Social Inclusion
2025 • Volume 13 • Article 9089
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.9089

cogitatio

ARTICLE

Open Access Journal

Dancing Hands: On Neurodivergent Embodied Knowledge

Anna Püschel

Department of Architecture, LUCA School of Arts, KULeuven, Belgium

Correspondence: Anna Püschel (anna.pueschel@kuleuven.be)

Submitted: 31 July 2024 **Accepted:** 26 December 2024 **Published:** 6 February 2025

Issue: This article is part of the issue "Solidarity in Diversity: Overcoming Marginalisation in Society" edited by Matthew Mabefam (University of Melbourne), Kennedy Mbeva (University of Cambridge), and Franka Vaughan (University of Melbourne), fully open access at https://doi.org/10.17645/si.i417

Abstract

This article gives insight into my artistic research project Stimming a Space, which explores "stimming"—auto-regulative behaviour—as a means to make and hold space for neurodivergent individuals within the art world. The umbrella term "neurodiversity" describes developmental conditions such as autism, ADHD, or dyspraxia. Neurodivergent individuals stim extensively due to frequently occurring sensory issues. I argue that parallel to movements of "queering" public spaces that result in increasing safety for all gender identities, "cripping" spaces through adjusting them to neurodivergent needs can be beneficial to everyone in a competitive capitalist environment such as the art world: from education to art spaces and academia that host an increasing number of artistic researchers. Diversity in the art world is not a luxury but a need. Despite recent motions for inclusion, disabled artists still encounter "ableism," othering, and exclusion. Lack of diversity perpetuates stereotypes and mental obstacles. From an "emic" perspective, the research project Stimming a Space approaches neurodiversity as a condition affecting the entire body instead of solely focusing on symptoms such as speech impairment or executive dysfunction. As a counterweight to much literature that problematises stimming as "disruptive behaviour," this autoethnographic research approaches it as a performative tool and claims that exploring the entire "bodymind" and embracing stimming as a radical act of self-care can enrich current research on neurodiversity. Opening up the art world is not a mere act of solidarity—lived inclusion makes it more accessible and safer for everyone.

Keywords

ableism; accessibility; artistic research; auto-ethnography; crip; disability studies; diversity; inclusion; neurodiversity; stimming

1. Introduction

Discussions around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the arts are gaining momentum, mainly focusing on overcoming racism and sexism. Ableism (discrimination and prejudices against people with disabilities) is slowly finding its place in the discourse as well, but efforts to overcome it are often reduced to discussions around accessibility for visible impairments.

When it comes to understanding the accessibility needs of neurodiversity, there is still much work to be done. Neurodiversity is a term embraced by neurodivergent individuals grouping a range of neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism, ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), or dyspraxia. Next to its more stereotypical presentations, such as sensory or communicative issues, many traits are invisible on the surface. One of the reasons for the rise in diagnoses in recent years (Yoo, 2013) is the growing coverage of these more hidden aspects that motivate neurodivergent individuals to seek information (Boyle, 2024; Ghorayshi, 2023). This development is particularly relevant for the art world that hosts a great deal of neurodivergent talent.

As part of the neurodivergent population, women move within a two-fold invisibility. This includes trans women—the strong link between autism and gender nonconformity has been known for over a decade (de Vries et al., 2013). Not only are their needs less obvious on the outside than, for example, a visual disability, neurodiversity also presents quite differently in girls and women (Simantov et al., 2021; Young et al., 2020). This leads to twice or even four times fewer diagnoses than in their male peers (Ramtekkar et al., 2010; Ratto et al., 2017; Zeidan et al., 2022), as they encounter medical bias through evaluation forms oriented on a predominantly male presentation (Cook et al., 2024; Quinn & Madhoo, 2014). Furthermore, their symptoms, such as trouble connecting with peers or feelings of deep isolation, are often overlooked, as women tend to "mask" more than men. "Masking" describes the process of hiding one's neurodivergent traits. Due to their high masking tendencies, neurodivergent women's needs regarding self-regulation tend to be expressed in much more subtle ways—society's pressure on the female body is real.

Research focusing on neurodivergent traits in women has only been gaining momentum in recent years (Attoe & Climie, 2023). Regarding ADHD, studies are showing more and more evidence that many girls and women present "atypically"—meaning not like men. ADHD presents in the female population more often as the inattentive type without the hyperactivity, the "dreamy girl" (Young et al., 2020). This new information is shedding light on the effects that undiagnosed ADHD can have on girls and women, thus slowly closing the gap between the number of neurodivergent women and the ones receiving adequate treatment and support (Kok et al., 2020).

Between this emerging field of research on female neurodiversity, current efforts to make institutions more accessible through embracing diversity (Cachia, 2024; Cairo, 2021; Van Eertvelde, 2024), and the growing field of disabled and care-centred art practices such as Kai Syng Tan's Neurodiversity In/& Creative Research Network or Manchester University's Care Lab, is where I situate my artistic research project Stimming a Space.

2. Research Question

Stimming a Space seeks to contribute to efforts to make institutions in the art world safe and supportive for everyone by focusing on the following research question: How can artistic research improve accessibility for neurodivergent women in the arts?

My position as a neurodivergent artist creates an opportunity to enrich current discussions on inclusivity with a positionality that seeks to broaden current knowledge with neurodivergent embodied knowledge. A diagnostic trajectory, which for women typically happens at a later stage such as high school or university, is a life-altering experience but often leaves one with more questions than before. On top of that comes the realisation that one's personality must be fully de- and reconstructed as identities are hidden under layers of lifelong masking. I wish to contribute to closing the gap between the information available within a classic medical diagnostic trajectory and the abundant knowledge shared by neurodivergent scholars, neurodivergent communities, and social media creators. I propose that accessing this pool of information can help to not only orientate oneself after a diagnosis but also provide crucial tools to sustain durable and successful careers. I apply this hypothesis to the art field that welcomes many neurodivergent women while often lacking supportive structures they could rely on, as they are frequently mis- or undiagnosed and have, therefore, no access to possible support tools (Able et al., 2006; Arnold et al., 2015; Schechter, 2018). My multidisciplinary approach to this question ties artistic research to design-driven research that aims at including female neurodivergent voices, following the disability activism slogan "nothing about us without us" (Charlton, 1998, p. 3).

My PhD research project Stimming a Space focuses on the unity of body and mind. When it comes to accessibility for neurodivergent individuals, many of the adjustments made aim at symptoms of the mind, such as forgetfulness or social anxiety. I state that neurodevelopmental conditions must be considered to a higher degree as a phenomenon that concerns the entire body. The physical needs of a neurodivergent "bodymind" (I use this term from the disability movement to underline the non-duality of mind and body) cannot be separated from mental or psychological ones. To explore these physical aspects, I focus on a phenomenon called "stimming" (self-stimulatory behaviours) as I encountered many misconceptions about it in the medical literature. As neurodivergent individuals often experience over- and/or underwhelming sensory input, they resort to self-stimulating their nervous system to regulate themselves. For example, rocking back and forth or playing with one's fingers can help reduce nervousness.

When I started reading up on stimming during the process of being diagnosed myself after graduation, I came across articles describing stimming as pathological and disruptive behaviour (Bodfish et al., 2000; Bourreau et al., 2008). They were mainly written for an audience of medical and behavioural professionals or instructing parents of autistic children on how to deal with a range of harmful stims. Potentially harmful stims like chewing or picking one's skin need to be considered, but they do not reflect the incredible variety of self-stimulatory behaviour. Furthermore, until this day, stimming is often merged with special interests and activities into one "problem" that needs to be addressed (read: fixed) as "RBB" (restricted repetitive behaviours; see Root et al., 2024). In these texts, information on stimming was limited to problematic behaviour to such an extent that I almost refrained from engaging in a diagnostic trajectory, thinking I could not possibly be autistic as my lived experience did not resonate with what I read about stimming.

The better-known forms of stimming are swaying movements like rocking back and forth or rhythmically flapping hands, but stimming implies all kinds of self-regulatory behaviour (Pugle, 2024; Watson, 2024). All senses can be stimulated through stimming—there are auditory stims like listening to soothing sounds, haptic stims like touching specific textures, motoric (movement) stims and vestibular stims (stimulating our sense of balance), visual stims like watching moving lights or sparkles, and even vocal stims like repeating words that feel good ("echolalia") or humming. Stimming also extends into the perception of the body within itself (interoception) and within the space (proprioception).

One defining feature of stimming might be its repetitive nature, like swaying back and forth for a while or stroking surfaces repeatedly. Stimming is not a uniquely neurodivergent behaviour. Most people catch themselves occasionally tapping their feet when impatient or twisting their hair when concentrating. A mother humming for her child is stimming in coregulation, and children naturally stim a lot as well. However, many neurodivergent individuals keep doing it while growing up. It is as much a natural expression of our body as it helps us to navigate environments that often do not grant us a sense of safety and connection. As the outside world can often be too much and our brains are constantly processing significantly more information than a "neurotypical" (a non-neurodivergent) brain (Beopoulos et al., 2022), stimming is, for many of us, what keeps us together in an overwhelming world.

Other than in the (mental) healthcare field, where it is widely used (Molloy et al., 2024; Scanlan & Novak, 2015), sensory modulation is not seen as a widely acceptable regulation technique. Only recently can sensory rooms be found during cultural events to enhance accessibility, as realised by the cultural access organisation Staging Access in Flanders.

Recent literature has shed light on the importance of stimming in education (Tancredi & Abrahamson, 2024). Yet there are still few contributions of neurodivergent authors that approach and celebrate stimming as self-care from an "emic" (insider) perspective such as Jason Nolan's *Embodied Semiosis: Autistic "Stimming" as Sensory Praxis* (Nolan & McBride, 2015), which sheds light on the wide range of stimming behaviour that is not only beneficial and nourishing to the neurodivergent soul, but that also functions as a life-supporting tool.

To understand neurodivergent qualia, one needs to listen to lived experience. I focus on stimming as an expression of a neurodivergent being. Stimming touches upon many issues that neurodivergent individuals face while navigating an environment made by and for neurotypicals. Leaning into Jakob Johann von Uexküll's description (Von Uexküll, 1909) of the "umwelt" (the surrounding world or phenomenal world) as an approach to describe what I would like to call a "neurodivergent cosmology," I explore stimming as a behaviour that allows us to be in the world. Being neurodivergent feels to me as if the boundaries of my existence are too porous: I experience lights, noises, and textures much brighter and louder than most people. This "hyper porosity," as I would coin it, is constantly present and makes it more difficult for me to feel good not only within my surroundings but in my own body as well. Stimming feels like a reconciliation of these two areas—when I stim, the outside slightly fades out, while I get back in touch with my inner world.

I argue that the lived experience of neurodivergent individuals is valuable in understanding, navigating, and accommodating neurodiversity. My attempt is, therefore, to draw from my own embodied experience as much as from the overwhelming amount of information that is shared within neurodivergent communities (such as life hacks, diagnostic tools, mental health, and advocacy tips) that unfortunately to this day rarely finds its way

into the medical field. Texts by neurodivergent scholars add positive and empowering language to this pool of information (Bernett, 2022; Walker, 2021; Yergeau, 2017). Through engaging in auto-ethnographic research within my creative practice, I seek to obtain new information on how this neurodivergent embodied knowledge impacts my artistic path. I propose that making and holding space for stimming can be a powerful addition to the tools institutions have started to put into place to support neurodivergent individuals, such as access support from the UK Council of the Arts. Leaning into the growing field of neuroqueer theory (Gernsbacher & Yergeau, 2019), crip theory (Dokumaci, 2018), and crip choreography as suggested by Rutgeerts et al. (2024), I am exploring how thinking about accessibility touches on positionality and language. The term "cripping," coming from "cripple," emerged in the late 20th century. It has, through crip theory, become a way to critically reflect on societal structures of marginalisation (McRuer & Berube, 2006). A room or an institution can be cripped, even time ("crip time"), as an expression of the different temporalities a disabled person might have to navigate—think waiting for help to board a train, or the obstacles in planning when one navigates chronic pain or fatigue. Crip theory confronts us with ableism embedded into societies and therefore internalised by the individual.

With my doctoral research, I explore how outgrowing my own internalised ableism lets me trace a trajectory of growing into a proud neurodivergent, creating and exploring alternative ways of thinking, dreaming, and enacting creative practices. As Patty Berne, co-founder of the disability justice performance project, words it: "Crip life invites us into fierce creativity" (as cited in Mills & Sanchez, 2023, p. 9).

In addition, disability is the only minority that we are all very likely to be part of at some point in our life. Showing solidarity towards this minority can be argued to be beneficial for every member of any given society. By implementing measures that represent a diverse population, everyone will profit from it:

> [As] everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick. Although we all prefer to use the good passport, sooner or later each of us is obliged, at least for a spell, to identify ourselves as citizens of that other place. (Sontag, 1978, p. 3)

3. Methodology

3.1. Auto-Ethnographic Research

I started this research from a rather unique position: My own neurodiversity had been diagnosed just months before I engaged in this project. I was discovering it as a new territory, feeling like a traveller of two different worlds. I navigated the first with a lifelong feeling of never belonging, and in the second, I felt like an intruder—yet welcomed ever so warmly. Everything suddenly made sense. The first year of research was therefore dedicated to a thorough auto-ethnographic investigation into the effects of cripping my creative practice to gain detailed insight into the needs of a neurodivergent woman regarding her artistic career. My goal was to document a first-hand experience of applying shared neurodivergent embodied knowledge to my work routine. I was curious to see to which degree it would corroborate my proposition that neurodivergent knowledge should be shared widely as it can provide meaningful support for others. The goal of this exploration was, therefore, not to formulate a universal key to navigate the art world as a neurodivergent woman, as experiencing and navigating it is different for everyone. As Julia Clausen puts it in her master thesis on self-advocated autistic gathering:

> Defining Autism is a bit like trying to define what makes someone or something alive—there is a practical answer with arbitrary boundaries, with different cultures picking different places to put these lines—but at the end of the day it is as fluid as all humanity and all life…it is part of everything. (Clausen, 2023)

I would rather see this investigation as a care-oriented exploration of how things can be done (and, before that, imagined, thought, and named) differently. It inspires me to lean into Lockwood Harris' work on reflexivity as a relational and embodied practice of care (Lockwood-Harris & Fortney, 2017).

The first year consisted of two main pillars: implementing supportive tools and stimming.

For the first pillar, I focused on measures that I learned through other neurodivergent individuals and social media channels, with particular interest in women sharing their diagnostic trajectories. Even if I have been moderately successful in my artistic career so far, I struggle severely with time management and episodes of exhaustion. Curious to find out how much my way of working was affected by my neurodiversity, I made a list of life hacks and started implementing them one by one while observing changes in my artistic practice and keeping track of the outcome (see Section 4.1).

Simultaneously, the second pillar consisted of a deep exploration of stimming to investigate its relevance for my neurodivergent bodymind. Over six months, I implemented stimming into my artistic practice. This was necessary as I had only a vague image of the stims that I did as a child, while being certain that finding out how my body would behave "naturally" could be an important entrance point to thinking about accessibility. Furthermore, I filmed myself to document this process and create video material (Figures 1, 2, 3) for further investigation (see Section 4.2).

Figure 1. Haptic stim.

3.2. Artistic Exploration

In the second year, I started working with different media (filming, drawing, painting, and dancing) to conduct an artistic exploration into documenting stimming with a larger pool of media than the one I am used to as a photographer, my camera. The goal of using different artistic tools was to approach stimming without a potentially familiar and, therefore, limiting artistic language, as I understand stimming to be pre-verbal and ephemeral in its appearance. I wanted to come to a deeper understanding of the movements

and the circumstances in which I resort to them. For this phase, I partly cooperated with other artists, such as a dancer and a videographer, working with "scores" that structured our interactions. In year three, this will expand into a collaborative development of a stimming choreography as one of the outcomes of this research (see Section 4.3).

3.3. Design-Driven Research

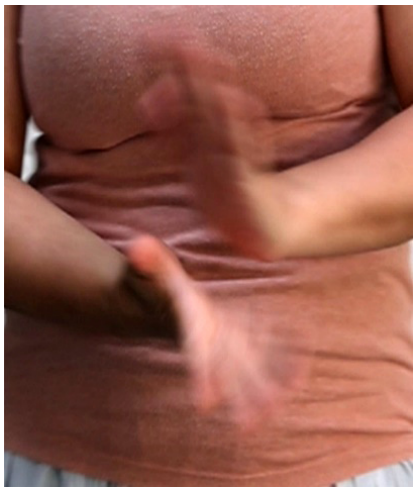

Figure 2. Motoric stim.

In year IV, the findings will be used to develop an online platform assembling resources for neurodivergent individuals and their allies, with a focus on the art field (see Section 6.)

4. Research

4.1. Year I—Cripping My Practice

Departing from my statement that embodied knowledge is valuable in thinking neurodivergent accessibility, my research started with implementing tools I had come across while seeking information after my diagnosis, realising that much neurodivergent culture (and mutual support) happens online. I kept a diary while slowly adding measures I deemed interesting to me and tracking different criteria such as the average time needed to start a task, the ease with which I transfer from one task to another, and the ability to maintain focus or ability to stop an activity. This way, I could see which tools served me and to which extent they supported my productivity. Here are some examples:

- I started by listening to my body's need for rest. Having experienced burnout at the start of the PhD required me to take much more time for my mind and body than anticipated. This confronting realisation, however, made the implementation of these tools even more critical
- I would, furthermore, block my tasks into time blocks that followed my natural rhythm. Many ADHD individuals experience a delayed circadian rhythm (Lunsford-Avery & Kollins, 2018). I started accepting that I take a while to be fully focused and put off carrying out tasks requiring plenty of dopamine (for deep concentration) into the afternoon. I also made sure to take regular breaks (setting alarms), hydrate and move for several minutes (inciting dopamine release), and not wear myself out by ignoring my body's

needs. I used a visual timer to keep track of the time blocks. Through these adjustments that would be finetuned depending on my energy levels on a specific day, I could embrace my natural variations in focus and plan my routine around them.
- When these measures were in place, I also started adjusting my diet: avoiding sugar, replacing snacks with complex carbohydrates and fats to avoid concentration peaks and abrupt attention declines, and cutting down on coffee.

During this period, I was part of the Cripping the Space collective that strives for the inclusion of disabled artists in the cultural field in Flanders. This role, while sensitising me for the work still ahead regarding diversity in the arts, helped me greatly in this process of taking the space I needed.

4.2. Year I—Stimming as a Way to Come Back Into the Body

In line with my proposition that neurodiversity affects the entire body and that therefore its needs should be considered when discussing the inclusion of neurodivergent individuals, I was eager to understand how stimming would affect me and, as a possible consequence, my practice.

I departed from a very limited understanding of stimming. It was only when I started looking for information online that I discovered a colourful and vibrant neurodivergent world where I learned what stimming really was: a joyful expression of neurodivergent existence (see initiatives such as Everybrain or Neuk Collective). Diving into these realms felt as if I entered a new universe—imagine having heaps of internalised shame about your existence (the things you like, the way you dress, the way you express emotions) being turned into one big celebration of these very characteristics. Hence, my use of the term neurodivergent cosmology. It really felt as if I was entering a world with different natural laws, suddenly being unconditionally accepted for being who I was.

The process of diving (back) into stimming was an interesting path with an unexpected outcome. Before I started, I thought stimming would help me to feel more relaxed or energised. I started actively stimming while implementing the above-mentioned tools and strategies. Nothing prepared me for the deep emotional journey I was embarking on.

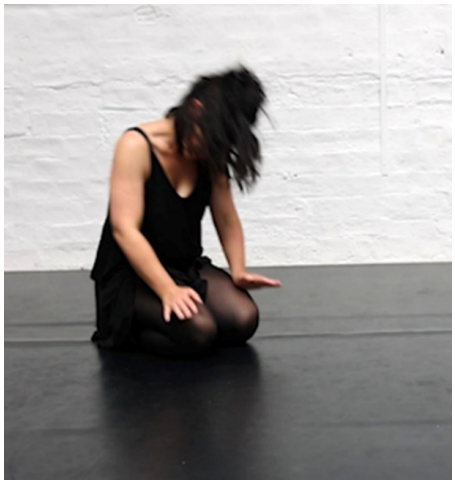

Figure 3. Motoric and vestibular stim.

During the first months, I would stim every morning in my studio for a moment—I would breathe deeply, close my eyes, and allow my body to move freely. This exploration initially felt strange, somehow artificial, and, at moments, frankly embarrassing. I felt like I was walking a territory that was not mine and where I did not belong—as if I was appropriating someone's language. The doubts that I had during my diagnostic process about whether I could be autistic or not arose more strongly than ever. It seemed that initially these exercises pulled me out of the neurotypical world but did not let me into the neurodivergent world, either—my mind was filled with the exact prejudices I was trying to overcome. It was only later in the trajectory that I learned, once again through online channels, how very common this feeling was for late-diagnosed neurodivergent people, especially women.

Moving through this initial discomfort, I started remembering gestures and movements that my body expressed when I was a child (Figure 4): stroking my clothes over and over, touching my lips, swaying back and forth, stroking my legs when kneeling. Tapping surfaces or touching the tips of my fingers in a specific order—it all came back. Over several months, I held this space, feeling a sense of relief that I had no words to express. I was still stimming exclusively in private. I was still quite hesitantly exploring this tactile and motoric territory that I slowly realised I had left behind due to feelings of shame. Over time, I noticed that my body started to engage in these freshly remembered gestures when outside, too: I caught myself swaying back and forth at a bus stop. I was fidgeting while talking to students. I stroked my neck over and over when tired and overwhelmed.

Figure 4. Haptic stim. Source: Emiel Van Den Daele.

Instead of simply expanding my knowledge on neurodivergent culture and growing as a person (which was my expectation), I was suddenly caught in a period of very intense emotions: real anger and frustration, followed by an episode that I can only describe as mourning. Those emotions were confirmed by many late-diagnosed women I spoke to: anger and frustration about the obstacles that did not have to be there, at the misunderstandings and the lack of support, followed by a period of real grief about a life that could have been lived differently. It was as if, through stimming, I released a cascade of emotions I had kept suppressed throughout my life. While this process repeatedly left me overwhelmed and at a loss for words, it also felt as if I was stimming myself into my new neurodivergent territory. My body started to find its natural place in this expanding reality. What felt like stripping away a lifetime of masking, was, through allowing this unfolding of my neurodivergent self, a coming home.

I started dreaming of facilitating a space in which this raw side of me could simply exist, a room that I "could enter where my experiences were comprehensible, where I didn't have to apologise, offer a tortuous explanation of myself or turn myself into a joke" (Limburg, 2021, p. 57).

4.3. Year II—Artistic Exploration

In this phase, I continued my stimming explorations but focused on finding different ways to approach my own (motoric) stims to come to a deeper understanding of the movements and effects stimming has on our bodyminds. To approach stimming from different angles, I explored various media such as photography and film (which I am familiar with as a visual artist) but also sketching and drawing (Figures 5 and 6), which to me feel like a foreign (artistic) language.

Figure 5. Sketching the stimming body.

Figure 6. Sketching a stim.

Inspired by Ulrike Scholte's suggestion that drawing can play a role in the perception and construction of space and, therefore, not just depict but also analyse it (Scholte, 2022), I was curious to find out whether drawing would change my perception of my stimming body within the space. I was interested in what the body produces in a language in which it is not yet proficient. As I have no drawing training, I cannot aim so much to create aesthetically pleasing results, but my body can still enjoy translating what it feels and sees into a foreign vocabulary that is not impaired by subconscious artistic and maybe aestheticising choices. This way, I hoped to find unexpected information regarding the movements, as I was not used to observing and dissecting them this way.

As task initiation and transitioning between tasks are challenging to me, in this phase I worked with scores to create a repetitive and reliable frame for production and reflection. I wrote them to create precise frameworks in which to execute an action (think of a theatre score) according to my needs. After a first "settling in" moment during which I tackled smaller tasks to start the day with a clear mind, I cut the remaining time of the day into blocks of one hour: 25 minutes of action, 25 minutes of reflection, while allowing myself 5 minutes of relaxation and some minutes as a buffer for transitioning.

Sticking to this format made it easier for me to tackle major tasks while getting less distracted. It also prevented the negative side effects of hyperfocus (such as forgetting to drink or eat).

I then started to work with dancer K. to explore the rhythmicality of stimming and work towards a participative choreography. My first impulse was to work on a choreography that somehow could explore how stimming movements can be interpreted as gestures of care. We met several times, and during our common exploration, I came to realise that my initial idea to use stimming as a performative tool was a proposition that stayed very much at the surface. I was thinking in terms of aesthetic choices again, of visual impressions, of orchestrated movements. Working with K., despite—or because of—my ever-fluctuating levels of energy, made me understand that it would hold more potential for this research to explore how a choreography could depart from the needs of neurodivergent bodies. This would be in line with my research question which seeks to investigate how stimming can lead to a better understanding of the needs of neurodivergent bodies regarding accessibility.

I learned about the three "spheres" of dancing: time, space, and energy. I could not help linking them to my practice of stimming, as it anchors me so deeply within time and space and affects my energy so profoundly. We explored how stims changed while playing with these factors: slowing them down, doing them while walking across the room, and moving with softness or determination. It taught me to which degree stims really live a life of their own and can only be controlled or "made conscious" to a certain degree until they lose their liberating effect and stop touching those sweet spots in our brains that help us to relax and come back to ourselves.

My next steps will explore how such a choreography could be constructed, as I am curious to develop circumstances in which stimming can be facilitated without being forced or limited, as it then seems to lose its self-regulating potential. As many fantastic disabled creators are working in dance (Bersani, 2018; Kuppers, 2023; Sheppard, 2023), the field of neurodivergent dance and choreography is still small. Some creators are doing very interesting work in that field in the UK and US (Davies, 2020; Dye, 2022; Martin, 2024; Watson, 2024), but in Flanders, there is no field of neurodivergent dance creation. I am currently exploring possible partners to work with in Belgium.

5. Findings

5.1. Year I—Cripping My Practice

Through the concrete adjustments implemented in the first year, I realised that it was more important for me to get into a healthy state of focused creative flow than to follow a schedule for which my body is not made and that inhibits my performativity. By timing my (rather atypical) work hours, including research, networking, reading, and counting a monthly average, I realised that I was not less productive than my peers. Accepting and adjusting to these natural fluctuations gave me a sense of peace of mind since I stopped constantly feeling as if I was not performing enough. It gave me the confidence to unapologetically take a day off when needed. This took immense pressure off me and contributed to lowering my stress levels significantly. My racing thoughts at night became more silent; I could fall asleep better and earlier. My anxiety symptoms improved as well. A chronic inflammation I have had since my early childhood was appeased for months on end as my nervous system learned to relax profoundly.

It became clear that my practice could be cripped towards my personal needs while not compromising on the quality of my work. In those twelve months, I took part in two exhibitions, two scientific conferences, and a residency in Scotland while regularly travelling to France for embodiment courses and finishing a major publication. This underlines my proposition that listening to our needs instead of adjusting to formats that society deems normal can be a liberating and empowering gesture. If more individuals can implement a work routine that fits their needs while being equally productive, the prioritisation of mental and physical health can become more widely implemented.

5.2. Year I—Stimming

I started understanding stimming not as an added value to my daily life or a funny quirk to be cultivated but as an elementary part of my wellbeing. Stimming more and more (un)consciously throughout my days turned what felt like a newly gained habit into an integral part of my life. It profoundly altered my daily experience while increasing my ability to deal with sensory overwhelm, uncomfortable social situations, and waves of anxiety. This confronting realisation confirmed my proposition that stimming is an integral part of neurodivergent life. I am not stating that one cannot be neurodivergent if one does not stim, everyone is different. The question remains: How many of us neurodivergent people have their stims buried deep without knowing it? My proposition that the body is key when thinking about adjustments for neurodivergent individuals deeply resonated through the impact that stimming had on my artistic practice and my private life. It boosted my creativity, improved my mood, and made me generally more relaxed, which in turn made me a better partner, friend, and parent—all roles that I find challenging to combine with my artistic drive. I discovered that being my authentic self transforms the world around me and that embracing my neurodiversity is compatible with leading a successful artistic career. I therefore, propose that neurodivergent joy is not a pleasant luxury but a crucial component in understanding connection: "The minor gesture is everywhere, all the time….The minor invents new forms of existence, and with them, in them, we come to be" (Manning, 2016, p. 2).

Particularly true for neurodivergent individuals who are non-vocal, stimming is a way to engage deeply with their surroundings, in ways that neurotypicals might not understand at first, but that are crucial for their wellbeing and their engagement with a world that they share with everyone else:

> The way that I move is an ongoing response to what is around me. Ironically, the way that I move when responding to everything around me is being described as "being in a world of my own," whereas if I interact with a much more limited set of responses and only react to a much more limited part of my surroundings people claim that I am "opening up to true interaction with the world. (Baggs, 2007)

5.3. Year II—Artistic Research as a Tool to Rethink Accessibility

The result of the artistic exploration to draw my moving body, and later trying to draw the movements themselves (Figures 7 and 8), showed me how my body perfectly knew what it was doing, an experience I can't say my mind is equally proficient at. This was a surprising realisation as I was still new to re-learning and easing into my stimming gestures. I would film myself moving, then draw what I saw on the recordings, then try to implement what I drew into further stimming patterns, and so on. These loops of gestures that fed into each other helped me distil the essential qualities of the movements. I liked that this way of working somehow reflected the movements themselves as well—a truly neurodivergent research structure emerged. When I looked at the figures I traced, I came across recurring delicate circles, shy and prominent brush strokes, and, time and time again, lemniscates (a lying eight, symbol of infinity: ∞; see Figure 7). These patterns seemed like an underlying form language that I had not been able to see or read yet, a level of physical expression that lies beyond language and, therefore, holds the potential to understand self-regulation beyond a limiting medical vocabulary.

Figure 7. Tracing a stim in full movement.

The results of my artistic explorations so far shine a light on how neurodiversity is experienced on a personal level. Focussing on and practising stimming, as well as studying it through different media, leads to a more visceral understanding of it. Through this exploration, my understanding of stimming changed from a purely regulatory function to a natural expression of my body. Stimming expanded my comprehension of what it means to feel good in a neurodivergent bodymind. This includes the circumstances that facilitate stimming regarding space and time: spaces in which time can be experienced as more loopy than linear, in which bodies can discover their potential by being themselves, and in which stimming can flourish as a radical gesture of self-care.

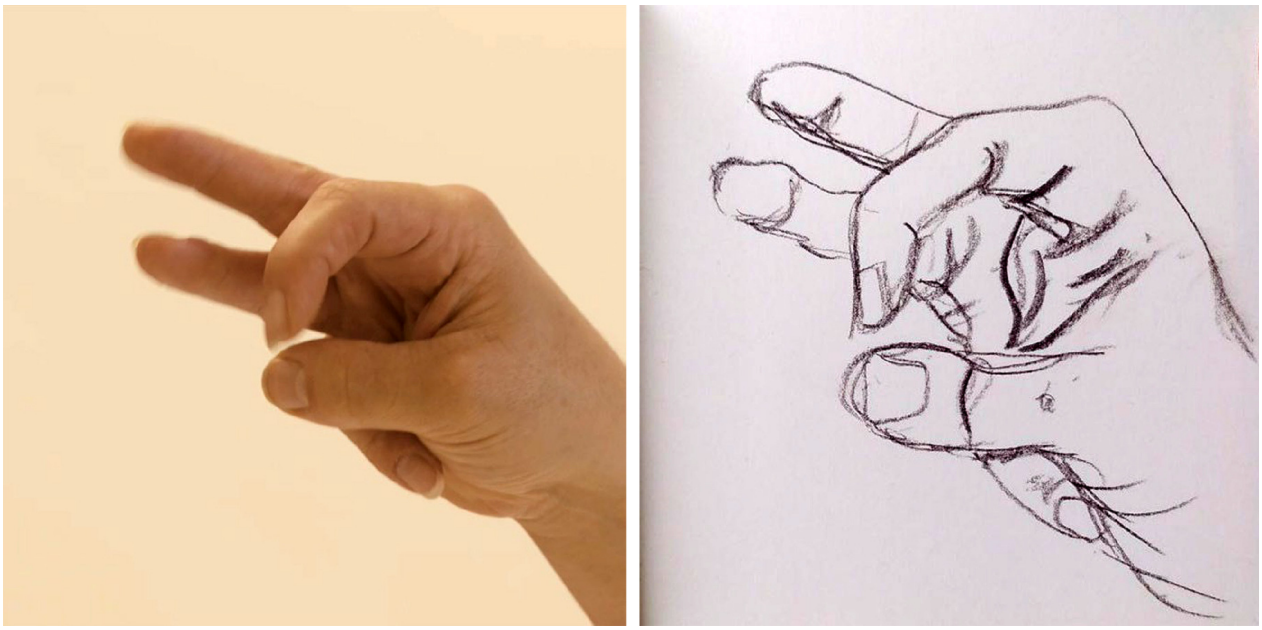

Figure 8. Sketch of video material.

While I dived into a non-verbal exploration of stimming for a more visceral understanding of its nature, I took detailed notes. They contain concrete observations that hold the potential to create new spaces by finding words for ephemeral processes. One example would be certain words that I noted during my stimming work and that became persistent in their presence as I referred to them repeatedly: being in the zone, pacing a space, looping, circular time, comforting, coming into myself, sanding the edges, tracing my presence.

All these, thrown onto the paper without much thought, hold pieces of my neurodivergent reality: how it feels to anchor my presence in space through moving, what happens inside me, in the periphery of my body, as well as outside of it when I stim. They trace how stimming affects my perception of time and space. These descriptions can help broaden the perspective of medical professionals who diagnose and treat neurodivergent individuals, especially women, as they can illustrate the degree to which we perceive the world differently, and how strongly we feel intertwined with it. Maybe these words can find their way into descriptions of neurodivergent needs that lay the foundation for the development of stim toys or stim rooms. My goal is not only to provide more information for neurodivergent women on how to thrive but also to support them in their self-advocacy in obtaining diagnoses and building strong careers. Language is important when it comes to understanding a phenomenon, and by naming observations, they come to be. How we label them determines our perspective and shapes them in our minds. In a neurodivergent cosmology, developing and sharing neurodivergent wording can lead to neurodivergent worlding. While this can create safe and empowering spaces for us neurodivergent individuals to thrive, I believe that crafting a frame in which radical acceptance holds space for each one of us transcends the world of neurodivergent creation. In Siobhan Davies' words:

> Stimming has become both my subject matter and my method of exploration. Shedding the shame I have associated with it in the past, I am now celebrating all that it is; mesmerising, stimulating, pleasurable, soothing, grounding, challenging and disruptive…shifting from a position of stigma to one of curiosity and acceptance. As such, I hope that I can serve to remind people of the universality of

> stimming and create an appreciation for shared experience, whilst also opening up a greater understanding and tolerance for difference. (Davies, 2020)

I would like to summarise this early stage of research with the following findings:

- As a neurodivergent individual, I benefitted greatly from the embodied knowledge that was generously shared by other neurodivergent people online in the form of support, empowering language, life hacks, and a general celebration of neurodivergent culture. This wealth of knowledge and support from the neurodivergent community, this sense of solidarity, would not have been accessible to me through classic medical trajectories, underlying my proposition that neurodivergent embodied knowledge needs to be taken into consideration in diagnosing and supporting neurodiversity, especially in women.
- Stimming is an essential self-regulation tool for neurodivergent individuals as it helps them handle their environment. As such, it should be better understood by institutions working on accessibility, as enabling and promoting it can hold space for neurodivergent individuals by making them feel seen, safe, and appreciated. In addition, designing spaces in which people can stim freely can benefit everyone as they potentially provide support for a larger demographic than just neurodivergent individuals.
- Artistic exploration of stimming can contribute to building safe spaces for neurodivergent individuals. Studying stimming through different media has shifted my initial goal of creating a work of art *about* stimming, oriented on the neurotypical gaze, to working towards one that is based on accommodating stimming, departing first and foremost from the needs of the neurodivergent bodymind. I discovered that my initial focus on celebrating stimming as a literal gesture of care slowly shifted towards a deepening understanding of stimming as a way to engage with and impact the space.
- My observations can enrich the current medical framework with a neurodivergent perspective through artistic output as well as language. This way, my research contributes to shifting the focus of potential adjustments from problem-solving to joyful designing. This approach puts the emic perspective first in developing concrete propositions such as “accessibility riders” (a list of accessibility tools that can be offered by an institution) developed to welcome neurodivergent artists (think quiet spaces, soundproof ear gear, relaxed deadlines). Accessibility tools for neurodivergent individuals should not be developed without neurodivergent expertise.

6. Further Research

During the third year, my personal experiences will be enriched through cooperation with other neurodivergent women artists. Together with them, I will work on a performance piece (a choreography or a score) that brings our embodied expertise together. Leaning into Manning’s (2016, p. 111) concept of leading-following, I want to develop a choreography or score in which stimming plays a key role. It will be based on a cyclic development of mutual play and experimentation, continuously feeding into the next step. Simultaneous to our work on the dance floor, I plan to do interviews around their experiences navigating art education and their respective field(s), their obstacles, and which tools they employ or are missing, as well as their experiences in being othered and judged as not-belonging. Furthermore, through shared moments of common stimming, this emic research will implement several perspectives to keep this investigation representative of the variety of stims that exist. These moments of reflection, as well as the common stimming experience, will feed back into the piece I am creating (my artistic output) as well as the neurodivergent toolkit I will be developing as a hands-on output that can be used by other artists and institutions.

As more and more neurodivergent creatives use their approaches for research and accessibility (see Bakan, 2014; Thom, 2020) my contribution to the field expands the broader understanding of stimming, and my proposition to use stimming as an access tool can find implementation in the growing numbers of accessibility riders.

Simultaneously, the website Neuroverse will be developed and launched. It is meant to be a pool of information for neurodivergent individuals (as well as their allies) and institutions that want to work on their accessibility. Neuroverse is not only a research output that structures my findings in an accessible manner, but also a format that is supposed to empower individuals by sharing a neurodivergent vocabulary list and a collection of tools that can be continuously expanded. It will also host a visual library of stims showing the variety and beauty of different forms of stimming, and a neurodivergent accessibility rider that can easily be printed out for personal use. Finally, Neuroverse will have an ever-expanding list of resources on neurodiversity in general, women more specifically, and a special focus on neurodiversity in the arts (Figure 9). Through this easily accessible channel, I contribute to bridging the gap between the neurodivergent experience and professionals in the medical field.

Figure 9. First draft for Neuroverse.

Not only can neurodivergent individuals (and the ones wondering about their potential diagnoses) access important information, they can also enjoy seeing their lived experience portrayed in a respectful and empowering way. This platform will also help medical professionals like speech therapists, psychiatrists, and psychologists to better understand neurodiversity in women, as there are still too many misconceptions preventing individuals from getting adequate diagnoses and support.

Neuroverse will be developed with neurodivergent individuals in mind to support them and their friends, partners, family, and allies, as well as institutions that want to implement lasting and true change in their efforts to diversify their in- and output. Over time, I wish for it to become a hub of neurodivergent culture where people can post opportunities, exchange experiences, and keep expanding its resources, such as the neurodivergent lexicon or the list of life hacks.

7. Conclusion

As an artist, I constantly ask myself whether my perspective on any kind of phenomenon contributes to its understanding. When it comes to artistic research within academia, the question of the relevance of one's subjective approach becomes even more compelling—calling on the artist to be very attentive to the doubts that arise when presenting their perspective on something as purposefully objective as academic research. At the same time, I learned through my art practice that often the most precious encounters with others happen through opening our very own story.

Without leaning too much into aspects of vulnerability—that have their place—I would like to add my voice to the canon as my approach centres on listening to neurodivergent women's experiences because their voices are lacking while carrying so much knowledge. At the same time, I argue that embedding support structures that help neurodivergent women to thrive in the arts (such as quiet residencies or dyslexia-friendly application forms) are valuable and important tools for everybody and can strengthen social cohesion.

If we make space for everyone at the table, everyone feels included. One does not need a dyslexia diagnosis to benefit from the option to record an application for an art school on video—it might just generally give a feeling of acceptance and take away some stress. This simple measure might encourage someone's first try. Amplifying excluded voices matters. So much neurodivergent talent remains unseen because artists struggle with these obstacles.

Accessibility is beneficial for everyone. Let us make decisions with everyone on board—we are all relational beings. We all need to feel supported by our environment, the ones amongst us who struggle to formulate their needs and experience othering and exclusion, even more so. Implementing tools formulated by minorities can be a great way for institutions to promote solidarity and inclusion.

As Stimming a Space presents my perspective, it should not be read as a universal key to female neurodiversity. Neither should it be discarded as an isolated experience. Countless conversations have brought me in touch with shared feelings of confusion, longing, and deeply caring about the state of the world. The porosity that I mention is the reason why we are often at such a loss: in contrast to many a stereotype about neurodiversity as cutting individuals off from the world, it makes us so very intertwined with what is happening around us. We might respond to these stimuli differently, but we are in a deep and ever-ongoing relationship with the world, feeling and caring profoundly. Stimming a Space broadens perspectives on neurodiversity by highlighting these lesser-known aspects of it. What this exploration has shown me so far is that even though all neurodivergent individuals are unique, stimming can connect us—not just as a commonality but as a literal gesture of connection.

This article is structured in its own rhythm on purpose, focusing on minor details before placing them into a larger context. It dances and flows just like my mind. It embodies my ambition as an artistic researcher to have a voice on platforms like these while keeping my neurodivergent mother tongue.

Being our neurodivergent selves is not a luxury but a condition if we genuinely want to hold space for one another. We must be able to get a seat at the table without denying who we are. To build spaces in which we can unapologetically be ourselves and use our own language to describe our reality in full agency, we

need institutions to understand our needs and accommodate them, to hold space for our buzzing minds and stimming bodies. If art schools, museums, and galleries really are to become inclusive and diverse, they must include all voices. They must include all languages, be it humming, be it movements.

How can we unite this dreamy, loopy, and circular neurodivergent cosmos with what you call the normal world and what, for us, is a place of misunderstanding and disconnection?

Listen to us.

Sit with us while we breathlessly share our newest discoveries, our encounters, our being puzzled about the state of the world, sharing facts that are close to our hearts—our love language.

Listen while we share our deep emotions.

Listen to us repeating words over and over because they feel good; listen to us humming.

Be silent with us.

Sit with our minds while they are circling slow and fast.

Breathe with us.

Watch us moving at the margins: our fingers ticking, our hips swaying, our hands dancing.

Let minor gestures grow.

Acknowledgments

I owe much inspiration to Sarah Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), Alison Kafer's *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (2013), Ali Wilson's *Galaxies of Neurons Firing* (2021), and conversations with Aby Watson.

Funding

The PhD research this article is based on is funded by the FWO (Fonds voor wetenschappelijk onderzoek) Flanders, Belgium.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Able, S. L., Johnston, J. A., Adler, L. A., & Swindle, R. W. (2006). Functional and psychosocial impairment in adults with undiagnosed ADHD. *Psychological Medicine*, *37*(1), 97–107. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0033291706008713

Arnold, E. A., Hodgkins, P., Kahle, J., Madhoo, M., & Kewley, G. (2015). Long-term outcomes of ADHD: Academic achievement and performance. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, *24*(1), 73–85. https://doi.org/10.1177/1087054714566076

Attoe, D. E., & Climie, E. A. (2023). Miss. diagnosis: A systematic review of ADHD in adult women. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, *27*(7), 645–657. https://doi.org/10.1177/10870547231161533

Baggs, A. (2007, January 15). *In my language* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/JnylM1hI2jc

Bakan, M. (2014). The musicality of stimming: Promoting neurodiversity in the etnomusicology of autism. *MUSICultures*, *41*(2), 133–161.

Beopoulos, A., Géa, M., Fasano, A., & Iris, F. (2022). Autism spectrum disorders pathogenesis: Toward a comprehensive model based on neuroanatomic and neurodevelopment considerations. *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, *16*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2022.988735

Bernett, S. (2022). *Composing with the event—Moving toward neurodiverse perception/sensation* [Unpublished PhD thesis]. Concordia University.

Bersani, C. (2018). *Works*. Chiara Bersani. https://www.chiarabersani.it/en/works

Bodfish, J. W., Symons, F. J., Parker, D. E., & Lewis, M. H. (2000). Varieties of repetitive behavior in autism: Comparisons to mental retardation. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *30*(3), 237–243. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1005596502855

Bourreau, Y., Roux, S., Gomot, M., & Barthélémy, C. (2008). Comportements répétés et restreints (C2R) dans les troubles autistiques: Évaluation clinique. *L Encéphale*, *35*(4), 340–346. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.encep.2008.05.004

Boyle, S. (2024, April 24). The sudden rise of AuDHD: what is behind the rocketing rates of this life-changing diagnosis? *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2024/apr/04/audhd-what-is-behind-rocketing-rates-life-changing-diagnosis

Cachia, A. (2024). *The agency of access: Contemporary disability art and institutional critique*. Temple University Press.

Cairo, A. (2021). *Holding space. A storytelling approach to trampling diversity and inclusion*. Aminata Cairo Consultancy.

Charlton, J. (1998). *Nothing about us without us: Disability oppression and disempowerment*. University of California Press

Clausen, J. (2023). *Stepping off-stage. Co-creating the divergent self through autistic digital practice* [Unpublished master thesis]. KULeuven.

Cook, J., Hull, L., & Mandy, W. (2024). Improving diagnostic procedures in autism for girls and women: A narrative review. *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment*, *20*, 505–514. https://doi.org/10.2147/ndt.s372723

Davies, S. (2020). *Stimming as a neurodivergent performance practice*. Siobhan Davies. https://www.siobhandavies.com/blog-stimming

de Vries, A. L. C., Noens, I. L. J., Cohen-Kettenis, P. T., Van Berckelaer-Onnes, I. A., & Doreleijers, T. A. (2010). Autism spectrum disorders in gender dysphoric children and adolescents. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *40*(8), 930–936. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-010-0935-9

Dokumaci, A. (2018). Disability as method: Interventions in the habitus of ableism through media-creation. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, *38*(3). https://doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v38i3.6491

Dye, X. (2022). *Stimming towards a neurodivergent dance practice. Interview with Xan Dye*. Dance Art Journal. https://danceartjournal.com/2022/03/24/stimming-towards-a-neurodivergent-dance-practice-interview-with-susanna-dye

Gernsbacher, M. A., & Yergeau, M. (2019). Empirical failures of the claim that autistic people lack a theory of mind. *Archives of Scientific Psychology*, *7*(1), 102–118. https://doi.org/10.1037/arc0000067

Ghorayshi, A. (2023, April 10). More girls are being diagnosed with autism. *The New York Times*.

Kok, F. M., Groen, Y., Fuermaier, A., & Tucha, O. (2020). The female side of pharmacotherapy for ADHD—A systematic literature review. *PLoS ONE*, *15*(9). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.02392577

Kuppers, P. (2023). *Crip mad archive*. Petra Kuppers. https://www.petrakuppers.com/cripmad-archive-dances

Limburg, J. (2021). *Letters to my weird sisters. On autism, feminism and motherhood*. Atlantic Books.

Lockwood-Harris, K., & Fortney, J. M. (2017). Performing reflexive caring: Rethinking reflexivity through trauma and disability. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, *37*(1), 20–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/10462937.2016.1273543

Lunsford-Avery, J. R., & Kollins, S. H. (2018). Editorial perspective: Delayed circadian rhythm phase: a cause of late-onset attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder among adolescents? *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *59*(12), 1248–1251. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp. 12956

Manning, E. (2016). *The minor gesture*. Duke University Press.

Martin, A. (2024). *Neurodivergence in dance performance: A thesis* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Sarah Lawrence College.

McRuer, R., & Berube, M. (2006). *Crip theory: Cultural signs of queerness and disability*. New York University Press.

Mills, M., & Sanchez, R. (2023). *Crip authorship: Disability as method*. New York University Press.

Molloy, L., Chidarikire, S., Pullman, J., Havilla, S., Patton, D., & Beckett, P. (2024). The impact of sensory modulation interventions on practice in acute inpatient mental health settings: A meta-ethnography. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, *45*(6), 580–588. https://doi.org/10.1080/01612840.2024.2341034

Nolan, J., & McBride, M. (2015). Embodied semiosis: Autistic 'stimming' as sensory praxis. In P. Pericles Trifonas (Ed.), *Springer eBooks* (pp. 1069–1078). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9404-6_48

Pugle, M. (2024). *What is ADHD stimming?* Very Well Health. https://www.verywellhealth.com/adhd-stimming-5208900

Quinn, P. O., & Madhoo, M. (2014). A review of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in women and girls. *The Primary Care Companion for CNS Disorders*, *16*(3). https://doi.org/10.4088/pcc.13r01596

Ramtekkar, U. P., Reiersen, A. M., Todorov, A. A., & Todd, R. D. (2010). Sex and age differences in attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms and diagnoses: Implications for DSM-V and ICD-11. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, *49*(3), 217–228.

Ratto, A. B., Kenworthy, L., Yerys, B. E., Bascom, J., Wieckowski, A. T., White, S. W., Wallace, G. L., Pugliese, C., Schultz, R. T., Ollendick, T. H., Scarpa, A., Seese, S., Register-Brown, K., Martin, A., & Anthony, L. G. (2017). What about the girls? Sex-Based differences in autistic traits and adaptive skills. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *48*(5), 1698–1711. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3413-9

Root, H. K., Abdul-Chani, M. M., Arnold, Z. E., Cottle, J. J., Hilty, T., Guest, K. C., & O'Kelley, S. E. (2024). Structure of restricted repetitive behaviors of individuals referred for autism spectrum disorder assessment. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-024-06536-7

Rutgeerts, J., Van Goidsenhoven, L., & Sandahl, C. (2024). Differing bodyminds: Cripping choreography. *Choreographic Practices*, *15*(1), 3–15. https://doi.org/10.1386/chor_00077_2

Scanlan, J. N., & Novak, T. (2015). Sensory approaches in mental health: A scoping review. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, *62*(5), 277–285. https://doi.org/10.1111/1440-1630.12224

Schechter, J. (2018). *Supporting the needs of students with undiagnosed disabilities*. Kappa Online. https://kappanonline.org/schechter-supporting-needs-students-undiagnosed-disabilities

Scholte, U. (2022). *Feeling techniques—Making methods to articulate bodily practices* [Unpublished PhD thesis]. University of Amsterdam.

Sheppard, A. (2023). *Alice Sheppard on dance, disability and defying gravity*. Always Looking Up. https://always-looking-up.libsyn.com/website/alice-sheppard-on-dance-disability-and-defying-gravity

Simantov, T., Pohl, A., Tsompanidis, A., Weir, E., Lombardo, M., Ruigrok, A., Smith, P., Allison, C., Baron-Cohen, S., & Uzefovsky, F. (2021). Medical symptoms and conditions in autistic women. *Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice*, *26*(2), 373–388. https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613211022091

Sontag, S. (1978). *Illness as metaphor*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Tancredi, S., & Abrahamson, D. (2024). Stimming as thinking: A critical reevaluation of self-stimulatory behavior as an epistemic resource for inclusive education. *Educational Psychology Review*, *36*(3). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-024-09904-y

Thom, J. (2020). *Relaxed venues can radically improve theatre experiences*. The Stage. https://www.thestage.co.uk/opinion/jess-thom-relaxed-venues-can-radically-improve-theatre-experiences

Van Eertvelde, A. (2024). *Handicap, Een bevrijding*. De Bezige Bij.

Von Uexküll, J. (1909). *Umwelt und Innenwelt der Tiere*. Springer.

Walker, N. (2021). *Neuroqueer heresies: Notes on the neurodiversity paradigm, autistic empowerment, and postnormal possibilities*. Autonomous Press.

Watson, A. (2024). *Disordering dance: Neuroqueering a choreographic practice* [Unpublished PhD thesis]. Royal Conservatory of Scotland & University of St Andrews. https://doi.org/10.17630/sta/1154

Yergeau, M. (2017). *Authoring autism: On rhetoric and neurological queerness*. Duke University Press

Yoo, H. J. (2013). Recent increase in autism and ADHD: True or inflated? *Journal of Korean Medical Science*, *28*(7), 974–975. https://doi.org/10.3346/jkms.2013.28.7.974

Young, S., Adamo, N., Ásgeirsdóttir, B. B., Branney, P., Beckett, M., Colley, W., Cubbin, S., Deeley, Q., Farrag, E., Gudjonsson, G., Hill, P., Hollingdale, J., Kilic, O., Lloyd, T., Mason, P., Paliokosta, E., Perecherla, S., Sedgwick, J., Skirrow, C., . . . Woodhouse, E. (2020). Females with ADHD: An expert consensus statement taking a lifespan approach providing guidance for the identification and treatment of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in girls and women. *BMC Psychiatry*, *20*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-020-02707-9

Zeidan, J., Fombonne, E., Scorah, J., Ibrahim, A., Durkin, M. S., Saxena, S., Yusuf, A., Shih, A., & Elsabbagh, M. (2022). Global prevalence of autism: A systematic review update. *Autism Research*, *15*, 778–790.

About the Author

Anna Püschel (D/FR) is an artist and conducts her interdisciplinary PhD research in the KULeuven Architecture Department of LUCA School of Arts in Belgium. Her practice spans photography, movement, archiving, and writing. Melting different epistemologies into inquiries about certainty and truth, her deeply personal artistic research projects touch upon perception, pluriformity, and access to information and power. Her books *Layers of Reality* (2017) and *Encyclopedia of the Uncertain* (2024) can be found in public and private collections and libraries.