

Milda Keršulytė

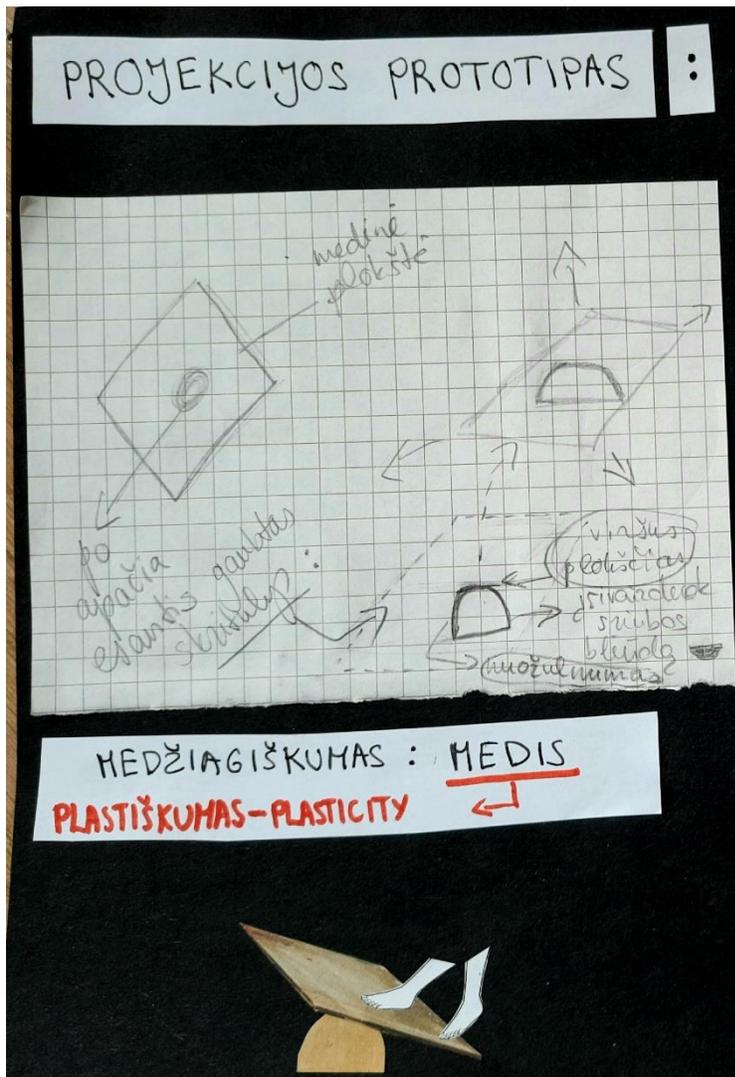
For dance exploration platform "bitės'21"

PROCESS / FRAGMENT NO. 3

2021

During our research, we started to construct a geometric sculpture to put our theoretical part into a more practical one: a static bowl with a wooden panel on top.

At first, we made a smaller prototype out of wood from our sketches and mind maps:

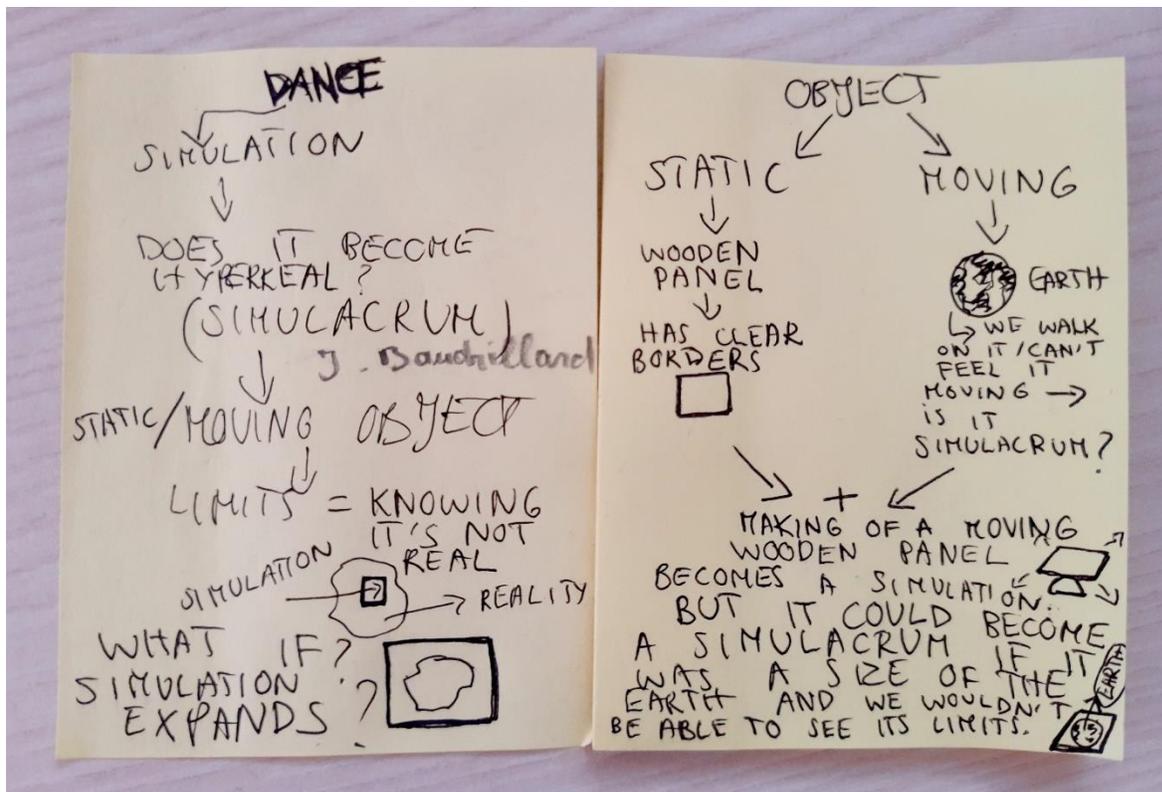


Here is the result:



Afterwards, we started brainstorming on how to do this object in a bigger size, so that it could hold the two of us and we could move freely on it, this way searching for balance.

As we began to dig deeper, more ideas and questions arose. What interested me, in particular, was how different does a body move on an unstable surface. In a way, there is no more freedom to how you move; it depends merely on the position of the moving panel. As it shifts to one, or the other side, so does your body, trying to restore the balance. In a way, you dance is no longer a dance rather than a simulation of it, which is an imitation of the process. I put my outburst of this new concept into a mind map:



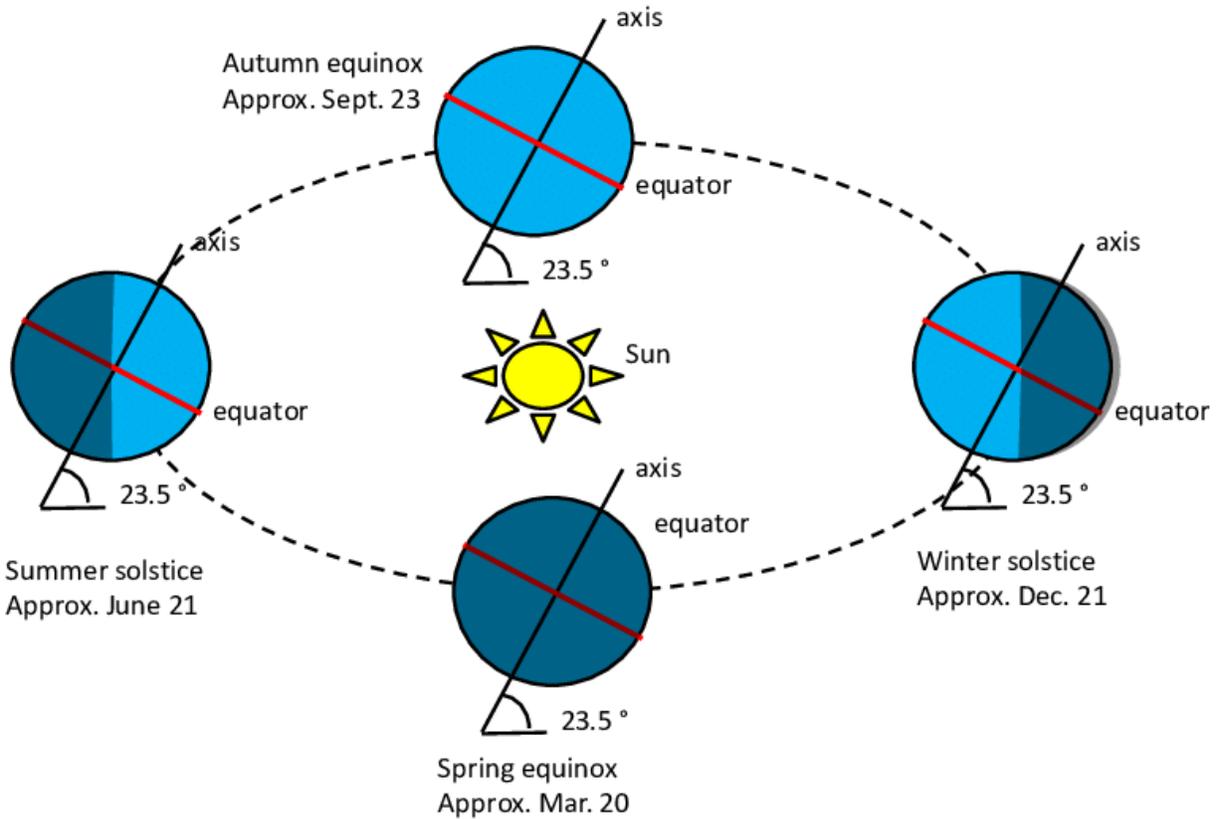
According to French sociologist Jean Baudrillard, people are now in a new era of simulation in which social reproduction (information processing, communication, and knowledge industries) replaces production as the organizing form of society. Instead, people live in the “hyperreality” of simulations in which images, spectacles, and the play of signs replace the concepts of production and class conflict as key constituents of contemporary societies (Kellner, 2005).

When applying this theory into our work, an important question emerged, after I realized our bodily movement to be a simulation of dance. I started asking myself whether this phenomenon makes the construction we made a simulation, too, and if we can experience a simulacrum while dancing on an unstable surface. The simulacra that Baudrillard refers to are the significations and symbolism of culture and media that construct perceived reality, the acquired understanding by which our lives and shared existence are rendered legible (Baudrillard and Glaser, 2020).

Having this in mind, I started to engage into whether our project is a simulation, or, “the hyperreal”, since standing on a moving surface engages your whole body, making oneself uneasy and unstable. However, the reality is different: you can feel that stepping two meters down from the construction and being back to a normal state. No imbalance, no need to move in a certain motion – just the way everything was before beginning to explore physical boundaries. By climbing down the prototype – unstable panel – you no longer simulate the imbalance. Therefore, the only disbalance that is left there is the one that lies within you. In particular, you no longer simulate it; you experience it.

Because the construction of a wooden panel has limits, we know it is not real and only a simulation of imbalance. Outside the border, lies the reality. However, what would happen if we expanded the simulation this way reducing the sense of the real world?

Consequently, I started to think: “what does our pannel, levitating on the wooden hemisphere, simulate?” And one particular phenomenon came into my mind – the movement of the Earth:



(Sandnes, 2011).

Just like the Earth can move around its axes, so can our wooden panel move on the hand-made hemisphere. Of course, Earth moves around its axes in one direction, whereas our panel has multiple possibilities of changing it. But let us say, it would constantly move around the base of our projection in the same direction as our planet does it.

When we walk on Earth, we do not feel its movement. On the contrary, if we moved on the rotating panel, we would certainly experience the sense of imbalance and would have to restore it. Does it make the Earth a simulacrum? I do not think anyone can truly answer that because we do not have enough proof that the reality we live in is the one and only truth.

Nevertheless, I can suggest that our construction is a simulation, which models the movement of the Earth. It depends merely on one's perspective whether our planet rotates clockwise or counter-clockwise; if one is looking down on our solar system from the North Pole's side, Earth spins on its axis in a counter-clockwise direction. However, if the person is looking at our Solar System from the other side, it rotates

in a clockwise direction. In this case, imagine we simulated the movement of our planet from the view of North Pole's side. In particular, our wooden panel would be rotating in a counter-clockwise direction. This is a significant example of how the simulation occurs in our work.

Is it possible that our simulation becomes a simulacrum? Yes, theoretically, but only on the condition if same levels of gravity and electromagnetism would apply in space that they do on Earth. If we were to make wooden panels bigger than the Earth that would cover the planet from all sides of it, no longer would we be able to distinguish whether the ground we are standing on is real or not, or if the Earth is real in itself. Diminishing the limits of our construction and us not being able to see it, would undoubtedly change the way we experience balance. Maybe we would feel standing firm on the ground, as we are doing it right now. Alternatively, we could feel imbalanced, constantly finding ourselves collapsing on a wooden surface.

This is how our prototype could become a simulacrum, from a theoretical standpoint. Unfortunately, we cannot make it a simulacrum practically, unless we would have all the resources and physical capacity to make enough wooden panels to cover the Earth. Moreover, even if we do cover our planet's borders, there are no methods invented to simulate gravity other than actual mass or acceleration.

Therefore, we are now working on constructing a wooden pannel and the base it is attached on to be able to hold at least two bodies. When the structure is built, we will explore our physical capacity and will search for means to restore imbalance and what impact it has on our bodies. Will our movement be affected by our state of balance all the time? Or will we be able to control this simulation over time?

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