

K L I K E R

M o v i n g

LAB

10.3. - 15.3. 2025.

Zagreb Dance Centre, Croatia

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BY

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Stepping into the Labyrinth;



ENTERING MOVING LAB

Kliker Lab: Next Generation is an artistic laboratory developed by Sanja Tropp Frühwald, held in Zagreb, Croatia, from March 10th to 15th, 2025.

The program is split into two complementary parts. This documentation focuses on the **Moving Lab**, where we worked through movement practices and artistic research in a mix of practical tasks and discussions.

In the afternoons, we shifted to the **Mediation Lab**, which approached mediation as an artistic practice, looking at ways art can be translated, contextualized, and opened up to children and young people in a meaningful way. Alongside sharing tools and methods, it was also a space for exchanging experiences and testing ideas on how artistic work might live beyond its initial creation.

Being part of both offered a kind of double perspective: deep engagement with movement itself, and time to reflect on how that work could connect with a wider, young audience.



Kliker Lab. Even in the name, there's already something playful and precise, something between instinct and experimentation. The word *kliker* [cro.] most commonly refers to a marble, the small, round glass toy used in children's games. But beyond this literal meaning, *kliker* carries some charming colloquial weight in local speech, "*imati kliker(e)*" [cro.], "to have marbles" means to be clever or sharp-minded, someone with their wits about them, even implying being able to grasp something intuitively, with a childlike logic or quick perception.

So *Kliker* suggests a flick, a spark, the clink of thought, the sharpness of insight, a Lab, on the other hand, evokes a site for serious testing, failing, and rethinking; a laboratory. But here, there's also a subtle pun or layered meaning. Lab also brings to mind a labyrinth, a place of detours, false starts, and slow navigation. This double meaning feels very fitting, because what unfolded in March 2025 at the Zagreb Dance Centre wasn't just a lab in the conventional sense. It felt more like a **living labyrinth, a space that invited not-knowing as a method rather than a problem.**

My role there, somewhere between dramaturg and documentarist, was to move through this shifting terrain with a listening ear. I had the chance to speak with most of the participating artists; briefly, sometimes in depth, always with the sense that I was stepping into something in motion. These conversations, generous, tentative, and often unexpectedly intimate, form the basis of this reflection.



To enter **Moving Lab**, the morning block of activities within the Kliker Lab, was to enter an ecology of vulnerability. A space where bodies think, where language sometimes stumbles, and where courage comes in quiet gestures. The rhythm of the days, split between morning physical labs and evening sessions of the Mediation Lab, offered enough structure to hold me, but not so much as to constrain. What became clear, quite early on, was that we weren't there to polish anything. There was no premiere to work towards, no audience to impress (at least not in the conventional sense). A group of young people was invited to act as a kind of test audience toward the end of the week, but what they witnessed were multiple short performances still very much in progress. The point was never to present something finished, but rather to open up the process, to share its messiness and momentum, and to consider how it might be re-thought in real time.

Across the different practices and disciplines represented, certain preoccupations repeated, not as fixed positions but as threads we kept returning to. One of the strongest was a commitment to **process over product**, a shared belief that what happens in the room is at least as important as what ends up on stage, if not more. This led naturally to reflections on **pedagogical responsibility**, especially when working with young people, how to hold space without overpowering it, how to **unlearn hierarchies**, how to stay responsive. Alongside this came a striking openness about **artistic insecurity and self-doubt**. Participants often described feeling not quite enough, not certified enough, not confident enough, not sure if what they were making was valid. But rather than undermine the work, this transparency seemed to deepen it.



Other patterns emerged too. There was a collective interest in **community over audience**, not creating work for someone to consume but with others, in exchange. The **integration of artistic and pedagogical practice** was rarely named explicitly but constantly present. These were not two separate hats to be swapped out, but one blended approach. At the same time, there was a shared insistence on **refusing simplification for young audiences**. Nobody here was interested in talking down. Instead, the work sought complexity in form, sensation and emotional texture. And perhaps most importantly, nearly everything we did, whether a spoken reflection or a physical improvisation, was grounded in **embodied and experiential learning**. Ideas weren't just spoken, they were danced, tested, refracted through movement and gesture, held in the body before being held in words.

Moving Lab never asked us to arrive with answers. It asked us to move with our questions, to keep circling the centre, not to solve the maze but to stay with it, to dance between knowing and not knowing. And in that dance, to make room for others, for the work, and for ourselves.







Reflections from the Inside: On Process, Pedagogy, and the Body

What unfolded during Kliker Lab 2025 wasn't only a collection of individual practices, but a shared landscape of recurring concerns, minor tensions, and questions that refused to be resolved. As I spent time listening to participants, often between scheduled tasks, during short breaks, or while they were transitioning from one activity to another, I found myself circling a set of themes that kept returning in different forms. These were not isolated positions, but resonances. What follows is not a summary, but a kind of tracking of the echoes that stayed with me.



1. Process Over Product

If there was one thread that tied everyone together, it was this: *the process matters more*. Not just as a pathway to a final form, but as a space of meaning in itself. One participant called it “the most beautiful part,” and I could feel that belief in the way it was spoken about, with a certain weight to the idea that a performance is never really done. Another spoke of creation as a personal process that expands rather than narrows, describing how the doing itself opens new directions. Several participants, both as individuals and in small working groups, described how they test, adapt, and reconfigure based on what happens in the room, especially in response to children.

There was something liberating about how openly unfinishedness was embraced here. It wasn't a lack of discipline. It was an intentional stance against polish as a false goal. It gave me permission, too, in writing this, to leave certain things open, and to trust the value of circling around an idea rather than pinning it down.





2. Pedagogical Responsibility and Flat Hierarchies

Something that surprised me (though maybe it shouldn't have) was the level of ethical attentiveness participants brought to their pedagogical roles. The awareness that *to work with children is to carry a certain kind of power* was palpable. But rather than deny it or soften it with benevolence, many seemed intent on dismantling that imbalance as much as possible.

Some reflections stayed with me: one participant spoke not only of listening, but of letting go of their own plans if the group moved another way. It's a practice of de-centring that is deceptively difficult to enact, especially in a field that often rewards clarity and control. Others insisted on flat hierarchies, resisting the role of "educator" in favour of co-existence in play. Another warned about the lasting impact of misused authority, reminding me how deeply art and pedagogy are entangled, especially for children, who may not separate the space of rehearsal from the space of formation.

Responsibility here wasn't about correction. It was about responsiveness. About treating imagination as a serious thing, and authority as something to be constantly re-evaluated.



3. Artistic Insecurity and Self-Doubt

This is the theme I didn't expect to hear so often, at least not so openly. And yet, it surfaced again and again: *I'm not enough. I'm not trained enough. I'm not confident in what I'm making.* Some spoke about comparing themselves to others, while others named how long it took them to call themselves artists at all. A few described the crash after a project, and how quickly a sense of momentum can collapse into doubt.

What struck me is that this wasn't framed as an obstacle to be overcome. It was a condition of working, of making. It sat alongside curiosity and ambition. Maybe especially for those who move between roles, between institutions, between scenes, the question of legitimacy never quite leaves. But what I also noticed was that those who named this doubt seemed to work from a deeper place of reflection. They asked better questions. They weren't trying to impress; they were trying to connect.

Writing this reflection took longer than I planned. Partly because I was afraid of not capturing things properly. That same inner critic. But sitting with this shared doubt, I was reminded that maybe writing, too, is not about closure. Maybe it's just another kind of rehearsal.






4. Community Over Audience

There was a gentle but clear resistance to audience as a target. Instead, many spoke of *building with the audience, not for*. Some emphasised the importance of staying with a group of children over time, of watching them grow. Others described feedback not as a final verdict, but as a tool for adjusting and reimagining. Different working groups echoed this in their own ways, each questioning the old logic of developing a “future audience” and instead speaking of shared experience.

This felt especially significant when framed against the background of arts funding pressures, of having to justify work in terms of impact or marketability. The lab was a space where that logic could be paused. Where mutual investment was possible, not as a utopian ideal, but as a practical method.

Community, here, didn't mean harmony. It meant exchange. The kind where everyone leaves having shifted a little.



5. Integration of Artistic and Pedagogical Practice

One thing I noticed was how few drew a firm line between being an artist and being a pedagogue. The two were not roles to be toggled between, but often simultaneous, layered ways of being. In one process, *the artistic and the pedagogical were equally important*, and impossible to untangle. Others described their dramaturgical and educational tools as flowing into one another. And some participants' choreographic games were clearly pedagogical, but without ever becoming instructive.

This hybridity felt honest. I have often seen artists try to bracket their pedagogical work as something separate, perhaps less prestigious. But here, it was taken seriously, as a site of rigor and invention. A place of real influence.



6. Rejection of Simplification for Young Audiences

Almost everyone I spoke with stressed the importance of *treating young audiences as capable*. Of trusting them with complexity, metaphor, abstraction. Some spoke about resisting narration, even character, in favour of more open structures. Others reminded us that children absorb more than we assume, they just do it differently. One group articulated it beautifully: *artistic excellence is a necessity, not an afterthought, and the work must be both playful and rich.*

There was no interest in “dumbing down.” But there was also no interest in confusing for the sake of artistic ego. The clarity sought here was formal, not moral. And it assumed that children are not just watching, but interpreting, building meaning in ways we can’t predict.



7. Embodied and Experiential Learning

Perhaps most moving was the consistent return to the *body* not only as a tool for performance, but *as a site of knowledge*. Some brought in specific movement systems and spatial structures into their classroom practice. Others spoke of the body as archive, and of injuries as markers of time. There were those who framed games as choreographic forms, and dance as a structure for learning.

What united all these was a sense that learning happens in the doing. Not in explanation, not in repetition, but in movement. This was not theoretical embodiment, it was specific, sensory, practiced. And it reminded me, again, that so much of what we call knowledge comes through the skin.








Conclusion: No Map, Just Return

As I prepare to step back from the Moving Lab, at least in the form of this text, what remains with me is not a set of clean insights or clear categories, but rather a texture. A feeling. A shared pulse. There was something about the week, its pace, its porousness, its quiet insistence on care that allowed different people to show up in ways they may not have fully expected. Vulnerability wasn't a sideline, it was the working material.

It took me longer than expected to write this. At first, I thought I was collecting something. Later, I realised I was also circling something. This reflection became a process in itself, not unlike what I saw unfolding in the Lab. I caught myself returning to the same ideas, rewriting the same sentences, not quite ready to let them go. And still, one of the most powerful truths I was reminded of (maybe the most difficult one) was something I heard quietly echoed by several participants: *kill your darlings*. That meant letting go of the sentence that felt too smooth, the phrase I was a little too attached to, or the clever observation that didn't really belong. Not out of cynicism, but to make space for something more honest. Letting go, it turns out, is also a form of care.



What I encountered across these conversations was not a consensus, but a commitment. A commitment to asking difficult questions without demanding fast answers. A commitment to holding the tension between the pedagogical and the artistic without collapsing one into the other. A commitment to working with children not from a place of instruction or simplification, but from curiosity and mutual recognition. On the last day, this curiosity took on a tangible form: we shared the small works-in-progress that had emerged during the week with a live young audience scattered throughout the Zagreb Dance Centre building.

The atmosphere was light, there was no pressure to present something “finished”, and the children’s responses became a kind of living mirror, offering reflections and questions that will inevitably ripple into the further development of those pieces.



The labyrinth doesn't offer shortcuts. And sometimes, it demands a sacrifice. Not a brutal one, but one of clarity, of space, of rhythm. Kill your darlings is not about destruction, but about making the work breathe. The mythic labyrinth is not only the place where the Minotaur waits, it's the place where we lay down what we no longer need. To move through it fully, we have to keep letting go. And maybe that's the real task: to trust that what matters will stay with us, even after we set it down.



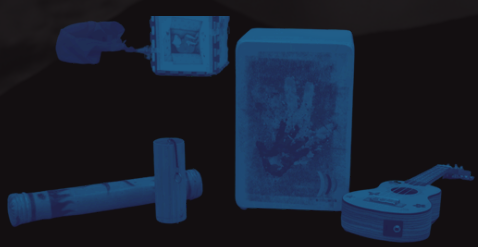
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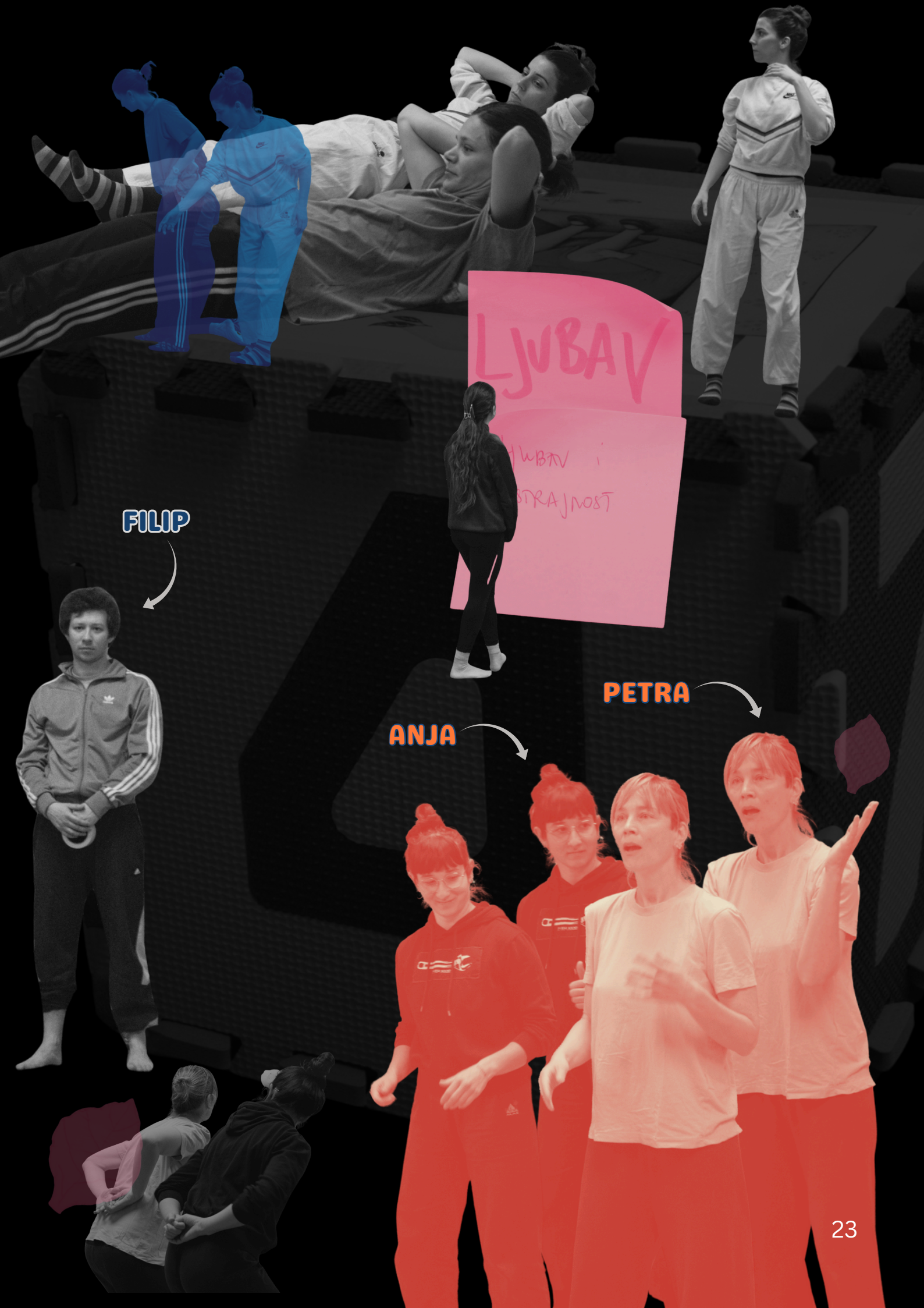


LUCIJA

JELENA

IGOR





FILIP



LJUBAV
LJUBAV i
STRAJNOST

ANJA

PETRA



TIME
SPACE
BODY
ENERGY



LUCIJA



MARTA



MIA



DANIJELA



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS (BOTH LABS):

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Videographer:

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LJUBAV

Ljubav i
ustrajnost

KLIK BELLOW FOR THE AFTERMOMIE !



TIME
SPACE
BODY
ENERGY