front Cover of 'The Athlete's Cookbook,' published by USA Gymnastics in 1995.
- Figure 2.48** Redbook Magazine for Young Women, with American gymnast Cathy Rigby on the front cover, as part of a feature on "How to get in shape – and stay there."
- Figure 2.49** Vinyl record cover released as part of a sponsorship deal between USA gymnast Cathy Rigby and Stayfree, in which she is both advocating the use of Stayfree feminine hygiene products, but also how to stay slim with her exercise programme. Author's own collection.
- Figure 2.50** Coca-Cola London 2012 Summer Olympic Games 'Open Happiness' campaign, Male Gymnast edition, designed by Mccann Erickson, Germany.
- Image Accessed: <http://www.designboom.com/design/coca-cola-open-happiness-campaign-wins-2-if-gold-design-awards/>
- Figure 2.51** Coca-Cola London 2012 Summer Olympic Games Limited Edition Cans, USA gymnast Shawn Johnson edition, designed by Turner Duckworth.
- Image accessed: <http://theinspirationroom.com/daily/2012/coca-cola-2012-olympics-cans/>
- Figure 2.52** *Gymnastics Coaching Aid*, produced circa 1990s and used by the gymnastics coach of the author. Photo credit held by the author.

- Figure 2.53** Article and Illustration on 'The Coach-Gymnast Conference,' May 1986 issue, published by Paul Ziert & Associates, Norman, Oklahoma. Illustration credit: Dwight Normile.
- Figure 2.54** Still from fluff produced by National Broadcasting Company (NBC) America as part of coverage of the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games Men's Artistic Gymnastics Team Final.
- Image Accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZMMAec0K8s>
- Figure 2.55** Google Search Profile for Romanian Olympic Gymnast Aurelia Dobre; a search for her name automatically brings up details of her height and weight during her competitive career.
- Screen shot taken from page, image accessed:
https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=aurelia+dobre&biw=1517&bih=741&source=Inms&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjWI5LH3sjLAhXCchQKHUUrBbMQ_AUIBigA&dpr=0.9
- Figure 2.56** Still from American coverage of the 1996 Atlantic Summer Olympic Games Men's Artistic Gymnastics Team Compulsories Competition.
- Image Accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GVHvp7HMfk>
- Figure 2.57** USSR Olympic medallist Olga Korbut performs on the Balance Beam as part of a display event in New Orleans, USA, circa 1974. Photo Credit: Ringier Fotoarchiv, Aarau Federal Archives, Switzerland.
- Figure 2.58** 'Miss Perfect Posture' 1956, run and awarded during a national convention of chiropractors in Chicago as a PR exercise.
- Image accessed: <http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2012/07/13/156718782/you-think-beauty-is-skin-deep-youre-not-a-chiropractor>
- Figure 2.59** Tampax advert featuring anonymous gymnast/model, 1971.
- Image accessed: <https://flashbak.com/25-vintage-feminine-hygiene-ads-that-offered-freedom-396964/>
- Figure 2.60** Tampax menstrual tampons educational booklet, "Accent on You" 1983, USA.
- Image accessed: <http://www.mum.org/accen83f.htm>

Chapter 3

- Figure 3.1** American gymnast Sam Mikulak training bare-chested in 2012.

Image accessed:
<http://c2971522.r22.cf0.rackcdn.com/9phj7ug506XIVj0fwT6P.JPG>

Figure 3.2 Characters Joanne (left, played by Vanessa Lengies) and Mina (right, played by Tarah Paige) showing their bra strap in an act of protest during the 2006 Touchstone film production “Stick It!” Stills taken from the film.

Figure 3.3 British Comedian James Corden wears a leotard to promote his 2011 Sky2 programme ‘A League of Their Own.’

Image accessed: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2056583/James-Corden-wears-tight-fitting-leotard-series-A-League-Of-Their-Own.html>

Figure 3.4 Jules Léotard wearing his “maillot, photograph circa 1860s. Photo credit: Disdéri of Paris.

Image accessed: <http://www.19thcenturyphotos.com/Jules-L%C3%A9otard-122282.htm>

Figure 3.5 Jules Léotard wearing his “maillot, photograph circa 1860s. Illustration credit not available.

Image accessed: http://www.theflightfantasticfilm.com/trapeze_history

Figure 3.6 Jules Léotard wearing a variation on his “maillot, photograph circa 1860s. Photo credit not available.

Image accessed: <http://francisrault.com/#prettyPhoto/1/>

Figure 3.7 Jules Léotard wearing a variation on his “maillot, photograph circa 1860s. Photo credit not available.

Image accessed: https://danceinsoul.com/ballet_clothes

Figure 3.8 Dolly Adams’ Burlesque performer in Leotard, San Francisco, Issued 1890. Photo credit: Houseworth's Celebrities (studio).

Image Accessed: <http://kb.osu.edu/dspace/handle/1811/47624>

Figure 3.9 A South Albanian kavass of Turkish dignitaries in native fustanella, Dated 1910s, Photo credit: Frederick Moore.

Image Accessed: <http://www.natgeocreative.com/photography/1319324>

Figure 3.10 Body Education Group Adolf Koch’ (Körperbildungsgruppen Adolf Koch), Silver Gelatin print, produced by artist Germaine Krull.

Image accessed:

<http://www.artnet.fr/WebServices/images/II00145IldFnOGFgDVEcfDrCWvaHBOcTREC/germaine-krull-k%C3%B6rperbildungsgruppen-adolf-koch.jpg>

Figure 3.11 Illustration from Adolf Koch's 1950 publication 'Physical Culture and Education,' published Berlin.

Image accessed: <http://www.fkk-museum.de/buecher/b-003-03.jpg>

Figure 3.12 Illustration from Hans Surén's 1925 publication, *Der Mensch und die Sonne*, Stuttgart: Dieck & Co.

Image accessed: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=4241

Figure 3.13 Front Cover from Hans Surén's 1925 publication, *Der Mensch und die Sonne*, Stuttgart: Dieck & Co.

Image accessed: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=4241

Figure 3.14 Model wearing Adidas Climalite 'Sincere' Leotard from the Fall/Winter Gymnastics Collection.

Image Accessed: <http://www.asvsports.co.uk/#!/product/prd1/675904461/at1402---climalite-sincere---from-%C2%A339.50>

Figure 3.15 "Jumping" (Springen), Colour Lithograph, from: Jonas, F. H.; *Gut Heil. Ein Festgeschenuk für Deutschlands turnende Jugend*, J Berthold: Leipzig, 1856. Reproduced in: Sports Museum Berlin, *Olympische Spiele vor dem Hallischen Thore' -bibliophile rarities from the history of gymnastics*, Sports Museum: Berlin, 1995, pg. 21.

Figure 3.16 "Gymnastics Exercises" (Turnübungen), Colour Lithograph. Reproduced in: Sports Museum Berlin, *Olympische Spiele vor dem Hallischen Thore' -bibliophile rarities from the history of gymnastics*, Sports Museum: Berlin, 1995, pg. 18.

Figure 3.17 Long jump with and without pole" (Der Sprung in die Weite mit dem Stabe und ohne denselben), Copperplate engraving, from: GutsMuths, J. C. F.; *Gymnastik für die Jugend enthaltend eine praktische Anweisung zu Leibesübungen. Ein Beytrag zue nöthigsten Verbesserung der körperlichen Erziehung*; Verlag der Buchhandlung der Erziehungsanstalt: Schnepfenthal; 1793. Reproduced in: Sports Museum Berlin, *Olympische Spiele vor dem Hallischen Thore' -bibliophile rarities from the history of gymnastics*, Sports Museum: Berlin, 1995, pg. 6.

Figure 3.18 "Sokol Class in gymnastics, Westfield, Massachusetts," circa late 1800s. No photo credit available.

Image accessed: http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/misc/smith_czechoslovaks/

Figure 3.19 An example of Czech Sokol outfits from 1877-1883. Sokol meant 'Falcon,' hence the feathers in their caps.

Image accessed: <http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-tvyqShrTknM/Ulc7nMGbaKI/AAAAAAAAOa0/aJEi37b8BZI/s640/deska2543-hotovo-sokol.jpg>

Figure 3.20 The Sokol uniform being worn for a marching parade during the 10th Sokol Slet in 1938; the last Slet before WWII.

Image accessed: <http://www.czechgallery.com/sokol/image/slet1938.jpg>

Figure 3.21 Artists Josef Manes, Designs for the Czech Sokol Kroj (uniform), from 1862.

Image accessed: <http://www.czechgallery.com/sokol/image/kroj1.jpg>

Figure 3.22 Advertisement for Corsets, in brochure for G. L. Wilson Drapery, Warehouseman and Ladies and Children's Outfitter, Dundee, early 1910s. Consulted in the Archives of the University of Dundee.

Figure 3.23 The Norwegian Women's Gymnastics Team at the 1912 Stockholm Summer Olympic Games, wearing a white blouse, a necktie, dark culottes, black tights and gym shoes.

Image accessed: http://concreteplayground.com.au/_snacks/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Gymnastics-1912.jpg

Figure 3.24 The Dutch Women's Gymnastics Team at the 1928 Amsterdam Summer Olympic Games, wearing something like a black playsuit; a joined dark vest with shoulder caps, with baggy shorts.

Image accessed: https://www.ushmm.org/exhibition/olympics/?content=holocaust_athletes

Figure 3.25 The British Women's Gymnastics Team at the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympic Games, wearing a white vest and short white culottes. It is difficult to tell whether these are separates or joined like a dress. Image accessed: Lausanne Musée Olympique, La mise en scène du corps sportif : de la belle époque à l'âge des extremes, Musée Olympique: Lausanne, 2003.

Figure 3.26 Medal Winners of the Uneven Bars competition at the 1956 Melbourne Summer Olympic Games, winning a leotard, with waistband, similar to bathing suit designs around this period.

Image accessed: http://gymnast.bplaced.com/AG/OI52_UBpod.jpg

Figure 3.27 British Women's Gymnastics Team posing in advance the 1960 Rome Summer

Olympic Games. Whilst arms are still on display, the cut at the leg is much lower than at present where the leotard is permitted to sit above the hip. The leotards are noticeably baggy on the gymnasts also.

Image accessed: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/4b/ac/44/4bac44fe03b39b68b7eeb4e27e6354db.jpg>

Figure 3.28 Caption reads 'Portrait of the gymnast (Nadia Comăneci) as a young woman,' circa 1980. Photo credit Alan E. Burrows.
Image accessed: Smither, G. B.; Behind the Scenes of Gymnastics, Proteus: London, New York, 1980, pg. 37.

Figure 3.29 Leotard glue, for fixing the leotard to the gymnasts' skin during performances. Multiple brands exist.

Image accessed: <https://www.elitegymwear.co.uk/product.asp?pid=9772>

Figure 3.30 USSR gymnast Maria Filatowa waiting to mount the next apparatus, at the age of 15 years in a V-neck leotard at the 1976 Montreal Summer Olympic Games. Photo Credit: Ringier Fotoarchiv, Aarau Federal Archives, Switzerland.

Figure 3.31 USSR gymnast Nelli Kim wearing an Adidas leotard, circa 1976.

Image accessed:
http://40.media.tumblr.com/05b20245e6e3eba90944a72f60ec1d47/tumblr_n9sq2oe8lB1r3tszho1_1280.jpg

Figure 3.32 USSR gymnast Svetlana Boginskaya in a partially transparent white leotard at the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympic Games on the medal podium.

Image accessed in the archives of the Olympic Studies Centre, Lausanne.

Figure 3.33 Caption reads 'Svetlana Grozdova of the USSR in a dramatic floor exercise,' circa late 1970s. Photo credit Alan E. Burrows.

Image accessed: Smither, G. B.; Behind the Scenes of Gymnastics, Proteus: London, New York, 1980, pg. 52.

Figure 3.34 Still from Japanese pornographic films 'Gold Bird' and 'EuroAngels' featuring three former Romanian Olympic and World Champion gymnasts.

Image accessed: <http://b2.woxcdn.com/pics-final-2/abe/d6a/abed6aa0de2c4bf35a5931ea691cdd41.jpg>

Figure 3.35 Still from Japanese pornographic films 'Gold Bird' and 'EuroAngels' featuring three former Romanian Olympic and World Champion gymnasts.
Image accessed: http://ut13.xhcdn.com/t/226/9_b_4320226.jpg

- Figure 3.36** DVD Cover image for 'Gold Bird,' a Japanese-produced pornographic film featuring three former Romanian Olympic and World Champion gymnasts. The wearing of a gymnastics leotard featuring the Romanian colours was to prove a major source of outrage during the scandal.
- Image accessed: http://www.romanian-gymnastics.com/news/2005/feb05/lavinia_milosovici_nude_photos_japan.htm
- Figure 3.37** Still taken from National Broadcasting Corporation (USA) coverage of Kristen Maloney's Floor Exercise in the Women's All-Around Artistic Gymnastics competition at the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games.
- Image accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QZWIPJGy1E>
- Figure 3.38** USA gymnast Mary Lou Retton competing at the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games, wearing what is likely to have been the first incarnation of the national team leotard referencing the American national flag.
- Image accessed: <http://waytofamous.com/20964-mary-lou-retton.html>
- Figure 3.39** USA gymnast Dominique Moceanu at the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympic Games, wearing a leotard drawing on the colours and pattern of the national flag.
- Image accessed: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/9a/bc/fa/9abcfa68df4bb32ee38f528a17ca2f20.jpg>
- Figure 3.40** USA gymnast Aly Raisman at the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games wearing the national team leotard, featuring the stars, stripes and colours red, white and blue of the USA flag.
- Image accessed: http://img.wennermedia.com/480-width/1344368513_alyraisman-467.jpg
- Figure 3.41** USSR gymnast Ludmilla Tourischeva wearing a red, white and black leotard with embroidery on the neck and chest recalling Russian folk costume. Photo from British Amateur Gymnastics Association Gymnastics Display Event, Wembely Arena, circa 1978.
- Image Accessed: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/6d/9f/1d/6d9f1de7f752407228a258a4cd20113c.jpg>
- Figure 3.42** Spanish gymnast Esther Moya competing in the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games in the Women's Artistic Gymnastics Vault Final, wearing a red, black and gold beaded leotard, reminiscent of the outfitter of the Matador figure.
- Still from Olympic footage, image accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oB6pj2hfjU>

Figure 3.43 Russian gymnast Aliya Mustafina shown in 2012 wearing a leotard which recalls the onion dome prominent in Russian architecture. Photo credit: Eileen Langsley.

Image accessed: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/5a/fc/ea/5afcea23688be733b66330809146a0d1.jpg>

Figure 3.44 Montage of leotards worn by Romanian gymnast Lavinia Miloşovici throughout the 1990s, drawing on the colours of the national flag.

Image accessed: <http://www.cinemarx.ro/persoane/poze/Lavinia-Milosovici-1164926,451052,big.html>

Figure 3.45 USSR gymnasts Natalia Lashenova (left) and Yelena Shushunova (right) on the medal podium at the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympic Games, with the crest of the USSR showing through in-between the medal ribbons.

Image accessed:
http://news.bbcimg.co.uk/media/images/61517000/jpg/_61517961_61517960.jpg

Figure 3.45 Uniform for the Agnete Bertram's feminine gymnastics system in Denmark in the 1920s.

Image Accessed: Hans Bonde (2012): Projection of Male Fantasies: The Creation of 'Scientific' Female Gymnastics, The International Journal of the History of Sport, Vol. 29, Iss.2, pg. 240

Figure 3.47 Cumbernauld Gymnastics Team, with interviewee Mr Ronald Rodger shown in the back line, third from the right, circa 1950. Reproduction of the original gifted to the author.

Chapter 4

Figure 4.1 The 2012 London Summer Olympic Games Greenwich Arena, showing the six pieces of apparatus installed in the Artistic Gymnastics raised podium, ready for competition.

Figure 4.2 Chart showing the breakdown of the Women's Artistic Gymnastic Free Exercises, also known as the Floor Exercise, into Acrobatic, Music and Choreography Elements, initially created in 1977 and first published in English 1987, by Soviet coaches and choreographers Vladimir Zaglada and Tatyana Lisitskaya.

Image Accessed: Lisitskaya, T. S.; Zaglada, V. Ye.; Women's Free Exercises, Fizkultura I Sport: Moscow 1977; English translation ATI Unlimited: 1987, pg. 1

- Figure 4.3** Chart showing the breakdown of Classical dance within the Women's Artistic Gymnastic Free Exercises, also known as the Floor Exercise, into various balletic types of movement, initially created in 1977 and first published in English 1987, by Soviet coaches and choreographers Vladimir Zaglada and Tatyana Lisitskaya.
- Image Accessed: Lisitskaya, T. S.; Zaglada, V. Ye.; Women's Free Exercises, Fizkultura I Sport: Moscow 1977; English translation ATI Unlimited: 1987, pg. 4
- Figure 4.4** Detail from photograph showing the Medal Ceremony for the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games Women's Artistic Gymnastics All-Around Final Competition, showing (L) in first place, the feet position of gold medal winner Gabrielle Douglas (USA) and (R) the feet of bronze medal winner Aliya Mustafina (RUS) in ballet's third position. Image credit: Getty Images/AFP.
- Image accessed: <http://cache1.asset-cache.net/gc/149695558-gymnast-gabrielle-douglas-celebrates-on-the-gettyimages.jpg?v=1&c=IWSAsset&k=2&d=GkZZ8bf5zL1ZiijUmx7Qc%2BSQ7h4WfkVHm3iPAbm9ym6KAUFqkXTVulJyaN8G3HW09GFDQCVI0c0cTC60u%2FBaA%3D%3D>
- Figure 4.5** Example of the notation system devised for Artistic gymnastics, and other gymnastics disciplines, by the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique.
- Image accessed: <http://www.fig-aerobic.com/photo/art/default/4796079-7170682.jpg?v=1371686719>
- Figure 4.6** Example illustration Carlo Blasis (1803-1878) work *Traité élémentaire théorique et pratique de l'art de la danse* (Elementary, Theoretical, and Practical Treatise on the History and Art of Dance, published Milan 1820.
- Image accessed: <http://www.lib.utah.edu/collections/rarebooks/exhibits/past/dramatis-personae.php>
- Figure 4.7** Example illustration from Francisco Amorós, Marquis of Sotelo, *Gymnastique et Morale*, published Roret: Paris, 1830, re-issued 1838; 1848.
- Image accessed: <https://laquetedekiaz.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/amoros.jpg?w=425&h=266>
- Figure 4.8** Example of Labanotation, developed by Rudolf von Laban in 1928.
- Image accessed: <http://www.sportsbabel.net/2008/11/labnotation.htm>
- Figure 4.9** Example of Benesh notation, showing the corresponding dance positions.
- Image accessed: <https://www.rad.org.uk/study/Benesh/how-benesh-movement-notation-works/@@images/24e667a4-5e6e-438c-b860-fe696f24c4f6.jpeg>

- Figure 4.10** Example of the Eskhol notation system, and corresponding dance positions.
- Image accessed: http://sfile.f-static.com/image/users/133376/ftp/my_files/partitura/%D7%A6%D7%99%D7%A4%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D%20%D7%92%D7%93%D7%95%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%AA%20%D7%9B%D7%AA%D7%91%20%2B%20%D7%AA%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%94.jpg?id=3137932
- Figure 4.11** Performance Analysis of a tennis match between David Ferrer and Kei Nishikori, measuring Forehand and Backhand Efficiency, formulated by Juan José, March 26, 2013.
- Image Accessed: <http://www.changeovertennis.com/stats-introducing-the-forehand-and-backhand-efficiency-rating/>
- Figure 4.12** Data Gathering System for Boxing, using symbols to notate a 1989 five-round fight between Mike Tyson versus Frank Bruno at the Hilton International, Las Vegas.
- Image accessed: Franks, I. M.; Hughes, M.; Notational analysis of sport, E & FN Spon: London, 1997, pg. (tbc).
- Figure 4.13** Francesco Novelli , The Attitudes of Lady Hamilton, Etching, ink on paper, dated after 1791, published Venice.
- Images accessed: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O63626/the-attitudes-of-lady-hamilton-print-novelli-francesco/>
- Figure 4.14** Russian gymnast Elena Produnova competing at the 1998 New York Goodwill Games, competing in the Women's Artistic Gymnastics Floor Exercise Event Final. Both her hands, feet and legs from her ankles to knees are very heavily chalked.
- Image Accessed: <http://www.djphotography.com/gym/ai21.jpg>
- Figure 4.15** Russian gymnast and Olympic medallist heavily chalks her ankle and foot in preparation, from the feature 'Got Chalk?' posted on The Couch Gymnast blog, November 3rd 2010.
- Image Accessed: <http://couch-gymnast.blogspot.co.uk/2010/11/got-chalk.html#comment-form>
- Figure 4.16** Still from the BBC coverage of the Men's All-Around Competition at the 2011 Artistic Gymnastics World Championships, held in Tokyo.
- Image accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKfVVj2rQVU>
- Figure 4.17** A blogger's joke-collage of Russian gymnast Alexei Nemov on the body of a white, polished Greek statue, alluding to the 'gymnastic gods' and playing upon

his 'sex appeal' and popularity with audiences throughout his senior career from 1994 until 2004.

Image Accessed: http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-5MjM_RpXqhY/UBGjBodJavI/AAAAAAAAAV8/LD6ZKgnqo1Y/s1600/Alexei-Zeus.jpg

Figure 4.18

Caption reads: 'Some of the models, diagrams and casts displayed at the Ecole Desbonnet to inspire students of physical culture, from La Culture Physique, September, 1904.

Images accessed: Image cited in Garb, T.; Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-Siècle France, Thames and Hudson: London, 1998, pg. 64. Author cites permission of British Library for reproduction.

Figure 4.19

Detail for the Iron Cross on the Men's Artistic Gymnastics Still Rings event, from Jo Longhurst, A-Z, 215 appropriated photographs, Installation dimensions 10.25m x 95cm x 18mm (not shown to scale), Original version on mdf, 2008; Perspex version, 2012.

Image accessed:
http://jolonghurst.com/docs/projects_images.php?id=3:4575:4955:0

Figure 4.20

William Kennedy Laurie Dickson's 1894 kinetoscope 'Amateur Gymnast,' produced at Edison's 'Black Maria' studio.

Image accessed:
<http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft3q2nb2gw;chunk.id=d0e883;doc.view=print>

Figure 4.21

Jo Longhurst, Suspension (1), Digital print on vinyl, 366cm x 222cm (dimensions variable), Shot 2009, Produced 2012.

Image accessed:
http://jolonghurst.com/docs/projects_images.php?id=3:4874:0:0

Figure 4.22

Image of USSR gymnast Ludmilla Turischeva suspended mid-air during the Women's Artistic Gymnastics' Vault exercise. The competition and year are not specified, but will date circa 1972. Image caption reads: 'Ludmilla Turischeva's great after-flight in Yamashita vault.'

Image Accessed: Simons II, M.; Women's Gymnastics: A History, Volume I - 1966 to 1974, Welwyn Publishing Company: Carmel, CA, 1995, pg. 194

Figure 4.23

Sir John Everett Millais, Ophelia, Oil on canvas, 76.2 cm x 111.8 cm, 1851/52, held Tate Britain.

Image accessed: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-ophelia-n01506>

- Figure 4.24** USA gymnast and London 2012 Summer Olympic Games team member Danell Leyva poses for the 2012 ESPN 'The Body' issue. Photo credit: Peter Hapak.
- Image accessed: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/61/2c/77/612c770ec28e8cadf875a86b928007db.jpg>
- Figure 4.25** Robert Kinmont, 8 Natural Handstands (Detail from series of nine images), Silver Gelatin prints, 21.5 x 21.5 cm, 1969/2005.
- Image accessed: <https://www.frieze.com/article/pacific-standard-time>
- Figure 4.26** USA Olympic gymnast Jack Holst on the Men's Artistic Gymnastics High Bar Event at the 1932 Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games.
- Image accessed: Scrapbook cut-out. Held in the archives of the Olympic Studies Centre, Lausanne. Box. No. GF5.
- Figure 4.27** Company Sportsbet launched a balloon copy of Rio de Janeiro's Christ the Redeemer statues, flying it Melbourne as a marketing stunt for the 2014 Football World Cup. Photo credit: AFP
- Image accessed: https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0ahUKEwiZ3tab_MbNAhWJIsAKHRrtBxwQjBwIbA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.smh.com.au%2Fcontent%2Fdam%2Fimages%2F3%2Fa%2F6%2F0%2F7%2Fimage.related.articleLeadwide.620x349.3a5ru.png%2F1402851600000.jpg&psig=AFQjCNEkwusWmhKw0-n6bDzw0BhkSj6Gw&ust=1467074407031251
- Figure 4.28** Romanian gymnast Sandra Izbasa is frozen in High-Definition 3D Slow Motion replay footage of the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games Women's Artistic Gymnastics Vault Event Final.
- Image accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ws1tth8XWhg>
- Figure 4.29** Still taken from fan-made overview of the London 2012: The Official Video Game of the Olympic Games gymnastics event.
- Video accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDM7vdS4DI8>
- Figure 4.30** Still taken from official trailer for "Shawn Johnson Gymnastics," produced by Zoo Games for Nintendo Wii and DS consoles, released November 2011.
- Video accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvRSzKZpZZ0>
- Figure 4.31** Film director Leni Riefenstahl with cameraman Walter Frentz at a shooting for her film 'Olympia', comprising two parts: 'Festival of the Peoples' and 'Festival of Beauty,' 1936.

Image accessed: <http://i.imgur.com/qmJyTy0.jpg>

Figure 4.32

Film still taken from Salla Tykkä, *Giant*, 12 min 20 sec, HD video, 2013, showing archive footage of Romanian Olympic gymnast Simona Amânar, circa early 1990's.

Image accessed: Screenshot taken by Tiffany Boyle, directly from film as provided by AV-arkki, the Distribution Centre for Finnish Media Art.

Figure 4.33

Eadweard Muybridge's study of a male gymnast, 1887.

Image accessed: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/42/63/4b/42634b4ddc9b862d82b85c9d527d4e94.jpg>

Figure 4.34

A movement sequence of positions struck, manually prepared, of Soviet gymnast Olga Korbut on the Balance Beam at the 1972 Munich Summer Olympic Games.

Image accessed: Simons II, M.; *Women's Gymnastics: A History, Volume I - 1966 to 1974*, Welwyn Publishing Company: Carmel, CA, 1995, pg. 244-245.

Figure 4.35

Illustration, attributed to Archange Tuccaro, 1599. Caption reads: 'Bodenturner mit genauen Bewegungsanweisungen,' translating as: 'Floor Gymnastics with Accurate Motion Instructions.'

Image accessed: Kühn, P., *Sports: A cultural history in the mirror of art*, Verlag de Kuhn: Dresden, 1996, pg. 25.

Figure 4.36

USSR gymnast Maria Filatova performing on the Balance Beam at the 1980 Moscow Olympic Summer Games at the Palace of Sports, Central Lenin Stadium Area.

Image accessed: Scrapbook cut-out. Held Olympic Studies Centre Archive, Lausanne. Press Scrapbooks collection, ID Chemise 305513 Box No. 19845-ARTPR.

Figure 4.37

Stroboscopic Image of Tumbling Sequence Performed by Danish Men's Gymnastics Team, photographed by Gjon Mili.

Image accessed: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/564x/48/64/2e/48642ee84c99b27970d6433d5865f1f6.jpg>

Figure 4.38

GIF sequence showing USA gymnast Jordyn Wieber performing a two and a half twisting Yurchenko vault in advance of the London 2012 Summer Olympic Games.

Image accessed: Park, H.; González Veira, X.; *The Toughest Vault*, The New York Times, 2012, Available:

http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/07/19/sports/olympics/the-toughest-vault.html?_r=0

Figure 4.39

Video sequence visualising the airbourn movement USA gymnast Jordyn Wieber performing a two and a half twisting Yurchenko vault in advance of the London 2012 Summer Olympic Games.

Image accessed: Park, H.; González Veira, X.; The Toughest Vault, The New York Times, 2012, Available:
<https://static01.nyt.com/packages/images/newsgraphics/2012/0706-vault/video.jpg>

Chapter 5

Figure 5.1

Gymnastics sculpture installed in the grounds of the Olympic Studies Centre and Museum, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Photograph taken by author.

Figure 5.2

Promotional Exhibition Poster, 'Boxer,' Centre for Contemporary Arts Glasgow, 27th April – 8th June 1996.

Image accessed: <http://www.cca-glasgow.com/archive/51b87661bdc6ccfc17000034>

Figure 5.3

Installation view, 'The International Gymnastics Hall of Fame,' a permanent exhibit at the Science Centre, Oklahoma City, USA.

Image accessed:
https://res.cloudinary.com/roadtrippers/image/upload/c_fill,h_316,w_520/v1365481004/international-gymnastics-hall-of-fame-5163962b4203c32877001827.jpg

Figure 5.4

Installation view, Opera Autonomia, 'Gymnasia,' held at Fleming House as part of Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art, 4th – 21st April 2014.

Image accessed:
<http://www.craigmulholland.com/#!/untitled/zoom/c1han/imagehv9>

Figure 5.5

Screenshot from Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art Programme Page for 'Gymnasia' exhibition, Fleming House, 4th – 21st April 2014, to which I contributed an exhibition text.

Image accessed: <http://glasgowinternational.org/events/opera-autonoma/>

Figure 5.6

Dr Beatriz Garcia and Tiffany Boyle listening to the presentation of Jo Longhurst, as part of 'Sports Event Spectacle: Cultural Policy-Making and Curating Contemporary Art for Major Sporting Events,' held at Flat Time House, Peckham, 15th July 2014.

Photo documentation taken by Flat Time House Programme Coordinator Mary Vettise.

Figure 5.7

Dr Beatriz Garcia, Professor Jo Longhurst, Tiffany Boyle and audience listening to the presentation of Dr Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt, as part of 'Sports Event Spectacle: Cultural Policy-Making and Curating Contemporary Art for Major Sporting Events,' held at Flat Time House, Peckham, 15th July 2014.

Photo documentation taken by Flat Time House Programme Coordinator Mary Vettise.

Figure 5.8

Photograph of the gym interior of community-led mixed-purpose space Kinning Park Complex, a former primary school in the south of Glasgow. The first screening within the Glasgow edition of the 'Sport, Sport, Sport' screening programme was shown in this space, with black-out curtains and a free-standing projection screen.

Image accessed: <http://www.kinningparkcomplex.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Hall-8.jpg>

Figure 5.9

Documentation of 'Sport, Sport, Sport' screening event, held at Transmission Gallery, 22nd October 2014.

Photograph taken by Transmission Gallery Committee member Ashanti Harris.

Figure 5.10

Screenshot from author's computer showing an example of the subtitling completed for the film 'Little Doll' using the subtitling software programme Aegisub.

Screenshot taken from file on author's own laptop.

Figure 5.11

Lucy Mckenzie, Quodlibet XXXV, Oil on canvas, 250 x 300 cm, 2014. Installation view as part of 'The Inventors of Tradition II,' conceived and curated by Panel and Atelier E.B., The Palace of Art, Bellahouston Park, Glasgow, running 2nd – 30th May 2015.

Image accessed: <http://wearepanel.co.uk/index.php?page=iot-ii>

- Figure 5.12** Fashion collection on display. Installation view as part of 'The Inventors of Tradition II,' conceived and curated by Panel and Atelier E.B., The Palace of Art, Bellahouston Park, Glasgow, running 2nd – 30th May 2015.
- Image accessed: <http://wearepanel.co.uk/index.php?page=iot-ii>
- Figure 5.13** Fashion collection on display. Installation view as part of 'The Inventors of Tradition II,' conceived and curated by Panel and Atelier E.B., The Palace of Art, Bellahouston Park, Glasgow, running 2nd – 30th May 2015.
- Image accessed: <http://wearepanel.co.uk/index.php?page=iot-ii>
- Figure 5.14** Installation view as part of 'Fully Fashioned: The Pringle of Scotland Story' exhibition, held at the National Museum of Scotland, 10th April – 16th August 2015.
- Image accessed: http://www.wallpaper.com/fashion/fully-fashionable-pringle-of-scotland-toasts-200-years-with-an-anniversary-exhibition-in-edinburgh?utm_content=buffer1130e&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer#15664
- Figure 5.15** Installation view as part of 'Fully Fashioned: The Pringle of Scotland Story' exhibition, held at the National Museum of Scotland, 10th April – 16th August 2015.
- Image accessed: <http://www.wmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/pringle-of-scotland-3-630x420.jpg>
- Figure 5.16** Installation view as part of 'Fully Fashioned: The Pringle of Scotland Story' exhibition, held at the National Museum of Scotland, 10th April – 16th August 2015.
- Image accessed: <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/B-oajLkUAAAP2Jm.jpg>
- Figure 5.17** Glasgow Clydeside Gym Top, held in the collections of the Glasgow Museum Resource Centre.
- Photographed by author.
- Figure 5.18** A more modern version of the Gym Blouse St Leonards School, formerly St Leonards and St Katharines School, is an independent school founded in St Andrews in the 19th century. The traditional gym uniform featured 'tails,' a silk tie hung from the waist through a leather belt. The military influences of this uniform were based on Belgian uniforms, due to the first Principal Teacher of the school taking up the post from Belgium.
- Photographed by author.

Figure 5.19

Catalogue Front Cover, Tatham, J.; O'Sullivan, T.; Amongst other things: an unsuccessful proposal for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, Published Centre for Contemporary Arts Glasgow, 2012.

Image accessed: <http://www.aye-ayebooks.com/shop/images/uploads/tathamosull.jpg>

Figure 5.20

Jo Longhurst, 'Petrobras 100,' Digital Photographic Print, created with bodyscanning technology. Produced in collaboration with Gimnásticas de Manguera, a rhythmic gymnastics social change project located in the Manguera favela, Rio de Janeiro.

Image accessed: Courtesy of the artist Jo Longhurst.

Figure 5.21

Promotional Exhibition Poster, 'Playing for Scotland: The Making of Modern Sport,' Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1st December 2011 – 2nd April 2017.

Image accessed: http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-1G4tlr_9vZo/T4f-CVgWz_I/AAAAAAAAAc18/LhAwzh7iot0/s400/Playing-for-Scotland-ad.jpg

Illustrations

Chapter 1



Figure 1.1



Figure 1.2



Figure 1.3



Figure 1.4

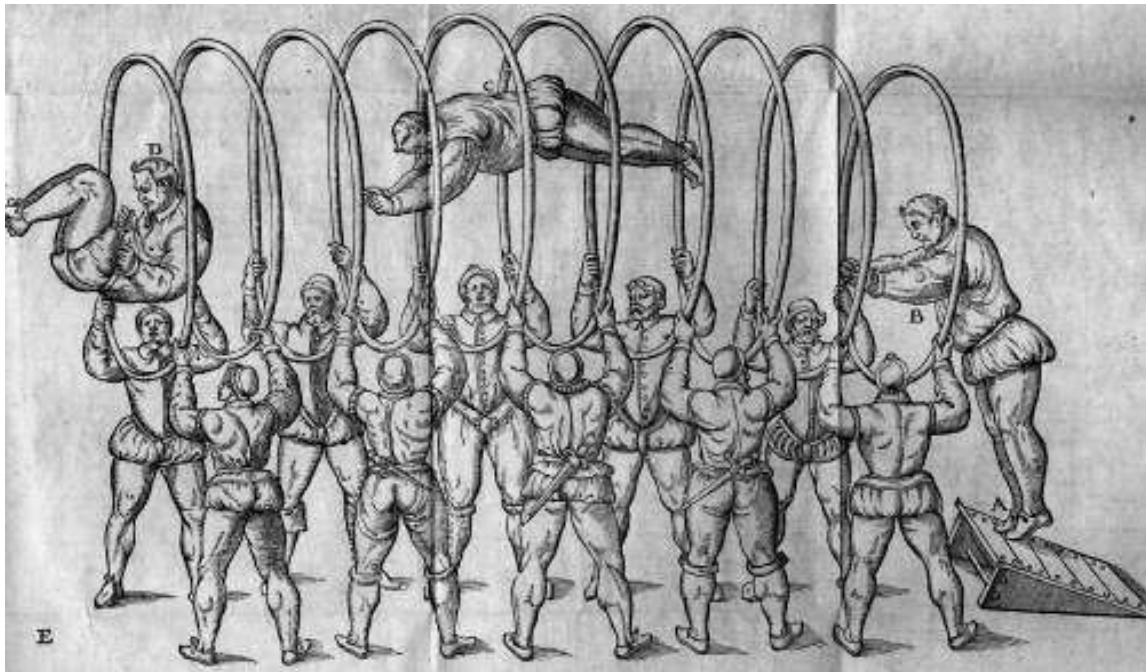


Figure 1.5

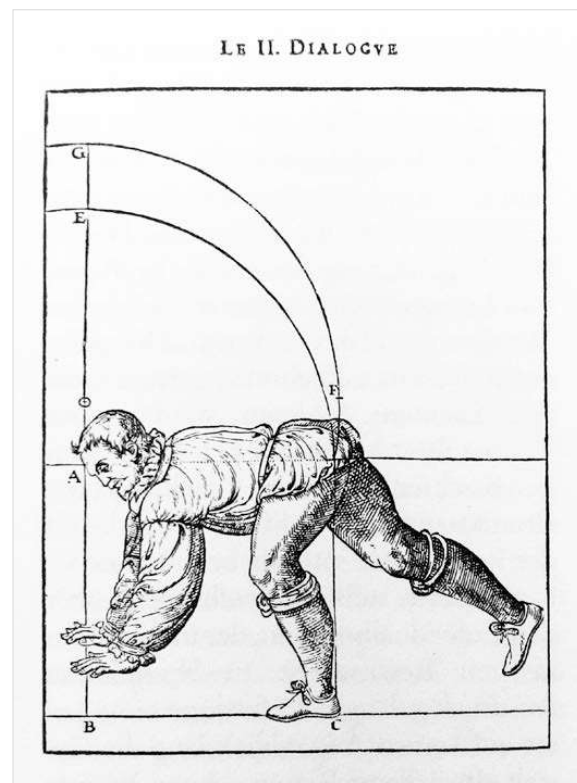


Figure 1.6



Figure 1.7



Figure 1.8

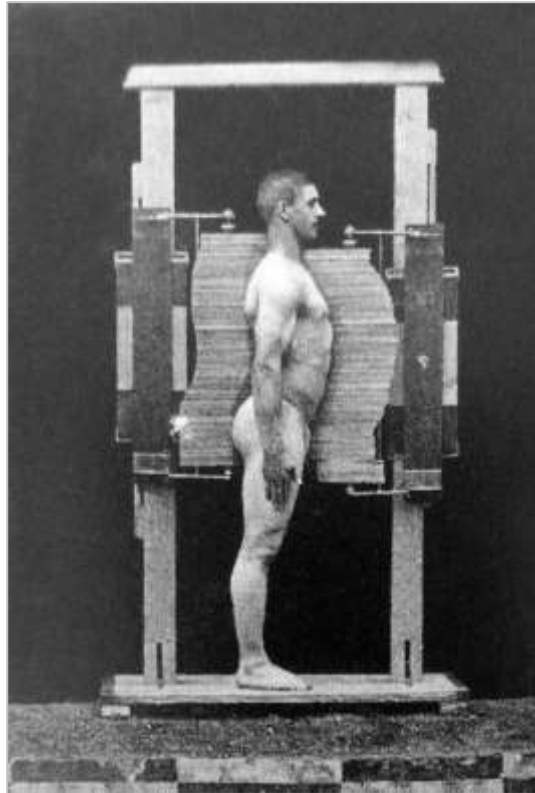


Figure 1.9



Figure 1.10



Figure 1.11



Figure 1.12

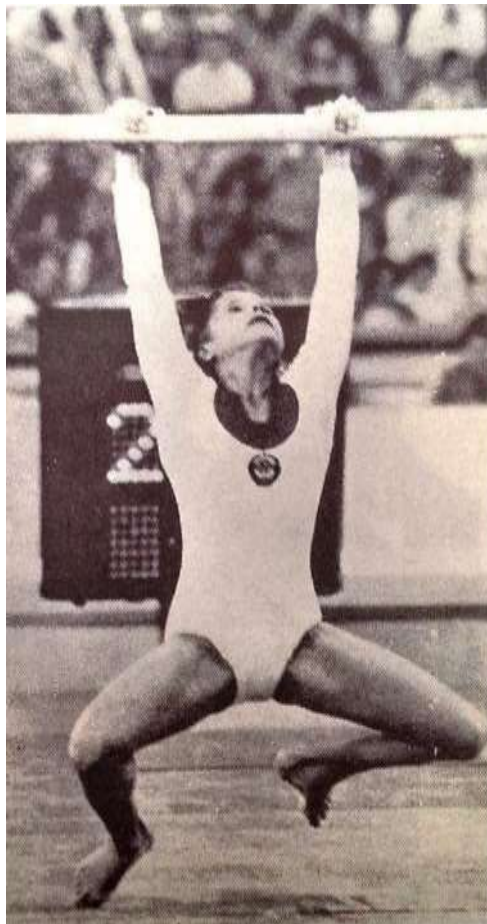


Figure 1.13



Figure 1.14



Figure 1.15



Figure 1.16



Figure 1.17

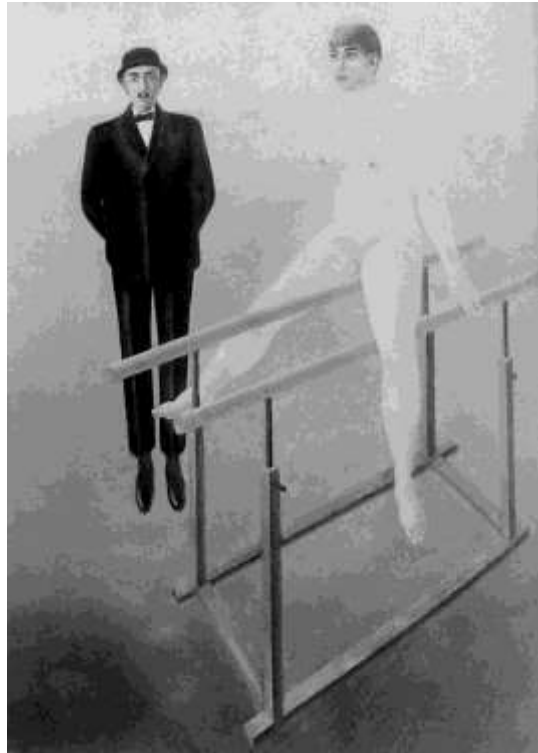


Figure 1.18



Figure 1.19



Figure 1.20



Figure 1.21

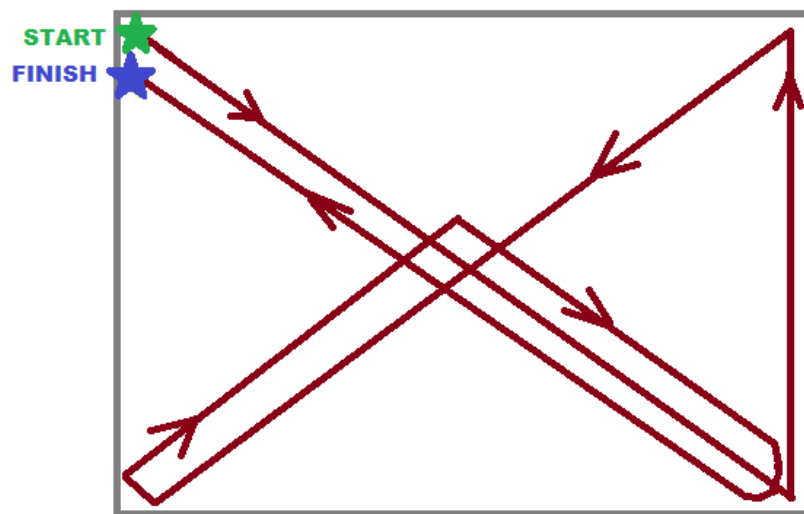


Figure 1.22

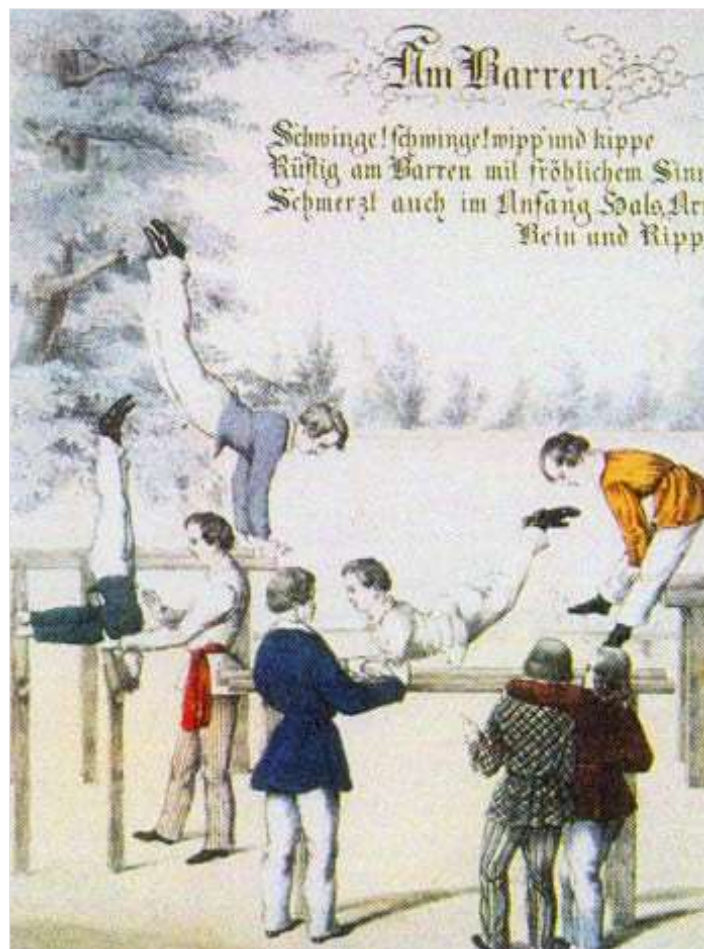


Figure 1.23

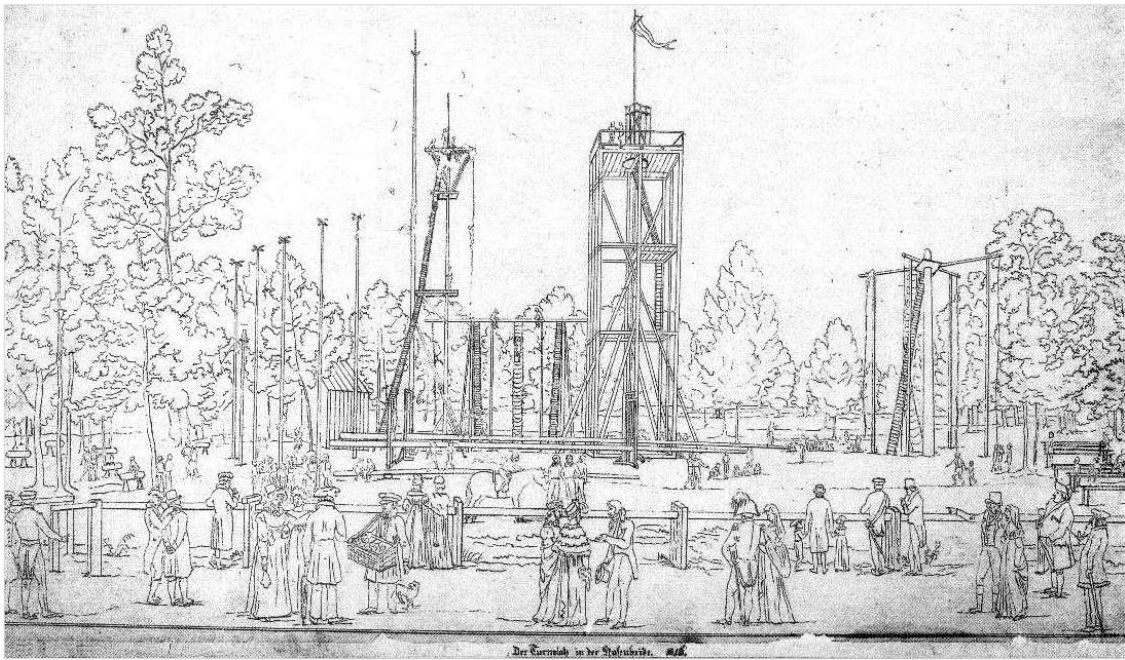


Figure 1.24



Figure 1.25

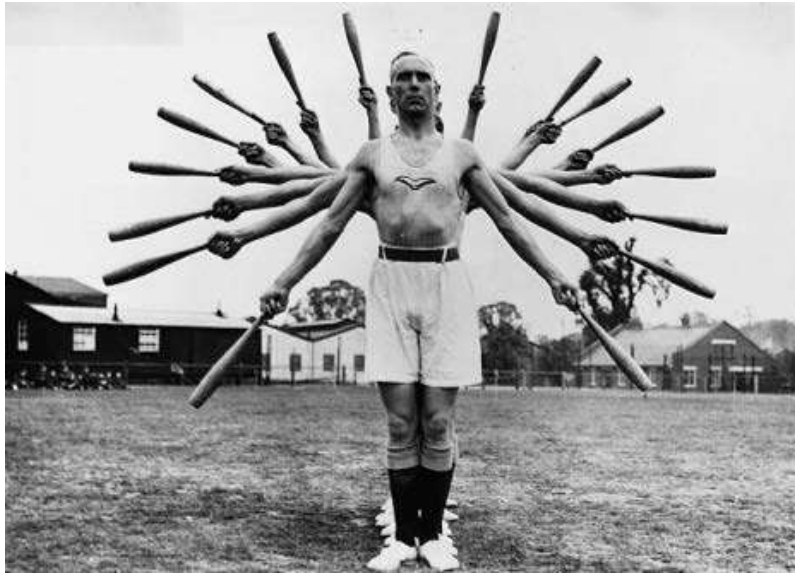


Figure 1.26



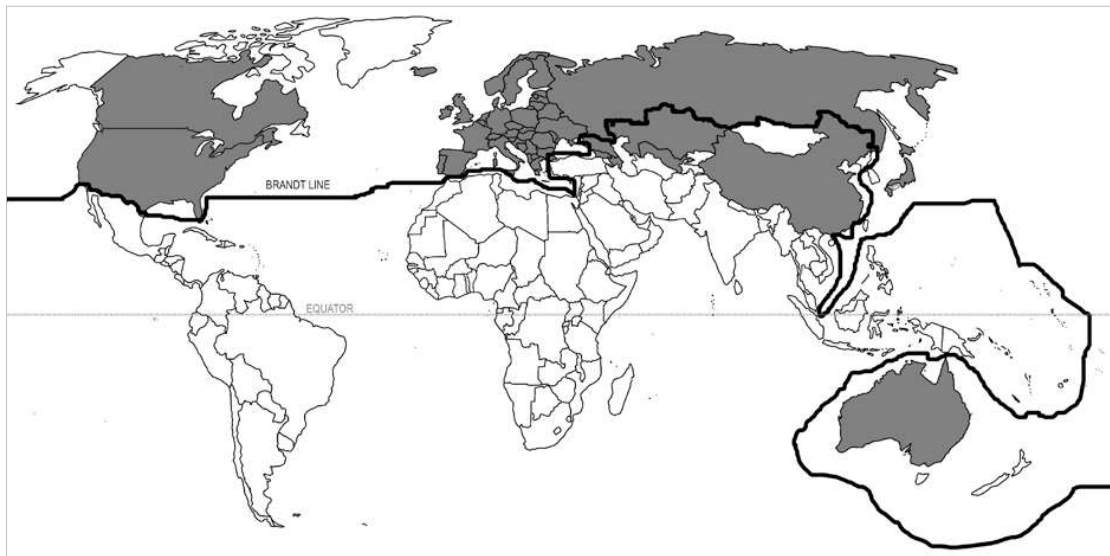
Figure 1.27

TOP 15 GYMNASTIC NATIONS, RANKED BY OLYMPIC MEDAL COUNT, 2004-2012

Rank	2004 1	2008 2	2012 3
1	Romania	China	China
2	USA	USA	Russia
3	Russia	Russia	USA
4	Ukraine	Romania	Japan
5	Italy	North Korea	Romania
6	Japan	Poland	Brazil
7	Canada	Canada	Canada
8	China	Japan	Hungary
9	Germany	Belarus	South Korea
10	Spain	France	Netherlands
11	France	Germany	Germany
12	Greece	Croatia	Great Britain
13	Bulgaria	South Korea	Belarus
14	South Korea	Spain	Italy
15	Latvia	Ukraine*	France
		Uzbekistan*	

* Please note that Ukraine and Uzbekistan came in equal 15th place.

Figure 1.28



■ Nations marked Grey indicates a history of high-achievement in Olympic Gymnastics (all disciplines)

Figure 1.29



Figure 1.30

Chapter 2

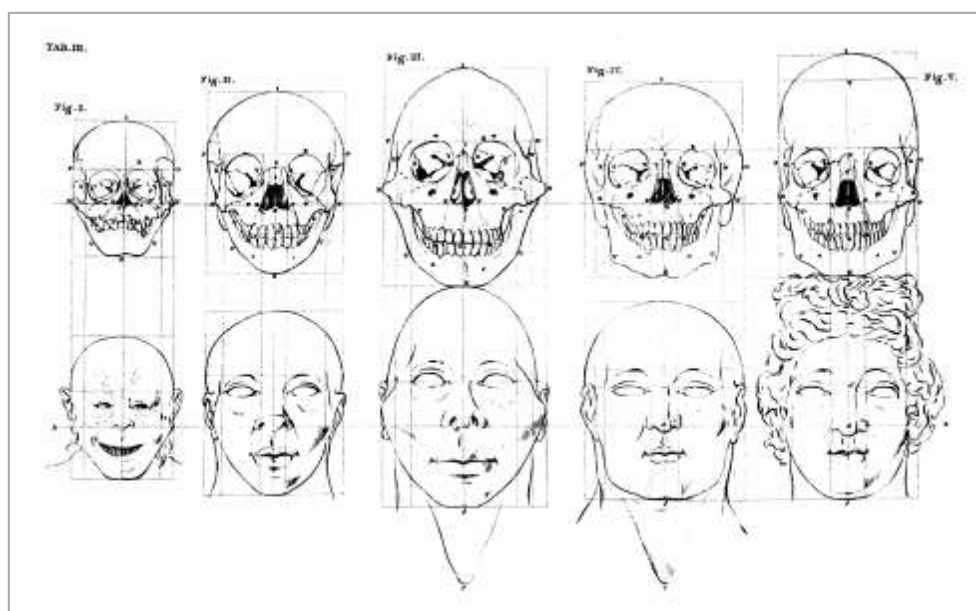


Figure 2.1



Figure 2.2

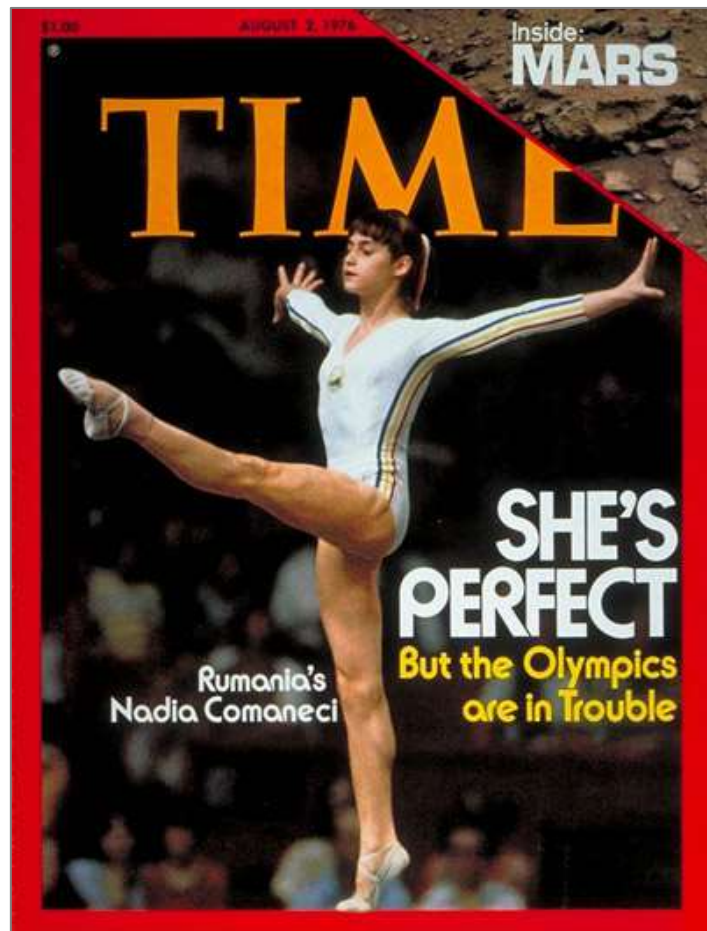


Figure 2.3



Figure 2.4



Figure 2.5



Figure 2.6



Figure 2.7

**"I DON'T
COMPETE IN
GYMNASTICS,
BUT I CAN HELP
YOU WIN!"**
—Ralph Sampson

Like a gymnast, an NBA Center has to have strength and agility. And what helps me can help you too. Nutrament. It gives you a competitive edge.

Nutrament is a complete fitness and energy drink, recommended by leading coaches and trainers. It supplies carbohydrates to help build strength and endurance.

Nutrament also provides your body with vitamins, minerals and protein needed for muscle growth and development. And because it's a liquid, it digests easily.

Nutrament has given me that extra competitive edge for years. It can do the same for you.

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NUTRAMENT
The athletes' energy source.



Figure 2.8



Figure 2.9



Figure 2.10



Figure 2.11



Figure 2.12



Figure 2.13



Figure 2.14



Figure 2.15



Figure 2.16

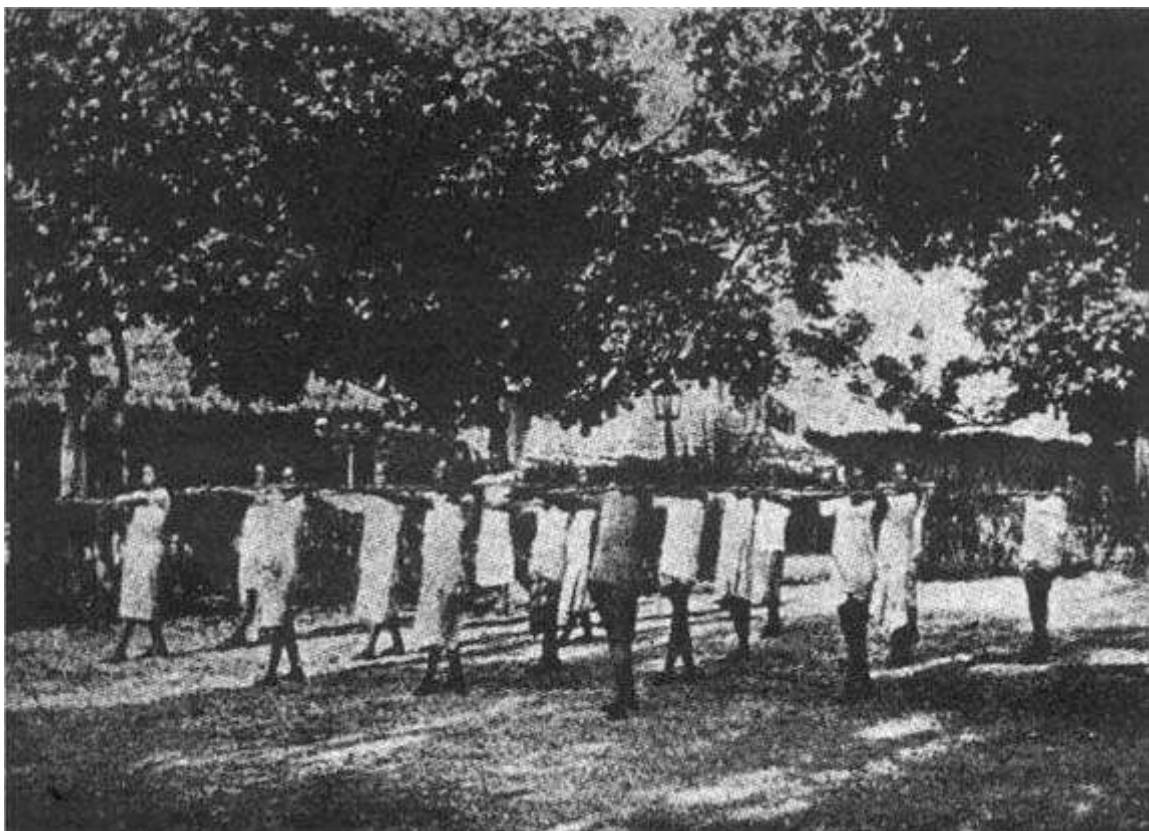


Figure 2.17



Figure 2.18



Figure 2.19



Figure 2.20



Figure 2.21



Figure 2.22



Figure 2.23



Figure 2.24



Figure 2.25



Figure 2.26



Figure 2.27



Figure 2.28

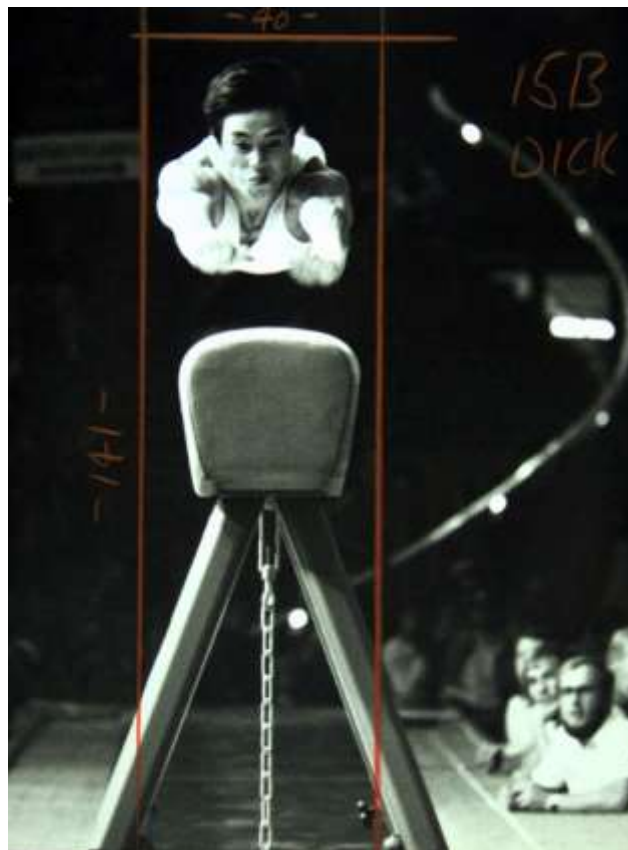


Figure 2.29



Figure 2.30

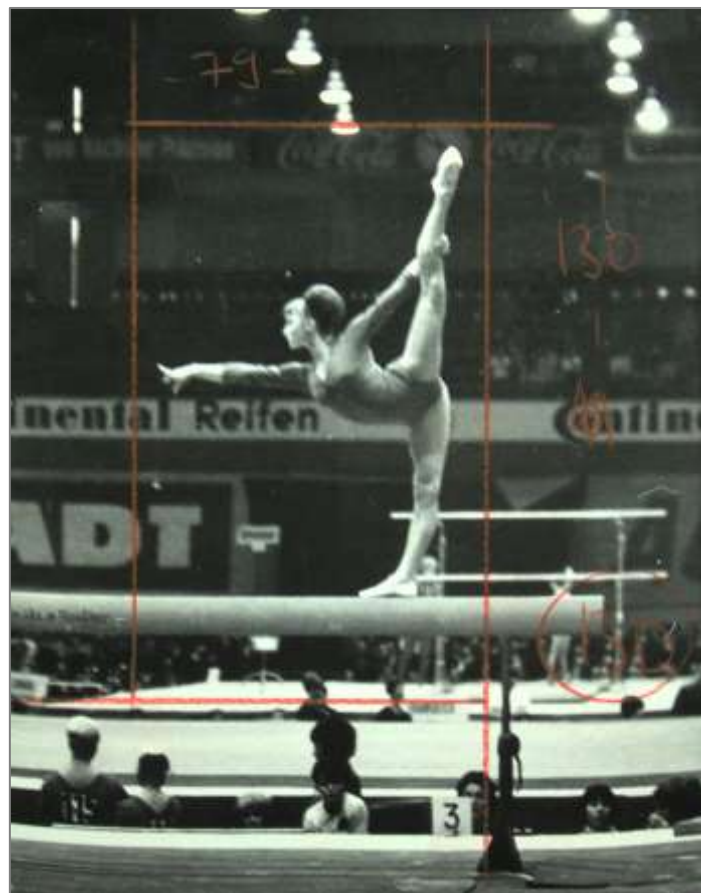


Figure 2.31

Medical Indoor Gymnastics

OR

A SYSTEM OF HYGIENIC EXERCISES FOR HOME USE

*TO BE PRACTISED ANYWHERE WITHOUT APPARATUS OR
ASSISTANCE BY YOUNG AND OLD OF EITHER SEX
FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HEALTH
AND GENERAL ACTIVITY*

BY

D. G. M. SCHREBER, M. D.

Late Director of the Orthopaedic and Medicinal-Gymnastic Institution in Leipzig

REVISED AND SUPPLEMENTED BY

RUDOLF GRAEFE, M. D.

Of the Second Public Infirmary in Leipzig and Assistant in the Surgical Department

TRANSLATED FROM THE TWENTY-SIXTH GERMAN EDITION BY

HERBERT A. DAY

WITH A PLATE AND FORTY-FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

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Figure 2.32



Figure 2.33



Figure 2.34



Figure 2.35



Figure 2.36



Figure 2.37



Figure 2.38



Figure 2.39



Figure 2.40

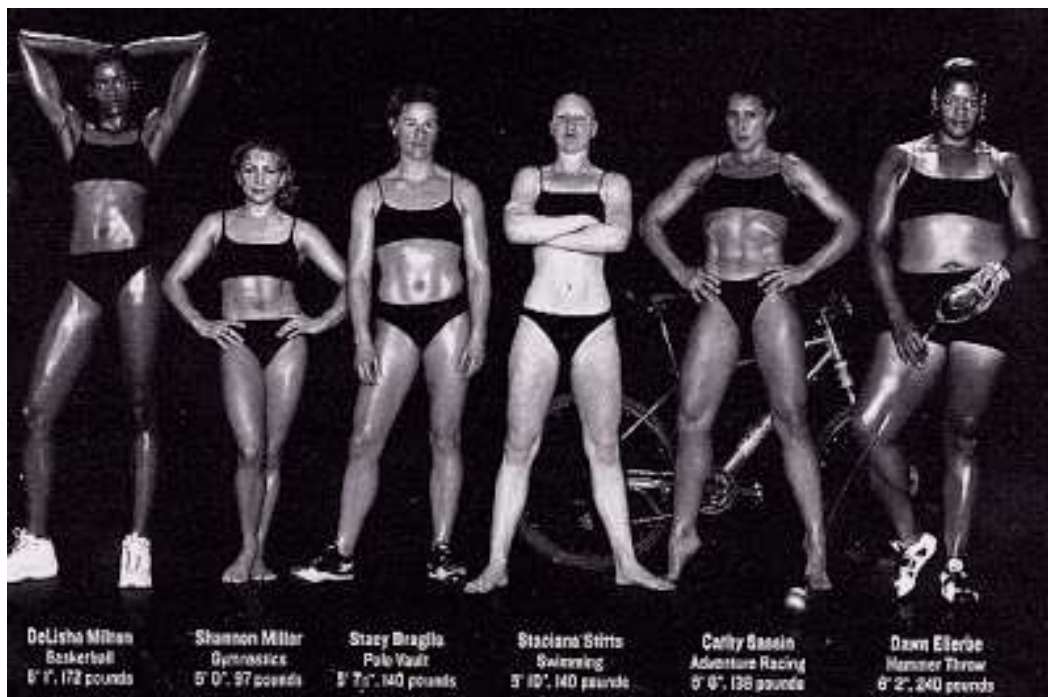


Figure 2.41



Figure 2.42



Figure 2.43



Figure 2.44



Figure 2.45



Figure 2.48



Figure 2.49



Figure 2.50



Figure 2.51



Figure 2.52



Figure 2.53



Figure 2.54



Aurelia Dobre
Olympic athlete

Aurelia Dobre is a former artistic gymnast from Romania, who was the 1987 World Champion. She was also 1st on balance beam, 3rd on vault and floor exercise in event finals and scored a total of 5 "perfect 10's" at these championships. [Wikipedia](#)

Born: November 16, 1972 (age 42), [Bucharest, Romania](#)

Height: 1.46 m

Weight: 42 kg

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Daniela Silivaș	Yelena Shushunova	Camelia Voinea	Ecaterina Szabo	Oksana Omelianchuk

Figure 2.55



Figure 2.56



Figure 2.57



Figure 2.58



Figure 2.59

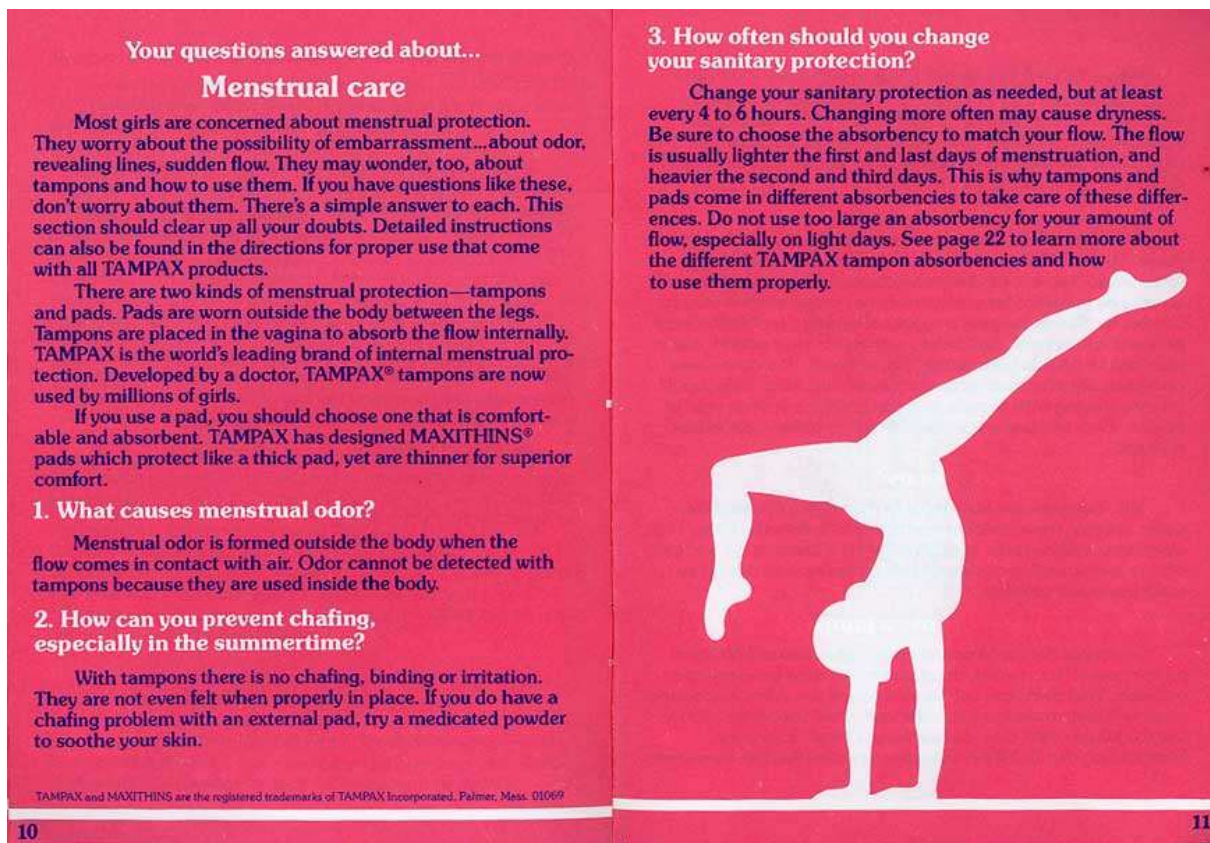


Figure 2.60

Chapter 3



Figure 3.1.



Figure 3.2



Figure 3.3



Figure 3.4



Figure 3.5



Figure 3.6

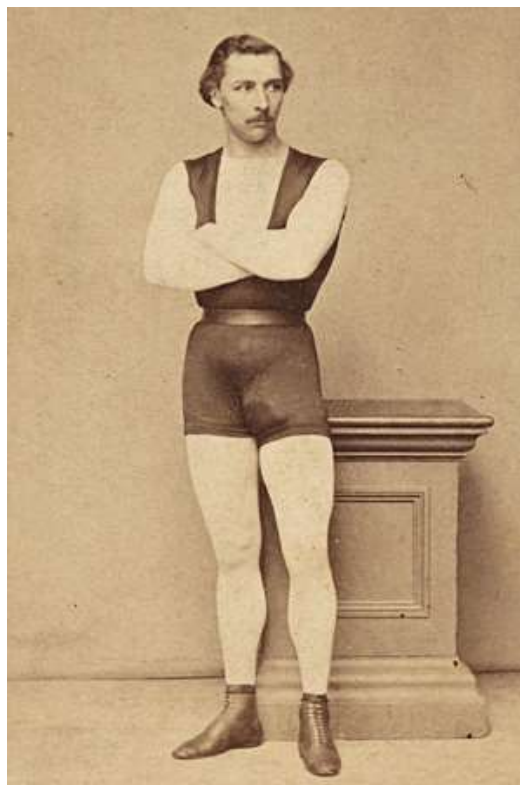


Figure 3.7



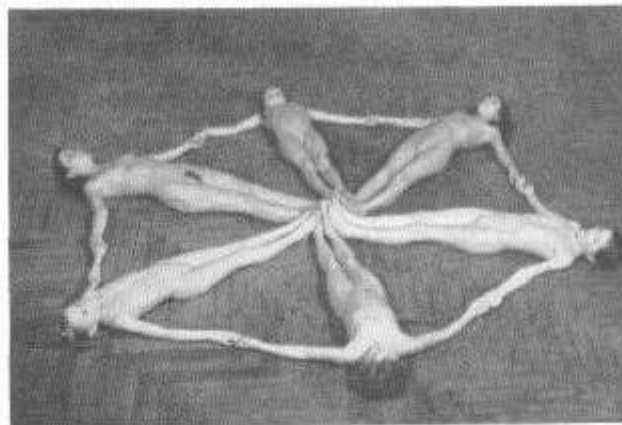
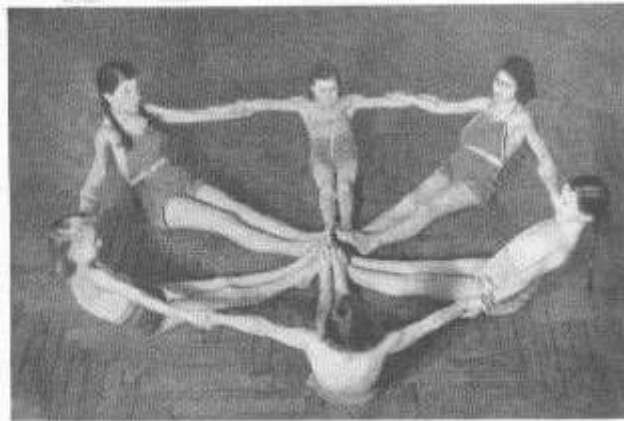
Figure 3.8



Figure 3.9



Figure 3.10



Vergleichsbilder aus der Gymnastikarbeit. Der durch Kleidung nicht
zergliederte Körper ist auch im Ausdruck harmonisch und natürlich.

Figure 3.11



Figure 3.12



Figure 3.13



Figure 3.14

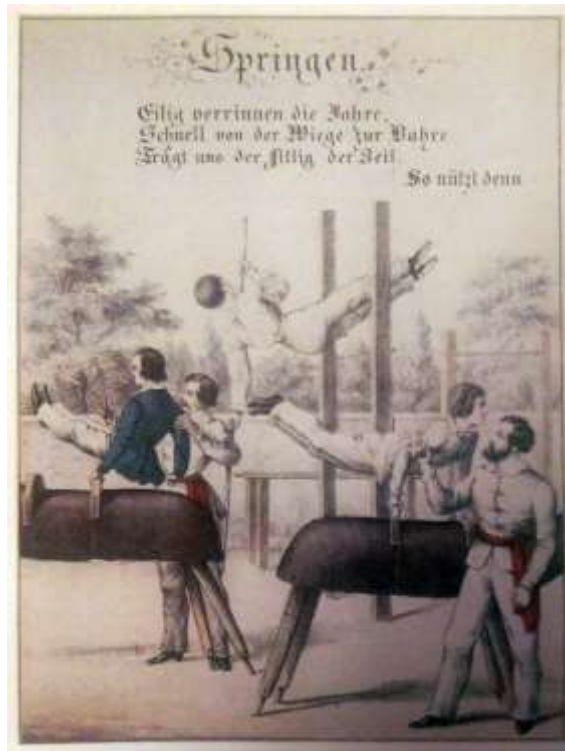


Figure 3.15



Figure 3.16



Figure 3.17



Figure 3.18



Figure 3.19



Figure 3.20



Figure 3.21

Those Admirable Corsets

will meet with your approval. Expert fitters are at your service always, so that the Corset Case is assured to you.

BUCHANAN - Dark Satin and Bone Corset Case, elastic ends, adjustable straps, double back, medium depth, 2 1/2 in. deep, 11 in. to 14 in., 2/6.

SPORTS - Elastic Top Corset in White Gossamer, with suspenders at back, very elastic, steel bones, with skin. Specially designed for golf, tennis, etc., for ladies who prefer very easy. 212, 211, 411, 511.

CORINA - White or Bone Corset Case, in elastic, 2 suspenders, deep straps, with skin, medium depth. Very special 213.

GIPSY - Bone Corset Case, in elastic, all with elastic, 1 suspender, medium depth, and elastic. Only 211.

COMPARISON - Bone Corset Case, in elastic, adjustable straps, 4 suspenders, medium depth, deep, deep, medium depth, 11 in. to 14 in., 2/6.

NEW BRASSIERES.
TYPE 10 - White Satin Bralette, covered in elastic, double lined, steel pattern, 2/6.
TYPE 11 - White Satin Bralette, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 12 - White Satin Bralette, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 13 - White Satin Bralette, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 14 - White Satin Bralette, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 15 - White Satin Bralette, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 16 - White Satin Bralette, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 17 - White Satin Bralette, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 18 - White Satin Bralette, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 19 - White Satin Bralette, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 20 - White Satin Bralette, covered in elastic, 2/6.

GIRL'S CORSETS.
PLAY SOCIETY - These are the most popular for young girls. Covered in elastic, 2/6.
CHILDREN'S - These are the most popular for young girls. Covered in elastic, 2/6.
CHILDREN'S - These are the most popular for young girls. Covered in elastic, 2/6.
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CHILDREN'S - These are the most popular for young girls. Covered in elastic, 2/6.
CHILDREN'S - These are the most popular for young girls. Covered in elastic, 2/6.

LONGLETH BODICES.
TYPE 1 - Longleth Bodice, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 2 - Longleth Bodice, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 3 - Longleth Bodice, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 4 - Longleth Bodice, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 5 - Longleth Bodice, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 6 - Longleth Bodice, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 7 - Longleth Bodice, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 8 - Longleth Bodice, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 9 - Longleth Bodice, covered in elastic, 2/6.
TYPE 10 - Longleth Bodice, covered in elastic, 2/6.

G. L. Wilson, Dundee.

Figure 3.22



Figure 3.23

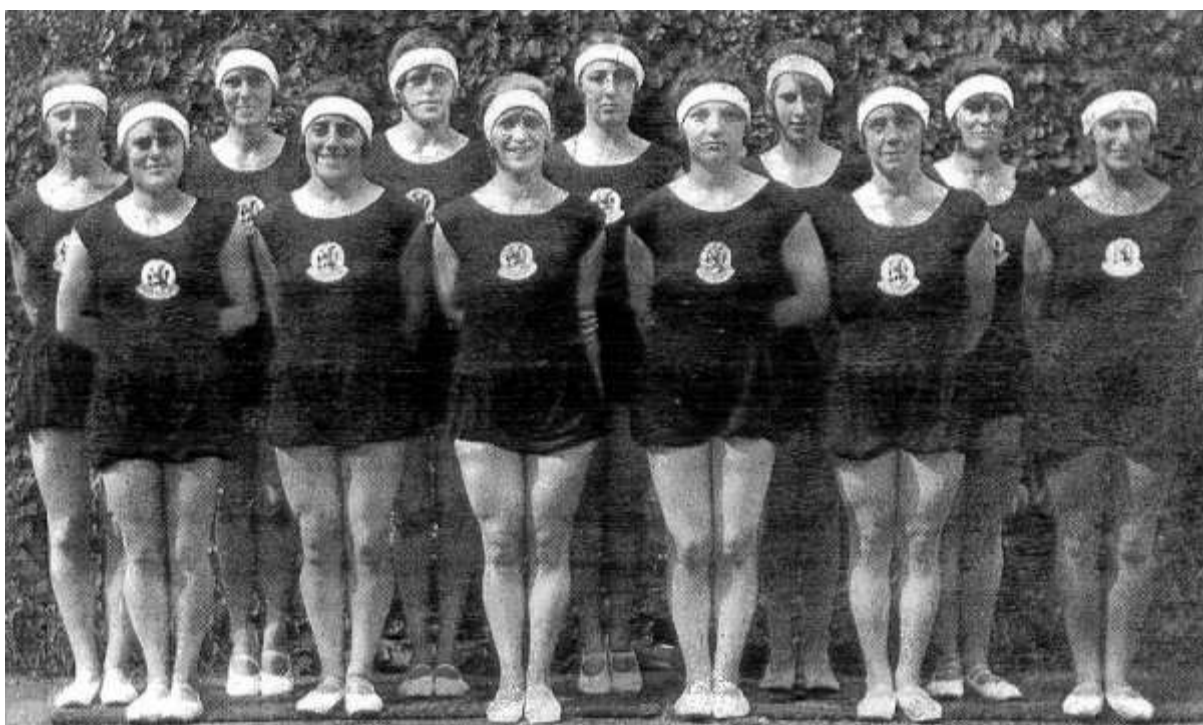


Figure 3.24



Figure 3.25



Figure 3.26



Figure 3.27



Figure 3.28



Figure 3.29



Figure 3.30



Figure 3.31



Figure 3.32



Figure 3.33



Figure 3.34



Figure 3.35



Figure 3.36



Figure 3.37



Figure 3.38



Figure 3.39



Figure 3.40



Figure 3.41



Figure 3.42



Figure 3.43



Figure 3.44



Figure 3.45

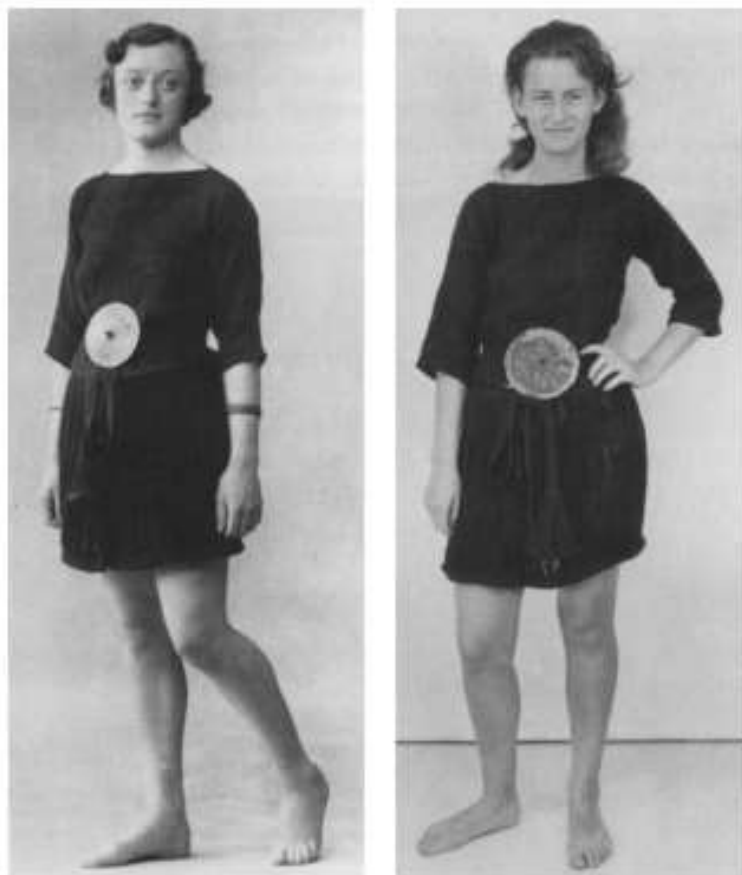


Figure 3.46



Figure 3.47

Chapter 4



Figure 4.1

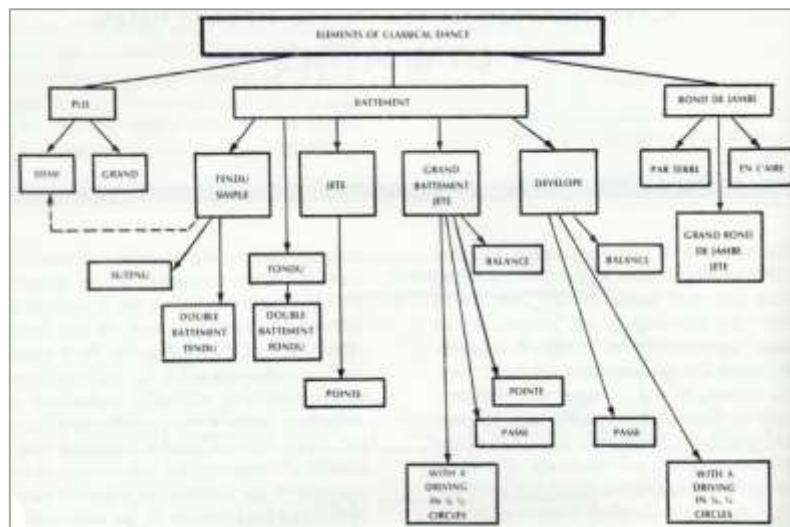


Figure 4.2

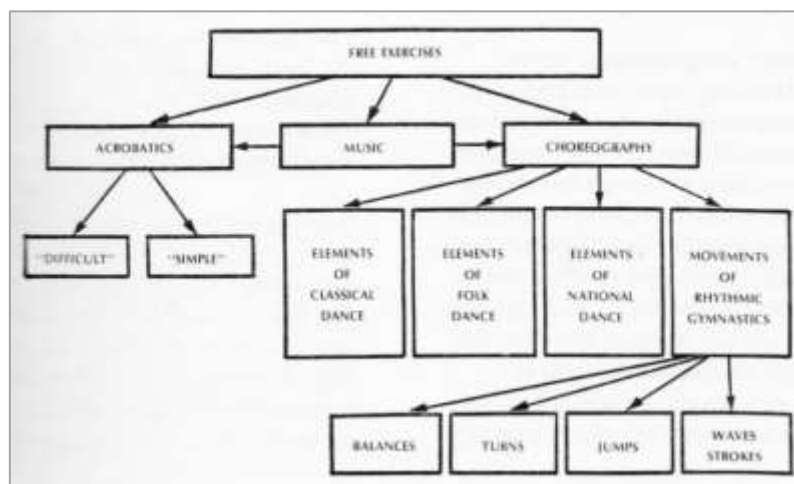


Figure 4.3



Figure 4.4

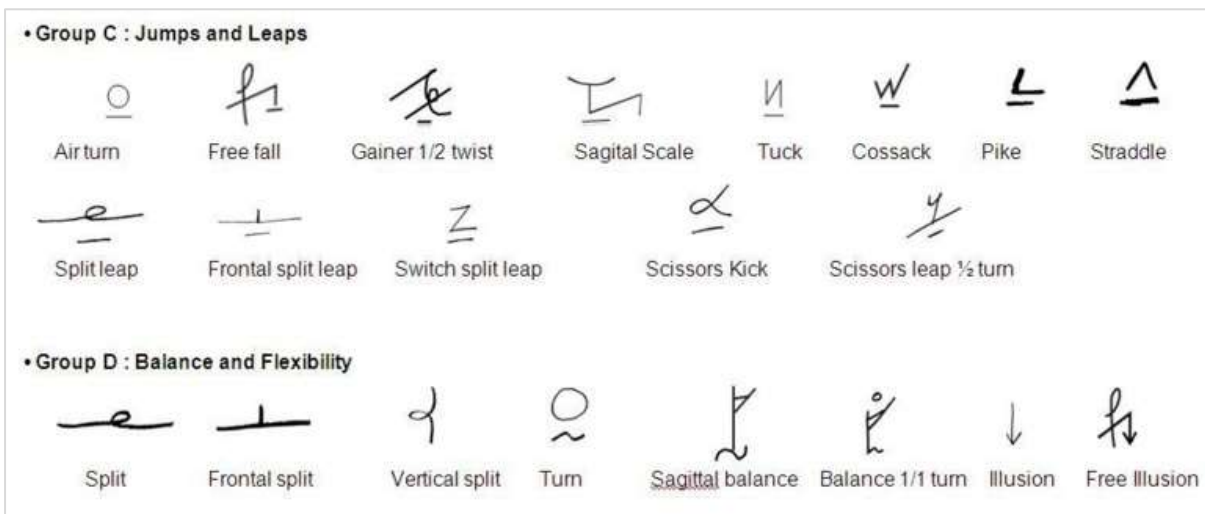


Figure 4.5



Figure 4.6

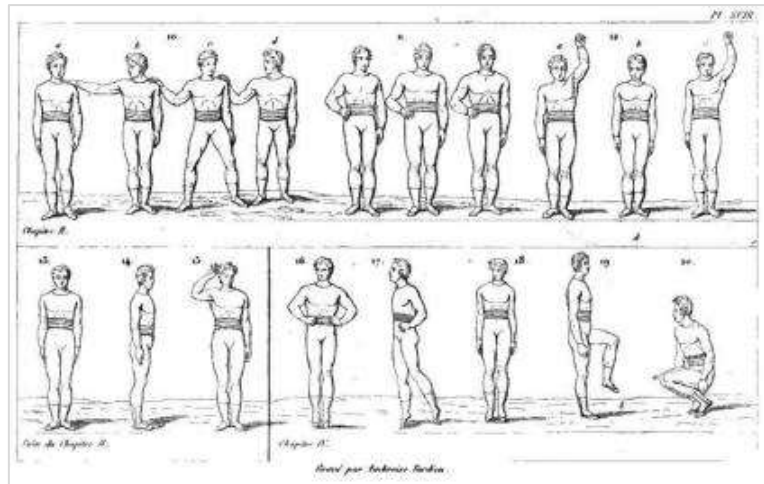


Figure 4.7

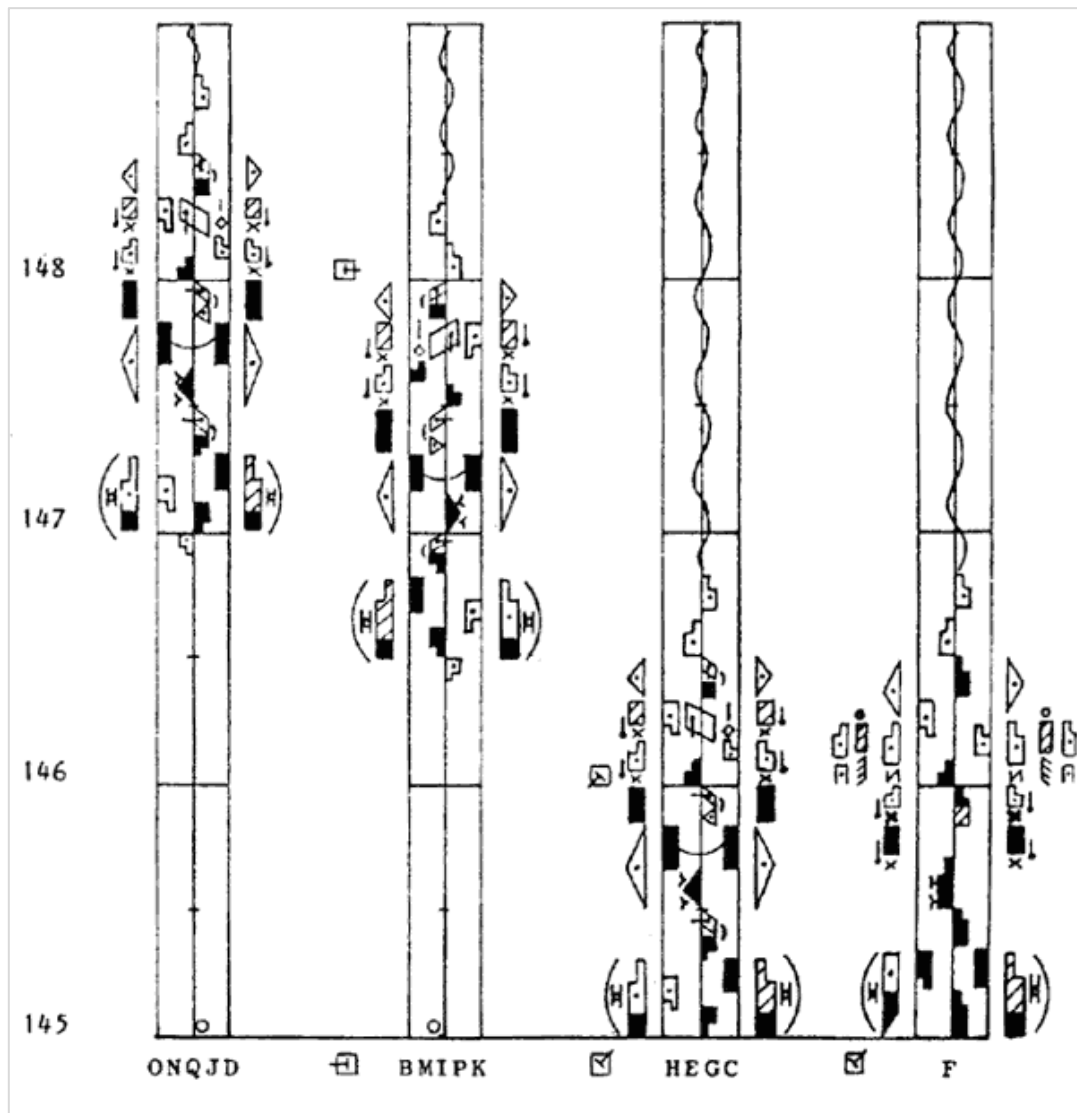


Figure 4.8



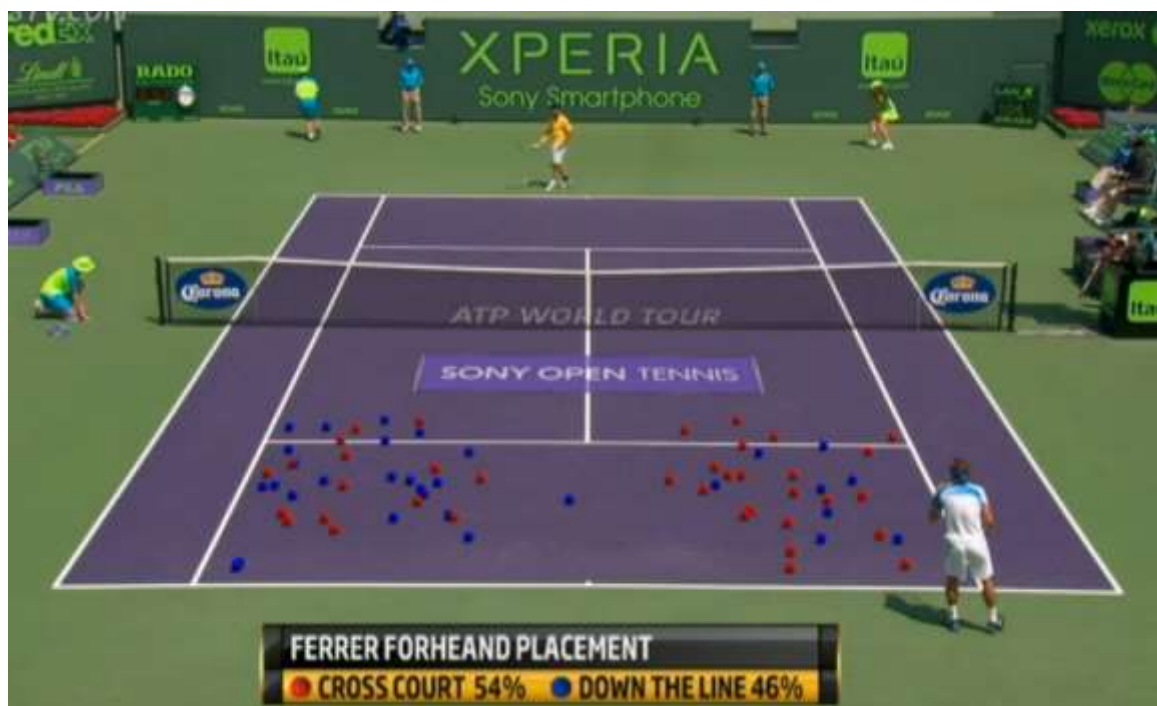


Figure 4.11

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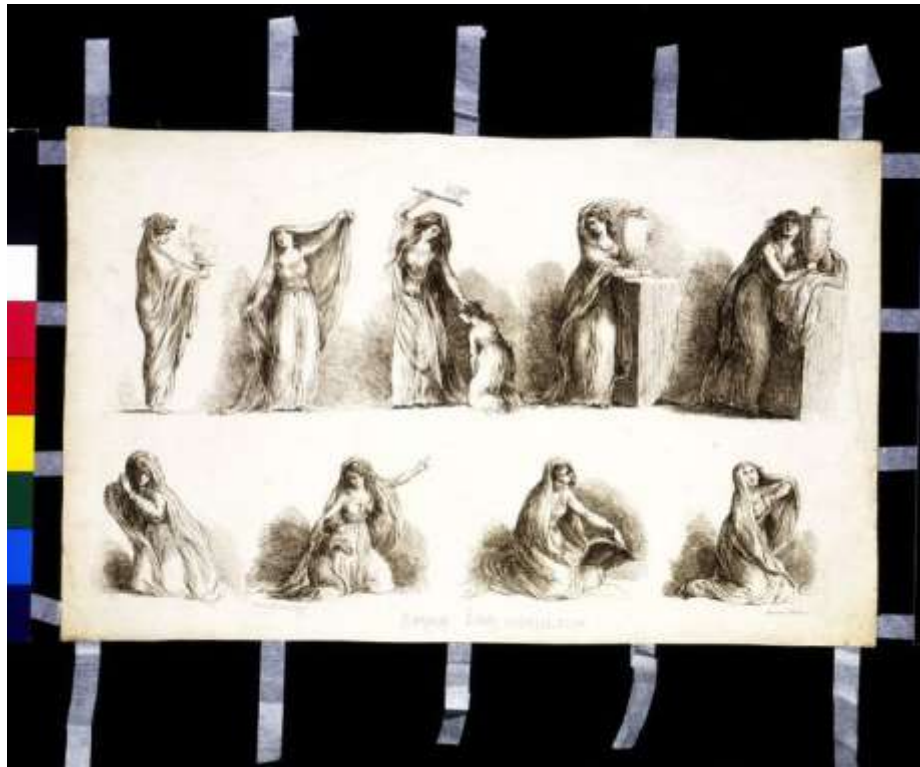


Figure 4.13



Figure 4.14



Figure 4.15



Figure 4.16



Figure 4.17

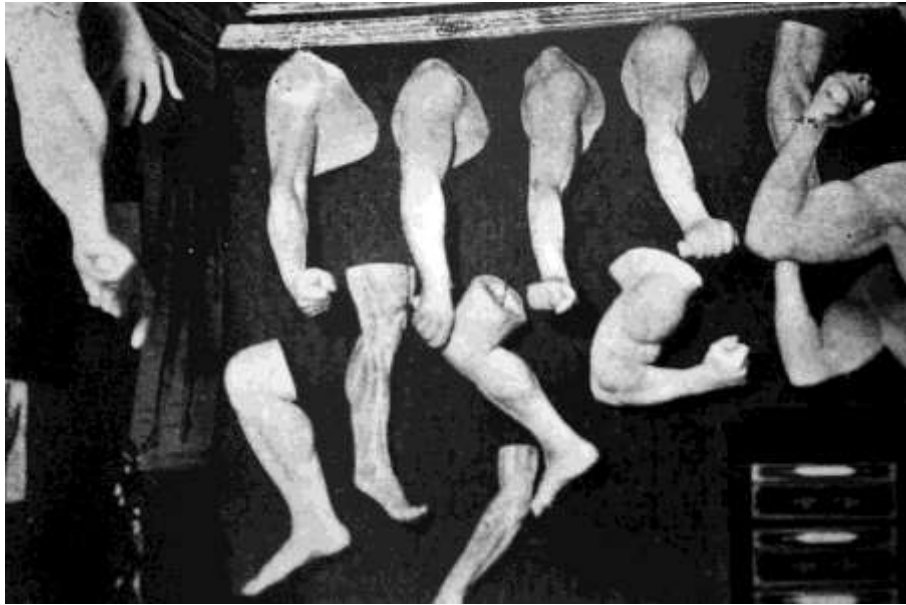


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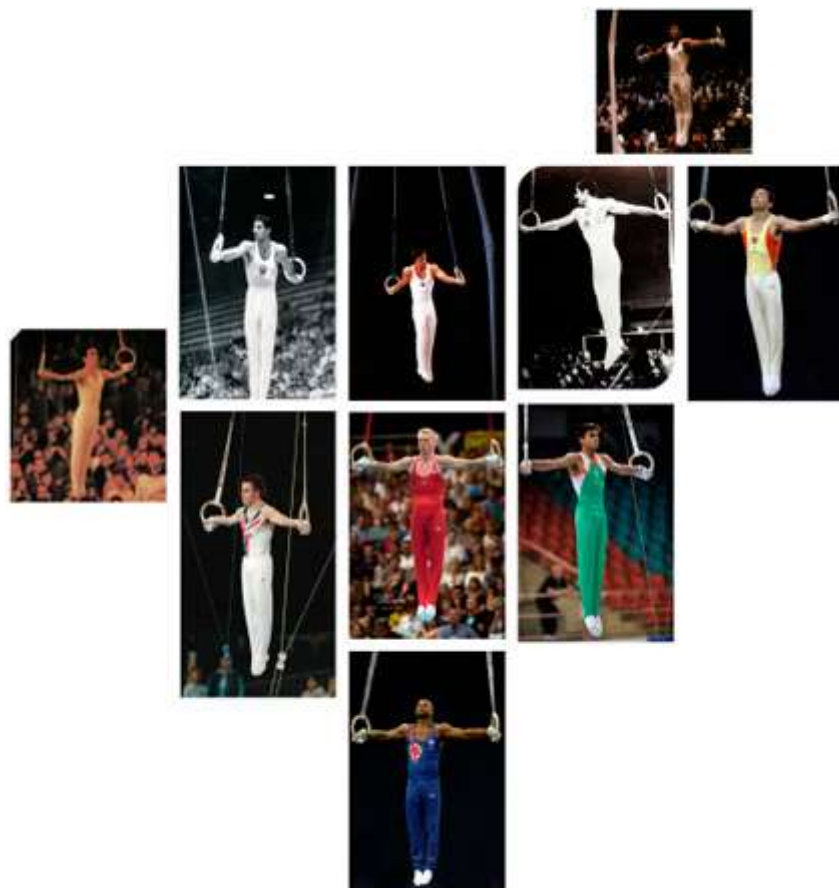


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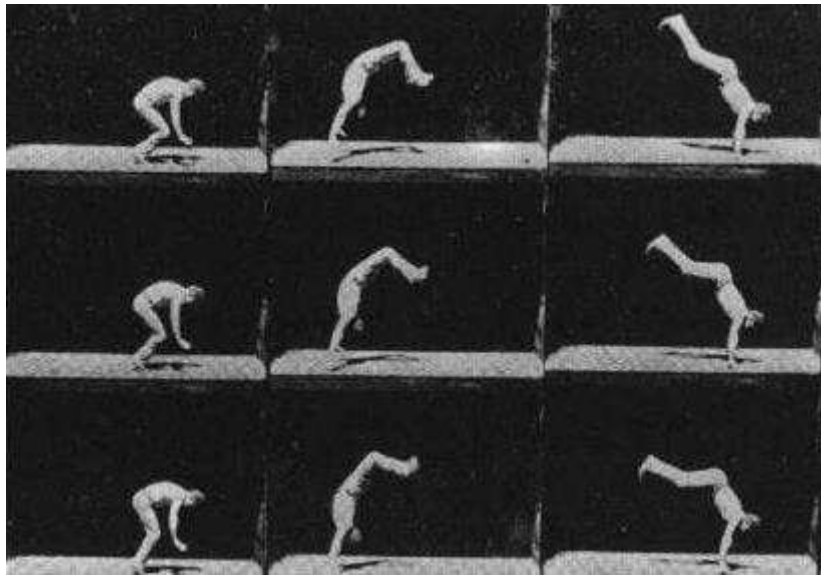


Figure 4.20



Figure 4.21



Figure 4.22



Figure 4.23



Figure 4.24



Figure 4.25



Figure 4.26



Figure 4.27



Figure 4.28



Figure 4.29



Figure 4.30



Figure 4.31



Figure 4.32

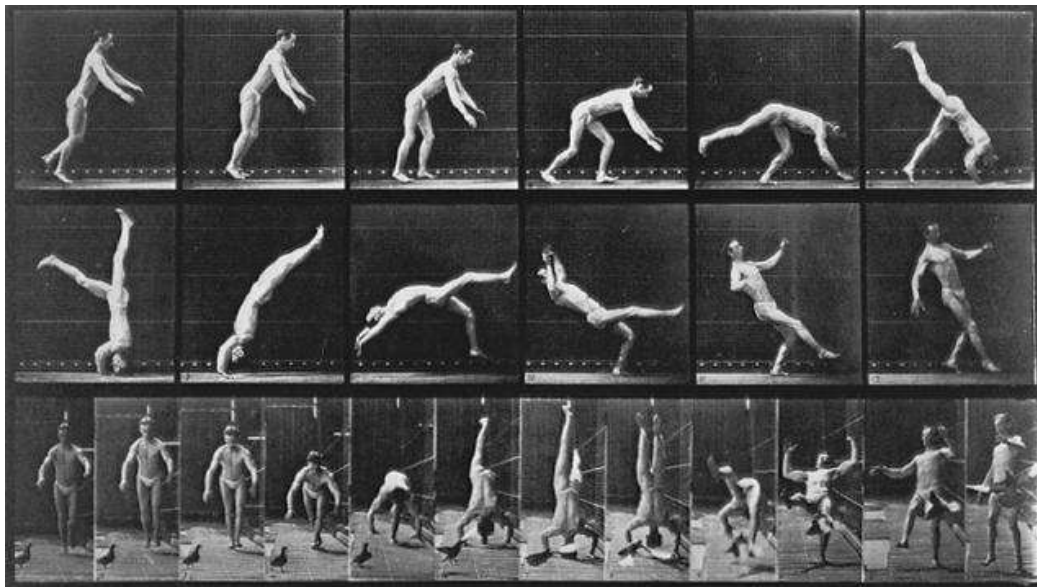


Figure 4.33



Figure 4.34

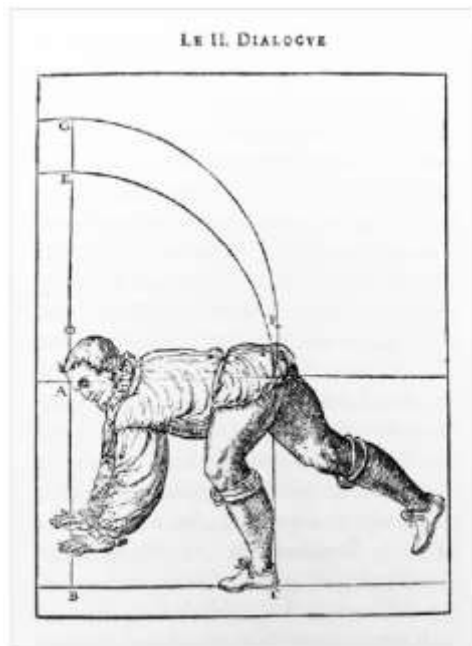


Figure 4.35

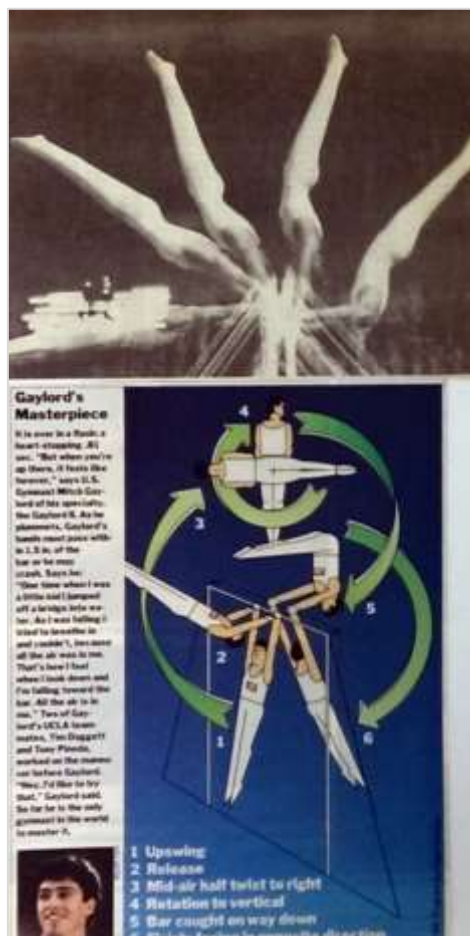


Figure 4.36



Figure 4.37

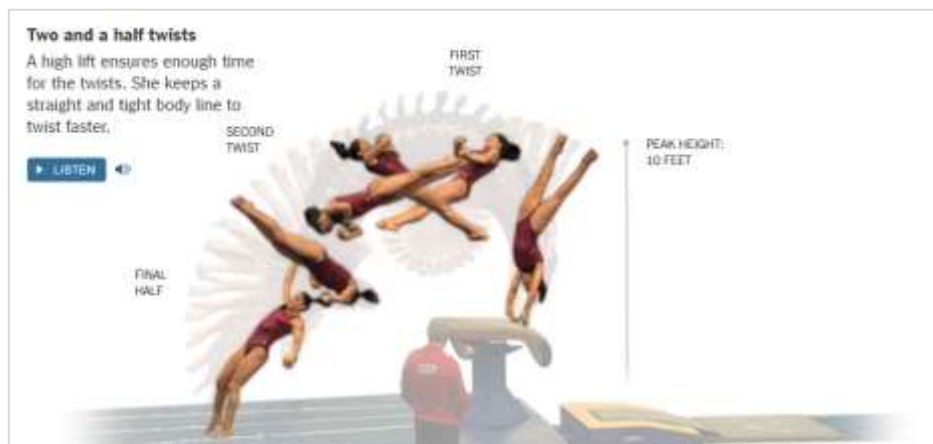


Figure 4.38

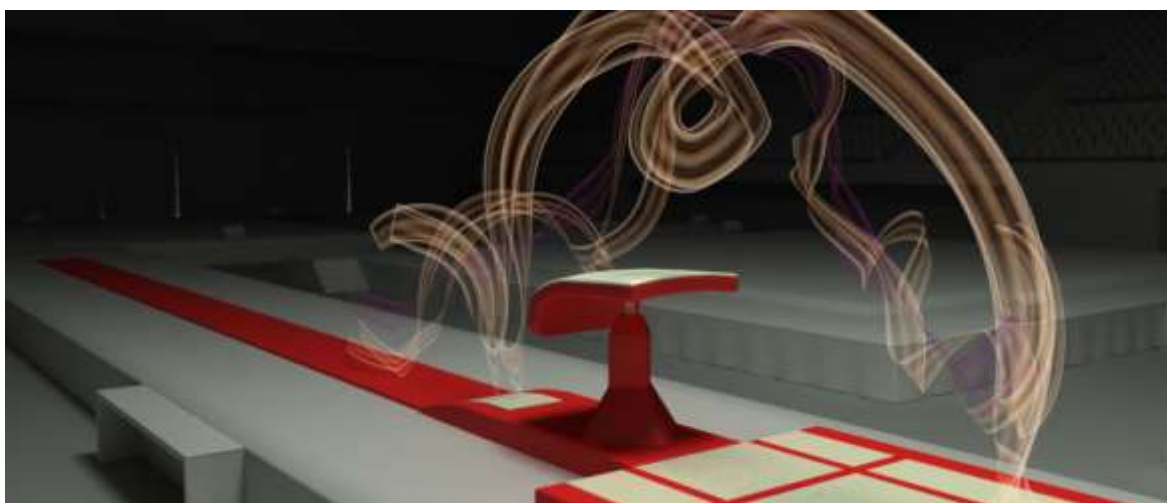


Figure 4.39

Chapter 5



Figure 5.1



Figure 5.2



Figure 5.3



Figure 5.4



GYMNASIA
[Add to itinerary](#) ♥

Date: 04 Apr 2013 – 21 Apr 2013
 Type: Exhibition
 Location: [Fleming House](#)

GYMNASIA is a multi-disciplinary artwork produced by the artist's collective OPERA AUTONOMA, directed by Craig Mulholland, with Michelle Hannah, Andrew Houston, Claudia Nova and Carmel O'Brien. Inspired by the non-hierarchical alignment between physical exercise and scholarly activity found in the ancient Greek institution of Gymnasia, it functions both as a live performance event and static multi-media installation.

GYMNASIA endeavours to act as an autonomous territory or arena for the alliance of sporting and artistic activity, functioning in the model of a peripatetic classroom, laboratory or theatre. Through this lens the project specifically seeks to examine themes of endurance, practise and performance between sporting and artistic disciplines.

Commissioned by Glasgow International and supported by Outset Scotland and The Glasgow School Of Art.

With thanks to Tiffany Boyle, Sukaina Kubba, Ingrida Danieliute, Kendall Koppe, Kevin Pollock and Glasgow Lofts.

Figure 5.5



Figure 5.6



Figure 5.7



Figure 5.8



Figure 5.9

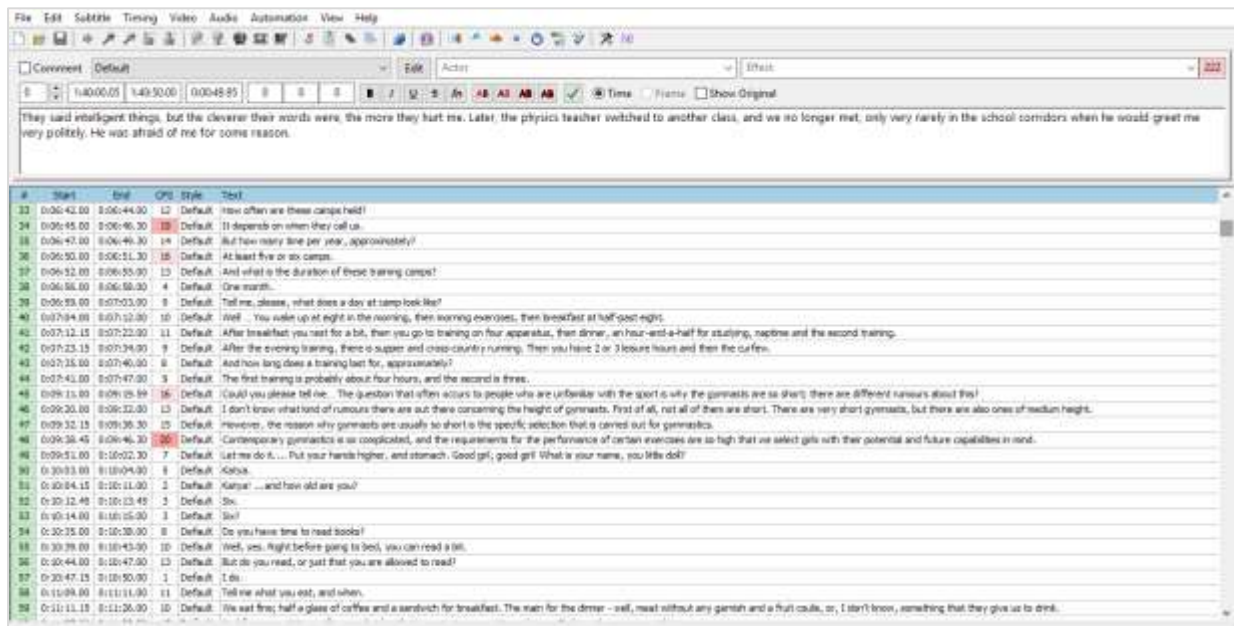


Figure 5.10



Figure 5.11



Figure 5.12



Figure 5.13



Figure 5.14



Figure 5.15



Figure 5.16



Figure 5.17



Figure 5.18



Figure 5.19



Figure 5.20

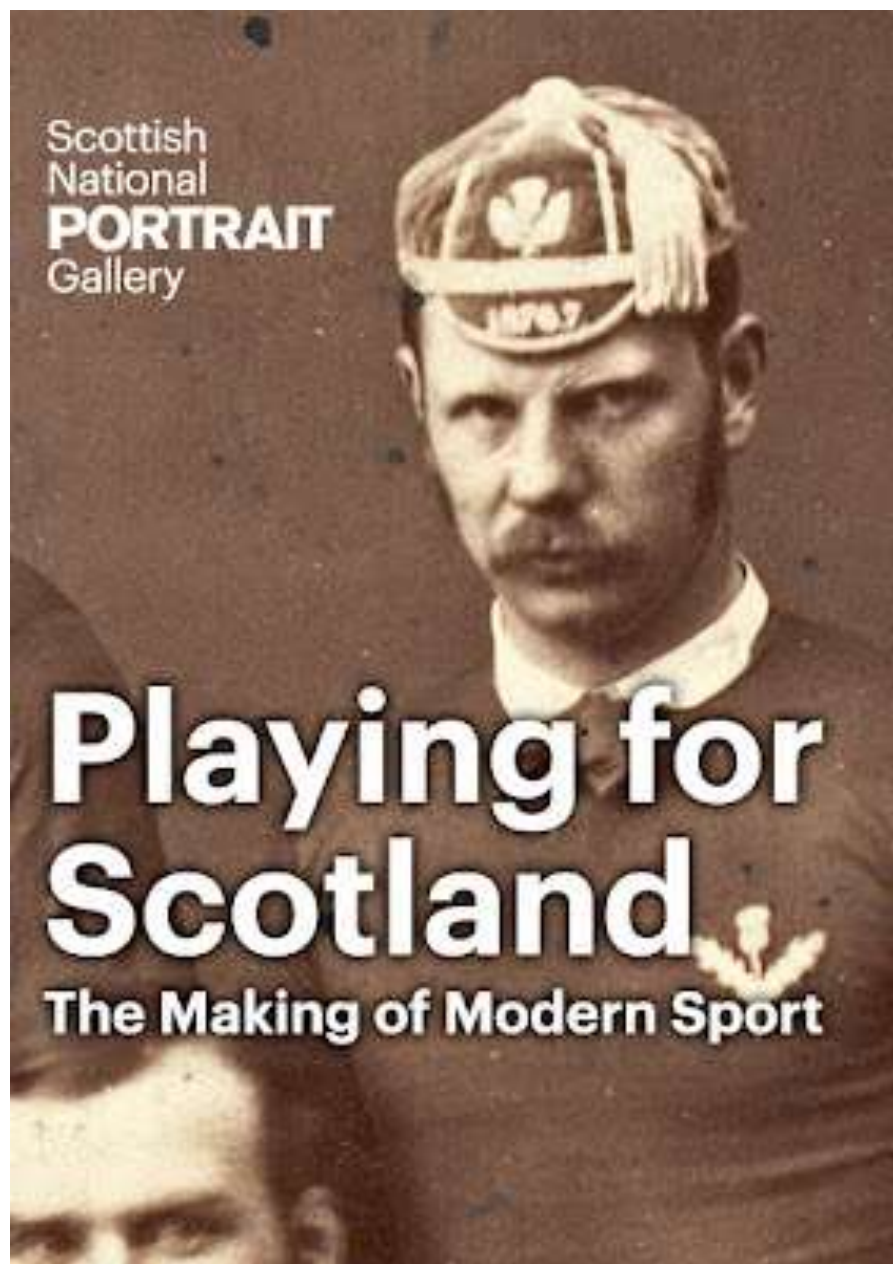


Figure 5.21

Introduction

The quotation from which this thesis takes its title in part – ‘these gymnasts do not simply perform gymnastics’¹ – is taken from the Nazi-sympathiser and Danish gymnastics instructor Niels Bukh (1880 – 1950). He founded a gymnastics school at Ollerup in Denmark, was the gymnastics trainer of the Danish team at the Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912, and a recognisable figure both at home and internationally in the 1930s.² I have purposefully misappropriated the title here to convey a central tenet to this thesis, being that the representation of the gymnastic body and its performance in visual culture emits a complex web of signals and messages to those viewing it, the deconstruction of which has received relatively little analysis.

The shape of the Olympic discipline of Artistic Gymnastics is a legacy distilled from a wealth of gymnastic forms of movement, practiced against military, didactic, medicinal, political, dance and aesthetic objectives. Gymnastics is a form of movement for which no complete, global history exists. It has largely been neglected by research in the arts and humanities, with sports history largely contributing studies of specific gymnastic leaders, or regional or national practices. The majority of existing research derives from sports science, focusing on biomechanics, issues of bodily development, nutrition, eating disorders, and sports psychology. This thesis seeks to add to the modest existing literature a visual analysis of the manner in which the gymnastics body has been represented, tracing the genealogy of these representations back to the re-invention of gymnastics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

¹ H. Bonde, *Gymnastics and politics: Niels Bukh and male aesthetics*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press; University of Copenhagen, 2006, p. 187

² H. Bonde, The iconic symbolism of Niels Bukh: aryan body culture, Danish gymnastics and Nordic tradition, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 16, Iss. 4, 1999, p. 104

Specific areas of analysis cover the whiteness of gymnastics; the relation of this whiteness to the reverence for classical imagery and the statuesque; gender; posing; performativity; movement notation; the tension between stillness and movement; the various clothing worn for gymnastics; and ways of watching and capturing gymnastics. This thesis takes a thematic methodology, consulting a range of interdisciplinary resources and literature, and stems out of my own childhood experience of competitive gymnastics. A range of archives have been consulted, as well as items from the sport's visual culture: from gymnastics magazines; posters; and advertisements; to competition coverage; commentary; fan montages; leotards; badges; coaching manuals; teaching aids; and films. A practice-based thesis, specific lines of enquiry from the thesis have been explored in exhibition texts and curated public programming, with a particular focus on the body in motion, and culminating in the exhibition 'New Order, Other Spaces' as part of the Glasgow 2018 European Sports Championships cultural programme.

Framework

As already mentioned, no comprehensive global history of gymnastics exists; as sports historian Gertrud Pfister has described, its history is a 'subject often marginalised by the history of sport community [teamed with a] widespread lack of interest in gymnastics among sport historians.'³ Suggested reasons for this academic indifference include the sheer variety of activities described as gymnastics throughout history, in different languages and locales, and that gymnastics itself has continued to evolve in new directions. To this I would add that gymnastics has *not* been a sport, for longer than it has been considered such. The Federation Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) is the oldest sporting organisation of its kind, founded in

³ G. Pfister, 'Epilogue: Gymnastics from Europe to America', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 26, No. 13, 2009, p. 205.

1881 and with gymnastics included in the modern Olympic Games from the outset.⁴ However, it was at the point of its debut still considered a separate entity to modern sport, as demonstrated by the following quote: ‘the 2nd Congress of the International Olympic Committee held in Le Havre, 1897, decided “unanimously [that] the definition of physical education [should be] the harmonious combination of gymnastics and sport”’.⁵

The division – gymnastics *and* sport – was not simply at the pedagogical level being pushed by Baron Pierre du Coubertin, but was also in terms of gymnastics’ reception. At the inaugural modern Olympic Games, held in Athens in 1896, the aesthetic emphasis of gymnastics was not popular with the audience, which deemed it ‘not enough of a real sport’. It may have taken the intervening 117 years to change spectators’ minds, but gymnastics is now considered one of the Big Four sports in terms of Olympic viewership.⁶ Gymnastics received the most on-air coverage out of all sports aired in the American coverage of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games by the National Broadcasting Corporation,⁷ which also revealed it to be one of their ‘centerpieces’ for the London 2012 Olympic Summer Games.⁸ With significant fanbases in some of the world’s most populous nations – the US, Russia and China – and powerhouses such as Japan, gymnastics is the most direct Olympic arena for the world’s superpowers to (softly) compete.

⁴ Henceforth referred to by its abbreviation, the FIG.

⁵ IOC & Olympic Studies Centre, Olympic Congresses Fonds List [Digitised Version], p. 6. Personal collection of author.

⁶ A.C. Billings, ‘From Diving Boards to Pole Vaults: Gendered Athlete Portrayals in the “Big Four” Sports at the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics’, *Southern Communication Journal*, Vol. 72, No. 4, 2007, p. 330.

⁷ A.N. Eagleman, ‘Constructing gender differences: newspaper portrayals of male and female gymnasts at the 2012 Olympic Games’, *Sport in Society*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2015, p. 235.

⁸ *Ibid.*

If we are to consider a sport – even if within an Olympic realm it sits within a small pool of aesthetic and subjectively-judged disciplines – then an interrogation of the meaning of sport itself is also required. Sport has been defined by the Oxford Dictionary as ‘an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment.’⁹ This definition feels dissatisfying, in that it neglects many points we should consider to be central to our understanding of sport: it does not, for example state its social importance, or refer explicitly to the fact that it is often viewed by an audience and marshalled by officials: observing, measuring and timing the competition. Furthermore, its inclusion of ‘for entertainment,’ while admittedly true in many senses, neglects to denote that for many, this entertainment is permeated by politics, mired with militarism, reticulated with religion, and, in its pairing with the mega-sporting event of today, big business. Moreover, it fails to identify the crux of sport: that it is, by design, a purposeful and organised social practice, which wields significant weight in shaping contemporary life.

Allen Guttman, in his preface to the 1978 edition of *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports*, describes the enduring lack of academic scholarship as thus:

In [the] introduction to one of the first books written on the psychology of sports, the philosopher Max Scheler lamented what he saw as scholarly neglect: ‘scarcely an international phenomenon of the day deserves social and psychological study to the degree that sport does. Sport has grown considerably and in social importance, but the meaning of sport has received

⁹ Oxford Dictionary, *Sport*, Available: <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/sport> (Accessed 1 November 2019).

little in the way of serious attention.’ That was in 1927. Fifty years later, sports remain among the most discussed and least understood phenomenon of our time.¹⁰

This scenario is no longer the case, having seen a surge in both published texts but also subsets of the discipline; via an array of academic disciplines, the meaning of sport has, and continues to be, dissected and examined by psychologists, sociologists, historians, philosophers, and economists, amongst others. However, I begin this literature review by outlining in a skeletal manner the context and influence of sport, not only to introduce this particular sphere of evidence (I will return at a later stage to gymnastics as the predecessor to body cultures), but instead to lay the foundations for asserting the case of one particular sport – Artistic Gymnastics – as being exceptional within the general sporting praxis referred to earlier, and secondly, to carve out the specificities of the gymnastic terminology employed in this text. I contend that this exceptionalism is not only applicable, but more importantly, a valuable lens by which to chart the sports’ transformation. My reasoning is based upon the importance of the predisposition to change inherent in the artistic element of the discipline, teamed with the numerous discordances between the sport and various political ideologies, nationalism, militarism, youthfulness, medicine and notions of health, racism and eugenics, modernity, the Olympic movement and gender, to be inexhaustive. While other Olympic sports may have found themselves intersected within one of two of the listed factors, the exceptionalism of Artistic Gymnastics is that it has been intertwined with all of these elements, and often simultaneously. Its impressionable bequest to body cultures and the aforementioned exceptionalism posits the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach towards the subject-matter which will become evident as this thesis progresses. This thesis takes up this challenge, analysing representations of the gymnastic body at the interdisciplinary intersection (primarily) between visual culture, art history, cultural studies, fashion

¹⁰ A. Guttmann, A.; *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports*, Columbia University Press, 1978.

theory, the history of sport and curating – offering its results as a new contribution to knowledge within these fields.

Terminology

Addressing terminology is considerably more complex than it may initially appear. The sport is an ancient one – so much so that it is impossible to date its origins – and while its transmutation into its present form bears few resemblances to its previous selves on a visual level, their remnants are instead embedded within the sports identity, traditions, and expectations in subtle ways. For example, with the exception of the general Olympic salute and equestrian events, no other Olympic sport requires that the competitors salute the judges, the main reason being, in gymnastics, to demonstrate respect for the judging panel and thereby displaying the integration of discipline within the sports' ethos. We should therefore think of Artistic Gymnastics as a derivative of gymnastics traditions in aggregate, preceding the official formation of the discipline in 1952; that being said, even the 1952 version of competition would appear in many ways foreign to a contemporary audience. Nevertheless, I will use gymnastics to refer to the global tradition of the sport from ancient times up until 1952 (until a specific or localised term is more suitable, e.g. German Turnverein). My use of Artistic Gymnastics will denote the specific discipline, post-1952, considering both the Men's and Women's elite-level competition – the Summer Olympic Games, World Championships, European Championships, etc. The exact chronological developments will be further elaborated upon in chapter one, but generally speaking, the sport consists of the following set apparatus events: floor exercise, pommel horse, still rings, vault, parallel bars, and high bar for Men's Artistic Gymnastics [MAG], and floor exercise, vault, high bar and beam in Women's Artistic Gymnastics [WAG]. The sport is judged subjectively – by two judging panels, consisting of a total of eight judges – working to a Code of Points that no longer facilitates the infamous 'Perfect 10' score of the mid-1970s.

Having surveyed the existing literature, what must be emphasised is that the history of gymnastics – and consequently Artistic Gymnastics – is a fragmented one that has yet to be comprehensively historicised along a singular lineage. General histories exist, many of which are aimed at fans, coaches and gymnasts, and have been commissioned in collaboration with a sporting body (thus, we must assume an element of bias or leniency). A case in point is Anton Gadjos' 'Artistic Gymnastics: A History of Development and Olympic Competition,' which was published in 1997 by Loughborough University in conjunction with the British Gymnastics Amateur Association. The focus of scholarly-orientated histories have a predisposition based upon the language in which it is written, i.e. writing in Swedish tends to pay greater attention to the role of Swedish gymnastics (Brodin 2008; Hedman 2003; Ljunggren 2000; Lundvall 2003) than those in German, English, etc. Furthermore, sustained analysis of gymnastics outwith its Western stronghold can be relegated to a handful, or even single, specialist: such as Danish gymnastics in Japan (Laderrière 1984); German gymnastics in Eastern Africa (Ndee 2010); in the Ottoman State (Okay 2003); French gymnastics in Brazil (Terret & Tesche, 2009); etc. A final observation is that academic attention to gymnastic history has, by and large, omitted to analyse the sports' visual culture, even whilst using selected examples as illustrations alongside their writing. The exception to this is scholarship regarding gymnastic imagery as a propaganda tool (Bonde 2006; Rowley 2006; Schmidtke 2012; Tumblety 2012), prior to the formation of Artistic Gymnastics, which draws upon Kracauer's concept of the 'mass ornament' to which I will return at a later stage. This scholarship is essential to my study, in that I will be using it as the historical starting block, and transferring its key elements to the discipline of Artistic Gymnastics post-1952.

Methodology

This thesis stems out of my own childhood experience of competitive gymnastics, in the artistic and trampoline disciplines, beginning at the age of two, and entering the competition circuit at the age of seven, before a series of falls led to the conclusion of my competitive career. During this period, I trained upto five days a week, an additional day of national squad training or competition, and, as I entered my teenage years, working one day per week at my club's gym. Due to the volume of time spent there, the gym was a second home, and an environment in which I was blindly and completely subsumed in the visual culture of gymnastics. Following the end of my competitive career, I continued to train recreationally for a period and also continued to watch elite gymnastics, through televised broadcasts of major sporting events. Following postgraduate study – in art theory, visual culture and curating – I suddenly found myself equipped with the tools by which to firstly, truly see the visual culture of gymnastics, and secondly, to begin to deconstruct and analyse the interconnected meanings at play. Thus, this thesis throughout is image-led, undertaken via a thematic methodology. The gathering of these images stems in part from my person proximity to gymnastics, and sustained archival research throughout the duration of this thesis – often in part with the intention to locate images or information around which there has been little academic scholarship to refer to.

Running concurrent to this is the practice-based methodology which has led to the staging of a number of curatorial outputs in tandem with the writing of this thesis (detailed in chapter five and documented in detail in the Appendix). I had been working as an independent curator three years prior to commencing my doctorate, and understood my practice as primarily concerned with the subject-matter and artist works, with curating at once solely a means to an end, but also a process that facilitated the insertion of my voice into a shared and public dialogue with artworks not otherwise possible, and the raising of provocative

questions through the experience and negotiation of these artworks and the conventions of exhibition-making. It is such questions that I am interested in examining in an academically rigorous manner within this thesis and to which the notion of an original contribution to knowledge should equally be applied to my practice-based outputs. Whilst through producing a literature review for the written component increased my awareness of the gaps and absences to which my writing responds, I have in less formal ways gone through a similar process for the practice-based output.

In addition to maintaining an awareness of the diversity of contemporary curatorial practices, I have attempted to think reflexively about the nature of conducting a practice-based PhD via curating in a university environment. An influence upon my outlook towards practice-based study comes from the art historian Jonathan L. Dronsfield, who describes that:

In his 'Positive Ideas' chapter [...] James Elkins contends that of all possible models for the PhD in art the most interesting ones, the ones which pose the most challenging questions, are those in which 'the scholarly portion of the thesis inextricably fuse[s] with the creative portion.' In what is an 'open field of experimentation' he says, there are two possibilities for such PhDs: A. 'The dissertation is intended to be read as art, and the visual practice as research;' and B. 'The research and visual art are fused, and there is no separate dissertation.'¹¹

The fusion outlined in "possibility A" is the balance I have sought for this thesis: for the academic scholarship expressed in writing and that within the practice outputs to have mutually informed one another in a dialogical manner.

¹¹ Jonathan L. Dronsfield; *Writing as Practice: Notes on Materiality of Theory for Practice-Based PhDs*, in James Elkins; *Artists with PhDs*, publisher unknown, second edition forthcoming in 2014.

Structure

This thesis is comprised of five chapters. The first of these, Artistic Gymnastics: A Tale in Three Parts, which offers up a selected history of gymnastics, from antiquity, charting its demise following Roman rule until Renaissance Italy. Two chronologies are then traced: of German gymnastics, via key figures such as Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths and Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, and of Swedish gymnastics, focusing on Pehr Henrik Ling. The oppositionary stances of these gymnastic systems are detailed, as well as their educational, remedial and political attributes, in addition to a discussion of the means by which these systems travelled outwith their home nation, for example to America via migration. The first chapter then proceeds to discuss the Olympic discipline of gymnastics following WWII, when moves towards professionalism, Cold War tensions, and the entry of Soviet gymnasts into the competition field caused fast-paced developments to occur in the sport, and where winning medals took on new levels of national significance. The final section of the third chapter discussed the global roots of gymnastics and the physical spaces within which it takes place, examining particular barriers to access faced by nations not traditionally strongholds in the sport and the manner in which the gymnasts' body is framed within the space it works, whether this be outdoor or indoor.

The second chapter of this thesis, 'Of the Classical Mould – Visual Representations of the White Gymnastic Body,' outlines the intersection between the gymnastic body and whiteness, gender, Muscular Christianity and Western preoccupations with a slender physique. The chapter begins by outlining that the concern here is the representation of the gymnastic body and the images which the sport privileges, as opposed to its exact demographics. The chapter outlines the historic inception of racism in Europe, and through this demonstrates the links between the whiteness of the gymnastic body, with Enlightenment Europe's reverence for Ancient Greek statuesque imagery, Muscular Christianity, and to point to the hierarchical

shade of whiteness. The second section of this chapter furthers this line of exploration by considering the manner in which the physical appearance and condition of the body was historically considered to indicate the individual's morals and character. The truisms of this time period are then expanded to biological determinism, outlining the manner in which specific body shapes and ways of moving have been codified through gender and race. From this foundation, the second chapter then develops three lines of enquiry: the first being the tensions inherent in the gymnast's skin, and the manner in which aesthetic preferences for their skin echoes ancient Greece imagery and 18th and 19th century European understandings of Greek statues. Secondly, major changes within the judging system in the Olympic discipline are discussed, focusing on the change in balance between artistry and acrobatics that this caused – in addition to this opening up the competition to a marginally wider spectrum of body shapes. A final note within the second chapter speaks to the links between the female gymnastic body, historic notions of biological determinism, and the female reproductive system, focusing on menstruation products, whose first celebrity endorsement in advertising came from the American gymnast Cathy Rigby.

The third chapter, 'Dressing the Gymnastic Body,' surveys selected aspects of gymnastics attire, charting moments of restriction (for example athletic corsets) to moments of freedom and revelation of the skin, including the links between nude gymnastics and Freikörperkultur in Germany. Politicised uniforms, including that of the Czech Sokol and their borrowing of red Garibaldi shirts. This politicisation is then further discussed in a Soviet context, when competing at international friendly contest was used to raise foreign capital which contributed to the purchase, amongst other things, of national uniform. The third chapter closes with interrogating uniform as a concept, and looks to the multiple interpretations of national flags which have formed the basis for Olympic leotards for decades.

Until the fourth chapter, 'Strike a Pose, Pause the Performance,' the gymnasts' body has largely been described as if a static object. Discussing the inherent tension within gymnastics between motion and movement, vis-à-vis stillness, pause and posing, the specificities of gymnastic movement and its relationship to dance is explored. This is further unpacked through a considered of the ways in which gymnastics is, and is not, written down, with reference to its relatively new notation system, used by judges in elite competition. The complexities of this movement are then considered through lens-based media, ranging from the inception of photography to present-day technologies, including virtual reality and super slow-motion footage. In relation to each of these media, the manner in which they further complicate the tension between motion and stillness, and impact our visualisation of gymnastic movement is examined.

The fifth and final chapter, 'Enquiries in the Mode of Practice,' is presented paired with a substantial Appendix documenting the seven practice-based outputs included within this thesis for examination. The chapter begins by attempting to understand the current relationship between the arts and sport, as impacted by cultural policy and the significant number of Cultural Olympiads and festivals which have taken place alongside sporting events within the UK since 2012. In a chronological manner, the chapter then discusses each of the seven-practice based outputs in turn, pragmatically discussing challenges and failures as well as successes. The multisite, solo presentation 'New Order, Other Spaces' with London-based artist Jo Longhurst, curated in autumn 2018 for the Glasgow European Sports Championships festival programme is presented as the culmination of my curatorial explorations within this doctorate.

Chapter One

Artistic Gymnastics: A Tale in Three Parts

i) Introduction

Gymnastics – in each of its ‘ancestries’ as sport, physical education, military drill, medicinal exercise and a performing art¹² – requires the conditioning and use of the entire body, literally from head to toe. This holistic use of the body extended under the Greeks of the Homeric and Classical eras to an integration of the body and mind,¹³ which was to have a profound impact, setting apart Greek gymnastics from the gymnastic-type movements also performed in ancient Chinese, Mesopotamian, Indian and Mediterranean cultures.¹⁴ The ancient Greeks placed great importance on gymnastics, attested to by their stipulation that ‘no Greek settlement could count as a city unless it possessed an administrative building, a market-place, a theatre – and a gymnasium’ as described by classics scholar Glenn Most.¹⁵ Gymnastics formed a central component of the ancient Olympic Games and other similar games and festivals of the time. These often had a religious element but also recognised the sporting contest as a display of military might.¹⁶ With the commencement of Roman rule over Greece from 146 BC, Emperor Theodosius banned such ‘pagan cults’ in 393 AD, but retained the training regimes developed in the Greek gymnasium for use by the Roman army.¹⁷

¹² K. Russell, The Evolution of Gymnastics, in *Handbook of Sports Medicine and Science: Gymnastics*, (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell and IOC Medical Commission, 2013), pg. 4. Available at <http://download.e-bookshelf.de/download/0003/9027/69/L-G-0003902769-0002364264.pdf> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ G.W. Most, ‘The Athlete’s Body in Ancient Greece’, *Stanford Humanities Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1998, Available at <http://www.stanford.edu/group/SHR/6-2/html/most.html> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

¹⁶ Russell, ‘The Evolution of Gymnastics’, p. 5.

¹⁷ International Olympic Committee, *Ancient Olympic Games*, Available at <http://www.olympic.org/ancient-olympic-games> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

As such, the esteem placed upon the Greek concept of the gymnasium lapsed with the independent rule of ancient Greece itself. However, as Most further details:

this ideal was only submerged and not entirely effaced, and it went on to be rediscovered during the course of the 19th century and to provide both an important stimulus to the development of modern amateur athletics and a criterion of imagined perfection by which these could be measured and, of course, found wanting.¹⁸

The hiatus in between did, however, see the development of the wooden horse apparatus, the first documentation of which was in the accounts of the Roman military author Vegetius in 375 AD, a trend which continued into sixth- and seventh-century Europe when 'military skills on the wooden horse were considered one of the seven knightly virtues', as kinesiologist and President of the FIG's Scientific Committee Keith Russell outlines.¹⁹ The vaulting acrobat carved in white ivory (Figure 1.2) dates from the Minoan period (Late Bronze Age, circa 1550 BC) and originates from the Knossos Palace, Crete. The vaulter depicted may have been vaulting over a bull rather than a horse, but evidences the continual value placed on (men's) equestrian vaulting skills over the ages.

. There is a long history of Olympic gymnastics as a politicised sporting domain, most prominently at the height of Cold War tensions between the US and the Soviet Union. The ascent of gymnastics in the sporting world is the subject of this first chapter. Like all accounts of gymnastics before it, this chapter will

¹⁸ Most, 'The Athlete's Body in Ancient Greece'.

¹⁹ Russell, 'The Evolution of Gymnastics', p. 6.

be a partial and basic introduction. Through three thematic sections, a historical chronology of gymnastics development and its first political entanglements will be the initial area of focus, spanning from the Renaissance to early 1900s. This will then be complemented by a more recent overview outlining the rapid developments within gymnastics in the 1970s and 1980s, and their impact on the gymnastic body. Discussing the structure of the discipline, developments in equipment, and contradictions in its performance will lay the foundations for detailed explorations of the sports artistry and aesthetics in Chapter Two, and in relation to dance, body carriage and deportment in Chapter Four. The third and final focus will detail the geographies of gymnastics: its international dialogues, as well as the physical space in which the gymnastics performance takes place and is viewed.

ii) Political Movement(s)

The resurrection of gymnastics – while admittedly with a different emphasis than its Greek precursor – was to begin two centuries prior to the re-staging of the modern Olympic Games in 1896 (see Figure 1.1, and should be seen as a major contributory factor to the revival of interest in the Games in the first place. However, the initial interest was for medical purposes: during the Renaissance the emphasis was upon gymnastics as a preventative measure for the healthy to undertake, rather than for athleticism, or as curative (as would later be the case with Swedish gymnastics). The Italian philologist and physician Girolamo Mercuriale (1530-1606, Figure 1.3)²⁰ published in 1569 *De Arte Gymnastica* within which he constructed three categories of gymnastic activity: ‘gymnastica medica’, being exercise for the sake of

²⁰ It is worth noting that as part of the revived academic attention to Mercuriale, the city of his birth and death, Forlì, Italy, celebrated his legacy on the fourth centenary of his death in 2006. The leadership of the FIG was heavily involved with this event: Forlì is also the hometown of FIG President Bruno Grandi, who was part of the organising committee of these celebrations and a participant. See Romagna Oggi, ‘Forlì recalls his most illustrious doctor: Gerolamo Mercuriale’, 21 July 2006. Available at <http://www.romagnaoggi.it/cronaca/forli-ricorda-il-suo-medico-piu-illustre-gerolamo-mercuriale.html> (Accessed 7 November 2019). FIG congress notes for the Helsinki 2008 meeting also show that Grandi gifted a copy of Mercuriale’s *De Arte Gymnastica* to all attending national delegations. See FIG, ‘Gymnastics: FIG Congress Official News’, 28 October 2008. Available at http://en.olympic.cn/news/sports_news/2008-10-28/1660963.html (Accessed 7 November 2019).

health and well-being, ‘gymnastica bellica’, exercise in preparation for warfare, and ‘athletics’ as exercises undertaken for pleasure, as an amusement or as competition.²¹ Figure 1.4 shows a plate from his treatise, in which the Latin caption *Artis Gymnast* (translating into English as ‘artistic gymnast’), may be the first instance of the terminology for the present Olympic discipline in use, and the phrasing of which will be discussed further in Chapter Two. More lavishly illustrated gymnastics manuals were published in the same period as Mercuriale’s treatise : Arcangelo Tuccaro’s 1599 *Trois dialogues de l'exercice de sauter et voltiger en l'air* (in English: Three Dialogues on the practice of leaping and somersaulting in the air) and Giocondo Baluda’s 1630 *Trattato del modo di volteggiare & saltare il cavallo di legno* (A treatise on vaulting and leaping over the wooden horse).²² Tuccaro and Baluda were renowned court entertainers of their time, and their texts both highlighted their own skills, used geometric analysis in two-dimensional illustrations (see Figures 1.5 and 1.6) to convey the acrobatic movement, as well as outlining in a rationalised manner how to coach young boys in these skills.²³ These early forms of visualisation will form an important historical backdrop to the discussion of gymnastic movement and stillness, interrogated in Chapter Four.

While medicinal purposes were fully-endorsed by Mercuriale, and for warfare partially condoned, athletics was considered vulgar and debased.²⁴ Despite being the only ‘legitimate’ form, limits were even placed upon the preventative role for gymnastics, as historian Alessandro Arcangeli describes:

²¹ A. Arcangeli, *Medicine, Gymnastics and the Renaissance Sense of the Body's Limits*, p.1. Available at http://www.academia.edu/2076996/Medicine_gymnastics_and_the_Renaissance_sense_of_the_bodys_limits (Accessed 7 November 2019).

²² J. McClelland, *Body and Mind: Sport in Europe from the Roman Empire to the Renaissance*, (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), p. 55.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Arcangeli, *Medicine, Gymnastics...*, p.1.

while it is normally understood that the period we refer to as the Renaissance saw a significant development of physical play and exercise and a growing orientation towards a positive appreciation of its propriety and benefits, it is also true that at the same time a variety of texts displayed a concern and warning against excess and its negative consequences.²⁵

For more than a century following its publication, *De Arte Gymnastica* had a wide circulation in Europe. Mercuriale's emphasis was medical, but it was to be the pairing of gymnastics with education in eighteenth-century Germany that was to secure its second coming. The ideals of the Enlightenment movement led to 'the idea of a special German-Greek affinity [being] formulated around 1800', as described by literature scholar Felix Saure.²⁶ This formulation was conceived not only by physical educators but also art theoreticians, writers and philosophers of history such as Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Schiller and Wilhelm von Humboldt.

Winckelmann, in his major work *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterums* (in English: The History of Art in Antiquity) published in 1764, underlined 'the public character of [ancient Greek] physical exercises, and how they [related] to the public good' as further noted by Saure.²⁷ Winckelmann's scholarship was to be the direct impetus for two practical applications of his claims for exercise, published within four decades of *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterums*. These were Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths's *Gymnastik für die Jugend*, published in 1793 (in English: Gymnastics for Youth), and Gerhard Ulrich Anton Vieth's 1794 *Versuch einer Encyclopädie der Leibesübungen* (in English: Encyclopaedia of Bodily Exercises (Veith's

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ F. Saure, 'Beautiful Bodies, Exercising Warriors and Original Peoples: Sports, Greek Antiquity and National Identity from Winckelmann to "Turnvater Jahn"', *German History*, Vol. 27, No. 3, p. 358.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 361.

portraits commemorated in Figure 1.7). Both converted this notion of ‘public good’ into a workable manual of physical exercises, and a conception of holistic and harmonious education for body and mind.²⁸

Questions as to how to encourage a new form of masculinity – comprising intelligence, civilised behaviour and a strong, healthy body – were also to bear significance, as sports historian Teresa Sanislo explains:

the idea of and urgency for a new gymnastics for young men [emerged] out of concern over divergent elements of masculinity. On the one hand [was] the man of strength, vigour, will power, and courage; on the other [was] the civilized man, a rational, intellectual and culturally refined being. The Philanthropists [as the group of thinkers were to be known] came to see them as [in tension] or at least as needing to be reconciled, balanced, or managed. [In response to the movements’ proponents notion that] rugged and heroic manliness was threatened in the Age of Enlightenment, [they] designed a program of physical hardening and gymnastics to revive and protect it.²⁹

The Philanthropists were a group of thinkers and pedagogues during the Enlightenment, who founded a number of progressive schools in German-speaking Europe, beginning with Johann Bernhard Basedow’s (1723-1790) founding of the relatively short-lived Philanthropinum school in Dessau.³⁰ Employees of the Philanthropinum, such as Christian Gotthilf Salzmann (1744-1811) who will be further discussed in

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

²⁹ T. Sanislo, ‘Protecting Manliness in the Age of Enlightenment: The New Physical Education and Gymnastics in Germany, 1770-1800’, in *Gender in Transition: Discourse and Practice in German-Speaking Europe 1750-1830*, edited by U. Gleixner, and M.W. Gray (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), p. 267.

³⁰ The most well-known Philanthropists were Johann Bernhard Basedow (1724-1790); Joachim Heinrich Campe (1746-1818); Christian Gotthilf Salzmann (1744-1811); Ernst Christian Trapp (1745-1818); Friedrich Eberhard von Rochow (1734-1805); Christian Heinrich Wolke (1746-1806); Peter Villaume (1746-1825); Martin Ehlers (1732-1800); Friedrich Gabriel Resewitz (1729-1806); Karl Friedrich Bahrtdt (1741-1792); Friedrich Gedike (1754-1803); Philipp Julius Lieberkühn (1754-1788); Johann Georg Büsch (1728-1800); Gottlieb Konrad Pfeffel (1736-1809); Caroline Rudolphi (1754-1811); Christoph Daniel Ebeling (1741-1817); Gottfried Nathanael Fischer (1748-1800); Gottfried Benedict Funk (1734-1814); and Karl Philipp Moritz (1756-1793).

Chapter Two, later went on to found their own institutions. Significant contributors beyond the German Empire to the development of physical education and gymnastics in this period and the following decades (although by no means a definitive list) include: Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (Swiss, 1746-1827) who is considered to have founded calisthenics; Captain Phokian Heinrich Clias (Swiss, 1782-1854), who was a considerable force in the popularity of gymnastics in England and also advocated exercises for both men and women³¹; Don Francisco Amorós y Ondeano, Marquis de Sotelo (Spanish, 1770-1848), who introduced gymnastics to the physical education curricula in France; and Pyotr Franzerich Lesgaft (Russian, 1837-1909), who incorporated Prussian drill gymnastics in to the Imperial Russian Army in 1874.

It is, however, GutsMuths (Figure 1.8) who has come to be known as the 'grandfather' of gymnastics, probably due to *Gymnastics for Youth* being published in several editions and translated into several languages. Another possible factor in his wide following was that the influences upon his work were not limited solely to the ancient Greeks as physical education and sports scholars Ken Hardman and Roland Naul state:

other determinants included the work of several French physicians, but especially the education philosophy embedded in naturalism and [the] pedagogue Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The assimilation process and the formulation of a collection of gymnastic exercises with running, jumping, playing, swimming, etc., were assisted by the various contributions of GutsMuths's European students emanating from Austria, France, Denmark, Hungary and Portugal amongst other

³¹ J. Todd, *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful: Purposive Exercise in the Lives of American Women 1800-1875*, (Macon, GA.: Mercer University Press, 1998), p. 37.

countries. Thus GutsMuths's 'system' of physical education was the culmination of an assimilation of *pan-European* ideas.³²

Whatever was inherently pan-European in GutsMuths's gymnastics soon diminished in the context of nineteenth-century European nationalist movements. From this point onwards, the original ideas concerning gymnastics, exercise and education fractured into an array of systems, each attributed to specific nations, regions and individuals, and in conflict with one another on the basis of the specificities of their conceptual foundations. Initial clashes between German *Turner* and Swedish *Ling* gymnastics, and to a lesser extent Danish and French systems (the 'French method'³³ and aspects of Delsartism), were exported to other European nations such as Belgium.³⁴ Moreover, conflicts also existed between systems within nations, for example between the Ollerup and Snoghøj schools in Denmark.³⁵

This would quickly spread to the New World, where this 'variegated group of physical education pedagogy theories competed for pre-eminence in what became known as "The Battle of the Systems"', as described by sports scientist Anthony Laker.³⁶ One point of contention between proponents of Jahn's *Turner* and Ling's Swedish gymnastics were the claims made for the expanded chest measurements (see Figure 1.9) that would be achieved as a result of Ling's gymnastics, thought at the time to be a major indicator of healthiness. In many ways, the 'battle' has never been resolved; it is often stated that Jahn's gymnastics was the ultimate winner and the direct descendent of Olympic Artistic Gymnastics, mainly due to the

³² K. Hardman and R. Naul (eds.), *Sport and Physical Education in Germany*, (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), p. 15 (my emphasis).

³³ T. Terret and L. Tesche, 'French Gymnastics in Brazil: Dissemination, Diffusion and Relocalization', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 26, No. 13, 2009, p. 1983.

³⁴ P. Delheye, 'Statistics, gymnastics and the origins of sport science in Belgium (and Europe)', *European Journal of Sport Science*, Vol. 14, No. 7, 2014, pp. 653-654.

³⁵ H. Eichberg, J. Bale and C. Philo (eds.), *Body Cultures: Essays on Sport, Space & Identity by Henning Eichberg*, (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), p. 76.

³⁶ A. Laker (ed.), *The Future of Physical Education: Building a New Pedagogy*, (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), p. xi.

continued use of the wooden apparatus he devised and the vigour of the exercises performed (as opposed to the genteel nature of Swedish gymnastics). However I personally do not agree that this is wholly the case: firstly, neither form advocated any form of competition. Jahn's system of gymnastics did not place any emphasis on aesthetics, did not allow female participants, and its system of measurement (of distance, height and speed achieved) was based relative to the height of the athlete.³⁷ Conversely, the spectrum of bodies able to perform Artistic Gymnastics to an elite level is limited. The continued plurality of gymnastic disciplines (at least counting the seven officially governed by the FIG) attests to the unresolved outcome of the 'Battle of the Systems'.

German *Turner* gymnastics was founded by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778-1852), also referred to as *Turnvater Jahn* (in English: father of gymnastics). He joined the Prussian army in 1806 and fought in the Battle of Jena-Auerstedt in which the Prussians were defeated, before founding the first *Turnplatz* (in English: open-air gymnasium) in 1811. The *Turnvereine* (in English: gymnastics associations) quickly proliferated, strictly for male participants only. Through his insistence upon using German as the *Turnsprache* (in English: language of gymnastics), with additional *Turnwörter* (in English: gymnastics terminology)³⁸ – as opposed to appropriating a term of Greek or Latin derivation – Jahn's intention was to differentiate and make culturally unique the patriotic activities of his specific form of gymnastics. This linguistic emphasis and the infusion of Turner with romantic nationalism set apart Jahn's gymnastics from its predecessors, his vision outlined by Pfister as being:

³⁷ J. Nauright and C. Parrish (eds.), *Sports Around the World: History, Culture, and Practice*, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2012), p. 328

³⁸ Saure, 'Beautiful Bodies', p. 370.

more than merely physical exercise [...] important ingredients were patriotic speeches, traditional songs, celebrations held to commemorate important events of German history and excursions intended to give young men an opportunity of familiarise themselves with and to love their fatherland.³⁹

Jahn's *Turnen* stressed its military and political benefits, arguing on the premise that the body was not supposed to be exercised for its own sake or towards some abstract achievement, but in view of its military usefulness. *Turnen* was above all a political movement, or, in other words, under Jahn, gymnastics became a kind of politics, and politics became a kind of gymnastics.⁴⁰ He held very specific ideas about the function of this politicisation, advocating liberation from French domination, the overthrow of the feudal order and German unification, and expressing anti-gentry, Francophobe and anti-Semitic sentiments.⁴¹ For this reason, he has been linked with National Socialism, and more severely, to the spiritual founder of Nazism, Johann Gottfried von Herder.⁴² Prussia's overlords recognised the potential risk Jahn's gymnastics posed, leading them to prohibit *Turner* between 1819 and 1842. His defiance against this led to his partial confinement and later imprisonment over a period of six years.⁴³ By the time of his release, the *Turnvereine* – especially the younger members – had embraced a more liberal stance. When a significant proportion fought in the failed Revolution of 1848, sports historian Allen Guttman outlines that 'Jahn condemned them and was finally dismissed as a traitor',⁴⁴ after which he never again recouped his influence over the *Turner* movement. Jahn's dislike of conventional forms of education also resulted in the lost opportunity to adopt *Turnen* in German physical education. It was Major Hugo Rothstein and Adolph

³⁹ G. Pfister, 'Cultural confrontations: German Turnen, Swedish gymnastics and English sport – European diversity in physical activities from a historical perspective', *Culture, Sport, Society*, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 67.

⁴⁰ Pfister, 'Epilogue: Gymnastics from Europe to America', p. 2053.

⁴¹ A. Guttman, *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 142.

⁴² P. Viereck, *Metapolitics: From the Romantics to Hitler*, (New York, NY: A.A. Knopf, 1941).

⁴³ Guttman, *Games and Empires*, p. 142.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Speiss instead who were to lead the mass teaching of gymnastics throughout Germany. Rothstein had visited Sweden between 1845 and 1846 to study Ling's system of gymnastics,⁴⁵ and Speiss – at the request of the Prussian education minister Karl Friedrich von Eichhorn – devised a form of gymnastics specifically for physical education in German schools from the early 1840s onwards. Both opposed Jahn's system, advocating Swedish gymnastics instead, and the *Turner* movement momentarily struggled to maintain momentum in its own homeland.

Meanwhile, the role that the *Turner* had played as '48ers' in the political uprisings against the ruling classes led to their emigration en masse to America, where they reinstituted *Turnvereine* prolifically. Wherever the German-immigrant population was large enough (Chicago being one example), *Turner* gymnastics appeared. It had actually been introduced in New England in the early 1820s, but its initial success lasted only a few years. Prior to the American Civil War (1861-1865), the *Turnvereine* saw their purpose as largely political, but this changed drastically as they disbanded in the face of war, formed military regiments to support the Republicans, and even served as 'Lincoln's personal bodyguard at his presidential inauguration', as stated by sports historian Gerald Gems.⁴⁶ In 1865, the *Turner* umbrella organisation was re-structured and renamed as the *Nordamerikanischer Turnerbund* (now known simply as the American Turners).⁴⁷ However, the identity politics of the American Turners had swiftly evolved during the war years. Factors for this listed by Gems include the 'fragmentation of ethnic culture into class factions, the dilution of the German language, the repression of the labour movement, middle-class aspirations and the social mobility of Germans all contributed to the deterioration of radicalism.'⁴⁸ Such was

⁴⁵ M. Kant, 'The Moving Body and the Will to Culture', *European Review*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 2011, p. 583.

⁴⁶ G. Gems, 'The German Turners and the Taming of Radicalism in Chicago', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 26, No. 13, 2009, p. 1930.

⁴⁷ A.R. Hofmann, 'Transformation and Americanization: The American Turners and their New Identity', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2002, p. 94.

⁴⁸ Gems, 'The German Turners', p. 1940.

the magnitude of the change in outlook of the *Nordamerikanischer Turnerbund* that they declared in 1871 to no longer be in league with the *Turnverein* of their homeland, beyond the shared format of their gymnastics training.⁴⁹

Gymnastics was to be the sole focus of their energy henceforth, particularly in school education, which they made progress with. Despite this contribution, sports historian Annette Hofmann has outlined that the *Nordamerikanischer Turnerbund* still faced the 'anti-German politics of the American government in the years between 1914 and 1918 [and despite member numbers remaining constant] the group identity became more private in its expression.'⁵⁰ Numbers decreased after the war, and were not to recover until the 1950s, largely as the result of some 500,000 newly arrived Germans emigrating to the US between 1950 and 1959.⁵¹ To this day, the *Nordamerikanischer Turnerbund* continues to promote a range of physical and social activities,⁵² with 59 societies and 13,000 members as of 2000.⁵³ America was not the only country that German migrants took Turner gymnastics to: for example, in Brazil, they were to establish the *Deutscher Turnverein* in 1888, and the *Turnerschaft von 1890* in São Paulo.⁵⁴ With a very different purpose in mind, gymnastics was introduced by the German Empire – as with other European administrations and their colonies – into the school curricula in German East Africa from the 1890s onwards. The gymnastics they introduced was not *Turner*, as that would have required the financial investment of constructing a gymnasium,⁵⁵ instead, it was mainly Swedish gymnastics and calisthenics that were practised, with an intention more akin to Norbert Elias's concept of the 'civilising process'.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1931.

⁵⁰ Hofmann, 'Transformation and Americanization', p. 95.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁵² German Marylanders, *The Turner*, 2016, Available at <http://www.germanmarylanders.org/clubs-societies-groups/the-turners> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

⁵³ Hofmann, 'Transformation and Americanization', p. 96.

⁵⁴ E.A. Quitzau, 'Different Clubs, Similar Purposes? Gymnastics and Sports in the German Colony of São Paulo/Brazil at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 30, No. 9, 2013, p. 964.

⁵⁵ H.S. Ndee, 'Germany and Eastern Africa: Gymnastics in Germany in the Nineteenth Century and the Diffusion of German Gymnastics into German East Africa', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 27, No. 5, 2010, p. 833.

⁵⁶ Eichberg, Bale and Philo, *Body Cultures*, p. 63.

The *Turner* model directly spurned a second movement: the Czech *Sokol* (in English: Falcon). *Sokol* was first established in Prague in 1862 by Miroslav Tyrš, a young doctor of philosophy from Charles University in Prague, and Jindřich Fügner, a wealthy German-speaking businessman. Their respective biographies are significant to understanding the ethos of the movement. Historian Mark Dimond argues that the *Sokol* had ‘a split personality, one part based on a Fügnerian concept, the other on a Tyršian one.’⁵⁷ However, he also notes that due to the death of Fügner only three years after the founding of the *Sokol*, with Tyrš living on for another two decades, it has largely been his junior whose imprint has been the focus of academic study.

Heinrich Fügner was born in Prague in 1822, the son of a successful textile merchant from Leitmeritz who quickly became part of the Prague bourgeoisie.⁵⁸ He received specialised education in Trieste, Italy, to enable him to follow his father into the family business, but under his own initiative, pursued further education following his own interests, reading widely and learning to play the organ.⁵⁹ He undertook the customary Grand Tour of Europe, during which time he was impressed by the atmosphere of freedom and style of life in England, as historian Claire Nolte notes, and henceforth adopted the English soft-top hat and loose tie, as opposed to the high hat and stiff collar customary to the Prague middle-classes.⁶⁰ Fügner’s gesture of expressing his liberal views through dress, as an individual and for the *Sokol*, was to be a significant means of communication for him, as will be further addressed in Chapter Three. In a similar vein, Fügner first changed his name to Hynko, then to Jindřich, the Czech version of Heinrich (in English: Henry), despite being a weak speaker of Czech himself.⁶¹

⁵⁷ M. Dimond, in *Czechoslovakia in a Nationalistic and Fascist Europe 1918–1948*, edited by M. Cornwall and R.J.W. Evans, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press and The British Academy, 2007), p. 186.

⁵⁸ C.E. Nolte, *The Sokol in the Czech Lands to 1914: Training for the Nation*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 43.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 43–44.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

In 1853, Fügner married Katerina Turecký, also from a German-speaking Prague family.⁶² In 1855, increasingly looking to distance himself from the profit-driven nature of the textile business, he left to take up employment with an insurance company based in Trieste, which immediately proved to be a lucrative venture. Through this, he became aware of the Young Italy movement, which contributed to his re-alignment towards nationalist politics and away from German liberalism. The Fügner family both drifted away from their German-speaking friends and were equally seen as disloyal during the Bach era, due to Fügner's vocal support of Garibaldi in Italy.⁶³ Instead Fügner became close to the upper ranks of Czech society. Through this, he met Tyrš, who was working as a tutor for his acquaintances, the Bartlemus family.⁶⁴ While in many respects it would appear historically odd for a German-speaker to become the first *Starosta* (in English: mayor) of a Czech nationalist gymnastic movement, what could be called Fügner's unconventionality made him uniquely placed for the position.

Tyrš, on the other hand, suffered from fragile health throughout his life, and also periods of what was likely to have been clinical depression. Having returned from a period of respite in Italy in 1876, he had by 1880 committed to a full work schedule, added to by his appointment as docent in 1881 at the Prague Technical College, and in 1883 becoming a Professor Extraordinaire of the Czech University. In July 1884, he was forced by the university to resign from his role in the Czech *Sokol*, and following this took a solitary recovery period in the Tyrolean Alps. He was found dead in a river on 8 August 1884, and although his death was declared an accident by the *Sokol* leadership, it did not prevent rumours of suicide.

Summarising the relationship between the life, beliefs and work of Tyrš, Nolte describes him as 'a sickly man who extolled health and strength, a propagator of Darwin who sought refuge in the ordered certainties

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

of classical esthetics, and an aggressive national warrior whose rhetoric concealed his own deep-seated pessimism.⁶⁵ This reference and reverence for the classical is again noteworthy, and will be expanded upon in Chapter Two.

Tyrš acted as both the club's *Ndcelník* (in English: gymnastics director) and pedagogue, 'whose speeches and articles defined the ideological firmament of Czech gymnastics and became required reading throughout the movement' as Nolte describes.⁶⁶ With a uniform echoing the red shirt of Garibaldi's army⁶⁷ and recruiting from the petty bourgeoisie and working classes,⁶⁸ the clubs quickly became immersed in the development of Czech nationalism, with Tyrš announcing that 'whatever is Czech is also Sokol'.⁶⁹ As Nolte further elaborates, the *Sokol* movement translated its pledge to 'the moral and physical renewal of the Czech nation'⁷⁰ into gymnastic exercises and festivals, and within fifty years of its founding, totalled 150,000 members throughout a network of over 1,000 clubs.⁷¹ What was most notably different between the *Turner* and *Sokol* movements is that the latter did not determinately exclude women from its activities,⁷² and secondly the speed by which *Sokol* spread to America: the first *Sokol* 'clan' was established in 1865 in St Louis, Missouri, by a slender margin of three years after the inaugural Czech club. Over the course of five decades, the *Sokol* became the most sizeable Czech organisation in America, its membership tallying over 10,000 members.⁷³

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁶⁶ C.E. Nolte, "'Every Czech a Sokol!': Feminism and Nationalism in the Czech Sokol Movement', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 24, 1993, p. 80.

⁶⁷ C.E. Nolte, 'Our Brothers Across the Ocean: The Czech Sokol in America to 1914', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 26, No. 13, 2009, p. 1964.

⁶⁸ Nolte, 'Every Czech a Sokol!', p. 80.

⁶⁹ Sokol Ennis homepage, 2013. Available at <http://www.ennisgymnastics.com/16.html> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

⁷⁰ Nolte, 'Our Brothers Across the Ocean', p. 1963.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1963.

⁷² Women were allowed to contribute through charitable and handicraft activities, and also teaching gymnastic exercises to children, but were not allowed to actually practice gymnastics themselves until the 1890s.

⁷³ Nolte, 'Our Brothers Across the Ocean', p. 1963.

While initially acting in the New World as a focal point for the Czech community and a locus for the transferal of cultural heritage between generations,⁷⁴ the differences between the fatherland and America were soon to create strains. These included the use of the English language in the American clubs,⁷⁵ an insurance programme offered to members in case of death passed in the American clubs, but not in Czech organisations,⁷⁶ and the impact of the Free Thought Movement (an irreligion advocating truth and reason) on the American clubs, as opposed to the continued Catholicism of the fatherland. Splinter groups such as the *Workers American Sokol* and *Orel*, a Catholic gymnastics movement, were founded in light of these tensions. It was, however, the larger political developments that were to sweep Europe and the US that were to have the most impact: with the outbreak of World War I the *Sokol* were disbanded, violently subdued under the Nazi occupation, and suppressed again by the Communist Party following World War II, which wished to replace the en masse performance of the *Sokol Slet* (Figure 1.10) with Spartakiad.

As with *Sokol*, German *Turner* was the impetus for the introduction of gymnastics in Italy. This came firstly via military drill, practised by the Army of Savoy from 1833 onwards under the instruction of the Swiss-born Rudolf Obermann (1812-1869), who then oversaw its implementation in the nation as a whole.⁷⁷ At the beginning of the twentieth century, its potential was realised by the Futurists, who demanded in their manifestos and publications: 'Gymnastics in schools every day. Supremacy of gymnastics over books'.⁷⁸ Considering the historical context of the *Turner* and *Sokol*, at home and abroad, it is possible to see the embedding of later developments within the sport; that is, its dangerous entanglements with politics, and both the recognition by the ruling factions that such entanglements could be beneficial, but also

⁷⁴ G. Pfister, 'Prologue: Gymnastics – Divergent European Principals and Practices and American Transformative Reactions and Responses', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 26, No. 13, 2009, p. 1891.

⁷⁵ Nolte, 'Our Brothers Across the Ocean', p. 1968.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1967.

⁷⁷ G. Gori, *Italian Fascism and the Female Body: Sport, Submissive Women and Strong Mothers*, (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), p. 34.

⁷⁸ F.T. Marinetti, *Third Futurist Political Manifesto – Lacerba – 11 October 1913*, in *Critical Writings*, Farrar, edited by G. Berghaus, translated by D. Thompson, (New York, NY: Straus and Giroux, 2006), pp. 75-76. I would like to thank Dr Bernard Vere for highlighting this reference.

threatening. As the aforementioned sources attest to, the short step between Jahn and National Socialism was equally emulated by the ruling parties; the threat of subversive organised political and sports activism was soon engulfed under the reigns of the nationalist project as ‘grandiose gymnastic and patriotic parades’ as sports historian Gigliola Gori describes.⁷⁹ These political entanglements in the modern period have received academic scrutiny elsewhere, however, and will not be elaborated upon in this thesis..

Continuing this chronology, it is necessary to go back to the early 1800s, to trace a second gymnastics trajectory, that of Per Henrik Ling’s model of Swedish gymnastics. Ling was born in Småland, Sweden, in 1776, initially studying theology at Lund University and Uppsala University. Following further courses at the University of Copenhagen, he travelled throughout Europe, then returned to Sweden, partially due to injuries and rheumatism. He took a post as fencing-master at Lund University in 1805, and through this found the exercise to cure his own ailments.⁸⁰ Ling had practised the gymnastics of Franz Nachtegall, the originator of Danish gymnastics who was inspired to begin teaching after reading GutsMuths’s manual, mentioned earlier. Subsequently, Ling undertook anatomy and physiology classes, before launching his own brand of gymnastics. In 1813, he became fencing-master at the Carlberg Royal War Academy in Stockholm, and cemented his vision for his gymnastics with the founding of his *KGCI* (*Kungliga Gymnastiska Centralinstitutet* (in English: Royal Gymnastic Central Institute in Stockholm), which was to further explore the medical aspects of these gymnastic exercises. The funding supplied for the construction of this also required of Ling the provision of gymnastics training for the military.

⁷⁹ Gori, *Italian Fascism and the Female Body*, p. 35.

⁸⁰ A. Ottosson, ‘The First Historical Movements of Kinesiology: Scientification in the Borderline between Physical Culture and Medicine around 1850’, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 27, No. 11, 2010, p. 1899.

Ling's later publication *Gymnastikens allmänna grunder* (in English: Basics of the Gymnastic Principles, published Uppsala 1834, second edition 1840) made distinctions between four types of gymnastics: pedagogical, military, medical and aesthetic.⁸¹ In contrast to Jahn's *Turnen*, no apparatus was used, any equipment held was primarily for show (Figure 1.11), and Ling gymnastics was normally termed 'free-standing exercises'.⁸² Gymnastics was practised synchronously as a group, repeating basic movements as ordered by the teacher in command. The emphasis was on collective motion, as opposed to an individualistic or competitive outlook.⁸³ Exercises were not intended to stretch the body to its limits, and Ling was horrified to see the exertion on the body caused by Jahn's system and apparatus.

Following Ling's death in 1839, his son Hjalmar Ling made a number of reforms which nullified the military aspect of his father's gymnastics, instead stressing the educational properties of free-standing exercises.⁸⁴ Moreover, the lack of equipment needed, the discipline instilled and the docile surrender of personal agency to the collective and teacher, allowed Ling's gymnastics to be easily installed as a physical education programme in schools throughout Europe, including England and Belgium, operating as recently as 1968. The KGCI offered teaching qualifications: these instructors – and Swedish gymnastics generally – were one of 'Sweden's most successful cultural exports of the 1800s as discussed by historian Anders Ottosson'.⁸⁵ The most obvious legacy of Ling's gymnastics today is the FIG's Gymnastics for All discipline, the most visible outcome of which are the World Gymnaestrada events that take place every four years. Gymnaestrada (Figure 1.12) is open to all, regardless of age, gender and cultural background, and

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1901

⁸² J. Vlieghe, 'Physical education beyond sportification and biopolitics: an untimely defense of Swedish gymnastics', *Sport, Education and Society*, Vol. 18:, No. 3, 2013, p. 279.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Ottosson, 'The First Historical Movements of Kinesiology', p. 1899.

saw 22,000 gymnasts participate in the 2007 event. The FIG organise Gymnastics for All based upon the Four F's: fun, fitness, fundamentals, and friendship, and describes it as offering:

aesthetic experiences in movement for participants and spectators while providing the opportunity to focus on items that are of particular interest in a national and cultural context [whilst contributing] to personal health, fitness and well-being – physical, social, intellectual and psychological.⁸⁶

This array of attributes – physical, social, intellectual and psychological – demonstrates the ongoing use of gymnastics as more than the sum of its parts. The foundations for this laid especially by Jahn and Ling will be further explored in Chapter Two, as they relate to patriotism, gender, Classical imagery, whiteness, and clothing.

iii) Cast into the Limelight: Changes and Controversies for Strictly Sportive Gymnastics⁸⁷

Immediately following World War II, there was – as with the Olympic movement and all other international sports federations – an element of recouping, of starting anew. Between 1939 and 1945, the FIG was

⁸⁶ FIG, *Gymnastics for All – History of GfA*, 2013, Available at <http://www.fig-gymnastics.com/vsite/vcontent/page/custom/0,8510,5187-203971-221194-48950-312048-custom-item,00.html> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

⁸⁷ A. Huguenin, *100 Years of the International Gymnastics Federation 1881-1981: Essay on the development and the evolution of gymnastics within an international federation*, Lausanne: FIG, 1982), p. 53.

without a president, and attendance at Congresses was modest.⁸⁸ As the political status of a number of nations and groupings remained unresolved, some were temporarily omitted and others declined. The most significant addition to FIG membership was the vote for admission of the USSR at the 1949 Stockholm Congress, which paved the way for their debut at the 1952 Games in Helsinki.⁸⁹ They were to dominate immediately, with the FIG turning a blind eye to their breach of the amateur status regulations still in place in this period.⁹⁰ At the time of the USSR's entrance, female gymnasts were young women, aged in their 20s or early 30s. Their bodies were of a regular weight, with hips and a bust, and varied in height. At this time, gymnasts all performed across all four apparatus both an identical compulsory routine, and a free exercise, which they independently constructed. As sports sociologist Natalie Barker-Ruchti has noted, the gymnastics they pursued was judged on the criteria that they should 'make use of the entire body [and perform routines containing] artistically performed movements and leaps, with liveliness, poses, balance, changes of pace, [and] expression.'⁹¹ As such, their exercises did not strain their bodies to the extreme, and their bodies did not appear 'highly trained' as would later be required.⁹²

A combination of factors was to change the face of gymnastics forever, at a time when the Olympic movement began to be mediated to a global audience through televised broadcasts while facing major financial obstacles. This face – literally – came in the guise of Olga Korbut and Nadia Comăneci, who were both to become global stars with their gymnastics. Televised broadcasts of the Olympics for the 1972

⁸⁸ FIG, *The FIG in Brief: Milestones*, 2014. Available at <http://www.fig-gymnastics.com/site/about/federation/brief/milestones> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

⁸⁹ M. Berlioux (ed.), *Olympic Encyclopedia: Gymnastics and Archery*, (Lausanne: Comité International Olympique, 1985), p. 10.

⁹⁰ W. Varney, 'A Labour of Patriotism: Female Soviet Gymnasts' Physical and Ideological Work, 1952 -1991', *Genders Online Journal*, No. 39, 2004. Available at http://www.genders.org/g39/g39_varney.html (Accessed 1 November 2019).

⁹¹ N. Barker-Ruchti, 'Ballerina and Pixies: a Genealogy of the Changing Female Gymnastics Body', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2009, p. 47.

⁹² In fact, one of the most successful female gymnasts and Olympians of all time, Larisa Latynina, won six medals at the World Championships in 1958 while four months pregnant. J. Longman, 'Phelps Tops Another Olympian, but at 77, She Grins', *New York Times*, 31 July 2012, Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/01/sports/olympics/gymnast-larisa-latynina-is-elegant-reminder-of-olympics-history.html?_r=0 (Accessed 7 November 2019).

Munich Summer Games were still selective productions, showing only the main excerpts. The focus given to Korb, her charisma, and the unfolding drama of her successes and failures in competition made her an overnight international celebrity (Figure 1.13).⁹³ The changes in their form of gymnastics were brought about firstly through the exhaustion by the late-1960s of ‘the possibilities of Časlavská-style [i.e. mature and graceful] gymnastics’ as Barker-Ruchti describes.⁹⁴ Additionally, the political climate of the Cold War created the impetus for change, fuelled by a competitive spirit and intense political tension. Rich rewards were offered to Soviet coaches to realise the political ambitions of the Soviet government (although this in turn caused much in-house competition among Soviet coaches themselves).⁹⁵ The foreign ‘exhibition tours’ of Soviet gymnasts abroad also became a lucrative means of acquiring foreign currency for the Soviet government.⁹⁶ Centralised training was provided for, with a boarding-school-cum-gymnasium, where a production line of young gymnasts was cultivated as alluded to in Figure 1.14. The country’s elite competitors training alongside one another pushed the individual gymnast further, but was also cost-effective. Gymnastics is an expensive sport, with a basic total cost of FIG competition equipment totalling £29,285.00 in 2013.⁹⁷ The gymnasts were placed under excessive pressure, while claims of eating disorders and ‘tampering’ with the gymnasts bodies (e.g. drugs offsetting puberty and abortion doping) began to plague the sport.⁹⁸ The Soviet system, also implemented effectively in East Germany and Eastern Bloc nations such as Czechoslovakia and Hungary, was ‘renowned for finding and identifying gymnastic talent at an early age and in starting the young gymnasts in intensive programs to maximise their potential while they were still physically and socially malleable’ as humanities scholar Wendy Varney states.⁹⁹ Despite the collapse of the USSR and East Germany, the centralised training format has become the norm,

⁹³ Barker-Ruchti, ‘Ballerina and Pixies’, p. 56.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁹⁶ Varney, ‘A Labour of Patriotism’.

⁹⁷ See <https://www.continentalsports.co.uk/gymnastics> (Accessed 1 November 2019).

⁹⁸ R. Kerr, ‘The Impact of Nadia Comaneci on the Sport of Women’s Artistic Gymnastics’, *Sporting Traditions*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 2006, p. 96.

⁹⁹ Varney, ‘A Labour of Patriotism’.

implemented in the UK during the 1990s and more recently adopted by Brazil ahead of the Rio 2016 Summer Olympic Games.

The desire to produce medals required creativity and innovation in order to impress judges, taking influence from the Soviet circus and male gymnastics. Female coaches were replaced with male coaches, who had previously been teaching male gymnasts. As such, they were experts in teaching acrobatics, but neither artistry nor dance, and quickly a new emphasis on daring stunts and tricks emerged. As historian and sports sociologist Henning Eichberg notes, this was aided by wider developments of the time, including “anthropomaximology” (a Soviet term for the science of top performance), from the physiologist to the psychologist.¹⁰⁰ This allowed the (male, Soviet) coaches to establish that the new kind of gymnastics being formed would be best suited to young girls, with androgynous, pre-pubescent bodies, their small feet and lower centres of gravity proving beneficial in competition.¹⁰¹

In more recent times, the increasing difficulty of the acrobatic skills performed by competitors has equally been contributed to by evolved apparatuses: for example, the additional spring built into the Floor apparatus and the re-design of the Vault from the long horse to a square platform. In other circumstances and without pre-design, the women’s Uneven Bars gradually developed into a piece of apparatus, bringing into being a completely new piece of equipment. Figure 1.15 from the early twentieth century shows military use of the men’s Parallel Bars in training, while Figure 1.16 shows the German gymnast Fabian Hambüchen performing on Parallel Bars at the 2009 Tyson American Cup. While the range of exercises competed on the apparatus, height, and fabricating materials (contemporary bars are made with fiberglass-

¹⁰⁰ Eichberg, Bale and Philo, *Body Cultures*, p. 123.

¹⁰¹ Barker-Ruchti, ‘Ballerina and Pixies’, p. 50.

reinforced plywood rails) have changed considerably, the actual look of the Parallel Bars for the men's event has remained very similar over the course of a century. In the early days of the women's event (Figure 1.17), the female gymnast competed on the same Parallel Bars the men would use for competition but concerns over the strain of performing for the female competitors shoulders – and femininity – were soon voiced. In the same time-frame, the painting *Nude Gymnast* (Figure 1.18) by German painter Anton Räderscheidt (lost since 1942) was deemed degenerate. The work shows his wife, naked, with her legs parted open between the bars, reflecting in a different manner societal anxieties surrounding the female body and sporting equipment. By 1956 (Figure 1.19), the same apparatus remained in use, but with the bars set to different heights, allowing moments for the female gymnast to sit and stand on the bar as well as grasp and swing, thus not carrying her body weight over the bar for the duration of the routine. That it not to say that all developments were pre-planned, with Barker-Ruchti noting that:

[The American gymnast] Fuchs Brause's swinging bar routine represents a serendipitous occurrence and exemplifies what Foucault calls historical discontinuities. She had been unable to practice on a women's set of uneven bars since the gymnasium at which she trained did not hold such an apparatus. She trained her bar skills on the men's high bar, which forced her to practice swinging movements. Fuchs Brause's performance inspired new movement possibilities.¹⁰²

Following on from Brause's adaptive movements in 1966, the bars began to be distanced apart, in terms of height and width, further and further away from each other. By the time of Nadia Comăneci's success at the 1976 Games (Figure 1.20), the Uneven Bars had become a hybrid apparatus of both the men's Parallel Bars and High Bar. There were infamous cases of safety with this hybrid form, the most notable being the complete collapse of the Uneven Bars as USSR gymnast Ludmilla Tourischeva dismounted at the 1975

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

World Cup. Soon after, the Uneven Bars became an independent piece of equipment. The separation of the bars has continued – a width of between 130 and 180 centimetres is now permitted – allowing the airtime and space for a vast array of acrobatic elements to be performed between the low and high bar. Only the tallest gymnasts are able to move between the bars without jumping, the distance between them spanning the full length of the out-stretched body (see Figure 1.21).

The amendments to apparatus were creative in some respects, and extremely functional in others: explicable in terms of safety, imaginative in their innovation, productive in the addition of new movements with the equipment, and daring in their willingness to re-assess what is physically possible. The functionality, however – for example in the technology allowing for the floor to be ‘sprung’ or in the re-design of the Vaulting table as previously illustrated – is in large part fuelled by the desire and need to facilitate the ability of the gymnasts to realise the motto of the Olympic movement *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (in English: Faster, Higher, Stronger). In the case of the new Floor and Vault apparatus, they propelled the gymnast to new heights, more height equalling more time in the air, in which to complete rotations in the forms of somersaulting and twisting elements. The more somersaults and twists performed, the higher the score will be: in vault, scores of sixteen and over were previously only the domain of male gymnasts, but this is no longer the case as the female gymnasts ‘catch up’.

To therefore state the obvious, Artistic Gymnastics is a sport which permits change and to a certain degree values changes, innovation and creativity. When a new move is performed successfully by a gymnast in an elite competition, then the skill will be named after them, which inadvertently acts as an incentive. Thus new moves are frequently added to the Code of Points, which is revised every quarter, sitting a year out from the Olympic cycle (e.g. 2013-2016). The innovation referred to is limited, however, controlled by the

FIG, and it is in fact questionable whether it is really 'innovation' in any true sense. Acrobatic elements in gymnastics are created from a limited pool of options. These options consist of somersaulting, twisting or combination elements, in the tucked, straddle, piked or straight positions, or again a combination of these. As such, there are limited pairings, 'innovations' tend to appear incrementally, and are in reality a code-word for increased difficulty. The Roche Vault (named after Jorge Roche in 1980) in the men's competition is a handspring (a flip) in the entry onto the vaulting table, with a double front somersault dismounting towards the landing. In 2000, the Romanian gymnast Marian Drăgulescu added a half-twist to the end of the Roche to create a 'new' move, the Drăgulescu.

This trajectory – building new gymnastics upon old gymnastics – is in many ways unavoidable, and hints at the reason behind a level of imitation. The FIG decides which skills will and will not be recognised in competition, and the accumulation of these form a gymnast's routine. Skills are assessed in terms of difficulty on a scale of 'A' to 'H' as of 2016, and moves can be upgraded or downgraded between an Olympic cycle, often shaping how popular certain skills will or will not be to perform. Eight to ten skills, from a range of 'families' and difficulty categories are required to form the routine, although other moves will also feature in the routine and receive any necessary deductions. Therefore, routines are almost prescribed, and it is easy to understand why certain combinations are copied or carried over from old routines into new ones. In fact, up until 1997, gymnasts would compete a 'compulsory' routine and an 'optional' routine: the compulsory routine set by the FIG, which although less difficult than what gymnasts would select for their optional, had to be executed at a high level with excellent technique. Removing this and competing only a single, self-selected routine opened up a significant amount of training time and energy for gymnasts and coaches, promoting difficulty, individualism and new choreographies.

Repetition is also constituted within the women's Floor exercise through music selection: for example, the Jewish folk song *Hava Nagila* was used by Russian gymnast Yekaterina Lobaznyuk in 2000, and again by American gymnast Alexandra Raisman in 2012. Initially, this seems inexplicable, since the only restrictions are length, that the music should be instrumental, and allow the gymnast to demonstrate their 'artistry' at different tempos. This imitation is less the weight of gymnastic tradition, and instead more pragmatic: at an elite level, there are a select number of producers of suitable music, and a substantial number of coaches have been in their positions for up to thirty years, maintaining an Old Guard sense of continuity (for example, the current Romanian head of gymnastics first started working as a coach on the women's team in 1981). Moreover, most coaches maintain long-term collaborations with choreographers, dance instructors, physiotherapists, thus inhibiting the incorporation of new styles and concepts. Many teams will share the same choreographer, for example USA Gymnastics has a single team choreographer, Dominic Zito. Furthermore, the route of the Floor Exercise is often not immediately visible during the women's event, due to the skills, leaps and dancing (although it is much clearer in the men's competition). Although gymnasts are required to use the entire space of the twelve-metres-square floor mat and to touch each corner, routines are strictly structured to include diagonal, straight and curved routes across the floor, and moving in different directions. Normally consisting of three or four 'passes', by tracing a bird's-eye route of each routine, it is possible to discern in fact the uniformity inherent within the artistic performance. In Figure 1.22, I have sketched the path of the American gymnast Kerri Strug throughout her floor routine from the 1993 US Gymnastic Championships, displaying spatially what can be difficult to determine in the duration of the routine itself: that is, that routine follows a rigid, geometric route across the floor.

Although it is clear that change is permitted and has taken place impacted by a complex web of factors, it is imperative to understand that the acrobatic developments of the 1970s and 1980s were not welcomed

across the board, reigniting instead a debate similar in many ways to the conflict between Jahn and Ling's contrasting systems. Judges complained, arguing that the task of judging increasingly acrobatic routines was 'visually exhausting' as Barker-Ruchti states.¹⁰³ Some members of the FIG leadership raised health concerns, based upon the dangers posed by performing risky acrobatic skills. The West German association held reservations on an aesthetic basis, finding the exertion used to perform the new routines problematic.¹⁰⁴ This viewpoint has roots in the German concept of *Leibesübung* (in English: body culture) in which it was believed that the female performance conveyed elements distinctly feminine and graceful, and therefore different from men's gymnastics.¹⁰⁵ The new style of performance was not the mature poise of the previous era, but a learned yearning for consistent technical perfection through mechanical repetition. Consequently, a 'sameness' emerged at this time that continues to dog the sport: at London 2012, three out of the five US Women's Artistic Gymnastics team performed an Amanar vault (a backwards somersault with two and a half twists).

While some critiqued the balance between artistry and acrobatics, sociologist Roslyn Kerr notes that others insisted artistry had completely disappeared: 'instead [that] there was merely a high level of difficulty.'¹⁰⁶ This debate was to rear its head again in 2006, when the FIG significantly overhauled the Code of Points governing men's and women's Artistic Gymnastics. This was largely due to pressure from the International Olympic Committee upon all subjectively judged Olympic disciplines to become more objective in their marking, but also in response to major judging controversies in the 2004 Olympic gymnastics competition (in the men's Vault and High Bar event finals in particular). The changes saw the end of the famous

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁰⁶ R. Kerr, 'The Impact of Nadia Comaneci on the Sport of Women's Artistic Gymnastics', *Sporting Traditions*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 2006, p. 95, quoting Grossfeld.

perfect-ten score, amid fears and protests that the changes would negatively impact the artistry and creativity thought of as intrinsic to the sport. Prominent gymnasts made an appeal to the FIG President Bruno Grandi, writing ‘we are losing the beauty of our sport. We do not want gymnastics to lose what makes it so great – its artistic beauty.’¹⁰⁷ Gymnasts continue to embody contradictions in their performances, creating much discussion over the sport’s future, which will be further discussed in Chapter Two and Four respectively.¹⁰⁸

iv) Gymnastics in Geographic and Physical Space: Global Roots & Routes

Sports geographer John Bale highlights that ‘space and place – regarded by many as the two geographic fundamentals – are central to both geography and sport.’¹⁰⁹ First published in 1989, his essay ‘Sports Geography’ was a seminal text for this sub-discipline, then in embryonic form, but that has since gained much momentum. Bale himself underlines the neglect of sport by geographers, citing that it was not until the third edition of *The Dictionary of Human Geography* in 1994 that the ‘geography of sport earned a modest [yet] unsatisfactory, entry.’¹¹⁰ This neglect is curious, in the sense that from the Enlightenment period onwards, physical educators, gymnastic proponents and calisthenicists alike have understood the location(s) of their activities to be of fundamental concern.

Coubertin himself referred in 1911 to an ‘athletic geography’,¹¹¹ and more specifically in the case of gymnastics, the German *Turnvereine* placed the site of their sport as a primary characteristic, insisting that

¹⁰⁷ Svetlana Boginskaya, Tatiana Gutsu, Svetlana Khorkina, Shannon Miller, Lilia Podkopyayeva, John Roethlisberger, Vitaly Scherbo, Rustam Sharipov and Dmitry Trush, in a letter to FIG President Bruno Grandi, 4 October 2005. Available at <http://www.gymn-forum.net/quotes-1.html> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

¹⁰⁸ Varney, ‘A Labour of Patriotism’.

¹⁰⁹ J. Bale, *Sports Geography*, (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 2nd edition, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

their (all-male) gymnastics take place in natural, open-air surroundings, as opposed to the stadiums that symbolised the ethos of Anglophone competitive-sporting dominance. Bale's observation that 'there is nothing natural about a sports event'¹¹² casts an irony over the *Turners'* vain attempts to conduct their exercises in synthesis with their preferred woods and fields surroundings;¹¹³ as Figures 1.23 and 1.24 illustrate, everything about the environment is natural *with the exception* of their gymnastic apparatus and performance. *Turnvater* Jahn directed that any open-air gymnasium 'must be on solid ground covered with short grass, and be planted with trees... If trees are completely lacking then some must be planted.'¹¹⁴ It is my intention here to think through the methodology prescribed by Bale to examine the geography of sport – that is, 'to think of an individual sport as originating at points in geographic space, spreading outwards at points in geographic space, [and subsequently] spreading outwards from these initial areas to embrace regions, nations and in some cases the world'¹¹⁵ – with the case of Indian Clubs, imported from India in the Victorian era. Following this, I will conclude with a more specific focus on the gymnasium as space and place, and how its specificities have arisen, and in turn impacted upon, gymnastics.

The preceding sections of this chapter have been structured as a historical timeline, chronologically working through the key developments occurring over time and simultaneously at particular historical junctures. While a case for such a methodology can be made (especially in allowing us to see when and why political occurrences intertwined with the sport have made an impact), it is also unsatisfactory in the sense that by doing so, we risk not fully understanding the impact of the spatial dimension. In contrast, the development and evolution of gymnastics occurred as the result of the movement of people, ideas, books, images and footage across spatial and geographic borders, political systems and history. Despite a free-

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 9. Quoting Philip Wagner.

¹¹³ Eichberg, Bale and Philo, *Body Cultures*, p. 53.

¹¹⁴ Eichberg, Bale and Philo, *Body Cultures*, p. 53.

¹¹⁵ Bale, *Sports Geography*, p. 4.

flow throughout certain geographies, there remain today large discrepancies in the spread of achievement-oriented Artistic Gymnastics globally. Unlike a number of other modern sports that were definitively created in the Western world – for example the origins of tennis in northern France – traditional gymnastics activity is in fact a global phenomenon, largely due – as has been expanded upon earlier – to its role in the military, and its separation from sport as a separate and more universal physical culture entity until relatively recently.

Indian Club swinging is a significant example of a form of gymnastics originating outside the geographies associated with both the founding of gymnastics and maintaining elite-level achievement in Artistic Gymnastics – i.e. America, Europe, Eastern Europe, Russia, China, Japan and Australia. Incorrectly named Indian Clubs by British military officers, the club apparatus in fact originated in ancient Persia, but evolved in India into a fitness-directed regime (Figure 1.25). As sports historian Jan Todd comments, ‘many primitive cultures [have naturally] placed value on being able to lift and swing big clubs. In India and Persia, however, what began as a survival tactic evolved into a system of physical training which passed down through the generations’ and continues to be used to the present day.¹¹⁶ The British military adopted a style of Indian clubs (Figure 1.26); a hybrid between calisthenics, ‘Swedish cure extensions movements’ and the lighter version of the clubs apparatus.¹¹⁷ These exercises were subsequently introduced to Europe and America via the publication in 1834 of Donald Walker’s ‘British Manly Exercises’, which Todd describes as ‘perhaps the most influential book on purposive exercise published in English during the nineteenth century.’¹¹⁸ The Indian Clubs, also referred to as ‘Club Swinging’, made two separate

¹¹⁶ J. Todd, ‘From Milo to Milo: A History of Barbells, Dumbbells, and Indian Clubs’, *Iron Game History*, Vol. 3, No. 6, April 1995, p. 8. Available at <http://library.la84.org/SportsLibrary/IGH/IGH0306/IGH0306c.pdf> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

appearances at the Summer Olympic Games¹¹⁹: firstly as part of the 1904 Summer Olympics gymnastics programme and secondly at the 1932 Summer Olympics.¹²⁰ A devolved version – referred to by the FIG simply as ‘clubs’ and their handling as requiring ‘rhythmic work, psychomotor coordination and clockwork precision’¹²¹ – continues today as a female-only Olympic event (Figure 1.27), one of four Rhythmic Gymnastics apparatuses, and in many ways displaying more similarities with circus acrobatics than the Indian Club tradition.¹²²

What is significant to note, however, with the example of the Indian Clubs (because it is symptomatic of a wider pattern) is that the imperial powers and army appropriated what they found to be useful in the indigenous variety of Indian gymnastics (which had a specific meaning and purpose within that culture), incorporated it within its own gymnastics framework, slowly stripping away its specific form until arriving at the slight, synthetic version of clubs used in Rhythmic Gymnastics today. This wider pattern is not a historical anomaly in gymnastics history, has applied in the transfer of gymnastics systems or movements between Western nations and between social classes, and continues to occur in the present day, albeit in new and ulterior forms. For example, American commentator Tim Daggett, referring to the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games Floor Exercise, stated his preference for non-Western gymnasts to use floor music that reflects their national culture, while Western gymnasts select freely,¹²³ or a commentator emphasising that a Brazilian gymnast ‘just has such a *different* style’¹²⁴ should be seen as remnants of

¹¹⁹ It should be noted that in none of these instances the competitors were female.

¹²⁰ Olympic Studies Centre (Research and Reference Service), *Gymnastics – Artistic gymnastics: Participation during the History of the Olympic Games*, September 2011, see table on p. 2. Available at http://www.olympic.org/Assets/OSC%20Section/pdf/QR_sports_summer/Sports_Olympiques_gymnastique_artistique_eng.pdf (Accessed 7 November 2019).

¹²¹ Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique, *About Rhythmic*, 2013. Available at <http://www.fig-gymnastics.com/vsite/vnavsite/page/directory/0,10853,5187-188467-205689-nav-list,00.html> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

¹²² It is worth noting on this point that Cirque du Soleil is a major partner of the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique, recently extending their collaboration agreement until 2016. Many former Rhythmic Gymnasts make the post-retirement transition from competitive sport to stage performance.

¹²³ Tim Daggett, NBC commentator, referring to Brazilian gymnast Diane dos Santos.

¹²⁴ My emphasis.

particular kind of sporting power held in the tight clasp of a select few. How and when was this power gained, and how does it affect the present geographical spread of Artistic Gymnastics?

Firstly, it is important to establish where the geographical spread of Artistic Gymnastics actually falls. At first glance, the membership of the seven gymnastic disciplines presided over by the FIG appears to be reasonably inclusive: 130 out of approximately 196 nations worldwide are FIG associated or affiliated members, with the number of National Olympic Committees sending gymnasts to the qualification stages of the Olympics having increased from 45 nations in 2004 to 58 nations in 2012.¹²⁵ However, if we collect the details of the top fifteen nations in terms of medal count over the last three Summer Olympic Games, certain countries steadfastly re-appear: the US, Russia, China, Romania, Japan, France, Germany and Canada all made the top fifteen in each of the last three Games. While I have used statistics from the last three Summer Games for demonstrative purposes (Figure 1.28), their findings are applicable at least as far back as the demise of the German Democratic Republic and Soviet Union. While FIG membership for a nation such as Angola is certainly permissible – they will be liable for membership fees, will be eligible to send gymnasts for qualification rounds who meet specific international standards, attend FIG meetings and may have aspirations to become more successful in the sport – their membership remains of no threat to the dominance of the top fifteen. Furthermore, until a short time ago – with the recent onset of digital and cable television – only the gymnasts and teams who qualified for the Finals would receive televised coverage, rendering the presence of all but the top fifteen nations invisible.

¹²⁵ Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique, *History of Artistic Gymnastics*, 2005. Statistics dated as correct of 31.12.2005. Available: <http://www.fig-gymnastics.com/vsite/vcontent/page/custom/0,8510,5187-188434-205656-44680-282887-custom-item,00.html> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

Figure 1.29 has been drawn to indicate the uneven spread of achievement-oriented Olympic Artistic Gymnastics, drawing upon the statistics from the 2004, 2008 and 2012 Summer Games. Additionally, I have included nations that I know have influenced the development of the sport from the eighteenth century onwards (for example, including Sweden due to the influence of Ling's exercises, despite the nation not winning an Olympic medal in gymnastics since the 1956 Games).¹²⁶ The spread of gymnastic nations marked in grey demonstrates a strong correlation between sporting success, location in the Global North, the national wealth of More Economically Developed States (MEDC) and post-Communist states, in short, those with political, economic and cultural clout.¹²⁷ This is undoubtedly true of most, if not all, achievement-oriented sports (although referring back to my earlier description of the cost of gymnastic equipment as one of a number of factors, I would argue that the impact of this political, economic and cultural clout is unduly stark in the case of Artistic Gymnastics).

Sports historian Allen Guttman has explored the correlation between a nations' sphere of influence and the global diffusion of sport. However, he notes that 'each path [political, economic, cultural] allows for two-way traffic (even when the volume in one direction is greater than the other)' between core and peripheral nations.¹²⁸ One example of such two-way traffic in the case of gymnastics is the acceptance and appropriation of the Japanese men's 'bow' to the apparatus as a mark of reverence and respect, which as a gesture is now made by male competitors of other nationalities. However, in an aesthetic and subjectively-judged sport such as gymnastics, I remain sceptical of the capacity for substantial or long-impacting impact by any peripheral feedback.

¹²⁶ Two Swedish gymnasts medalled in the 1956 Melbourne Summer Games – William Thoreson won Silver in the Men's Floor Event, and Ann-Sofi Pettersson – won Bronze in the women's Side-Horse Vault.

¹²⁷ There is also a partial link between gymnastic nations and Christianity, which will be explored in further depth in chapter two.

¹²⁸ Guttman, *Games and Empires*, p. 173.

The Dutch sociologist Ruud Stokvis has argued that England and America were the 'only nations within which the most important modern sports were not developed under the influence of foreigners.'¹²⁹ Neither England nor America were home to founding factions of gymnastics, however, and for much of the time modern sports were in development, gymnastics was not yet considered a sport, their equal. It mushroomed instead under different motives and purposes primarily in Germany, Sweden, Spain, Denmark, France and the Soviet Union, and not only in one particular style in each locale, for example, the discordances between the Danish Ollerup and Snoghøj schools. While the separate gymnastics factions fought one another during the 'Battle of the Systems', they (somewhat incohesively) rallied against English and American sporting dominance. Ultimately, what the 'Battle of Systems' evidences is the flow of information, ideas and debates between Europe, the New World and further afield of gymnastic concepts.

v) Gymnastics as Spatial Practice

The etymology of gymnastics, derived from the Greek words *gymnastikos*, *gymnasia* and *gymnos*, meaning 'to be naked', 'exercise' and 'to be fond of athletic exercise' respectively, is perhaps an indicator why gymnastics has been at the forefront of the drive twice – in the early 1800s and again in the early 1900s – to take physical exercise and training out into the open air. Games, exercise and dancing during the Middle Ages and Early Modern period took place in the immediate surroundings of the participants: be this the village streets, town square, frozen lakes in the winter time, etc.¹³⁰ This was followed by indoor fencing rooms, riding halls, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the predecessor to the tennis court ('the ball house') took hold across France, Italy, Spain, England and Germany.

¹²⁹ I. M. van Hilvoorde; A. Elling; R. Stokvis; How to Influence National Pride? The Olympic Medal Index as a Unifying Narrative, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 45: 1, 2010.

¹³⁰ Eichberg, Bale and Philo, *Body Cultures*, p. 50.

However, the upsurge of industrialisation and revolution that took hold of Europe in the late-eighteenth century brought about the demise of both the noble classes who had utilised the indoor halls and courts, but also the desire for such sporting practices in the first place. GutsMuths was at the forefront of gymnastics' role in the change to outdoor pursuits (although gymnastics was only one embedded component within his more holistic sense of educating the youth) suggesting 'an enclosed yard or garden in the district of the school [may] be used, but more preferable was an area 'open to the public's gaze but within an enclosure' as Eichberg writes.¹³¹ Following in quick succession and with more radical notions of what outdoor exercise should entail was *Turnvater* Jahn's gymnastics, although as was described earlier in this section, the discrepancy between Jahn's *Turnplatz* and GutsMuths's 'nclosed yard' was not as dramatic as it may first appear. Following in Jahn's footsteps a generation later, his compatriot Adolf Spiess created the first gymnastic group exercises; the need to work in rhythm with other participants displaying a preoccupation with the body's relationship not only to the surrounding habitat, but also with those also moving within the mutual communal space of the gym. It must be underscored, however, that all three gymnastic proponents mentioned above – GutsMuths, Jahn and Speiss – were German, operating in Germany and neighbouring nations such as Switzerland, and that their ideas were not universally shared. At the same time frame that his German adversaries were advocating the move outside, Pehr Ling was constructing the KCGI for the exclusively indoor pursuit of his exercises. Likewise, when Swedish gymnastic instructors were 'imported' into Victorian England from 1878 onwards, their training took place inside schools and colleges.¹³²

By the mid-eighteenth century, German physical activity had joined that of Sweden and England back in the gymnasium; partially due to the prohibition on gymnastics that saw Jahn imprisoned, but also on

¹³¹ Eichberg, Bale and Philo, *Body Cultures*, p. 52. Quoting GutsMuths.

¹³² N. Barker-Ruchti, 'Stride Jump – Begin! Swedish Gymnastics in Victorian England,' *Sporting Traditions*, Vol. 22, No. 2, May 2006, p. 15

grounds of health and hygiene. It was to be only five decades before the call was once again to take to the outdoors, going hand-in-hand with the *Freikörperkultur* (in English: Free Body Culture), and lasting until the Nazi government came into office. The reasoning behind the to-and-fro between the open-air versus enclosure are expounded by Eichberg as permanent social fixtures: 'political power and resistance to that power found visible reflection in both bodily movement and the shaping of space, and 'nature' and 'freedom' were thereby interlinked.'¹³³

vi) Conclusion

By the time the Summer Olympic Games resumed in 1952 following World War II, the move into the gymnasium was irreversibly complete. Yet with the continued use of GutsMuths and Jahn's apparatus in Olympic gymnastics disciplines – in the 1950s and early 1960s these were still made of wood, not yet fabricated with synthetic materials – there was enduring evidence of the displacement from outside to inside. The caption accompanying the black and white photograph in Figure 1.30 reads as follows: 'the fluid beauty of the human form is in stark contrast with the harsh regularity of the architectural structure. Nadia [Comănești] in her training camp in Bucharest, 1978.'¹³⁴ This perceptive observation is a side-note, and goes unmentioned in the main body of the text. I refer to it here because it exposes a contemporary schism in gymnastics, a residue of prior antagonisms between inside/outside. It appears that what has been forgotten from GutsMuths and Jahn's teachings is the emphasis on 'body-environment relationship';¹³⁵ as Eichberg states, both GutsMuths and Jahn recognised that 'the body [...] does not stop at the surface of the skin[;] it reaches into the space surrounding it.'¹³⁶

¹³³ Eichberg, Bale and Philo, *Body Cultures*, p. 62.

¹³⁴ G. Buxton Smither, *Behind the Scenes of Gymnastics*, (London and New York, NY: Proteus, 1980), p. 33. My emphasis.

¹³⁵ Eichberg, Bale and Philo, *Body Cultures*, p. 52.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Chapter Two

Of the Classical Mould – Visual Representations of the White Gymnastic Body

i) Introduction

While the surface of the gymnastic body will be the focus of this introduction, it is a body more than skin deep. This entire chapter will engage with the specificities of the gymnastic anatomy: its whiteness, its physical exterior, what this exterior has been thought to contain, and what this body represents, both historically and in the present. The extended introduction of this chapter defines whiteness, and the cross-overs between whiteness and elite, global sport. In this sense, it will outline ideas and readings of the gymnastic body that are central to understanding the arguments contained in the chapter that follows, which will investigate the way in which this body has been concealed and revealed through dress and uniform, before moving on to an analysis of the specificities of its movement.

Structured in four sections, this chapter begins with defining whiteness as a concept, exploring how this has been intertwined historically with the modern Olympic Games. The second section considers the history of gymnastics and physical education, as pre-dating and subsequently correlating with the history of the modern Olympic Games. In demonstrating the proximity between gymnastics and motifs in Ancient Greek sculpture and imagery, this section charts the special qualities attributed to the white gymnast, touching upon the role gender plays. The anatomical frame and silhouette of the white gymnast's body are explored in the third section, as a contributory factor to the exclusivity of gymnastics. This chapter closes by looking at the manner in which gender plays into the fold, drawing out in particular the intersection between the skeletal gymnastic body, female reproductive organs, and athlete endorsements of menstruation products. This chapter employs a thematic approach, and while it draws on specific examples from Artistic Gymnastics and gymnastic personalities, it is concerned with the *representation* of the

gymnastic body, how its meanings and image are constructed and utilised, rather than a literal analysis of white gymnasts on an individual basis.

It is worth taking a moment to define what I mean by representation. To be represented usually suggests that an image or person is taken to stand or speak for a larger group, categorised along lines of ethnicity, belief, age, gender, etc. Representation is concerned with understanding how particular images are taken as representative of a specific group, the choices that are made in the creation of such images, the stereotypes that they rely upon, the multiple meanings that such images contain, and where, when and by whom they are reproduced. Furthermore, representation is the construction of a reality, but as the film theorist Richard Dyer describes:

representation is not directly reality itself, but other representations. The analysis of images always needs to see how any given instance is embedded in a network of other instances.¹³⁷

With this in mind, a genealogy of representations of the gymnastic body, in different time periods and varying formats, will be discussed throughout this chapter, and will demonstrate Dyer's statement that such images and 'representations' exist interdependently. Contemporary images of gymnastics contain residual and inherited markers derived from their predecessors, and act as feedback loops between then and now, here and there. Thus, I draw upon images and language as my main primary sources for analysis, many of which I have arrived at through personal knowledge of the sport as well as archival research.

¹³⁷ R. Dyer, *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations*, (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 2.

Beyond the approach already outlined, it is also of value to chart where this writing falls within whiteness studies. The sociologist Ruth Frankenberg has described four primary areas of work in this interdisciplinary field of study, the third – quoted below – being the area I identify my research with as:

[asking] how whiteness is performed by subjects, whether in daily life, in film, in literature, or in the academic corpus. At times what is at stake in such research is the ‘revealing’ of the unnamed – the exposure of whiteness masquerading as universal. But at other times the stake is rather in examining how white dominance is rationalised, legitimized, and made ostensibly normal and natural.¹³⁸

While I would contend that it is no secret that gymnastics is a ‘white sport’, it is my intention to take this writing in both the directions described above. While there is an element of ‘revealing’ the white gymnastic body as such, it is also in many respects a statement of the obvious. The previous chapter discussed the origins of physical education in the late-1700s, which was entangled with the development of gymnastics under a collective of educators known as the Philanthropists, including Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths and Gerhard Ulrich Anton Vieth. Their ideas concerning physical education and gymnastics were equally in tune with and a product of Enlightenment thinking, with as one of their objectives the preservation of ‘the “natural order” among the sexes’, as highlighted by the historian Teresa Sanislo.¹³⁹ Along a similar timescale and also as a by-product of the Enlightenment, the ‘invention of the “Caucasian Race”’ occurred following the publication in 1684 of François Bernier’s *New Division of the Earth*, which was more concerned with a natural order between races and with capitalist pursuits on the agenda.¹⁴⁰ That

¹³⁸ R. Frankenberg (ed.), *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 3.

¹³⁹ T. Sanislo, ‘Protecting Manliness in the Age of Enlightenment: The New Physical Education and Gymnastics in Germany, 1770–1800’, *Gender in Transition: Discourse and Practice in German-Speaking Europe 1750-1830*, edited by U. Gleixner and M.W. Gray, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006), p. 266.

¹⁴⁰ B. Baum, *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race: A Political History of Racial Identity*, (New York, NY and London: New York University Press, 2006), p. 58.

the ideas of the time were to give rise to whiteness and revive gymnastics almost simultaneously makes the white gymnast to some extent an inevitable outcome.

ii) Naming Whiteness

Gymnastics is frequently referred to as a 'white sport', along with other sports including figure-skating, swimming and skiing. In the media, such a statement can be understood to mean the numerical domination by white participants, from competitors to a sport's administration. However, the *whiteness* of gymnastics is something else, derived from the ethnic make-up of competitors; in the words of Dyer, 'true whiteness resides in the non-corporeal.'¹⁴¹ Whiteness permeates Artistic Gymnastics to the point of saturation; not only does it endure as the naturalised status quo, but its privileging is constantly (re)constructed, and prevails even now. Whiteness is a notoriously difficult concept to demarcate, a slippery concept, but can be defined as the collective racial identity of white people: the cultural construction, positioning and embodiment of their image, what it is held to signify and the power it wields. As Dyer notes, 'white people are not racially seen and named', and therefore have historically acted as the hegemonic default norm, and arguably continue to do so.¹⁴²

The use of white as a noun and adjective to describe a specific race of people first appeared in 1604, coinciding with the beginnings of the imperial exercise and the developments in natural history arising out of the emphasis of rational thinking during the Enlightenment.¹⁴³ A number of different classifications – between human beings, and between humans, animals and nature – were created, one of the best known and most influential works being Carolus Linnaeus's tenth edition of *Systema Naturae*.¹⁴⁴ His adaptation of

¹⁴¹ Dyer, *White*, p. 45.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

¹⁴⁴ Baum, *Rise and Fall*, p. 65.

the Great Chain of Being concept not only created a hierarchy among the human race, but set out the rationale behind their relational placing based upon each group's supposed attributes.¹⁴⁵ These outlines of characteristics were to have long-term effects, leading to race stereotypes that were later elaborated on and that continue to reverberate today. Two examples are the descriptions of the European and African 'varieties':

European	White, sanguine, muscular. Hair: flowing, king; Eyes: blue. Gentle, acute, inventive. Covered with close [-fitting] vestments. Governed by laws.
African	Black, phlegmatic, indolent. Hair: black, frizzled; Skin: silky; Nose: flat; Lips: tumid. Women without shame; Mammae lactate profusely. Crafty, lazy, negligent. Anoints himself with grease Governed by caprice. ¹⁴⁶

Within 50 years of the first edition of *Systema Naturae*, scientists began attempts at measuring the physical characteristics and at calculating the gap between varieties on scales such as proposed by the *Systema Naturae* through the pseudo-science of physiognomy. With its origins in Ancient Greece, physiognomy

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹⁴⁶ Baum, *Rise and Fall*, p. 66. Baum quotes Carolus Linnaeus, *Systema Naturae*, 10th ed. (Stockholm, 1758-1759), pp. 20-22, quoted in J.S. Slotkin. (ed.), *Readings in Early Anthropology*, (Chicago, IL: Aldine, 1965), pp. 177-178. The partial translation for the 'Monstrous' category is taken from W. Scheidt, *The Race Concept in Anthropology and the Divisions into Human Races from Linnaeus to Deniker (1924-25)*, in *This Is Race: An Anthology Selected from International Literature on the Races of Man*, edited by E.W. Count, (New York, NY: Henry Schuman, 1950), p. 357.

had fallen in and out of favour during the Middle Ages, to be revived by the Dutch physician, anatomist, physiologist, midwife, zoologist, anthropologist, paleontologist and naturalist Petrus Camper (1722-1789) and the Swiss pastor Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801). Individually, they each gathered various measurements of lengths, widths and angles of the skull and facial features of orang-utans and chimpanzees, 'Kalmucks', 'Negroes', 'Europeans', and Greek gods, derived from classical statues.¹⁴⁷ As Figure 2.1 demonstrates, the white European comes second only to the Apollo Belvedere, which was taken to be a sign of beauty, but also of the intelligence of Europeans over that of other races, as the obstetrician Charles White (1728-1813) argued – building upon Camper and Lavater – when he asked 'Where shall we find, unless in the European, that nobly arched head, counting such a quantity of brain...?'¹⁴⁸ These 'scientific' developments had been preceded by the Protestant Reformation (1517-1648), which, in the words of historian Winthrop D. Jordan, remodelled the 'content and tone of English Christianity [...] in the direction of Biblicism, personal piety, individual judgement, and more intense self-scrutiny and internalized control.'¹⁴⁹ This self-imposed sense of control over oneself and moral sensibility thus came historically almost hand-in-hand with the 'scientific proof' evidencing the superiority of Europeans in terms of intelligence as well as physical and internal beauty. In fact – anticipating the beliefs and rise of Muscular Christianity during the Victorian era – Lavater believed that God created individuals' outer appearance, and that there was a 'correlation between personal beauty and human virtue, between outer looks and inner soul' as described by the historian Nell Irvin Painter.¹⁵⁰ I dwell on this particular period to pinpoint the historical moment when the correlation between beauty, whiteness and moral righteousness first emerged and entered European consciousness. The notion of a special constellation between whiteness and beauty,

¹⁴⁷ N.I. Painter, *The History of White People*, (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), p. 65.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹⁴⁹ W.D. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States*, (Oxford and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 22.

¹⁵⁰ Painter, *History of White People*, p. 67.

with ideas of self-control and self-discipline, will show itself to still be manifest in Artistic Gymnastics in particular ways as this chapter progresses.

A major component of attitudes around self-control and self-discipline of the body is the belief that our bodies are, at least to an extent, malleable. Plastic surgery was re-named as such in the early-1800s, proposed by the French anatomist and surgeon Pierre-Joseph Desault (1738-1795), from the Greek *plastikos* (in English: fit for moulding).¹⁵¹ While his proposal undoubtedly demonstrates the advancing surgical abilities of the time, it also reveals the circulation of wider ideas regarding an individual's agency to change and alter (for better or worse) their physical appearance. In doing so, an individual advertises their desires (to be accepted and seen as good and healthy) but perhaps also fears, anxieties and vanity. In the same manner in which plastic surgery has increased in popularity astronomically globally since the 1980s, so too has the desire to hone, perfect and enhance the body: to acquire 'ripped abs', toned bodies, stripping body fat, and building muscle, and in the present to share and be judged through images of this body through social media platforms.

What is most significant for this study about the manner in which whiteness has been used since these early formulations of racial difference in terms of the gymnastic body is the way in which these characteristics and metaphorical connotations have been presented as *truisms* of specific races. Of specific relevance is the longstanding binary opposition between white and black and the manifestation of this contradistinction in everyday language. This also rears its head in media commentary of gymnastic competitions: while infrequently shown on-screen, commentators are predominantly white themselves and thus speak from a North American or Eurocentric vantage point (as shown in Figure 2.2). An imperial off-

¹⁵¹ S.A. Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 10.

shoot inflected with Christianity, whiteness has long been equated with 'good', and black with 'bad'.¹⁵² The range of 'good' attributes that white symbolised in the past and now includes, but is not limited to: beauty, purity, virginity, innocence, youth, vitality, health, hygiene, cleanliness, happiness, peace, godliness, and moral rectitude; versus black, which denotes darkness, dirt, fear, and death, among other things. As gender and sexualities scholar Anne McClintock has evidenced, the equation of goodness, religion, cleanliness, superiority, rationality and whiteness was formed in Victorian Britain, in relation to the British Empire's colonialism.¹⁵³ As McClintock details:

Victorian advertising took explicit shape around the reinvention of racial difference. Commodity kitsch made possible, as never before, the mass marketing of empire as an organized system of images and attitudes. Soap flourished not only because it created and filled a spectacular gap in the domestic market but also because [...] it could persuasively mediate the Victorian poetics of racial hygiene and imperial progress.¹⁵⁴

It is, however, worth highlighting that white can also symbolise death, alongside ill-health, old age, ghostliness and coldness. The contrasting duplicity between these attributes has resulted in a hierarchy of whiteness between white people: that some people are perceived as supposedly more white than others, while particular groups historically have only occasionally qualified as white (the Irish, for example).¹⁵⁵ This duplicity has also found its way into gymnastics: the golden, wholesome, athletic, smiling American team versus the pale, serious, robotic Soviets, as pitted against one another during the Cold War era.

¹⁵² Dyer, *White*, p. 58.

¹⁵³ A. McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995), p. 208.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

¹⁵⁵ R.D. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, (London and New York, NY: Verso, 1999), p. 133.

Perhaps the whitest characteristic of all is in the striving to be 'truly' white. Aptly described by Dyer as a 'characteristically Western investment... in the possibility of humans developing themselves here on earth', the yearning for whiteness finds itself teamed with the elusiveness of perfection.¹⁵⁶ The ties between whiteness and perfection take on a new resonance in the sporting arena, under the Olympic banner 'Higher-Faster-Stronger', but strike a particular chord with gymnastics, with its subjective judging, emphasis on aesthetics and the global popularity of the female competition. Until the changes in the Code of Points in 2006 by the FIG, all gymnasts strove for the Perfect 10 score, made famous by Nadia Comăneci at the 1976 Games, even making the front cover of *Time magazine* (see Figure 2.3). The routine was in fact not perfect, but the high scores given to other competitors forced the judges to award Comăneci a 10, in recognition that her routine was far superior to those presented by her competitors. Comăneci framed her famous achievement in other terms, saying: 'I don't believe in perfection. I achieved it under a certain system, but there was plenty of room for developing that system.'¹⁵⁷

As was discussed in the first chapter, the post-2006 Artistic Gymnastics code is structured differently – so that there is no limit on scores – and therefore competitors are compelled to work with increasing difficulty and risk to achieve endlessly higher scores. This endless service under the ideal of perfection has shades of Muscular Christianity, and gymnasts are frequently depicted in pre-competition religious prayer (see Figure 2.4) or as medallists kissing pieces of equipment in an act of veneration (see Figure 2.5). Despite the dominance of remnants of Christian imagery in the practising of gymnastics (see Figure 2.6), Pierre de Coubertin actually intended for Olympism to be an ideal and religion itself. In memoirs written late in his life, he describes his personal conception of this, stating: 'To me, sport was a religion with its church, dogmas, service... but above all a religious feeling.'¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Dyer, *White*, p. 151.

¹⁵⁷ Nadia Comăneci, quoted by the artist Jo Longhurst, see http://www.jolonghurst.com/docs/projects_list.php (Accessed 1 March 2014).

¹⁵⁸ Pierre de Frédy, Baron de Coubertin on Amateurism from: *Olympic Memoirs*. See <http://library.la84.org/OlympicInformationCenter/OlympicReview/1977/ore116/ore116u.pdf> (Accessed 29 June 2014).

Whiteness as the benchmark for gymnastics is in fact a scenario shared by all Olympic sports, in the sense that the modern Olympics were founded in Europe,¹⁵⁹ with the majority of the founding members from noble and elite ranks of society,¹⁶⁰ and the early games were populated almost entirely by competitors from Western nations who at that time submitted teams primarily of white, male participants.¹⁶¹ Subsequently, by the time the door was opened to female and non-white competitors, the gatekeepers had established themselves, with their sense of ownership, power and dominance. For example, in a letter from the President of the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Aviron to the Technical Director of the International Olympic Committee on the occasion of the 1976 Montreal boycott by African nations (see Figure 2.7), found in the archives of the Olympic Studies Centre, it is worth questioning who the 'our' he speaks of refers to: 'The withdrawal of most of the African countries did not affect rowing, as *our* sport is not practised (sic) by black African people.'¹⁶²

The arrival of non-white athletes into Olympic sports initially occurred only with particular disciplines, as had also been the case for female athletes, and included team sports such as basketball, and track and field events. In the case of gymnastics, Japanese and Chinese gymnasts first made their presence in the medal count, predominantly in the men's competition, from the 1950s onwards, within which they have achieved much success and recognition. Black athletes began to reach the higher ranks of elite competition in the 1980s and be selected for national teams, with break-out stars including Stella Umeh

¹⁵⁹ The Olympic Museum, *The Modern Olympic Games*, Lausanne, see http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/EN/en_report_668.pdf (Accessed 29 June 2014).

¹⁶⁰ The most notable example being the founder of the modern Olympic Games himself, Pierre de Frédy, Baron de Coubertin.

¹⁶¹ It is difficult to be exact on this point, as at this stage in the development of the Games individual competition was emphasised more than the team element, and the accuracy of surviving records from that time is difficult to ascertain. As a result, there are many disputes over the number of participating nations in the early Olympic Games, with police and army teams often being submitted, and the mass migration from European nations to the New World also creating dualities. I make this statement therefore on the basis of the surviving images from the Games, which were consulted in the archive collections of the Olympic Studies Centre, which I have found to consist almost exclusively of white, male competitors.

¹⁶² Letter from Thomas Keller, President of the Federation Internationale des Societes d'Aviron to the Technical Director of the International Olympic Committee, Mr H. R. Banks, sent on 27 September 1976 from Zurich. Held in the collection of the Olympic Studies Centre, Lausanne, Switzerland.

representing Canada at the 1992 Olympics and Jair Lynch representing America at the 1996 Olympics.¹⁶³

What is made clear by the 1985 advertisement (see Figure 2.8) via the statement attributed to NBA basketball player, Ralph Sampson – ‘I don’t compete in gymnastics, but I can help you win’ – is that gymnastics is not considered a sport for, associated with, or ‘suitable’ for black men. What is more, there is an ongoing trope in the American media, re-appearing pre-Olympics every four-year cycle, featuring a portrait of a petite young female (white) gymnast, alongside a tall, adult (black) basketball player. Conversely, while black athletes may be considered to be making visible progress in the sport of which African-American gymnast Simone Biles is the most recognisable, recently there has been a highly publicised backlash against this. Following the 2013 World Championships Balance Beam final, in which Biles placed fifth, the Italian gymnast Carlotta Ferlito gave a media interview in which she commented that after the competition she ‘told [her teammate, Vanessa Ferrari] that next time we should also paint our skin black, so then we could win too.’¹⁶⁴ Therefore, we should be clear that both racism and discrimination remain actively present in elite-level gymnastics, which is in all likelihood a knee-jerk reaction to the erosion of white privilege that has been a staple of the sport for so long. The next section will investigate the development of gymnastics pre-dating the Modern Olympics, in tandem with the ideas surrounding early physical education, as a means to further understand the exclusivity between gymnastics and the white, Western world.

¹⁶³ It should be noted that this diversity has normally been focused upon specific nations, such as the US, Canada, Brazil, and more recently France and the UK, whereas teams submitted by Russia, former Eastern Bloc nations and Italy to the best of my knowledge have never in their history had a black gymnast as part of their national team. This, of course, can at least be partially explained by the ethnic demographics of those nations.

¹⁶⁴ Daily Mail, ‘Maybe next time we’ll paint our skin black so we can win’: Italian gymnast sparks fury with racist jibe at 16-year-old new world champion’, 16 September 2013, available at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2458533/Carlotta-Ferlito-sparks-fury-racist-jibe-new-world-champion-Simone-Biles.html> (Accessed 30 June 2014).

iii) 'M is for Muscles, Morals, Mind: These Three Go Together You Will Always Find'¹⁶⁵

Writing in 1569 and as described in the previous chapter, the Italian philologist and physician Girolamo Mercuriale divided gymnastics into three forms: 'gymnastica,' for the sake of health (favourable), 'bellica,' in preparation for war (tolerable), and 'athletics,' for the sake of competitive performance (detestable).¹⁶⁶ However, the prioritisation of gymnastics' medicinal value was to be short-lived. As described earlier in this chapter, the origins of physical education and the revival of gymnastics occurred from the 1790s onwards, coinciding with the end of the Age of Enlightenment, a period of rational thinking, scientific progress and technological development.¹⁶⁷ During the late-eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century, major economic and social changes were underway. Wider societal history is far too complex to describe succinctly here, but the transformation from monarchies and aristocratic rulers to the democratic nation-state, the industrial revolution and increasing urbanisation, created and necessitated fresh fault lines among populations: by gender, class and in a global sense, race.¹⁶⁸ For this study, the most significant changes happened by way of educational reforms: new modes of work generated the need for an alternative form of education for young people that was to include physical activity, as skills demanded by work could no longer be taught by family members, through simply doing or in an apprenticeship. Instead, formal schooling would be the means to pass on the types of knowledge – both physical and intellectual – that would transfer into adulthood employment.

¹⁶⁵ M. Hatt, 'Muscles, Morals, Mind: The male body in Thomas Eakins' *Salutat*', in K. Adler and M.R. Pointon (eds.), *The Body Imaged: the human form and visual culture since the renaissance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 57. Hatt quotes from 'The Physical Culture Alphabet' published in a 1905 issue of *Physical Culture for Boys and Girls*, but does not include a more detailed citation for this source.

¹⁶⁶ N. Siraisi, 'History, Antiquarianism, and Medicine: The Case of Girolamo Mercuriale', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 64, No. 2, April 2003, p. 238.

¹⁶⁷ G. Pfister, 'Cultural confrontations: German Turnen, Swedish gymnastics and English sport – European diversity in physical activities from a historical perspective', *Culture, Sport, Society*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2003, p. 62-63.

¹⁶⁸ E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), p. 1-3.

This formal schooling saw children seated indoors, in classrooms, physically inactive for large periods of the day, which physical education pedagogues such as GutsMuths and Vieth saw as creating ill-health, but equally as an ineffective teaching method. Their ideas for physical education in response to formal schooling stood in stark contrast to the attitudes of physicians such as Mercuriale that predated them. As the art historian Nina Sobol Levent notes:

medieval Christian iconography created a contemplative and mystical image of divinity. This tradition was not about the perfection reached in external battles or with physical forces but instead emphasized perfection through selfless suffering and sacrifice and created the less muscular and subdued body seen in many representations of Christ.¹⁶⁹

Put in simple terms, medieval Christian society emphasised mind over matter, in contrast to the harmonious and total integration of the body and mind in Ancient Greece. Against the changing contexts of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a crisis in masculinity was diagnosed, or, perhaps more accurately, constructed. The schism was between the strong man, who displayed bravery, valour and stamina, and the civilised man, who was well-read and sophisticated, but led a sedentary lifestyle and was physically weak.¹⁷⁰ As discussed in Chapter One, the latter was expressed by the Philanthropists in the term *Weichlichkeit* (effeminacy, softness, weakness), who blamed the degeneration of the youth largely on soft parenting and the transferral of education to classrooms.¹⁷¹ They discussed the ‘problem’ in gendered terms, negatively attributing so-called feminine traits to boys and young men.¹⁷² There was to be one ‘cure’, initially aimed primarily at youngsters – the synthesis of intellectual and physical training.

¹⁶⁹ N.S. Levent, *Healthy Spirit in a Healthy Body*, (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004), p. 60.

¹⁷⁰ Gleixner and Gray, *Gender in Transition*, p. 267.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 269-270.

The claims of this (white) masculine crisis began with GutsMuths, who took his lead from the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. As the sports sociologist Pfister notes:

as [with] other educational theorists of the time, GutsMuths shared Rousseau's view that reason (the intellect) can only be developed through the senses (i.e. only through action and perception) and that therefore the education of the body, the training of the senses and physical activities were indispensable elements of education – at least for boys.¹⁷³

GutsMuths' manual, *Gymnastics for Youth*, and his later collection of pan-European folk games, *Spiele zur Übung und Erholung des Körpers* (in Games for Training and Reviving the Body), set out the exercises that would achieve the *Abhartung* (physical hardening) GutsMuths and his peers were striving for, in both moral improvement and reinforcing the surfaces of the body. This gymnastic exertion was to be teamed with other character-building hardships, including cold baths and plain food, denoting that GutsMuths's manual would not only build a specific constitution of mental strength, control and will-power, but also moral attributes and intellect.¹⁷⁴ It remains common for athletes to take ice-baths, including gymnasts, as became obvious through social media during the London 2012 Summer Olympic Games (see Figures 2.9, 2.10 and 2.11).

Gymnastics and pedagogical theory were to be in tandem with many more 'historical processes'. Quoting GutsMuths, Sanislo remarks that 'the ultimate goal was to achieve a level of physical perfection through which one could unify "health with manly strength and firmness, endurance, courage, and presence of mind"'.¹⁷⁵ What the Philanthropists and their students were projecting in their ideas, writing and

¹⁷³ Pfister, *Cultural confrontations*, p. 64.

¹⁷⁵ Gleixner and Gray, *Gender in Transition*, p. 271.

educational reforms – initially oppressing children and women, and as their ideas filtered through history, essentially reaching all those who were *not* able white men – were the conflicting notions of masculinities, plural, of their time. These conflicts were fuelled by societal changes, and processes of modernisation supposedly eroding the modern man in various manners.

As described in the previous chapter, the notion of a ‘special German-Greek affinity’ was conceived around 1800.¹⁷⁶ Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s 1755 *Gedancken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Wercke in der Mahlerey und Bildhauer-Kunst* (Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Painting and Sculpture) argued that ‘the only way for us to become great, nay, if possible inimitable, is to imitate the ancients’ – the ancients for Winckelmann equating ancient Greece.¹⁷⁷ Winckelmann identified a special body consciousness, to use the historian Felix Saure’s terminology, in ancient Greece due to their practice of physical exercise in the specificities of their climate and immediate topography, essentially a thought process rooted in environmental determinism.¹⁷⁸ Winckelmann’s ideas and texts were to be lastingly influential – resonating in the work of Lessing, Herder, Goethe, Hölderlin, Heine, Nietzsche, George, and Spengler. Rather than a chance encounter with his writings, however, the gap between Winckelmann and GutsMuths is a small one. Christian Gotthilf Salzmann (1744-1811) founded the Schnepfenthal Institution Waltershausen, Germany, and was GutsMuths’s mentor. Quoting sports scientist Peter Kühnst, Saure describes Salzmann’s keen ‘practical and theoretical interest in ancient archaeology and ancient art history “in direct continuation of the ideals of classicism as they were understood by Winckelmann”’.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ F. Saure, ‘Beautiful Bodies, Exercising Warriors and Original Peoples: Sports, Greek Antiquity and National Identity from Winckelmann to “Turnvater Jahn”’, *German History*, Vol. 27, No. 3, p. 358.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ P. Kühnst, *Sport: Eine Kulturgeschichte im Spiegel der Kunst*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996), as cited in Saure, ‘Beautiful Bodies’, p. 362.

Two elements not fully explored in Winckelmann's writings were to be appropriated by gymnastics educators, and later seized upon to dangerously infiltrate politics. These were, firstly, his focus on the public nature of physical exercise in Ancient Greece, and his mention of uniformity as a positive aspect of exercise, stating that the ancient Olympic Games 'were a great incentive to all young Greeks.'¹⁸⁰ This was to develop into the concept of sport as a patriotic duty and activity able to nurture specific national traits, largely at the behest of Turnvater Jahn as discussed in Chapter One, before being elaborated by the Futurists, fascism, National Socialism and communist Russia. The second element was that his admiration for the athletic form of the Ancient Greeks – most notably in his dictum 'noble simplicity and quiet grandeur'¹⁸¹ – acted as the linchpin between the notion of an affinity between the two cultures, studying representations of their bodies, and making like-for-like comparisons between the Ancient Greeks and the German countrymen of educators such as GutsMuths. In terms of aesthetics, Greek forms and symbols became cemented in sporting imagery, solidified by the creation of the torch relay for the 'Nazi Olympics' and Leni Riefenstahl's Olympia, to be discussed in the following chapter. However, as Figures 2.12 and 2.13 evidence, prior to this, Greek imagery was already widely used as a rich source and visual shorthand of sporting beauty.

In Germany, Prussian losses in the Napoleonic Wars and the later defeat of the French in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, encouraged the idea that modern man was less than his forefathers; he was degenerating, becoming *imperfect*. In fact, as the art historian Tamar Garb describes in the context of fin-de-siècle France, it was thought that 'modern men were in such a sorry state, [as claimed by] hygienists, doctors and politicians alike, that they threatened to produce damaged offspring whose progressive degeneracy spelled nothing less than the end of France.'¹⁸² The manner in which Turnvater Jahn

¹⁸⁰ J.J. Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst*, 1755, as cited in Saure, 'Beautiful Bodies', p. 360.

¹⁸¹ Saure, 'Beautiful Bodies', p. 360.

¹⁸² T. Garb, *Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in fin-de-siècle France*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1998), p. 56.

responded to such fears (in the German context) will be explored in detail in the next chapter, and I would here like to focus on a later example of how such thinking was implemented into gymnastics, through the work of the Danish doctor Johannes Lindhard (1870–1947). Lindhard became a Professor of the Theory of Gymnastics at the University of Copenhagen in 1917, his major influence in gymnastics being ‘in the “gendering” of the behavioural codes of conduct and the formulation of gender-specific movement’ as has been described by sports sociologist Hans Bonde.¹⁸³

Situated in-between the German and Swedish gymnastic traditions, Lindhard’s system demonstrates the effects of the supposed crisis in (white) masculinity upon the (white) female form. From the Swedish gymnastics pioneer Pehr Ling, Lindhard inherited the belief that from the outset, women’s gymnastics could not simply be the same as men’s: it had to be ‘specifically designed for them for reasons of health’.¹⁸⁴ Admittedly, this was perhaps partially due to the proliferation of different methods and systems for men’s gymnastics already in practice, and due to the ongoing conflict between Anglo-Saxon and German sport at the time.¹⁸⁵ Adding women’s gymnastics to this – inventing methods, drills, routines, and disseminating them through published manuals and teacher training courses surely added to the reputation of the leading male gymnastic educators of the time, and may have also been a lucrative undertaking. However, at the forefront of such thought was biological determinism, at a time when modern bourgeois society was founding parallel institutions and as eugenics was gaining ground in Europe and the United States. Lindhard described the differences between ‘masculine walking’ and the ‘feminine gait’ in this way:

¹⁸³ H. Bonde, ‘Projection of Male Fantasies: The Creation of “Scientific” Female Gymnastics’, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 2012, p. 228.

¹⁸⁴ R. Bartlett, C. Gratton and C.G. Rolf (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of International Sports Studies*, (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 606.

¹⁸⁵ Bonde, ‘Male Fantasies’, p. 231

A walking man follows a definite course. The masculine walk is purposeful, following straight lines; when a man walks he has the appearance of pursuing a definite plan even if this is not the case, whereas a woman does not convey the impression that she is deliberately walking in a certain direction even if this is the case... A woman's walk is less balanced, less stable than a man's...¹⁸⁶

These descriptions effectively created a triangulation between the mind, gender and bodily movement, in relation to which white middle- and upper-class Europeans of the time were to be measured. This is summed up succinctly in by the epigram for this section here, the entry for 'M' in the 'Physical Education Alphabet' published in a 1905 issue of the journal *Physical Culture for Boys and Girls*: 'M is for Muscles, Morals and Mind: the three go together you will always find'. Reading between the lines, muscles stands for the masculine.¹⁸⁷

Women were accepted into gymnastics on these terms but were not readily able to challenge its structure: positions determining the rules, judging and coaching were for the greater part held by men until recently, although inequality is still highly visible in the directorship of international gymnastic management.¹⁸⁸

Instead, as we shall see, women entered gymnastics on men's terms, which required that they hyperbolise their femininity in order to fulfil judging criteria such as 'feminine grace', while also taking on 'male' characteristics of strength and discipline over their body.¹⁸⁹ The 'inferiority' of the female gymnast is still embedded in the sport, with female competitors doing four pieces of apparatus instead of six as with the

¹⁸⁶ Bonde, 'Male Fantasies', p. 236-238.

¹⁸⁷ Hatt, 'Muscles, Morals, Mind', p. 57.

¹⁸⁸ Interestingly, the Men's Artistic Gymnastics Committee is now exclusively constituted by male members, and the Women's Artistic Gymnastics Committee wholly formed by female members. However, in the history of the FIG there has never been a female President and the Executive Committee stills shows the residual gap between the sexes in the sport, with only seven members out of a total of 25 places being held by women. See https://www.fig-gymnastics.com/publicdir/pub_dir_c.php (Accessed 28 February 2014).

¹⁸⁹ N. Barker-Ruchti and J. Weber, 'Bending, Flirting, Floating, Flying: A Critical Analysis of Female Figures in 1970s Gymnastics Photographs', *Sociology of Sport Journal*, Vol. 29. No. 1, 2012, p. 36

men's disciplines, and the vault apparatus being set at a lower height for the women's event.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, due to the developments outlined in Chapter One, in which the female gymnasts body changed from being that of a women's to a child, their exaggeration of femininity transitioned to that of girlhood. The sport has long been governed and actioned by men, in ways that reveal stagnant gender ideologies at play not only in gymnastics, but in elite sport generally (Figure 2.14). As the sociologists Grant Jarvie and Joseph Maguire have remarked:

Women's involvement in sport and leisure has been historically structured by perceptions, stereotypes, and limitations that have been placed upon women's physical and biological capabilities. One of the barriers which has served to exclude women from certain athletic events or robust leisure activities during pregnancy has been to allege women's biological inferiority – allegations often rooted in malestream notions of science. Feminists rightly point to the huge variation in physical capabilities within either sex and the substantial overlap between the two populations.¹⁹¹

Gender is not an issue being foregrounded in this thesis, but I press on this point firstly in recognition of how white male and white female gymnasts exude whiteness overlap and differ in meaningful ways. The white female gymnast is positioned as the Other to the white male. Secondly, the origins of Olympic Artistic Gymnastics with the male gymnast established norms before the arrival of the female gymnast, then the non-white gymnast, and it is therefore useful to attempt to disentangle gender-based Othering to

¹⁹⁰ In many ways, the women's Uneven Bars event is a hybrid between two men's apparatus: the High Bar and Parallel Bars. This leaves the Stills Rings event, which the women had the option of competing in at the 1948 Olympic Games. While I do not have evidence of the concrete reasons for the FIG not continuing a female competition in this discipline, it was recounted to me by the artist Jo Longhurst that in the making of her work *Cross* – which features a female gymnast in the Iron Cross position on the Stills Rings – that the male head coach of the elite training facility made it clear that he did not like this work or pose, as it was not 'feminine'. In-conversation, 17 June 2013.

¹⁹¹ G. Jarvie and J. Maguire, *Sport and leisure in social thought*, (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1994), p. 165.

comprehend the later double-Othering of the male and female non-white gymnast. This will prove especially relevant in considerations later in this chapter on gymnastic body types.

Returning to the quote from Jarvie and Maguire, the early practising of gymnastics as calisthenics and physical education by women was embroiled in the presence of biological determinism rooted in women's involvement in sport. Concurrent with the nineteenth-century cult of domesticity, scientists, doctors and gymnastic pedagogues perceived upper-and middle-class women's primary role in society as being a good wife and mother.¹⁹² Their bodies were thought to be 'naturally' smaller, frailer and weaker,¹⁹³ behaviourally controlled by their reproductive organs,¹⁹⁴ and more susceptible to the nervous disorders that were being defined as tearing through society at the time, such as neurasthenia (now a largely abandoned medical diagnosis).¹⁹⁵ Moreover, doctors thought at the time that the body contained a finite amount of energy: to expend a large sum of this would detract from other bodily functions.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, large amounts consumed by sporting activity would affect female development, leaving her sterile in the future or likely to produce 'sickly or neurotic children'.¹⁹⁷ As a chronological side-note here, I find it a provoking parallel that in the former USSR and GDR period the female reproductive organs were actually used for *and* against athletes to enhance performance. Convictions for use of performance-enhancing drugs are rare in gymnastics, yet there have been consistent historical rumours of abortion doping among female gymnasts. Competitors are intentionally, coerced or forced into becoming pregnant so that the natural surplus of red blood cells created by the body in the first three months of pregnancy aids performance through increased levels of oxygen in the blood, with increased testosterone aiding muscle

¹⁹² M.J. Roberts, 'True Womanhood Revisited', *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2002, p. 150.

¹⁹³ A. Guttman, *Women's Sports: A History*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 88.

¹⁹⁴ J.A. Mangan and R.A. Park (eds.), *From 'Fair Sex' to Feminism: Sport and the Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post-Industrial Eras*, (London and New Jersey: Frank Cass, 1987), p. 16.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

strength and hormones such as relaxin improving flexibility. Abortion doping has never been made illegal by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), as it would be impossible to evidence that the pregnancy was for doping purposes and a conclusive testing method would prove complex. The real issue with the procedure, however, was that in the case of gymnastics, girls as young as 14 were essentially raped by their coaches and then forced to abort the pregnancy, as has been reported. As another parallel between Lindhard's thinking and gymnastics from the 1970s onwards, we should recognise the ongoing fascination with issues of delayed puberty and growth retardation in elite-level female gymnasts in the media, sports industry and in academic research to an extent as remnants of these ideas of finite amounts of bodily energy, rather than the combined reality of minimal calorie intake, long training hours, 'fat-testing' and peer pressure.

The work of physicians such as Lindhard was not only rooted in their scientific endeavours, however, but were also expressions of their own ethnicity, gender, taste and social position.¹⁹⁸ As was referred to in the first chapter, there was a long period of conflict between different forms of gymnastics, primarily German Turnen and Ling's 'Swedish' system. However, this conflict extended beyond this to encompass Anglo-Saxon and Continental practices of competitive sports and gymnastics, on an experiential basis.¹⁹⁹ In nations such as Czechoslovakia, Germany, Denmark and Sweden – and I would argue England – gymnastics was considered by the bourgeoisie and upper classes to be a more enlightened and genteel form of physical activity, encouraging the development of healthy citizens with strong moral attributes, whereas competitive sports were thought to be precarious for both the body and mind, promoting greed and individualism.²⁰⁰ This 'refinement' – at least initially – excluded many from participating: the Danish female gymnastics system created by Agnete Bertram – which found brief favour with Lindhard –

¹⁹⁸ Bonde, 'Male Fantasies', p. 230.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

eventually ‘died out [because] it was too elitist and exclusive on account of the high costs of participating.’²⁰¹

This exclusivity was soon to trickle down to the working classes. In England, the introduction of Swedish gymnastics as a form of female physical education was to have a dual effect: in the words of sports sociologist Natalie Barker-Ruchti, firstly one that ‘controlled and manipulated working-class girls, [while] also serving as a modest source of empowerment for middle-class women.’²⁰² Control was dictated by the gymnastics teacher, who, standing at the front, designated ‘the specific starting position, strict adherence to set patterns of movement, and a predetermined finishing position, every movement completed to command; a demand for precision and accuracy of movement.’²⁰³ By default, we can surmise that the assumption underlying the design and teaching of these gymnastic practices was that the working-class participants were undisciplined, imprecise and imperfect: all in all, less white than their middle-class instructor. Victorian England gymnastics served as an introduction – under the guise of ‘progression’ – to collect medical statistics on the young participants and to ensure a submissive attitude towards surveillance and authority in the future workplace, funded through a tax system predominantly paid into by the wealthy classes.²⁰⁴

In the previous chapter, I referred to the conflation of sport as a patriotic duty, with the ability to encourage national traits in German Turnen, which had explicitly militaristic aims.²⁰⁵ While the systems used by Lindhard and in Victorian England appear to have flourished under different class-based agendas, I would like to conclude this section with some remarks on the ideas of civic duty and the ‘white values’ these

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

²⁰² N. Barker-Ruchti, ‘Stride Jump – Begin!’, p. 13.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17–19.

²⁰⁵ The links in European nations between gymnastics and the military remain strong, with German gymnast Marcel Nguyen, Italian Vanessa Ferrari and Romanian Sandra Izbaşa (see Figure 2.15) are all currently members of their country’s national army.

methods upheld. Gymnastics in Victorian England and, in the same time period, in America, was largely concerned with health concerns such as consumption: the contracted chest seen as a symptom, and thus one reason why the protruding chest that gymnastics reinforced was to be aimed for (as Figure 2.16 demonstrates, the protruding chest continues in the form of the judges' salute). Gymnastics exercises at this time were termed hygienic and rational gymnastics, among other phrases.²⁰⁶ As communications scholar Ann Chisholm describes, postural rectitude, 'grace' and 'ease of action' through gymnastics was to nurture 'fundamental civic virtues', but also provided a solution to the 'preoccupation with the purity and quality of blood'.²⁰⁷ Thus, gymnastics could maintain the ethos of the nation as one of 'several logics (one of which being) racism'.²⁰⁸ This discourse ran concurrent with eugenic thought and the utilisation of gymnastics in physical education as part of the 'civilising process' across the colonies of the African continent (see Figure 2.17). Rather than claiming that the learning of gymnastics would bring out the desired effects of 'the most perfect state of social, civil and moral development', the manner in which gymnastics is discussed frames gymnastics as a graceful, disciplined, righteous (and inherently white) entity in itself.²⁰⁹

iv. Chalked Up – Skin, Sweat and the Statuesque ²¹⁰

To introduce the gymnastic body, it is worth returning to the etymology of gymnastics. The word gymnastics – as the sporting performance of physical strength, flexibility, agility, coordination, and balance – is derived from the Greek words '*gymnastikos*,' '*gymnasia*' and '*gymnos*,' meaning to be 'naked,' 'exercise' and to be 'fond' of such athletic exercise. If we contrast the evocation of the body contained within this root derivative with that of another ancient Greek sporting term from which the body is absent – athletics,

²⁰⁶ Mangan and Park, '*Fair Sex*' to *Feminism: Sport*, p. 148.

²⁰⁷ A. Chisholm, 'Defending the Nation: National Bodies, U.S. Borders, and the 1996 U.S. Olympic Women's Gymnastics Team', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, Vol. 23, No. 126, 1999, p. 129-131

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 131

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

²¹⁰ 'Chalked Up' is borrowed from the title of the book by ex-gymnast Jennifer Sey, titled *Chalked Up: Inside Elite Gymnastics* [sic] *Merciless Coaching, Overzealous Parents, Eating Disorders, and Elusive Olympic Dreams*, Enfield: New York, 2008.

from the Greek '*athletes*' meaning 'prizefighter,' and 'contestant in games' – the foregrounding, and preoccupation with, a highly particularised (Western and white) physique from the inception of gymnastics becomes apparent. The emphasis and place given to gymnastics as an equal relation to the training of the mind in Ancient Greece was to set the stage for gymnastics as an activity beneficial to more than the bodily exterior.

The lineage of the modern Olympic Games can be traced to the revival of gymnastics itself, as a result of medical concerns during Renaissance Italy, with the aforementioned publishing of Mercuriale's '*De Arte Gymnastica*' in 1569.²¹¹ Generally regarded as the first book on sports medicine, it is an intriguing coincidence that Mercuriale was to publish three years later the first book dedicated to the skin printed in Europe, '*De Morbis Cutaneis*.'²¹² Wincklemann's influence upon the aesthetic ideals of gymnastics is again of note here, writing that the white skin makes the 'bodily appearance more beautiful.'²¹³ In identifying the whiteness of gymnastics therefore, the skin is the most appropriate place to start since it is on prominent display; because there have been so many attempts to reveal or conceal the skin; because of the visual effects of chalking it for competition; because we see it ruptured by the demands of gymnastics; but most of all due to the special relationship between skin, the gymnastic body, and the pleasure (or aesthetics) of its performance. With the benefit of hindsight, this special relationship sat precariously close to the politicisation it found in National Socialism, Fascism and Communism, to be further explored in the next chapter. In this context, it is interesting to note the link between gymnastics, milk propaganda, and the historical and philosophical ties between milk and human skin, drawing upon the work of media and communications scholar Ylva Habel in the Nordic Region (see the advertisement for Gold Top milk,

²¹¹ Siraisi; 'History, Antiquarianism,' p. 234

²¹² Steven Connor; *The Book of Skin*, Reaktion Books: London, 2003, p. 24

²¹³ Painter; *History of White People*, p. 61

featured in the January 1981 issue of *The Gymnast* magazine, Figure 2.18).²¹⁴ The history of this special relationship between milk, skin, gymnastics and whiteness is a history repeating itself in the contemporary context of American and British ‘Got Milk?’ campaigns, featuring Olympic gymnasts such as Shawn Johnson and Elizabeth Tweddle (see Figure 2.19). Cultural historian Steven Connor quotes Jobs 10:10–11, who asks ‘didst thou not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese?’²¹⁵ Connor then suggests that ‘skin and milk exude and renew each other ceaselessly,’²¹⁶ to which I would add to the equation in this context, racial whiteness.

The skin has always been important to the appreciation of sporting display, from the fact that both athletes of the ancient Greek gymnasia and modern bodybuilders ‘share a passion for making their bodies shine through the application of oil and other liquids to their skin,’ in the words of literary theorist Hans Ūlrich Gumbrecht.²¹⁷ On this practice, Connor writes that ‘the shiny skin is skin that is no more than skin, skin thinned to a sheen.’²¹⁸ Figure 2.20 simultaneously dispels and reinforces the ‘thin sheen’ of the gymnastic skin, in the sense that the breaking of the skin on gymnasts hands is frequently seen during competition. For both men and women, calluses and blood blisters are common of bars-based events, even when wearing leather ‘hand guards.’ While the open wound of the blood blister connotes that the gymnastic skin is a thin membrane, the calluses – teamed with the fact that for many decades, Russian and Eastern Bloc nations did not use handguards (due the prohibitive cost of the leather) – disprove the thinness of the gymnasts skin.

²¹⁴ Y. Habel; *Say Milk, say cheese! Inscripting public participation in the photographic archives of the Milk Propaganda*, in: A. Ekström; S. JŪlich; Frans Lundgren; P. Wisselgren (eds.); *History of Participatory Media: Politics and Publics, 1750–2000*, Routledge: London, 2011, p. 98–111

²¹⁵ Connor; *Book of Skin*, p. 12

²¹⁶ Connor; *Book of Skin*, p. 189

²¹⁷ Hans Ūlrich Gumbrecht; *In Praise of Athletic Beauty*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA; London, 2006, p. 156

²¹⁸ Connor; *Book of Skin*, p. 54

The depthlessness of shiny skin, here the artificial casing of the body's inner workings, acts as a throwback to early anatomical understandings of the skin as the last element of the body to develop and as itself disconnected to the inner organs whilst containing them within its limits.²¹⁹ The skin received relatively little attention in early anatomical writings, the main concern of authors being how to cut through and remove the skin as swiftly and efficiently as possible.²²⁰ The skin could simply be lifted, folded back, detached from the body proper (see Figure 2.21). In a contemporary context, an Instagram post from the US Gymnast Steven Legendre three days after extensive shoulder surgery makes a similar visual point, with the deep stitches making the skin appear as a thick, chunky, moist husk enveloping his skeletal and muscular frame. Moreover, in the words of art historian Lynda Nead, such lesions spread 'open to reveal the meaty redness beneath the surface of the skin [and reinforce] the depth and interiority revealed by the terrible cut.'²²¹ However, such images of open wounds are infrequent and relatively new in gymnastics; their presence in all likelihood a direct result of social media (see Figure 2.22). Not until the 1980s when the mounting pressures of increased acrobatics did surgery in gymnastics begin to become commonplace, and any scars remnant of these procedures are covered in competition – for reasons of support and aesthetics – by skin-toned bandages (in the same manner that plasters match white skin tones only). When injuries do occur during international competition and on televised broadcasts, these tend to be injuries such as torn Achilles tendons or dislocated shoulders that do not rupture the surface of the competitor's skin. Whilst we see the injured gymnast grimace in pain, fans of the sport are largely aware that competitors perform through pain as the norm, using painkillers in training and competition to numb the effects.

²¹⁹ Connor; *Book of Skin*, p. 11-12

²²⁰ Connor, *Book of Skin*, p. 13

²²¹ Lynda Nead; The Cutman: Boxing, the Male Body and the Wound, *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2013, p. 368.

Whilst our understanding of the skin has since advanced in multifarious directions, the protruding muscle definition of athletes can give the impression that the taut skin is stretched over their form, as if it is not wholly intertwined with it. It is well-documented in the media that athletes across the spectrum of Olympic disciplines use hair removal treatments, for various practical and aesthetic reasons; the hairless body enhancing –via lack of texture – the thinned sheen.²²² Applying this to the gymnastic body sheds light on the contradictions of its form, particularly in the reading of gender, sexuality and the labour of the white gymnastic body. In 2011, the American Olympic gymnast Alicia Sacramone posed for the annual ESPN 'The Body' issue, as did her male teammate Danell Leyva, when the magazine is taken over by a photospread of elite athletes posing nude in a *mise-en-scène* reminiscent of their sporting discipline (see Figure 2.23).²²³ Save for her tattoo, which would normally be invisible beneath her leotard, the image is the perfect example of the shiny skin. A tattoo is a curious embellishment to have on show in the context of our discussion, since their process requires the intense penetration of the skin by needles by ink. In many ways, the look and fashions of male and female gymnasts are conservative. In contrast to other sports, jewellery (except studs for female competitors) are banned, hair styles tend to go with current trends but forfeit unnatural hair colours, etc. Tattoos are in themselves, not actually banned by the FIG. However, as a case point, a gymnastics commentator notes regarding the tattoo of the German-Vietnamese gymnast Marcel Nguyen (compare Figures 2.24 and 2.25):

initially thought that Nguyen had the work done after the Games, as a sort of celebration of his silver medal. Turns out he had it in London, but brought some heavy duty, sweatproof

²²² See for example: Brett Berk, Olympic Swimmer Ricky Berens on the Way He Got into Swimming, and How His Body Is "Nothing Abnormal," *Vanity Fair*. Accessed 30.06.2014: <http://www.vanityfair.com/online/daily/2012/07/ricky-berens-olympic-swimmer-body> & Victoria Clayton, Is Hairless More?, *Men's Fitness*. Accessed 30.06.2014: <http://www.mensfitness.com/styleandgrooming/grooming/hairless-more>

²²³ I have chosen to focus on the image of Alicia Sacramone, as more of the male body is covered up during and outside of competition. For female gymnasts, the size and cut of the leotard is heavily restricted, and penalty points can be applied to gymnasts whose bra strap is visible or who change immodestly in the public arena.

cover up and applied it before taking the floor. "We decided together that he should cover it up for aesthetic reasons. There are no specific reasons, but marks are scored for aesthetics," German team leader Sven Karg told the press in London.²²⁴

The awareness on the behalf of Nguyen and his team of the significance of having an 'aesthetic of immaculateness,'²²⁵ as Connor puts it, demonstrates in the context of gymnastics the importance of the whiteness, uninterrupted surface of the skin for sporting success.

In many ways, though, the skin of Alicia Sacramone is presented as iron skin, her body a sculpted, armoured shell. The German sociologist, responding to the ideas of philosopher Ernst Jünger, writes that 'the "beauty" of the machine resides in its potential to be used to resolve the problems of [the] body.'²²⁶ Appropriating this into the sports context, the technological machine, such as armour, is not only functional but aesthetically attractive and desirable. Furthermore, connotations of the hardness of the iron skin also insinuate heaviness and weight, yet we constantly see the gymnast defeating gravity (see Figures 2.26 and 2.27). This applies to the male and female gymnast, with Figures 2.28 and 2.29 demonstrating the male equivalent of the feather-like floating female gymnast. The press caption for Figure 2.28 reading 'like a human rocket' draws upon a Western 'romance with flight'²²⁷ that communications scholar Chisholm attributes directly to America but which I think can be extended to the Western world generally. Aerial flight

²²⁴ Blythe Lawrence; *All you need to know about...Marcel Nguyen's new chest tattoo*. Accessed 22.06.2014: <http://www.examiner.com/article/all-you-need-to-know-about-marcel-nguyen-s-chest-tattoo>

²²⁵ Connor; *Book of Skin*, p. 95

²²⁶ Klaus Theweleit; *Male Fantasies – Volume 2: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror*, trans. Erica Carter; Chris Turner; University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1989, p. 197

²²⁷ Ann Chisholm; *Acrobats, Contortionists, and Cute Children: The Promise and Perversity of U.S. Women's Gymnastics*, *Signs*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2002, p. 419

is associated with technological progress, individual courage, freedom and in the context of the Cold War, military prowess. Chisholm goes on to explain that in terms of race, the fantasy of flight has created a:

bourgeois exceptionalism within its narrative of modern progress and transcendence, a narrative that potentially "leaves bodies behind" including bodies evidencing "signs of non-Anglo-Saxon ethnicity."²²⁸

Of course, both of the male gymnasts featured in Figures 2.28 and 2.29 are Japanese, and as such not Anglo-Saxon, but Japan is a nation renowned in recent decades for its technological innovation. Rockets connote metallic surfaces, impenetrable, stiff, phallic forms. Hardness suggests angularity and rigid movements (think of the staccato, stuttered movements of robots in film and television), yet we see abnormal flexibility exhibited by gymnasts as they contort their body in to angular, curving, twisted shapes (see Figure 2.30).²²⁹

When this body is brought into the competition arena, its surface continues to shine but becomes more complex. One factor in this is what Dyer terms 'white light' – the aesthetics of lighting representations of the white body in photography and film so as to be pleasing to the (at least white, Western) eye.

Combining the technicalities of photography and film as 'media of light'²³⁰ and the conventions of lighting in these forms from above as 'virtuously Northern [yet] also [...] celestial,'²³¹ both contribute to the way

²²⁸ Chisholm; 'Acrobats,' p. 419

²²⁹ Despite the difficulty of contorting the body into such curved and arched shapes, it is much more common for commentators and audiences to appreciate a gymnast's "line" – the straight, angular shapes they form. Linearity is strongly linked with whiteness: for example, in architecture the whiteness and masculinity of straight lines within 20th-century modernism.

²³⁰ Dyer; *White*, p. 84

²³¹ Dyer; *White*, p. 118

the white gymnast looks in competition, in public. Dyer continues with a note specifically on the idealised white form as:

[being] bathed in and permeated by light. It streams through them and falls on to them from above. In short, they glow. They glow rather than shine. The light within or from above appears to suffuse [their] body.²³²

As seen in Figure 2.31 (and looking back, Figure 2.13 is also a prime example) the marks of the photo-editor actively remove all but the slightest hint of the lighting source, which as is always the case with sports arenas comes from above. Without the lighting source to explain the origins of the light emitted over the form of the gymnast, it does appear as if this light comes from 'within,' that it is her 'glow' rather than reflected shine.

In terms of the visible spectrum, black absorbs light, whereas white reflects light – the light shines back at the viewer. The unnatural shine of the bodybuilder, to match the unnatural expanse of muscled form, is put on show without any pretence that it is anything but unnatural. Although bodybuilders strike poses on stage, it is unlikely to be enough to warrant the body producing sweat, so the orange-tinged shine must be something else. The gymnastic body is not natural either, but attempts to obscure this fact. As Dyer notes, 'shine connotes sweat... an instance of the body's dirt,'²³³ considered a normal outcome of physical activity, yet in stark contrast to one of the long-standing purposes of gymnastics, when organised as

²³² Dyer, *White*, p. 122

²³³ Dyer, *White*, p. 78

physical education; that is, cleanliness and hygiene, as evidenced by the manual in Figure 2.32. I have never seen a gymnast sweat in competition (compare Figures 2.33, 2.34 and 2.35, all occurring after or during competition). The image of the gymnast disseminated by those in control of its image is chronically dry, cool, matte. This lack of sweat has practical explanations – the placing of the competition indoors, the behind-the-scenes training gyms, and the short breaks between apparatus – and aesthetic reasons: gymnastics is about giving an effortless performance, and sweat is one factor with the power to spoil the illusion.

However it is the use of chalk onto the skin to absorb perspiration and provide additional grip on apparatus – giving off a white light that seems to hover between shine and flatness – that is most perplexing. It could almost be argued that the use of chalk to enhance performance and competitor's abilities renders the gymnastic body as cyborg,²³⁴ in the sense that a cyborg is defined as a hybrid of organic and biomechanic parts that increase or enhance normal capabilities.²³⁵ The chemical composition of the chalk used by gymnasts is magnesium carbonate ($MgCO_3$), and their application of this compound to a substantial proportion of their body – hands, feet, upper arms and legs – effectually 'metallizes or mineralizes the body in such a way as to display it wholly as an object,' as Connor suggests.²³⁶ As will be discussed further in chapter four, the leotard builds upon this, as both a second skin and steeled shield (see Figure 2.36 and 2.37). Leotards began to incorporate lycra, foil, sequinned and metallic fabrics in the 1980s (see Figure 2.38), the current fashion for Swarovski crystals extending beyond this, literally encrusting as lamina across the arms and torso of the female gymnasts. Glitter make-up and hairspray elaborate upon

²³⁴ As with Olympic athletes across the board, gymnasts are, internally and invisibly, cyborgs. For example, the Italian gymnast has five screws in her hand following surgery, and the American gymnast Paul Hamm has a titanium plate and nine screws in his hand to rectify an injury, both of which meet the definition outlined above of biomechanic parts that enhance normal capabilities.

²³⁵ Chris Hables Gray; *Cyborg Citizen: Politics in the Posthuman Age*, Routledge: New York and London, 2002, p. 1-2, 11-12

²³⁶ Connor; *Book of Skin*, p. 53

this effect, a smooth and superficial surface, deflecting light from the gymnast (see Figures 2.39 and 2.40). Conversely, sheer panels are often incorporated into these: at once showing hardness and vulnerability.

v) 'Little Girls Dancing' – The Artistry Debate

Frankly speaking, I feel uneasy when gymnasts with an athletic, not gymnastic body, become world champions. Their performances lack elegance, finesse.....The judges like polite, smiling gymnasts.²³⁷

Now I want you to notice that this girl here is going through a lot of exercises that are standard practice technique for ballet dancers. There's a good deal in gymnastics that is exactly the same as the training for the ballet. That is, you need rhythm, balance, control and confidence in your act.²³⁸

The first quote – from the Soviet Olympic gymnast Nellie Kim, now the President of the Women's Artistic Gymnastics Technical Committee – suggests that the gymnastic body is different from its athletic counterpart. Commentators and fans regularly describe gymnasts as being of the 'classical mould'²³⁹ or as having 'beautiful long 'lines,' and concurrent with this, award them with titles such as 'diva,' 'first lady' and 'queen' – for example, Shannon Miller was nicknamed the 'Porcelain Princess' and Svetlana Boginskaya as both the 'goddess of gymnastics' and the 'Belarusian Swan.' The second quote above suggests what the

²³⁷ Rewriting Russian Gymnastics, Translation of Interview with Nellie Kim: *Russian Gymnastics Has Closed In On Itself*, 2013. Accessed 22.04.2014: <http://rewritingrussiangumnastics.blogspot.co.uk/2013/10/nelli-kim-russian-gymnastics-has-closed.html>

²³⁸ Quotation from John Kieran's narrator's commentary, in the documentary film 'Human Grace.' End Credits read 'A Schnee-Moss Production, Distributed by Alamanac Films Inc, Copyright 1952,' appears to have been part of a wider series on the subject of 'grace.' Accessed 22.04.2014: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGPpDXpfX6o

²³⁹ Rewriting Russian Gymnastics, David Belyavski - 'Cat-like flexibility in the style of Kohei Uchimura,' 2013. Accessed 22.04.2014: <http://rewritingrussiangumnastics.blogspot.co.uk/2013/04/david-belyavski-cat-like-flexibility-in.html>

difference between the gymnastic and athletic body may be; that the gymnastic body is a kind of hybrid between an athletic and balletic body (see Figure 2.41). There is an element of this that is true at face value: female gymnasts perform balletic elements such as tour jeté, and any elite training facility will contain a ballet barre and mirrored wall for training purposes.

While I referred to the lamented loss of the sports' artistry from individuals within the sport and fans worldwide in the first chapter, the use of this term is only sporadic in the Code of Points until the mid-80's when its use became more synonymous with the sport. To make matters more complicated, the terms of the Federation have been confusingly contorted over time, more in response to actual changes in the sport rather than directing change themselves. An array of other terms are used instead, all of which have the same degree of ambiguity that the use of artistry raises today. The Federation's vocabulary consists of phrases such as 'harmony' and 'virtuosity,' which were initially appropriated into the Women's Code from the Men's; a situation which now happens in reverse. Whilst defining terms, it is clear that the competitors' ability to meet them and the judges scoring of performances was, and still is, a matter of taste. For example, virtuosity was defined in 1968 as:

Virtuosity applies to the area of execution. There are virtuosos in all areas of art, in music, in rhetoric, in dancing, in gymnastics, etc. The virtuoso exhibits an unusual talent for artistic execution. A musician becomes a virtuoso when his brilliance rises above the level of technical accomplishment and so deeply impresses us that our very souls are moved. To do this, he must put his own soul into his work. A dancer shows his virtuosity when he, in his presentation, is able to express his virtuosity with lightness and superiority in movement so that, although driven to maximum exertion, the impression exists that he has yet to fully extend himself. It is similar in

the case of gymnastics... He is able to capture the souls of the spectators and to fill their hearts with joy.²⁴⁰

Moreover, implied within an early Code of Points from 1968 is the suggestion of a specific body type as suitable for gymnastics, and therefore by default, the exclusion of other bodies

The sequences must be varied, original and make the grace, suppleness, and dynamism of the gymnast stand out [...] the sequences are to be performed in accordance with] i) the level of difficulty throughout the exercise; ii) the morphology of the gymnast; 3) the temperament of the gymnast.²⁴¹

The same Code emphasised rhythm – which was to ‘appeal to the feeling of the gymnast’ – and in terms of technique, judges were looking for criteria including lightness; suppleness and relaxation.

Taking such criteria in combination – body shape, slowness and flexibility – denotes that the Federation had a specific, slender physique in mind as the gymnastic body. This is perhaps only one residual example of prevailing (Western) cultural ideas and norms concerning weight: the thesaurus cites as antonyms of heavy, ‘grace,’ ‘joyful,’ ‘moving,’ ‘smooth’ – all in all suggesting that it impossible to be both heavy and exude the FIG’s ‘feminine-grace.’ Temperament, on the other hand, reads like a throw-back to Nazi ideas of willpower, resolve and Aryan characteristics, to be discussed further in the next chapter.

²⁴⁰ Uncle Tim Talks Men's Gym Blog, *The Evolution of Artistry in Men's Gymnastics: 1985-1988*, 2014. Accessed 28.05.2014: <http://uncletimtalksmensgym.blogspot.co.uk/2014/01/the-evolution-of-artistry-in-mens.html#more>

²⁴¹ Uncle Tim Talks Men's Gym Blog, *The Evolution of Artistry in Women's Gymnastics: 1969-1972*, 2013. See http://uncletimtalksmensgym.blogspot.co.uk/2013_10_01_archive.html (Accessed 28 May 2014).

FIT Media Channel is a YouTube channel devoted to bodybuilding. In a still from video titled, 'Can a Bodybuilder be a Gymnast' and follows UK Muscle Mania 2012 Champion TY O-G attempt to learn basic gymnastic skills, his lack of flexibility and weight making progress difficult (see Figure 2.42). By pitting a white gymnastic body and a black bodybuilder against one another – bodies that at least gymnastic insiders consider to be at opposite ends of the spectrum – the video highlights the attitudes lurking behind the surface of gymnastics. In the words of gymnastics blogger Dvora Meyers:

'Artistic' or 'artistry' is coded language for body type. Lithe and flexible gymnasts are routinely called 'artistic' regardless of how well they dance or engage with the music or audience.²⁴²

Referencing the aforementioned racist remarks made by Italian gymnast Carlotta Ferlito regarding current World Champion, Simone Biles, Meyers goes on to say:

This is the first time I've seen "artistry" brought up in the context of race [...] pitting the "European" (read: white) body types on the "artistic" side against "powerful" and black.²⁴³

The exclusivity of the white gymnastic body to fit the artistic mould is further cemented by gymnastic commentators informing us of their genetic pedigree. Following the performance of the Russian Olympic

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ D. Meyers, *Simone Biles Vs. The Racists: Are Black Gymnasts The New Black QBs?* Available at <http://deadspin.com/simone-biles-vs-the-racists-are-black-gymnasts-the-ne-1443998882> (Accessed 28 May 2014).

gymnast Viktoria Komova on Floor Exercise at the 2011 World Championships, BBC commentator Christine Still informs us that:

Her mother was part of the Soviet team that won the gold World medal in 1985. She's been destined to be a gymnast all the way through.²⁴⁴

A wedding photograph of USSR gymnasts Valentin Mogilny and Olga Bicherova from 1988 commemorates the practice of athletes marrying other athletes known to be encouraged in the Soviet Union and German Democratic Republic (see Figure 2.43). Such images and statements of gymnastic parentage draw an exclusive line around those who have the ability to reach the upper limits of gymnastic achievement.

vi) Reproductive Capabilities and Slender Silhouettes

Visual images and footage of gymnastics can often be misleading in terms of the female gymnasts' body stature. Close-up shots, photographic angles, commentator descriptions of a gymnast as 'tall' without relativising this judgement (Figures 2.44 and 2.45), and that gymnasts' individual bodies are seen in groups in relation to one another often betray their petite frame. Svetlana Khorkina was renowned for her distinctive height in Olympic gymnastics, and stories of the manner in which her personal coach had to reinvent techniques and the moves constituting her routine to adjust to the 'obstacle' of her height are abundant. However, Khorkina's height measured in at 1.65 metres. In comparison to the average adult height in Europe – 1.60 m in France and Italy, 1.62 m in the UK and Germany, 1.64 in Sweden, and 1.65

²⁴⁴ British Broadcasting Corporation footage of Russian gymnast Viktoria Komova at the 2011 Tokyo World Artistic Gymnastic Championships All-Around Competition on Floor Exercise. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsQ7HQR_IJ8#t=136 (Accessed 28 May 2014).

in the Netherlands – Khorkina no longer appears to be the giant of gymnastics, but in fact of a more or less average female adult height.

Within the sport, height is seen as an obstacle and a problem for a variety of reasons. With the majority of training, progression and competition taking place during childhood and puberty, height often means growth spurts and growing pains, both of which disrupt training schedules and the ability to compete. In terms of biomechanics it is simply easier to perform intricate moves if your body is smaller in every direction. Certain apparatuses are also constricted in length, the Floor Exercise and the Balance Beam are examples. When doing a backflip, the span taken to perform this will be relative to the gymnast's height. While a taller gymnast may only be able to fit three backflips along a beam, a shorter gymnast could perform four, thus having the potential to earn a higher score than her taller counterpart. Outwith the sport, growth retardation in gymnasts is often viewed with suspicion, seen as the end result of selection procedures, disproportionate muscle growth during formative years, and consuming too-few calories for those expended.

The diminutive frame of these bodies and the young age of competitors does not make them exempt from the glare and intrusions of those involved professionally in Artistic Gymnastics, the fan base and the media. It is in some cases almost forensic: accusations of underage gymnasts competing for the Chinese team under false passports saw American NBC commentators and news article focus on the apparent baby and missing teeth as evidence of their girlhood. Likewise, gymnasts have spoken of their struggles post-retirement or during injury breaks with weight gain and the negative responses they received in the public domain in light of this. It is instructive that given the contained frame of gymnasts' bodies that commentators, judges and coaches often speak of a gymnast's 'clean lines', and not curves; limbs on

androgynous angular bodies are used to make linear shapes. This vocabulary is shared with fashion, whether this be created by the clothes themselves or the body punctuating the fabric. This body shape, or frame, is significant; as clothing is often presented as hanging from the body frame, like it would from a mannequin or clothes' hanger. The illustration in Figure 2.46, dating from the 1910s, this preoccupation with the body creating straight lines has a lengthy historical precedence. The drawings stylise arms and legs as unachievably straight, a positive re-imagining of how beautiful the body could look without the bumps of knees, elbows and ankles.

In a similar manner, excess body weight is also thought to be something that hangs from the frame of the body, an additional burden that the body carries. As the art historian Nina Sobol Levent describes with reference to the female body and psychoanalytic thought, 'body weight can be understood as something additional to the "true frame of the body" [and that] through starvation or sickness, the female body gets rid of this surplus matter to "reveal the essential, core self".'²⁴⁵ Such a sentiment is most frequently brought to our attention when people on diets or deemed overweight say, often jokingly, that 'there's a skinny person inside of me trying to get out.' Gymnastics as a sport has long been associated with eating disorders, which can be an attempt to exercise control over one's body. Dressed as attempts to promote healthy eating, USA Gymnastics in 1995 released *The Athlete's Cookbook* (see Figure 2.47). Of course, many gymnasts are teenagers and unlikely to be cooking their meals themselves, so many of the recipes enclosed were from the mothers of gymnasts. Overall, the production of the cookbook reads more as a sanctioned confirmation that gymnasts need to consume a low-calories, low-fat diet in order to achieve success. Tellingly, the book is catalogued for sale under 'Diets & Weight-Loss' at on Amazon.com the time of writing. Such endorsements, between gymnastics and the slim body go back at least to the 1960s, when

²⁴⁵ N. S. Levent, *Healthy Spirit in a Healthy Body*, New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing USA, 2004.

American gymnast Cathy Rigby – see Figures 2.48 and 2.49 – was featured in articles on keeping in shape and even created her own exercise programme on vinyl record, titled *Stay Slim*. She had since become a public speaker on eating disorders, which she was battling during and after her gymnastics career.

While I have gathered a strong sense of what the ideal or average gymnast's body type is in the course of this research, I began to look at images, photographs and footage of silhouettes of gymnasts in order to understand what this particular body shape is and how it is presented. Silhouettes of the gymnastic body in Anglophone gymnastics visual culture are not frequent. Figure 2.50, which alludes to the silhouette while simultaneously filling in the details the Coca Cola lines envelope, suggests to me that the details are perhaps too attractive to withhold; that what attracts us to the gymnastics body is in the detail. It is also likely that any silhouette of the gymnastics body might not be immediately read by a general audience, because of the unusual positions or poses into which it contorts itself. As Figures 2.51 and 2.52 demonstrate, the use of gymnastics uniform, hairstyles and equipment have to be added to the bodily silhouette as visual clues for the viewer to be able to read and identify the gymnastic body in situ and in motion. Figure 2.53 takes a different path, showing the silhouette in relation to another larger, adult, male body.

Silhouettes are most commonly found in items from gymnastics' internal visual culture, such as gymnastics manuals, teaching aids (see again Figure 2.52) and magazines, rather than the public sphere. A rare example of a gymnastic silhouette in the public domain comes from a fluff made for the men's All-Around competition coverage at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games (see Figure 2.54) by the National Broadcasting Corporation of America, where – in direct contrast to the silhouettes of female gymnasts shown in Figures 2.51 and 2.53 – his frame looks strong, powerful, dynamic and perhaps even 'sexy'. Nevertheless, both silhouettes point to a body frame that can be described as a 'prototype of the Euro-

American body' to borrow sociologist Ruth Holliday's phrasing. The connotations of this particular white, Western body frame is significant in acting as both the default and preferred physique within Artistic Gymnastics. I do not wish to suggest that the slender, Euro-American physique is only obtainable to certain races or classes of people, but rather that this body has been privileged within Euro-American ideas, attitudes and representations towards the body, which is then exacerbated within gymnastics as it is practised. Furthermore, this body is often the result of investment of many kinds: financial, nutrition, leisure time, and beauty treatments.

I labour on this point in an attempt to triangulate between the idea of body shape and weight, diet, Western ideals of bodily control and the kind of clothing designed for this specific body to wear – garments that accentuate its special, privileged nature. The distribution and ease of accessibility of elite gymnasts' body statistics in competition coverage, and both print and online media, as seen in Figures 2.55 and 2.56 makes clear that there is an interest and fascination in these small-yet-spectacular bodies. The changes documented in the first and second chapters from the womanly, curvaceous gymnastic body to teenage, elfin, pre-pubescent athletes reflected wider body ideals for woman in the West from the 1970s onwards, its scope and impact aggrandised by the intense competition in the sport at the time in the shadow of Cold War tensions.

At a tangent to this, there is something exceptional about the manner in which we perceive the relationship between the body and epidermis of the gymnastic body – as began to be discussed in the previous chapter – that seems to be accentuated by the extreme flexibility and leanness of the gymnast. For example, Figure 2.57 shows Olga Korbut performing a balance on the beam, her chin resting on the beam while her legs and feet reach in front of her to also touch the beam. The reaction of many spectators to

such a move would be that it should not be possible to perform, that the spine cannot contort into such an extreme bend. Thus, while viewing the gymnastics body – and perhaps many more athletic bodies that perform largely unclothed – I have a sense that viewers look past the skin as if an X-ray, looking for the skeleton, bones and muscles. Figure 2.58, showing the winners of ‘Miss Perfect Posture 1956’ demonstrates the kind of X-ray vision that can be applied to our gaze on the body.

American gymnast Cathy Rigby’s Olympic outings spanned the 1968 and 1972 Summer Olympic Games in Mexico and Munich. At the time the best performances ever by a female American gymnast, Rigby came 16th place overall in 1968 and 10th at the 1972 Summer Olympic Games, with another first being her silver medal on the balance beam at the 1970 World Championships. These successes spurred an interest in Artistic Gymnastics in America, and upon her retirement following the 1972 Games Rigby embarked on an acting, modelling and advertising career, famously appearing nude at the age of nineteen in a 1972 *American Sports Illustrated* magazine, perhaps the only athlete ever to do so. The second taboo she was to break was as the first celebrity to endorse sanitary products in print and television commercials, advertising for the Johnson & Johnson brand Stayfree. While she is often cited as beginning this contractual appearance in the mid-1970s, it is difficult to pin-point the exact date for print media. In terms of video infomercials, the earliest available video dates from 1980, and is likely to be the first instance of her endorsement, denoted by her opening address to the viewer: ‘You know, you’ve never heard a celebrity talk about feminine protection on tv before. Well I wanted to be the first because I think it’s perfectly natural.’ From the examples remaining in the public realm, her endorsement appears to have run until 1982, six years before she was to publicly admit her long-term battle with anorexia and bulimia.

Her endorsement simultaneously broke with established norms and continued with emerging trends in the advertisement of sanitary products. References to sport – and by association health, fitness and exercise – and deferring to the significance of the idea of discreteness as Gabrielle Moss notes, were existing tropes in sanitary product advertising. While there are some examples between the 1940s and 1960s of sports such as figure-skating and cycling used within advertisements, in the 1970s the appearance of sports – varying from tennis, horse-riding, and swimming to skiing, diving and hiking – becomes almost omnipresent. Although there is as yet very little literature exploring the interrelationship between these two occurrences, it is worthwhile noting that this use of sporting imagery was taking place against a backdrop of an increasing emphasis on physical fitness as a patriotic duty that was of particular resonance to Cold-War rivals America and the USSR. This happened alongside the increased reach of the Olympic Games and their televised broadcast post-1968, as well as of famously gendered sporting contests, including the 1973 Battle of the Sexes II in which female player Billie Jean King beat her male rival Bobby Riggs in straight sets.

Until 1972, television commercials for menstrual products were banned in America. Print adverts for sanitary products in the 1960s often featured substantial sections of text – offering women information frequently disguised in tones of friendly advice. These were accompanied by illustrations and photographs of women, who were predominantly white and uniformly young, youthful, healthy, carefree, fashionable and seemingly able to enjoy partaking in their sporting activity with ease while menstruating. Such a message responded to a historical trajectory of anxiety at the intersection between the use of sanitary products versus hygiene, virginity, disposal, leakages and propriety. Tampon adverts up until the 1990s continued to respond to fears that their use would break the hymen, with more covert references to concerns that inserting tampons would require touching genitalia and the risk of sexual stimulation. At a

moment in which the desirable female body silhouette in the West was making radical shifts towards a slimmer frame, the sporting female body offered the perfect model to champion the hygienic uptake of new, innovative sanitary products.

In the 1960s and 1970s, menstrual products quickly evolved away from the sanitary belts or girdles that had been available in decades prior, which were known for slipping out of place and creating a visible line through clothing. The new products did away with the need for the belt through the addition of adhesive strips on the bottom of the pads, allowing for it to be temporarily attached to the inside of women's underwear. Sportswear, as will be explored more fully in the following chapter, was being mass-produced in innovative new fabrics, and in new cuts, revealing more of the body's silhouette and flesh. Exactly because of this, activities such as gymnastics and swimming provided the ultimate challenge for new sanitary products, and within a marketing campaign provided effective, gravity-defying case studies. Dating from the early 1970s, Figures 2.59 and 2.60 are examples of anonymous female models or silhouettes staged as gymnasts pre-Rigby's endorsement, for these reasons.

There was another link between gymnastics and the more widespread motifs commonplace with advertising for sanitary products – the colour white, long associated with purity and virginity as noted earlier in this chapter. As will be further explored in the following chapter, white as the primary colour for leotard designs were commonplace at that time, which facilitated multiple messages to be communicated to viewers. As colour printing became more common in newspapers, magazines and advertisements, women within sanitary products advertisements were often pictured in white clothing and accessories, which Ryus has noted, the deployment of white garments was 'furtively trying to alert the reader to the

efficacy of sanitary care products. White is the ultimate torture test because it is so easily stained; the stains are easily seen and hard to remove.'

In 1979, a year before commencing her Stayfree endorsement, Rigby had advertised for a different product – Beautyrest mattresses – which are noted within the advert as suppliers to the Olympic team. Rigby is pictured doing a range of movements – some gymnastic in nature, others making use of her flexibility – to demonstrate its design, comfort and ability to provide the best night's sleep, especially – it is inferred – for those who really need it during important career competitions.

vii) Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter – having defined the concepts of representation and the history of the white race – has shown the enduring ties between Ancient Greek sculpture, the gymnastics body, gymnastic movement, whiteness, ideals of beauty, and characteristics and attributes associated with whiteness. In particular, my examination of the white skin of the gymnast through its physical surface, shine, sweat, reflection of light and the practice of chalking, has been made specifically to demonstrate that even in the contemporary context, parallels between gymnastics, whiteness and the ideals of the Ancient Greeks remain prominent, and influence and inform our reading of the statuesque in gymnastic performance. This constellation has been specially drawn and investigated here to highlight the privileging of the white gymnast on an individual basis in the sport, its exclusivity, and Eurocentricity, by drawing upon examples from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the present. This will be built upon in the following chapter, in which a discussion of the clothing worn and not worn for practicing gymnastics, and the various ways this has discussed political affiliations and expressed the containment of the body.

Chapter Three:

Dressing the Gymnastic Body

i) Introduction

Writing in 2001, the dress historians and sociologists Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson noted that the 'conventions in the dress of, for example, professional figure skating and ballroom dancing [are] subcultures whose fashions have been little studied if at all,'²⁴⁶ and that these conventions 'have shifted so that more and more of the body, particularly the bodies of women participants, have been revealed.'²⁴⁷ To the 'subcultures' of figure skating and ballroom dancing I would add the leotard and gymnastic clothing, which over a decade since Entwistle and Wilson's note, remains a subject unstudied within the disciplines of fashion, dress and costume.

This neglect is equalled by the many disciplines associated with sport, such as the history of sport, sport sociology and the philosophy of sport. In reading academic texts on gymnastics, it often appears that what the gymnast is wearing, and what gymnasts have worn historically, is an assumed fact or unworthy of attention. Fashion scholar Jennifer Craik expands on this to include sports clothing in general, suggesting that the fact it 'is so common has made it unremarkable – something so pervasive and taken-for-granted that analysts have not found a need to comment on it.'²⁴⁸ In fact, what has been worn and not worn has fluctuated as often as ideas about physical exercise, the body and the creation of 'new systems' have changed: numerous times and substantially so. I have not found any evidence that the clothing for male and female gymnasts has ever in its history been identical, instead that separate garments have always been thought necessary. As Figure 2.21 from the year 2000 demonstrates, even today there are vast

²⁴⁶ J. Entwistle and E.B. Wilson (eds); *Body Dressing*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2001), p. 3.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ J. Craik, *Uniforms Exposed: From Conformity to Transgression*, (London: Berg Publishers, 2005), p. 140.

differences in what is worn and how much flesh this puts on show. Secondly, there have been more severe alterations to the clothing of female gymnasts than their male counterparts, sometimes occurring rapidly with vast changes taking place over a decade. With women's participation in the Olympics taking the form of display until the 1950s, there is a general gap in information on what they were wearing, who was deciding what was worn, and reactions to their garments.

Concurrent to the writing of this chapter has been extensive research into archives across Scotland, into both documentation and objects of gymnastics activity, in an endeavour to substantiate some of my thoughts on the development of gymnastics clothing. Where clothing items exist in the archive, it has been of interest for me to consider the fabrics used, whether these were homemade items, and to ask how it would have felt to have undertaken gymnastics exercises in those items of attire. These archives have included that of Scottish Gymnastics, the sport's governing body, as well as the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, the National Museum of Scotland, the Moving Image Archive at the National Library of Scotland, the Centre for Research Collections at the University of Edinburgh, Dumfries & Galloway Local Studies Centre, the University of Dundee Archive Services, St. Leonards School, and personal collections. The influence of this archive research, supported via a Janet Arnold Award for the study of Western Dress, in terms of my practice will be discussed in further detail in the fifth chapter.

There are not a vast number of gymnastics clothing items in existence in the collections and archives I have consulted, especially if considered relative to football jerseys, bathing suits, hunting jackets and cricket whites. A disproportionate amount of what I have found in terms of historic clothing has been related to fee-paying schools such as St. Leonards School in St. Andrews, Scotland, or special institutes such as the former Dunfermline Women's College for Physical Education, in Fife, Scotland. While other

factors such as popularity and class as partially responsible, I believe that this can be largely attributed to the 'everyday' nature of the clothing worn for gymnastics, and the inexpensive, regular materials used to fabricate them from. If men were wearing a simple vest and trousers for gymnastics in the early 1900s, it is likely these wore out quickly, were mended frequently, or were passed on to relatives and friends, and thus neither deemed special enough nor in a good enough condition to ever enter into archives or collections.

Such findings therefore raise questions about what is deemed collectible or archivable, what survives to the present, and conversely, what does not. This is further augmented when we consider that many gymnastics groups and systems maintained outfits for parade or special occasions, which have often received more attention than those that they actually wore to practice gymnastics. The Czech *Sokol* are a case in point here, and their uniform will be discussed at length within this chapter. The example of the *Sokol* has also demonstrated that historical documentation of what governing bodies, or the leaders of clubs, teams, groups and systems accumulate, does not necessarily correspond with what participants actually wore. It is clear that participants did not always conform in terms of clothing and uniform, as is touched upon later in this chapter. With all of this in mind, I write this chapter questioning how to work from imbalanced remnants to build up a picture of clothing for gymnastics that is both as accurate and as representative as possible. To do so, the writing that follows has been informed by academic literature, archival research, gleaning information from photographs and illustrations, as well as my own memories of wearing the leotard and club uniform.

As with the previous chapter, the focus on the early history of gymnastics clothing will focus on the male gymnast, whereas more recent histories will centre on the female gymnastics attire. The main body of this chapter begins with a continued exploration of the gymnastic body from the previous chapter, focusing on

the silhouette, stature, and body ideals that gymnastic clothing encases, and the relationship between this clothing and the body. The ideas around the body and clothing which constitute the fabric of this chapter are based upon Western history, ideas and ideals. This first section will also lay out in detail the current regulations on official uniform for elite competition, as context for subsequent discussions. The second focus within this chapter selects specific moments from the chronology of gymnastics clothing, including the invention of the leotard, the nude gymnastics of Adolf Koch and Hans Surén, the loose clothing of the nationalistic, radical German *Turner* gymnastics vis-à-vis the nationalistic regimented uniform of the Czech *Sokol*. This second section ends by looking at the relationship between the corset, sports clothing and the contemporary leotard. Closing this chapter are some notes on the fabrics, pattern, badges and decoration of the leotard, spanning examples from the 1960s to the present.

ii) On Body Stature

Visual images and footage of gymnastics can often be misleading in terms of the female gymnasts' body stature. Close-up shots, photographic angles, commentators' descriptions of a gymnast as 'tall' without relativising this judgement, and that gymnasts' individual bodies are seen in groups in relation to one another often betray their petite frame. As previously referred to, within the sport, both height and weight are viewed as obstacles for a complex web of reasons, and that the transgression of these – with the given example of the Chinese women's team at the 2008 Olympic Games – is met with almost forensic interrogation.

It is therefore warranted to say that the gymnastics body and how it looks is heavily policed. Strict instructions on what must be worn and how it should be worn, are matched by deductions for violating this uniform code, which are particularly pertinent to the female gymnast. Male gymnasts are often seen in media coverage bare-chested and are likely to train bare-chested, as can be seen in Figure 3.1. I was often warned during my childhood experience of competitions against revealing bra straps or underwear, or from changing in the arena. These deductions come under the category of ‘distractions’, presumably for the judging panel, and to the aesthetics and values that sport esteems to uphold. As can be seen in Figure 3.2, in the 2006 Touchstone Pictures movie *Stick It!* one of the ways in which the gymnasts ‘rebel’ against the judging panel is by putting their bra straps on public view. This control over the gymnast’s body – male and female – extends to the shape and size of the body that participates and is dressed in gymnastics attire.

To re-iterate points made within chapter two, it is instructive that given the contained frame of gymnasts’ bodies that commentators, judges and coaches often speak of a gymnast’s ‘clean lines’, and not curves; limbs on androgynous angular bodies are used to make linear shapes. This vocabulary is shared with fashion, whether this be created by the clothes themselves or the body punctuating through the fabric.²⁴⁹ This body shape, or frame, is significant; as clothing is often presented as hanging from the body frame, as it would from a mannequin or clothes hanger.

249 For example, an article in *the Independent* newspaper on the 2010 Milan Fashion Week describes the collection of Italian designer Armani as including ‘vivid shots of colour that didn’t detract from the classically clean lines favoured by the label.’ C. Long, ‘Fashion Week: A La Mode in Milan’, *the Independent*, 28 February 2010. Available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/news/fashion-week-a-la-mode-in-milan-1913219.html?action=gallery> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

It is difficult to decipher who holds the greater power in the bilateral relationship between the gymnastics body and leotard manufacturers: that is, whether the leotards are made to fit gymnasts' bodies, or whether gymnasts make themselves fit into the leotards that are produced. To compare leotard sizes with the average body measurements in the UK, the largest size female leotard produced by leading manufacturers such as Milano Pro Sport is a size 38 – intended to fit a size 35 to 38 inch chest – with Milano's 34, 36 and 38-inch-sized items being classed as an adult items. Leotard manufacturer GK Elite refer to their largest size, also a 38-inch chest, as 'AXL' – Adult Extra Large. This is in contrast to the average chest dimensions of an adult woman in the UK, measuring 38.5 inches, meaning that the average British adult woman would struggle to fit into the largest size of leotard made available.²⁵⁰ It is a similar situation in terms of the male uniform, with the Milano Pro Sport large size measuring in at 38 inches (the same chest size as the average adult female), and the largest XXXL sized items intended to fit a 42 to 44 inch chest, in comparison to the average chest measurements of a British adult male being 42 inches.²⁵¹ All in all, if an average-sized British woman would struggle to fit into the largest size leotard available and if an average-sized British male is classed as 'XXXL', it becomes clear that the contemporary gymnastics body takes a very particular, contained form. Its privileging of an exclusive body which is so normalised becomes apparent when looking at the British television presenter James Corden, shown in Figure 3.3 wearing a leotard with the ribbon apparatus from Rhythmic Gymnastics, as part of a 2011 promotion for the British Broadcasting Corporation's comedy-sports panel show *A League of Their Own*.²⁵² Recognising the difference between this image and that of competitive gymnasts corroborates the strict parameters within which the gymnastics body must fall.

²⁵⁰ SizeUK, *Average Measurements for Men & Women*. See <http://www.arts.ac.uk/media/arts/research/documents/SizeUK-Results-Full.pdf> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² K. McCormack, 'That's gotta hurt! James Corden wears tight-fitting leotard as he visit gymnasts for third series of A League Of Their Own', *Daily Mail*, 2 November 2011. Available at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2056583/James-Corden-wears-tight-fitting-leotard-series-A-League-Of-Their-Own.html> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

In the Women's Artistic Gymnastics Code of Points 2013-2016, the section on 'Competition Attire' features eleven points, which cover the necessity of wearing national emblems and bibs, gymnasts wearing matching leotards in the team and qualification rounds, the option of wearing gymnastics slippers or socks, corporate logos, and restrictions on jewellery. The core of the criteria however covers the leotard itself, which should be:

a correct sportive non transparent leotard or unitard [...] which must be of *elegant* design. She may wear complete leg coverings of the same color as that of the leotard; under or on top of the leotard [...] The neckline of the front and back of the leotard/unitard must be *proper*, that is no further than half of the sternum and no further than the lower line of the shoulder blades. Leotards/unitards may be with or without sleeves; shoulder strap width must be minimum 2 cm. [...] The leg cut of the leotard may not extend beyond the hip bone (maximum). The leotard leg length cannot exceed the horizontal line around the leg, delineated by no more than 2 cm below the base of the buttocks...²⁵³

There are nine points covered in the same section of the men's Artistic Gymnastics Code of Points (the point covering jewellery is one of the points omitted for the men's code), which states that:

They must wear long gymnastics pants and socks on Pommel Horse, Rings, Parallel Bars, and Horizontal Bar. Long gymnastics pants, socks and/or slippers that are black or the darker shades

²⁵³ See [http://www.fig-gymnastics.com/publicdir/rules/files/wag/WAG%20CoP%202013-2016%20\(English\)%20Aug%202013.pdf](http://www.fig-gymnastics.com/publicdir/rules/files/wag/WAG%20CoP%202013-2016%20(English)%20Aug%202013.pdf), p. 10, section 2, p. 2.

of blue, brown or green are not permitted. [...] They have the option of wearing short pants with or without socks or long gymnastics pants with socks on Floor Exercise and Vault. [...] The wearing of a gymnastics singlet on all apparatus is compulsory.²⁵⁴

iii) Inventing the Leotard

Jules Léotard was a circus performer born in Toulouse in 1842, who was originally trained by his father, who managed a local swimming pool. Léotard invented the flying trapeze act – which he had initially practised over the water of his father's pool²⁵⁵ – but a second invention was to have a much more substantial legacy: the skin-tight costume which bears his name, the leotard. There are discrepancies in writings around his creation, as to whether this item covered the legs or not, which is interesting to explore briefly within the context of the primary difference in contemporary gymnastics uniform between genders: the exposure of the legs. While his leotard has been described as a 'tight-fitting gymnastic garment without legs but with wrist length sleeves',²⁵⁶ it has elsewhere been outlined as a 'close-fitting suit of knitted jersey, which reached to the wrists and ankles'.²⁵⁷ Looking closely at photographs of Léotard in variations on his maillot (see Figures 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7), it is my conclusion that the maillot did not cover his legs, but that he did wear tights, giving a visual continuity to his outfit. There is a tension inherent in Figure 3.4 – the maillot in which Léotard is most frequently portrayed – between the barely there, nude tone of his suit, and the patterned cuffs at the wrist and the neck. These ensured that the audience would understand that he was not performing topless, but in terms of design, their presence is usually neglected.

²⁵⁴ Available at [http://www.fig-gymnastics.com/publicdir/rules/files/mag/MAG%20CoP%202013-2016%20\(FRA%20ENG%20ESP\)%20Feb%202013.pdf](http://www.fig-gymnastics.com/publicdir/rules/files/mag/MAG%20CoP%202013-2016%20(FRA%20ENG%20ESP)%20Feb%202013.pdf), p. 10.

²⁵⁵ A. Lynch and M.D. Strauss, *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopaedia*, (City: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), p. 186.

²⁵⁶ K.B. Harder, *American Speech*, Vol. 35, No. 2, May 1960, p. 101.

²⁵⁷ C. Wagner and L. Harmon (eds.), 'More Costume History', *Tutue Étoile*, n.d. available at <http://www.tutuetoile.com/more-costume-history/> (Accessed 7 November 2019).

During his lifetime, he referred to this item as a 'maillot': a term which would now be understood more as a close fitting-swimsuit but more generally at the time meant close-fitted clothing.²⁵⁸ The first recorded use of this garment being referred to as a leotard in English was in 1886, sixteen years after Léotard's premature death in 1870, of either smallpox or cholera. His garment was in its early period mostly associated with male attire, but was soon adopted by other circus acts including female performers. Figure 3.8 is a photograph of Dolly Adams 'The Water Queen' – likely dating from the 1880s – known in post-Civil War America as the most famous of the theatrical mermaids on stage. What I find of interest in Figure 3.8 is that despite the skin-tight neck-to ankle-to wrist garment she is wearing, it is coloured black, and the corset she wears underneath is very visible. As such, despite the close-fitting nature of her clothing and unlike Léotard's own, her garment is designed to conceal, revealing only her silhouette. To even reveal this was of course in the time and context of Adams's performance a challenge to the status quo, and relegated to stage and circus performers.

The reasons for his design were primarily functional and originating out of his practice sessions: its original design 'allowed freedom of movement, was relatively aerodynamic and there was no danger of a flapping garment becoming entangled with the ropes'²⁵⁹ and it has been suggested may also have been 'to avoid rope burns on his arms.'²⁶⁰ However, in his memoirs, his descriptions of his attire may also provide a further explanation of cultural resonance, namely that through his creation 'men have preserved the ancient costume, the shirt that brings out their forms, and graceful fustanella that perfectly draws their size.'²⁶¹ It

²⁵⁸ Lynch and Strauss, *Ethnic Dress in the United States*, p. 186.

²⁵⁹ Victoria and Albert Museum, available at <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/j/jules-leotard/> (Accessed 23 September 2015)

²⁶⁰ Harder, *American Speech*, p. 101.

²⁶¹ J. Léotard, *Mémoires de Léotard*, Chez tous les libraires (1860), p. 187.

may not have been an objective of Léotard's design, but it became clear that another effect of his garment was that it displayed 'his physique to its best advantage, making him a huge hit with women.'²⁶²

A Fustanella (see Figure 3.9) is traditionally a skirt-like item of dress worn by men in nations throughout the Balkan region, which may have had its origins in classical Greek garments such as the chiton (tunic) and the chitonium (short military tunic). In his memoirs – in the passage directly preceding the one quoted above – Léotard writes 'of all the writers who speak of Greece, Mr. Edmond About above others, argues that men are much more beautiful than women.'²⁶³ This reference to Greece is a reminder of the Classicism ingrained across fin-de-siècle Europe and in ideas surrounding physical culture. It would therefore not seem a great leap to surmise that for Léotard, to be able to create a new item for his acrobatic activity, that carried forth components from classical Greek dress and in doing so, created a direct link between Greece, physical culture, masculinity, militarism and his acrobatics, would have been a satisfactory conclusion. Over a decade after Léotard's death, began the adoption of his leotard by Parisian ballet studios for their performances.²⁶⁴ The garment underwent a transformation there in its symbolism, before re-entering the sphere of gymnastics in the 1950s.

iv) Sweden, Germany & Nacktgymnastik

The connection with Greece and physical culture in nineteenth-century Europe was to have another outcome for gymnastics uniform, taking place between Germany and the Nordic region, which began to gain traction concurrent to Léotard's early death. The one-time popularity of doing gymnastics naked is a

²⁶² Victoria and Alberta Museum.

²⁶³ Léotard, p. 187 and further.

²⁶⁴ Lynch and Strauss, *Ethnic Dress in the United States*, p. 187.

strong inversion within a chapter surveying the range of clothes worn for gymnastics activity, but its mapping is a worthwhile endeavour for an understanding of the negative connotations that came to characterise a specific time and moment for a relatively large number of practitioners the notion of exercising clothed, to bring about a nuanced understanding of the tension that exists in contemporary uniform between being clothed and unclothed in gymnastics. Developing out of Swedish National Romanticism, art historian Michelle Facos describes the coming together in the 1870s in the context of industrialisation and urbanisation in Sweden of the ‘physiologist Fritihof Holmgren, the balneologist Carl Curman, and the writer Viktor Rydberg [to promote] health through gymnastics, physical culture and outdoor bathing.’²⁶⁵ Advocating public nudity and group exercise in his essay, as well as referencing Winckelmann, Rydberg in his essay ‘On Nudity and Ways of Dressing’ drawing on evolutionary theory argued that there was a correlation between the ancient Greeks whom he believed exercised publicly in the nude and that the expression in Greek art of the nude body corresponded with the ancient Greek’s culture focus on fitness and military strength.²⁶⁶ Alongside the Swedish painter Richard Bergh and English philosopher Herbert Spencer, Rydberg’s argument for exercise for outdoors in the sunlight and fresh air was in the rejuvenating connection to nature that it provided: it was, in short, therapeutic. This could never be provided by clothed, formal, indoors exercise. Extolling such virtues, the Swedish artist Bruno Andreas Liljefors (1860-1939) – who had experienced bouts of illness as a child – wrote of exercising outdoors: ‘It is nature’s great dust-free gymnastics hall with equipment much larger than in our modern gymnastics halls... I have climbed ropes and poles in the gymnastics hall, but climbing to the top of a full-grown fir tree suits me much better.’²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ M. Facos, *Nationalism and the Nordic Imagination: Swedish Art of the 1890s*, (California: University of California Press, 1998), p. 85.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

Synchronous to these developments in Sweden was the growing prevalence of public nudism and naturism in Germany, which especially between 1919 and 1939 was split between different groups (with their corresponding socio-political and racial beliefs) and between non-profit and commercial enterprises.²⁶⁸ Such groups included the German Beauty Movement [Schönheitsbewegung], Reform of Life [Lebensreform], German Youth Movement [Jugendbewegung] and Natural Healing Movement [Naturheilbewegung],²⁶⁹ but what is of the utmost relevance here is the Physical Culture movement [Körperkulturbewegung], dedicated to rhythmical gymnastics and dance. By the time of the Weimar Republic, the Physical Culture movement itself was divided into a number of competing factions, including the Imperial Association for Free Physical Culture (Reichsverband für Freikörperkultur, RFK), the Imperial League for Free Physical Culture and the League for a Free Way of Life; co-existing to an extent under the banner of the RFK. Although doing so repeats the more prominent historical narratives surrounding *nacktgymnastik* (exercises in the nude),²⁷⁰ it is significant to an understanding of the relationship between nudism and gymnastics in Germany – and by extension ideas connected to the practising of clothed gymnastics – to focus on the roles played Adolf Koch (1894-1970)²⁷¹ and Hans Surén (1885-1972).²⁷² Sports historian Arnd Krüger's reminder that in terms of primary material, most 'naturist literature of the period was written by men' is worth bearing in mind here also.²⁷³ Therefore, as a less well-known and as a (feminine) counterpoint to these examples, mention will also be made of the system developed by female

²⁶⁸ A. Krüger, F. Krüger and S. Treptau, 'Nudism in Nazi Germany: Indecent Behaviour or Physical Culture for the Well-being of the Nation', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol 19, No. 4, 2002, p. 35.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33-34.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²⁷¹ Please note that Koch's date of birth is listed as 1896 in other sources.

²⁷² Krüger, Krüger and Treptau note that 'a complete history of German nudism has never been written', p. 33. Matthew Jefferies provides a more detailed literature review of academic research in this area and in the English language, noting that 'the historiography on Third Reich naturism remains limited to a few short chapters and articles, either providing a general overview, or focusing on prominent individuals, such as Adolf Koch or Hans Surén [and that] empirical studies of naturism in specific localities during the Nazi era are in particularly short supply. See M. Jefferies, 'For a Genuine and Noble Nakedness?' German Naturism in the Third Reich', *German History*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2006, p. 64-65.

²⁷³ A. Krüger, 'There Goes This Art of Manliness: Naturism and Racial Hygiene in Germany', *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Spring 1991, p. 136.

nude physical educator propagator Bess Mensendieck (1866-1959), primarily aimed at woman for indoor and domestic practice.

Koch studied psychology and medicine at the Friedrich William Institut and continued his studies under the Jewish physician and sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld, founder of the Institute of Sex Research (Institut für Sexualwissenschaft). By 1921, Koch was a public school teacher in the inner city, working-class Berlin district of Moabit, conducting open-air nude exercises for boys and girls suffering from vitamin deficiencies. A complaint to the school put a stop to this practice, and so in 1926 – setting his teachings apart from all other nudist organisations - he founded his own school and organisation (known as the Adolf Koch League for Social Hygiene, Body Culture and Gymnastics (*Institut für Eubiotik und Lebensregelung*)). The image seen in Figure 3.10 of Koch with some of his students is very reminiscent of the expressive dance (*Ausdruckstanz*) used by Leni Riefenstahl in the opening scenes to *Olympia*, despite preceding this by nine years. The League operated through a membership system, whereby members in employment paid five percent of their salary into the organisation, whereas unemployed members were allowed free access. This measure was in response to high unemployment at the time, despite Koch's uncertainty at the true capacity of nudism to move its practitioners beyond class boundaries.²⁷⁴ By 1930, Koch had opened further schools in Berlin, Breslau, Barmen-Elberfeld, Hamburg, Ludwigshafen and Mannheim, with a total enrolment of 60,000 students. Koch advocated drills and group exercise (see Figure 3.11), taking place in- and outdoors, and as described by sports historians Krüger, Krüger and Treptau 'on the whole, Adolf Koch included more sports than any of the other[nudist] organizations,'²⁷⁵ including over and above gymnastics, swimming, volleyball and tambourine ball.²⁷⁶ Most importantly here

²⁷⁴ K.E. Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935*, (California: University of California Press, 1997), p. 36.

²⁷⁵ Krüger, Krüger and Treptau, 'Nudism in Nazi Germany', p. 40.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

however, Krüger, Krüger and Treptau make the observation that despite the other activities of the Koch schools not qualifying as sport, that 'conscious improvement of and showing off of the body can be considered part of physical culture.'²⁷⁷

Koch's socialist leanings did not find him favour under the Nazi regime, and despite attempts – at least on the surface²⁷⁸ – to realign the ethos of the League with government objectives concerning public health, racial hygiene and racial biology, Koch was forced to cease in stages his activity, fully closing in 1936. However, a successor to Koch gymnastics, formulated by Hans Surén, was to find favour in the highest possible ranks of the Nazi party. Hans Surén was born in Berlin in 1885; his father was an army captain, and he followed this tradition by entering the army in 1903, serving until 1925. During this time, he served as part of the imperial colonial force in the then-German colony of Cameroon, and was later captured as a prisoner of war by the British – which may have piqued his interest in the competitive nature of sports associated with Britain in this period. On his return to Germany in the early 1920s, he became head of the Army School for Physical Exercise at Wiinsdorf, near Berlin. It was here that he began to implement not only his own particular form nudism, but of gymnastics also. As Toepfer describes, Surén throughout his life moved against the strict military call-and-command drill exercises, his own system featuring medicine balls, logs and rocks, naked cross-country runs, mud baths, breathing exercises, the prohibition of alcohol and nicotine and a meat-free diet.²⁷⁹ The sexes were separated; woman exercising fully nude, the male participants in the 'Surèn Schurtz' – described as a 'string tanga, that covered the genitals but nothing else'

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ Jefferies notes that although he paid 18 months subscription as a 'supportive member' of the SS, Koch was cleared by the Denazification Commission Berlin-Kreuzberg in Dec. 1947, which accepted that this had been a cover for his anti-fascist activities. See Jefferies, 'For a Genuine and Noble Nakedness', p. 69.

²⁷⁹ M. Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890-1930*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 189.

(see Figure 3.12). His exercises revolved around self-discipline, personal discovery, strong will, fulfilment and most importantly, strength at an individual and national, *Völkisch* level.

He then became a popular and prolific writer, with his first gymnastics book and manual *Man and the Sun* (*Der Mensch und die Sonne*) which was to run through sixty-eight editions and selling 250,000 copies in the year following its publication in 1924 (see Figure 3.13). In 1936, the year of the Berlin Summer Olympic Games, Surén opportunistically re-published *Man and the Sun* with a new subtitle: the *Aryan-Olympic Spirit* (*Arisch-Olympischer Geist*). Surén met Hitler in March 1932, joining the Nazi party in May 1933 as historian Michael Hau notes ‘in order to pursue a career as a physical educator in the Nazi hierarchy.’²⁸⁰ Especially in light of his attempts in the Weimar period to distance himself from direct political engagement and alignments, it is flagrantly clear that his motivations were for his own personal gain. Surén was to count Hitler²⁸¹ and Schutzstaffel (SS) as fans of his methods; as Krüger, Krüger, and Treptau expand, the SS had always ‘liked to show off their bodies as being stronger than most of the public, spoke out in favour of treating nudism as something natural.’²⁸² Infact, Surén gymnastics was the Nazi’s own nudist tradition with the military and paramilitary.²⁸³ However, when Surén attempted to introduce his gymnastic methods across the general army, its leadership was alarmed and promptly dismissed him.²⁸⁴ Surén was quick to fall out of favour, charged in 1942 with public masturbation and spending the remaining years of the Nazi regime in Brandenburg prison.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ Krüger, Krüger and Treptau ‘Nudism in Nazi Germany’, p. 38.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²⁸⁴ Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, p. 35.

The Nazi party membership was divided over issues such as the freedoms of nude gymnastics, and a contributing factor to the demise of the popularity of Surén's system was the *Zwickelerlass*. This was a piece of legislation brought forth by Reich Commissioner Franz Bracht regulating what appropriate swimwear was, giving the police powers to regulate and take criminal proceedings against those disobeying. However, Walter Darré, Führer of the farmers and Minister for Agriculture, had argued against the *Zwickelerlass*, pointing out correctly that nude bathing was healthier than having your swimming costume dry on your skin and risking a cold.²⁸⁵ This line of argument has strong parallels with how 'technologically-advanced' contemporary fabrics used in the production of gymnastics leotards are framed. Many of these are actually a kind of plastic, but also as I recall very vividly as a child, in the late 1990s, looking through the latest Milano Pro Sport leotard brochure at a line of designs made with supposedly new fabrics, with mesh under arm, specifically aimed at being breathable and fast drying. One contemporary equivalent (see Figure 3.14) is Adidas' Climalite® Sincere leotard – which in its plain, single colour design conveys that it is made for the training gym, not competition – is made from an 'all-new breathable... fabric', which is 'moisture-wicking [and] quick-drying [to] keep sweat off your skin during your workout.'²⁸⁶ Referring back to the discussion in the second chapter around the sweat-less gymnast and ideas around hygiene that previously surrounded gymnastics, it is clear that such 'concerns' have both a longevity to their presence and re-occur time and time again.

v) Radical Dress and Equality in the German Turner

There are many overlaps between the writings and the position taken by Koch and Surén, and that of the ideas of *Turnvater* Jahn preceding these later developments by approximately one hundred years. While

²⁸⁵ Krüger, Krüger and Treptau, 'Nudism in Nazi Germany', p. 44-45.

²⁸⁶ See <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/423690277417454822/> (Accessed 1 November 2019).

Koch and Surén correspond and depart from Jahn's ideologies around nationalism, drill, group exercises and elements of competition, a line should be drawn between Jahn's attitudes towards the dress of his Turner gymnastics and later movements by nudist gymnastics propagators.

The radicalism of Jahn's outdoor gymnastics was about the liberation of the body and the body in space, which was matched by ideas around dress reform. The changes in clothing have been framed in terms of, firstly, wider dress reforms of the time, secondly the radical political stance of Jahn, and thirdly, his ideas of Germany's history. The sports sociologist Henning Eichberg quotes the account of a Prussian court historian of Jahn and a group of his followers, with:

their long hair hung down unkempt onto their shoulders; and their shirts were open-necked - since a servant's scarf befitted the free German as ill as an effeminate waistcoat; their broad shirt-collars covered the low stand-up collars of their dirty coats. And he complacently referred to this questionable garb as the true dress of old Germany.²⁸⁷

This account may of course represent the clothing worn on a single or infrequent occasion, or may contain a significant degree of bias. Sport scientist Udo Merkel describes the Turner gymnasts as wearing 'a very simple grey linen uniform.'²⁸⁸ Studying illustrations of Turner gymnasts from this early period (see Figure

²⁸⁷ Eichberg, H.; The Enclosure of the Body - On the Historical Relativity of 'Health', 'Nature' and the Environment of Sport, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 21, Iss. 1, 1986, p. 106

²⁸⁸ Merkel, U.; The Politics of Physical Culture and German Nationalism: Turnen versus English Sports and French Olympism, 1871-1914, *German Politics & Society*, Vol. 21, Iss. 2 (67), 2003, p. 74

3.15, 3.16 and 3.17) do not bring an easy conclusion to the discrepancies the two aforementioned descriptions set out; some of the illustrations do show jackets with collars, but those not in black and white show colours beyond the described grey. Of course, Turner gymnastics spread across Germany, and was adapted by followers during the Prussian ban on gymnastics and Jahn's imprisonment. Rather, what may be the resounding influence of Jahn's attitudes towards dress for gymnastics was the idea of complete symmetry among participants. As Merkel describes, in addition to the requirement that all members use the casual 'du' rather than the formal 'sie' to address one another, the grey linen suit was intended 'as a symbol of equality.'²⁸⁹ If this is indeed what participants were wearing, then this representation of equality through dress I would argue to have been ahead of its time, and likely to be the first gymnastics uniform in our modern understanding of this particular kind of clothing.

vi) The Regalia of the Czech Sokol

The Czech Sokol were created in the image of Jahn's Turner gymnastics, also with nationalistic objectives and values thoroughly embedded in their being. This image however did not extend to the outfits worn to both display their gymnasts, and embody their ideology. Generally speaking, the uniforms of gymnastics movements – primarily the German Turner and the Czech Sokol – are given only fleeting mention in academic literature and have been considered independently of one another. These uniforms encompassed not only clothing for physical exercise and more formal items for parade and festivals, but also include footwear, badges, hats, flags, motifs and mascots. As detailed in chapter one and further complicating the academy study of gymnastic dress, is that such movements became transnational,

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 74

through mass emigration from Germany and Eastern Europe to the New World. The travelling of these gymnastics organisations and ideals carried over elements of the original uniform, with added variations over time in their new context. For example, Figure 3.19 shows what the differences may have been in what was worn by the Czech Sokol in their homeland and the American branches, in Figure 3.18 at Westfield, Massachusetts, likely to be from the late 1800s. The American uniform is simpler, and despite the formal photograph, there are no regalia or falcon feathers on display. It must also be noted that there can exist a discrepancy between what was designated as uniform and who was allowed to wear it and for what purposes, with what uniform was *actually* worn and by whom. For example, in discussing the gradual inclusion of women into the Czech Sokol, the historian Professor Claire E. Nolte notes that the ban by the Congress of the Czech Sokol Union on women wearing modified versions of Czech folk costumes for Sokol parades ‘had to be repeated in the ensuing years [indicating] that it was often violated.’²⁹⁰

To expand upon the context of the Czech Sokol laid out briefly in the first chapter, it is important to focus on the biographical details of the movement’s founders, Miroslav Tyrš and Jindřich Fügner. Historian Mark Dimond argues that the Sokol had ‘a split personality, one part based on a Fügnerian concept, the other on a Tyršian one.’²⁹¹ However he also notes that due to the death of Fügner only three years after the founding of the Sokol, with Tyrš, living on for another two decades, it has largely been his junior whose imprint has been the focus of academic study.²⁹² In the case of the creation of the uniform worn by the Sokol, Fügner was in fact more instrumental in its shaping, but the interplay between the political beliefs and interests of the two men undoubtedly propelled elements of it forward.

²⁹⁰ Nolte, C. E.; “Every Czech a Sokol!”: Feminism and Nationalism in the Czech Sokol Movement, *Austrian History Yearbook*, Vol. 14, 1993, p. 90

²⁹¹ Dimond, M.; in: Cornwall, M.; Evans, R. J. W. (eds); *Czechoslovakia in a Nationalistic and Fascist Europe 1918-1948*, publish by The British Academy, by Oxford University Press: Oxford, New York, 2007, p. 186

²⁹² Dimond, M.; in: Cornwall, M.; Evans, R. J. W. (eds); *Czechoslovakia in a Nationalistic and Fascist Europe 1918-1948*, publish by The British Academy, by Oxford University Press: Oxford, New York, 2007, p. 186

Tyrš was born Friedrich Emmanuel Tiersch on the 17th August 1832 to a German father, later changing his first name twice, first into the Czech version of Friedrich Bedřich, then to its Slavic form, Miroslav. He was raised by an uncle in Mladá Boleslav, Czechoslovakia, until the age of ten, before moving to live with another uncle in Prague, following the death of his father when he was three, his mother when he was six,²⁹³ and his two sisters at unknown dates. Despite his relatives' plans for him to study law, Tyrš switched to philosophy, obtaining his doctorate in 1860, his study particularly focused on the writing of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer.²⁹⁴ Failure to obtain an academic position led him to return to Prague and within two years, he had co-founded the Sokol movement with Jindřich Fügner, alongside other public figures. In 1872, despite a large age gap and Tyrš not being of a background or occupation that would put him in the financial position for the match, he married the only child of Fügner, Renata Fügnerová.²⁹⁵ As discussed previously, Tyrš suffered from ill health throughout his life; me, this also raises questions of how a man of poor health would view the masculine impenetrability of the military suit concealing the athletic, healthy body of the gymnast-soldier.

The design of the Czech Sokol uniform was unlikely to have been made with its physical mandate in mind, as the photographs in Figures 3.19 and 3.20 demonstrate; the uniform was truly for ceremonial, display and public uses, whilst other simpler items were largely worn for actual gymnastic exercise. In my research thus far, admittedly restricted to writing on the Sokol in the English language, I can find no reference to the details of these simpler items, which are very similar to what was being worn elsewhere across Europe in a similar timescale. The uniform was designed by the Czech artist Josef Mánes as seen

293 Jandásek, L.; The Founder of the Sokols: Miroslav Tyrš, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 10, No. 30 (Apr. 1932), p. 573

294 Jandásek, L.; *Ibid.*, p. 577

295 Nolte, C. E.; *The Sokol in the Czech Lands to 1914: Training for the Nation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

in Figure 3.21, commissioned by Fügner, and consisted of a red Garibaldi shirt and Sokol insignia (gifted to each member by Fügner at the club's first social meeting in March 1862), in addition to:

‘an ensemble of brown Russian linen with wide [trousers], a jacket with a čamara closings that [were] modelled on those worn by Polish revolutionaries, and a Slovak-style soft hat that was replaced in 1864 with a hard, circular Montenegrin cap with a falcon feather.’²⁹⁶

During the 1860s, the base of the Sokol went from strength to strength, ‘winning adherents by its colourful marches (complete with uniforms, flags, and martial music) to the Czech countryside, where villagers hailed the club as the “Czech national army.”’²⁹⁷ However, it could be said that the uniform had unexpected consequences; one other hand, it was put forward by one member in an edition of the Sokol newsletter from 1893 that women joined the movement only in order to wear elements from the movements’ uniform.²⁹⁸ Indeed, two years later, the St. Wenceslas Day resolution passed at the 1885 meeting of the Sokol leadership, prohibited the inclusion of women in Sokol parades, specifically noting as Nolte describes that they had ‘sometimes appeared wearing a modified version of the club uniform.’²⁹⁹ No details are given regarding exactly what modifications were made, but from photographic evidence, it seems likely that the main adaptation was from trousers to a floor-length, flowing skirt. On the other hand, there was at least one call published in a circulated journal for the Sokol uniform be abolished, fearing that it deterred educated, professional men from taking up membership.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁶ Nolte, C. E.; *The Sokol in the Czech Lands to 1914: Training for the Nation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 49

²⁹⁷ Nolte, C. E.; “Every Cezch a Sokol!”: Feminism and Nationalism in the Czech Sokol Movement, *Austrian History Yearbook*, Vol. 14, 1993, p. 82

²⁹⁸ Nolte, C. E.; “Every Cezch a Sokol!”: Feminism and Nationalism in the Czech Sokol Movement, *Austrian History Yearbook*, Vol. 14, 1993, p. 89

²⁹⁹ Nolte, C. E.; *Ibid*, p. 90

³⁰⁰ Nolte, C. E.; *The Sokol in the Czech Lands to 1914: Training for the Nation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 128

vii) Corsets, Restricted Movements and the Gym Tunic

Although it did not please the Sokol leadership, the attraction of the uniform for female participants is indicative of the discontent with the general clothing options for women at that time – that, as fashion scholar Jennifer Craik describes of the history of sports clothing in general, that through these items ‘women expressed a newfound freedom.’³⁰¹ This freedom was from, amongst others things, from clothing which constrained and restrained them, such as the corset or the “hobble skirt,” which severely impeded the walking stride of the wearer. Throughout the timespan of women’s participation in gymnastics, the corset has been an undergarment, not outwardly visible as it had been previously. This – teamed with my own sense that as an undergarment it would have not been an appropriate discussion topic, that it would have been a widespread practice and that women’s competition at the Olympic Games was not in a competitive, official capacity until the 1952 Summer Olympic Games – is reflected in there being little material discussing the wearing of corsets for gymnastics that is in support of the practice.

There does exist, however, more substantial material rallying against the idea of wearing the corset for gymnastics, calisthenics and physical education. Medical doctor Gerhart S. Schwarz, writing in the Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine in 1979 and referencing German-language materials, describes how many of gymnastics founding figures were actively involved in attempts to discredit and discourage the corset, in daily life and for exercise. Pedagogue Christian Gotthilf Salzmann, referred to in the first chapter and founder of the gymnasium at Schnepfau in 1784, only four years later sponsored a prize, awarded in its inaugural year to an essay on the dangers of the corset written by a German physician, Thomas von Soemmerring.³⁰² This outlook continued to be held by gymnastics educators, included Turnvater Jahn and

³⁰¹ Craik, J.; *Uniforms Exposed: From Conformity to Transgression*, Berg Publishers: London, 2005, p. 152

³⁰² Schwarz, G. S.; Society, physicians, and the corset, *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 1979; Vol. 55, Iss. 6, p. 553

Adolf Speiss. Jahn's Turner gymnastics were during his lifetime a male only enterprise, and so the target of his damnation was the male, rather than female corset.³⁰³ Subsequently, Speiss – a more moderate gymnastics figure than Jahn – was to found several 'antilacing societies.'³⁰⁴ The case for female gymnastics teachers was more complex, but Madame Bergman-Österberg is one example of an instructress who banned the wearing of the corset in her all-female classes.³⁰⁵

Despite this, the the selling of "sports" or "athletic" corsets for activities as seen in Figure 3.22 appears to have been a staple offering by outfitters continuing even into the 1920s. The sale and popularity of these corsets was therefore running concurrent to other practices, at the complete opposite end of the spectrum in the form of nude gymnastics, with more moderate examples such as the gym tunic and knickerbockers situated in-between. Corsets have received a wealth of academic attention, and so here I will only briefly discuss the role they played historically in making women's participation in sport acceptable, to wider society and primarily, men. My main objective here instead is to draw a line between ideas around the corset and its survival, to leotard waistbands and current fabrics used in the leotards of Olympic Artistic Gymnastics. In doing so, I aim to demonstrate the continued prevalence of constraining female athletes and the ideas that frame this an "attractive," "good" and as one facet within an embodiment of whiteness.

Corsets survival within sportswear into the 20th century is rooted in a combination of what wearing them represented and of men's fears surrounding women's participation in games and sports. As Craik notes, women's clothing throughout the 19th century 'emphasised light colours, soft contours and ornamentation

³⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 559

³⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p.560

³⁰⁵ McCrone, K. E.; *Playing the Game: Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914*, University Press of Kentucky: Lexington, 1988, p. 223-224

to project the appearance of delicacy, submissiveness and *immobility*.³⁰⁶ The restriction of movement through tight and heavy garments is important, in that it assured women's position as the "inferior" sex. To be restricted was to show restraint and propriety³⁰⁷ - essentially to uphold, and not transcend, the social and moral code of the day. Moreover, as fashion theorists Cavallaro and Warwick correctly state, 'the corset, in bounding the body, also connects it to its surroundings: it defines the body in terms of the amount of space that the body is entitled to occupy in relation to other bodies.'³⁰⁸ Thus, in the context of women's struggle for a place and acceptance in the sporting world, the ongoing presence of the corset is suddenly unsurprising – ensuring women took up the minimum amount of space required and impeding their efforts whilst there.

Due to the dramatic twists-and-turns in the clothing worn by women for gymnastics, it is worth looking at examples of these through the 20th century to the present day, comparing that from 1912 (see Figure 3.23), 1928 (see Figure 3.24), 1936 (see Figure 3.25), 1956 (see Figure 3.26) and 1960 (see Figure 3.27). From the 1910s through to the present day, it became apparent to me that the one thing that this varied clothing has shared has been the 'nipped-in" waist. Through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, waistbands were an integral part to the leotard, despite the petite, girl-like frames of the gymnasts wearing them (with Figure 3.28 being just one example). This may have been partially for functional reasons, to keep the leotard in place before the use of spray glues (see Figure 3.29) was commonplace, which literally fix the leotard to the skin of the female gymnast. The waistband may have been a feature of the design intended - whether we deem it successful or not - to make the androgynous gymnast body populating the sport through the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s appear more feminine. I have often felt that the deep V-necks

³⁰⁶ Craik, J.; *Uniforms Exposed: From Conformity to Transgression*, Berg Publishers: London, 2005, p. p216-7 (my emphasis).

³⁰⁷ Cavallaro, D.; Warwick, A. (eds.); *Fashioning the Frame: Boundaries, Dress and the Body*, Berg: Oxford, 1998, p. 61

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.* p. 61

of the leotards commonly seen in the 1970s reflected not only the prevailing fashions of the day, but to also trick the viewer's eye into seeing a degree of womanly curves (see Figure 3.30 as an example of such a V-neck design). Communications scholar Dr Ann Chisholm has also pointed out that the use of stripes on a gymnasts' leotard (as seen in Figure 3.31), frequently running straight from the underarm to hip, can be used to allude to an aerodynamism of a performance and to exaggerate the sought-after lines and contortions of the gymnasts' movements.³⁰⁹

It often also appears as if the fabric under the waist band is either thicker or doubled in comparison to that above the waist, and so may have been to ensure no transparency, especially with the enduring popularity of the colour white within gymnastics leotards. Despite all of this, there remains a component of this enforced waist that is about constraining the body and affecting the bodily carriage. In an interview prior to the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games, a representative of GK Elite and contractor for the USA Gymnastics Team Uniform, stated in an interview describing the compression fabric used for their leotards: 'it's nice as a woman to have something that pulls you in and is supportive.'³¹⁰ Statements such as this link the contemporary leotard back to the ideas of modesty and control surrounding the corset. Although camera shots such as that in Figure 3.32 and 3.33 are less likely to be permitted now in print, they demonstrate the falsity of this idea of the leotard as a modesty-protecting garment – it is infact, hugely revealing. The contradictions inherent between the idea of modesty versus sexualisation embodied in the wearing of the female leotard was highlighted by attacks on the medal-winning Muslim Malaysian gymnast Farah Ann Abdul Hadi. After winning six medals in the Southeast Asia Games, criticisms were made on

³⁰⁹ Chisholm, A.; *Acrobats, Contortionists, and Cute Children: The Promise and Perversity of U.S. Women's Gymnastics*, *Signs*, Vol. 27, Iss. 2, Winter, 2002, p. 422-423.

³¹⁰ Odell, A.; *Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Team USA's Gymnastics Leotards*, BuzzFeed, 2012. Accessed: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/amyodell/everything-you-ever-wanted-to-know-about-team-usa#.ii9EN0Pv7>

social media and a senior Islamic cleric ‘for wearing a leotard that revealed the shape of her “aurat”, which refers to genitalia and other areas of the body, such as thighs.’³¹¹

A separate example was the scandal of three former Olympic and World Champion Romanian gymnasts, Lavinia Milosovici, Claudia Presacan, and Corina Ungureanu, who posed nude for a series of photographs and films produced by a Japanese pornography company.³¹² As can be seen in Figures 3.34, 3.35 and 3.36, the films featuring the three women doing gymnastic exercises nude and separate images of them wearing elements of a “national uniform.” The release of these photographs and films caused a major upset between the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG), the Romanian gymnastics federation, the Japanese gymnastics federation, the Romanian national team coaches and the gymnasts themselves. The punishment for this at one point was going to include the withdrawal of the current Romanian gymnastics team from international competitions, but eventually was set at a five-year ban from coaching and judging for the three gymnasts charged. I have been considering these images, alongside that of the transparent leotard in Figure 3.32 and the camera angle in Figure 3.33, the latter two representing at least at the time of production “acceptable” images in the eyes of the FIG. It would therefore appear that the line between modesty and disgrace is a fine line for the female gymnast, and actually reveals hypocrisy from the governing bodies of gymnastics. Although competitive gymnastics in an Olympic sense has always been a clothed affair, the idea of doing such exercise nude as has taken place historically under alternative auspices and the complete reveal of such a body appears to remain a compelling and titillating affair.

³¹¹ Accessed: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/muslim-gymnast-farah-ann-abdul-hadi-criticised-for-revealing-leotard-worn-in-double-gold-win-but-her-10325444.html>

³¹² Accessed: http://www.romanian-gymnastics.com/news/2005/feb05/lavinia_milosovici_nude_photos_japan.htm

In certain regards, the leotards in the 1970s and 1980s revealed more flesh than in the present, through necklines such as the V-neck or sweetheart. Currently, flesh coloured transparent panels and sleeveless leotards are permitted, revealing in alternative ways more of the body. Returning to Figure 3.32, USSR Olympic gymnast Svetlana Boginskaya is seen in a predominantly white leotard, and quite transparent across her chest to the extent that the viewer can tell she is not wearing a bra. In past conversations with my childhood gymnastics coach, the preference for white and a level of transparency in women's leotards throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s – albeit normally worn by girls – has been attributed to enhanced scores from the all-male judging panels of the period. If we were to refer to the selection of this kind of garment as “score-enhancing,” I have been questioning where this blurs with the idea of “performance-enhancing” sportswear designs, normally understood as extra grips on the bottom of running shoes, ergonomic swimwear, etc.³¹³ If the design, fabrics and patterns of a leotard do not aid the performance itself, but the judges and spectators' interpretation of the performance, is this not also “performance-enhancing”?

The fact remains that the leotard is in integral part of the female gymnasts' performance, and oft commented upon feature. For example, on the leotard choice of USA Olympic gymnast Kristen Maloney (as seen in Figure 3.37) for the Women's Artistic Gymnastics All-Around competition the commentators express that it's “interesting all these years Kristen has wanted to wear the red, white and blue, and on this night of nights, she wear silver.”³¹⁴ Likewise in the same competition for Russian gymnast Svetlana Khorkina – and in slightly sarcastic tones – the commentators describe how ‘you know it's the big event for Svetlana because she's come dressed in her black sequin.’³¹⁵ Such comments frame how the viewer perceives the performance and draw attention to the uniform: it is no longer allowed to remain a simple

³¹³ Craik, J.; *Ibid*, p. 146

³¹⁴ National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) America coverage of Kristen Maloney's Floor Exercise in the Women's All-Around Artistic Gymnastics competition at the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games. Accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QZWIPJGy1E>

³¹⁵ National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) America coverage of Svetlana Khorkina's Floor Exercise in the Women's All-Around Artistic Gymnastics competition at the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games. Accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N15fYD7zh9o>

garment, but is cast into a leading role. I do not recall ever hearing similar comments made about a male gymnast's uniform during a performance.

There is a long history of leotards reflecting the national flags and colours of nations, or other cultural heritage, including heraldic shields and crests. For example, Figures 3.38 3.39 and 3.40 demonstrate the application of the stars and the stripes of the American national flag to the Olympic national team leotards of Mary Lou Retton in 1984, Dominique Moceanu in 1996 and Aly Raisman in 2012 respectively. In a similar mould, we can see in in Figure 3.41 the embroidered details of the leotard of USSR gymnast Ludmilla Tourischeva speaking to Russian folk costume, in Figure 3.42 the manner in which Spanish Olympic gymnast Ether Moya's 2000 leotard has been fashioned to be reminiscent of the Matadors outfit, and how the 2012 leotard shown in Figure 3.43 worn by Russian gymnast Aliya Mustafina recalls the onion dome so closely associated with Russian architecture. Finally, Figure 3.44 demonstrates the many different designs worn by Romanian gymnast Lavinia Miloşovici throughout the early 1990s, all incorporating in varied ways the colours of the Romanian national flag: blue, red and yellow.

By drawing on the national flags, there is a frequent overlap in the colours used in leotard designs, for example the use of red, white and blue across Russia and the Eastern Bloc as the Pan-Slavic colours. As seen in Figure 3.45, the USSR gymnasts often wore red, the colour mostly strongly associated with communism, and also reveals the USSR crest on the gymnasts' chests. The placement of the crest, a requirement even today for Olympic competition, has normally been on the arm or chest, corresponding to the military's placement of rank badges, medals, etc. Usually, the logo of the leotard designer – once these begin to appear in the 1970s – is on the hip. Fashion curator Stefano Tonchi, referring to military uniform, describes how these garments are entirely codified, using a 'hypergrammar' in a 'hypercodified system'

which is simultaneously ‘hyper-semiotic.’³¹⁶ The body of the elite, performing gymnast is no different, and the manner in which these symbols and colours are draped across this performing body inflect specific readings and meanings onto their gymnastics.

The compression fabric referred to it in the aforementioned interview is a form of plastic. While it is used to a lesser degree for men’s leotards, the shorts and elasticated leggings worn by the male competitors negates the effects of the fabric. Although it is difficult to say definitively from photographs, the fabrics used for gymnastics clothing from the 1950s to 1970s are likely to have been relegated to production in fairly standard everyday, accessible fabrics such as cotton, polyester and later, Lycra. However, in the 1980s and outwith the realms of gymnastics, the leotard transitioned into a major fashion and exercise piece, now worn by millions of women. I would suggest that the treatment of the leotard in fashion then fed back into gymnastics leotard production, especially because at this point new fabrics (for example, velvet) are introduced, as is pattern, in a way that departs from the designs of the 1970s.

viii) A Closing Note on Uniform

The concept of the uniform is a modern one, heavily tied to militarism and by extension, the nation-state. Generally speaking, ‘to make things uniform means to make them equal,’³¹⁷ as described by Tonchi. There is a significant history of this egalitarianism in terms of mass gymnastics, under communism, socialism and totalitarian governance, but this does not hold true in the individualistic landscape of the post-1980s Olympic Games. However – despite the inequality in terms of status and achievements that the sporting arena brings – the uniformity of the designated clothing worn extends beyond the actual garments

³¹⁶ Tonchi, S. in: Bonami, F.; Frisa, M.; Tonchi, S. (eds.); *Uniform: Order & Disorder*, Edizioni Charta Srl: Milan, 2001, p. 148-150

³¹⁷ Tonchi, *Ibid.*, p. 14

themselves, to be mirrored by a conformity in how they are worn and by the body that is able to wear them. Historically, leaders did not clothe their armies, but instead distributed markers as a sign of belonging, identified by Tonchi as 'sashes, cockades, plumes of different colours, down to the red cross on a white field worn by the crusaders.'³¹⁸ It was not until the reigns of Napoleon and Frederick of Prussia in the 18th century that the military were fully garbed for their service, extending into society for those in public services such as education.³¹⁹ As Tonchi further details,

It was only with the beginning of true industrial production and of long-distance transport for the supply of large quantities of inexpensive materials and dyes from the East that modern states could afford to dress immense multitudes of men in the same uniform, with the same fabric and color, for the specific aim of war.³²⁰

The introduction of athletic wear within the military - and in the education system – is not the uniform of the battlefield, but that which would be worn on home territory and in training. The belonging that wearing them signifies is not therefore not to distinguish between two warring armies, but instead to mark out the wearer as part of an army rank, to a particular school, institution, society or club. These garments, and especially the colours and badges that go alongside these, are exclusive in the sense that they require participation in order for the wearer to be qualified to own these. Wearing this uniform announces membership to their affiliates, to other clubs and to the public. The clothing also symbolises to the wearer their belonging, and often a sense of validation in the activity they are undertaking.

³¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 154

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 154

³²⁰ *Ibid* 154

Under the modern nation state of the 20th century, such uniforms would often be provided for gymnasts by their club, team or national sporting body, although not without certain binds. As fashion theorist and sociologist Patrizia Calefato describes in the context of military uniform, the 'body that is inside the military uniform is, by definition, the healthy, athletic, disciplined body trained by marching, calisthenics and exercises.'³²¹ In the context of gymnastics, the proviso in the supply of uniform goes further, based on athletic merit, national representation on the sporting stage and the accumulation of soft power for the state.

In the perestroika-era Russian film, *Kukolka* (Little Doll, directed Isaak Fridberg, 1989), one of the early scenes depicts the film's protagonist, elite gymnast Tanya, at an invitational competition in the UK. During the warm-up the day before the competition, she suffers an injury to her back. On the coach back to the hotel for the night, she has the following conversation with her coach:

Tanya: Vadim Nikolaevich, my back hurts.

Coach: So what?

Tanya: It is painful for me to jump.

Coach: And what are you suggesting?

Tanya: I won't be able to perform.

³²¹ Calefato, P. in: Bonami, F.; Frisa, M.; Tonchi, S. (eds.); *Uniform: Order & Disorder*, Edizioni Charta Srl: Milan, 2001, p. 204

Coach: Listen to me, darling. This is a commercial contest. Our country gets foreign currency for it, which it uses to buy you the tracksuit and trainers you're wearing, the apparatus you train on. Therefore, you ought to put up with this.

Tanya: I will not suffer.

Coach: You will. No one is asking you to win, but your name is on the poster. Therefore, would you be so kind.?

Although an extreme example, the dialogue demonstrates the manner in which gymnasts *labour* for the assumed privilege to wear and even to fund the purchase of their uniform. Gymnastics uniforms of course exist and have existed historically outwith the elite competitive sphere under different circumstances – in the junior ranks, for recreational purposes and in specific schools. For example, in 1920s Denmark, Agnete Bertram developed a system of “feminine” gymnastics, under the pupillage of Danish medical doctor Johannes Lindhard. Her system was like many others of the time greatly influenced by Ancient Greece, and in line with this, her gymnastics system was performed to classical music, in Carlsberg Foundation building of neo-classical design, and in the tunic-like robes and embellished belt worn by participants, as seen in Figure 3.46. Although this outfit is not singled out specifically, the demise of Bertram’s has been explained by sports physiologist Erling Asmussen ‘in its being too elitist and exclusive on account of the high costs of participating,’³²² of which we can assume that the uniform was a contributing factor.

³²² Asmussen, E.; translation from Danish, in: Bonde, H.; Projection of Male Fantasies: The Creation of ‘Scientific’ Female Gymnastics, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 29, Iss. 2, 2012, p. 240

However, it would be misleading to construct an image of the uniform as something completely controlled in its production, that misrepresents the previous amateurism of elite sport against the current professionalism, and to suggest that the wearer has no agency over the garments covering their body. In a conversation with ex-gymnast, coach and founder of two gymnastics clubs in Scotland, Mr Ron Rodgers, now 89 years of age, I enquired with Mr Rodgers about where he was able to purchase the gymnastics whites for training and competitions when he first began competing in his early twenties at the gymnasium of the railway station where he was employed (see Figure 3.47). He answered that he was not able to buy these, but that his mother opened up the seams on white cricket trousers upto the knee, altering them down to the ankle to give the tapered look of gymnastics whites.³²³ In a different fashion, international leotard brands (such as Milano Pro Sport, Christian Moreau, GK Elite, The Zone and Alpha) distil the uniforms supplied for national teams into the collections sold to a mainstream audience through brochures, online shopping sites and stalls at competitions. The leotards worn by the USA gymnastics team at the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games have been said to cost between \$500 and \$1,200 US dollars per garment, with athletes having a number of different styles with them and duplicates of each style.³²⁴ Other countries, especially less wealthier nations and those less gymnastics success, will spend considerably less than this. For the main market, leotards are more likely to cost between £50 and £60 pounds (approximately \$75), or to cost as little as 6% of the cost of a garment worn by an Olympic athlete. The manner in which leotards are brought to the mainstream market is ultimately to result in financial profit, but does also to an extent recognises the desires of junior and recreational gymnasts, and the wider fan base to which their collections respond.

³²³ In conversation with Mr Ronald Rodgers, at his home in Cumbernauld, 20th August 2015.

³²⁴ <http://www.buzzfeed.com/amyodell/everything-you-ever-wanted-to-know-about-team-usa#.ii9EN0Pv7> / <http://www.inc.com/olympics/nicole-carter/gk-elite-outfitting-olympic-gymnasts-made-in-the-usa.html>

Chapter Four:

Strike a Pose, Pause the Performance

i) Introduction³²⁵

In this examination of the gymnastic body thus far, much attention has been devoted to the body in a static or still position, whether this was true to the live performance or captured and rendered as such by the camera lens. In this chapter I would like to focus on the gymnast's body, how it moves, what this movement signifies, and the contradictions embedded in this particular performance between motion and stillness. This will include a basic description of the crossovers and contributions to the discipline of Artistic Gymnastics by dance. This chapter is an attempt in many ways to deal with the contradiction I have faced in this writing: of writing about the motion and movement of gymnastics in the fixed form of words. This chapter will therefore trace what gymnastics' notation system adds to our understanding of the tensions that exist within its undertaking. To this end, a brief description of the relationship between gymnastics and dance will be outlined, building towards a solid argument for a reading of the gymnast as a moving statue, its images showing contemporary echoes of the classical imagery being privileged within Western ideals of beauty and crucial to the hierarchy of whiteness within nineteenth-century European thought.

These arguments will then be extended by examining the manner in which the tensions between movement and stillness are replicated and exaggerated by how the camera lens captures the gymnastic

³²⁵ I would like to acknowledge throughout this chapter two specific debts: to my supervisor Lynda Nead's writing on photographic stillness in the moment of the punch in boxing; and to artist Jo Longhurst's photographic work *Suspension (1)*, 2012. Both have provided points of departure for ideas explored in this chapter.

body, in photography and video formats, taking stock of the distinction between real, live watching and mediated viewing. Of particular interest here will be the gymnastic body suspended, in motion and mid-air – in falsified moments of stillness – illusions created by the camera. These will be used to create links between the living gymnast and the dead statue, through ghost-like suspension and celestuality, compounding our readings of the whiteness inherent in the many vocabularies of Artistic Gymnastics.

ii) Desired and Penalised: Moments of Stillness and Dance Histories

There exists a tension in gymnastics between motion and stillness, movement and moments of pause. The idea of movement and stillness are relative to the speed of the sport: gymnasts can reach speeds of up to 27.4 kilometres per hour over short distances³²⁶ in their run-ups,³²⁷ and are normally expected to ‘hold landings’ – meaning to keep entirely still and upright for between two or three seconds. Such short moments of stillness may seem to not qualify as stillness at all in other situations, but these moments of inaction are hugely significant to our understanding of the movement that they book-end. In fact, I believe that one of the pleasures of gymnastics spectatorship is this tension between the extremes of motion and stillness; that the speed of the run, twists, somersaults and leaps are accentuated and heightened by the stillness which precedes and supersedes them. Stillness acts as a point of relativity within the gymnastics performance to the motion – and vice versa – thus making its movement meaningful and emphasising one of its most central characteristics, namely bodily control.

³²⁶ 27.4 kilometres per hour is converted from 17 miles per hour. See K. Morley, ‘Achieving the Perfect 10: Speed, Velocity, and Torque in Gymnastics (Basic)’, *Sports 'n Science*, The University of Utah, 11 June 2015. Available at <http://sportsnscience.utah.edu/2012/05/08/gymnastics-vault-basic/> (Accessed 21 November 2016).

³²⁷ This can be taken into comparison with Usain Bolt, World and Olympic champion sprinter, who has reached speeds of 44.72 km/h. See E. Cassin, ‘Faster than Usain Bolt?’, *BBC News Magazine*, 21 November 2016. Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-34884849> (Accessed 21 November 2016).

Another still anchor to the dynamic movement of the performance are the predominantly static, inanimate pieces of equipment for each of the gymnastics exercises across the competition. The podium is the name given to the special installation of all gymnastics apparatuses in the competition arena, where the seven pieces of equipment used in total for the men's and women's competition are installed on a temporary basis onto a raised platform (see Figure 4.1). There are mainly practical reasons for this backdrop, but this setting also confers upon participants and viewers that the podium is a stage-like *mise-en-scène* for the gymnastic performance. Spectatorship of gymnastics points to the fact that the competition of the sport is a performative act, full of gestures, poses and illusions. The act of coming in-and-out of this performance and its particular codes of motion and stillness is flagged up before and after its display. In fact, the most significant signals from the gymnast indicating the performativity of their display are given before and after the routine, in the form of the salute to the judges, the bodily carriage and deportment used in entering the arena, and in the ascent to and descent from the podium.

The routine of a gymnast as designated by the Code of Points produced by the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG), begins with the gymnast's first movement and essentially ends with the last moment of stillness. This is a slight paraphrasing of FIG's description, which refer to the end of the routine as the 'reaching of the last position'.³²⁸ However, each move in gymnastics is taught through its division into phases, and the last of these is always the landing, which is the achievement of stillness through the ability to control and stop motion. At different points in the performance, stillness and bursts of movement are equally desired and penalised. For example, if a gymnast is performing a number of acrobatic skills in sequence on the Balance Beam, they are awarded bonus points. This depends on continuous and uninterrupted movement between these separate skills, and any pause in-between these would cause the bonus marks to be withheld. Conversely, since the debut of Olga Korbut in 1972, it had become a feature

³²⁸ Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique, *2013 Code of Points: Women's Artistic Gymnastics*, (Lausanne: Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique, 2013), Section 13, p. 2. See <http://www.fig-docs.com/Media/Codes%20of%20Points%202013%20-%202016/WAG/2013-2016%20WAG%20CoP.pdf> (Accessed 26 April 2016).

of the Floor Exercise routines for the female gymnast to pause for a couple of seconds in the corner of the mat before each diagonal pass, which acted as a moment to take a deep breath and to focus concentration. In the 2013-2016 Code of Points, however, moves to return a balance in the sport between artistry and difficult acrobatics saw these corner pauses classed as a deductible error. However, moments of pause or stillness are equally rewarded as a clean completion or landing during the routine. Moreover, in events such as the men's Rings – often referred to as the 'Still Rings' and less frequently the 'Steady Rings'³²⁹ – it is the essence of the exercise to complete swinging movement on the Rings before bringing that movement to a halt in wholly still positions held up in the air for at least two seconds. It is desired and considered 'stylish' if the gymnast is able to raise their head while doing so, which creates an illusion of ease over the reality of the exertion in holding this still pose mid-air.

As previously referred to, the performance of the gymnast extends beyond the beginning and ending of the actually competed routines through various signals. The deportment of the gymnasts is one of these signals, acting as a code of gestures even when not competing, demonstrating their artistry, embodied ideals, and bodily control and regulation. This is particularly pronounced in the deportment of the female gymnast, and has its roots in the importance of ballet to the training and performance of gymnastics. Previously, marks could be deducted if the female gymnast's deportment is not satisfactory when she came to, and down from the podium.

There are a number of dance traditions that have contributed to Artistic Gymnastics as a discipline, but the one that is the most physically present and valued is ballet (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3). This has its roots in

³²⁹ These have had a number of other names throughout the history of the apparatus, also being known as the Flying Rings and Roman Rings.

the importance of ballet to the training and performance of gymnastics, which under the Soviet system went hand-in-hand: indeed, many young girls moved from balletic training, gymnastics and ice-skating as their training progressed. USSR gymnast Larisa Latynina, for example, first began her training in ballet, before switching to gymnastics. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 are taken from a coaching manual dedicated specifically to the women's Floor Exercise, published in 1977 in Russia and in 1987 in the UK, authored by Soviet coaches and choreographers Vladimir Zaglada and Tatyana Lisitskaya. That a second chart was given specifically for ballet indicates – what the first chart does not fully convey – that ballet has a special significance for gymnastics, not matched by folk or national dance, although they play their own parts. What is interesting in this second chart is that while it details various moves and steps within the choreography for the Floor Exercise, the bodily carriage associated with ballet and prized within gymnastics is seemingly so obvious that it goes unmentioned.

While ballet was an intrinsic part of gymnastics training in the centralised Soviet training system, in Western nations – where there was no such equivalent – it was recognised that in order to provide gymnasts with 'an edge' at home and for a chance of success on the international circuit, a private ballet training and/or a choreographer was necessary. The 'Russian style' is a phrase often used by commentators to describe the stylistic flair that this grounding in ballet gives to the individual gymnast, as can be seen in Figure 4.4, in which Russian gymnast Aliya Mustafina stands with her feet in classical ballet's third position, versus the regular feet positioning of American gymnast Gabrielle Douglas. This additional expense undoubtedly contributed to the barriers to reaching the elite levels of the sport, giving it the aura of an upper middle-class pursuit. As an example, in the biography of former United States 1986 Gymnastics National Champion Jennifer Sey (the daughter of a dentist), she describes how her mother:

employed a dance coach to hone my balance beam and floor exercise routines... I went there twice a week for special instruction in dance for gymnastics... She [her dance coach] taught me how to finish moves with elite perfection, with grace and poise, flexibility, 'amplitude,' and extension. Over and over, I'd practice the same dance moves – leaps, tour jetés, double turns, splits that went beyond 180 degrees.³³⁰

Outlining this particular strand within the history of ballet and its legacy in terms of current technique and notions of 'tradition', sociologist Jean Van Delinder describes:

the form of classical ballet as it is known in the West today originated in European court dance in the 17th century influenced by folk dances. The stylistic etiquette of the body, including the five positions of the feet were derived from fencing. These innovations all contributed to the exaggerated, noble carriage of the body, along with the artificial turning out of the legs and feet at the hips characteristic of classical ballet today. This 'turnout' allowed the dancer to perform physical feats such as jumps, turns and extension (lifting).³³¹

To go one step further back – and to partly explain the appeal of this bodily carriage to gymnastics – such a deportment was formed out of the idea of physiologically correct body posture. Correct in the sense of a full, proper extension of the body's natural posture: the reason that gymnasts must point their toes is that in doing so, it is physiologically impossible for all the muscles in the leg to not be fully tightened.

³³⁰ J. Sey, *Chalked Up: Inside Elite Gymnastics' Merciless Coaching, Overzealous Parents, Eating Disorders, and Elusive Olympic Dreams*, (New York, NY: William Morrow, 2008), p. 52-53.

³³¹ J. Van Delinder, 'Dance as Experience: Pragmatism and Classical Ballet', *Social Thought & Research*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 2000, p. 243.

Likewise, the turning out of the foot familiar to the five positions of ballet is impossible to prevent when the buttocks are fully tensed. Therefore, to move with this deportment in the present day (as in past decades), the gymnast carries forth the meanings of this bodily carriage – of nobility, of propriety – alongside newer cultural significations – of tradition, of artistry, elitism, and Western ideals and values. To move in this way also imbues the gymnast with specific attributes and characteristics. In a 1952 documentary series on the theme of grace throughout the animal and natural world, the episode focused on humans' notion of gymnastics, in parts using footage from the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympic Games. The narrator (John Kieran) directs the viewer:

Now I want you to notice that this girl here is going through a lot of exercises that are standard practice technique for ballet dancers. There's a good deal in gymnastics that is exactly the same as the training for the ballet. That is, you need rhythm, balance, control and confidence in your act.³³²

Thus, deportment and balletic training are equated with the mental and emotional attributes of confidence in terms of the gymnastic performance. Gymnasts do not move with this deportment in the training gym, only in the competition arena (and perhaps other public appearances), denoting that this is a specific deportment to be performed when the gymnast is aware that they are being watched and judged. This kind of bodily carriage has a stiffness and rigidity to it, which we should understand as contributing to a reading of the female gymnast especially as a kind of moving statute, a point which will be further explored later in this chapter.

³³² Quotation from John Kieran's narrator's commentary, in the documentary film *Human Grace*. End Credits read 'A Schnee-Moss Production, Distributed by Alamanac Films Inc, Copyright 1952,' and it appears to have been part of a wider series on the subject of 'grace'. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGPpDXpfX6o> (Accessed 26 April 2016).

iii) Writing Gymnastics: Expression versus Function

There are many overlaps in the terminology used by dance and the Olympic discipline of Artistic Gymnastics, including choreography, composition, musicality and expression. Equally, there are many phrases and framings which have been used for some time that are particular to the sport, for example 'feminine grace' and the specificities behind the use of 'artistry' as an adjective in the Code of Points and almost as a code word for specific ideals and values when used in internal dialogues within the sport, as discussed in Chapter One. The overlaps that do exist, however, point to the interlocked histories of dance and gymnastics at various junctures in the understanding of bodily movement and expression in Western thought. It does remain, however, difficult to fully tease apart the history of artistic and rhythmic gymnastics vis-à-vis dance, Eurythmic and other twentieth-century systems of movement – especially the women's discipline – due to the ever-changing nature of Artistic Gymnastic and in the many subtle remnants that remain alongside those that are more pronounced.

However, what can be said is that the strong influence of ballet within Artistic Gymnastics was a contribution to the sport from the Russian tradition. Gymnastics had arrived in Russia through the military and physical education reforms of the teacher, anatomist, physician and social reformer Peter Franzevich Lesgaft (1837- 1909). Establishing himself through his writings on naturalistic gymnastics and the history of sport in Europe and ancient Greece, in 1875 he was commissioned by the Russian Military Ministry to travel throughout Europe to study various forms of physical education. His research on physical culture was widely implemented, and the State Institute of Physical Education, St. Petersburg (now the Lesgaft National State University of Physical Education, Sport and Health) was founded on his teachings. Two international innovators and systems of movement were to pass through Moscow and St. Petersburg, both

contributing to the wider impact on the Russian intelligentsia of dance, movement and gymnastics in this period. The first was a demonstration tour in Russia by the Swiss music educator Emile Jaques-Dalcroze in January 1912, organised by Prince Sergei Mikhailovitch Volonsky, a member of the Russian aristocracy, who had served as Director of the Imperial Theatres between 1899 and 1902 and later lectured at the Institute of Rhythm, Moscow. In the same year, Volonsky created a rhythmic gymnastics course in St. Petersburg, although World War I hindered his progress as a proponent of Dalcroze's system. Meanwhile, in Moscow, the arrival in 1921 of the 'Mother of Modern Dance' Isadora Duncan, had been preceded by the Eurhythmics programme at the State Institute of Physical Education, St. Petersburg, becoming a mandatory course for all students, with the later establishment of an Art of Movement department.

From 1924 onwards, the dance community and infrastructure began to be politically persecuted in Russia. This started with a decree from the Moscow authorities that led to the closure of the majority of private dance studios, leading to further containment of dance due to its 'increasingly evident dissonance with the official ideology of Soviet culture,' as curator Natalia Kuryumova describes. Its 'cultivation of individualism' was also cited, however, by the 1940s competitions for Rhythmic Gymnastics that had begun to take place in the Soviet Union. Despite this, it would take until 1984 for Rhythmic Gymnastics to be officially accepted as an Olympic discipline. Rhythmic Gymnastics as a discipline maintains a much stronger sense of its ties to dance than its sister discipline. The 'History of Rhythmic Gymnastics' section of the FIG website cites the founder of classical ballet Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), François A. Delsarte (1811-1871), Isadora Duncan (1877-1927) and Emile-Jacques Dalcroze (1865-1950) as central to the making of the sport as it

exists today.³³³ No such names are outlined in the 'history' section on the Artistic Gymnastics page, despite these contributors having an equally important influence in the form the sport currently has.

The wider affinities between dance and gymnastics also extend to the fact that the discipline has created a notation system for itself, used to document selected movements in written form. The notation system is primarily applied in communication between the FIG and coaches (see Figure 4.5), to express the skill being described by the governing body in a third and visual means, and by judges – as a mandatory manner of recording during the scoring process – the other two means being the written name given to each skill performed and the literal illustrations of the move in stages for various literature. Elite gymnasts will probably see the notation system in various paperwork surrounding their practice, but are unlikely to be fluent themselves in understanding its symbols. In judging, the notation symbols for the performed skills must be recorded simultaneously to the judges writing down the deductions for the same skills, the deductions are then added up to arrive at the final score. Before competitions, all gymnasts submit 'sheets' to the judging panel, which inform the judges what moves they will perform and what the corresponding difficulty scores for these are. However, the main body of the judging panel is forbidden to look at these sheets during the competition itself. The notation symbols therefore act as shorthand for the judges to record the skills that they have seen, and can be referenced when the gymnast falls, performs a different routine than planned, and in the case of appeals against the given score or accusation of judging inconsistencies or corruptions. It is interesting – and perhaps indicative of the pressure on subjective sports from the International Olympic Committee – that the notation system continues to be used, despite the application within competition of high-definition video rewind technology for similar purposes.

³³³ Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique, *About Rhythmic Gymnastics*, Available at <http://www.fig-gymnastics.com/site/page/view?id=261> (Accessed 26 April 2016).

Notation symbols are a visual language and a form of semiotics, and can be traced back historically as far as any form of written language. The attention to the body's movement within attempts to create new notation systems, likewise recognising that this is a language in itself, thus the notation of movement is a translation of another language. Sports performance analysts Hughes and Frank note that 'the Egyptians, thousands of years ago, made use of hieroglyphs to read dance, and the Romans employed a primitive method of notation for recording salutary gestures.'³³⁴ From the fifteenth century onwards, the primary focus of notation systems in terms of bodily movement was in recording dance patterns and steps, for posterity. During the Renaissance period, court dances were notated by using letters denoting specific steps along the staff of the music, for example 'r' denoting *révérence*, and 'b' for *branle*. A significant change in our understanding came with the choreography of Romantic dance by Italian dance theoretician Carlo Blasis (1795-1878).³³⁵ He did not record his work using a notation system, but in 1820 published his dance manual, *An Elementary Treatise upon the Theory and Practice of the Art of Dancing*. Interestingly, it has been argued that Blasis believed in 'dance as a gymnastic endeavour that developed grace, supple strength and symmetry.'³³⁶ This treatise has been described by dancer, historian and theorist Mark Franko as charting for the first time 'not only the *what* but the *how* of dance.'³³⁷ It is worth comparing an illustration from Blasis's treatise (see Figure 4.6) to a gymnastics illustration of the time (see Figure 4.7): these share a body-centred approach and overlap visually, and both appear as if they are a precursor to the sequential imaging of movement that would arrive into public consciousness some three decades later in the form of the chronophotograph, as will shortly be explored.

³³⁴ J.M. Franks and M. Hughes, *Notational analysis of sport*, (London: E & FN Spon, 1997).

³³⁵ M. Franko, 'Writing for the Body: Notation, Reconstruction, and Reinvention in Dance', *Common Knowledge*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2011, p. 6.

³³⁶ M.E. Snodgrass, *The Encyclopedia of World Ballet*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), p. 49.

³³⁷ M. Franko, 'Writing for the Body', p. 6.

From the middle of the eighteenth century, a number of new systems of notation proliferated, which attempted to use notation systems to more holistically capture the full performance of the dancer through various means. The most famous of these was Slovakian-born dance theorist Rudolph Laban's 'Labanotation', which was created in response to the three primary issues identified in the creation of notation systems by Laban.³³⁸ These were, firstly, to accurately document complex bodily movement; secondly, to note down this movement using functional and easily read means; and thirdly, to create a system that could keep pace with new developments in dance.³³⁹ Franko describes how this system 'analyzed and described movement analysis in body-centered terms: weight, space, time, flow', and is one of the most widely used systems while remaining fairly complex and relegated to the professional realm.³⁴⁰ Figure 4.8 shows an example of Labanotation, while Figures 4.9 and 4.10 are example excerpts from systems which followed Labanotation in the twentieth century: Benesh and Eshkol.

A separate development has been the evolution of notation in sport, specifically for the purpose of performance analysis. This objective has from the outset imprinted itself upon the format of such systems, which have been designed to collect numerical and statistical information, to feed back into the sport with the ultimate goal of enhancing competitive performance. Audiences are becoming increasingly familiar in objective or ball game sports with seeing on-screen statistics used in the commentary, during the game, breaks and half-time. The information collected ranges from numbers of fouls, goals and corners, to the percentage of ball possession by a team, and where this possession takes place on the court or field (see Figure 4.11 for an example from tennis). A case of a notation system used in a subjectively judged sport are the symbols used in boxing to collate data on the variety of punches within the fight – jabs, hooks,

³³⁸ Franks and Hughes, *Notational analysis of sport*.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ Franko, 'Writing for the Body', p. 6.

upper cuts, misses, body punches, holdings, knock-downs, etc. – also allowing for these to be recorded in sequential order. This system (see Figure 4.12) is based on letters and geometric keyboard symbols, ordered chronologically according to the rounds of the match. In some respects, it would not be difficult to argue that boxing's system shares some characteristics in a theoretical sense with Renaissance court dance notation.

Notation for Artistic Gymnastics exposes itself, perhaps unwittingly, to the contradictory position it occupies between sport and artistry, between expressive movement and technically set-down acrobatic skills. What is perhaps the most surprising component within the notation system is that it is not used to document all the elements of the gymnasts' routine within the routines to which artistry is applied most significantly: in the women's Floor Exercise or Balance Beam apparatus. Within these competitive exercises, only ten moves – acrobatic skills, leaps and jumps – are recorded on paper and included in the difficulty score, although the execution and total scores take into account much more than this – including dance, choreography, artistry and the mastery of the performed routine. This doesn't mean that these undocumented elements are not marked: mistakes on these will be penalised while those completed with excellence add to the overall score. However, neither the notation system nor submitted paperwork is used to document dance elements, pose, pause or stillness. Of course, for a sport so preoccupied with the idea of 'artistry' we could surmise that this is to leave space for improvisation and personal expression. However, the reality is that – at least from the 1960s onwards – the fierce competition in elite-level competition brought about strictly choreographed and repetitively drilled routines, created for the female gymnast by a team of professional coaches and dance instructors.

Therefore, written descriptive accounts – of which to the best of my knowledge there are few – and video/radio footage are likely to be the only sources to comprehensively access documentation of the choreography for historical gymnastics routines. An exception to this are the extensive written descriptions of 82 gymnastics routines from the Women's competition in journalist Minot Simons II 1995 publication *Women's Gymnastics a History: 1966 To 1974*, charting the routines of the winning gymnasts and team in both World Championship and Olympic competitions over this period.³⁴¹ The accounts given by the author frequently detail moments of pose, artistry, pause and stillness – using this same vocabulary – which acknowledges the presence and contribution of these components to the routine and overall performance. For example, below are excerpts from the lengthy account of Ludmilla Turischeva's Floor Exercise routine at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games:

She started along a side a few paces to her right from a corner... She then continued turning, leaning first with her left hand and then her right hand on the floor, and made a full turn to her left to pose with her right knee and leg on the floor, her left foot in front with her left knee bent, her arms making graceful gestures... She posed in a pose that she likes... She turned back to the corner, posed again standing statuesquely erect, turned to face along her first diagonal and prepared for her final pass.³⁴²

In many cases here, the use of the word pose could be replaced by 'pause' or a brief 'stillness'. This is not serendipitous but in fact originates in the etymological roots of the word 'pose', originating in the Greek

³⁴¹ M. Simons II, *Women's Gymnastics a History: Volume I – 1966 to 1974*, (Carmel, CA: Welwyn Publishing Company, 1995), front flap.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 239-240.

‘pausis’, ‘to stop’, developing into the Late Latin ‘pausare’: to stop, cease, rest.³⁴³ Therefore, to strike a pose and pause the motion of the gymnastic performance are often one and the same. Does this then mean that the performance is not continuous if the movement is not endless throughout its duration? And would it make the gymnastics routine a less successful or artistic display if this were the case? These questions will later accentuate the tensions between stillness and movement in gymnastics photography, which adds further layers to these contradictions.

As briefly mentioned prior, the skin of the female gymnast is smooth, hairless, matte and devoid of sweat. The skin-tight nature of her leotard and the preference for the colour white, or for flesh-coloured panels alluding to nakedness – or at least the smooth transition between skin and swathes of draping fabric – is shared with the imagery of classical statues. The use of chalk onto the skin is to absorb perspiration and provide additional grip on pieces of equipment. I would like to trace a line between this practice and nineteenth-century companies of ‘posers’ who followed on from the ‘Attitudes’ or Mimoplastic art of Lady Emma Hamilton, first described by Goethe in 1787 (see Figure 4.13). Hamilton created a series of poses, based on the stances of classical statues, which she performed wearing an Ancient Greek-like tunic, and it is these references that sets posing apart from the tableaux vivant.³⁴⁴ Due to the classical references, the elite pastime of posing was seen as a high art form, offering enlightened contemplation and reflection for audiences.³⁴⁵ As described by English Professor Carrie J. Preston, later companies in the mid-1800s ‘developed a method of covering body tights with flour to present the illusion of plaster.’³⁴⁶ These attitudes

³⁴³ Etymological roots outlined in the entry for ‘pose’ in the Oxford Dictionaries. See <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/pose> (Accessed 28 April 2016).

³⁴⁴ C.J. Preston, ‘Posing Modernism: Delsartism in Modern Dance and Silent Film’, *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 61, No. 2, May 2009, p. 216.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

and posers would strike poses, in one moment frozen, the next coming to life again, before moving into another pose and stillness.

Almost a century later, a combination of tableaux and posing were to play a central part in Leni Riefenstahl's controversial film of the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympic Games, *Olympia*. As Susan Sontag argues regarding *Triumph of the Will*, Riefenstahl's frequent use of tableaux's creates a theatrical fluctuation between stasis and motion. German cultural critic *Siegfried* Kracauer was the first to write of this particular ploy by Riefenstahl, referring to the merging of the posed body with the artform of the classical statue as the 'living ornament'.³⁴⁷ Film scholar Brigitte Peucker suggests that *Triumph of the Will* has 'a choreography as well as a dramaturgy', and in the case of *Olympia*, this is undoubtedly shown – the opening scenes of nude female dancers recalling Riefenstahl's own training in *Ausdruckstanz* (German Expressive Dance).³⁴⁸ These initial dance scenes were filmed in Athens, and visually act as a direct descendent of Wincklemann's idea of 'noble simplicity and serene grandeur' regarding both whiteness and the form of classical sculpture, as described in Chapter Two. Riefenstahl adds to Winckelmann's equation Nazism and the belief of the superiority of the Aryan race.

Thus, the practice of chalking in gymnastics brings forth a number of visual connotations: of posing and the stasis-motion of the tableaux, but also of fascism and particular forms of politicised whiteness. Taking Figures 4.14 and 4.15 as examples – showing the Russian gymnasts Yelena Produnova with legs chalked up to her knees on the Floor Exercise and Aliya Mustafina heavily chalking her ankle and foot in preparation for performance – allows us not only to imagine what the flour-covered tights of the poser

³⁴⁷ B. Peucker, 'The Fascist Choreography: Riefenstahl's Tableaux', *Modernism/Modernity*, Vol. 11, No. 2, April 2004, p. 283.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

companies might have looked like, but also demonstrate that this practice in gymnastics is not without a precedent. Equally, we can think of this preparation of the gymnastic body as similar to the practices of applying white powder and paste to the skin as a cosmetic or as war paint – made from arsenic and lead among other substances – dating back to the Ancient Greeks and found in cultures the world over. The contradictions within gymnastic movement with posing, pausing, motion and stillness are exaggerated by the practice of chalking, and the visual connotations these conjure. In the gymnastic performance, the length and manner of moments of stillness, pose and pausing do not qualify the performance as a *tableau vivant* – defined by the artist and writer Aura Satz as ‘living pictures... [consisting] of people posing silently and motionlessly, in imitation of a painting or sculpture, existent or imaginary.’³⁴⁹ Satz goes on to describe the *tableau vivant* as the ‘Hardening into the rigor mortis of the “tableau mort”, so to speak, without truly dying... if and when it slackens, this is only so as to shift into the next pose, the next statue. Or to snap out of it and back to normal fluid life.’³⁵⁰

Yet, the above quote feels as if it could be applied directly to gymnastic performance, and this tension between the living, dead and stillness is significant in determining here what residue still remains of early physical education’s penchant for Greek classical sculptures within more contemporary gymnastics form. Even in recent footage of gymnastics competitions, equations between gymnastics and the Greco-Roman world still proliferate. Figure 4.16 – a creation of the British Broadcasting Corporation without reference to the event’s host city of Tokyo – juxtaposes the gymnastic body with classical architecture, and in terms of scale compares the stature of the headless male gymnast with that of the gods. Figure 4.17, a light-hearted fan-made montage but with the same end result, collages the body of a white, polished Greek statue with

³⁴⁹ A. Satz and J. Wood (ed.), *Articulate Objects: Voice, Sculpture and Performance*, (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), p. 162.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

the head of Russian gymnast Alexei Nemov, alluding to the 'gymnastic gods' and playing upon his 'sex appeal' and popularity with audiences throughout his senior career from 1994 until 2004.

With the saturated white tone of Mustafina's ankle in mind, I would like to ask what aspects of the tableau mort might be useful in understanding a coming in-and-out of the statuesque. It is well-known that the Greek statues were not originally the white colour we encounter now, yet this is the hue we associate them with. Comparing the white chalked ankle of Mustafina with the models and casts from the early 1900s in Figure 4.18, I wonder if we can think of this whitened ligament of hers in the stillness of the pose as statue: is it one and the same as the models and casts, can it be the 'temporary cadaver' that Satz speaks of? Does the gymnast play at becoming a temporary statue, and do we as spectators in the temporary hiatus of movement forego our knowledge of their breathing, moving aliveness and read them as classical statues?

iv) Motion-Capture

The discussion here has thus far focused on the live, physical performance of the gymnast within the particular confinements of the competition arena. However, the capture of stillness and movement in the performance of gymnastics is further complicated by the mediation of gymnastics through the lens of the photographic and video camera. It should be stated from the beginning here that much of my research draws on texts focused on photography and cinema, and that a majority of the sources I will subsequently refer to (televised broadcasts, video games) do not fit into either of these categories. What they share, however, is a shared sense of looking, watching and viewing, which I would like to extend upon and borrow from to consider the multiple ways gymnastics is screened. I would first like to outline here the

historical backdrop to the notion of photographic stillness, and the role of the athletic body from the outset within the origins of photography, which bleed into white, Western notions of movement and the body from the late nineteenth century especially. I would then like to expand upon this by discussing the suspended gymnastic body – moments of stillness created by the photographic lens removed from the reality of the performance – and the extension of this into the use of slow-motion in video capture and playback. The ultimate aim of these explorations is to demonstrate that the lineage of these visualisations draws upon connotations of the statuesque, classical body, and somewhat conversely, of flight, celestuality and ethereality, all of which are connected to whiteness as outlined in Chapter Two and which will be further unpacked here.

All of the major photographic innovators worked with gymnasts: Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904), Étienne-Jules Marey (1830-1904), the lesser known German sports scientist Ernst Kohlrausch (1850-1923), Harold Edgerton (1903-1990) and his mentee Gjon Mili (1904-1984). In the case of Kohlrausch, his contribution to the development of photography developed out of his work in teaching gymnastics as physical education, and a desire to demonstrate its underlying principles in physics in order to advance these teachings.³⁵¹ One of the closest associates of Marey was the gymnast Georges Demenÿ, who was a photographic innovator in his own right, and also appears as a model in some of the images produced with Marey. Gymnastics groups and networks were immediately aware of, and followed, photographic developments, evidenced by Marey's introduction of German physiologist Hermann von Helmholtz to Muybridge during his first travel in Europe in 1881, as just one example.³⁵² From the perspective of photography, there are few explanations as to what specifically may have led Muybridge, Edgerton or Mili to gymnastics. However, we can hypothesise that its appeal could firstly have laid in its widespread

³⁵¹ C. Kemp, 'The chronophotographer Ernst Kohlrausch and the physics of gymnastics', *Presenting Pictures*, No. 4, 2004, p. 44.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

prominence, and thus that audiences would be familiar enough with gymnastic movements to interpret their images. The same has been said of Muybridge's use of equine movement at a time when America's dependence on horses for transport, widespread use throughout the Civil War, and their symbolism of modernity and wealth would have made them a familiar sight for audiences of his chronophotographs, as art historian John Ott has outlined.³⁵³ Secondly, there may have been technical advantages to the fixed nature of gymnastics apparatuses such as the Parallel Bars and Vault, in the sense that their fixed location could possibly have made the placing of multiple cameras and lenses a less difficult, time-intensive and expensive procedure.

This relationship between the development of photography, a preoccupation with movement, and modernity – especially in the forms of scientific progress and rhythm – were tied to the period's advancing industrialisation. In a similar vein to the embracing of dynamic movement of technology and mechanisation by the Italian Futurists, historian Anson Rabinbach has described the widespread adoption of the idea of a set amount of energy contained within individual human movement by physiologists across Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, especially in France and Italy, and later Sweden. The increased use of machines and move towards faster, mass and efficient production methods led to the desire to be able to measure the energy expended by particular movements, and thus a greater understanding of movement generally. It is at this point when expending 'unnecessary' energy on the aesthetic elements of gymnastics became feminised, and when for men's gymnastics 'the aesthetics and ethical idealism were removed in order to save energy' as noted by sports historian J.A. Mangan.³⁵⁴ These attempts at measurements of bodily movement were mirrored in the same time frame as the expansion of anthropometry in recording the body's physical dimensions, with the male puffed-out chest deemed to be of particular significance at the time (refer back to Figure 1.9).

³⁵³ J. Ott, 'Iron Horses: Leland Stanford, Eadweard Muybridge, and the Industrialised Eye', *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 2005, p. 412.

³⁵⁴ J.A. Mangan, *Making European Masculinities: Sport, Europe, Gender*, (Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), p. 106.

There are particular tropes or motifs in terms of the commercial photographic shots of gymnastics: particular moments in routines and on pieces of equipment caught repetitively, over decades, irrespective of the individuality of the gymnast. Examples of these 'tropes' or 'motifs' include shots of landings, of gymnasts re-catching the bar after release moves, of the full extension in splits and leaps, the gymnast captured exactly upside down, moments of dance, focused concentration and of the still pose. In some respects, we only begin to realise how rife the regularity of these images is when we notice the moments of the performance that the camera does not catch, for example, the relative lack of images capturing the fallen gymnast. In the context of the existing academic literature, studies of the manner in which the gymnastics body have been captured by modern photographic means have come from sports science, sports sociology and media studies. One example of such a study, conducted by sports sociologists Natalie Barker-Ruchti and Julia Weber, worked with four commercial agency archives. Images were categorised according to the apparatus the gymnast performed on, or the type of move that had been captured when performing – such as acrobatics, in-flight, mounts, dismounts, handstands, pirouettes, leaps, rolls, and artistic poses – specifically disregarding 'award ceremonies, private life, training, and before and after performances'.³⁵⁵ Such a methodology of sticking to categories the sport has created within itself not only misses significant moments by overlooking the images that these agencies did not have a commercial interest in, but also dislocates these images from their place within the history and practice of photography.

The reoccurrence of these particular shots is made especially visible in artist Jo Longhurst's 2012 large-scale photographic installation work, *A-Z*, an alphabetical tracing of gymnastics moves. As can be seen in a detail of the work in Figure 4.19, a number of images appropriated from commercial outlets of gymnastics from different nations and across decades, performances of the same move around grouped around each

³⁵⁵ N. Barker-Ruchti and J. Weber, 'Bending, Flirting, Floating, Flying: A Critical Analysis of Female Figures in 1970s Gymnastics Photographs', *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 2012, No. 29, p. 26-27.

letter. What becomes increasingly striking, however, is that while we would expect the move to be performed uniformly – it is the constant throughout this collection of images after all – this uniformity is matched also by the camera angle, the crop of the image, ratio and scale.

By and large, these capture moments of action, speed and momentum, alluding to the pull of gravity, and convey the dynamic movement that has led up to, and will continue after, this specific moment captured by the camera. These action shots are an exaggerated version of the cinematic conception of photographic stillness described by art historian Jonathan Friday, who reminds us that ‘cinematic influences upon thought about photography have also resulted in a conception of stillness as the extractedness of an individual image from the real or implied series of images that precede or follow it.’³⁵⁶ In addition to these tropes and motifs is a separate genre of gymnastic photograph, less conventional, and not as closely linked visually as the other motifs appear to be. I would like to refer to this genre as the suspended gymnast: their body caught and fixed in a moment which appears not just to be defying gravity and time but to be without it entirely, where there are no clues of movement, flight or exertion, and in which the gymnast appears as if levitating.

Before looking at this specific genre of the suspended gymnast, I would like to outline the manner in which both these typologies relate to early photographic innovations. In initial camera apparatuses, the exposure lasted between 20 and 120 seconds, during which the sitter was required to sit as still and as stiffly as possible in order to create a clear image.³⁵⁷ As Friday notes – and of heightened relevance here – ‘it took

³⁵⁶ J. Friday, *Stillness Becoming: Reflections on Bazin, Barthes and Photographic Stillness*, in D. Green and J. Lowry (eds.), *Stillness and Time: Photography and the Moving Image*, (Brighton: Photoforum & Photoworks, 2006), p. 41.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

many decades before photographers began deliberately to blur parts of the image to suggest movement', the kind of image we would come to most associate with (commercial) sports photography.³⁵⁸ One of the manners in which the 'scientific progress' of the late nineteenth century manifested itself in terms of photography was in the drive to reduce the exposure time, gaining the ability to explore via making visible things the naked human eye couldn't. Muybridge was able to reduce the exposure time from 1/500th to 1/1000th of a second,³⁵⁹ which Edgerton and Mili would in turn further decrease to less than a millionth of a second.³⁶⁰

Such glimpses hitherto unseen conferred upon movement an aura of spectacle in the 1890s, a shift that not coincidentally took place alongside the founding of the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique in 1881 and the staging of the first modern Olympic Games in 1896. Images could be 'snapped', stolen from their rhythmic, flowing reality. These images were immediately criticised by those who sought for photography to be considered a fine art form, in that its capturing of the moment placed it at odds with the 'timeless qualities of the ideal, especially the ideals of grace or repose,' as outlined by film scholar Laurent Guido and photography historian Olivier Lugon.³⁶¹ Some of the earliest moves towards cinema, such as Thomas Alva Edison's Kinetoscope, consisted of a single take, with figures positioned against a blanket black backdrop, locating them somewhere between photography and cinema. Gymnastics, and physical culture generally, were immediate topics for the Kinetoscope, with W.K.L. Dickson producing *Amateur Gymnast, No. 2* in 1894 (sometimes also referred to as *American Gymnast*, see Figure 4.20) and in 1896, a

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ See <http://www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/muybridge/muybridge.html> (Accessed 28 April 2016).

³⁶⁰ See http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/permanent/windows/south/harold_edgerton.html (Accessed 28 April 2016).

³⁶¹ L. Guido and O. Lugon (eds.); *Between Still and Moving Images*, (New Barnet: John Libbey Pub. Limited, 2012), p. 7.

special feature on celebrity bodybuilder Eugene Sandow.³⁶² Equally, dance was a popular subject for early cinematic experiments. As film scholar Tom Gunning has described:

The subjects of early cinema in the 1890s reveal a fascination with movement in itself that I believe should be viewed not simply as the demonstration of a technical accomplishment, but precisely as an aesthetic focusing on movement as a spectacle worthy of attention. Thus the hundreds of early films of dances demonstrate the fit between subject and device: dancing images showing images of dancing.³⁶³

It is this end comment of the first captures of motion of bodies in motion – ‘dancing images showing images of dancing’ – which fascinates me, and I argue is equally applicable to gymnastics.

Many phrases have been used to think around these snapshot images of movement, of instants gleaned from movement that the eye cannot see. Photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson’s ‘decisive moment’ and photography historian Estelle Jussim’s ‘eternal moment’ are just two examples. Bresson’s definition of the ‘decisive moment’ in many respects captures the essence of the suspended gymnast, describing that ‘inside movement there is one moment at which the elements in motion are held in balance. Photography must seize upon this moment and hold immobile the equilibrium of it.’³⁶⁴ The choice of the words ‘balance’ and ‘equilibrium’ suggest to me the search for a truth, in which my selection of the moment of the suspended

³⁶² J. Lewis, *Essential Cinema: An Introduction to Film Analysis*, (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2013), p. 209.

³⁶³ T. Gunning, ‘The “Arrested” Instant: Between Stillness and Motion’, in Guido and Lugon, *Between Still and Moving Images*, p. 27.

³⁶⁴ Cartier-Bresson quoted in E. Jussim, *The eternal moment: essays on the photographic image*, (New York, NY: Aperture, 1989), p. 52.

gymnast falls down in one sense: that the genre of gymnastic photography is a falsification, creating a stillness from a moment of intense dynamism and velocity.

There are two images through which I first began to contemplate this particular sub-category of gymnastics photograph: the first being artist Jo Longhurst's 2012 photographic work *Suspension (I)* (see Figure 4.21) showing a member of Heathrow gymnastics team suspended horizontally, set against the backdrop of the training gym and her working teammates. The second is an image of Soviet gymnast Ludmilla Tourischeva (see Figure 4.22) shown mid-air between blocking from the vault and landing. In fact, such is the lack of movement that I initially needed to take a second, closer look at this photograph, searching for the springboard (or its absence) in order to be able to tell whether Tourischeva was arriving at or departing from the vault. What both these examples share is a horizontality of the body, but more significantly a weightlessness. For the female gymnast, such images recall scenes such as Sir John Everett Millais's oil painting *Ophelia* (1851-52, see Figure 4.23), inspired by Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, who drowns in the river, perhaps by accident or as suicide. Her brother Laertes is angered by the suggestion of suicide and proclaims that she will be an angel in heaven. In Millais's painting, she is seen surrounded by flowers, lifeless and floating, perhaps already between this word and the afterlife.

American gymnast Danell Leyva's 2012 pose for the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network ESPN 'The Body' issue (Figure 4.24) and Los Angeles-based conceptual artist Robert Kinmont's 1969/2005 work *8 Natural Handstands* (Figure 4.25) each underline that this stillness is not relegated to a horizontal pose. Figure 4.26 likewise demonstrates that this is not a new genre of gymnastics imagery, created with new technological developments, but rather a long-running thread which continues to surface. The image of Leyva is so weightless and distorting of gravity that it feels that if we were to rotate the image by 180

degrees, we would see that he is in fact hanging from the handle rather than balancing on one arm on the pommel. His face is expressionless, and while we know that his left arm and hand have been placed in such a way as to conceal the groin area, the relaxed position of this arm contributes to the sense of in exertion that a lack of gravity necessitates.

Kinmont's image propels us further towards an answer. Balanced atop a mountain peak, his handstand is not that of a professional gymnast, and admittedly, the sheer height of the location and proximity between any loss of balance and a serious, even life-threatening fall, strikes a pang of fear into the viewer.

Concurrent to this, however, the height that he reaches impart on the image a tone of spiritualism, his hands on Earth, but his feet reaching into the clouds and beyond. There is usually a contradiction in viewing the gymnastic body, in that it sends us visual signals of both weight – through muscular power, deductible exertion, and evidence of the pull of gravity – versus a lightness suggested by the height reached by gymnasts in frequent departure into the air, in release moves, jumps, somersaults, spins and dance. Lightness can be understood here to refer to the opposite of weight, but also sunlight, visible to the human eye. As film scholar Richard Dyer has outlined:

Movie lighting drew on nineteenth-century traditions of using and representing light that were explicitly indebted to North European painting, above all to Rembrandt and Vermeer, painting rediscovered in this period. This had provided, through its emphasis on domestic portraiture as opposed to classical and biblical subjects, a venerable model for photography in its bid for profitable respectability.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ Dyer, *White*, p. 114.

Dyer proceeds to equate light from the geographical North of Northern Europe as superior light, and describes how in film-making, it was northern light which directors have attempted to re-create, soft light shining from above, not directly but at an angle. It is this kind of light which bathes and rebounds of the still Tourischeva in Figure 4.23. The location of this light is also home to northern Europeans, second only to classical statues in Linnaeus's tenth *Systema Naturae* as outlined in Chapter Two, and the historical seat of Aryanism's ideals. The features held up as Aryan – pale, but healthy, blue eyes and blond haired – are those which have long been imparted on images of Jesus Christ, described by Dyer as the 'embodiment of Western humanity'.³⁶⁶ We thus began to understand the genre of the suspended gymnast as moving beyond not only the general spectacle of defying gravity, but also images of awe in their celestialty in a manner that other categories of commercial gymnastics photography do not encompass. These images are textbook examples of the muscular Christianity of the nineteenth century, and the religious transcendence Coubertin sought to invoke with the re-establishment of the modern Olympic Games. As Figure 4.27 demonstrates, created for the 2014 World Cup as a marketing stunt, imagery equating whiteness, Christianity, sport, and the transcendence of this Earth and the pull of gravity, continues to proliferate in new ways.

v) Towards New Ways of Looking: On Gymnastics in SlowMo

The writing of this thesis began in the autumn following the London 2012 Summer Olympic Games. One of the most striking aspects of the Artistic Gymnastics footage from these Games – departing from all previous coverage and described as a 'broadcasting milestone' – was the use of three-dimensional slow-

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

motion footage.³⁶⁷ A total of 230 hours of immersive 3D coverage of the London 2012 Games was made available to high-fee-paying viewers, covering the opening and closing ceremonies, as well as selected sports, of which gymnastics was one. A further augmentation was that over 40 High Super Slow Motion (HSSM) cameras were used during the Games. These cameras provide shots which freeze the athlete in motion in high definition and three-dimensions, before rotating them suspended in action, showing the audience all-around views of the competitor. As an example, in the high-definition slow-motion replays of the women's Artistic Gymnastics Vault event final, the winning gymnast Sandra Izbasa is seen blocking off the vaulting table into the air. During this motion, the camera was positioned towards the back-end of the vault table, so that we watch her coming towards us. As she reaches the full height of her vault and begins a twisting somersault, she is frozen in mid-air (see Figure 4.28), while the camera rotates to give us a side-on view, following which she is released back into slow-motion, and we watch Izbasa complete the move and make her landing. The freeze-frame in 35-millimetre film would be created manually by repeatedly printing and editing in a single frame, so that it would be beamed onto the screen for such a time that its stillness would be discernible to the human eye.³⁶⁸ While we as the viewer are totally aware that the footage of Izbasa's vault is digital – and pushing the parameters of digital – the freezing of her movement mid-air creates the same effect as the physical film freeze frame, described by Gunning as 'suddenly kick[ing] the viewer out from that form of viewing'.³⁶⁹

We are given this footage to watch directly after watching the original vault in full-motion and in slow-motion, from multiple camera angles. In comparison, the 1977 Women's Gymnastics European Championships held in Prague showed each performance once, from the vantage point of a single camera

³⁶⁷ Accessed: <https://www.olympic.org/news/a-window-for-the-world-london-2012-olympic-games-to-set-broadcasting-milestone> (Accessed 1 November 2019)

³⁶⁸ T. Gunning, 'The "Arrested" Instant', p. 28-29

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

position, with a single slow-motion replay of the same shot, indicated by a flashing 'R' in the top-right hand corner of the screen.³⁷⁰ The three-dimensional slow-motion replay of Izbasa feels almost to embody the Cubist objective to render into a single picture multiple views of the same subject. Of course, in this case these are not brought into a single image, but a single rolling reel of digital footage. In culmination, the three viewings of this single performance displayed to the screen viewer much more of the performance than the spectator in the arena would have seen with their own eyes – although there are of course video replays played on cinema-sized screens spread throughout the interior of the arena itself.

The quality and sense of space within the three-dimensional footage is noticeably different from the two versions previously selected for the viewer. In some respects, this particular way of watching feels as if gymnastics coverage has entered the territory of video-gaming. The Beijing 2008 Summer Olympic Games appear to be the first to have released an official video-game, which was expanded upon for London 2012 (see Figure 4.29), and individual commercial partnerships seeing release dates between games, for example, *Shawn Johnson Gymnastics* produced by Zoo Games for the Nintendo Wii released in November 2011 (see Figure 4.30).³⁷¹ It is interesting that these video games emulate moments of slow-motion and include the moving video camera shuttling along rails adjacent to the vault run-up, a moving camera technique first used by Leni Riefenstahl in *Olympia* (see Figure 4.31), her controversial film of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games as discussed earlier. All in all, there are new questions which arise out of these kinds of visualisation and the illusion of depth they create – of high-definition, three-dimensional slow-motion, and the immersive world of the video-game – to the relationship between the gymnast and the statuesque. In these, the gymnast becomes sculptural in a new sense, akin to the manner in which we

³⁷⁰ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTgoVfqTK0Y> (Accessed 28 April 2016).

³⁷¹ Release date as given by Amazon.co.uk, Available: <https://www.amazon.com/Shawn-Johnson-Gymnastics-Nintendo-Wii/dp/B003H00S3K> (accessed 28 April 2016).

might activate and observe a sculpture in an exhibition, walking around and encircling the sculpture to gain a fullest sense of its form, its life-like likeness.

The innovations of late-nineteenth-century photography innovators undoubtedly changed the manner in which we visualise and understand movement, but also substantially impacted the manner in which gymnastics has been taught, scored and measured ever since. It is difficult to date precisely when national training centres started using video cameras to film gymnasts in training, using the playback to visually communicate to gymnasts the errors in their performance, but it must have been but from the early 1990s onwards at least. I am able to date this to the 1990s in part due to archive footage used in the final scenes of Finnish artist Salla Tykkä's 2013 artist film *Giant* (see Figure 4.32), which show Romanian Olympic gymnast Simona Amânar who competed for her country between 1994 and 2000. She is shown as a young gymnast in training, watching playback of herself through the eyepiece, while the lens of the camcorder itself faces the audience.

As Ott has described, 'homo sapiens's modest set of twinned retinas paled in comparison to the Argus of the automated gaze.'³⁷² Gymnastics illustrations and instructions appear to have quickly adopted this vantage point. Figure 4.33 show gymnasts in motion captured by the aforementioned photography pioneer Muybridge in 1887, and in Figure 4.34 we see a manual creation of a gymnastics sequence to a similar effect, showing Soviet gymnast Olga Korbut on the Balance Beam at the 1972 Munich Summer Olympic Games. In comparison with early illustrations, for example Figure 4.35, the sequential motion captured by these photographic methods is substantially more complex in their tracing of the full spectrum of motion

³⁷² Ott, 'Iron Horses', p. 417.

within individual gymnastics movements. We are able to see the effect of these chronophotographs on the visual aids used to teach gymnastics (see Figure 4.36), which is taught in flight phases, i.e. the full movement broken down into defined stages. Perhaps the most impactful addition to the visualisation that the chronophotograph provided was the use of stroboscopic light by photographers such as Edgerton and Mili (see Figure 4.37) to condense the sequence of movement captured as separate plates in the chronophotograph into a single image. Such imagery, as evidenced by Figures 4.38 and 4.39, continues also to be prominent, and has entered the realm of animation and three-dimensional capturing. Such conceptions of gymnastic movement continue to make concrete the tensions between movement and stillness, due to the creation of moments of stillness within fluid movement that do not in fact exist. This was outlined by philosopher Henri Bergson in his 1907 work *Creative Evolution*, in which he described how 'every attempt to reconstitute change out of states implies the absurd proposition that movement is made out of immobilities.'³⁷³

vi) Conclusion

As charted in Chapter Two, the links between gymnastics, the statuesque and classical imagery stem out of a historical legacy, which through the writing of Winckelmann, extends to the conflation between whiteness and beauty. Analysis of the tension between stillness and movement officially inscribed in the discipline of Artistic Gymnastics reveals the manner in which the links between gymnastics, the statuesque and classical imagery are re-enacted and re-vitalised in contemporary performances, despite anxieties from within the sport about the continuity, flow and rhythm of gymnastic movement. These anxieties are embedded in various ways in the manner in which the sport is written down, and its understanding of the specific role of

³⁷³ Gunning, 'The "Arrested" Instant', p. 23.

dance forms, especially ballet, within its historical evolution. Further adding to these links are the complexities of how gymnastics is captured and mediated to us through the lens of the camera, in photography and film. These mediums themselves contain contradictions between movement and stillness, which are replicated and heightened by the presence of gymnastics. The notion of the statuesque, stillness in the physical performance and the capturing of the suspended gymnast in pose, contribute to the whiteness of the gymnastics body as light, celestial, deathly, frozen and of the classical mould.

Chapter Five:

Enquiries in the Mode of Practice

i) Introduction

It is the objective of this chapter to frame the curatorial practice component of this thesis as being part of the exact same research process which has led to the chapters preceding this, only that they have been articulated in an alternative form to the apparatus of academic writing. Through-out this period of doctoral study, I have often felt torn between the terms 'practice-based' and 'practice-led,' trying to understand which I felt represented most accurately the role of my practice within this thesis and period of enquiry. Practice-led denotes to me the prevalence of the practice over the writing; that the writing is in the service of the practice. I will therefore be referring to my own thesis as being practice-based, by which I would like it to be understood that both forms of the thesis are of equal standing and sit in-tandem with one another. I hope for the work completed in both written and practice forms to be understood as complementary, intersecting, interwoven and useful to their counterpart, whilst also at times diverging and having the right to do so. The majority of the practice has been produced and conceived of as for a public and an audience, but not entirely, as I will detail further throughout this chapter. Whilst my research has brought me into dialogue with a number of artists through this doctorate, there are two artists in particular whose exchange with me has been particularly valued and sustained: Jo Longhurst and Craig Mulholland, which I believe will be apparent to the reader through their re-occurrence across the curatorial projects to be discussed here. More than this – and to which I place a weight – the practice outputs created space for people within shared interests through my curated projects to come together, enter into dialogue, share information and experience discursive practices, film and artworks together. For myself, it allowed different ways to experiment, to process ideas, and to reach new lines of enquiry.

It has been my own conception and understanding throughout my doctoral study that there are three different kinds of knowledge which I have brought to this research. The first is information learned and analysed through reading, watching and the study of gymnastics, and its visual and material culture. The second is curatorial knowledge, a dialogue and creative process, working across a range of partnerships and with a sustained concentration towards selected artworks. The third is information that I know from my own childhood experiences of competitive gymnastics, through memory, sensory experience, doing, past learning and conversations with a small group of individuals who I have known for the vast majority of my lifetime. Often, I have struggled to find the right tone with which to put down in words this third kind of knowledge, or perhaps more accurately to balance the tone of writing I have for this knowledge with formal academic writing. These difficulties are in a way reflected here, in the sense that this chapter will take a more direct, plainer writing style. As I approach the end of this thesis, ultimately it is the third body of knowledge which feels less visible and without its own dedicated place, but I hope it is instead embedded and woven throughout this research as a whole, as it has been in my daily life. Akin to a literature review, I begin here by mapping out the context within which my curatorial practice has operated, before discussing in chronological order the projects being submitted towards this thesis for consideration.

ii) Negotiating Practice Within a Contested Context

My doctorate has been book-ended by two Summer Olympic Games and corresponding Cultural Olympiads, met in the middle by the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games and Cultural Programme and concluded with the 2018 Glasgow European Sports Championships co-hosted with Berlin. The immediacy to my locality of these very particular and dominant kinds of programming has undoubtedly influenced my research, how I position my practice, and the kinds of public contemporary arts programming I have been

able to encounter during this body of research. In many respects and in the long-term, I think more modest initiatives, such as the 125th anniversary of the founding of Scottish Gymnastics in 2015, are likely to have a more meaningful and sustained impact on my research than the enormous scale of the Cultural Olympiads. Simultaneously, it would be fair to say that this period has been one of heightened tension, distrust and dislike of such mega sporting-events in the UK by the arts sector. In the early stages of this thesis, I met with an artist who had been in-residence with Glasgow Life, the local authority for the city. During a meeting between the sports and culture department, the artist observed a great deal of enthusiasm from the sports staff for the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games for the Cultural programme to examine the links between sport and art, to produce content which directly represented sport. Their culture counterparts were not receptive to this idea, but perhaps for reasons of funding cuts, maintain control of the arts branding within the city that has its roots going back to the European City of Culture in 1990, and the power imbalances that come with mega-sporting events, rather than a straight-forward objection. In the end, the visual arts programming for the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games which was Scotland-wide was contained under a programme titled GENERATION. Its presence was limited to a single page towards the back of the Cultural Programme brochure, directing browsers to the separate programme for the visual arts programming.

Conversely, and as a second anecdote, during my archival research at the Olympic Studies Centre and Olympic Museum in Lausanne in October 2013 funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council Research Support Training Grant, the museum was undergoing an extensive renovation, during which a new art gallery space was being created within the museum within the café. The museum has a fairly extensive collection of artworks, largely donated or gifted to the International Olympic Committee and thus the museum. Many of these gifts had come from national sports federations, were installed throughout the

museum grounds (see Figure 5.1), and were literal depictions of athletes in their own sport, or elaborate trophies and shields. In the placing of the art gallery with the museum café, the choice made explicit that the museum saw its art collections as of less importance than their museum object holdings. Equally, I was invited in 2016 to attend the second session of an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded network, 'Sport in the Arts: the Arts in Sport,' based out of Leeds Beckett University. A section of the network overview and rationale reads:

The reason for such a proposal lies in part in the belief that sports projects can appeal to social groups with lower income and educational levels, who are often put off by the air of exclusivity and 'high' cultural capital requirements characterising traditional arts activities.³⁷⁴

I found this particular framing firstly, to be offensive and unrepresentative of the arts, but more generally speaking of the pitting of the arts and sport against one another by a multitude of parties, the placing of them in competition against one another.

Shortly before commencing my doctorate in 2012, I was already working as a curator, as part of the curatorial duo Mother Tongue, formed with Jessica Carden in 2009. In the summer of 2012, we were invited into the archives of the Centre for Contemporary Arts Glasgow, founded as the Third Eye Centre in Glasgow in the 1970's. The project brief was to respond to items in the archive as part of a retrospective of the organisations activity of four decades, titled 'What We Have Done, What We Are About To Do,' which ran 18th August until the 15th September 2012. Although they did not form part of the resulting project, I

³⁷⁴ Network advert circulated in email correspondence.

was struck in the archives at the number of sports-related contemporary art exhibitions which ran there up until the 1990's, mostly focusing on football, boxing, and different forms of racing. What interested me most about this was the question of why the presence of such exhibitions was curtailed post-1990's, or whether they instead found other outlets beyond the arts sector. 'Boxer' was an exhibition themed, of course, around artworks engaging with the boxing, which was held at the gallery between 27th April and 9th June 1996 (see Figure 5.2). In our conversations around that project, many people remembered the exhibition, but my sense was that it was not then - nor now - highly regarded. This was perhaps viewed as such, in the belief that to curate an exhibition around such shared content matter is likely to be seen as a very literal or museum-like act of curation. Through this, I have realised throughout the duration of this thesis that, in terms of the relationship between art and sport, than rather than the official history of this pairing, that what in fact is most of interest to me here is a sense of the exhibition histories of sporting themes and contemporary artworks. I place an emphasis on contemporary art again, as historical paintings featuring sport and particularly sporting past-times of the elite classes occupy a very different arena with the realms of galleries and museums. Such an exhibition history has yet to be compiled and is too substantial a body of original research to undertake within the scope of this thesis, but I believe would be worth pursuing and would illuminate further the areas in which the arts and sport are seen as at odds with one another.

In spite of this, I continue to be intrigued by the prospect of an exhibition of contemporary art, curated around the histories and representations of gymnastics – what would such an exhibition look like, where could it take place, what could it reveal beyond a history of gymnastics, should it include museum objects alongside artworks, and what could be gained or opened up for our understandings of body cultures, movement, dance, exercise and health by bringing together these works into a shared space for the first

time? As part of this research, I have investigated throughout Europe and beyond the presence of gymnastics museums, which I had anticipated might have existed where the sports' popularity and impact would have warranted this. There are globally a number of sports museums throughout the world, and single-discipline dedicated to sports such as football, basketball, baseball, cricket and rugby, to name a few. However, beyond a small exhibit – 'The International Gymnastics Hall of Fame' at the Science Museum, Oklahoma, USA (see Figure 5.3) – and regional or movement-specific institutions, for example the Tyrs Museum of Physical Culture and Sports, Prague, dedicated to the founder of Czech Sokol gymnastics in their former headquarters.

iii) Gymnasia

For the 2014 edition of the Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art (4th – 21st April), the artist collective Opera Autonoma received a director's commission for an exhibition at Fleming House, a disused retail unit and car park now frequently used for artist-led exhibitions project in part due to its proximity to Glasgow School of Art. This project was the first outing of Opera Autonoma, consisted by five Glasgow-based practitioners: performance artist Michelle Hannah, musician Jim McKinven, artist and musician Claudia Nova, clothing designer Carmel O'Brien, and formed and directed by established artist Craig Mulholland. The rationale of the project, taking place just weeks in advance of the 2014 Commonwealth Games and Cultural Programme, was conceptually-driven, immersive and was framed as taking:

... its inspiration from the non-hierarchical alignment between physical exercise and scholarly activity found in the ancient Greek institution of Gymnasia. During this period most gymnasia, besides offering physical training, housed libraries and social areas for

philosophical, artistic and literary discourse as well as the contemplation of aesthetics and music. This less structured intellectualism would have been underpinned by spontaneous lectures, presentations and theatrical performances.

In reference GYMNASIA would endeavor to act as an arena for a study of the parallels between physical exercise and artistic activity, through a functioning hybrid of the creative/ theatrical laboratory and the self-improvement centre or gym. Through this lens the project would specifically seek to examine themes of endurance, practice and performance between these disciplines. A series of live performances, particularly involving the voice and body, would strategically be subjected to the heightened effects of fatigue, psychological stress and ennui, through simultaneously conducting physical exercise. This methodology would intend to mimic, similarly oblique production techniques often used by directors, actors and performance artists to achieve 'authenticity'.³⁷⁵

The exhibitions consisted of 3D scanned images digitally printed, custom costumes both worn and presented as sculptural objects, installed ready-made gym objects, bespoke textile screenprints, a high-definition looped artist film, and two performances, marking the opening and mid-way point (see Figure 4). Texts, lyrics and slogans were interspersed throughout the space. The performances took place on a set, facing the looped film projection and audio soundtrack. Artists Hannah, Jim McKinven, Nova, and O'Brien performed a series of exercises repetitively, their motions progressively speeding up as the tempo of the soundtrack fastened. Hannah stood apart from the other three performers, punching at a freestanding

³⁷⁵ Opera Autonoma 'Gymnasia' Project Outline as prepared for Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art 'Open Glasgow' funding application, shared with the author for reference purposes.

boxing punch ball, whilst the three other performers integrated their exercises with bespoke running machines.

Through my curatorial practice, I had previously worked before with Craig Mulholland on a collaborative month-long production residency, 'CreativeLab,' at the Centre for Contemporary Arts Glasgow in 2013. It was at this point that in conversation, both Craig and I first discovered overlaps in our research and interests in the sporting body. Following the awarding to Opera Autonomia of the Glasgow International Festival for Visual Art award, I began to be in dialogue with Craig about the project, which led to my invitation to write an exhibition text for the exhibition (see Figure 5.5). I visited the studio of Opera Autonomia to view in-progress works and discuss their plans for the installation, and was sent preview versions of the videowork premiered as part of this exhibition. On the basis of these insights, I produced the exhibition text, which was available to the audience throughout the duration of the show. My text, titled 'Will-Power & Rhythm' (see Appendix) in many ways responded to the specific objectives of Opera Autonomia, but also reflected my writing about the gymnastics body and the intersection of political agendas with gymnastics, in chapters one and two. The text was relatively short, and whilst not being a piece of creative writing, I enjoyed the freedom of its tone and flow, and of the task of contributing something to a bigger project, with a strong and coherent concept. The performances which were enacted as part of the 'Gymnasia' exhibition were filmed, and following the exhibition, were edited into a new version of the videowork. As a result of my ongoing dialogue with Craig, this videowork was later one of the six artist moving image works selected within the 'Sport, Sport, Sport' screening programme which I curated in partnership with Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image and Transmission Gallery, Glasgow, detailed later in this chapter.

iv) Sports Event Spectacle

In 2013, I approached the gallery, archive and artist's residency space Flat Time House Institute (FTHo) housed in the former home and studio of John Latham (1921—2006), in response to a call for collaborations with researchers, research centres and academic networks. I proposed to Flat Time House to curate a discursive event, which was later titled as 'Sports Event Spectacle: Cultural Policy-Making and Curating Contemporary Art for Major Sporting Events' (see Figures 5.6 and 5.7). The event took place on the 15th July 2014, during the aforementioned Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and Cultural Programme, and brought together three speakers: Dr Beatriz Garcia, Dr Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt and Professor Jo Longhurst. A full transcript of this event is available in Appendix A. At the time of the event, Flat Time House were showing an exhibition of work by artist-collaborators Tom and Simon Bloor and they were keen that these two programmes should coincide. In the words of Flat Time House and from their perspective in terms of their programming methods:

...alongside Simon and Tom Bloor's Residency Works, which [focus] on the unintentional artistic acts that occur in urban environments, this roundtable discussion will look at a very different approach to the placing of art in a public context.³⁷⁶

The location of Flat Time House in Peckham was also of relevance, considering the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad projects which had taken place in the area.

³⁷⁶ Flat Time House, *Sport Event Spectacle Event Page*, Published July 2014, Available: <http://flattimeho.org.uk/events/sports-event-spectacle/>

FTHo is in terms of the physical gallery, studio and events space, is modest in scale. After discussion with curator Claire Louise Staunton, and programme managers John Mill and Mary Vettise, we decided to hold the event in the extended kitchen area, to create a hospitable space for listening and discussion. The event was held in the evening in an attempt to allow as many audience members the chance to attend, outwith the normal working hours for employment and study. Holding the event in this space did limit the audience numbers we could host due to seating, and the event was fully booked with a waiting list, and fully attended. The event was free but ticketed, and the room was fully accessible. Refreshments were provided, and many of the audience stayed on after the event, continuing discussion from the Question and Answer session. Flat Time House offered various in-kind support: in the administrative planning of the event, marketing, overnight accommodation for speakers, photographic documentation, projector hire and audio-visual set-up. To cover the financial costs of the event, I made two funding applications, to Birkbeck School of Arts and University of London Extra-Mural History of Art Society (ULEMHAS), for approximately £300 and £250 respectively. In return for this funding, I was required to make the event accessible to Birkbeck students and staff, and in the case of the ULEMHAS funding, to write a letter of thanks to the society for their support.

As the curator of the event, I asked each speaker to respond to certain points and to cover aspects of their research which spoke to the objectives of the event. I introduced the event, chaired the discussion which followed the three presentations, and prepared a hand-out for all audience members, outlining the event's focus as assessing:

... the presence of the visual arts in the cultural programming of London 2012 and Glasgow 2014, looking at the effects of recent cultural policy-making in this area upon

what was, and is being, actualised. Wider questions to be addressed include the power imbalance between mega-sporting events and the arts in the production of accompanying cultural programmes; celebratory tones within such programmes; and what aspects of the cultural programming from London 2012 and Glasgow 2014 are acting as a blueprint for future events.³⁷⁷

Rather than present myself as chairing the event as an expert in this area, I viewed my role more as a facilitation of a conversation, and an opportunity for me to learn alongside the audience. I could have had separate conversations with each speaker, but the event allowed for the three speakers to be in a dialogue with each other, and with the audience, who brought a high-level of knowledge with them to this event. As previously mentioned, a number of audience members had experiences some contact with the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, and the ensuing conversations revealed a lot of information and insights that would have been difficult to source by other means.

My invitations to each participant came through previous dialogue and introductions through mutual connections. In the first year of my doctorate, I applied to the Olympic Studies Centre PhD Students Research Grant Programme unsuccessfully. The feedback on my application was given by Dr Beatriz Garcia, Head of Research at the Institute of Cultural Capital, Liverpool. She headed the main legacy evaluation programme for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, and informed Scotland's transition towards the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games cultural programme, and has conducted primary research at all Olympic Games held between 2000 and 2012. Out of our dialogue regarding my application, I was able to

³⁷⁷ Flat Time House, *Sport Event Spectacle Event Page*, Published July 2014, Available: <http://flattimeho.org.uk/events/sports-event-spectacle/>

invite her to participate in this event. I had in 2013 visited Jo Longhurst in her London studio, discussing her work, which led to a proposal from us both to co-present a paper at the 42nd Annual Conference of the International Association for the Philosophy of Sport (IAPS), being held in Natal, Brazil and hosted by the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. Concurrent to this, I was already in dialogue with Jo regarding plans for the 'Sport, Sport, Sport' screening programme. Finally, I was introduced to Dr Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt through the Jenny Brownrigg, Exhibitions Director at The Glasgow School of Art. During an informal conversation with Jenny regarding my doctoral research and plans for the practice-based component of this, she recommended that I contact Rebecca, in light of an edited publication she was working on, a critical inquiry in to the planning and delivering of the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games. In some respects, Beatriz and Rebecca as speakers sat at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of their outlook on the event's focus. However, it did feel important to me to have a speaker from the cultural policy-making perspective, and an insider's view, even if only to add to the discussion an understanding of the mechanisms and rationale behind what can otherwise appear to be very opaque organisations.

The main points of discussion in the Question and Answer session centred around the power imbalances held in such forms of programming, and in the potentials and downfalls of the arts to refuse participation. A number of audience members have been involved in some way with the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, and one individual had been offered a commission as part of this, which they turned down. The subsequent invisibility of this refusal and the reasons for doing so were discussed, vis-à-vis the hypervisibility of the platform that would have been afforded if the commission had been accepted by the artist offering up their own experience for discussion here. As I hope will be very clear, this event spoke to my attempts in the early period to contextual what I hoped to achieve through the practice element of this

thesis, within the wider context of the arts, sport and the period 2012 to 2016. The event was very instructive, but I have not since pursued the specific area of mega-sporting event cultural programming or cultural policy-making, realising that this area is of extreme relevance to my work but not where my own specific research interests lie.

v) Sport, Sport, Sport: A Screening Programme of Soviet-Era Cinema and Artist Moving Image

Prior to beginning and in the first year of my thesis, research undertakings such as my literature review and archive research were matched with forms of research that have been less outwardly present in the chapters written since. These included a number of studio visits and conversations with artists, whose work had in some form spoken of gymnastics (for example Lucy Mckenzie), and a widespread search for cinema, films and documentaries which featured and represented the sport. Prior to beginning this doctoral research, I had encountered a number of Hollywood portrayals of gymnastics, including: “Nadia” (Tribune Entertainment, 1984); “Flying” (Brightstar Films, 1986); “Little Girls in Pretty Boxes” (ABC Pictures, 1997); Perfect Body (NBC, 1997); “Stick It” (Touchstone Pictures, 2006); and “Peaceful Warrior” (DEJ Productions, 2006). All of the aforementioned films have been American productions,³⁷⁸ largely produced and released off the back of peaked audience interest in the wake of Olympic Games and adjunct successes. These films by-and-large follow the familiar tales and clichés of gymnastics in the media; that of the underdog overcoming adversity, eating disorders, injuries, over-zealous parents, abusive coaches, and the pressures of competition on young, female athletes. There is much truth to these stereotypical representations, but their portrayal on-screen in the aforementioned films felt predictable, and has been both simplified and de-politicised, in light of the fact that these films have been made as commercial,

³⁷⁸ Recent films featuring gymnastics produced outwith America to my knowledge include: ‘A 2nd Chance,’ Marvista Entertainment, 2011, Australia; ‘White Palms,’ Katapult Film, Hungary, 2006; ‘Alps,’ 2006, Haos Film, Greece.

Hollywood entertainment ventures, and as a number of these films were made with a young audience in mind.

My search for alternatives led me to film from Russia and the Eastern Bloc, and also back in time to the communist era. I found a number of films online, and was able to watch these, in Russian. These included 'The Miracle with Pigtails'/Чудо с косичками (1974); 'The Trainer'/ Тренер (1969); 'Silver Coach' / Серебряный тренер (1963); 'Oh, that Nastya!' /Ach, ta Nast'a! (1971); and 'The Newcomer' / Новенькая (1968). I was struck by the volume of films from this era, understandably so considering the prominent role and international popularity of gymnasts under communism. Moreover, the films were visually striking, at times highly critical and experimental. Concurrent to this process of researching films, a number of artists who had made worked around gymnastics cited these films I had newly learnt-of as being important influences upon their work; for example, both Lucy Mckenzie and Phil Collins referred to Věra Chytilová's 'Something Different' as having a significant impact on them.

At this point, I began to wonder about the influence of these films, their content but mostly importantly aesthetics, and the possible links between their work in film and contemporary artist moving image. Investigation revealed that these films had been rarely screened in the UK, if at all, that there was little Anglophone academic analysis of them, and that copies of the film with English subtitles were unavailable. As an initial experiment, I arranged for simple translations of three films into English from Diana Tsarelasvili, in order to better follow their narrative, selecting 'Something Different' / O Něčem Jiném,³⁷⁹ Barransov Studios, Věra Chytilová (1963); 'Sport, Sport, Sport' / Спорт, спорт, спорт, Mosfilm, Elem

³⁷⁹ Also known as Something Completely Different, About Something Else, Bitter Laurels, Another Way of Life.

Klimov (1970); and 'Little Doll' / *Кукла*,³⁸⁰ Mosfilm, Isaak Fridberg³⁸¹ (1988). Each of the films are normally discussed briefly – almost as a footnote - on the basis of being an early career work in the oeuvres of these filmmakers, whose most famous works were to be produced later (especially in the case of Klimov and Chytilová). Once I had these translations and was able to watch the films more coherently, I began to be increasingly drawn in by them, and to feel as if I should share these films and my new access with others. I did not realise at this point that I was embarking on one of the most substantial curatorial projects that would actualise in the duration of my doctoral study.

The copies of the films I had watched were online, Chytilová's film uploaded to Youtube split over several segments with Russian dubbing, and Klimov and Fridberg's films on online streaming sites. These I knew would not be of a suitable quality for a screening event, and were without English subtitles. At this point, I made contact with two film festivals in Edinburgh with whom I had personal contacts: the Africa in Motion Film Festival and the Middle Eastern Film Festival, to ask for advice if they had similarly encountered problems before regarding films with no English subtitles available. Africa-in-Motion replied that they had previously gotten around such issues through "soft-titling," screening the subtitles as a PowerPoint using a second projector below the film being screened. My process began with attempting to find copies of these films: through Second Run DVD Distribution and Renata Clark, the Deputy Director of the Czech Centre London, I was put in touch with the Czech National Film Archive in Prague. The only copy of the film that they had with English subtitles was an archival copy on 35mm film, meaning that there are two reels, and requiring a projector with additional capacity. I was able to find a DVD copy of Klimov's 'Sport, Sport, Sport,' and with help from translator Diana Tsarelasvili, I was also able to buy digital copies of both

³⁸⁰ Also known as *Die Puppe*, *A Little Doll*, *The Doll*, *Dolly*, *La Poupée*.

³⁸¹ Name also appears as *Isaakas Fridbergas*.

Klimov and Fridberg's film from the Mosfilm online archive for a small fee, the famous Russian film studio which produced both these films.

Concurrent to this, I began to identify artist works in moving image which I would be keen to show alongside the cinematic works, the different curatorial strategies which could be used to show these alongside one another and in the framing of this. I initially approached five artists to present their work within this programme: Jo Longhurst (UK), Craig Mulholland (UK), Phil Collins (UK), Salla Tykkä (Finland), and Laura Horelli (Finland/Germany). I had encountered the work of Laura Horelli in February 2012 as I was writing the application for this doctorate, during a residency with the Helsinki International Artist Programme/FRAME Finnish Fund for Visual Art Exchange, based in Helsinki. Through conversation with the curator of HIAP Marita Muukkonen regarding the proposal I was writing at that time, I learned of the work of Laura Horelli, whose 'You Go Where You're Sent,' touches upon the performance of her grandmother in the Finnish women's gymnastics display at the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympic Games. The work of Salla Tykkä was recommended to me by Dr Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt, who had spoken at the Flat Time House event. At a later stage in the project, I included in the final screening of this programme the work of Polish artist Agnieszka Polska, whose work was brought to my attention by curator Lina Džuverović (Croatia/UK). In this sense, the curatorial process was deeply affected by the continual conversations I was having with others whilst developing this project, and the knowledge and contributions I gained through entering into such dialogue.

In October 2013, I began to approach two partners regarding this proposed project: Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image BIMi and Transmission Gallery Glasgow. Dr Sarah Joshi of BIMi had been on the interview panel for my entry onto the doctoral programme, and so I felt able to contact her to ask whether

BIMI accepted proposals to their programme. Soon after this initial correspondence, I met with Dr Sarah Joshi and Professor Laura Mulvey to discuss both the idea of the screening programme, scheduling, and the practicalities it would entail. Birkbeck did have the necessary projector in-house to screen the Chytilová work, and we discussed whether there would presentations made - by researchers, film-makers, artists – as part of the event. When the planning for the BIMI event was more significantly underway, in spring 2014 I approached Transmission Gallery, Glasgow, with a proposal to make public this project in Glasgow, especially in light of the Commonwealth Games Cultural Programme.

From the outset, how to finance the programme was an obstacle, and required seeking from multiple partners. I approached a number of other venues, organisations and groups, such as Pushkin House and UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies, which did not lead to any success in terms of funding or partnerships. I approached the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies, who were not able to fund the programme directly, but provided £300 towards the programme so that it could be shown as part of their annual conference, in the auditorium of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. The programme was thus screened as five events within the series: as three separate events in Glasgow in 2014, at Kinning Park Complex 31st July (see Figure 5.8), at Glasgow Film Theatre 28th September, and at Transmission Gallery 22nd October (see Figure 5.9); as a single all-day event at Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image on the 28th February 2015; and an excerpt of the programme at the BASEES conference on the 29th March 2015. All of these events were free to the audience, and held in accessible spaces. The programme was shown in different configurations each time, for practical reasons, but also allowing me to see the film in alternative juxtapositions, always drawing out new emphasis and themes in these works. For the event at BIMI there was a more academic leaning to its structure, and it had been planned for artist

susan pui san lok³⁸² to present at this event. I had provided susan with copies of each film being screened within the programme and shared some of my writing with her also. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen family circumstances, susan was unable to present at the event on the day.

As partners, both BIMl and Transmission Gallery had different organisational processes. Ultimately, Transmission Gallery was the biggest backer of the project financially, contributing over £1200, in addition to a variety of in-kind support: from marketing, to technical advice and projector hire, to hospitality and printing. BIMl contributing £500 and BASEES £300, and archives and distributors such as the Czech National Film Archive and AV Arkki – the Distribution Centre for Finnish Art, offered discounted loan fees considering the educational settings of the events. Transmission Gallery was set-up by graduates of Glasgow School of Art in 1983, and is run by a voluntary committee of six members, who rotate on a twice-yearly circle. It is the most significant artist-led space in Scotland, and was the blueprint for a number of gallery spaces formed across the city and Scotland since. I had previously worked with Transmission on a curatorial project separate to my doctoral research, and had in 2010 worked on the cataloguing of their archive. Transmission Gallery were excited about the proposal, and we arranged a meeting to take the conversation forward. To this meeting, Transmission also invited two programmers from Glasgow Film Theatre (GFT), Sean Greenhorn and Jane Hartshorn. GFT is an independent cinema, which first opened in the city in 1939. As part of their programme, they run an ongoing strand titled 'Crossing the Line,' which they describe as seeking to:

³⁸² Please note that susan pui san lok's name is not capitalised on purpose, in line with her wishes.

redefine our expectations, experimenting with form and content to create new ways of understanding and experiencing the moving image.³⁸³

The programme is known for showing artist film and moving image, or for being curated by artists showing their own work alongside films which have influenced their practice. The strand is curated by GFT in tandem with other organisations, and by chance, they had approached Transmission at the same time as I had, and so I was lucky to benefit from this.

A committee member from Transmission Gallery, Nick Thomas, suggested that I use a free software programme called Aegisub to take the translations I had, and to form subtitles out of these. This meant that the subtitles would be played as overlaid the Soviet-era films, as you would normally expect to see in a cinema and of a professional standard. The programme was quite complex (see Figure 5.10): the subtitles needed to be broken down into lines and timed, down to the millisecond. These lines and the timings were then inserted into the Aegisub programme, which was akin to a large spreadsheet. The programme would then show in shades of white, pink and red how fast you were asking the audience to read the subtitles: white providing sufficient time, and red not enough. Once the subtitles had been entered, I would watch the film through, and then make amendments and corrections where necessary. Each of the films had hundreds of lines of subtitles, and it is difficult to describe in words here quite how substantial and time-consuming an undertaking this was. At the same time, the process of doing so acted like an intensive close reading process, which left me with a very strong knowledge of these films. I did not fully understand before starting the project how much work this would entail, but I knew that the costs of paying

³⁸³ Glasgow Film Theatre, *Crossing the Line*, Date Unknown, Available: http://www.glasgowfilm.org/festival/brochure/crossing_the_line

a professional to do this would be prohibitive, and it was for this reason that I took on this task myself. I did however work with a freelance film technician on the final instalments of the screening programme, at BIMl and for the BASEES screening, due to the complexities of the multiple film formats and subtitles that the longer events brought.

Once the translations had been prepared – and with a sense at this early stage in this research that these films had not been extensively screened and explored in the UK and Anglophone research – I curated a series of screenings using these three films as structural basis for the programme (see Appendix), which also encompassed moving image works from six artists: Phil Collins, Laura Horelli, Jo Longhurst, Craig Mulholland, Agnieszka Polska and Salla Tykkä. The programme encompassed five screenings which took place between July 2014 and March 2015, at Transmission Gallery, Glasgow; Kinning Park Complex, Glasgow, the Glasgow Film Theatre; Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image, London; and at the 2015 annual conference of the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies, held at Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge. For each of these events, I wrote specific introductions for the audience, and prepared hand-outs for their reference with synopsis of the films and biographies of the filmmakers. The Glasgow events were particularly well-attended, but each of the events added in different ways to my experience of the event series. Curating this programme took me into new territory as a curator and it was a steep learning curve, but it was ultimately to lay the foundations for chapter four.

The screening programme provoked for me an examination of the relationship between the moving gymnastic body on screen, and the role of gymnastics in early experiments in cinema and photography. Scenes from Elem Klimov's film of the same name were particularly instructive in the explorations between stillness and movement that followed, as was Agnieszka Polska's work 'Medical Gymnastics.' Although

detailed analyses of the films have not made their way into a sustained way or dedicated chapter, the research that this programme created is nevertheless embedded in the written component of this thesis by other means. For some time after the close of the programme, I felt quite certain that I would not take on the challenge of subtitling films for such an event series again. I have however recently returned to my original research, re-watching a number of films which in terms of narrative shared a focus on the relationship between the gymnast and coach ('The Trainer' / Тренер (1969); 'Silver Coach' / Серебряный тренер (1963); and 'The Newcomer' / Новенькая (1968)), and have subsequently been considering revisiting this type of curatorial project following the completion of my thesis.

vi) What To Wear For Gymnastics

From the outset of this doctoral research, clothing worn for gymnastics, and especially the leotard, has been a specific avenue of research that I wished to pursue. It is a particular kind of garment to have worn, and I can recall vividly the extreme emotions of wearing it which I have since others experience. However I would say, in fact, that I did not set out to create a curatorial project around gymnastic clothing. Instead, it was my academic inquiry into tracking down such garments that led me into museum collections, and in turn, a curatorial proposal. During my archive research at the Olympic Studies Centre and Museum in Lausanne in 2013, I spoke with one of the curators, who undertook on my behalf database searches relating to my areas of interest. Gymnastics is considered one of the 'Big Four' Olympic sports, and I was surprised at the lack of material culture items relating to gymnastics in the collection of the OSC and Museum. When I enquired about their collection policy, I was informed that staff were sent from the museum to each Olympics, and would request from participants items worn and used to enter the collections, therefore relying on the goodwill of athletes and their ability to dispense with their clothing and

equipment. I was quite shocked at the untargeted approach of this collecting policy, and the major gaps that this was creating in their holdings.

As I began to prepare for the writing of my third chapter, I encountered the problem of there being almost no academic literature on the history of the leotard in gymnastics, and gymnastics clothing generally. I therefore needed to undertake primary research and to work from secondary sources such as historical photographs, to piece together a narrative of the changing attitudes and items worn by gymnastics participants. I enquired with the National Museum of Scotland regarding their sportswear holdings, who have in their collections a number of military medals for gymnastics and some items of equipment. There were however no items for gymnastic clothing, despite there being a number of bathing suits, hunting jackets, cricket whites, etc, in their collections. Some of the possible reasons for this have been laid out in-depth in Chapter Three. I made further enquiries locally, and begin to realise that the issue of these absences was widespread.

Their omission is in stark contrast to the importance of the leotard, to the history of the sport of gymnastics and to sportswear (as the resurgence of gymnastics in the 16th century as medicinal, educational and of use to the military paved the way for the creation of modern sport and physical education as we know it). The loose-fitting attire and long hair of the German Turner gymnasts was a political statement, as was the feather in the cap of the nationalistic Czech Sokols. The plain, matching uniforms worn under Communism in mass gymnastics displays was a tool by which to visually communicate equality. Questions such as: where are these items of gymnastics clothing now, why have they been neglected or deemed unimportant by museums and collectors, what would it have felt like to

wear them during gymnastic practice and how such clothing defined the interpretation of gymnastics by spectators, were questions that occupied my thinking at this time.

During my thesis, and as part of wider trends, there have been a number of exhibitions of sportswear that have taken place locally, and across the UK. Some of these were initiated as artist and designer led projects, such as 'The Inventors of Tradition II,' curated by Panel and art-design collective Atelier E.B., held at The Palace of Art in Glasgow, 2nd – 30th May 2015 (see Figures 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13). Equally major museums such as the National Museum of Scotland curated retrospectives and surveys, including 'Fully Fashioned: The Pringle of Scotland Story' exhibition, held at the National Museum of Scotland, 10th April – 16th August 2015 (see Figures 5.14, 5.15 and 5.16). One of the things that was most striking to me is that these exhibitions of sportswear – items designed for the body in motion – hung these items in a still fashion on mannequins in the exhibition, losing the sense of how they were activated by movement, the ability for the audience to touch the textures of the fabrics, and to see how these flowed around the body's dynamism. Of course, there are practical reasons for this, most obviously the need to. Around this time, I also first became aware of the Centre for Fashion Curation at University of the Arts London, and some of the experiential modes of exhibiting clothes and fashion design that they were presenting.

I then began to feel that the absence of physical garments of gymnastics clothing had the potential to become a curatorial project; to re-create lost garments in a way that would allow them to be exhibited in a sensory manner for the exhibition visitor. At this stage, I applied for a grant from the Society of Antiquaries London, for the Janet Arnold Award for the study of History of Western Dress. The application made the case for these garments' significance, and proposed to provide a commission and residency for designer Carmel O'Brien to study and re-create items of gymnastic clothing, which would then be exhibited as an

open studio in the Glasgow School of Art Project Rooms. The application also described the archival and collection research I myself as the curator would undertake, in public collections, and that of commercial enterprises, such as the headquarters of Milano Pro Leotards (a global manufacturer in elite gymnastic apparel). The application was successful and £2,800 was awarded for this project. It was extremely unfortunate that shortly after receiving this decision, the Glasgow School of Art buildings suffered extensive damage in the first of two substantial fires, and the venue I had secured for this project was no longer accessible. Plotting an alternative route for this project, I focused on extensive archival and collection research across Scotland, locating items of gymnastic dress, including beginning a series of recorded conversations with elder gymnasts and coaches surrounding their experience of sourcing and wearing gymnastic attire.

vii) New Order, Other Spaces

I would like to include here a brief overview of 'Other Spaces Brazil,' a project of which I was one of three instigators, whose funding was ultimately unsuccessful, the project unable to materialise as a result. I have been inspired to include it here by the project 'An Unsuccessful Proposal for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad: The Experience Being an Experience Like An Experience You Just Had' (see Figure 5.17), by artist duo Joanne Tatham and Tom O'Sullivan. The project was originally conceived as bid for one of the twelve 'Artists Taking the Lead' commissions, one offered to each region, for a sum of upto £500,000. Their proposal was shortlisted for the Scottish commission, but was ultimately not selected.³⁸⁴ 'An Unsuccessful Proposal for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad: The Experience Being an Experience Like An Experience You

³⁸⁴ Tatham, J.; O'Sullivan, T.; *Amongst other things: an unsuccessful proposal for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad*, Published Centre for Contemporary Arts Glasgow, 2012, pg. inside cover.

Just Had' was an exhibition and catalogue produced subsequently, tracing the failures of the original project, and the evolution of the project into fruition by other means.

This project has struck a chord with some of my own experience, and relates back in ways which I am only seeing now upon reflection, to the background context laid out in this chapter and the discursive event 'Sports Event Spectacle.' In September 2014, I co-presented a paper with artist Professor Jo Longhurst at the 42nd Annual Conference of the International Association for the Philosophy of Sport, held in Brazil. I was able to attend this conference only through conference travel grants awarded to me by IAPs and Birkbeck School of Arts. There was, by coincidence, a curatorial visit by a group of Scottish curators in Brazil at the same time, funded by the British Council Scotland, and related to the handover of the Cultural Olympiad from the UK to Brazil at this time. Through my curatorial practice and Masters programme, I also had two close colleagues from Brazil, and so quite naturally, plans by Longhurst and I to visit galleries during the first evolved into meetings with their curators and programmers, and interest was shown by three organisations to work on a multi-venue exhibition of Jo's substantial body of work around gymnastics, looking towards the 2016 Rio Summer Olympic Games Cultural Olympiad. These organisations were the gallery spaces Largo Das Artes (Rio de Janeiro), Centro Municipal de Arte Hélio Oiticica (Rio de Janeiro) and Videobrasil (São Paulo).

Following the trip, conversations continued with these organisations, and as a result, Longhurst submitted a successful application to the Arts Council England International Artists Development Fund, for a production residency with Largo Das Artes lasting six weeks. During this visit, she produced new performance, photographic and video work (see Figure 5.18), working with Gimnásticas de Manguera, a rhythmic gymnastics social change project located in the Manguera favela, Rio de Janeiro, and undertaking

archive research into the history of gymnastics in Brazil. At the same time, Longhurst began to develop an Arts and Humanities Research Council Standard Route Grant bid, with herself as principal investigator, Susan Pui San Lok as co-investigator, and myself as a research assistant. The bid was for a multi-venue exhibition across Largo Das Artes (Rio de Janeiro), Centro Municipal de Arte Hélio Oiticica (Rio de Janeiro) and Videobrasil (São Paulo) during the 2016 Olympic Games Cultural Olympiad. This exhibition was then due to travel back to Scotland, to Stills: Scotland's Centre for Photography, Edinburgh, in 2018, and the project as a whole to be accompanied by a symposium at the Whitechapel Gallery, London, an exhibition catalogue, and a monograph. The bid made it to the second stage of the AHRC selection process, but was ultimately not successful. Largo das Artes had in the meantime secured funding from the Rio de Janeiro municipal council Cultural Olympiad fund towards the project, and attempts were made to source funding from the British Council and Birmingham School of Art for a scaled down version of the project, which were also unsuccessful.

However, in August 2015, I presented a paper at the British Society of Sports History seminar at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 'Scottish Sport and the Arts, to coincide with the 'Playing for Scotland: The Making of Modern Sport' exhibition on show at the gallery between 1st December 2011 and 2nd April 2017 (see Figure 19). Out of the process of writing that paper and presenting it, I was brought into renewed re-evaluations of the archives of Scottish Gymnastics, and entered into dialogue with a working group for a new arts and archives project based between the University of Edinburgh and Horsecross Arts Perth, titled 'Body Languages.' 2015 was the 125th anniversary of Scottish Gymnastics, but their archives remain uncatalogued and in poor storage conditions. Over time, this led to a discussion with the Centre for Research Collections at the University of Edinburgh regarding their acquisition of the Scottish Gymnastics archive, into a Wellcome Trust funded-project titled 'Body Language.' Considering this as part of an

expanded curatorial practice as a member of the Project Board, my role within this was to oversee the acquisition of the Scottish Gymnastics items.

As the culmination of the curatorial outputs included here within this thesis – and responding to the histories of Scottish Gymnastics that my archival research had brought to the fore of my thinking – curated by Tiffany Boyle as part of the cultural programme accompanying the inaugural Glasgow 2018 European Championships. New commissions and existing work were brought together to explore the gymnastic body across photography, moving image and installation, presented simultaneously in Glasgow and Perth. New commissions produced in collaboration with gymnasts of all ages and responding to archival research took form in new moving image work, and responses to the life and work of dancer, choreographer and teacher Margaret Morris – in particular her application of colour theory to the system of dance notation she devised. ‘New Order, Other Spaces’ engaged with ideas of perfection, gender, gesture, and inter-generational understandings of movement. The exhibition, in part, took its title from Foucault’s 1967 essay, ‘Of Other Spaces,’ which interrogates ideas of physical and psychological space in relation to location and time.

Since 2008, artist Jo Longhurst has created a substantial series of work exploring the gymnastic body. Gymnastics in Scotland has a long history, dating back to the mid-1800s, and has always been intertwined with sport, dance, physical education, workplace exercise. However, this history is not well-known, and there have recently been major archiving projects uncovering these important narratives. Working with these archival items and personal collections was a key aspect of the research and development of the commissioned works, using footage from the National Library of Scotland’s Moving Image archive.

Recruiting gymnasts via the network of Scottish Gymnastics, Longhurst worked with a group of 22 gymnasts (young people aged 7-21), creating together a choreographed performance piece 'What is to be done?' staged in both Glasgow and Perth to mark the openings of both exhibitions. 'What is to be done?' sat in dialogue with a short filmwork titled 'Pivot,' working with Ronald Rodger, a gymnast and coach aged 87; a life-long competitor and an important figure in gymnastics for Scotland today. In the work – filmed in slow-motion HD footage – Rodger performs his own range of warm-up exercises undertaken throughout his life, focusing on the effort and discipline of continuing to practice these. Through the juxtaposition of these works, 'New Order, Other Spaces' explored the transition into retirement and measurements of life-long wellness. The event was accompanied by a panel discussion, which I introduced and offered up curatorial framing for, and through which research across artist film, curating and the history of dance was shared with audiences to allow for new avenues through which to unpack the artworks within the exhibition.

viii) Conclusion

Rather than a contained component of the thesis, the practice is instead an ever-developing, fluid and fluctuating entity. As I hope has demonstrates, the practice elements have at times set in motion avenues of enquiry, and vice-versa. Furthermore, and which I hope is visibly apparent, what has taken place throughout my thesis and what is submitted here as my practice has not only concerned my curatorial practice, but the many practices of others with whom I have met, generously sharing their knowledge with me, and whose work I have encountered, experienced and thought through. For myself, the idea of exhibitions curated around sport remain an interesting question – what would such an exhibition look like, how would visitors experience such a display, what could such a constellation reveal above and beyond a factual history of gymnastics? How could it illuminate certain histories of photography and cinema, is there

a relationship with dance, ideas of movement and performance art to be revealed here? These are questions that this period of practice and doctoral research has not yet been able to answer, but which has instead set the path for such future enquiries.

Conclusion

To conclude, this thesis set out to offer up for the first time a visual analysis of the manner in which the gymnastics body has been represented, tracing the genealogy of these representations back to the re-invention of gymnastics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Working with a thematic methodology and at an interdisciplinary intersection (primarily) between visual culture, art history, cultural studies, fashion theory, the history of sport and curating, the results contained within this thesis are a new contribution to knowledge on this topic. This has been further added to by the thematic methodology employed, and the outputs forged by the curatorial practice, through which I have attempted to further understand the present relationship between art and sport, and to interrogate the aesthetics of the gymnast's image through artistic practices.

In summary, key findings of this thesis have included evidencing the historical bind between gymnastics, the statuesque and classical imagery, which through the writing of Winckelmann, extends to the conflation between whiteness and beauty. An analysis of the tension between stillness and movement officially inscribed in the discipline of Artistic Gymnastics was shown to reveal the manner in which the links between gymnastics, the statuesque and classical imagery are re-enacted and re-vitalised in contemporary performances, despite anxieties from within the sport about the continuity, flow and rhythm of gymnastic movement. These anxieties are embedded in various ways in the manner in which the sport is written down, and its understanding of the specific role of dance forms, especially ballet, within its historical evolution. Further adding to these links are the complexities of how gymnastics is captured and mediated to us through the lens of the camera, in photography and film. These mediums themselves contain contradictions between movement and stillness, which are replicated and heightened by the presence of gymnastics. Looking ahead to the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympic Games, the Fédération Internationale de

Gymnastique has announced that robot judges produced by the technology firm Hitachi will be used within competition for the first time, thus pointing to a field of vision only likely to become more complex in the future. The notion of the statuesque, stillness in the physical performance and the capturing of the suspended gymnast in pose, contribute to the whiteness of the gymnastics body as light, celestial, deathly, frozen and of the classical mould.

Furthermore, this thesis has demonstrated the enduring ties between Ancient Greek sculpture, the gymnastics body, gymnastic movement, whiteness, ideals of beauty, and characteristics and attributes associated with whiteness. In particular, my examination of the white skin of the gymnast through its physical surface, shine, sweat, reflection of light and the practice of chalking, has been made specifically to demonstrate that even in the contemporary context, parallels between gymnastics, whiteness and the ideals of the Ancient Greeks remain prominent, and influence and inform our reading of the statuesque in gymnastic performance. This constellation has been specially drawn and investigated here to highlight the privileging of the white gymnast on an individual basis in the sport, its exclusivity, and Eurocentricity, by drawing upon examples from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the present. This was discussed in tandem with gender, body shape, reproductive functions, codified movement, and dress subcultures, as new ground covered for this topic.

Future Orientations

The academic field within which this thesis sits has shifted since I initially embarked on this project in 2012. With sports history, sports sociology and journalism, publications on topics pertaining to the Olympic discipline of Artistic Gymnastics have emerged, offering new readings and interpretations of key

events and discussions. Within the field of journalism, online platforms and bloggers have developed followings amongst what is referred to as the “gymternet” – bearing in mind that as one of the Big Four Olympic Sports, the sports’ fanbase is numerically sizeable and global. However, despite this, the focus of such writing largely centres around the personalities, specific tournaments, injuries, rule changes, governance, and – unfortunately in recent years – a massive sexual abuse scandal within USA Gymnastics. I believe that primarily due to the fields within which gymnastics research takes place, the visual and material culture of contemporary gymnastics remains almost unstudied.

Looking towards the future, there are a number of directions within which I hope to continue the research trajectory begun here. This thesis, in historic material, has primarily focused upon the male body, and in the present, the female gymnast – as the bodies (hyper)visible in each of these periods. However, my attention has increasingly been drawn to the contemporary male gymnastic body, with a particular desire to offer up an analysis of the camp aesthetics of male gymnastics. In chapter two, my examination of the gymnasts’ skin, brief allusion to the idea of the gymnast as cyborg, the sharing of injuries via social media, and the tensions between eating disorders, diet and menstruation embedded within sanitary product advertising, has left me with unanswered questions regarding the elite as a sick body in pain, concealed within the exterior appearance of a healthy body – which I would like to pursue in tandem with research material from the medical humanities. Leading on from chapter four, I would like to pursue further writing which seeks to understand the way in which chronophotography has irreversibly impacted the understanding of gymnastic movement visually, relating to coaching manuals, flight phases and the communications of this via illustrations. As described within chapter five, and as a final future direction for the research contained within this thesis, there remains much scope to undertake study of sporting exhibition histories

and to further embed artworks responding to the explorations contained within the chapters here in future analysis.

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The Olympic Studies Centre and Museum, Lausanne.

Scottish Gymnastics archive, Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.

The Sports Museum of Finland, Helsinki.

St Leonard's School, St. Andrews.

University of Dundee Archive Services.

Appendix A. Curatorial Portfolio

Please note: Within the compilation of this curatorial portfolio, I have included a brief project outline, information regarding venues and dates, artist and speakers' biographies, documentation, selected marketing and press (where relevant), and have indicated partners and supports, both financially and in-kind. Due to the volume of associated material held pertaining to each projects included within this portfolio (totally eight), I have purposefully and pragmatically focused on the output of each project, as opposed to the conception, planning, delivery, and administration. An exception to this is the seventh project detailed, 'New Order, Other Spaces,' for which selected planning and administrative material has been provided. This is the case due to this project being the largest in scale, budget, ambition and reach within the practice-based output of my thesis, and the culmination of many of my explorations. Further details: <http://www.de-arte-gymnastica.co>

1. 'Gymnasia' Exhibition Text, Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art 2014

GYMNASIA was a multi-disciplinary artwork produced by the artist's collective OPERA AUTONOMA, directed by Craig Mulholland, with Michelle Hannah, Andrew Houston, Claudia Nova and Carmel O'Brien. Inspired by the non-hierarchical alignment between physical exercise and scholarly activity found in the ancient Greek institution of Gymnasia, it functioned both as a live performance event and static multi-media installation. Taking place at Fleming House, the project endeavoured to act as an autonomous territory or arena for the alliance of sporting and artistic activity, functioning in the model of a peripatetic classroom, laboratory or theatre. Through this lens the project specifically seeks to examine themes of endurance, practice and performance between sporting and artistic disciplines. Commissioned by Glasgow International and supported by Outset Scotland and The Glasgow School of Art.

At the invitation of artist Craig Mulholland, I produced the following exhibition text in response to the project and its conceptual explorations.

1. \acute{c} 2. \acute{B} 3. \acute{i} 4. \acute{G} (over) 5. \acute{c} 6. \acute{G} (under) 7. \acute{h} 8. \acute{B}

The notation above, as indecipherable as it first seems, was infact a commonly used notation system for a prescribed and specific type of movement - gymnastic drills – in the 19th century, lasting in popularity

until the 1930's. This older form of gymnastics bears more resemblance to physical education than the Olympic gymnastics familiar to us in the present. These drills were designed to be led by an instructor stood facing their obedient pupils in formation, who were to carry out the exercises as exactly as possible and any deviation from direction penalised. By the time such systems were adopted as physical education in mainstream schooling, these exercises were taught largely by middle-class instructors, carried out by working class pupils, and willed into being by the elite classes, whose taxes provided the majority of the funding for the programme.

Willed, willing and will-power. The elite classes determining how the general population should move and behave, the working class forcibly internalising social codes of conduct, under the auspices of refinement, general health and a schooling system that manufactured a production line of workers for the industrial age already used to accepting orders. And foot soldiers at the ready, should they be needed for this function. These were the bodies of workers but also patriotic bodies: the national, communal body constituted by the individual form en masse. Conceptually, this patriotic body-in-motion had an unlikely creator: a gymnastics pedagogue, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn [1778 –1852], who proceeded from his first publication 'Von deutschen Volkstum – Of German Folk Essence' towards a gymnastics system and manual of exercises that would actualise the "German" body. Rhythmic movement as patriotism, gymnastics as politics in and of themselves.

Rhythmically - not just to the beat or in time with music - but with rhythm: believed to exist all-around us, within and permeating through the human form, whether this be the individual or collective national body. Academic study of rhythm was at its peak between 1890 and 1940, spanning disciplines including psychology, physiology, musicology, genetics and eugenics. Where Jahn made an equation between physical education, bodily rhythm and - essentially - race, this later proliferation of discourse on rhythm took things a step further: enlisting blood and pulse in order to codify and rank bodies, according to gender, race, class, mental health, etc. As academic hypotheses on the rhythms running through subjects' bodies in their daily lives "progressed," the idea that the national body politic could be controlled through rhythms orchestrated by those in power began to take hold: in industry to increase production and efficiency, but also by totalitarian states, who would use amongst other tools rhythmic gymnastics drill to infiltrate the individual, to overcome their individual agency with the state's own politics and objectives.

State politics, state policies. Not long before the London 2012 Summer Games, in conversation with my childhood gymnastics coach, I asked if he could foresee a time when such mega-sporting events would be awarded to multi-nationals, instead of nations. Swiftly and decisively he responded "no." I was temporarily taken aback, but on reflection, his reasons are crystal clear. Soft power on the international stage; successful athletes as contemporary heroes; a monopolistic elite ruling world sport, founded - after all - by aristocracy. It is no coincidence that commercial gyms up and down the country are blasting out dance music: a tempo, pulse, speed, to measure your activity against. Can you keep up? Sport, health, physical education, and fitness culture are no less conservative and/or fascistic in the present than the past, it is just offered up to us on different terms – as if we chose it, as if we are individually in control of our health, as if we could be trusted to our own bodies.

KEEP FIT. STAY ACTIVE. IT'S GOOD FOR YOU.

2. Sports Events Spectacle: Cultural Policy-Making and Curating Contemporary Art For Major Sporting Events, Flat Time House



A Roundtable Discussion with Jo Longhurst, Beatriz Garcia and Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt

Programmed by Tiffany Boyle, 15th July 2013

A discursive event, exploring the presence of the visual arts in the cultural programming of London 2012 and Glasgow 2014, looking at the effects of recent cultural policy-making in this area upon what was, and is being, actualised. Wider questions addressed included the power imbalance between mega-sporting events and the arts in the production of accompanying cultural programmes; celebratory tones within such programmes; and what aspects of the cultural programming from London 2012 and Glasgow 2014 are acting as a blueprint for future events. Presentations from each of the guest speakers – Jo Longhurst, Beatriz Garcia and Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt – was followed by a Q&A discussion.

Supported by University of London Extra-Mural History of Art Society (ULEMHAS), Birkbeck School of Arts and Flat Time House. Please note that due to sensitive content within Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt's contribution, a transcript of the audio recording for this event is not being made available as part of this thesis.

Speaker's Biographies

Jo Longhurst is an artist based in London and a professor of photography and fine art at the Birmingham School of Art. In 2008, Longhurst graduated from the Royal College of Art, London, with a practice-led PhD and came to prominence with 'The Refusal,' a solo exhibition curated by Ute Eskildsen at the Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany. In the same year she was selected for Bloomberg New Contemporaries by Richard Billingham, Ceal Floyer, and Ken Lum; won a Pavilion Commission for new work hosted by the National Media Museum, Bradford, UK; and was awarded a Leverhulme Fellowship to support the development of a new body of work, 'Other Spaces.' She has exhibited internationally in many art galleries and museums including 'Present,' Sporobole, Quebec; 'Other Spaces,' Mostyn, Llandudno; 'The Worldly House,' dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel; 'Artists' Symposium on Perfection,' Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK; 'Photography in Britain since 2000,' Krakow, Poland; 'Cocker Spaniel and Other Tools for International Understanding,' Kunsthalle zu Kiel, Germany; 'Becoming Animal, Becoming Human,' NGBK, Berlin, Germany; and 'Future Face,' National Museum of Natural Science, Taichung, Taiwan.

Publications include 'The Refusal,' Steidl, 2008; 'Other Spaces,' Cornerhouse, 2012, 'On Perfection' (ed), University of Chicago Press, 2013. In 2012 she was artist in residence at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada, where she was awarded the Grange Prize (now the AIMIA/ AGO Photography Prize).

www.jolonghurst.com

Beatriz Garcia is Head of Research at the Institute of Cultural Capital, a strategic research collaboration between the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University. She has managed and delivered projects in culture-led regeneration, first working on the Sydney 2000 Olympic cultural programme, then studying the legacy of the Glasgow 1990 European City of Culture and most recently directing the Impacts 08 research framework on the multiple impacts of Liverpool 2008 European Capital of Culture. From Sydney onwards, she has conducted primary research at every Olympic Games – Winter and Summer – as well as a range of European Capitals of Culture and Commonwealth Games, funded by such organisations as the British Academy, the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, the UK Social and Economic Research Council, the Universities China Committee in London, the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the International Olympic Committee.

Garcia was in charge of the main legacy evaluation programme for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, and also informed Scotland's transition towards the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games cultural programme. She is currently completing a review of the long term effects of the European Capital of Culture programme for the European Parliament.

www.beatrizgarcia.net

Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt organised her last exhibition at apexart in New York City on the eve of the Iraq war, having worked for a decade as a curator of contemporary art in the UK, Ireland and the Nordic countries. Since then, she has focused her work on research exploring the impact of cultural policy upon creative practice. This has led her to chart the various waves of privatisation that have beset the cultural field in the UK, and to go in search of alternatives in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution.

Gordon-Nesbitt studied History of Art at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, before working as a curator and writer on contemporary art. With Maria Lind and Hans Ulrich Obrist she established salon3, a space for international exchange in London in 1998 and, two years later, was appointed as a curator at the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art in Helsinki. Since the early 2000s her investigative work across cultural and academic fields has led her to take on research positions with institutions including the University of Edinburgh and CCA Derry. She was editor of *Make: the magazine of women's art*, and her texts have appeared in a range of publications from *Critique Journal of Socialist Theory* and the *International Journal of Cultural Policy* to *Mute* and *Variant*. Recently she has been involved in research into the small-scale visual arts sector in the UK, with the London-based group Common Practice. She is currently working with Arts for Health at Manchester Metropolitan University, undertaking research as part of the AHRC's Cultural Value Project into the relationship between cultural participation and long-term health outcomes.

www.shiftparadigms.org

3. Sport, Sport, Sport: A Screening Programme of Soviet-Era Cinema and Artist Moving Image

In Collaboration with Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image and Transmission Gallery, with Glasgow Film Theatre and Kinning Park Complex. An excerpt of the programme was presented at The British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies (BASEES) annual conference, 2015, at Fitzwilliam conference, Cambridge,

Věra Chytilová : Isaak Fridberg : Elem Klimov : Phil Collins : Laura Horelli : Jo Longhurst : Craig Mulholland : Salla Tykkä : Agnieszka Polska

July 2014 - March 2015

A series of four events, 'Sport, Sport, Sport' was a screening programme of cinema and artist moving image, curated in collaboration with Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image and Transmission Gallery, Glasgow.

The programme was structured around three Soviet-era cinema works, all of which respond to gymnastics: Elem Klimov's 'Sport, Sport, Sport' [1970], Věra Chytilová's 'Something Different' [1963], and perestroika-era 'Little Doll' [1988] from Isaak Fridberg. Rarely or never seen before in the UK, translated and subtitled especially for the programme and all early-career works, the programme engages with the lack of critical material surrounding these films. This lack is mirrored in the absence of attention to sporting themes in artist moving image, and the programme as a whole draws upon the long-running ties between sport, the body in motion and early experiments in film. Through the juxtaposition of the works, the programme examined the relationship between sport in cinema and artist moving image, and the influence of this particular period of film-making and its aesthetics in contemporary art.

Produced with financial support from University of London Extra-Mural History of Art Society (ULEMHAS), Birkbeck School of Arts and Transmission Gallery, Glasgow. With thanks to the artists; Diana Tsarelasvili; Mosfilm, AV-arkki: The Distribution Centre for Finnish Media Art; Daniel Vadocký at the Czech National Film Archive, Renata Clarkova at the Czech Centre London and Sinisa Mitrovic at Shady Lane Productions.

Programme

Laura Horelli / You Go Where You're Sent / 2003

Isaak Fridberg / Little Dolls / 1988

Phil Collins / Marxism Today (Prologue) / 2010

Elem Klimov / Sport, Sport, Sport / 1970

Craig Mulholland / Gymnasia / 2014

Salla Tykkä / Giant / 2013

Věra Chytilová / Something Different / 1963

Agnieszka Polska / Medical Gymnastics / 2008

Laura Horell is a visual artist, born in Helsinki and working in Berlin since 2001. Her works, mainly in video, explore the intersection of the private and public spheres, through her use of biography, family history, distance, interview and documentary. 'You Go Where You Are Sent' takes as its point of departure the participation of the artist's grandmother in the 1936 Berlin Olympics, in the Finnish women's gymnastics team. Her grandmother later – as a translator in Nazi Germany, the wife of a diplomat and a physician – continued to 'represent her nation' in differing manners, whose juxtaposition form the crux of the conversation. She discusses her attempts to balance her varying obligations as we view sequences of precisely cropped family photographs; her duties as a diplomat's spouse were a priority, but where she could, she practiced her profession as a physician. Horell's method of biography calls into question the format's reliance on the exceptional nature of the lives it records; conversely, it intimates how every family would be exceptional given the appropriate scrutiny. The film is divided into the periods of her husband's postings, which coincided with some of the great traumas of the 20th century.

Born 1947 in Lithuania, **Isaak Fridberg** has directed films including 'Night Whispers' (1986), 'Walk on the Scaffolding' (1992), and 'Little Dolls,' from 1988: which ran twice at the Berlinale, first in 1989, and then re-released in 1997. The film won the Grand Prix au Festival des Films Sportifs à Lvov, Ukraine, in 1990, despite initial problems with censorship. Fridberg cast as the star of the film Svetlana Zasybkina, a Soviet gymnast who left the sport at the age of sixteen. After ten years of intense training and mirroring the plot of the film, she injured her spine whilst training. She was no longer able to perform any jumps, and training was no longer possible. Leaving gymnastics behind, Svetlana initially turned to acting, before training to become a gymnastics coach, switching to veterinary sciences, and eventually working in industrial business. A Russian documentary with a similar title – 'Broken Dolls' – was released in 2004, elaborating on themes from Fridberg's films with interviews from a number of injured and retired Soviet gymnasts.

Born in 1970, **Phil Collins** grew up in the North of England. He studied at the University of Manchester, from which he graduated in 1994 (BA English Literature and BA Drama), and University of Ulster in Belfast, from which he graduated in 1999 (MA Fine Art). During this time he worked different jobs, including a cloakroom boy and pint-puller at the Hacienda nightclub, a bingo caller, a lecturer in performance and film theory, a high-street photo lab assistant, and a secretary at the Big Issue magazine for the homeless. Throughout the second half of the 1990s he was a member of London-based performance group Max Factory whose live art projects reached all corners of the UK and beyond. Collins received the Paul Hamlyn Award for Visual Arts in 2001, and was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2006 and the Artes Mundi Prize in 2012. He has completed a number of international residencies, including DAAD Berliner Künstlerprogramm in Berlin, Al-Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art in Jerusalem, and PS1

Contemporary Art Center in New York. marxism today (prologue), Collins' 2010 film, was awarded 3sat-Förderpreis at the 57th International Short Film Festival Oberhausen. Shining a light on what is generally perceived as the losing side in the political and social upheavals of the past two decades, 'Marxism Today (Prologue)' is an ongoing project that began with Collins following the fortunes of former teachers of Marxism-Leninism in Communist East Germany. This project is part of a longer interest in the artists' practice across film, video and photography, that often provides a platform for the overlooked or the disenfranchised.

Born in Stalingrad in 1933 into a communist family, **Elem Klimov** graduated from Moscow's Higher Institute of Aviation in 1957. A filmmaker in the vanguard of perestroika, he was elected the First Secretary of the Soviet Filmmakers' Union in May 1986. He was to resign just two years later, his ambitious objectives for the organisation hindered by the state. In his lifetime, he produced five feature films: 'Welcome, or No Trespassing' (1964); 'The Adventures Of A Dentist' (1965); 'Agony' (1975); 'Farewell' (1981); and 'Come And See' (1985), which won the Golden Prize at the 14th Moscow International Film Festival. 'Farewell' was a film begun by Klimov's wife, Larisa Shepitko, who died in a car accident in 1979. A year after her death, Klimov filmed a 25-minute tribute to his wife titled 'Larisa' (1980), then proceeding to finishing the film for her, which reflected on the dilemma of the price paid for progress when an old village in Siberia is to be destroyed, and its peasant community resettled in a development of faceless apartment blocks. Following Shepitko's death, the remainder of his film output were tragedies. During his lifetime, many of Klimov's films were censored or blocked, taking several rewrites and waiting several years before being released. Klimov died at the age of 70, on October 26, 2003. An early work and a film Klimov himself was dismissive of, 'Sport, Sport, Sport' is conceived on the surface as a documentary, appropriating footage from global sporting events held in the stadiums of Moscow, Philadelphia, Stockholm and Mexico City. Disguised behind allegory, the film is severely critical of the role of sport, and its relationship with politics, art and ethics. The 'documentary' element of the film is undercut by poker-faced pastiche technique, mixing styles and media into a disquietingly seditious stream of information. This culminates in a surrealist scene where Klimov stages a physical struggle between the famous athlete Jesse Owens and Adolph Hitler himself. 'Reality,' in the form of newsreel footage from the 1936 Berlin Olympics, is turned against itself, as the fans appear to cheer this surreal spectacle on. As such, the film caused discomfort among censors, who shelved it.

Craig Mulholland was born in Glasgow and studied Drawing and Painting at Glasgow School of Art. Recent exhibitions include TEMPORAL DRAG, Kendall Koppe, Glasgow, ILLEGITIMI NON CARBORUNDUM, LGP Gallery, Coventry, DUST NEVER SETTLES, SWG3 Gallery, Glasgow, GRANDES ET PETITES MACHINES, Glasgow School of Art, touring in expanded form to Spike Island, Bristol, 2008, RISING RESISTANCE, SORCHA DALLAS, Glasgow, HYPERINFLATION, Tate Britain, London. Mulholland was a recent recipient of the Glasgow Visual Artists Award, the Glasgow Festival of Visual Art Directors Commission and the Creative Scotland Artist Award. He lives and works in Glasgow and is currently course leader and lecturer in Fine Art at The Glasgow School of Art. His practice tends to operate in a liminal territory between the concrete

and virtual, seeking to critically examine the aesthetic, cultural and ideological effects of dematerialising technologies and their increasing ubiquity. Recent work has focused on modes of resistance and compliance to their related power structures. 'Gymnasia' takes its inspiration from the non-hierarchical alignment between physical exercise and scholarly activity found in the ancient Greek institution of gymnasia. During this period most gymnasia, besides offering physical training, housed libraries and social areas for philosophical, artistic and literary discourse as well as the contemplation of aesthetics and music. This less structured intellectualism would have been underpinned by spontaneous lectures, presentations and theatrical performances. The film is intended to act as an arena for a study of the parallels between physical exercise and artistic activity, through a functioning hybrid of the creative/theatrical laboratory and the self-improvement centre or gym. Through this lens the project specifically seeks to examine themes of endurance, practice and performance between these disciplines. 'Gymnasia' was produced as a Director's Commission for the 2014 Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art.

Salla Tykkä is a visual artist, born and working in Helsinki, who has been working with film and video since 1996. Tykkä is renowned for video works that use subtle narratives to engage with power relations, gender antagonisms, voyeurism, identity, obsession and perfection. Her dramatically edited footage plays with cinematic structures, and is often set to familiar, grandiose film scores. 'Giant' is the final work in a trilogy of films – instigated in 2008 – that each explore differing notions of beauty and perfection, all informed by the colour white. 'Giant' originates in the artists' awareness of her body's abilities and inabilities through her own practicing of gymnastics in her childhood, and her fascination with Romanian gymnastics, which she returned to through watching the 2004 Athens Olympic Games. Revisiting to this fandom in adulthood, her enquiry takes in the complexity of these gymnasts as figureheads, subject to the control of the centralised training academy and the political dictatorship of the time. Through gymnastics – which defines itself as creating beauty out of exact control of bodily movement – the artist asks from where our concepts of beauty originate, and how they mirror historical narratives of power. Tykkä graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki 2003 and participated in the Venice Biennale 2001. Solo exhibitions include: BALTIC Arts Centre, Gateshead 2013; EX3, Florence, 2011; Hayward Gallery Project Space, London, 2010; Norrköping Art Museum, Norrköping, 2009. Her work has also been shown at film festivals including the 36th International Film Festival Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 2007; 21st Brest European Short Film Festival, Brest, 2006; Tribeca Film Festival, New York, 2003; and International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, Oberhausen, 2003 and 2002.

Věra Chytilová was born in 1929, in Ostrava, Czechoslovakia, initially studying architecture and philosophy, before working as a draftsman, fashion model and then as a clapper girl at the Barrandov Studios. She enrolled at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU), studying under Otakar Vavra, and graduating in 1962. 'Daisies' (1966), her most known work, cemented her international reputation, but was censored upon its release in then-Czechoslovakia. Although she was never officially blacklisted as a director, the authorities thenceforth made it difficult for her to produce her work. Her last film before the Soviet Invasion of 1968 was 'Fruit of Paradise' (1969), following which she was unable to make another film for eight years. Due to international pressure and a personal appeal to the President, she was allowed to resume film-making in 1976 with 'The Apple Game,' after which she worked steadily throughout the 80s

in to the early 90s. She produced her last film in 2006, 'Pleasant Memories.' She was awarded the 1967 Bergamo Film Festival Grand Prix; 1977 Chicago; International Film Festival Silver Hugo; 1980 Pretas Story International Film Festival in San Remo Grand Premio; and 2001 Czech Lions Artistic Achievement Award. Chytilová died at the age of 85 in Prague, on 12 March 2014. 'Something Different' was Chytilová's first feature length film, premiering at the 1963 Mannheim Film Festival and winning the award for Best Film. An early experiment from the Czech New Wave director, it is a film of two halves: following two women, both unhappy with their circumstances and contemplating the choices they have towards an alternative existence. As the film progresses, the vast gaps between their realities begin to dissolve as clear overlaps emerge. For all that Eva initially seems to have more independence, material wealth and agency, it is she who is subject to constant criticism of her performance, wear-and-tear on her joints and muscles, and physical violence from her coach. It is instead Vera who breaks the mould, seeking out an extra-marital affair. The film is an early example of Chytilová's experimental nature, and demonstrates her preoccupation with feminist issues that later came to the fore with 'Daisies.'

Jo Longhurst is an artist based in London and a professor of photography and fine art at the Birmingham School of Art. In 2008, Longhurst graduated from the Royal College of Art, London, with a practice-led PhD and came to prominence with 'The Refusal,' a solo exhibition curated by Ute Eskildsen at the Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany. In the same year she was selected for Bloomberg New Contemporaries by Richard Billingham, Ceal Floyer, and Ken Lum; won a Pavilion Commission for new work hosted by the National Media Museum, Bradford, UK; and was awarded a Leverhulme Fellowship to support the development of a new body of work, 'Other Spaces.' She has exhibited internationally in many art galleries and museums including 'Present,' Sporobole, Quebec; 'Other Spaces,' Mostyn, Llandudno; 'The Worldly House,' dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel; 'Artists' Symposium on Perfection,' Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK; 'Photography in Britain since 2000,' Krakow, Poland; 'Cocker Spaniel and Other Tools for International Understanding,' Kunsthalle zu Kiel, Germany; 'Becoming Animal, Becoming Human,' NGBK, Berlin, Germany; and 'Future Face,' National Museum of Natural Science, Taichung, Taiwan. 'Present' seeks to convey the intensity of the moment before a performance, when the gymnast, at the height of her concentration, salutes the members of the jury evaluating her. As the gymnasts prepare for action, their disciplined minds and bodies are presented to camera, revealing moments of slippage between private introspection and public display. The repetition of the same motif within the image highlights the singularity of the work's protagonists. The installation's loops and stutters in film. Through the links between the works, the programme aims to examine the relationship between sport in cinema and artist moving image, in tandem with the influence on this particular era of film-making and its aesthetics in contemporary art.

The animated film 'Medical Gymnastics' is constructed through the artists' contortion and stretching of illustrations from an old gymnastics manual and photographs from a book about children gymnastics, created by removing clothes of the exercising girls in Photoshop. The short videowork is typical of the artist **Agnieszka Polska's** oeuvre, in which she frequently addresses issues of institutionalised amnesia and

the retrieval of memory (particularly through fiction and confabulation). Polska has particularly focused on marginalized or forgotten facts from the twentieth-century history of art in Central/Eastern Europe, focusing on the moments of disappearance (ideas, bodies, materials) and on facts that have become distorted through incomplete photographic documentation or inaccurate filming, or simply from being badly remembered. Using computer animation and live action she rescues, embellishes and re-animates events that are on the verge of oblivion, using a narrative style that is both serious and playful.

Born in Lublin, Poland, in 1985, while it was still a communist state, the use of collage in Polska's animations references techniques used in experimental films of the Polish avant garde. Polska graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, studying in Agata Pankiewicz's photography studio (2005 - 2010) and from the Universitaet der Kunste Berlin in the class of Hito Steyerl (2008 - 2009). She won the Grand Prix Geppert Award in 2001, is sponsored by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage in Poland, and is represented by the Żak/ Branicka Gallery in Berlin. She first began exhibiting her works in Kraków in 2007. She has exhibited across Europe and in the United States, including Calvert 22 London; Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw; Museum of Modern Art, Lodz; Santander Foundation, Madrid; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; and the ICA London.

Film Stills, Example Marketing and Documentation

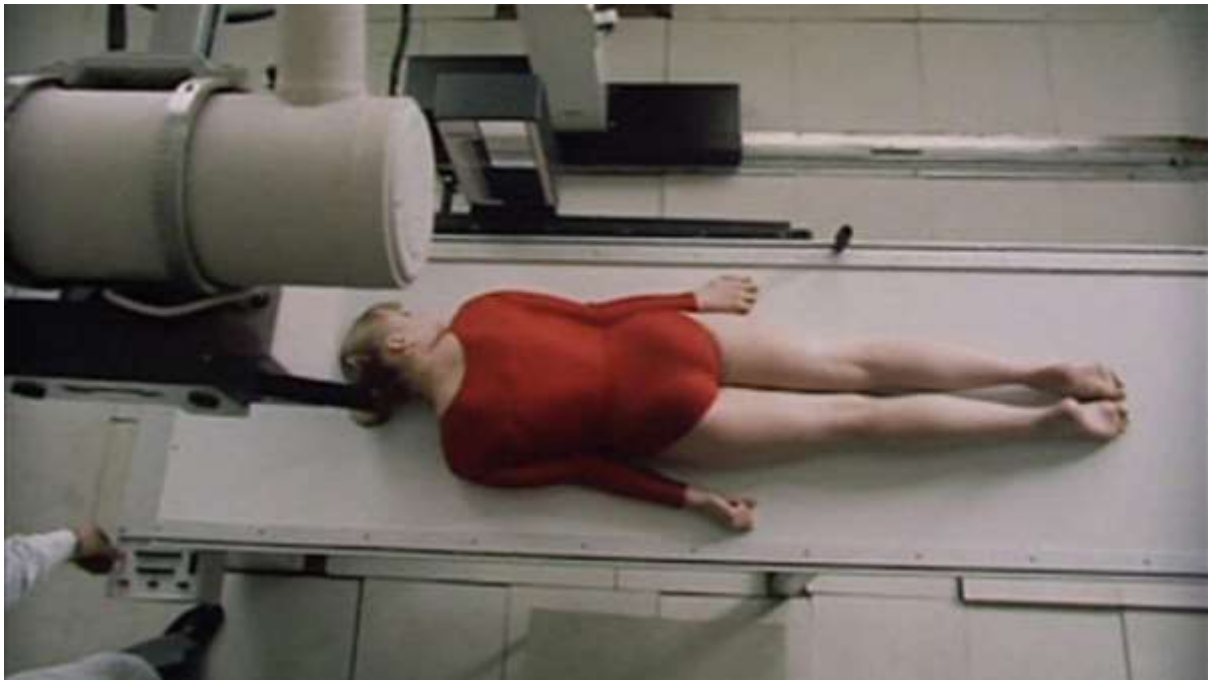
Věra Chytilová



Agnieszka Polska



Isaak Fridberg



Elem Klimov



Phil Collins



Jo Longhurst



Craig Mulholland



Salla Tykkä







Sport, Sport, Sport:

A Screening Programme of Soviet-Era Cinema and Artist Moving Image

Věra Chytilová | Salla Tykkä

Glasgow Film Theatre | 28 September | 20:10

The second in a series of four events, the 'Sport, Sport, Sport' screening programme is structured around three Soviet-era cinema works, all of which feature gymnastics: Elem Klimov's 'Sport, Sport, Sport' [1970] Věra Chytilová's 'Something Different' [1963] and perestroika-era 'Little Dolls' [1988] from Issak Fridberg. Rarely or never seen before in the UK, translated and subtitled especially for the programme and all early-career works, the programme engages with the lack of critical material surrounding these films. This lack is mirrored in the absence of attention to sporting themes in artist moving image, and the programme as a whole draws upon the long-running ties between sport, the body in motion and early experiments in film. Through the juxtaposition of the works, the programme examines the relationship between sport in cinema and artist moving image, and the influence of this particular period of film-making and its aesthetics in contemporary art.

The second event takes place as part of the GFT 'Crossing the Line' strand, dedicated to the crossover between visual art and cinema. The programme features the Scottish premiere of Věra Chytilová's first feature-length film, 'Something Different,' from 1963. Alternating between fiction and documentary, the narrative contrasts the lives of an anonymous housewife with the Olympic gymnast Eva Bosáková. 'Something Different' is preceded by artist Salla Tykkä's work 'Giant' [2013], filmed in the famous Communist-era gymnastics schools of Onesti and Deva in Romania. An experimental documentary, with an inquiry into beauty and the colour white at its core, the work evolved from interviews made by the artist with national gymnasts and their coaches, all of which is frequently interrupted by dictatorship-era archival footage from the very same locations.

Curated by Tiffany Boyle in collaboration with Transmission Gallery and Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image. Presented with Glasgow Film Theatre, Kinning Park Complex and Gordon Square Cinema.

Free, but ticketed - all welcome!

Please see the Glasgow Film Theatre website for booking details:

<http://www.glasgowfilm.org/whats-on/527-something-different>

Copyright © Věra Chytilová Film Still from 'Something Different,' 1963. Courtesy of the Czech National Film Archive.

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Example Documentation from Transmission Gallery 22 October 2014.





Images courtesy of Ashanti Harris.

4. MAP Magazine review, 'The Inventors of Tradition II'

Commissioned review of 'The Inventors of Tradition II' exhibition catalogue, published by MAP magazine January 2017, available: <https://mapmagazine.co.uk/style-lines>

Style Lines! Tiffany Boyle reviews The Inventors of Tradition II
Issue #38 On Balance - Review - January 2017



The Inventors of Tradition II, published by Koenig Books, 2016

Moving back and forth between the pages of *The Inventors of Tradition II*, a flurry of personal recollections and research materials come to mind. These begin with black-and-white flickering images of sporting parades to mark the 1938 opening of The Palace of Art in Glasgow, and of gymnastics being coached in an old church hall filmed by Murray Grigor in his 1970s film *Sports for all Seasons*, played out onscreen in the archives of the National Library of Scotland. From a newspaper article in *The Herald* charting the

design commission for a revised and fashionable uniform for St Leonards School (St Andrews), to dancer Steve Paxton's cut-out images of athletes used to choreograph his 1961 piece *Proxy*, instructing his dancers to find their own way to transition between athletic poses.

Closer to home, an understanding of the myriad ways that school socks could be folded down and rolled in the playground, rightly or wrongly. I recall the signed football shirts of Edinburgh teams, sandwiched inside photo frames, hanging like collectibles high up the walls of pubs run by my father and uncles. Perhaps most vividly—and an early lesson learned in the domain of uniform—I cannot forget my mother washing my first gymnastics club leotard and tracksuit at a temperature too high, the black dye leaking over into the white, pink and blue patchwork of teardrops and panels. They remained functional, but subsequent competitions were marred by the wearing of those ruined items.



Tiffany Boyle's ill-fated tracksuit

The breadth of these memories leaping forward is entirely reflective of the scope of *The Inventors of Tradition II* in terms of the project's public forms, its wide-ranging influences, and the background processes and preoccupations given visibility over its pages. The publication brings together each of these prior selves—which encompassed an exhibition, design collection, dance performance, film screenings and conversations—drawing out their connections through essays, personal reflections, interviews, and a playful mise-en-scène dialogue from Lucy McKenzie. This dialogue flits between 1901, 1911, 1938 and 1988 in the very same way in which the projects points-of-reference cover historical ground. Playing with attendance at the large-scale public festivities from which so many influences are drawn, the publication is marked with souvenir-like mementos tucked away for another time: a bookmark, a pamphlet, a 6×4 colour photo.

Many of the texts compiled within the volume draw upon archival research, or personal collections—of scents, press cuttings and the back catalogue of jewellers Ceard and Carrick. These are preceded by a number of thematic sections, on the notion of the casual, on perfume, on style in Glasgow, and on the artists' home. The influences *The Inventors of Tradition II* gathers together and departs from do chart international connections and stylistic imports, but the project is firmly rooted in histories of design and style local to Glasgow and Scotland. Its richness lies in this: an understanding of the impact and trickle-down effects of Mackintosh, of football shirts, of high fashion, into the everyday and back again.

The Inventors of Tradition II is published by Koenig Books, £38, and is distributed worldwide. It is sold in Scotland through www.wearepanel.co.uk and selected bookshops.

Essay contributions are from Michael Bracewell, Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt, Fiona Jardine, Juliet Kinchin, Mason Leaver-Yap, Mairi MacKenzie, Ray McKenzie, Bernie Reid, Rebecca Wober and Linsey Young. These give insights to 1980s football casual style and culture, perfume scents and their social significance, Glasgow's cultural policy, city branding, the architect Peter Womersley, his friend and fabric designer Bernat Klein, filmmaker Murray Grigor and artist Gerald Laing. Interviews with Jill Bryson from 1980s new wave duo Strawberry Switchblade, choreographer and dancer Ellen Van Schuylenburch and Mockintosh jeweller Eric Michael. Archive photography and photographic compositions by Kimberley O'Neill and Eileen Quinlan with Jack Miskell.

The publication was launched at The Art School (Glasgow School of Art Student Association building) on Wednesday 30 November 2016. The launch included a recreated performance-installation by Jill Bryson of Strawberry Switchblade, inspired by her 1981 degree show work.

*The Inventors of Tradition II is a project by Atelier E.B and Panel. An exhibition took place at the Palace of Art from 2–30 May 2015 and was conceived in partnership with the Palace of Art and Steff Norwood. A special programme of events connected to the exhibition included the work of acclaimed film director Murray Grigor and four performances of the dance piece 'O YES', a recreation of 'Yes O Yes' from the production *I Am Curious, Orange*, 1988, by Michael Clark.*

5. The Body In Motion // In Motion

Glasgow Film Theatre, 10th June 2018, 19:45

Curated for MAP by Tiffany Boyle, 'The Body in Motion//In Motion' programme explored dance film and artist moving image, ideas of movement, notation and choreography for the screen. Connecting historical dance film works from pioneering female directors Maya Deren and Margaret Tait alongside contemporary artist moving image – from Anna Hoetjes (Amsterdam-based) and Aideen Doran (Glasgow-based) – the programme was interspersed with pauses for discussion and reflection.

Supported by the Department of Design History & Theory at Glasgow School of Art. With thanks to the artists, MAP magazine, Glasgow Film Theatre, the National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive, and RE:VOIR, Paris.

Part of Glasgow Film Theatre's 'Crossing the Line' strand; the programme was originally scheduled to take place as part of Glasgow Film Festival 2018, but was postponed due to extreme weather.

Programme

Margaret Tait / Calypso / 4mins

Margaret Tait / Painted Eightsome / 6mins

Aideen Doran / Bodies in Motion / 12mins

Maya Deren / A Study in Choreography for Camera / 3mins

Anna Hoetjes / Single Mass Performance / 3mins

Anna Hoetjes / Es war hart—Es müsste es wieder geben / 8mins

Artist Biographies

Aideen Doran (b. 1984, Lurgan, Northern Ireland) lives and works Glasgow. Her practice traverses moving image, sound, installation and writing. She primarily works with found materials absorbing, annotating and transforming. In 2017, she produced an online commission for Transmission Gallery, and undertook a CCA Glasgow Creative Lab Residency. She was shortlisted for the 2018 Margaret Tait Award. Solo exhibition, Im Bau, at Grand Union, Birmingham in 2015. Group exhibitions and screenings including: Catalyst Commissions, Catalyst Arts, Belfast, UK (2017); On the Edge, Flatpack Film Festival, Birmingham,

UK (2017); AMINI screening programme, The MAC, Belfast, UK (2016); Coppice, Verge Gallery, Sydney, Australia (2016).

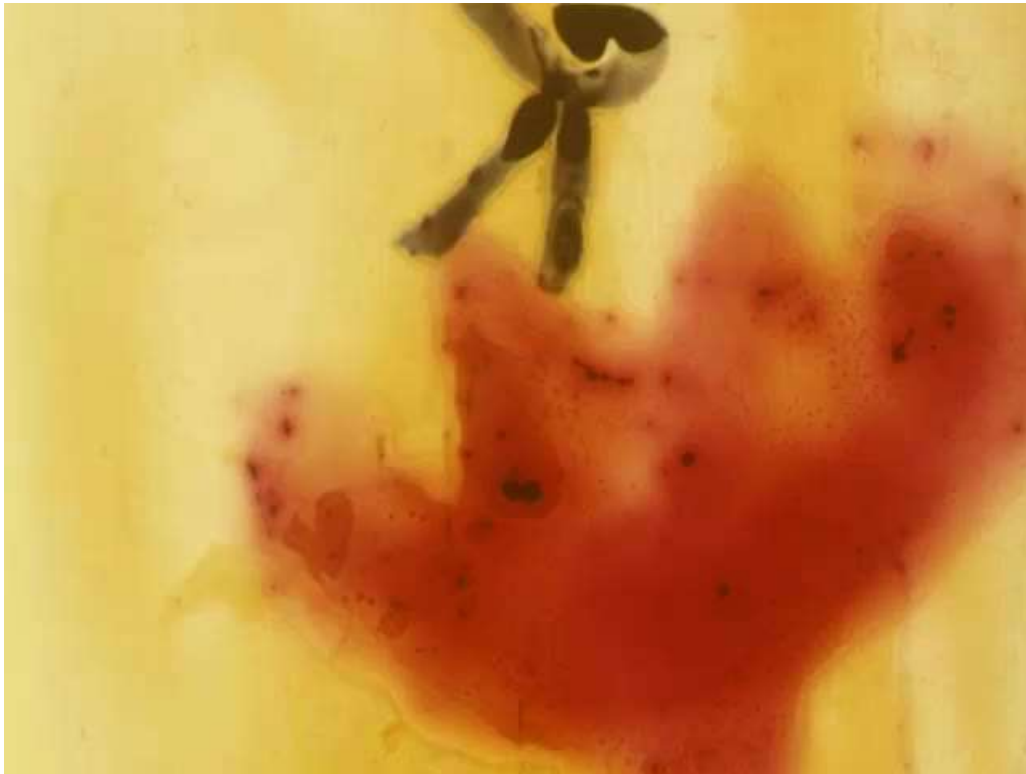
Maya Deren, (born Eleonora Derenkowska, Kiev 1917, died 1961, USA) emigrated with her family to America in 1922, studying journalism and political science at Syracuse University in New York and English Literature at Smith College. Deren was the first filmmaker to receive a Guggenheim award in 1947 for creative work in motion pictures. She wrote film theory, distributed her own films and established the Creative Film Foundation awards in the late 1950s for independent filmmaking. With Alexander Hammid, she produced her first film in 1943, titled 'Meshes of the Afternoon'. Through this association she changed her name to Maya at Hammid's suggestion: Maya being a Buddhist term meaning 'illusion'. She made six short films including 'Meshes of the Afternoon' (1943), 'Meditation on Violence' (1947) and 'The Very Eye of Night' (1959). Deren wrote two books, *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film*, (1946) and *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti*, (1953). She shot over 18,000 feet of footage of Haitian Vodou, some of which was assembled for viewing following her death by her third husband, Teiji Ito. In 2011 the BFI marked the 50 anniversary of her death with a retrospective.

Anna Hoetjes (born 1984, lives and works Amsterdam) studied at Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam, on Hito Steyerl's experimental video class at the Universität der Künste Berlin and received an MA at the Dutch Art Institute in Arnhem in 2012: her thesis reflects on the possibilities for synchronised, collective movement in locations loaded with the history of mass- movement parades during the socialist GDR-era. Working in film, video, performances and installation, Hoetjes' work deals with the relationship between the media, body and technology. Hoetjes work has been exhibited and screened widely, including at CIAT Contemporary Institute for Art & Thought, Berlin; Latvian Center for Contemporary Art, Riga; Museum Kranenburgh, Bergen; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Bogotá; L'Etrange Festival, Paris; Imagine Film Festival, Amsterdam and Het Ketelhuis: Amsterdam.

Margaret Tait (born Orkney, 1918, died Orkney 1999) was sent at the age of eight to school in Edinburgh. She studied medicine at Edinburgh University, graduating 1941. In 1943, Tait joined the Royal Army Medical Corps and served in India, Sri Lanka and Malaya. After studying film at the Centro Sperimentale di Photographia in Rome 1950 to 1952, Tait established Ancona Films in Edinburgh's Rose Street, moving back to Orkney in the 60s. Over the following decades she made a series of films inspired by the Orcadian landscape and culture. Tait's work has been screened at the National Film Theatre (London), Berlin Film Festival, Centre for Contemporary Art (Warsaw), Arsenal Kino (Berlin), Pacific Film Archives (San Francisco), Knokke le Zoute, Delhi and Riga. She received retrospectives at the 1970 and 2004 Edinburgh Film Festivals and has been the subject of BBC and Channel 4 profiles.

Film Stills and Example Marketing

Margaret Tait



Aideen Doran



Maya Deren



Anna Hoetjes



MAP

FOR ARTIST-LED PUBLISHING AND PRODUCTION



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and they all look the same.

JUNE, 2018 **EVENT**

THE BODY IN MOTION // IN MOTION

Glasgow Film Theatre, Sunday 10 June, 7.45pm. Maya Deren, Aileen Doran, Anna Hoetjes and Margaret Tait

Rescheduled due to February/March's stormy weather, this MAP programme for Crossing the Line, Glasgow Film Festival 2018 is curated by Tiffany Boyle and explores dance film and artist moving image alongside ideas of movement, notation and choreography.

Start/stopping between screening and short discussions around themes and individual works, the programme connects historical dance film works from pioneering female directors Maya Deren and Margaret Tait, alongside contemporary works by Anna Hoetjes (Amsterdam-based) and Aileen Doran (Glasgow-based).

Image: Anna Hoetjes, 'Es war hart / Es müsste es wieder geben', still, 2009. Supported by Glasgow Film Festival and the Department of Design History and Theory at The Glasgow School of Art.

To book contact: glasgowfilm.org/shows/map-magazine-the-body-in-motion-in-motion

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Supported by Creative Scotland

6. Invisible Knowledge, Other Spaces

Discursive Event and Artist Film Screening, CCA Glasgow, 6 March 2017, 6.30pm.



Adelita Husni-Bey, *After the Finish Line*, 2015.

Artist talk and screening event with an extended introduction from curator Tiffany Boyle, responding to Adelita Husni-Bey's videowork '*After the Finish Line*' presented as part of the exhibition '*Forms of Action*.' Working with a group of young athletes who have sustained injuries – a swimmer, a gymnast, a sprinter – the work through dialogue seeks to de-individualise the feelings of failure expressed by the young athletes, asking questions around success, competition, pain, and the limits of the body. The response from Tiffany Boyle will include an excerpt from '*After the Finish Line*,' and be interspersed with film clips and references to the visual culture of gymnastics.

Artist Jo Longhurst has since 2008 produced an on-going body of work '*Other Spaces*,' which explores through gymnastics ideas of perfection and bodily movement, the shape of personal and national identities, as well as social and political systems. Initially focusing on the physical and emotional experiences of elite gymnasts, her work takes form through photography, video, performance and installation. The artist will also discuss her 2015 Rio de Janeiro residency, during which she worked with the Vila Olímpica da Mangueira rhythmic gymnastics social project in the production of new work. The Mangueira favela, prominently situated alongside a concrete highway and the Brutalist Maracanã stadium, is home to the famous Samba School from which Rio's carnival originated, and also the site of Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica's 1960s experimental Parangolés. Accompanying this talk will be an excerpt of the artist's 2012 filmwork '*Present*,' followed by a Q&A. Supported by Horsecross Arts.

Example Press

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This Week in Scottish Art: 1 - 6 Mar

Mark Wallinger begins his Scottish Art two-city takeover in The Fruitmarket, Ingleby and Dundee Contemporary Art galleries, while Embassy opens its latest members' show, while artist collective Florida unveils its latest project, and much more ...

Article by Holly Gavin | 01 Mar 2017

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The Skinny

Mon 6 Mar: CCA

Curator Tiffany Boyle introduces [Invisible Knowledge Other Spaces](#), an artists talk and screening, at the CCA Cinema from 6.30pm. Boyle begins the event with a response to Adelita Husni-Bey's videowork *After the Finish Line*, which is currently on display in the CCA's *Forms of Action* exhibition. The work captures young athletes suffering injuries; through dialogue Husni-Bey attempts to de-individualise feelings of personal failure.

Artist Jo Longhurst has produced *Other Spaces*, an ongoing body of work started in 2008, which explores bodily movements, ideas of perfection, personal and national identities' shapes, and social and political systems through gymnastics. Longhurst's talk will be followed by a screening of excerpts from her filmwork *Present* (2012) and a Q&A. Tickets are free, but book them [here](#), or call the CCA box office at 0141 352 4900 to secure a space.

<http://theskinny.co.uk/art>

Documentation



7. New Order, Other Spaces, Jo Longhurst, Glasgow 2018 European Sports Championships Cultural Programme 2018

Kelvin Hall Ballroom, 1445 Argyle Street Glasgow G3 8AW.

Preview Thu 2 August 6-9pm.

Opening Hours: 2 - 12 August: Open daily 10am – 5pm.

Threshold Artspace, Perth Concert Hall and Perth Theatre, Mill Street, Perth PH1 5HZ.

Preview Saturday 4 August 2pm-4pm.

Opening Hours 2 August – 12 August: Mon – Sat 10am – 6pm; Sun 12noon – 6pm.

Opening Hours 13 August – 22 November: Open Mon – Sat 10am – 6pm, Closed Sun.

'New Order, Other Spaces' was a £40k multi-site solo presentation from London-based artist Jo Longhurst, curated by Tiffany Boyle as part of the cultural programme accompanying the inaugural Glasgow 2018 European Championships. New commissions and existing work were brought together to explore the gymnastic body across photography, moving image and installation, presented simultaneously in Glasgow and Perth. New commissions produced in collaboration with gymnasts of all ages and responding to archival research took form in new moving image work, and responses to the life and work of dancer, choreographer and teacher Margaret Morris – in particular her application of colour theory to the system of dance notation she devised. 'New Order, Other Spaces' engaged with ideas of perfection, gender, gesture, and inter-generational understandings of movement. The exhibition, in part, took its title from Foucault's 1967 essay, 'Of Other Spaces,' which interrogates ideas of physical and psychological space in relation to location and time.

Since 2008, artist Jo Longhurst has created a substantial series of work exploring the gymnastic body. Gymnastics in Scotland has a long history, dating back to the mid-1800s, and has always been intertwined with sport, dance, physical education, workplace exercise. However, this history is not well-known, and there have recently been major archiving projects uncovering these important narratives. Working with these archival items and personal collections was a key aspect of the research and development of the commissioned works, using footage from the National Library of Scotland's Moving Image archive.

Recruiting gymnasts via the network of Scottish Gymnastics, Longhurst worked with a group of 22 gymnasts (young people aged 7-21), creating together a choreographed performance piece 'What is to be done?' staged in both Glasgow and Perth to mark the openings of both exhibitions. 'What is to be done?' sat in dialogue with a short filmwork titled 'Pivot,' working with Ronald Rodger, a gymnast and coach aged 87; a life-long competitor and an important figure in gymnastics for Scotland today. In the work – filmed in slow-motion HD footage – Rodger performs his own range of warm-up exercises undertaken throughout his life, focusing on the effort and discipline of continuing to practice these. Through the juxtaposition of these works, 'New Order, Other Spaces' explored the transition into retirement and measurements of life-long wellness.

Jo Longhurst is internationally recognised for her explorations of cultural ideas of perfection through photography, video, performance and installation. She is drawn to human systems and structures, interested in attempts to create order from disorder, and the many ways in which we try to make sense of our place in the universe. She often returns to the question of how we as individuals learn to be in the world: how we are judged, shaped, or affected by our social and political environment, and how we are expected to 'fit in' or conform. *Other Spaces* (2008 – ongoing), a study of elite gymnasts in training and competition, explores what is required to produce a perfect performance, gently probing how ideas of perfection shape personal and national identities, as well as social and political systems. Jo Longhurst graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2008. Her work has been shown in numerous exhibitions and events, including *Arche Noah. Über Tier und Mensch in der Kunst*, Museum Ostwall in Dortmund; *Sport, Sport, Sport, Transmission*, Glasgow, & BIMl, London; *Other Spaces*, Mostyn, Wales; *The Worldly House*, Documenta (13), Kassel; *On Perfection: an Artists' Symposium*, Whitechapel Gallery, London; *Photography in Britain since 2000*, Krakow Photomonth; *Becoming Animal, Becoming Human*, Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst/ New Society for Visual Arts, Berlin; *New Works: Pavilion Commissions*, National Media Museum, Bradford; *New Contemporaries 2008*, Liverpool Biennial; and *The Refusal*, Museum Folkwang, Essen. In 2012 she was awarded the Art Gallery of Ontario's prestigious Grange Prize (now the AIMIA/ AGO Photography Prize). Longhurst lives and works in London.

Supported by Festival 2018, Glasgow Life, The Glasgow School of Art, Scottish Gymnastics, The Zone Leotards, Women of the World Festival, and Write-On Signs.

List of Works, Kelvinhall Ballroom, Glasgow

1. *Cross*, (2016), Double-faced fabric banner with wood. Made in collaboration with Gemini Gymnastics Club, Oshawa, during an artist residency at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.
2. *A-Z*, (2012), 215 appropriated photographs under Perspex. Commissioned by Pavilion, Leeds, for the National Media Museum. Photographs: Alan Baker, estate unknown; British Gymnastics Archive; Editura Sport-Turism, Spain; Alan Edwards; Giradet Archiv, Photographic Collection, Museum Folkwang; Hulton

Getty Archive; Sing Lo; Volker Minkus [official photographer to the International Gymnastics Federation]; Press Commission of the Chinese Olympic Committee; and Vladimir Safronov, estate unknown.

3. *Untitled (Cangas)*, (2018), Body scans and pure colours on cotton voile.

4. *Semana da raça*, (2018). Reproduction of archive photograph in box frame. Part of an album made in the 1930s as documentation of the Rio Pardo Race Week. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Centre for Sports Memory, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil.

5. *Pinnacle*, (2012), C-type photographs in powder-coated frames

6. *Peak*, (2012), C-type photograph in box frame.

7. *Double Portrait (after Margaret Morris)*, (2018), Silk organza on powder-coated stainless steel stand. The image used in this work was found in a 1931-2 album from a Swiss tuberculosis sanatorium, which documented the Margaret Morris Method – a movement programme developed to promote health and fitness for all. Reproduced with the kind permission of Margaret Morris Movement International and Culture Perth and Kinross Trust. Alpha Press Agency with thanks to Culture Perth and Kinross Trust.

8. *Space-Force Construction No. 1 (United States of America)*, *Space-Force Construction No. 2 (China)*, *Space-Force Construction No. 3 (India)*, (2012). Photographs in powder-coated aluminium structures.

9. *Untitled (Space-Force Constructions)*, (2012). Powder-coated aluminium structures.

10. *Cross*, (2016), Double-faced fabric banner with wood. Made in collaboration with Gemini Gymnastics Club, Oshawa, during an artist residency at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

11. *Momentum (toward a fiscal crisis)*, (2018), Body scans. Site-specific flag installation.

12. *What is to be Done?*, (2018), Gymnasts, leotards, cangas, mats. Site-specific performance intervention at preview on 2 August only.

13. *Present*, (2013), Single5-channel HD video re-mastered for the single urban screen onshown intermittently on the Big Screen, George Square, Glasgow during Festival 2018. Duration 8.03 min, no audio with no sound. Made in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, and Gemini Gymnastics, Oshawa. Original work: 5 individual projections with indefinite loop, or large-scale hanging work for one projector.

List of Works, Horsecross Arts Perth

1. *Suspension (I)*, (2018), Digital photograph. Wall vinyl.

2. *Momentum (melting point)*, (2018), Body scans. Wall vinyl.

3. *Pivot*, (2018), HD video. Duration 3.44 min. Looped, no audio.
4. *The Refusal (part IV)*, (2018), 22 channel video. Duration 8.54 min. Looped, no audio. with no sound.
5. *Momentum (melting point)*, (2018), Body scans. Wall vinyl II.
6. *Present* (2018), Single5-channel HD video re-mastered for single screen. Duration 63 min, no audio. with no sound. Made in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto and Gemini Gymnastics, Oshawa.
7. *Momentum (melting point)*, (2018), Body scans. 2 window banners.
8. *What is to be done?* (2018), Gymnasts, leotards, cangas, mats. Site-specific performance intervention at preview on 4 August only.
9. *Pivot* (2018), HD video. Duration 3.44 min. Looped with no sound. Re-mastered for the urban screen on Perth Theatre Mill Street Façade.
10. *Momentum (melting point)* (2018), Digital baryta print for Horsecross Arts, Edition of 10 + 2 artist proofs

Panel Discussion with Jo Longhurst, Margaret Salmon and Dr Lucy Weir

Kelvinhall, University of Glasgow Seminar Room 2, 11th August 2018 14:30 – 16:30

To mark the closing weekend of 'New Order, Other Spaces' at Kelvin Hall, this discussion brings together Jo Longhurst, Margaret Salmon and Lucy Weir to unfold themes within the exhibition, specifically interrogating performance, capturing motion, stillness, and the notation of movement. Introduced by curator Tiffany Boyle, followed by a Q&A. Supported by the School of Design at Glasgow School of Art, with thanks to Dr Alexandra Ross at the University of Glasgow. Please note that directions to the room will be given to attendees via email after booking. The room and venue are fully accessible. Free, but ticketed – booking via Eventbrite: <https://bit.ly/2qAGocM>

For further details on 'New Order, Other Spaces,' please see: www.de-arte-gymnastica.com

Speaker's Biographies

Born in 1975 in Suffern, New York, **Margaret Salmon** lives and works in Glasgow, Scotland. She creates filmic portraits that weave together poetry and ethnography. Focusing on individuals in their everyday activities, her films capture the minutiae of daily life and infuse them with gentle grandeur, touching upon

universal human themes. Adapting techniques drawn from various cinematic movements, such as Cinema Vérité, the European Avant Garde and Italian Neo-Realism, Salmon's orchestrations of sound and image introduce a formal abstraction into the tradition of realist film. Margaret Salmon studied at The Royal College of Art, London, and The School of Visual Arts, New York, and won the first Max Mara Art Prize for Women in 2006. Her work was shown at the Venice Biennale in 2007 and the Berlin Biennale in 2010 and was featured in individual exhibitions at Witte de With in Rotterdam and Whitechapel Gallery in London among others. Her work is held in a number of national and international collections, including Arts Council Collection, London; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.; and Frac Île-de-France, Paris.

www.margaretsalmon.info

Lucy Weir is a specialist in dance and performance. Her monograph, *Pina Bausch's Dance Theatre: Tracing the Evolution of Tanztheater*, will be released by Edinburgh University Press in May 2018, and she is developing a new research project exploring masculinity and violence in postwar performance. Lucy obtained her PhD in History of Art and Theatre Studies from the University of Glasgow in 2013. Since then, she has lectured on art and performance at various institutions, including the University of Edinburgh and the Glasgow School of Art. In 2015, she held a postdoctoral fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (University of Edinburgh), before taking up her current post. She is convenor of the SEXES research group at ECA, and a member of the Global Contemporary and Dada & Surrealism groups. Lucy maintains a strong interest in dance alongside her academic research. She was recently appointed as Visiting Artist at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where she teaches Floor Barre as part of the Junior Conservatoire Contemporary Dance programme.



Dr Lucy Weir presenting as part of the 'New Order, Other Spaces' panel discussion, 11th August.

Exhibition & Production Documentation, Example Marketing and Schedule

KelvinHall Ballroom, Glasgow



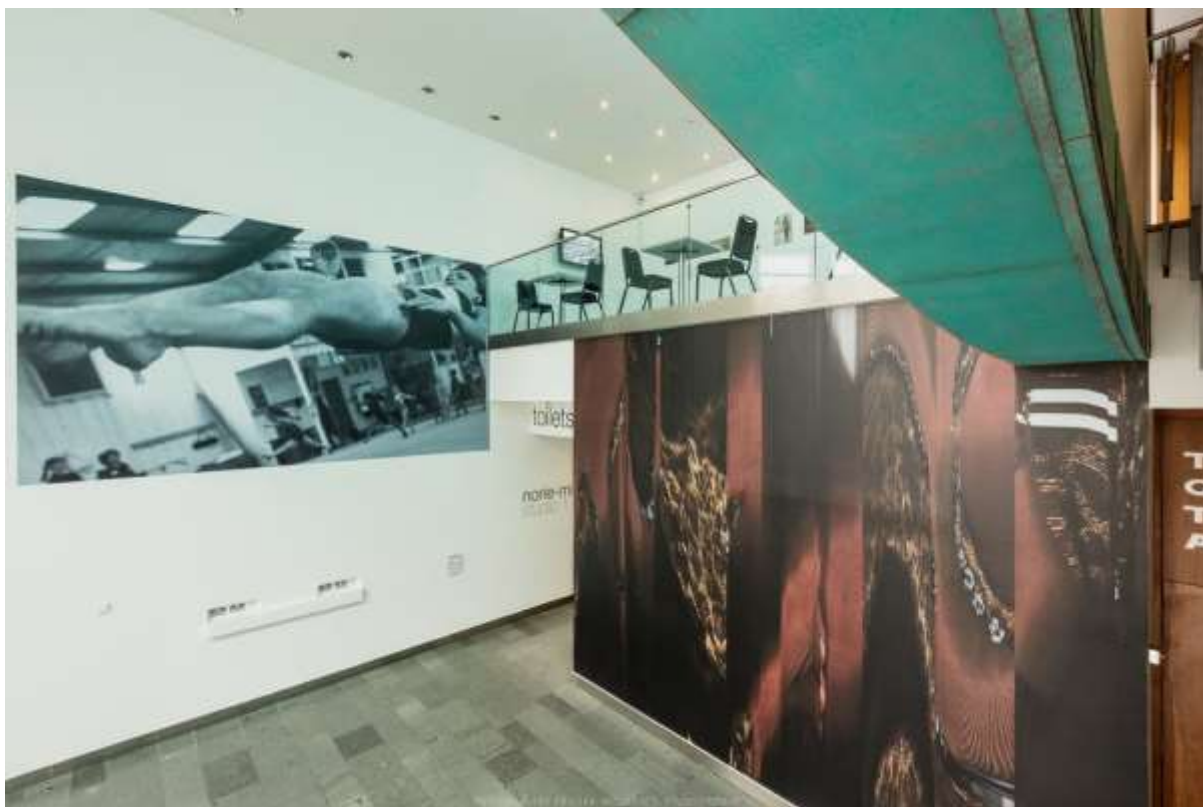








Horsecross Arts, Perth







Exhibition documentation images courtesy of Ross Fraser Mclean.




360 video walkthrough of 'New Order Other Spaces' at Kelvin Hall, August 2018 (commissioned as part of Festival 2018, Glasgow European Championships), this video is intended to be viewed inside a dedicated VR headset or Smartphone with Google Cardboard. Available: <https://youtu.be/nrr9GgZywSw>

Commissioned Film Production



Image author's own.

Example Marketing



JO LONGHURST
NEW ORDER. OTHER SPACES

CURATED BY TIFFANY BOYLE & ILIYANA NEDKOVA

KELVIN HALL, GLASGOW
2 - 12 AUGUST

THRESHOLD ARTSPACE, PERTH
2 AUGUST - 22 NOVEMBER

#neworderotherspaces
www.festival2018.gla.ac.uk
www.thresholdartspace.org

Kelvin Hall Ballroom, Glasgow, 2 - 12 August
Preview Thursday 2 August 6-9pm

Threshold Artspace, Perth, 2 August - 22 November
Preview Saturday 4 August 2-4pm

Multi-site exhibition 'New Order, Other Spaces' explores the gymnastic body across photography, moving image and installation, presented in Glasgow and Perth. A solo presentation from London-based artist [Jo Longhurst](#), with new commissions produced in collaboration with gymnasts of all ages and responding to archival research.

Curated by Tiffany Boyle and Iliyana Nedkova, this research finds form in new moving image work, and responds to the life and work of dancer, choreographer and teacher Margaret Morris.

'New Order, Other Spaces' engages with ideas of perfection, gender, gesture, and inter-generational understandings of movement. Part of Festival 2018 - the cultural programme of the Glasgow 2018 European Championships at venues across Scotland.



For further details of the exhibitions and events programme:
[Festival 2018](#)
[Horsecross Arts](#)
[De Arte Gymnastica](#)

Funded by Glasgow 2018 European Championships Festival Fund.
With support from Glasgow Life, Glasgow School of Art, Scottish Gymnastics, The Zone Leotards, Women of the World Festival, Alpha Press Agency, and Write-On Signs.

#neworderotherspaces #Festival2018


Kelvin Hall Ballroom
1445 Argyle Street
Glasgow
G3 8AW

Threshold artspace
[Mill Street](#)
Perth
PH1 5HZ

© Image: Jo Longhurst, Pinnacle, 11 framed tessellating photographs, 2012.
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Example Press

MAP Magazine, August 2018, Available: <https://bit.ly/34HYx7g>

MAP FOR ARTIST-LED PUBLISHING AND PRODUCTION
X NOW X THEN X INDEX

#46 SOMETHING ABOUT DECAY · REVIEW · AUGUST 2018

NEW ORDER, OTHER SPACES
Lucy Weir writes on an exhibition by Jo Longhurst
exploring the personal and professional in competitive
gymnastics. Kelvin Hall, Glasgow, 2 - 12 August



Jo Longhurst, 'Semana Da Raça' 2018. Courtesy the artist

Competitive gymnastics is interwoven with contradiction. It is a sport synonymous with near-superhuman levels of strength, flexibility, and co-ordination, yet its finely-honed bodies frequently operate under the shadow of multiple injuries. Elite-level gymnasts often appear simultaneously childlike in stature and unnervingly mature in terms of muscle development and physical power. For the spectator, too, much of the satisfaction derived from gymnastics results from an inherent tension between movement and stillness—it is a quest for physical perfection, a mastery of movement that can only occur in fleeting instances, which are all too easily missed.

These contradictory concerns create something of a framework for Jo Longhurst's meditative documentation of the interior world of artistic gymnastics (itself an arguably incongruous term—the notion of artistry sits uncomfortably alongside the reality of measurable, quantifiable competition). *New Order, Other Spaces* is an otherworldly exhibition, reflecting the peculiarities of the sport itself, and especially of the competition environment. Longhurst's ethereal images are realised across an array of media—printed on fabric, embedded within Perspex, and mounted upon modernist metal frames. She documents moments of suspension, capturing bodies in mid-flight, and fragmenting their gravity-defying feats of physicality. The blurry, indistinct rendering of these forms in motion further underscores the interstitial nature of gymnastics as a discipline.



Jo Longhurst, 'New Order, Other Spaces' 2018. Courtesy the artist

In its quiet contemplation of gender and physicality, *New Order, Other Spaces* queries the problematic notion of 'perfection,' and opens a door into this relatively closed world; for the uninitiated, viewing gymnastics can be an opaque experience, as it is a sport characterised by an inscrutable and ever-changing scoring system. While Longhurst does not make explicit her own experience of gymnastics training, it is evident that she draws upon an intimate understanding of this unusual environment, a world in which children are shaped into formidable competitors from an early age. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a hint of nostalgia pervades the space. 'A-Z' (2012), an extensive, exhaustive collage denoting various routines across time and space, bears a resemblance to the bedroom wall of a gymnastics super fan, for example. At the same time, Longhurst's impressive collection of archival imagery acts as a wordless history of gymnastics and its changing aesthetic preoccupations, while her portraiture (Longhurst was artist in residence with the Heathrow Gymnastic Club) stills and contains the intense energy of her young subjects.

Unusually, however, Longhurst also grants us access to the largely private, preparatory moments that take place before a competition begins—having been given only five minutes with each of her subjects, she asked the gymnasts to demonstrate a pose or warm-up exercise that they might undertake before being presented to a panel of hypervigilant judges. In 'Peak' (2012), for instance, the gymnast's body performs an impressive forward fold, heels lifting off the floor as if in preparation for a handstand. Yet we do not see the 'finished' manoeuvre; instead, the emphasis lies on intermediacy. Longhurst captures several such liminal moments, documenting the transitional points that precede execution of more recognisably camera-worthy exercises, and subtly highlighting the toll such intensive training exacts upon the body in the visible traces of physical injury.



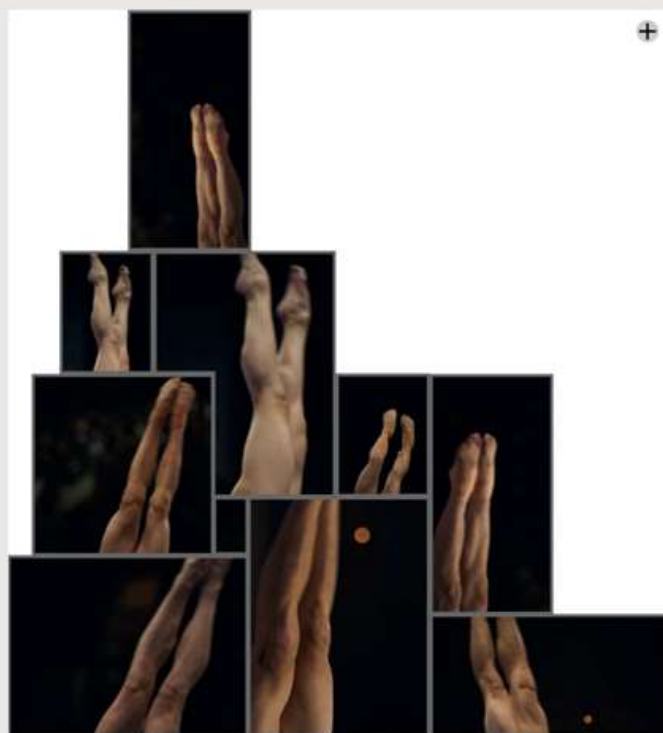
Jo Longhurst, 'Space-Force Construction No. 1 (United States of America)', 'Space Force Construction No. 2 (China)', 'Space Force Construction No. 3 (India)', 2012. Courtesy the artist

The influence of Russian Constructivism—in particular, the works of Alexander Rodchenko and Lyubov Popova—is immediately evident upon entering the gallery space, where geometric sculptural forms both occupy floor space and act as mounts for images projecting outwards from the wall. They add a three-dimensionality to 'Space-Force Construction' (2012), a striking photographic series depicting gymnasts drawn from three global superpowers (the USA, India, and China), competing in the vault of the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships. Again, bodies are suspended in space, disconnected from the starkly-lit context of the competition environment. This distancing effect, combined with the Constructivist supports, emphasises the mechanistic aspect of competitive gymnastics. Yet these are also bodies in flight, reminding us that gymnastics is that rare sport which enables the athlete to defy gravity, to push the body beyond its supposed limits, to become almost superhuman.



Jo Longhurst, 'Double Portrait (After Margaret Morris)', 2018. Courtesy the artist

Despite its primary focus on the confined realm of artistic gymnastics, *New Order, Other Spaces* posits further discussion of the relationship between physical culture and wider society. In the middle of the space, an image of a young girl being instructed in the Margaret Morris Movement technique hovers like a ghostly apparition. This snapshot, found in a 1931 photo album from a Swiss tuberculosis sanatorium, provides a fascinating insight into early wellness culture, and underscores the significance of Morris' work, which remains thoroughly under-researched in academic literature. A dancer, choreographer, and educator, Morris formed the Celtic Ballet Club in 1940, then helped to establish Scottish Ballet in 1960. She qualified as a physiotherapist, and her movement technique evolved to function as a form of remedial therapy. Her profound interest in the relationship between a healthy body and healthy mind was part of a contemporary cultural shift in favour of bodily awareness and movement. Physical conditioning—including collective displays of gymnastic and callisthenic exercises—and concepts of self-improvement became increasingly popular tools of social transformation in the first decades of the twentieth century. The vogue for body culture presented a particularly attractive opportunity for women to engage in stamina-building exercise, shedding the damaging restrictions of corsets, and rejecting popular beliefs that physical activity was perilous for the female body. This is a recurring reference point in Longhurst's work, where femininity is equated with strength: dominating this exhibition space is her 2016 work, 'Cross', a large-scale image of a young female gymnast suspended on the still rings (a piece of equipment reserved for male gymnasts). Her direct gaze betrays no sense of strain, despite the unfamiliarity of this equipment, and the degree of physical strength required to hold such a pose.



Jo Longhurst, 'Pinnacle', 2012. Courtesy the artist

Longhurst's citing of Margaret Morris also raises the question of the relationship between gymnastics and dance, and this is reiterated in 'Pinnacle' (2012), an arresting collage of female athletes' legs and feet. With their knees drawn firmly together and toes pointed (several sporting arches that would draw the envy of any dancer), one might be forgiven for misreading these fragmented body parts as belonging to the ballet world. Longhurst's penetrating gaze quickly dispels this, however, as she allows us to see the spray-on skin, ankle supports and bandages characteristic of a sport where injury is endemic. Despite the intimacy of her portraits, and the insight afforded by her personal and professional proximity to the sphere of artistic gymnastics, a sense of secrecy still shrouds this exhibition. Longhurst may permit us only a fleeting glimpse into this curious world and its ever-evolving quest for perfection, but it makes for an exquisite and uncanny experience.

New Order, Other Spaces, Jo Longhurst. Kelvin Hall, Glasgow, 2 - 12 August. Part of Festival 2018, the cultural programme accompanying the Glasgow 2018 European Championships.

Lucy Weir is a Teaching Fellow in Modern and Contemporary Art at the University of Edinburgh

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NOW SHOWING #257: THE WEEK'S TOP EXHIBITIONS

13 August 18

Now Showing #257: The week's top exhibitions

This week's selection of must-see shows includes: last week of Brazilian artist Luiz Zerbini at South London Gallery, movement explored through the gymnastic body with Jo Longhurst in Perth, Liverpool Biennial Associate Artists at Baltic 39, and Evan Hekker's 'queer black algorithm' at Gasworks, London.

[Baltic 39](#)
[Exhibitions](#)
[Gasworks](#)
[New openings](#)

[South London Gallery](#)
[Thamesmead Sculpture Park](#)

Luiz Zerbini, South London Gallery, London

'Intuitive Ratio', a solo show by the Brazilian artist Luiz Zerbini, features large-scale paintings referencing modernist architecture, contemporary culture and elements from the natural environment. Along with smaller abstract canvas works, the exhibition also includes a sculptural centre-piece – an elaborate combination of materials, including objects that create visual duality with the larger painted works. The exhibition also includes two films, which explore landscape and stillness, drawing on the perspective of a painter and glitches in digital camera technology.

Until 19 August 2018. www.southlondongallery.org

Jo Longhurst, Threshold Artspace, Perth

One part of the London-based artist's multi-site solo presentation 'New Order, Other Spaces', this exhibition is part of **Festival 2018**, the cultural programme for the 2018 European Sports Championships in Glasgow. Presented by Horsecross Arts and co-curated by **Tiffany Boyle** and **Ilyana Hedkova**, ideas of perfection, gender, gesture and inter-generational understandings of movement are explored through the gymnastic body. Along with photography, installation and performance it includes new moving-image works – both collaborations with gymnasts of all ages, and responses to archival research into the life and work of dancer, choreographer and teacher Margaret Munn.

Until 22 November. www.horsecross.co.uk

Richard Taylor

☆

Based in Glasgow Richard works freelance in independent publishing, copy-editing, proofreading and sound editing. For more information see the [Freelance work](#) section of his website.

His art practice is embedded in writing, and visual projects are narrative and research led. Projects have resulted in solo exhibitions and publishing in volumes such as *Cosmorama*, which he co-edited.

In 2010 he coordinated Transmission Gallery's archive and resource room. In April 2015 he undertook a research residency in Art Writing with Edinburgh College of Art and Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop. Richard completed the MFA programme at Glasgow School of Art in 2017.

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What to charge?

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VALUING ARTISTS

Project Timeline

Sept 2017

- Application to the Glasgow 2018 Festival Fund drafted and submitted by Tiffany Boyle, with budgetary input from curator Iliyana Nedkova, Horsecross Arts, Perth.

October 2017

- Additional budget information sought from funding panel, drafted and submitted.

November 2017

- Decision received of £25k award made by the Glasgow 2018 Festival Fund to Tiffany Boyle, in collaboration with Horsecross Arts, Perth.

December 2017

- Jo Longhurst site visit to Glasgow and Perth, including archival research (Margaret Morris archives, Perth, and National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive).

January 2018

- Funding applications to Arts Council England and the Elephant Trust submitted;
- Signed contract between Horsecross Arts and Glasgow City Council submitted to Glasgow 2018 team;
- First invoice for project installment of £6,250 raised and submitted to Glasgow 2018 team.

February 2018

- Initial exhibition design for Glasgow venue and Threshold artspace exhibitions drawn-up;
- Conversations begin with Glasgow Life (city council arts and culture department) regarding offsite venue, Palace of Art vs. Kelvinhall Ballroom;
- Project budget updated with actual expenditure;
- Draft 'coming soon' copy in Horsecross Arts brochure submitted;
- Initial exhibition design for Threshold artspace discussed with all Horsecross teams, inc. Tabitha McKechnie (Perth College curatorial placement student);
- Project dialogue with Scottish Gymnastics re-established, notifying them of successful outcome.

March 2018

- Sponsorship with The Zone Leotards secured, discussion re: application to Arts & Business Scotland;
- Tiffany Boyle and Jo Longhurst second site visit - Perth meeting for project planning and exhibition design, first meeting with elder gymnast Ron Rodgers, meeting with Centre for Advanced Textiles at GSA re: textile production.
- Consent form for participating gymnasts/parents drafted; enhanced disclosure requirements researched and applications secured;
- Payment of first curatorial fee installment to TB;
- Invoice for second project installment of £6,250 raised and submitted to Glasgow 2018;

- Technical Requirements Template and Marketing Templates Drafted to Glasgow 2018 team;
- Budget updated to reflect new quotes.

April 2018

- Vinyl artwork for wall-based installation in Perth, technical requirements and file worked up accordingly;
- Contract drawn up with photographer Ross Fraser Maclean for exhibition documentation;
- Technical set up/camera operation of the video shoot with elder gymnast Ron Rodger arranged with the technical team at Horsecross Arts;
- Image permission for use of Margaret Morris archival images and National Library of Scotland archival footage underway;
- First project installment of £6,250 received at Horsecross Arts bank account;
- Artist travel booked;
- Horsecross Arts summer brochure out with initial announcement of the exhibition in the contemporary art section;
- Project Plan | Technical Requirements Template and Marketing Templates submitted to Glasgow 2018 team;
- Participating gymnasts measured up and first order of leotards from sponsor The Zone placed;
- Artist confirms insurance values of selected work. Public liability and professional indemnity secured for Kelvinhall. Began processing insurance of artworks for Kelvin Hall through Horsecross' policy;
- Samples from GSA Centre for Advanced Textiles, Vinyl and Banner suppliers ordered, received, colours adjusted.

May 2018

- Invoice raised for third project installment of £10,000 and submit to Glasgow 2018;
- Video shoot on site at Threshold artspace with elder gymnast Ron Rodger, film-editing of two new moving image commissions in-progress;
- Glasgow install technician booked;
- Kelvinhall Ballroom confirmed as venue, discussion with venue manager re: health and safety, risk assessment and public entrances;
- Final order of textile works initially due (delayed due to the fire at the Glasgow School of Art), vinyl and banners ordered from suppliers;
- Create website listing, keep unpublished until following month;
- Risk Assessments, and Health & Safety documents drafted;
- Create audience monitoring template;
- Install schedule drafted;
- Final selection of participating gymnasts;
- Final order of leotards for participating gymnasts ordered from The Zone.

June 2018

- First marketing and PR released in full;
- Testing of new film work;
- First performance rehearsals with gymnasts takes place, Bells Sports Centre, Perth;
- Costumes for the performance produced.
- Crated work is shipped from London, arrives Glasgow;

- Continued marketing and PR information released;
- Second performance rehearsals with gymnasts takes place, Bells Sports Centre, Perth;
- Preparation of all walls/screens at Threshold artspace; removal of cables/vinyls;
- Testing of artist's films on all Threshold artspace screens;
- Final film supplied to Big Screen at George Square AV technicians for testing;
- Full exhibition install at Kelvin Hall;
- Exhibition install of all vinyl Images and banners + reading lounge area;
- Exhibition final test and install of all screen-based works.

August 2018

- Exhibition opens both sites;
- Final rehearsal with gymnasts onsite (afternoon);
- 2nd August - Kelvin Hall Opening Preview - 6-9pm inc. performance intervention;
- 4th August - Final rehearsal with gymnasts onsite a.m.;
- 4th August -Horsecross Opening Preview – 2-4pm inc. performance intervention;
- 11th August 2018 – Panel discussion as part of Kelvin Hall exhibition;
- Planning for Women of the World schools workshop event September 2018;
- TB managing volunteer invigilators at Kelvinhall exhibition.
- 12th August - Kelvin Hall exhibition closes;
 - Destall and return of crated work to London;
- 22nd August - Invoice for final, fourth project installment of £2,500 raised and submitted to Glasgow 2018 team.

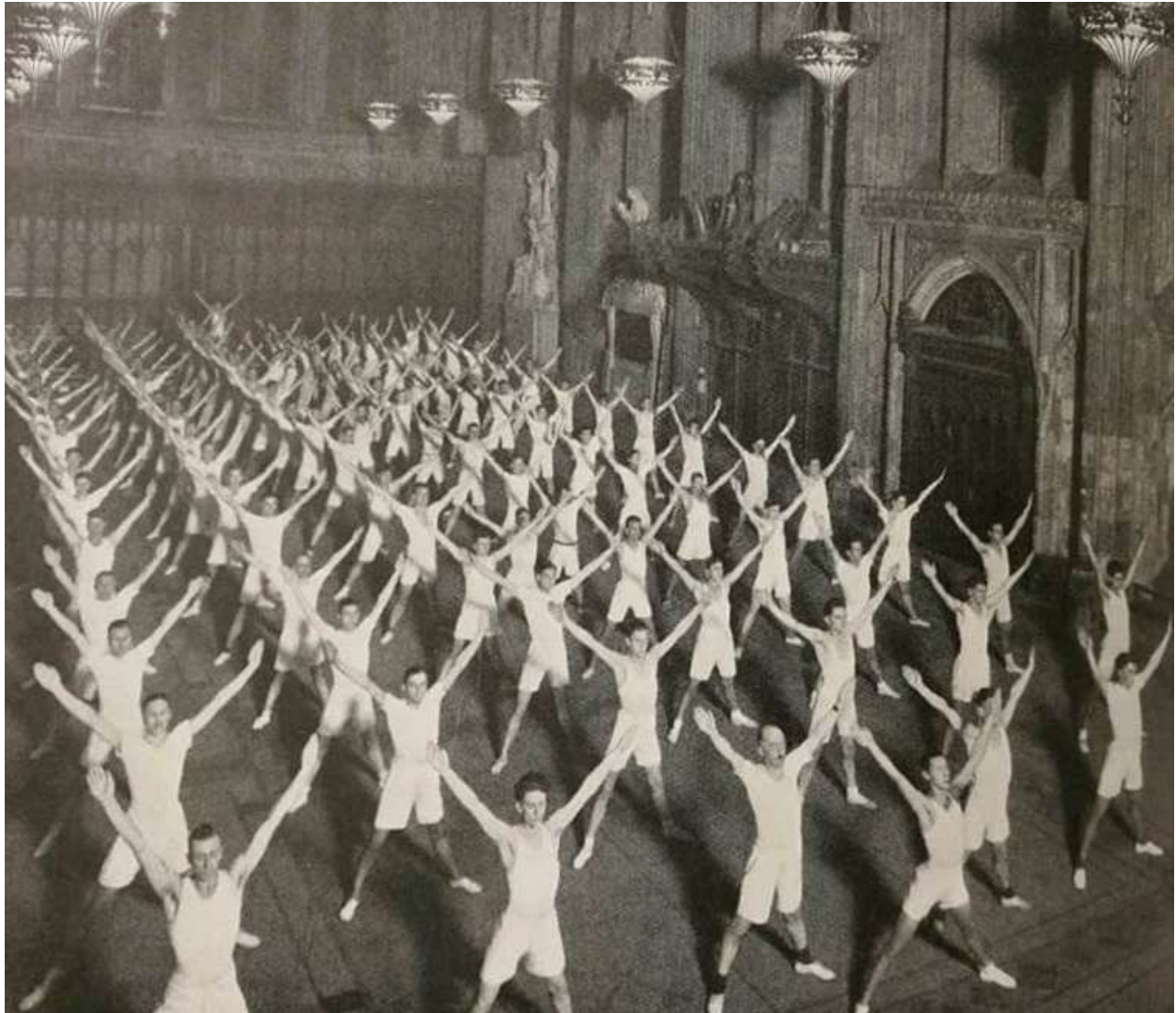
September 2018

- Evaluation of programme and funding for Glasgow Life undertaken;
- Delivery of Women of the World school workshop by Tiffany Boyle, more information available: <https://www.horsecross.co.uk/media/2310/wow-perth-2018-programme-final2.pdf>

November 2018

- Perth exhibition closes, destall takes place over two days and work is returned to London;
- An edition from 'New Order, Other Spaces' project enters the collection of Threshold Artspace at Horsecross Arts.

8. Body Language: movement, dance and physical education in Scotland, 1890-1990, Wellcome Trust Research Resources Award



'Body Language: movement, dance and physical education in Scotland, 1890-1990' is a £140k Wellcome Trust Research Resources-funded project between Edinburgh University Library Special Collections and the Fergusson Gallery, Perth - with the support of Moray House School of Education, Margaret Morris Movement International and Scottish Gymnastics. This initial award made May 2017 was to undertake at the Centre for Research Collections (CRC) at the University of Edinburgh, the cataloguing, preservation and making available of three significant collections relating to movement, dance, physical education and gymnastics in Scotland. A subsequent successful grant via the Wellcome Trust public engagement strand for £26k has subsequently allowed for an exhibition of archival material at the University of Edinburgh Main Library Exhibition Gallery, 26th July – 26th October 2019, further information available: <http://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/bodylanguage>

Since the inception of 'Body Language,' I have sat on the project board, and particularly to oversee the acquisition of the archives of Scottish Gymnastics archive. This conversation with Scottish Gymnastics stemmed from my participation in a video created by the governing body in 2015 to mark the 125th anniversary of their founding. I requested that my interview with Scottish Gymnastics for their documentary take place within the CRC so that my interview would be able to refer to historical material and objects. The filming on location led to a conversation surrounding the location and care of the Scottish Gymnastics archive, which in collaboration with other researchers (Dr Matthew McDowell, Dr Wendy Timmons, and Prof. John Ravenscroft, all based at the University of Edinburgh) and archivists at the CRC, led to the formation of the 'Body Language' project. I have since then worked with the CRC archivists in identifying further material for future acquisition, providing contextual information for cataloguing, discussed potential avenues for public and community engagement, and attending quarterly board meetings. I include the 'Body Language' project here within this portfolio, as I consider the process of conserving material and of acquisitions into collections as part of my expanded curatorial practice.

Scottish Gymnastics:

Scottish Gymnastics was founded in 1890 as a voluntary organisation representing a number of Scottish gymnastic and athletic clubs. Broadening its initial focus from military fitness to general health and wellbeing, it was significant for promoting and supporting gymnastics in Scotland and abroad. The archives contain minute books, correspondence, instructional material, photographs, rare books, journals and other printed material.

The records of Dunfermline College of Physical Education:

Dunfermline College of Physical Education, founded in 1905, was one of the first training colleges for women students of physical education and had an important influence on developing the role of movement and the body in educational practice. The records comprise governance, staff and student records, teaching materials, artefacts including costumes and uniforms, photographs, and a collection of performance and educational films. It also incorporates the records of DCPE's Old Student Association.

The archives of Margaret Morris Movement International:

Margaret Morris (1891-1980) established her own system for dance training, Margaret Morris Movement, which focuses on breathing techniques, posture and strength training with co-ordinated movements. Margaret Morris Movement International works today with mentally and physically disabled persons using Morris's systems and techniques. The archives contain costume designs, music scores, choreography notes, scripts, sketchbooks, diaries, teaching and publicity materials, photographs and around 8,000 items of correspondence from individuals including Edward Elgar, Stanley Baldwin and Charles Rennie Mackintosh.