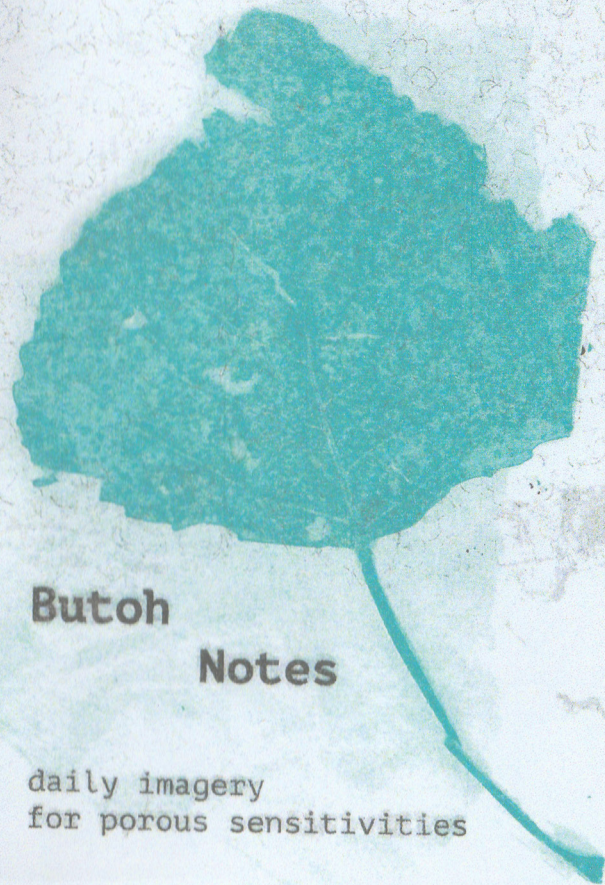


pollen



Butoh
Notes

daily imagery
for porous sensitivities

by Ulrike Scholtes

At the beginning of my research, I asked Butoh practitioners how they would describe Butoh. "Do you see that leaf there, lying on the ground? See how it is slowly disassembling? That's Butoh," was the answer of one practitioner (and I heard very similar answers since).

Butoh imagery facilitates slow transformations of the body, attuning to the surrounding conditions, and shifting body boundaries. The imaginations presented here are based on images used for Butoh dance and taught to me by different Butoh teachers. They can be used by anybody to foster porous sensitivities in daily life.

This series is part of a broader research project on porosity and leakiness. For more information see:
<https://www.ulrikescholtes.de/blob/leaky-bodies-archives/>



Waguri-sensei shows us a picture of a painting:

a yellow plain
dissolves into yellow grain.

The image is about
pollen.

The air around you
is filled
with pollen.

As you breathe,

the air becomes

more and more

dense with pollen.

You breathe in the pollen.

Through your nose.

Through your mouth.

There are pollen in your eyes

and entering your body

through your ears.

Your body becomes dry inside.

And extremely light.

Your mouth is sticky.

Your lungs are filled with
pollen.



You lose
the outlines
of your body.

Your skin
changes.

It slowly dissapears.

Inside there are pollen.
Outside there are pollen.

Then the wind comes

and blows away all the pollen.

It blows them apart

far away.

The imaginations presented here are based on fieldnotes, made during my research on Butoh in Japan and Europe (between 2011 and 2018). For the series "daily imagery for porous sensitivities", I selected imaginations that enact bodies not as whole and closed, but as leaky, permeable and dissolving.

Porosity and leakiness are concepts and sensitivities I explore for my artistic practice - called BLOB - and for my work at research centre What Art Knows: porosity as a generous and caring artistic research attitude; leakiness as an embodied approach towards connectedness and attunement.

How can we radically let go of individuality? What if we don't have boundaries? What if we allow ourselves to be all over the place? How does a leaky body feel? Butoh offers bodily practices that allow to physically explore such questions.

In this series of zines, I work with Riso printing to explore how butoh imagery - which is usually mediated through a dancing body - can be mediated on paper. Riso enables working with transparencies, different materialities and the merging of colours. Through working with these prints, I broadened my repertoire of porous sensitivities and hope to transmit (some of) these to the reader.