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Paper: "Efva Lilja's *Movement as the Memory of the Body*: Curating as a Documentation of Process and a Critical Examination of This Artistic Research Project"

Efva Lilja's *Movement as the Memory of the Body* (MMB) is screendance and a curation of screendance, a work of art and a meditation on the processes of artistic creation, the importance of artistic research as a path to new knowledge, and what can be learned about memory from older dancers. MMB is a book in which Lilja collects and displays products of artistic research, among them photographs (some presented on transparent pages), drawings, essays by the choreographer, dancers, and audience members, and DVDs. The three DVDs contain three completed dances, as well as footage from auditions and rehearsals. The first two dances are filmed from the front as stage pieces and taped again as screendances, integrated into and filmed in a specific environment. The text logs events in her process that are seen in the film footage. It carries also the artist's comments on those events and on the nature of the work – in general and in detail. The curatorial context and the screendance enrich and complete each other.

On her website it says of Efva Lilja: "Her work is penetrating, surprising and astonishes people by confronting them with a totally new experience of what dance can be."¹ In much of her writing she talks about her work as a choreographer and as a scholar who conducts artistic research. She calls her art a form of linguistic research, meaning that dance is a form of communication and should be seen as such; it is another way of knowing. The amount of artistic research and artwork she has generated over the past twenty-five years or so has been extensive and varied. Lilja is prolific, intelligent, genuine and probing. Lilja takes chances, big ones, and her work *is* astonishing and brave. It opens new ground and explores the capacity of dance to include many things. In Lilja's own words: "Dance takes shape in the space between what was and what will be. It is there, in the space in-between, that everything takes place and new insights are created." (2006b under Words on Dance). What are the insights generated by the two-years-in-the-making, research-driven text and dances called *Movement as the Memory of the Body*? In this presentation, I explore questions that surface from both a curatorial frame and screendance including: how does the body store memory, how does a choreographer harvest that memory from her dancers and from herself, and what is Lilja's larger purpose and the link between qualitative and quantitative research, questions that only begin to examine a few of the issues raised by this piece. I examine these points through discussions of Lilja's work with the help of existing literature, and by meeting her work with my own body—through movement and memory.

Linda Sabo is a performer, choreographer, theatre director, and teacher of dance who is presently on the performing arts faculty at Elon University in North Carolina. Ms. Sabo's teaching and professional work has spanned 30 years in universities, schools, and theatrical venues throughout the country, such as Syracuse University, The University of Michigan, Iowa State University, Ballet Iowa, Interlochen, and many regional and stock theatres. Very many of her former students have successful careers as dance, theatre, television, and film professionals.

¹ Efva Lilja Website. Biographical Sketch. <http://www.efvalilja.se/page.php?lang=eng> (Accessed December 13, 2007).