

***Europa: Gestures of History***

*Dancing Science and Art not to forget EU identity*

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## 0. *Short Presentation*

Close our eyes to see more, open our ears to actively re-think to our history.

### i. *The Project*

Traditionally, we dance on a given music. Is it possible a dance produces its own music? The EU ICT Project DANCE is designing multimodal sensible technologies able to automatically recognize the emotional qualities of a movement and to transform them in perceptually coherent sequence of sounds. The scientific and technological challenge of DANCE consists in demonstrating how (and how much) the affective and relational quality of gestures can be perceived through different and interactive sensory configurations: not only by viewing their trajectories in space but also hearing the sounds they generate in real time by means of a psychophysically and perceptually coherent “translation”. In our hyper-connected society, where our senses are overwhelmed by high-speed internet, mobiles, the risk is to loose content communication, even with the raise of pathologies. DANCE investigates ICT solutions to these problems: can deprivation of one sensory channel (e.g. vision) enhance a deeper communication and understanding of socio-affective content with another channel (e.g. auditory)? Can blind persons appreciate a dance, and in general qualities of body movement, by means their auditory channel?

### ii. *The Concept*

According to Ovid, the foundational myth of Europa, the fair Phoenician princess, whose name gives the name to our community, can be told as a succession of four basic gestures: the afraid but intrigued walking of Europa toward Zeus/bull; her abandonment on his strong and powerful body; her last look, back to the land she is leaving for ever; her free flight in the sky to reach her destiny. Each of these gestures expresses clearly an affective quality of movement: hesitation, heaviness, fragility, lightness. Each of these gestures represents in figure an emotional moment of the common European identity building history: the uncertainty of the beginning, the weight of its concrete realization, the afraid temptation of backing off, the perpetual rising of the dream.

### iii. *The DANCE-trailer*

The dancer deeply explores and shows with her body movements the qualities of the four Europa gestures, dialoguing with four wall-projected pictorial representations of the same qualities identified in the *Rape of Europe* (from the great Italian artistic history), and automatically generating with her dance itself a coherent sound resonance.

*Europa: Gestures of History* aims to shortly but deeply exhibit the strong impact on society of evoking cultural, historical and social contents, through the experience enabled by new interactive and multimodal DANCE technologies, sensible to the affective expressiveness of a moving body, its non-verbal but affectively communicative emotional language.

Chapter 1  
*The Question of Europa*



Paolo Veronese, *Ratto di Europa*, 1580 [Musei Capitolini, Roma]

The screen is dark.

The Dancer begins to move, exploring the hesitant, *cracked* qualities of her gesture. Sound output reflects and represents the different variation of her gestural quality. On the screen progressively appears the resonating image of Veronese uncertainty, frail equilibrium of Europa's body, sustained by her mates. The brightness of the image depends on the intensity of the quality varied in dance movement. When the clear relation between sound, movement and painting is consolidated, we can read on the screen, around the image, the title of the sequence, the name of the quality represented and the related verse of Ovid: «metuit contingere primo: mox adit» [«daring not to touch him, stood apart until her virgin fears were quieted»]

*Hesitancy*



Chapter 2  
*The Choice of Europa*



The Dancer begins to change the quality of her movement, trying to gain the weight, the heaviness, the gravitational, vertical links of her body. Sound output reflects and represents the different variation of her gestural quality. On the screen the image of Veronese fade in the image of Tiziano evoking the complete of Europa's body on the material solidity of Zeus. The brightness of the image depends on the intensity of the quality varied in dance movement. When the clear relation between sound, movement and painting is consolidated, we can read on the screen, around the image, the title of the sequence, the name of the quality represented and the related verse of Ovid: « ausa est quoque regia virgo, nescia quem premeret, tergo considerare tauri» [«The royal maid, unwitting what she did, at length sat down upon the bull's broad back»]

Tiziano Vecellio, *Ratto di Europa*, 1562 [Museo del Prado]

*Heaviness*

Chapter 3  
*The Fear of Europa*



Cavalier d'Arpino, *Ratto di Europa*, 1606 [Galleria Borghese Roma]

The Dancer begins to change again the quality of her movement, discovering inner rifts, with the suspensions of its frailty of her body. Sound output reflects and represents the different variation of her new gestural quality. On the screen the image of Tiziano fade in the image of Cavalier d'Arpino evoking the weak melancholy of Europa's sight on her leaving land. The brightness of the image depends on the intensity of the quality varied in dance movement. When the clear relation between sound, movement and painting is consolidated, we can read on the screen, around the image, the title of the sequence, the name of the quality represented and the related verse of Ovid: «pavet haec litusque ablata relictum respicit» [«while she affrighted gazed upon the shore»]

*Fragility*



Chapter 4  
*The Dream of Europa*



Bernardo Strozzi, *Ratto di Europa*, 1644 [Poznan]

The Dancer begins to change again the quality of her movement, discovering the Lightness, the possibility of horizontally transferring and suspend the weight of her body. Sound output reflects and represents the different variation of her new gestural quality. On the screen the image of Cavalier d'Arpino fade in the image of Bernardo Strozzi showing the precise moment when Europa's figure is almost dematerialized in a windy rush. The brightness of the image depends on the intensity of the quality varied in dance movement. When the clear relation between sound, movement and painting is consolidated, we can read on the screen, around the image, the title of the sequence, the name of the quality represented and the related verse of Ovid: «teremulae sinuantur flamine vestis» [«and in the breeze her waving garments fluttered as they went»] The screen fades in black as the dancer stops and sound silences.

On the screen appears the title of the performance: «Europa: Gestures of History»

*Lightness*