

# **body\_space\_interface**

Submitted artistic research work for peer review

Helle Brabrand IBBL, KADK. 27.03.2019

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My project is an integration of and a reflection on three of my recently presented works at conferences and exhibitions, plus a work-in-progress. To approach the project as a shared work, go to: [www.hellebrand.com/body\\_space\\_interface](http://www.hellebrand.com/body_space_interface) - the site presents a responsive body-space-media praxis together with questions about architectonic space-making as a field of artistic research. The individual works overlap. Thereby, the presentation accentuates unlike issues and concurrently raises insights relying on a continued shared focus on movement-forces as drivers in the making. Movement-feeling or kinesthesia is the mode of experience which awakens different senses and frames the way we see and imagine. More so, movement as a basic architectural 'engine' easily stays un-reflected in the process. This project incorporates different kinds of movement-forces and render them visible - seeking to augment fluent body-space-media relations and to generate and widen experience about the art-of-shared-space.

The project and the works display and discuss what relates to the three artistic research criteria, by:

- 1 *work appearance* (video-material, mostly) with a clarifying text. Here, only by a single videoframe from each work. At the website, worked out as a 'moving-material' and shown as short videos.
- 2 *work structure* (combined images) with a text that points to key topologies, techniques and agencies. The text is only at the website, due to space limitations.
- 3 *work meaning* with shared reflections. The text relates to cultural and societal issues, deepening aspects of the combined works, and pointing at unlike take-offs for new meaning.

Contents:

WORK appearance and structure in

**Space\_Gesture** - work-in-progress

**Dance with Space** – animate-configuring

**Drawing Millions of Spaces** – turning convex concave

**Along and Across** - kin-esthetic space making

WORK meaning

CV

**Space\_Gesture**  
*Work appearance*

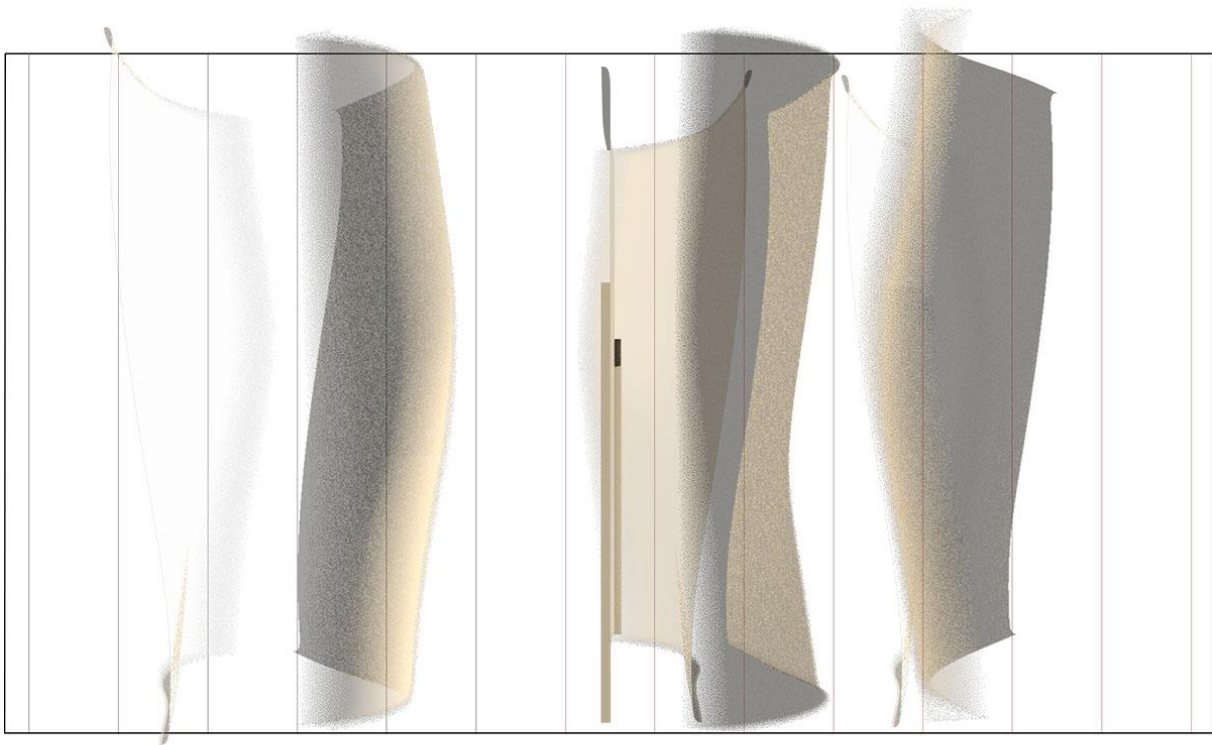


Figure 1. Work-in-progress, 2019 –

*Space\_Gesture* sets a stage for augmented interactions between the virtual image and the physical body - and seeks to break constraints for classic frames of projective space. Combining video-appearance with viewer-gestured articulations, using AR or Mixed Reality (MR), the work develops issues initiated in another of the works *Dance with Space – animate-configuring*. Material shown here is only laid-up as a sketch.

*Space\_Gesture* works with hybrid, confluent space, to bring qualitatively disparate levels together. Operating with otherwise incompatible or invisible, relations of structural, visual and temporal components, the body-spatial search also involves concepts of 'phenomenal transparency' - the transparency-concept potentially actualized and vitalized with a gesture-modelling that includes co-creation of spectator-gestures.

**Space\_Gesture**  
*Work structure*

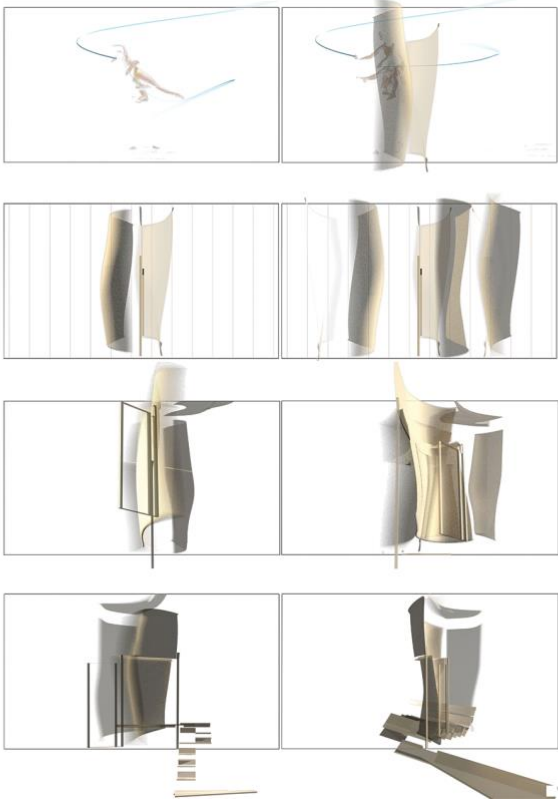


Figure 2. Rows 1-4 are initiating sketches, combining video-appearance with viewer-gestured articulations. The rows present framed video-images transgressed by potential AR overlaying.

**Dance with Space** – animate-configuring  
*Work appearance*



Figure 1. Presented at: rca2018\_research culture in architecture, international conference on cross-disciplinary collaboration, Kaiserslautern, Germany. Video and oral presentation.

*Dance with Space* – *animate-configuring* is an initial sketch in the *Space\_Gesture* work-in-progress series. The work initiates experiment with interactions between virtual image and physical body, combining video-appearance with viewer-gestured articulations; prepared for use with AR. The term *dance-with-space* refers to concepts of catalysing participants into virtual dancers, making them partly recognize the moves of others and partly 'ignore' natural or functional movements - as a mean to open up sensation and experience of the art-of-shared-space. The work set up simple situations of to 'dance-with'. That is, to confront spectators with modes of drawing and plastic assemblies of different entities and visual angles in a 3D-model, rhythmically animated as a kind of dancing-partners. The term *animate-configuring* refers to animation of movements – viz to render movement visible with animation as a 'how can movement's potential alter forces of form'.

**Dance with Space – animate-configuring**  
*Work structure*

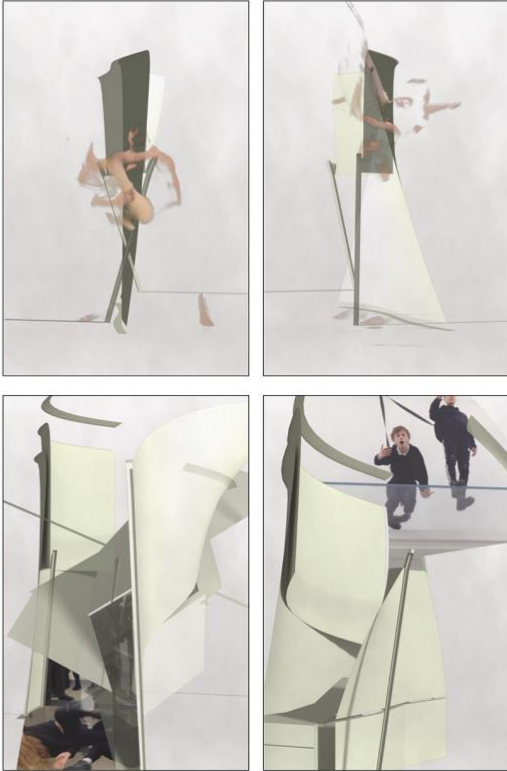


Figure 2. Rows 1-2 present the work as combining video-appearance with viewer-gestured articulations, preparing for a use of AR. The sketches are excerpts from a mowing work-field.

**Drawing Millions of Spaces – turning convex concave**  
*Work appearance*



Figure 1. Presented at: *Drawing Millions of Plans* conference and exhibition, KADK, Copenhagen, 2017. Exhibition (video) and oral presentation.

*Drawing Millions of Spaces – turning convex concave* switches focus from drawing plan to drawing space. The work sets up a basic body-space topology: convex-concave, inside-outside, volume-skin-object relations, implying varying individual-social scales and converting values. The work invests agencies of image-acts and expressions to discuss and twist body-spatial drawing in dialogue with 'real' space experience.

The work reflects on concepts of non-architect artists, engaged in questions about space-time and perception. Among them Richard Serra, interested in the surface or skin turning into volume.

*Turning convex concave* transfers Serra's field of actual moving body and perceptually moving surface into a field of differently moving images, operating with shifting intervals and scales – accomplished by resonance-with and break-up effects of shifting body-spatial configurations and viewing modes.

**Drawing Millions of Spaces – turning convex concave**  
*Work structure*

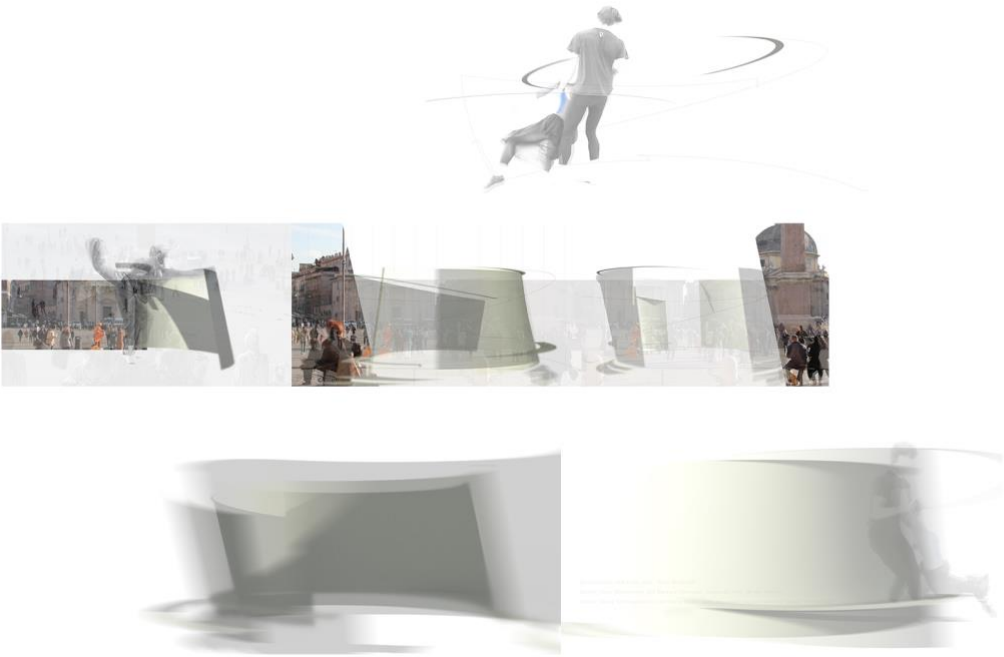


Figure 2. Rows 1-3 present the work as operating with a basic body-space topology: convex-concave, inside-outside, volume-skin-object relations. The rows invest drawing or image-acts to create shifting intervals and scales that resonate with or break-up effects of shifting body-spatial configurations and viewing modes. Sketches are excerpts from video-work.



**Along and Across** - kin-esthetic space making  
*Work appearance*

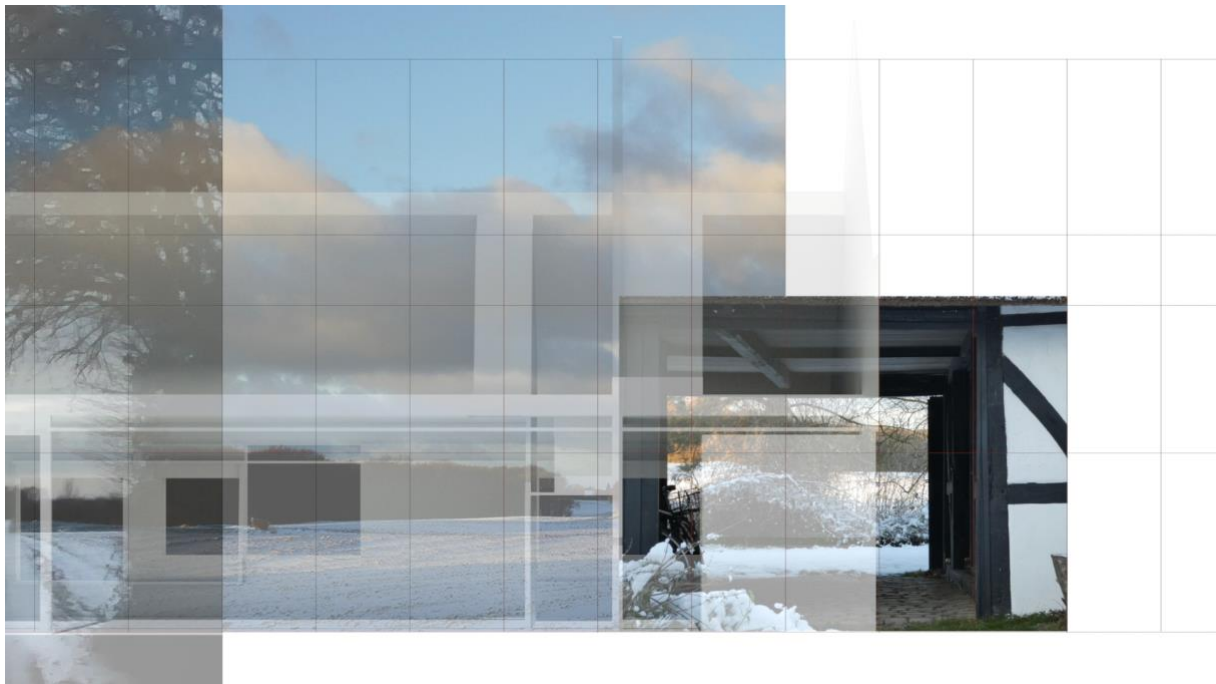


Figure 1. Presented at: WORKS+WORDS 2017 Biennale in Artistic Research in Architecture, KADK, Copenhagen. Exhibition (video + print) and paper (in Danish).

*Along and Across - kin-esthetic space making* presents a gesture-model working with selected characters and forces of a specific building program and site: a single-room dwelling and work-house as part of a family- and country-residence north at Langeland, Denmark.

The model focuses on a 'rise-of-space' - how to configure an 'inner' space in exchange with 'outer' contextual characters and concepts of gliding scales. Seen as intersecting 'currents and whirls', the contextual forces are selected and augmented by mediated body-movement - Along, takes up the course of coastline, main road and orientation of the site - Across, resonates rhythmically with local masses of woods, hedges, existing buildings and openings, creating floating pockets of space and shifts in depth-of-fields.

**Along and Across** - kin-esthetic space making  
*Work structure*

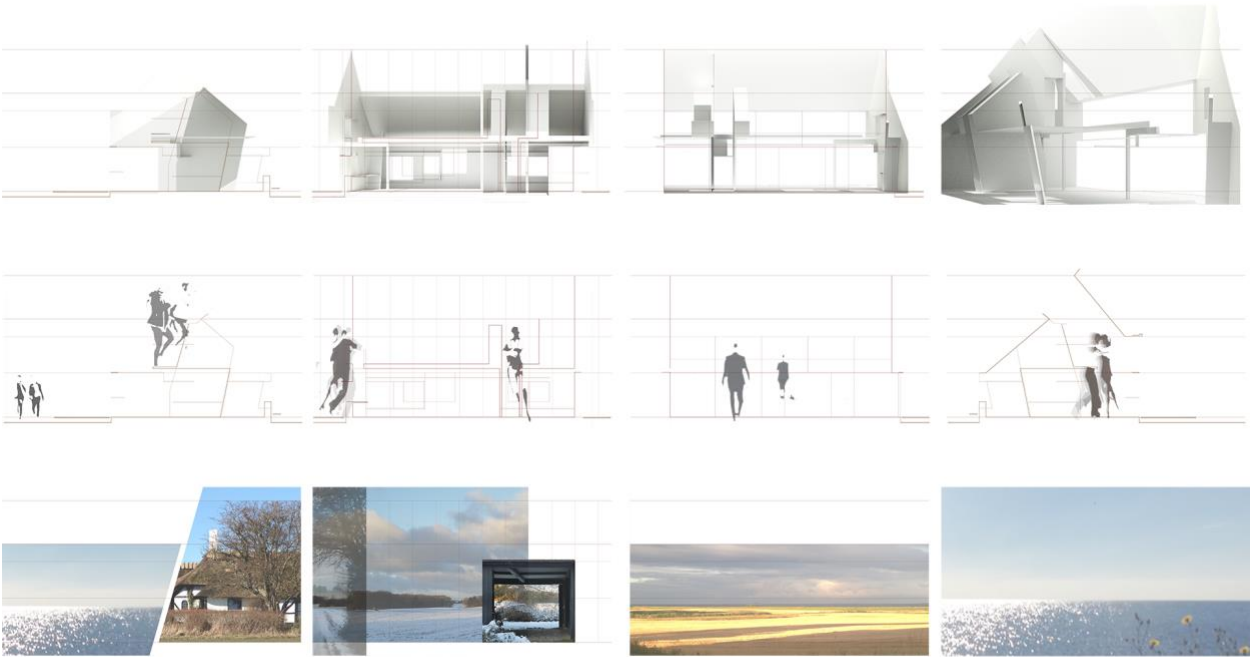


Figure 2. Rows 1-3 present the work as gesture-model configurations and topologies, pointing at tectonic-moves, body-moves and site-program issues.

## WORK meaning

The following reflections are shared with works presented here and also draw on earlier works (see CV). The combined 'body' of meaning and agencies relate to unlike cultural and societal issues, pointed out and handled by movement-forces, a key driver in space-making producing new meaning.

The project inscribe itself in a tradition, which understands the history of body and architecture as interwoven in alternating relations. This may be exemplified by the 'ideal body' regulated by geometry we know from Vitruvius and the Renaissance till today, where the ideal body gives way for different floating and shifting relations in body-world-media. Four reflection-concepts are in focus:

*Gesture-models.* Making contemporary body-world rhythms appear and operative, all my works are set up and presented as gesture-models. This term refers to the French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard and his publication '*Gestus*', where he describes the various elements of aesthetic production and reception. Together they constitute a model of 'gestural exchange'. Correspondingly, Giorgio Agamben views gesture as being 'an exhibition of mediality': i.e. a process of making means visible as such, operating with gesture, not as limited to movement of the body, but including moves constituted by camera, light, editing, object, design - and involving gestures of spectators.

*Image-acts.* Concepts of image-acts are involved in gesture-modelling as well, pointing out that, through their own potencies, image/drawing/model generates every sort of experience and action related to perception and embodiment. Body-image has implications for culture and society, operating not only as a picture of the body, but as an anticipatory plan for detailed movements a body must undertake in order to act and project subjective perspectives onto the field of shared intersubjective possibilities in a community. Also, experience of one's body-image and corporeal schema is neither fixed or rigid, but adaptable to the myriad of embodied tools and technologies. Along with the image of the body as distinct from all other images, stated with 'I do not only know it from without by perception, but also from within by affection'.

*Computation.* The last twenty year's use of computation in the architectural process have fostered a design-thinking dominated by form-making rather than space-making. Eventually, joining 'the spatial turn', focus in design-computing now is on dynamic spatial and user-centered optimization. Meanwhile, questions and ethical aesthetical weighing of what is relevant to optimize are often not in focus, when making use of massive amounts of data to optimize every area of cognitive and behavioral ecology and spatial and social dynamics in buildings and cities. Even so, essentially depending on the use of computation, my work is at dialogue with an emerging field that searches to expand perceptual and aesthetical-ethical meaning in spatial imaging.

*To render.* An aim of my project is to *render movement-forces visible*, not to render the visible. To map and work with movement-forces, we have to transform forces into an abstract material, into topological figures open for operation. Hereby, we can create a first passage from the normal to a grotesque or skewed movement. This kind of passages may cross other barriers as well, being social, natural-cultural or everyday-life vs. artistic effects. In 'Philosophy of dance', Poul Valery argues that dance is a physical discipline constantly engaged with pedestrians. He provides a model of dance both grounded in the actualities of the everyday body, but also operating as an alternative born of excess and aberrancy, accommodating the potential for new categories of movement.

*Conclusion.* My works and this project search to evoke body-spatial meaning, qualifying feelings of inclusion or exclusion, for example. But more so, they seek to catalyse participants into virtual dancers, to involve agency of rhythm, which isn't about content but about feeling of movement in gathering. Making intervals of space emanate from rhythmic forces, provoked by movement-excess, the project potentially transgresses cultural divergence, opening up sensation and experience about art-of-shared-space.

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- 1971 Graduated from KA, School of Architecture, Department of Architecture, Copenhagen.
- 2015 Appointed associate professor, emerita, KADK, School of Architecture, Copenhagen.

PUBLICATIONS peer-reviewed (selected and latest)

- 2018 Brabrand, Helle, Dance with Space – animate-configuring. RCA 2018 Conference, Faculty of Architecture, TU Kaiserslautern, Germany, 2018. Research culture in architecture, international conference on cross-disciplinary collaboration, p. 142-145.
- 2017 Brabrand, Helle, Drawing Millions of Spaces, conference and exhibition, 2017 at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture (KADK) in Copenhagen, Denmark. Exhibition: video 3 min., full paper presentation.
- 2017 Brabrand, Helle, Along and Across – Kin-esthetic Space Making, Works+Words 2017, Biennale i kunstnerisk udviklingsvirksomhed i arkitektur, Det Kongelige Danske Kunstakademi, Copenhagen. Exhibition: video 4 min., drawing series, abstract/catalogue, paper digital format: <https://kadk.dk> > workwords2017.
- 2016 Brabrand, Helle, body-space-interface, interview and illustrations p. 169-183, 'Refractions – Artistic Research in Architecture'. Anne Katrine Hougaard, Martin Søborg, Kristine Annabell Torp, Elise Lorensen, Christoffer Thorborg, Louise Grønlund. Architectural Publisher B, Copenhagen, 2016.
- 2016 Brabrand, Helle, body-space-interface, website: [www.hellebrabrand.com](http://www.hellebrabrand.com)
- 2016 Brabrand, Helle, Kinaesthetic Space-making, Symposium: Body Space Object, Coventry, England (20.05.2016) Accepted abstract, digital format.
- 2014 Brabrand, Helle, What Images Do - drawing architecture, Symposium: What Images Do, Copenhagen, paper presented. Accepted abstract, paper in digital format.
- 2012 Brabrand, Helle, Incipient Movement. Drawing the seamless and the scaleless, Symposium: ScalelessSeamless? Performing a less fragmented architecture and education, EAAE-ENSA Munster. Video + stills, paper p.98-104
- 2012 Brabrand, Helle, Deterritorializing Drawing – transformation/deformation, 5<sup>th</sup> International Deleuze Studies Conference, New Orleans. Accepted abstract, digital format.
- 2012 Brabrand, Helle, Rethinking the Human in Technology-Driven Architecture, KA12 Studies/Research. Kunstakademiets Arkitektskole p. 86-87.
- 2012 Helle Brabrand m.fl., spacebody (2005), Kunstakademiets Arkitektskole. Kunstnerisk udviklingsvirksomhed (Artistic Research), Kulturministeriet (Ministry of Culture, Denmark). Rapport, digital format, p.24-25.
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- 2010 Brabrand, Helle, Mixed movements/performance-based drawing, ARCC/EAAE International conference: the place of research the research of place, Washington. Link to the final paper:
- 2010 Brabrand, Helle, mixed movement in the composition plane, KA10 Studies/Research. Kunstakademiets Arkitektskole, p. 162-163.
- 2010 Brabrand, Helle, Mixed movement/Mind and body Interface revisited, Third International Seminar, Architectonic Network, topic: Mind and Body Interface Revisited, Barcelona. Accepted abstract, digital format.
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- 2008 Brabrand, Helle, Spacewalking: how to exchange capacities of the moving body and the shaping of architecture, EAAE-ARCC International Conference: Changes of paradigms: architectural research and the digital world. Vol. 1. Kunstakademiets Arkitektskole, p. 186-195.
- 2008 Brabrand, Helle, mixed movement in the composition plane. Conceptual and sensuous interacting in architectural becoming.. The problem of interpretation in research in the visual and performing arts. 5th Research into practice conference 2008, 31. October: Royal Society of Arts. London UK. University of Hertfordshire, 2008. p. 55-57.
- 2006 Brabrand, Helle 2006, Architecture and embodiment, Spacebody actual virtual. Uddannelse, forskning og udstillinger 06. red. Anders Abraham and others, Copenhagen. Kunstakademiets Arkitektskole, p. 132-135.
- 2006 Brabrand, Helle, Architecture and embodiment. (illustrations): Filosofi og arkitektur i det 20. århundrede. red. Carsten Thau. Copenhagen. Kunstakademiets Arkitektskole, Institut 1, p. 238-239
- 2005 Brabrand, Helle, Architecture and embodiment.: Nordisk arkitekturforskning, Gøteborg, Vol. 18, Nr. 3, 2005, 4. p. 54-67.
- 2005 Brabrand, Helle, *Spacebody actual virtual* as DVD. Produced in cooperation with Kjøbek, Jytte, choreography; Sørensen, Gert, sound. Copenhagen.