



# **H**uman beings and movement

My apologies if I constantly return to this topic, but movement is taking on an increasingly important role, naturally in an overall view of performance at any level. Movement is the basis of qualification in high levels of specialisation; I specialise if I have a basis which I can specialise on. But what exactly am I specialising, is it not movement? I am writing this today with more conviction than yesterday, and with greater determination than before. A belief that was reinforced after attending last year's Olympic and Paralympic Games. I don't want to talk about the actual results, I am more interested in how they have evolved, the ways in which the body expresses itself, by organising, creating and personalising in a set space and time, with resolute accuracy, a precise functional sequence

of movements following clear rules: competition rules.

So: space, time and accuracy. These three elements are the basis of every sport, and represent the key to its understanding and interpretation. All human performance is organised within these elements, and when one or more does not fit in with others, the result is always different from what the sports rules dictate.

Having been fortunate to experience the various competitions first hand, I was particularly impressed with the organisational aspects of movement of various athletes in various sports. I was amazed how Olympic athletes first and foremost, were capable of reaching the same result as their opponents, by doing things, within a repetitive

biomechanical system, which were often clearly different in terms of the strategic organisation of the movement: posture, technique, use of muscle chains and psychological approach.

I was going over my notions of biomechanics and discovered that many elements, among the theoretical and practical aspects, often showed totally incomparable differences in more than one case. It was extraordinarily fascinating to observe in some athletes, the fluidity with which the motor sequences engaged, creating a seemingly simple (movement?) framework, almost within everyone's reach. And I wondered, for example, how could I have trained that movement through the development of strength, also taking into account

how much strength? Which and how many preparatory exercises would I have performed? It is by no means easy, however many considerations came into play in things already seen many times, if not directly on the competition field, then at least on television, even if the observations are not exactly the same, strange as it may appear.

But the final blow, so to speak, was dealt at the Paralympic Games. All the considerations made, all the reflections stimulated by the observation of Olympic athletes were to be completely forgotten. The Biomechanics that we have all studied more or less in depth with those athletes, and in relation to that type of performance, can no longer exist in the realm of Paralympics. There are no longer references within the same sport. The disabilities are different, sometimes too different, so you cannot even attempt to make analogies of any kind. How do you qualify and subsequently specialise

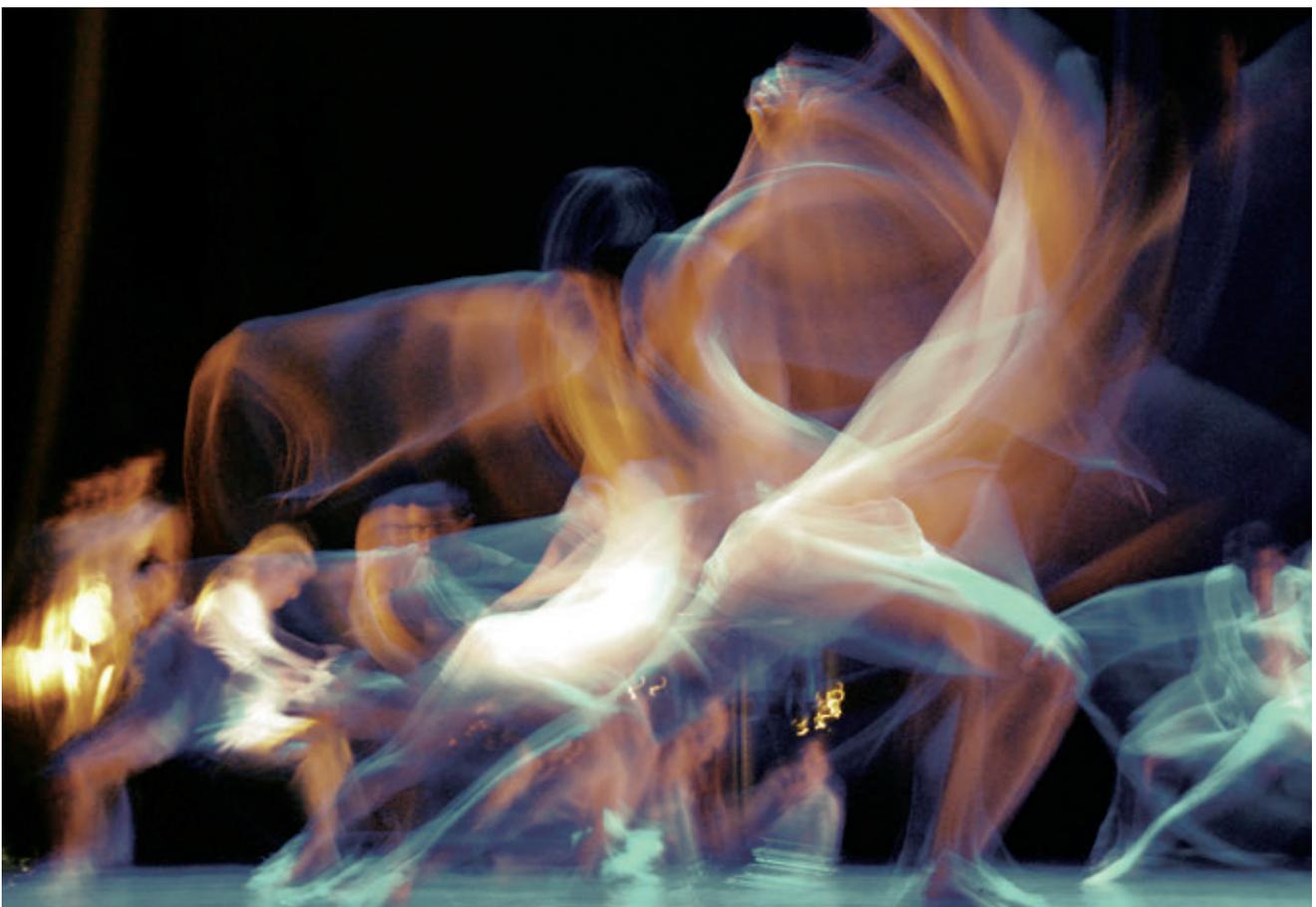
such an athlete? What, if any, is the methodological approach in each sport to create the basics of movement? How do you measure the adaptations? Do these aspects go hand in hand with the technology of the competition equipment (non-specific tools and specific tools: wheelchairs, straps, prostheses and more)? It all becomes more complicated, it almost seems as if there are no longer any rules, or maybe there is an infinite number of rules. In fact, if we thought in this way, it would undermine the readjustment phenomenon of the human-machine, even in extreme biomechanical conditions. These athletes can do "things" far better than those improperly called able-bodied people. They are proof of the infinite resources within us, set aside but not abandoned. Existing and available when necessary, to be used and put into action in extreme circumstances or upon the extreme desire to act, to express an ability.

All this raises further considerations and subsequently sparks new questions: with the knowledge we have at our disposal today, are we still able to bring out the best in the athletes we consider to be the "luckiest"? Or there are aspects that still escape us, sides where light needs to be shed, particular points of view to be accentuated?

Perhaps we should put everything into a new melting pot and carefully mix and blend all the ingredients, both old and new.

Human movement still harbours many secrets and has lots more to reveal. Naturally, we need to know how to query it.

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