

Thinking Alongside



Edited by
Ingri Midgard Fiksdal

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The publication "*Thinking Alongside*" is an appendix to Ingri Midgard Fiksdal's artistic PhD project "*Affective Choreographies*" (2013–2018). The project started within the framework of The Norwegian Artistic Research Program, and was in 2018 transferred to the new PhD program in artistic research at Oslo National Academy of the Arts. Artistic practice is at the core of this program. At the same time, the artistic practice is to be accompanied by an explicit reflection, which grants others access into methods and insights that emerge from the artistic research.

The artistic PhD project "*Affective Choreographies*" resulted in the six performances "*HOODS*" (2014), "*Cosmic Body*" (2015), "*Shadows of Tomorrow*" (2016), "*STATE*" (2016), "*Diorama*" (2017) and "*Deep Field*" (2018) as well as the publication "*Affective Choreographies*" written by Fiksdal.

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Introduction

Whilst in the process of my PhD in artistic research, “*Affective Choreographies*”, I became increasingly aware of the degree to which my project is entangled with the workings of others. I don’t believe in an autonomous *I* that has original ideas. Instead, I understand the emergence of my work through my encounters with others. To think alongside political theorist Jane Bennett; *I am* an assemblage of vibrant matters *making* assemblages of vibrant matters. In this case, the assemblage is a collection of texts by choreographers, performers, artists, scholars and curators whose thinking, in one way or another, has been influential on and in conversation with my own.

Rosalind Goldberg/Pernille Holden, Snelle Hall, Amanda Steggell and Venke Sortland, whom I have known and worked with for several years, were invited to write in relation to my choreographic work, in order to pluralize the perspectives. They have, in different ways, played important parts in my PhD project, and I wanted to include their voices, thoughts and experiences.

Lauren Fournier, Daniel Blanga Gubbay, Satu Herrala, Natasha Marie Llorens, Chrysa Parkinson, Karmenlara Ely, Mårten Spångberg and Ana Vujanović are colleagues whose work have inspired and influenced how I understand and articulate my own. They have been invited to write on topics that are central to my work, such as affect, uselessness and post-anthropocentrism, to mention just a few. They see these topics through optics other than my own, and form parallel, enriching lines of thought.

The aim of the text collection is to make a larger contribution to the knowledge production in the field of choreography, thus surpassing what the dissemination of my research alone would be capable of doing.

I would like to thank all the contributors for their differently thought-provoking texts.

Ingri Midgard Fiksdal

She Did Everything We Told Her To

A eulogy to the Cassini spacecraft

By Karmenlara Ely

Dear Cassini. You were the star of NASA's Cassini-Huygens project, researching Saturn and its rings from 1997-2017. I so wanted to be at your final performance. I know there was apple juice, in champagne classes, and tears. I watched that video over and over, where they predict how your death will appear, and simulate your best scenes, over 20 years. It's called *Cassini's Grand Finale*. You're wearing robes of gold foil, and your saucer-shaped high-gain antenna is always pointing towards the light. Your scenes are called *Launch from Earth*, *Saturn Orbit Insertion*, *Huygens Probe Landing on Titan*, *Flight Over Iapetus*, *Liquid Confirmed on Titan*, *Enceladus Plume Dive*, and then, *Grand Finale Begins*. In that one, you appear to be falling, or flying: as flying can only happen in relation to a ground, or at least a landscape of gravity one is bound to. You gain speed, trembling as you're pounding into the atmosphere of Saturn, becoming your own tail of burning materials. Your body fans out into a spray. The last scene, (it's called *End of Mission*) has no visual, just radio silence.

Cassini's last seconds revealed: NASA data shows craft 'did everything we asked of it' as it plunged to its death.¹

Described by your leading scientist Linda Spilker as a *she*, "Cassie, with those beautiful gold blankets", you were "this hard-working, very dedicated spacecraft,"² together you and Saturn occupied over 20 years of Spilker's career and charted the lives many others at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Spilker claims that she sometimes imagined sitting in your lap "right there as she dives between the rings and the planet. I wonder what it would be like to stand on the surface near one of these jets, put out my hand, and have those icy particles fall into my hand - and then, quick, run over to a microscope and look for any signs of life."³ Your journey started out as work, as study – and through a series of discoveries, suddenly became an epic human search for life. In that movement away from the sterile towards something else, something potentially living, you moved closer to your own end. "Things never will be quite the same for those of us on the Cassini team now that the spacecraft is no longer flying," said Spilker, in another article, "but, we take comfort knowing that every time we look up at Saturn in the night sky, part of Cassini will be there, too."⁴

But Cassini, what part of you remains up there? Didn't you send everything immortal home? What did you leave behind? Part of your magnetometer? Traces of your plasma spectrometer? Did you drop your radio science subsystem before it vaporized, after your final active and passive remote sensing? Would we find threads of your gold thermal blankets? Your ritual garments of high tech materials were sewn meticulously by your makers over a Christmas holiday in 1996, with more tailoring hours than a couture gown. They covered your body, protecting you from extreme hot, cold and those micrometeoroids orbiting Saturn. They sewed you a golden skin from which you would never emerge whole. Have you, or that skin, become part of another orbit, or a new moon?

NASA's Cassini spacecraft will crash into Saturn — its final screaming success⁵

On the NASA pages, it is claims you were “in a sense, a time machine.” The headlines about you could not be better. Cassini, through remote sensing operations you “revealed the processes that likely shaped the development of our solar system,” you could see “in wavelengths the human eye can’t”, and “feel things about magnetic fields and tiny dust particles that no human hand could detect.”⁶ Your dialogue with the light of the sun produced telemetry synced as loyal choreography, mapping and sniffing and measuring everything within reach of your 294 orbits of Saturn and its moons, in 453,048 images. Did you see something that you chose not to relay? Was there anything you sensed we could not receive? Any gyromagnetic secrets? Radiotopic vulnerabilities? Did you find ways to hide your failures?

Anecdotally, we know that you collected more data in the last moments of your study than we can analyze for at least the next 100 years. Turns out, Saturn and Enceladus speak to each other. Saturn’s magnetic field communicates and interacts with its rings and its moons, through plasma which can be measured in its interaction as sound.⁷ These are some of the last screams you heard, just recently unpacked from your last message. Cassini, what was it that made you, “you”? What part of your telemetry first became part of the gassy storms of Saturn? When did you lose the gold skin, or the radar, or the cosmic dust analyzer? The engine? Did you suddenly feel the absence of your former little passenger, Huygens? What part of you gave *you* life, and in dissolving, gave your death? Are you a body of parts, or is Cassini, a whole? What is a body? From where does it ontologically arise?

On 18 May 2004 Cassini entered the Saturn system. The gravitational pull of Saturn began to overtake the influence of the Sun.⁸

Saturn is the sixth planet from the sun, and the second largest after Jupiter. It’s also the least dense of the planets, its specific gravity (0.7) is less than that of water. Its gassy composition is similar to that of the primordial solar nebula credited for the formation of the solar system. One origin story is that a cloud of interstellar gas and/or dust was disturbed and collapsed under its own gravity, spinning on itself, forming the sun and planets, because of the shock wave from a nearby supernova⁹. (A vibratory contaminant, a bump, or an original violence?)

Maybe the word *Saturn* comes from the Etruscan *Satre*, referring to a god of the underworld who was responsible for funereal matters. The Roman god Saturn from which the planet is named, may have originally been a underworld deity linked to funerary rites. Saturnalia, one of the origins of carnival, known in ancient Rome, took place around the time of the winter solstice. Midway after harvest and before spring, Saturnalia may derive from *ab satu*, roots for the word “sowing.” Both images of the god could appear with a scythe, something representative of harvest, and death. During the Saturnalia festival, the ropes that bound the statue of Saturn in the temple during the rest of the year, were untied. Made wild. Saturnalia represented, like a bacchanal, release, inversion, temporary pleasure freedoms, and similarly permitted violences of and against the flesh. Appropriately, in the Greek myth, Cronus, as Saturn was known, feared that he would be overthrown by one of his children, and ate each one upon their birth. Cassini, when they call you a “time machine”, it is not this history that you are travelling through, is it. But when you were out there, listening to and even speaking with Saturn and his children: did they mention anything about this? Original violence? Was there something you found which was too much for us to bear, and therefore, required your destruction? Was it we who determined your fate, or Saturn?

Earl Maize, the program manager for the Cassini flagship mission laughs, “Cassini’s own discoveries were its demise.”¹⁰ In 2014, you discovered that Enceladus, one of Saturn’s moons, has a warm subsurface ocean under its icy crust. More importantly, your ion and neutral mass spectrometer also found that this ocean may contain almost all the ingredients needed for life to evolve. The discovery sealed your fate, as you were not only succeeding beyond our wildest dreams but running out of fuel. NASA and your creators at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory had to abide by “planetary protection rules”, which state that if a planet has the potential to host life, then NASA must ensure that it is not contaminated. You were sacrificed, like a well fed carnival king.

But still, you never stop performing. In your final moment before burning up in the entry to Saturn’s atmosphere, you sent back to earth the composition of that last breath. Your haunted messages keep revealing themselves.

There is a simulation of your passages, in animated spirits, as spirals, on the NASA website. It’s the most beautiful act of ghostly repetition. Spiral around and out. Spiral around and out. Dip, spiral, bounce, out. It’s a seemingly endless action of self-throwing. Like putting oneself in a basket one can also lift and carry. Like giving birth to yourself. I trace it with my hand: your orbits of earth, moon, Saturn, its moons over and over. In that tracing I can see how through dancing with each body, you borrowed enough gravity to spiral out to a new partner. Dancing, remotely, with yourself. I read about your last dance with Titan before hurling into Saturn. I studied this movement, sketched it, never able with my hand to precisely replicate the rhythm, curve or line of such a perfect gesture. I imagined what it must have felt like, the changes in velocity, both when you broke out of one orbit and were pulled into another. I imagined the applause when you tenderly, gracefully dipped and dropped of your passenger Huygens, the moon lander, on Titan years ago, only to swing out again and continue your study. I wondered if you missed him, or were liberated. Cassini, you never stop performing.

I was trying to find ways in which you resisted, trying to poetically manufacture the possibility of your resistance, so many million miles away, to perform. I wanted to think with you about fugitive actions, about art, about the notion of *performancescapes* that Hypatia Vourloumis writes about. Performancescapes for Vourloumis “connotes a sense of fugitivity, of escape, where the insistence of performance can be seen as an articulation of a breakout that inexorably materially exists in excess of its performativity, there where the irregular precedes the normative. Thus, the notion of ‘performancescapes’ concerns both a field as well as improvisations tremoring within and unleashing this field via multiple historical, material and contingent gestures, transgressions, dissonances. I approach these instances and insistences not as simple flight or exit but rather as immersive, transformative border breaching of spaces, structures and signs.” She describes how this concept of the performancescape deals in instances of “spatial and temporal enactments that alter landscapes through material effects and being, becoming and unbecoming.” Vourloumis infers that performancescapes entail actions of fugitive insistence: not only “moving to a somewhere else” but the “imperative to defend what one already has, a recovery and preservation.”¹¹ Cassini, they called your work “wildly beautiful” and “successful”.

I wanted to think about resistance, about fugitive actions, about encountering the unregulated wild, with you Cassini. I wanted to, with and through you, but I failed. I could only desire you, and to be with you, in your sniffing of the origins of the universe, ignorant to the implications of what the Jet Propulsion Laboratory’s unintentional search for life beyond earth could mean.

What could it imply, when and if they are found, the elements of life? What then, to think that the one who studies, who works, must be terminated to preserve such a discovery. You performed your termination perfectly.

According to scientists, such an unregulated wildness was available to you, but just out of your cautious reach. Saturn's "rings are very dynamic and interesting place where you have ring particles colliding with each other, forming clumps of material some of which are smallish, we call some of them 'propellers' – you can't resolve them as a core object which generate waves, and some get big enough to become moons in their own right which further perturb the rings which are extremely flat, maybe 30 meters high, except for the edges of the rings where the rings cause this interaction to occur, structures that tower 1km in height which we discovered in 2009 during the equinox mission. Some of the moons could be growing, (for example, a tiny little moon called Peggy) small moons can even orbit in the gap between the rings."¹² They let you play, in those raucous gaps, in the days leading to your end, risking your annihilation each day. But it wasn't until you began to form a compressed spray of your own dissolving parts that you knew what wildness felt like, what it meant to no longer be a puppet, and let go.

Resistance, fugitivity: if you knew it, was concealed to us, to me. Through the grasp of radio waves you might as well have been close enough to touch. You were a perfect glove in the hand of your loving programmers, who you turned your face to, even at the last moment. I tried to imagine what resistance for you would be, and what it would produce or refuse to produce. I also tried not to think about your life as a series of performances, I tried to understand your action not as performance, but as something else, yes, *study, work*, but found it was impossible to do so (so far). I began worrying about my focus on you and your gold costume, on the lead scientists' identification with you, all the years of political news and natural disasters you may or may not have missed hearing about on earth. I started seeing images you sent home, images of horizons, of Titan, perfect and moody like Rothko's *Untitled (Black on Grey)*. I got hooked on you, turned on. (How many of your horizon photos, sent back to Jet Propulsion laboratory looked actually like Rothkos? I did an inventory.) There were a few. I started to think about the impossibility for us, for me, to receive any of your labor as about anything, but us, me. I wanted to unbecome human, unbecome "life" with you, and be part of the plasma landscape, that 4th stage of matter which is not liquid, solid, or gas: and just resonate, on and in your solar telephone. But in each instance I only saw art, poetry, performance, *this text*.

Saturn, Titan, Enceladus. Cassini.

I began to worry that I did not know how to talk about the intersection of study and performance you balanced so responsively, or if it was possible to talk about objects, bodies, you, as part of something which could be called the Same. In watching your final scene, I wanted to write about nonperformance, about delay, about failure, but you resist those things. I thought about Saturn, its surfaces, its moons. Titan and Enceladus and the geysers of gases and ice which gave your scientists hope for signs of habitability beyond earth. Not only were you performing your duty, but our favorite moons joined the narrative. What were they doing, there, or not doing? Those "tiny little things" you met there, with your perfect hand reaching for Titans icy breath. Scott Edgington said those things might be able to be called "life"? How else to talk about them? If they were not life, were they dead? Is death only a condition of having lived? What is it to speak of objects, things, and end? Cassini, you died. Everyone agreed as they watched your death: calling it a suicide, or a great dive. Is it there, is it that, *your death*, which is the intersection of

study and performance? Are we at an inevitable intersection of mutually composed contaminants? Thing and human, subject and object, habitable and inhabitable, life and death?

"Its amazing how predictable it actually is."¹³

Cassini, you became in your 20 years, a gathering principle. Like the "Voyager babies", you were an entangled timeline for non/human lives beginning, unfolding, becoming-study, unbecoming-sterile, becoming escape. "There were atmospheric scientists, looking at the atmosphere, ring scientists, studying the rings, their age, what they are made of, and then all the scientists who study all the little moons who orbit around Saturn, and even the bigger moons. They thought that the tiny little moons could have liquid water oceans and the right ingredients and energy for life, a potentially habitable world. We thought, this might be a habitable place with 'tiny little things'.¹⁴ Cassini, what was it like to look back?

September 15, 2017

Shadows pass across the grass, made by planes. The sounds of engines and the smell of fumes. A machine age almost out of money and out of time. There are hollow metal sounds which I had never heard before, the sounds of new buildings, cranes working, sheets of glass and automated things, ticking. Hotels. Dishwashers too. Even endless possibilities. Resonating chambers deep in subway tracks, steam pipes, gift boxes, urns, plastic food containers, clean floors and fiberoptic cables. With no thought of anything diving in, no plans, no notice of close calls and crashes, spiral boosting out of precarious places. In Queens, New York there is a necropolis that spans kilometers, all dedicated to the burial of known and unknown bodies, humans. The Brooklyn-Queens and Long Island expressways pass right through it. You can see the endless miles of headstones if you look but you might crash on the highway if you work too hard to look out the car window over the cement walls.

Cassini you flew and fell, at the same time, for only a moment away from the earth, a moment only never to be retained. You fell and you flew, at the same time. And everything else down here that is work, everything else here that is "something trying to happen", orbiting our tiny little politic and trying to muscle itself into being, is like raking water. But you, Cassini, did everything we asked you to. Leaving nothing behind for nowhere, for everything, the search for life, for radio silence. Here, I just made some words for you. I looked for you, at the sky and in the earth below.

See my bones.

No one buried them.

They were dropped.

No, I jumped.

It swallowed me whole.

But no one knows, how much.

(Just whisper when you come around

So the wind won't know)

Where I lie.

(turn it off)

Dedicated to Choreographer Ingrid Fiksdal

29.09.18

Notes

¹ MacDonald, Cheyenne. *Cassini's last seconds revealed*. DailyMail.co.uk, 13.10.2017.

² Mosher, Dave. *Saturn ruled this scientist's life for 40 years – here's why she's begging NASA to go back after Cassini's death*. Business Insider, 17.09.2017.

³ ..

⁴ News. *NASA's Cassini Spacecraft Ends Its Historic Exploration of Saturn* <https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/news.php?feature=6948> 15.9.2017

⁵ Kaplan, Sarah. *NASA's Cassini spacecraft will crash into Saturn – its final screaming success*. Washington Post, <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/nasas-cassini-spacecraft-will-crash-into-saturn-its-final-screaming-success-1746559> 14.09.2017

⁶ <https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/missions/cassini/the-journey/the-spacecraft/> 22.09.2018

⁷ Klesman, Alison. *Cassini reveals the sounds of Saturn*. <http://www.astronomy.com/news/2018/07/cassini-reveals-the-sounds-of-saturn> 13.07.18

⁸ Wikipedia: *Timeline of Cassini-Huygens* 24.09.2018

⁹ Cray, Frank. *Appendix 4: The Origin of the Solar System*. UC Boulder. <https://nineplanets.org/origin.html> 22.09.2018

¹⁰ Rathi, Akshat. *The Final Sniff: Cassini's own discoveries were its demise*. Quartz. 09.14.2017 <https://qz.com/1077621/nasas-last-scientific-experiments-before-cassini-dies-in-saturns-atmosphere/>

¹¹ Vourloumis, Hypatia. *Introduction to the symposium "non-performance as method"* Green Park, Athens, Greece. 29.10.2016

¹² *Interview: Cassini's end*. BBC Sky at Night Magazine Interview with Scott Edgington, deputy project scientist of NASA's Cassini mission. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef9eUY8leKw> 13.09.2017.

¹³ *Interview: Cassini's end*. BBC Sky at Night Magazine Interview with Scott Edgington, deputy project scientist of NASA's Cassini mission. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef9eUY8leKw> 13.09.2017.

¹⁴ ..

Moving with Theory:

On Autotheory as an Artist's Notation Practice

By Lauren Fournier

Theory can do more the closer it gets to the skin
– Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*

Feelings are facts
– Yvonne Rainer

(i) autotheory & exhaustion (or towards a theory of blah blah blegh)

As I sit down to write this I don't want to write this.

I was sitting down, but now I'm lying on the couch. I've found myself in the fetal position, all curled up like a prawn. I'm like a baby. Something womb-bound, seeking comfort: wanting rest.

It's a rare place for me to be, the couch. I'm usually sitting upright at my desk, writing from the early morning through to dinnertime, dutifully checking off points on my to-do list, reading texts and scribbling notes in their margins. Admittedly, my writing practice has become more like a typing practice: it's been a while since I've journaled, and I spend my days tapping away at my laptop, or fingering notes into my smartphone—these technologies mediating the relationship between my thoughts and feelings and the outside world. During a studio visit last year, the new media/digital artist Trudy Erin Elmore described the technologies that tap us into the internet as “our collective nervous system”: the keyboards on our laptops and the interfaces on our phones: this is where we type through our thoughts, desires, frustrations—for some, hatred, loneliness, and rage. That is where we connect with something larger than ourselves. Or at least we try.

It's not right to say that I don't *want* to write this text. I want a lot of things that my body seems to be rejecting these days. I want to write, I always want to write—I have always wanted to write (flashback to me age 10, telling my teacher “I want to be an author”)—but the work is starting to take its toll on my body. I'm particularly excited to theorize the possibilities of autotheory in relation to choreographies, notation practices—it seems like a natural extension of my existing research on autotheory as contemporary feminist practice across media. Can autotheory be considered a practice of notation? I think so.

Is autotheory a mode of notation that artists might engage as they come to terms with the place of theory, philosophy, and criticism in their work?

What are autotheory's movements?

Right now, it's lying prostrate on the floor. Right now, it's not sure if it's dying, or if it's actually just *too damn alive*.

“I wonder what it’s like to live when you’re not really awake,” I say to my partner.
“What do you mean?”

“Like, to live the unexamined life. I wonder what that’s like.”

“I really wouldn’t know,” my partner says. He’s the artist-philosopher, and I’m the philosopher-artist.

“It seems less stressful, but also deadening. Like you’ve willed yourself to live in a way that isn’t fully awake.”

“I could see that,” he says.

“I see it in my parents, the way their eyes glaze over when IDEAS and FEELINGS come up. Like they’ve shut that part of themselves, of the world around them, out. They’ve shut themselves down. It makes me sad for them. And at the same time, I think they feel sad for me. *You think about things too much*, they’ll say. *Stop being so dramatic. Or, relax.*”

I was sitting but I felt a sharp pain shoot up into my head and I thought I was dying, so I fell down on the couch. If feminist theory has taught me anything, it’s to honour the feeling—to honour what is moving through my body-mind. I trust the sensation, whether it’s pleasure, pain, or something ambivalent; I want to observe the sensation and then learn with it and through it.

(ii) different ways of knowing: autotheory as feminist aesthetic

Autotheory: to theorize from a positioning that is explicitly embodied, subjective, auto/biographical; to engender theoretical insights from one’s lived experiences; to practice (as an artist, a writer, a curator, a scholar) in a way that shuttles between the theoretical and the autobiographical, the philosophical and the anecdotal.

In her theoretical texts like *Touching Feeling: Affect, Performativity, Pedagogy*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick integrates embodied, multi-sensorial, haptic, and relational modes into an auto-theoretical writing practice that is as responsive to works of contemporary art—like Judith Scott’s textile sculptures—as she is to literature, politics, intimacy, and social life. She writes in a way that moves between the theoretical and the “personal.” Sedgwick writes with a heightened self-awareness within and around and “beside”¹ the act of writing *theory*, and in this way her work might best be described as autotheoretical—like so many other works in this lineage of queer feminist affect theory that Sedgwick catalyzed (Kyla Wazana Tompkins, Ann Cvetkovich, Sara Ahmed). Sedgwick’s work affirmed my hunch that there must be other ways of *being* and *working* and *thinking* in academia and contemporary art that are better attuned to the demands of the body-mind. When she wrote her piece on depression in the Humanities (“Melanie Klein and the Difference Depression Makes”) I knew there was no turning back for me. In this weird space of feminist auto-theorizing, in this refreshing space of deep disclosure and auto-citational processing, I knew that I’d found my discursive-critical-affective home.

I’ve been immersed in this idea of “autotheory” for the last five years. In the feminist zeit-geist, the term began to trend in 2015 with the publication of American writer Maggie Nelson’s *The Argonauts*: a book that bridges memoir with academic writing and citation practices in a

particularly performative way. It was this term “autotheory,” written on the book jacket of Nelson’s text—and taken from Spanish writer and curator Paul B. Preciado’s *Testo Junkie* (2008)—that piqued my curiosity.

During my time as a PhD candidate, I took it upon myself to historicize and theorize this term. And what became clear over the course of my interdisciplinary research was the ways in which autotheory, or the bridging of a self-reflexively embodied, autobiographical practice with philosophy and theory—as discourses, materials, institutions—has a much longer history in the context of feminism. I became interested in the ways in which autotheory manifests in contemporary art and related modes of art writing and criticism.

In my ongoing body of work, which will be compiled in a forthcoming book entitled *Autotheory as Feminist Practice*, I contextualize autotheory in light of post-1960s contemporary art practices, both reading literary works that have been described as “autotheory” and recasting works that have not been previously understood as autotheoretical—including pioneering body art and conceptual art works like Adrian Piper’s 1971 *Food for the Spirit*, where the act of reading Immanuel Kant is juxtaposed with a performative practice of self-imaging, and more recent performance-for-video art works like Madelyne Beckles’s *Theory of the Young Girl* (2017).

While experiencing a discursive uptake in recent years, “autotheory” is indicative of a much longer history—especially when it comes to the context of feminisms. Daniel Peña acknowledges that Nelson’s *The Argonauts* is heavily indebted to Gloria E. Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1985), a point that risks being erased in literary and theory canons that continue to be dominated by whiteness and Eurocentric bias.

These are some of the things that feminist theory has shown me: to think through the feeling, to feel through the thinking; to *know* through intuition; to go with your gut.

“It is so colonialist to assume that intuition or gut-knowledge are somehow *less rational* than other ways of knowing.”

(iii) to essay is to try

I keep trying and then failing. It’s like writing an essay. As scholars, we’re always writing another essay. To *essay* is to try and I want to keep trying but lately my body is rejecting the work. I get off the couch and walk to my office chair, pull it out from my book-filled desk and plop myself down. Something has been happening in my left leg—nerve pain and, maybe, a pulled muscle in that tender area behind the knee—so I’m limping slightly as I walk across the floor of my studio apartment. The chair at my desk is one of those tall-backed office chairs. I bought it from Staples Office Depot because it looked sufficiently comfortable. I thought it could hold me in the way that I need to be held when I’m writing. I thought it could support the work of scholarship. But now, whenever I sit down in it to write my back begins to hurt. Something is out of alignment. It feels urgent, and I get up to lie down.

Writing is laborious. It takes a toll on the body. The toll isn’t *just* “intellectual.” It’s creative, embodied, engaged. This is something I think most writers realize, but not everybody knows.

The essay is a form that seems particularly conducive to autotheory, given the ways it can encompass the fictional and the nonfictional alongside an expansive range of references, anecdotes, and subject matter. Discussing New Narrative writer Dodie Bellamy's 2015 collection *When the Sick Rule the World* on KCRW's *Bookworm*, host Michael Silverblatt asks the writer: "What do you consider these? Are they essays? Are they meditations?" (Silverblatt). Bellamy responds, "...I don't know what to call it... I'm fine calling them essays because if you go back to like, Montaigne, the essay was a very open form that examined the working of his mind so it could go anywhere, and I think the essay in this sense is the closest prose comes to poetry" (Silverblatt). Coming from the New Narrative movement, Bellamy's description of the essay as a roomy literary form underscores the history of the essay as a space where the writer can move with ease between self-reflection and topics of social, cultural, political, ethical, or aesthetic concern: the essay, then, is part of a long history of these kinds of philosophically expansive practices.

Writing in the form of the lyric essay, Claudia Rankine gives the same subtitle—*An American Lyric*—to both of her autotheoretical texts (*Citizen* and *Don't Let Me Be Lonely*). Other poets who tend towards the autotheoretical, including Anne Carson and Maggie Nelson, have written in the lyric essay form. In her cross-disciplinary texts, Rankine cites specific works of contemporary art alongside an autotheoretical practice of lyric; the artworks function as intertexts that are pivotal both to Rankine's project of theorizing, where she focuses in on the politics and aesthetics of Blackness, and to Rankine's project of constituting a canon of contemporary art by Black artists. In *Citizen*, Rankine processes her lived experiences of everyday structural racism alongside the writings of Black theorists like Cornel West and the visual art of artists like including Glenn Ligon's *Untitled (I Feel Most Colored When I Am Thrown Against a Sharp White Background)* (1990-1), Carrie Mae Weems's *Blue Black Boy* (1997), and Hennessy Youngman's *ART THOUGHTZ: How to Be a Successful Black Artist* (2010). The resulting text is a work of feminist autotheory resonant with the politics of Black Lives Matter in America. Notably, when read in contrast to autotheoretical writings by non-racialized writers, it's palpable the ways that Rankine writes in the second-person. She transmutes the "I" of feminist autotheory into a "you," a rhetorical conceit that shows the reader how systemic racism precludes the writer from having access to the "I" in the same way that white writers do. The use of second-person pronoun also contributes to Rankine's theorizing of the dialectic between presence/absence and visibility/invisibility that feminist performance scholars have engaged with, proposing that perhaps the problem for her as a black woman is not so much invisibility as "hyper-visibility" (*Citizen* 49). The co-existence of personal anecdote, theoretical-literary-art-pop cultural intertexts or citations, and readings of specific works of contemporary art that constitute the form of *Citizen* is common to autotheory as a feminist practice in the twenty-first century.

The couch feels too soft, so now I'm back on the floor, lying down in "corpse pose," which my kundalini yoga teacher at the Toronto YMCA tells me "is the most restful pose in the world." My partner points out that, when I'm feeling overwhelmed, I often say "I think I'm dying," because to be dying would be better than to exist in this state of overwork and exhaustion. I remind him that I've been saying "I think I'm dying" since I was four years old, when I'd tell my parents "my heart hurts" and my elusive pain was met with bewilderment.

As a practice of notation, autotheory emerges from the exhaustion that feminist artists feel. It emerges from the exhaustion feminist academics experience when they were work in within university institutions. It emerges from the need to transcribe, the compulsion to know, the desire

to read, the lust for learning, the cliché of canons, the desirability of different ways of knowing and noting.

I'm excited by the possibilities of thinking through autotheory as a practice of notation. And yet, I can't deny my own intellectual, creative, physical, emotional exhaustion.

"I have nothing left to give."

"Sure you do."

"Mew."

I start to write, and I feel that numb feeling. That dull pain in my left arm. I've been going to acupuncture these past weeks. It gives me time to be held by a chair. I wonder what a feminist art practice looks like in which I let the chair hold me and support me.

(v) leaky sacs and sad vibrations

The first time I became phenomenologically aware of the fact that a chair *holds you up* was when I started going to psychotherapy as a *patient*. It was five years ago, and because of my newfound health benefits as a well-unionized PhD student/Teaching Assistant at my University (with its vigorously Marxist past, its fraught neoliberal future) I was able to afford it. When I arrived at the psychotherapist's office, I could barely hold myself up. I could barely get myself up the stairs. I was struggling to hold it together, to keep myself contained. And when I sat down on the couch, with the therapist sitting in front of me, holding that space, I fell apart.

I revealed myself to be only sadness, tears—an ocean of pain. I was a vessel through which generations of sadness began to pour forth. I was leaking.

The body knows in ways that aren't always articulable

...at least not immediately

The body knows in ways that aren't always intelligible

...at least not immediately

The body *notes* and sometimes we take this in and duly not ourselves, but we're encouraged to tune out, distantiate, numb. The body articulates in a language that we aren't able to understand, unless we're listening in the right ways, unless we're tuned in to the frequencies and amplitudes at which the body speaks to us.

And when I came to the therapist's couch and started speaking, it was a long-overdue chance for me to let it all flow.

After that hour of letting the chair hold me, after that hour of sharing the first parts of what I'd come to understand as *my story*, I cried for what felt like days, weeks. I'm still crying, letting

It was in that course that I started to recognize my own queerness as well: feeling attractions to fellow students whose gender and identities didn't fit into my previous conception of what my sexual attractions were. And in this seminar on affect, queerness, performativity—the course I'd leave to do social work, and start a few years of self-medicating with alcohol, cigarettes, music shows, and sexual irresponsibility—things had begun to be set in motion that I wouldn't be able to recognize as such for another few years.

(vii) extra-discursive: not/ation

Prior to the post-structuralist turn in theory, gender-based binary oppositions were often taken as a given, organizing Western thought according to unchecked patriarchal privileging. Women were associated with the body and its supposed irrationality, excess, and disorder while men were associated with the mind and its presumed rationality, moderation, and civility (Carson 124). Feminist thinkers like Anne Carson, who in “The Gender Of Sound” unpacks these gendered oppositions in relation to the history of sound, point out how engrained this binary way of thinking is in patriarchal society, and how women's fundamental association with the body and uncultivated matter has led to their abject and immoral status as hysterics and madwomen, witches and whores (Carson 120). Because of their supposedly inherent connection to the body—a connection that, according to the organizing logic of Cartesian dualism, was seen as preventing them from an engagement with the mind, women were considered essentially non-conceptual and irrational. This began to change in the 1960s, as civil rights movements and the second wave of feminism upend the politics of the social in a way that continues to resonate up through to the present. Jameson contextualizes these movements as part of a larger decolonization that begins in the third world in the late 1950s (“Periodizing” 180).

I applied to the PhD as an act of survival. When I tell people this they seem weirded out, like I'm telling them too much. Something ugly or base. But I came to this “elevated world” of “higher learning” through a sense of urgency, like I had to run away from this Lacanian Real that had become my life of social work, sex (work), self-medicating, of unmediated living, and run to that place that had once felt safe: a space of more regulated learning, of language, of THEORY. Coming to the PhD felt like returning to a place of refuge. I was ravenous again—to learn, to read, to take in texts, to metabolize all of these new theories and frameworks and languages. I had only been out of academia for a few years and already there was so much to catch up on. I was particularly drawn to the weirdo theory courses, graduate seminars like Dr. Marcus Boon's “Sex and Death” or “Theorizing Sonic Communities.” And it was here that I began to write through ideas of language and hysteria, feminist theory and the body, writing and sound.

In Kim Gordon's *Is It My Body?* the artist-musician's experience as the front-woman of Sonic Youth frames her works of text-based conceptualism, art writing, and art criticism. In this collection of writings from the 1980s through to the early 1990s—written after Gordon studied conceptualism in art school and founded the band Sonic Youth (Gordon 163-164)—she reflects on the politics of “her own position as a woman on stage” (Joseph 8) in the context of a (predominantly British and American, trans-nationally dispersed) music scene. As she does this, Gordon critically engages with art by contemporaneous artists like Mike Kelley, Raymond Pettibon, and Laurie Anderson—artists whose work was in conversation with the post-punk, no wave, and alternative rock scenes that Sonic Youth was a part of and, in the case of Kelley and Pettibon, whose work played a key role in shaping the semiotics of the band.

Don't just stare, 'cause she's not wearing underwear—²

Describing their aim in founding the Institut für Kunstkritik, the publishers of Gordon's text note that “it was our ambition to involve not only the leading critics and art historians of our time, but also artists whose practices involve critical texts. Kim Gordon is such an artist” (Graw and Birnbaum 7). By having personally known many of the artists whose work she engages with in her writing, and by being a female artist who was performing alongside these artists in a still fairly male-dominated scene, Gordon's critical art writing takes on a different kind of performative valence. Her active practice as an artist in these spaces was integral to her critical writings, as “Being part of a music culture or subculture appealed to me more than staying outside and commenting on it in a work of art” (Gordon 163-164). Gordon describes the pull she feels between making work in the “art-world” versus making work in “a music context”: “Doing work that's performative or has to do with traces of the body, that's where it meets up with my artwork” (164). For some, like Doyle and Jones, autotheory offers a way of responding to contemporary art that is responsive to the nuanced demands of post-descriptive³ art criticism and twenty-first century art and intersectional feminism; for others, like Gordon, Myles, and Kraus, art writing and criticism is a discursive and creative practice alongside other practices, including music, conceptual art, poetry, and filmmaking.

Autotheory is what happens when we move with theory, and when we become aware of the ways in which theory moves through us. As an artist working autotheoretically, the challenge is to transmute the relationship between theory and the self, between discourse and our own practices, in meaningful, evocative ways. Sometimes the artist might reject theory outright, work to move their body as far *away* from this thing called “theory” as they can. Sometimes the artist might fetishize theory, might take photographs of themselves with their books, might hold the theory close to their chests and let themselves inhale and exhale with it, hold it up against their mouth, make the pages damp from the warmth of their breathe, might become so relaxed that they drool onto the page, rendering theory *fleshy*.

There are days when moving with theory means writing texts, making work—the kind of work that feels like *really good work*. There are days when moving with theory means metabolizing a text through my body—maybe a really challenging text—feeling the waves of discomfort and elation that come as it works its way through my system. And finally there are days when moving with theory means falling down onto the couch, the chair, the theory coming with you, flopping down onto your body. It weighs on you like one of those “anxiety blankets,” its heaviness a welcome relief. Or maybe you set down the text and sit yourself on it, the text a kind of chair that holds you up. You can sit down onto it and feel it holding you up, and you can cry if you'd like, or maybe you begin to laugh—it starts as a giggle, and next thing you know you're in tears.

APPENDIX A

The following formula summates auto-theory as I understand it: a combination of a post-confessional “I”, a narcissistic mechanism, and a post-hysterical subject whose performance and/or performativity is self-aware and understood as such; this combination is divided by the context, which here is one of ambivalent feminism and a diversity of gender expressions and orientations that extends beyond those who are women-identifying. Inspired by Dr. Shannon Bell’s ingenious construction of mathemes in “Fragment of a Case of Posthysteria: D’or Owns the Jewel,” I have devised a formula for auto-theory below:

FORMULA FOR AUTO-THEORY AS CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST MODE:

$$[\text{☰} + (\text{C } \text{D}) + \$^{\wedge} + \text{☼} + \blacksquare] / \text{♀} +$$

Where

☰	=	POST-CONFESSIONAL “I”
(C D)	=	NARCISSISM AS SIMULTANEOUSLY SELF-CONTAINMENT AND DEGRADATION; SEE ALSO: THE DIALECTIC BETWEEN EROS AND THANATOS
\$ [^]	=	POST-HYSTERIA AS SELF-AWARE, POST-POST-STRUCTURALIST PERFORMANCE
☼	=	RIGOROUS REFERENCES TO THEORY, PHILOSOPHY, AND CRITICISM
■	=	A SUBJECTIVE APPROACH TO CONTEMPORARY ART OR “THE ART WORLD”
♀	=	AMBIVALENT FEMINIST CONTEXT INCLUSIVE OF ALL GENDERS AND GENRES

APPENDIX B

autotheory’s principle:

PRACTICE —————> THEORY —————> PRACTICE

Notes

¹ In *Touching Feeling*, Sedgwick posits the spatial positioning of “beside” as a useful tool in her anti-dualistic, or deconstructionist, project, in a manner that resembles the spatiality of Ahmed’s *Queer Phenomenology*: “Beside comprises a wide range of desiring, identifying, representing, repelling, paralleling, differentiating, rivaling, leaning, twisting, mimicking, withdrawing, attracting, aggressing, warping, and other relations” (Sedgwick, *Touching* 8).

² Sonic Youth, *Panty Lies*

³ What function does art criticism serve today? Art critic Ben Davis describes our context of “post-descriptive art criticism”: when images of contemporary artworks are pervasive online, the role of the critic is no longer one of description (Davis, “Post-Descriptive”).

⁴ I am indebted to Shannon Bell’s use of \$ to denote the agent of hysteria in her “Formula for the Discourse of the Posthysterical” in “Fragment of a Case of Posthysteria: D’or Owns the Jewel,” *ESC* 40.1 (March 2014): xx-yy. Notably, the agency that Bell affords the posthysterical position and posthysterical discourse is relevant here.

Distortion and hypersensitivity:

A conversation on performing the works of Ingri Fiksdal

By Rosalind Goldberg and Pernille Holden

Pernille Holden and Rosalind Goldberg have both worked with Ingri Fiksdal in several productions, Pernille since 2012 and Rosalind since 2013. In June 2018 they met on two occasions in Berlin to talk about the experiences of developing and performing the choreographies by Fiksdal. Pernille has, in total, been part of eight productions by Ingri and this conversation primarily focuses on her experiences of co-developing and performing the different works.

Rosalind Goldberg: As a dancer, you have been part of the creation and the performances of the works *HOODS*, *Cosmic Body*, *Shadows of Tomorrow* and *Diorama* during Ingri's PhD research, and, for the record, even in pieces before Ingri started with her PhD. In other words, you know Ingri's work and working methods very well and have been a close part of her choreographic development over the last six years. Working as a dancer with Ingri, would you say that it requires something in particular?

Pernille Holden: In Ingri's work you have to be interested in being part of a bigger whole. With that I mean that all the different elements of the choreography are of primary importance, who you are is not so important. Of course it's important. Now I'm talking about performing the actual piece and not the process, the making of the piece. Some of the pieces require physical stamina or finding your own interest within the repetitiveness of the work; a motivation inside the physical work.

RG: Can you give an example of how you find motivation inside the physical work? If we take *Diorama* (2017) as an example. That is the most recent piece you did with Ingri and a work you developed on site, in the fishing village of Brixham in England by a seawater pool. You worked with the surrounding land, sounds and light and used choreography as a lens to interfere with the view to alter the audience's experience of that particular place.

PH: We work quite slowly in that piece, so I have a slow distortion practice to work with when performing *Diorama*. Practice may not be the right term, but I work on the distortion of the overall shape that I produce and try to move without accentuation. We worked a bit with geological processes when making *Diorama*, so I also have that in mind. When performing I remember and reimagine these aspects. I also work with the notion of slow by trying to be as slow as I can within the obstacles that present themselves during the piece. Or trying to withdraw from time, if that makes sense. Not going backwards or rewinding obviously, but trying to define and be slow in different ways. You have to find your own way of how you want to engage in the slow movement. Ingri is very clear and specific in what she wants the material to do, with the audience, and therefore has a specific interest in how it is performed. But when you know how it should look or work, you have to be interested in finding your own way of performing it. I think I'm quite pragmatic in how I engage in the physical work.

RG: What do you mean, when you say that you are pragmatic?

PH: I'm physically practical. Working very much with mechanics, or not mechanics. Or perhaps rather, I work from the body and not so much from imagination.

RG: There is a moment in that piece when you are on the ground with your whole body and you slowly rise to standing. In that moment, how do you go about it? What are your strategies to find an interest in that movement material?

PH: My strategy would be to find a way to simply structure my body in order to rise up, or move slowly in a functional or not strained way. Also, there is an incentive to try to make the movements look non-human, which comes from the concept of *Diorama*. To distort the movement. And to work with lightness, to be able to do it without making it so hard on the body. But this whole *Diorama*-thing can be a long meditation: working with not being impatient, transferring weight, working on how little effort can I use, deciding when I have to use quite a lot of effort, how can I do something as light as possible, etc., from a very practical, bodily approach. I never get tired of working on these things.

RG: When you say working with lightness, what does that mean?

PH: With little effort.

RG: It could be a metaphor also.

PH: Ah, no, I don't mean it in that way.

RG: Okay. And "to perform the material is like a meditation"?

PH: It has a lot to do with finding a timing, of being in time or perceiving time. As a way to stretch out the time. How to do a lot but not so much. Make time slower. That is an image I use. Not all pragmatic I guess, or practical. It is also a way to work with patience. I sometimes struggle quite a lot in there, it can be quite hard or strenuous. There are a lot of practicalities that need solving within the doing.

RG: Would you say that you are coming into another state of consciousness as a performer through your work on time?

PH: I don't think of it like that. It's more about an emphasis on awareness or concentration than an altered state. I guess it depends on how you define or understand what an altered state is. If that can be concentration, then absolutely. But what is a regular, normal state? When I think of altered state, I think of a certain heightening, expansion or deviation in a more profound sense than that of performing. And I don't think I would use that terminology on my own state when performing, even though it is a difference in awareness from my everyday consciousness. There is this blurry space I guess.

RG: Once I stepped in as a performer in *Diorama*. The audience I met after performing the piece had such poetic experiences and they wondered how it was to do it, what I think about when doing

the material and what my strategies were. And you know, I didn't want to ruin their experience but what I do is basically to try to not step on the set design/costume, move as much as I can (which isn't much) in order to not get cramp in any muscles, etc.

PH: Ha-ha, yes exactly. *Diorama* is probably a mostly practical piece. And yet, I still try to work with these meditational tasks and the slow distortion as much as possible. Even though the piece is full of frustration from within. Half of the time I can be a bit upset: why am I stepping on the costume, why does my costume have such a big hole for my arms, now I am stuck in the sand or on a rock. And even though I have these experiences from within I'm never sure if I break the illusion for the audience, if I'm doing too much, that's not always totally clear. I have a sense of it though. But I suppose I would have been told if I deviate too much. So the piece is not always enjoyable to do. And yet, the work is not only what happens in that hour of performing. It is also about the hour before and after, preparing and rigging down with the other people being part of the work.

RG: Can you describe the process of finding movement material when working with Ingri? Is there a typical procedure or is it very different for each production?

PH: Hmm, there are different aspects. Sometimes Ingri has things we should just try out, like running, different movement ideas or patterns that she has found. She or we then further suggest what we could do with these things. Or she has tasks that we work with. We often start out with creating a variety of materials and then there is a process of gradually reducing the material. A reduction in quantity. That's one procedure.

RG: Is it always Ingri who develops the tasks?

PH: To begin with I would say that the start or the initiative always comes from Ingri and then we do something and within that we elaborate on the making. There is always a discussion. And for us the task is to decode what it can be and then take it further.

RG: If we take *HOODS* (2014) as an example. In that piece the set design involves puppets in human sizes and you partly try to give the impression that you are more performers in the space than you actually are through your movement and how you move the puppets. The work tries to blur the boundaries partly through the fact that the audience wears the same costume as the performers and the puppets. The aim is to create a disorienting distortion of perception.

PH: The work with *HOODS* started with another piece called *Urskog* that we did the year before *HOODS*. We had a research period for that piece, where we worked, as I remember it, with degradation, rotting, death and zombies. And we brought some of this material into the *HOODS* process. We worked with some danced rituals that never became a part of the piece, we worked on producing trancelike dances, talked and worked on the boundaries between being an audience and a performer and how to perform as an audience member. Then, when the puppets came in, we decided we could not do non-audience movements without them. This opened up for the questions: what can we do with these things, these puppets? How uncanny can it become, how can we move?

RG: What are you doing with the puppets?

PH: We start by sitting with the puppets when the audience comes in and at that moment it can be unclear to the audience who is human and who's not. Then some people think we are all puppets and they sometimes touch us and let out a quiet scream, he-he. It doesn't always happen but when and in that moment, there is a potential of disorientation of perception. At least that is how I experience it from the inside. We decided at an early stage to not go for the absolute illusion, we would then have needed to work in another way. Sometimes magic happens and sometimes not. The puppets are not always so compliant. It takes a lot of physical effort to move slowly with the puppets. But we also work with them as being half dead stuck to your body, or smothering them.

RG: In order to work within this room of blurred boundaries, do you use these strategies that I know from puppeteers of trying to find your way into the puppets' "reality" or to generate emotions for it or towards it?

PH: Maybe not so much. The puppets turn into different objects for me during the performance. I work with the puppets as a material. When rolling around with them, I get the perception of being a mass of material. Or when I'm holding them, they become like rag dolls. Sometimes I can think of them as a dead-like person. In the start of the performance I try to duplicate myself in a way, since me and the puppets should do the same thing.

RG: So you think of the puppet as you?

PH: Or as if it shadows me. But you know, all the time I need to be firm with my grip and I so clearly steer it, so it's hard to go into something else than what that is. So it's again quite a practical approach. But there is a matter of energizing it, since it's an inanimate object.

RG: How is it to be in this work?

PH: It's playful. Or it can be. I have different strategies for different days. Some days I can have more surplus energy and be playful, other days I am or was more practical. How that affects the outcome, I can't say for sure. It also has a lot to do with the audience, how they perform or move around in the space. The atmosphere can be quite different from one performance to another. Some performances feel darker than others.

RG: Ingrid's work uses the elements of sound, scenography, light, and dance as equal means to create the choreography. Each medium is as important for the choreography as such. The light can be used as a *performer* for instance, like in *Shadows of Tomorrow* or the set design can have the *same* function as the dancers, as in *Cosmic Body*. What are your sensations while performing the choreography, sharing your role with the light? Or asked differently; being part of a Gesamtkunstwerk in such way, what does it require from you as a performer?

PH: When I'm performing?

RG: Yes.

PH: I think I'm mostly concentrating on what to do, when and how to do it. Of course it is about the idea of being part of a whole and that idea is always there. That's the deal of the work somehow. The attentiveness. I'm unsure how it affects me differently than in other performances

where this is not at the forefront or how I think about it during the performance.

RG: If we focus on the work *Shadows of Tomorrow* (2016). That piece is a rework of the performance *BAND* (2013), in which the initial idea was to create the immersive experience of a psychedelic concert, but only through moving bodies and light. The audience is placed on the floor around the performers and the work is performed in rooms with light-colored walls to bring out the shadows of the performers. Through the movement of the light the shadows "dance" on the wall, sometimes in other rhythms than the performers.

When I have been performing *Shadows of Tomorrow*, I can relate to the word *meditation* you were using earlier. Since the costume is covering our heads, we can't see as well as usual and because of that, my focus is shifting. I'm not concerned about how my face looks since no one sees it. But my concentration is directed towards sensations other than the seeing. Like hearing, and feeling the other bodies, but also some sort of physical awareness that I could call meditation. It is a very sensorial experience doing *Shadows of Tomorrow*. It's one of the few dance pieces I have been part of that require that amount of sensorial work in order to actually be able to perform it.

PH: I totally agree with you that this work, with reaching some sort of total hypersensitivity, 360 degrees, up-down, through and around, through your every pore is a way to be with the other performers and to do the work. That is what's upfront in that piece. That sensation is triggered by the light coming from below, that the audience is close to you and you get a feeling of being 2.50 meters tall because of the shadows the set-up produce. I actually imagine that my body is a bit bigger than it is. It comes from a conversation I had after we did *BAND*. Someone thought that we looked really, really tall. Since the audience is sitting on the floor, the perspective is shifted, and because of the costumes our shoulders are bigger. In a literary sense I am bigger but I also use it as a tool, I feed the idea that I am bigger and that has an energetic effect. Not that I think about it all the time, I don't even think it was a conscious developed strategy. It came through the doing and watching the other bodies doing the performance.

RG: Can you develop the expression of working towards a hypersensitive body?

PH: Ah yes. I think it is an important aspect in *Shadows of Tomorrow*. I use it as a tool to connect with the other performers because we do the same material. Not that we have to look the same. But to commonly produce something unitary. How does this one-body or system of bodies move. How do we keep it going? This intention, to all the time find each other in the material, needs to be present. For that to happen or to reach for it you have to be attentive in as many ways as possible. It might be more present in *Shadows of Tomorrow*, but for me it is present in all the works of Ingrid.

RG: The covering of the face could be perceived as an obstacle. The face is something that reveals a relation to the movement, the audience, the other performers, etc. Taking that aspect away, what does it mean to you as a performer?

PH: I do find the fact of covering the face quite liberating in a practical sense. It is a relief to just be a body. And then be able to put all the work into the movement, the material and not to focus on how your face is read. Even though there are of course tons of things to read in a woman being covered by a scarf, etc. And that influences me as a performer. But from the inside it is like having one less focus. I can turn the volume down on the face and up elsewhere. I find it interesting to

be within it. But I must say that each piece with a covered face is very different, he-he.

RG: In what way?

PH: In *Diorama*, for instance, I never think about it being liberating to work bodily because of my covered face. But in *Shadows of Tomorrow* for sure. I would say that in *Shadows of Tomorrow* I have a feeling that I have to turn up my awareness because an orientation has to come from elsewhere than the visual. So how another performer lightly touches my costume becomes an information of orientation, tempo and proximity. And it's not only about being aware of where you are, but also what's going on. The hyper-sensing is a tool to build the material through increasing the force, size and speed etc. of the movement together with the other performers. So you have to sense the others as a group. It's a feeling as if you are in a huge force-field. You have to navigate through energies. Everything you decide to do is a result of the energy between the bodies or is information to the bodies around you with the aim to be perceived as a huge body.

RG: And in *HOODS*?

PH: In *HOODS* I don't think about it in the same way. Maybe because I can see. It's another covering of identity in a way. We wear the same as the audience, so there the covering of face and body also aim at erasing the border between who is who. It is a way to tone down identity in order to enable a way of being together in a room.

RG: In Ingri's work the aim or what she would like to achieve with the choreography is quite clearly formulated. Like in *Cosmic Body* (2015) for instance, the aim was to, through the choreography, create an altered state of consciousness for the audience. How do such clear goals influence you as a co-creator of the movement material? How do you find an entrance into the creation of movements? Is (the clearly formulated goals) something that triggers your creativity or is it rather the opposite?

PH: I don't have the concept in the back of my mind all the time. How I remember doing movement material in *Cosmic Body*, I think I didn't think so much about the concept's aim during the making of the piece... or maybe I actually did. Before *Cosmic Body* Ingvild Langård (the composer for the piece) and I went to *Breaking Convention* in London, a conference on psychedelic consciousness. That was interesting, important I think, to try to understand some ideas surrounding altered states.

We did speak about the concept in the beginning, and then through the process we tried to find it within that what we were doing. When we started with the running part of the piece for instance, we were questioning how the audience can fall into something, enter an altered state, when the movement is all wonky, he-he. The movements were not smooth like the *Dream Machine* of Gysin and Burroughs, which was one of the sources of inspiration we drew from.

When the physical material is more clarified, I try to understand what the overall goal entails for specific movements, or material. Like, how do we do this material to have the wished effect on the audience?

RG: In *Cosmic Body* but also in *HOODS* and *Diorama*, you are working with the set design in different ways. In *Cosmic Body*, the idea was to think about the performer as equal to the scenography/light objects. How does that make you perform the movement? For instance, when

you are running, it's not about your charisma, but rather as you were just saying, about you being a part of a hypnotic machinery. What do you reduce, what do you highlight?

PH: When we worked on the running in *Cosmic Body* we tried to find the most practical way of doing it. We also got a lot of feedback on our running. There are absolutely things I try to hold back, or I'm trying to work towards some principles in running, which are things like distribution of weight, leaning forward and placing my arms in a specific way. It has nothing to do with trying to be a machine, but trying to keep it clean and to be a part of something bigger. But of course we are very co-dependent on the others. I always need to know where the others are in order to be on my spot, and to make it into this ongoing machinery, or loop. I try to be relaxed in the face, and to have a relaxed gaze. Not be expressive in a way, if I am tired or something, turning down the volume on that. Trying actively not to stand out. And again, to be practical, paying attention to where I'm going and what's happening.

RG: Would you say that the works are physically hard?

PH: Yes, I would say so. *Diorama* is for sure. Not all of it but some parts, and depending on where, if we perform it in snow or sand. But also *HOODS*, but then partly because we often did two shows each night. But I wouldn't say extremely hard. In *Cosmic Body* I remember the running was taking a toll on my legs. But there I think you maybe have to prepare for what you go in for. In *Diorama* you don't have much of a choice, in that piece it can be a struggle. And you have to be in for the work, the work is not in it for you at all, in a way. It's of course my choice. It's maybe also where I go as a performer. I choose movements that are hard to sustain. And yet, there is room for how to work with it, to make it more sustainable.

RG: Okay, I have one last question. Has your notion about what the work of being a dancer changed through working with Ingri?

PH: I don't know. I started working with Ingri 2012 and before that I hadn't been working as a dancer for others that much. I had mostly been working in collaboration. I think it is an expanding field all the time, the notion of being a dancer. And working with Ingri informs my understanding of being a dancer. Each experience informs you. You asked me the first day, if it's different to work with Ingri than with others. I was talking to someone the other day about what comes first, who influences whom. And in relation to how I have been formed as a dancer to work with Ingri, I also think of how I have informed Ingri's work. I'm quite practical and I think that suits Ingri's work. That's maybe also why I was invited into her work, for dealing with movement in a way that suited her work. So maybe I haven't been that changed by it. How the movement part of the pieces are solved suits me. He-he.

Talking About The Weather

By Daniel Blanga Gubbay

1) Impersonal

The weather asks the use of the impersonal of us. *It rains*. We accept and pronounce the sentence, almost unconsciously protecting a request of anonymity. Indeed, the weather seems to have no body: everybody knows what the weather is and almost where it is, and yet if I try to point to it, or locate it, it disappears. It is impersonal. *It rains*.

Yet, while pronouncing it, it is not known whether there is a distinction between the agent and the action. Is it the *rain* that *rains*, or is it another element – such as the cloud – that rains, that takes responsibility as the agent of the action? Looking at the sky would not solve this linguistic dilemma: we are incapable of locating the subject of the action we just pronounced. In this sense that weather is the most manifest form of a hyper-visible yet anonymous action: the action is there, yet the agent is unidentifiable, and for this reason unstoppable.

Indeed, if we can protect ourselves from the weather (an umbrella might be opened here) and we can try to prevent the weather (as Beijing did, using rockets to keep the Olympic opening ceremony dry) the weather cannot be fought. Once it is there it cannot be forced to come to an end; it cannot be stopped, for it is an action without agent. *It rains*, and *it* will finish. We are subjected to its will.

This text is subjected to the weather the way we are subjected to it; it might abruptly change from time to time, as weather does. And hence its evolutions do not aim at representing the weather, nor are they trying to define it, or getting closer to it. Language here acts in a very tautological way: this text does not aim at understanding the weather, but simply aims at understanding why we talk about it; what does it produce to talk about the weather while we are subjected to it.

2) Connecting

We are subjugated to it together.

We are at the bus stop, in the elevator, or at the beginning of a meeting with a person we do not know, and we talk about the weather. If weather is always present in smalltalk and icebreaker speeches with strangers it is because it is that which we know we share with the other. Without knowing her – neither her personality nor her political views – we are in the same weather, and together subjected by it. In a minute we might disagree, but let's start this conversation from the point of what unites us. Talking about the weather manifests the desire to start from a consensual point, a *public space* we both share: we share the same humid, hot, freezing sensation, on our skins. The weather is thus what we have in common and connects us, like – as well – the common language we use with the other to talk about it. Talking about the weather in the elevator, hence manifests to the other's two connections in one: speaking a common language and sharing the same weather.

Furthermore, it is a discourse on the weather that takes place in the weather. The transmission of all vocal languages (including the icebreaker speech) happens in the same atmosphere we are trying to describe in the discourse. The weather is the tissue that connects our bodies and the medium that connects our conversation. We talk about it through it, talking about what unites us both conceptually and physically. Similarly, in her article *Hydrofeminism, Or on Becoming a Body of Water*, Astrida Neimanis describes the medium of water in a way that might here be relevant to clarify the weather (which is also made of water). Through it, «we experience ourselves less as isolated entities, and more as oceanic eddies. *I am a singular, dynamic whorl dissolving in a complex, fluid circulation*. The space between ourselves and our others is [...] closer than our own skin». Like water, the weather is a conduit and a mode of connection.

Furthermore, by talking about the weather, I am not simply connected to the other, but also, together with the other, we are connected to the weather. The weather is not only a place of connection, but a thing in itself: if it is a medium, as all media, it does not only connect two points, but also connects each of the points with the medium. This medium is the weather, in its present configuration. Hence, by talking about the weather I do not only remind the other that we generally share something or have something in common, but that we are sharing a specific present, the same time. We could start the icebreaker speech with a different subject that unites us, again such as the use of language or the human condition, yet if the weather is so common in starting the conversation it is because, while uniting us, it constantly changes. By doing this it offers on the one hand an incredibly large possibility to elaborate, complain, and speculate on its evolution; but, on the other, it transforms each of us talking about the weather in a shared manifestation of living in the same present. We are connected in the present, and together connected to the present. My phone is ringing.

- Hi Mami. - Rohi, how are you? - Good good, thanks, you? - Good hamdellah.
How is the weather there in Brussels?

Here, talking about the weather is the manifestation of our disconnection, of our distance. The nostalgic gesture of imagining my body subjugated by the weather that subjugates yours, in a desire of empathy that makes me dream of a proximity we do not have. Yet, is the weather in Milan and Brussels the same *medium*, or are these two different weathers?

3) The Body of the Weather

It starts raining. Yet no one would say that the weather starts in this very moment. The weather was already there. Hence, in its being continuously there, the weather does not properly occur. Or maybe it takes place continuously, and is hence subtracted from the logic of the event.

To elaborate on the challenging of the notion of event-hood that the weather seems to imply, I propose to invite the notion of hyperobject into this talking about the weather. Described some years ago by US scholar Timothy Morton, hyperobjects «are nonlocal; in other words, any *local manifestation* of a hyperobject is not directly the hyperobject. They involve profoundly different temporalities than the human-scale ones we are used to. In particular, some very large hyperobjects, such as planets, have genuinely Gaussian temporality: they generate space-time vortices, due to general relativity. Hyperobjects occupy a high-dimensional phase space that results in their being

invisible to humans for stretches of time. And they exhibit their effects inter-objectively; that is, they can be detected in a space that consists of interrelationships between aesthetic properties of objects» (p. 1). Hence maybe we have to rethink the idea of an absence of body, at first associated with the request of anonymity of the weather: the weather does have a body; one body that exists beyond its visibility and outside the perception of our ocular-centric culture.

Taking again the words of Neimanis the weather might be described as «not only a place of transit, but *itself* a watery body [...], a material fecundity that rejects an ontological separation between *thing* and *transition*, between *body* and *vector*». While we talk about the weather, we are already *into* his body, a singular one. For this reason, as a hyperobject, the weather does not happen, it simply is. What takes place are the local manifestations of the weather. I shall then perhaps call my mum to tell her that eventually we are in the same body of weather, simply in two local manifestations.

Nevertheless, talking about a *local manifestation* renders the perception of the weather even more complex. Indeed, the terms seem to suggest something that appears, as if – even if the weather was already there – the local manifestation was the product of the place in which it manifests itself. It starts raining. But does this raining start *here* where I am, or was it happening elsewhere, and is it simply entering with the wind the space of perception? Does the weather occur in time (local manifestation) or in space (movement), traveling with its moving manifestation? We are all familiar with the approach of the weather, as we are all familiar with the weather forecast graphics, where we see the perturbation moving on the map, and in which the weather is reduced to nothing but its movements. We look at them in front of the TV, and we talk about the weather, which is a moving body, and a question arises in the conversation: what kind of relation can we sketch between the body, its local manifestations and its movements?

4) The Dog Days

By making a rather sad joke to remind us of its muscular migration politics, during the dog days last summer, and specifically the high-pressure area moving from Sahara towards Europe, current Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini took a picture of himself in the heat of his office and wrote on Instagram: «unfortunately, cannot do much against the African heat». Talking about the weather here, is not only an implicit connection with fellow Italians: we share the same conditions and the same present. Weather is used here as a counterpart to remind and celebrate a *no-way* policy: no migrant – no *African* – will reach the Italian coast. Nothing from the African continent, but maybe the weather, has a hope of passing. Only the weather is that which cannot be stopped at the border and talking about the weather reminds us that all the rest will not. Salvini refers to the weather not only as that which cannot be controlled in its manifestation, but also that cannot be controlled in its movements.

And yet, the weather does not simply move. While moving from the Maghreb coast to Rome, the weather perceived by Matteo Salvini will not be the same as in Africa. A phenomenon does not stay the same, while moving through the extended body of the weather. We can imagine this body made of zones – the climatic zones – the same way we are made of parts of the body. The term suggests an inclination (*clima*), the tendency of an area towards certain atmospheric phenomena, depending on different factors. Traditionally there is a division into twelve zones: rainforest, monsoon, tropical savanna, humid subtropical, humid continental, oceanic climate, Mediterranean

climate, desert, steppe, subarctic climate, tundra, and polar ice cap. The climatic zones do not define the local weather, but rather the statistics of local weather over long periods of time. The weather can travel from one zone to other, yet not in an immutable way. If the weather does not simply manifest itself locally, it also does not simply move. It travels from one part to the other of its body, continuously readapting itself and changing, like a dance movement that goes around the body readapting itself to its different parts. For this reason Morton was claiming that among the properties of the hyperobject there is the viscosity: «They are viscous, which means that they “stick” to beings that are involved with them» (p. 1). This is the fascination of the weather: it connects the world in one, preventing at the same time the possibility for its complete homogenization. In this sense the weather is a natural form of resistance to globalization.

The weather does not change in time (as a phenomenon that appears locally and that is proper to the territory in which it appears) nor does it travel in space (as a phenomenon that comes from elsewhere). It is a phenomenon whose shape evolves at any instant while moving, and whose identity is renewed at any instant in an osmotic relation with the world. The weather does not first travel, to then evolve according to the local context; it evolves while traveling and travels while mutating. For this reason we cannot talk – for the weather – about an *integration in a context*, because its traveling life is nothing but a continuous activity of reshaping through an osmotic relation with the context. It does not first arrive to then adapt itself to the context: it evolves *through* the context.

It rains. And while appearing, this rain neutralizes the dichotomy between local phenomena and phenomena ‘coming from elsewhere’; it rains, and this rain is neither local nor foreign. Talking about the weather might suggest – and maybe the moment is particularly important – a new political subject, who is never local, nor ‘coming from elsewhere’ (foreign, migrant). If the dog days – heat coming from the Sahara is local in Italy, we have to be able to think political subjects as always *local*, since – like the weather – we constantly evolve through the context. The weather might invite us here in what French jurist Mireille Delmas-Marty defines the *nuages ordonnés*, clouds that are opening a new zone of opacity and possibility in the pyramids of norms. A norm in which subjects do not first travel, to then evolve according to the local context, but rather they evolve anyway in osmotic relation with the context. This radical viscosity (‘I am continuously local’) neutralizes and surpasses all political uses of the concept of integration and assimilation.

There is a further point: each local manifestation of the weather is not only influenced by this intertwined story of movement and locality, but also forcibly by other local manifestations too. In this sense, in his essay *Naturally, the weather: On Complexity, Philosophy, and World Systems* Canadian thinker Peter Trnka reminds us that «always moving even when as still as still, [the weather is] one thing only because its many manifestations or events cannot be split off from each other and considered to perdure on their own» (p. 10). Talking about the weather might suggest – also to Salvini – the metaphor of the whole humanity as a hyperobject, whose local manifestations (the bodies) are viscous phenomena, whose modality of life is nothing but an unstoppable evolution, that renews at each instant the identity in an osmotic relation with the context, as with the other lives.

5) Talking About *Us*

While talking about the weather, a further question emerges: if the weather is viscous, does it stick to our bodies too? In talking about the weather, we often decline the conversation on the influence that the weather has on us. A range of sentences, referring both to physical (‘my bones are hurting today’) and psychological (‘I’ll get depressed if the weather goes on this way’) influences of the weather on our present situation. This side-branch of the conversation is often disregarded as over-dramatic or a self-referred desire of attention. Yet, we may also see it as the climax of the bond with the other, manifesting how what we are acknowledging having in common (this present weather we both share), is not indifferent to me, but on the contrary it touches me both intimately and concretely. This thing that I share with you is dear to me, since I am affected by it in a *meteoropathic* relation, a *pathos*, whose agent is the weather I share with you.

Nevertheless, this same relation of affection of the weather on the human beings has also to be seen from the other direction: the affection of the human beings on the weather. The weather continuously reshapes itself while moving and in relation to the context, but are we not part of this context that affects it and contributes to its constant evolution? If the weather is viscous and evolves through what it encounters in its path, each of us might be now standing in the path of the weather. Our simple presence – the amount of bodies in an area, their temperature, the transformation we operate through breathing – affects it deeply and continuously, while it affects our present. For this reason, while talking about the weather in his recent book *La Vie des Plantes*, Italian philosopher Emanuele Coccia writes that: «L’espace dans lequel nous vivons n’est pas un simple contenant auquel nous devrions nous adapter. Sa forme et son existence sont inséparable des formes de vie qu’il héberge et qu’il rend possible (p. 67)» [The space in which we live, is not a simple container to which we should adapt. Its form and existence are inseparable from the forms of life that it houses and makes possible]. We are inseparable from the weather, through a mutual viscosity that neutralizes the opposition between connection and alterity. If the weather has been often seen as the emblem of the sublime, as what stands in front of us and we can admire from afar, this frontality is here destroyed. We are *in* the body of the weather, inseparably dancing with it, in a dance in which our actions stick to it, while it sticks to us. The weather *is* also our actions (and this is clear in a global warming scenario); and even before that the weather is the result of our presence on it (as we are the result of the same relation). Going back to Neimanis, the weather might again be seen in a similar fashion to what she was proposing for the water: «Water is *between* bodies, but *of* bodies, before us and beyond us, yet also very presently, *this body* too. Deictic falter. Our comfortable categories of thought begin to erode». Hence, talking about the weather with the other does not mean to talk about a third body we both share, but rather to talk about the three of us. For this reason while writing about weather conversation in another text of his entitled, *Being Ecological*, Timothy Morton challenges the perceived commonplace lightness in talking about the weather: «That’s the whole point of the ‘weather conversation’ you have with a stranger at a bus stop. You are able to find common ground in something that appears neutral, something that just functions and therefore creates a background for your interaction. But global warming takes that supposed neutrality away from us, like too-eager stage hands removing all the scenery while the play is still in progress» (p. 27). Talking about the weather means to talk about us. I stop the conversation, for the appearance of a question. But who is this *us*?

After referring to *forms of life* in the previously mentioned quote, Coccia immediately clarifies that *inseparable* in the weather are not simply the weather and the human being: «Plus qu'une partie du monde, l'atmosphère est un lieu métaphysique dans lequel tout dépend de tout le reste, la quintessence du monde compris comme espace où la vie de chacun est mêlée à la vie des autres (p. 67) [...] Le climat n'est pas l'ensemble des gaz qui enveloppent le globe terrestre. Il est l'essence de la fluidité cosmique, le visage le plus profond de notre monde, celui qui le révèle comme l'infini mélange de toutes choses, présentes, passées et futures. Le climat est le nom et la structure métaphysique du mélange (p. 41)». [More than a part of the world, the atmosphere is a metaphysical place in which everything depends on everything else, the quintessence of the world understood as space where the life of each form is mingled with the lives of others. Climate is not simply all the gases that envelop the Earth. It is the essence of a cosmic fluidity, the deepest face of our world, the one that reveals it as the infinite mixture of all things present, past and future. Climate is the name and the metaphysical structure of the interconnection]. The weather connects the human to other forms and other scales of life. The weather is the place in which we challenge our self-sufficiency, we look at the non-existing borders of this bodily thing we call 'mine'. The weather is not only the possibility of a connection, but the impossibility of an isolation: it touches us, as a space of reciprocal influence, in which we share the world with it and with non-human beings, and with those with which we do not talk about the weather. Or maybe being in the weather, and breathing (inside) the weather might be already seen as an act of talking with non-human beings about it. I breathe in and out and strengthen the interconnection with the world; I breathe and this movement that connects me to the atmosphere is the smalltalk in which we acknowledge our common ground; I breathe, and this breath – not dissimilar from the weather conversation at the bus stop – is the beginning of a sentence to remind ourselves and the other forms of life we are sharing the same present, which is a present of interdependence.

6. The Public Body

There is something peculiar in the interdependence that we encounter in the weather, and that produces the weather. If on the one hand it depends on us (bodies, plants, actions, animals, rocks...), on the other it is independent, autonomous, uncontrollable, rebellious. While being the object of predictions, the weather is seen as what preserves its unpredictability. The weather, which stands in front of us with its homophony to *whether*, expressing a doubt, an *if* carrying in the world the impossibility of a control. Hence, the weather – among its qualities of resistance – is not simply an anonymous, unstoppable, irreproducible body, it is also uncontrollable and uncertain. In a time of growing control and risk-managing, the weather accompanies us in the possibility of a daily experience of uncertainty. This is the body of the weather. In his article *From Multiculturalism to Multinaturalism*, Bruno Latour quotes American philosopher and psychologist John Dewey in a way that might be crucial to conclude the definition of the body of the weather. «Dewey calls the private, which does not need to be individual or subjective but is simply made up of what is well known, predictable, routinized, fully internalized. In opposition to this, the public begins with what we cannot see or predict, with the unintended, unwanted, invisible consequences of our collective actions. Contrary to all the dreams of rational politics which have devastated Europe over the centuries, Dewey equates the public not with a superior knowledge of the authorities, but with blindness. The public is made when we are entangled without knowing» (p. 10). The weather is not simply a public space, as mentioned in the first chapter of this text, in which we talk. It is a public body in which we make experience of being entangled without knowing. This is perhaps

the essence of talking about the weather, this desire to put some words on this feeling of being entangled without knowing. We are not simply talking about weather; nor are we simply *in* the weather while talking about it. We *are* the public body of the weather: a feeling that shifts from recognizing the unknowability in the other, to acknowledging an interdependent unknowability. For this reason, while analyzing the interdependence in *Hydrofeminism*, Astrida Neimanis was concluding by saying: «What sort of ethics and politics could I cultivate if I were to acknowledge that the unknowability of the other nonetheless courses through me – just as I do through her?» (p. 90). While talking about the weather, and we fill our mouths with its unknowability, it enters into us as we enter in it. It is a circulation of air, movements and uncertainties among the organs of the public body: atmosphere, plants and other forms of life, among which the human ones, among which the two of us chatting at the bus stop. While talking about the weather, we both aliment and remind ourselves of this vital circulation, as if our words were a fluid entering the body, to render visible its nerves and veins connecting its different parts.

7. Choreographies

In her conclusive chapter, Neimanis states: «We found ourselves entangled in intricate choreographies of bodies and flows of all kind – not only human bodies, but also animal, vegetable, geophysical, meteorological, and technological ones; not only watery flows, but also flows of power, culture, politics, and economics» (p. 96). Neimanis uses the term *intricate choreography*, reminding us the water – and similarly we can say the weather – as a body circulating in and crossed by different movements of interdependence. The notion of choreography evoked by Neimanis brings this text back to the (dancing) body. Indeed, while talking about the weather so far, I often evoked it as a body and, even more, as a moving body. But if an exercise of interconnection always demands a relation in both directions, what does it mean to explore the metaphor in the other direction, hence not only to see the weather as a moving body, but the moving body through the weather? How can we bring the weather, and the different chapters of this text, to the scale of the body, in order to differently explore its status?

(*First*). Looking at the dancing body through the weather, one might see how the body does not happen, it simply is. What is happening are its local manifestations, such as the movements.

(*Second*). The dancing body might be *impersonal*. It dances; and while pronouncing this sentence, it is not known whether there is a distinction between the agent and the action. Does the body dance a dance, or is it the dance that dances a body? I'm referring here to the perspective of the movement as an element pre-existing its sensible appearance, and circulating between bodies (cfr. *The Movement as Living Non-Body*).

(*Third*). The movement might circulate between bodies, and on different parts of the body. However, each body is made up of *zones*, and the movement is affected by its morphology. Similarly to the weather, the movement is affected at each instant by *clima* of the body on which it appears, the morphology through which it travels. The movement does not appear *ex nihilo* on the body, nor does it travel unchanged from elsewhere: it recreates itself at each instant, through the body on which it appears. The movements of a dancing body undo the dichotomy between autochthony and migration.

(*Fourth*). The dancing body is the experience of two inseparable lives (the body, the movements) merged in an interdependent communication. We cannot isolate the movement, nor the body. It is the place of a perpetual interconnection. Furthermore, it is a public body hosting the interconnection of different lives, well beyond simply the body and the movements. The body is affected by the weather in the space, the texture in which it moves, and through which we see the movements of the other; it is touched – both in the motility and in the vision – by the cold light of the dawn, or the foggy humidity of a summer night. It is touched by the atmosphere, and while dancing it moves the air and the atmosphere interacting with it.

(*Fifth*). The dancing body is not simply affected by the atmosphere, but it affects it, and by doing so it blurs the spatial limits of choreography: an expanded choreography, not intended here in a conceptual sense, but rather in a physical one. What are the spacial limits of the choreography? Is there a movement outside the body? What is part of it, and what is not? A porous dancing body, that loses the clear limit of *a* body; that challenges the perception of this body I call ‘mine’.

(*Sixth*). A last life land belongs to the space of the dancing body: the gaze of the spectator is there, on the public body of the dancer. At the core of the darkness of the stage, or in the middle of the atmosphere of an open air performance, the dancing body is place in which we gather, through our simultaneous gazes. We are all looking there, at a series of movements that move the atmosphere we are part of; at a fragment of body that connects us from afar. We are there together, inside a space in which we are entangled without knowing.

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Kinaesthetic Transference

– Production of Presence

By Snelle Ingrid Hall

Sometimes when working with dance, in rehearsal or in a workshop, a special feeling of everything coming together occurs that dancers often refer to as the “ah-feeling”. There seems to be an interconnectivity and exchange on a sensorial level actively informing the experience of the material for those attending. The experience could be described as both sublime and embodied, often resulting in a certain vitality and energy of the space. It is complex, possibly involving everything from neuroscience, collective imagination to aesthetics, but also obvious, or plain simple, like just saying “yes”. This could be an example of kinaesthetic transference within a situation, a topic that seems to have found a new actuality in the discourse of art – in dance, as well as other disciplines – in later years, often in parallel to the interest and investigation in to affect. Being a dancer and choreographer myself, as well as a frequent audience member, I am intrigued by questions of what is actually going on when transmitting through movements and the body. The term *kinaesthetic* brings to the surface a contradictory feeling of bodily experienced knowledge – and simultaneously a difficulty articulating this knowledge and experience into comprehensive thoughts. As I am writing, language strikes me as disturbingly linear, with its defined words, its grammar, and its conformity to linearity in written form, compared to the rhizome of the body, with its contradictory mess of experiences, expressions and communication in all directions and many layers. When attempting to organise some of my thoughts on kinaesthetic transference around examples from dance, I find the “ah” to be a good reminder that these experiences exist – at least in part – outside of language. The “ah” is not only a practical and effective way of framing the complexity of a shared experience, but also actually an extra-linguistic and quite precise description of a situation not quite graspable in language.

Kinaesthesia and Western dance practices

It might be obvious, but it is still important to emphasise; kinaesthesia is not in any way exclusive to dance. It is a sense all living creatures possess and need – including plants. The term was coined by the neurologist Henry Charlton Bastian in 1880, as a development of the term “muscle sense”, in a time when knowledge of our nervous system was escalating. In the development of neuroscience this ability is now mostly referred to as proprioception, being what many think of as our “sixth sense”; the ability to know our body’s movements and position in space. Different from the senses drawing information from our environment – seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching – proprioception, as well as our sense of balancing, turns inwards, and differs also by not being associated with a specialised organ such as ears, eyes, nose or skin. It functions as an ongoing feedback loop between the brain and nerve endings in our fascia, muscles, ligaments and bones. (Pearce 2010, 63:73-78) The fields of neuroscience and neurobiology are rapidly expanding – and something I know little about. My point here is simply to state that dance and movement have an explicit material side to them.

Within dance and choreography this materiality might be emphasised to a greater or lesser degree, and it is *also* clear that the same materiality is not so obviously separated from feelings, thoughts, experiences of meaning, and so on. Ever since Socrates, and manifested further through Christianity and the philosophy of Descartes, the West has struggled to overcome the division of body and mind. We all know Descartes's *Cogito ergo sum*, I think therefore I am, but as author Siri Hustvedt, who is also highly regarded in the field of neurology, discusses in her essay "The Delusions of Certainty", we don't really know how our mind – our thoughts, emotions and reflections on experiences – relates to our materiality.

The truth is that people do not agree on the mind. There is no single theory about what it is. Confusion reigns, and not only among those who rarely think about the mind-body problem. Scientists, philosophers, and scholars of all kinds frequently clash over this question. The battles go under different names, but there are many struggles over consciousness – what is it and why people have it at all. (Hustvedt 2016, 153)

This in-between zone is where, in my opinion, some of our contemporary dancers and choreographers operate, oscillating between many possible realities and paradigms. In our time there seems to be a growing interest within the performing arts for neuroscience; artists exploring ideas of the mirror neuron mechanism, kinaesthetic empathy, perception of space and time, and intersubjectivity, to name just a few – often in combination with investigations into the limitations of language and meaning and emphasising the experience of the audience members.

Even though kinaesthesia obviously has a conscious side to it, making it possible to develop our bodily skills and awareness, many of us do not seem to pay much attention to this sense. Given that kinaesthesia is clearly at the core of dancing, my assertion is that, for a long time, Western choreography was not very interested in exploring kinaesthesia in aesthetic and imaginary ways – or at least not to invest in its particularities as artistic potential. Somehow, the kinaesthetic was always "just there" as part of the dancing body, while the art of dance was concerned with the visual, the musical, the structural, the emotional, the representational, the intellectual, and so on. Traditionally, there has been a division in the art of dance between dance and choreography, and between dancer and choreographer, although in practice they overlap, often to a large degree. On the other hand, in dance pedagogy and dance practices proprioception is often what it is mostly about; how to fine-tune the body and the *experience* of the body and the movements in relation to others and time and space. Although through very different methodologies, this is valid for form-based techniques, somatic-oriented practices as well as rhythmic dance.

Interestingly enough, sometimes in form-based dance training, such as ballet or modern techniques, this kinaesthetic sense seems to be disturbed by the methodology of self-correction through the use of mirror. Many dance educators and students have struggled with how to actually solve the challenge of fully embodying the poses and movements, the opposite resulting in a somewhat stiff and animated style of posing and moving. The visual domain seems to take over; you have to either watch in the mirror, or imagine yourself visually, to sense what you are doing. It feels like not having immediate access to the sensation of your body and movements, and not being completely synchronised in time. Like a certain alienation or a sort of doubling – a very concrete way of simultaneously experiencing yourself as subject and object (sometimes the latter being dominant).

Somatic dance practices enter from the other end of the spectrum, prioritising the sensation of the interior of the body when developing practices for dance. This includes releasing tension, working actively with the force of gravity, and addressing and exploring your own physiology. Many of these practices grew out of the ideas of the collective group of the Judson Dance Theatre in New York in the sixties, who abandoned the aesthetics of fixed form and explicit representation – a development in clear contrast to the previous dominance of formalism and/or expressionism in modern dance. The work was seen as a democratisation of dance, exploring pedestrian movements and alternative performative formats. Dance practices were also developed out of intellectual ideas, such as Yvonne Rainer's *The Mind is a Muscle*, as well as drawing from other movement traditions, such as, for example, aikido, in relation to Steve Paxton developing contact improvisation.

In short, contact improvisation is a duet form based on different approaches to a shared point of contact. It demands a reading of gravity and space through the senses of balancing, kinaesthesia and touch, and the practice can take you into a deep experience of flow. It is, as a whole, centred on observing the presence and listening for what is coming next; staying open for opportunities of momentum, pauses and so on. A much-used practice within contact improvisation is the *Small Dance*, where you balance the body for quite a while, noticing the micro-movements continuously going on inside of you. One of the pioneers of contact improvisation, Nancy Stark Smith, sometimes asks the participants to face where they were born during the *Small Dance*, as if proposing an immediate anchoring in space and memory to his or her own history.

The Western modern dance scene preceding the Judson Dance Theater had a predominantly "choreographic" approach to dance; structured, formalistic, representative and to a degree narrative. There were, of course, exceptions: the emergence of the African-American modern dance scene with pioneers such as Katherine Dunham and, some years later, Pearl Primus emphasised a more direct and embodied dancing, inducing social change and empowerment into American contemporary dance. Both Dunham and Primus were academics as well as dancers, researching African-American dance traditions.

It is also interesting to be reminded of the work of dance pioneer Isadora Duncan who preceded the Judson Dance Theater by some 50 years. Duncan, inspired by Nietzsche – one of few philosophers emphasising dance – argued for a Dionysian way of expressing and realising the self through dance and the body, embracing emotions and instincts. Even if Duncan's aim, according to dance researcher Kimerer L. Lamote, was to install a "new religion" not hostile to the celebration of the body and the earthly life, her work for a large part seemed to be based on kinaesthetic transference as a non-representative expression of this Dionysian power:

(...) what Duncan discerned in the undulating lines of Greek dancing echoes what she also found in Nietzsche's writings: a celebration of the inherent creativity of bodily beings. What she claimed to have seen in the Greek figures was not the truth of the body or of the infinite per se. What she saw were images – kinetic images – images that employ bodily movement as a medium in which humans generate images of themselves as participants in what their movements represent as a 'universal Dionysian movement'. (...) She intended her dancing to communicate participation in this experience – to effect in dancers and spectators alike a 'magic transformation'(...). (Lamothe 2006, 115)

Duncan argued that “a body embodies its own intelligence; (...)persons must learn to empty their minds into the spaces of their physical consciousness(...)”. Moreover, she built her pedagogy largely on basic movements such as walking, running, skipping and leaping, pointing out that her students had to learn to move naturally in order to adjust their movements from within, thus accessing a coordination of physical and mental awareness – in the sense of *becoming* themselves. (Lamothe 2006, 132-133) Methodically, this is surprisingly close to the development 50 years later in regard to giving value to the body, basic movements and the kinaesthetic transference as a mode of relating. Nonetheless, Duncan’s emphasis on subjectivity was in clear contrast to, for example, Steve Paxton:

I stress that the dancers are people not in the social sense but in the animal sense in this kind of dancing, (...) that they should just be there as animals, as bundles of nerves, as masses and bones... touching the other bundle and letting that be the work. (Paxton 2004) (Cvejić 2015)

Dealing with the world in a difficult time

I see here a link to our own contemporaneity. Together with the aforementioned renewed interest in neuroscience, some choreographers and dancers also seem to further develop the ideas from the sixties and seventies, but from other and contemporary perspectives. This might be triggered from the new ecological, political and social situation; a collapse in stability that demands approaches other than the representative. Some common traits seem to be an orientation towards body, affects, audience, uselessness, and presence.

In the title of this essay, I am citing literary scholar Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, who has formulated an extensive critique of the exclusive dedication to interpretation and attribution of meaning in Western humanities. Gumbrecht suggests a rethinking of this practice:

Now what would it mean – and what would it take – to put an end to the age of the sign? What would it mean – and what would it take – to end metaphysics? It can certainly not mean that we would abandon meaning, signification, and interpretation.(...) It would mean to try and develop concepts that could allow us, in the Humanities, to relate to the world in a way that is more complex than interpretation alone, that is more complex than only attributing meaning to the world (or, to use an older topology, that is more complex than extracting meaning from the world). (Gumbrecht 2004, 52)

I read in Gumbrecht a deeply felt need to suggest alternatives in a world facing severe challenges. One way of dealing with these big questions is to admit that we really do not know, we have to empty ourselves to facilitate new thoughts (easier said than done). We might have to address and *experience* exactly that what *cannot* be interpreted, as interpretation is only possible within what we know. As a consequence we need to confront and empathise with what is outside of (or in the outskirts of) language. Kinetic transference anchors us to that what can be felt and shared, not necessarily understood, in and through our bodies. It has the ability of shaking our foundations – producing presence and change. To speculate further; resisting the formulation of a direct critique towards the social or political, which would unavoidably invite interpretation, and instead staying within the realm of uselessness, art holds a potential for an immanent politics of a possible future.

In some contemporary artworks, a thematic occurs of equating the living human body with other objects, or desubjectifying it, in order to investigate the materiality of the living as well as the non-living. New materialism is an interdisciplinary field crossing humanities and natural science, and can be seen as a critique of the non-sustainable hierarchy of humans as supreme to other kind of material. The materiality addressed is relational and plural and sets out to put an end to the division between the natural and social worlds, and has nothing to do with the kinds of objectification dancers know all too well; the dancer as object for the gaze of desire. I am not suggesting that contemporary dancers and choreographers are attempting to illustrate a theory in fashion. On the contrary, some performances propose strategies that add considerably to these discussions, as well as addressing them in a way to be felt and experienced directly.

Sometimes these thematics propose a specific kind of poesis that occurs almost as meditations, or opportunities to dwell connectively. As examples, they might be proposed as affects – intensities producing alterations – as emptying of a motif by working with repetition or duration, by emphasising the tactile or challenging the language through deconstruction or poetry.

In her book *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance* (2011), choreographer and dance researcher Susan Leigh Foster contributes vastly to both a historical and present development and relationship to kinaesthesia. In line with Gumbrecht, Foster asks: “Are there techniques of knowledge production that invite us to imagine the other without presuming knowledge of the other?” (Foster 2011, 14) Stating the weak position of the body in Western thought, and also choreography, Foster’s emphasis is on the current need for different strategies, suggesting a further development of the concept of *kinaesthetic empathy*, coined by dance researcher Deidre Sklar, reminding her readers that the term empathy was developed by German aestheticians seeking to describe and analyse art, especially painting and sculpture. They argued for the necessity of a *bodily* empathy relating to experiencing art, long before the term was swallowed up by psychology. (ibid.: 9-10) The notion of kinaesthetic empathy draws on the idea that we can recognise something of ourselves in other bodies, or even other materialities: “The notion of empathy then theorizes the potential of one body’s kinaesthetic organization to infer the experience of another.” (ibid.: 175) This certainly brings to the centre the audience’s embodied experience and performance as a site and situation of relationships.

HOODS and Diorama

Choreographer Ingri Fiksdal has, over the timespan and projects of her doctoral research project at Oslo Academy of the Arts (2013-18), worked on isolating affective movements by emptying the subjectivity of the performers. The performance *HOODS* (2014) is performed in a black box theatre with no defined audience areas. The work is performed by dancers, audience and life-sized puppets. Before entering the performance space the audience members are dressed up in costumes; wide layered textiles, veils covering the faces, looking the same as the performers and the puppets. In the ambient space of sound, light and textiles it is difficult to tell who or what belongs to which group. Some of the puppets are connected to the performers’ bodies and it is surprisingly difficult to tell a puppet from a person. The movements are kept simple, repetitive, some resemble contact improvisation; rolling, supporting, leaning in pairs and other constellations. *Diorama* (2017), in contrast, takes place outdoors; there is no defined space. It is winter, by the waterside, and somewhat cold. This time there is no confusion about the audience. They are seated in a long row,

not as performers, but as land art. The audience is watching a nature/culture scenario interspersed with performative elements; some rather large lumps of glittery material. These object/performers are not recognisable as human shapes. But there are other performers: birds, boats, waves, clouds, natural light, wind, temperature, dogs, visitors – and music/sound composition. Almost nothing is happening, but after a while it seems like there is a great deal taking place: a police boat drifting by, a bird that seems to have taken a role as audience member, some children playing for a while. After a while new lumps further away come into sight. The lumps are moving very slowly, some are not moving, and one is getting into the water. Eventually, the lumps have sort of gathered and, slightly unsynchronised, they rise to an upright position, only to dissolve again.

In both *HOODS* and *Diorama* the subjectivity of the performers is totally withdrawn. There is an important distinction here. The performers are, I believe, as individuals and experts of what they are doing, extremely important for the realisation of the work, in terms of commitment, contributions, and precision, to mention just a few aspects. But the work is *performed* by affects, by movements – by human and non-human alike. The sense of kinaesthetic transference was, on my part profound – and the beauty of *Diorama* striking. So what is Fiksdal addressing? When directing my thoughts into the analytical, I might see references, translating the aesthetics into concepts of our time. Ritualistic, post-Anthropocene, post-dance, questions of materiality, affect, or expanded choreography. But what made both of the works so strong was that I was hit by a consuming and strongly bodily felt *nothingness*. A sensation corresponding with Lyotard's discussion on the connection in aesthetics between the *now* and the *sublime* in his essay "The Sublime and The Avant Garde" where he describes the intensification of now evoking a threat of nothing more to come. (Lyotard 2008) Fiksdal's works are not representational by themselves. In our overly stimulated social situation, this is remarkable.

Black, No Title and Oslo

Choreographer and performer Mette Edvardsen mostly presents solo works. She is a trained dancer, but her physical expression is downscaled to a minimum. She also, to a large degree, explores language in relation to space. Edvardsen has, in several works, activated the audience's imagination by playing with what is *not there*. This has triggered my curiosity when it comes to a kinaesthetic experience of imagination. Her piece *Black* (2011) was when I noticed this the first time. The space is empty, but by walking around and naming objects that are not there, and actions in connection to the objects, the space is doubled in our imagination. The naming is intense and rhythmic, most of the time she repeats the word eight times, so that the syntax is almost gone. I *see* Edvardsen in the empty space, but I *sense* the objects she places out; language has turned into material. In *No Title* (2014) she does something similar. Edvardsen is walking around the empty space, mostly blindfolded, actualising objects and concepts not there, but then withdrawing them again by adding the word "gone", creating a glitch in time and a bodily felt confusion. At one point she becomes concrete; with chalk she draws a line on the floor, and then tries to wipe it away, but she partly misses it because she cannot see. Again the text is rhythmic and sometimes on the verge of meaning:

Line is - gone.
The distinction between writing and drawing is - gone.
The distinction between thinking and doing is - gone.
Distinction is - gone.
Between is - gone.
In-between is - gone.
Details are - gone.
The thing that I still wanted to say is - gone.
The things that do not speak are - gone.
Things we are unable to speak about are - gone.
Things we do not see are - gone.
Things we must not see are - gone.
Will be - gone.
Will have been - gone. (Edvardsen 2014)

In the piece *Oslo* (2017) Edvardsen has left the performance space entirely, instead she is placed in the audience reading a text. It is a meta-text about what is taking place on stage. At the same time there is a live streaming of the performance as radio. The piece is challenging because of the confrontation with the empty space, the darkness, the void. There seems to be a kinaesthetic transference of the void itself. When on another occasion listening to the performance on the radio, it feels completely different. I am surprised to discover that there was actually a vague narrative in the text. When in the theatre, the sensation of the void took over completely, emptying the language of meaning. Edvardsen's investigation into the materiality of both language and imagination proposes an "in-between" not graspable for interpretation. Edvardsen discusses this relation in regard to the notion of an expanded field of dance and choreography:

(...) this interest in text and writing is not a shift towards another discipline or art form (theatre, literature), but within the field and practice of dance and choreography. What is text? Where does the text take place? What is this notion of the written, and how does it relate the body in time and space? (Edvardsen 2017, 219)

Anatomie

Choreographer Anne Juren proposes yet another very different concept in her performance *Anatomie* (Juren 2017) – literally moving the performance inside our bodies, with the help of imagination. We are entering a prepared studio/stage, some objects and mini-scenarios are placed around the room; I remember it as sand, rice, water, stones, some fruits and the like. We are asked to lie down on mats on the floor. The situation is a little confusing as it resembles a part of a release dance or yoga practice. With a soothing voice Juren guides us into relaxation. We are encouraged to let go of our weight, and feel the support from the floor. I remember expecting a sensorial session based on the objects I had seen in the room. I expected to tune into sound, maybe to get a touch of different textures and temperatures. And I remember wanting to fall asleep, lying down in the semi-dark room. I cannot remember the transition from this familiar situation of guided relaxation into what I perceived as the performance. At some point Juren started to manipulate my imagination, shifting the situation from a comfortable presence in my own subjective anatomy, to the body becoming a site for glimpses of stories – some of them funny, some of them rather grotesque.

I remember a hand entering through my ribcage, holding and massaging my organs, a child's hand finding its way into my intestinal tubes, an insect entering my inside, the skin of my legs being peeled off, my muscles being separated from my bones, an eyeball held between teeth, a tongue without a body(?) licking different parts of me. At times I felt extremely disturbed, almost sick, by the violence happening in and with my own body, at times I found it amusing. Sometimes Juren accompanies her story with rather telling sounds, like a radio theatre, adding layers to the work. It lasted for about an hour and left me with an experience of having my body deconstructed. My experiences within somatic dance work have certainly taken me on journeys inside my body, but not in this fictional way. This is the *Small Dance* going totally wild. It is interesting how Juren initially managed to anchor the awareness of my body in a way that I had the feeling of no escape possible when it changed into fiction, no chance of "seeing" it like a movie from the outside. It was happening inside of me. The roles underwent a complete reversal, I was no longer audiencing Juren in the performance space, my body was instead turned into a site of performative actions, unfolding in my inner space as a transformative experience.

I am thinking of Foster pointing out that the development of the concept of kinaesthesia and cartography was going on at the same time. (Foster 2011, 9) In *Anatomie* I had a strong experience of being "landscape"; as if Juren was working out from a map of my bodily landscape, my inner space. However, the performance also addressed the subjective me as nature, as biology; vulnerable and strong, diverse, violated, dissected, beautiful, comforted, material, present, abandoned, dissolving into putrefaction. A tiny piece in the bigger picture. Post-human.

The "ah"

Re-experiencing these performances through writing, I am thinking that kinaesthetic transference manifests the body as a generator and a ground of resistance: the body and its powers to act, to transform. We need a re-appropriation of our bodies and their capacity for resistance and expansion of both the individual and collective, and somehow I find the exemplified performances to manifest the body as a receptacle of capacities and resistances. "Although partial and one of many narratives that might be told about how bodies feel and how they feel about each other, the ecological and political crises of our times call out for synthesizing perspectives on our situation (...)" (Foster 2011, 14) I think that is well put. At the same time, to encourage the "ah-feeling", we need to remember that we don't know, and actually need to seek the void. One suggestion is by putting our bodies into motion:

I'm often asked what I think about as I run.(...)What exactly *do* I think about when I'm running? I don't have a clue.(...) I just run. I run in a void. Or maybe I should put it the other way: I run in order to *acquire* a void. But as you might expect, an occasional thought will slip into this void. (Murakami 2009)

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On (the Impossibility of) Curating Affects

By Satu Herrala

My main task as a curator lies in creating conditions for the potential of something or some things to happen. Something is a thing that we can perceive, recognize and be affected by; something that contributes to how the world is felt.

Suspended in-between

I see art as a field giving forms to ideas, questions and tensions that cannot necessarily be named but can be felt; a practice in which forces turn into forms that can again transmit forces, but perhaps different ones, as one can never fully be in control of what those forms that become artworks actually transmit. Together with my colleagues I set up support structures in which artworks can be produced and together with the artists to facilitate appropriate contexts where they can be shared with their respective audiences. I am particularly interested in artworks able to generate an in-betweenness that can make visible things that are not falling into already existing categories but instead alter ways of perceiving and understanding.

I will look at Spinoza's definition of affect, "ability to affect and be affected", in two experiments and examples of my work as a curator. They are both artistic discursive events that situate themselves in the spectrum between artistic and political spheres. In those events, together with the collaborating artists and curators, we have aimed to stage a creative tension between the artistic and the political and to see if and how something could move or leak between the two spheres. What is important here is the assemblage of bodies and identities sharing a space and time of the event, making visible their positions while creating a tension where something could be moving between these rather fixed positions. This movement or transition has a quality that can be felt. Could the dynamic relations between bodies, identities and their positions affect the capacities of the bodies to feel and even to act?

Affective bodies, affective environments

Make Arts Policy Summit

The first example – *Make Arts Policy Summit* – held at the City Hall in Helsinki in the context of the Baltic Circle International Theatre Festival 2014, and created in collaboration with Dana Yahalomi, Eva Neklyaeva and Terike Haapoja, staged Finnish politicians from 10 different parties to present their agendas for the future of Finland's arts policy in front of a large audience primarily consisting of artists, other professionals from the field of arts and policy-makers. The audience had a possibility to influence the politicians' speeches with cards that required them to either 'be concrete' or to explain 'why?' they made such a statement. When enough of the same cards were

up in the air a band sharing the stage with the speakers started to play on top of the politician's speech, covering their voice and indicating them to reply to the demand posed by the public. This set-up empowered the audience to perform a position and to have agency in the situation.

The roles of the artist and the politicians were obscured when the politicians were given the possibility to use artistic means in their presentations. Some of them played music or read an excerpt of a play during their presentation. One decided to sing his entire speech. There was also a scene on the same stage in which actors embodied politicians and performed a transcription of dialogues on art that had taken place in the Finnish Parliament at different times over the past 100 years or more, such as debating on national versus cosmopolitan art in 1877 or debating whether or not they agree with a homoerotic *Tom of Finland* image on a stamp from 2014.

Many artists and cultural workers, journalists, and policymakers from the City's Cultural Office and Ministry of Culture and Education, and other experts attended the *Make Arts Policy Summit*. The event managed to raise a great deal of media attention and spark discussion about the Finnish arts policy as well as on the Summit itself, which was blurring the lines between the constituents and their representatives. There was a felt-sense of the bodies in the audience moving into "augmented state of capacitation" (Brian Massumi) fueled by the agency given to them with the simple tool of raising cards and the possibility of interrupting and influencing the speeches of the politicians when the tool was activated in unison in large numbers. Artists often feel powerless when it comes to arts policy and arts funding and the event managed to create something like Spinoza's idea of "common notions" that, according to Massumi could be described as "agreements between bodies that allow the power of the individual body to be enhanced through the forming of relations".



Make Arts Policy Summit. Photo: Noora Geagea

The relational field here is two-fold: it is the linkages between the bodies acting in concert as well as the event's suspension in-between the sphere of art and the sphere of politics, that itself obscures the identities and positions performed by the different agents attending the Summit. The performative tools designed by the Summit's director, Dana Yahalomi from the Public Movement research body, and utilized at the event made it possible to stage these tensions and activate the agencies between the constituents and the representatives.

Vuosttaš álbmogat

The second artistic discursive format was a program of works and events that took place throughout the six days of Baltic Circle Festival in 2017. *Vuosttaš álbmogat* (North Saami, in English *First Nations*) was a commission work curated by Pauliina Feodoroff and it functioned as an artistic platform to advocate for indigenous rights and self-determination in Finland and Nordic countries as well as to foster the recovery, revival and rebirth of indigenous cultures of the region. The program consisted of a documentary theater piece by Feodoroff in collaboration with Maryan Abdulkarim and S. Nousiainen; an exhibition *Maadtoe* by Anders Sunna and Michiel Brouwer portraying the past and present forms of exploitation that the Swedish government keeps forcing on Sámi lands and people; a documentary film-screening of first-nation-led environmental activism; a club combining ancient indigenous music traditions and contemporary electronic dance music as well as a two-day gathering in the form of a Skolt-Sámi village council meeting focusing on restoring the lands and waters with the help of traditional and scientific knowledge, and examining the role of contemporary art practices within the struggle.

Vuosttaš álbmogat operated with completely different strategies than *Make Arts Policy Summit* and posed a more complex set of contradictions. On the one hand it functioned as a platform of self-determination in the institutional art field dominated by discourses of the colonizing culture. However, on the other, it embodied the contradiction at stake by situating the platform of First Nations rights in the context of a state-funded theater and performance festival run by white, Finnish women with very little prior knowledge about Finland's colonial history and current state-policies that keep the Sámi oppressed. The contradiction set a tone for the entire process of making *Vuosttaš álbmogat* happen from the moment of inviting Feodoroff to work on the commission to its realization and beyond.

How does the dominant privileged mode of existence restrict and other precarious modes of existence? How can we work together and negotiate power over a gap between the colonizing culture and the colonized? What does it mean in practice to be an ally? What are the consequences of being an ally and the contradictions of adopting that position? These open-ended questions pierced through the working and learning process, which took 1.5 years and concerned the whole festival team.

The conditions in which the artworks are created and shared matter – the quality of attention and care are crucial. They provide a background for what the artworks and events can become and attune bodies according to their tendencies. The conditions of making and the actual space in which *Vuosttaš álbmogat* unfolded turned into an affective environment where the "ability to affect and be affected" manifested in multidirectional negotiations between bodies, identities, histories, practices, resources, languages, forces and forms.

Path of the possible

I recall an experience in my life that I still consider as my main motivation for working in the field of arts today. I was watching a performance *Song and Dance* by Mark Tompkins in Akademietheater in Vienna in July 2004 when something that took place on stage made me think: I did not know this is possible but now I do. The realm of possible in my understanding had expanded or perhaps sunk deeper into another sediment I did not know existed underneath the surface of my capacity to perceive. The transition from the impossible to the possible was something I could understand and feel in that particular event. It was rooted in my body as a “reactivation of the past in a passage towards a changed future” (Massumi).

In their text *Dancing in the Second Matter* Daniel Blanga Gubbay and Lars Kwakkenbos reflect on the impossible becoming possible before we can think of its possibility. They refer to Elie Ayache, who writes: “Events that are really unexpected create their own possibilities. Only by occurring – and not before they occur or regardless of whether they occur – do they create the path that the meta-physician, if he wishes, can retrace in order to see how they possibly occurred.” Blanga Gubbay and Kwakkenbos propose “doing before thinking” as a strategy of creating the possible within the experience itself: exploring what we cannot think, yet shaping the matter we do not know yet, dancing the moves we have not made yet, saying the words we have not formed yet.

How can we create conditions to practice “doing before thinking” together? How can we attune the bodies to a tendency to act prior to knowing what exactly to do? I see the “ability to affect and be affected” as a porous state in which the bodies share a space, form relations and experience the intensity of their coming together. It takes a huge amount of trust to stay there. It’s important to allow contrasting alternatives to co-exist without imposing or overriding one over the other. Blanga Gubbay and Kwakkenbos invite the unknown to be reclaimed not as otherness but as otherwise. “Doing before thinking” unfolds in the space between the bodies that by embracing the otherwise make the unimaginable occur.

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Curators Paulina Feodoroff and Satu Herrala in conversation with the artists Anders Sunna and Michiel Brouwer.



Photo: Tani Simberg

Intro

The top half of the gallery wall is covered by an enormous glossy photograph that Thomas Hirschhorn has pixelated, leaving a checkerboard of flesh tones and deeply saturated squares of red. Below it is a photograph of a dead man, naked to the waist, his arms splayed out over his head. Two pairs of disembodied legs appear without their pants at the top of the frame, cropped at the waist as though to reveal what is withheld from view by the trousers of the photograph's central subject: torn clothing bunched at the ankles, bloody knees. It is possible, due to the level of photographic detail, to discern blood stains on what little grass has managed to grow in the packed earth beneath the corpses.

Pixel Collage is an ongoing series of high-production photo-montages made by Hirschhorn that juxtapose fashion photography and photographic journalism from some of the world's most intense conflict zones. The appropriated fashion photography is partially obscured, while the images of graphic death are *de-pixelated*, shown in vivid relief. "My engagement in the problematic of 'pixelation' and 'de-pixelation' comes from the decision to see and look at the world as it is, and to insist in doing so", Hirschhorn wrote in a statement accompanying a recent exhibition of the series at Gladstone Gallery in New York in October 2017. He continued:

I believe that 'de-pixelation', 'pixelation', blurring or masking and furthermore censorship or self-censorship, is a growing and insidious issue, also in the social media today. I don't accept that, under the claim of 'protecting' - protecting me, protecting the other - the world is pixelated in my place. I want, I can, I need and I must use my own eyes to see everything in our world, as an act of emancipation.¹

Pixel Collage is violent insofar as Hirschhorn's desire to *see* is articulated against the dead bodies of people from whom consent cannot be requested, and whose brutal violation has been spectacularly monetized without that consent. The ease with which Hirschhorn uses subaltern bodies, the ease with which he generalizes his own desire at the expense of others' human dignity, and the refusal on the part of the artist to consider whether the economic dimension of the work might attenuate his grandiose claim to personal emancipation, are all marked by an arrogance that makes of him an easy target for moral outrage. Nevertheless, Hirschhorn is articulating a political claim for representation that underpins many discussions in art discourse today: let us see the world as it really is. Let us give up our complacency and confront the Truth, figured forth by the dead or dying or raped—and very often racialized—bodies.

Further still: under such conditions of pervasive un-truthfulness, what purpose do oblique and abstract choreographies and forms serve? Why indulge in the pleasure of "un-engaged" aesthetics?

Is there any political role for the “uselessness” of art that is not simply an escape for some from their responsibility for the misery of others? What is the artists’ responsibility to participate in a demonstrable, literal sense in order to counter the violence of patriarchy and white supremacy under late capitalism? This debate is often reduced, as Hirschhorn so lucidly illustrates, to whether art is showing what really exists. It assumes that art’s most political purpose is to give us the world *as it is*, literally and directly. Unmediated by ideas.

The example Hirschhorn sets also illustrates the difficulty with the idea of usefulness, namely that the term implies sufficient knowledge of a given system that a generalizable judgement can be made. The person enunciating use-value must be in a position to establish cause and effect not only for him- or herself but for a general audience.

Yet the bodies in a position to establish cause and effect are defined by historical circumstances. Bodies marked by slavery, by colonization, by their female-ness, by their deviance from socio-sexual norms—none of these bodies were allowed the same prerogative to establish the “facts” or to evaluate the use value of a given object or structure. They were not historically granted full access to the public space of debate, the democratic agora, and therefore their structural analysis has been seen as partial, personal, intimate, and psychological rather than lucid articulations of what might be useful to consider in the context of social change.

For example: the kinds of spaces that are “useful” for queer and gay cruising may not be “useful” for middle-class mothers of small children. The kinds of objects and representations that are “useful” to engendering productive public debate about the role of women in society in North American contexts may not be “useful” for women in the Gulf and on the Arabian Peninsula. In each case, there are objects and images and forms of address that are useful to some, but their usefulness is contingent on context, on the specificity of the bodies involved, and on the histories of violence they have endured. The term drifts, unable to anchor itself objectively without fantasizing some universal common ground, some absolute set of values for all people everywhere.

What follows is an argument for gestures and objects, the purpose of which cannot be known in advance, and which may never be known. I will argue that forms that elude established categories of sense and non-sense are at the foundation of radical, egalitarian forms of democracy. This argument is based on the conviction that a binary distinction between useful and useless is analogous to the distinction between politics and aesthetics, and that both are dichotomous systems that exist to serve conservative paradigms of knowledge and collective life.

I. Usefulness, effectivity

One of the strongest arguments for the usefulness of art is related to responsibility. The curator and the artist are understood to be responsible for the classed and racial contexts for their work – this is especially true when a project takes place in or works with populations marginalized on the basis of socio-economic or cultural factors. This mandate led historian of social practice in art Grant Kester to favorably compare the role of the community-based art practitioner to that of the social worker on the basis of the skills, funding structures, and ameliorative goals both roles share. Their common aims are defined as “bringing about some transformation in the condition of individuals who are presumed to be in need.”² But Kester is also sanguine about the historical

context for those artists—and especially what Kester calls “community artists” in 1995—who claim to be able to identify with and thus be useful to communities to which they do not belong. Kester elaborates:

I’m interested here in a persuasive cultural mythology, grounded in romanticism, in which the artist is imagined as a kind of trans-historical shaman who has ostensibly sundered him or herself from all other social and cultural identities, privileges, and commitments. Freed of these bonds, artists are able to identify themselves with any and all other subjects - the poor, the homeless, etc. - and further, are able to feel their oppression and to express their pain and moral outrage.³

Kester’s point remains salient today, twenty-five years after its publication: the mandate to rehabilitate those who are perceived to be socio-politically injured with recourse to individualistic self-empowerment schemes rather than structural reform is fundamentally conservative. It is also a strategy to redirect funding, organizing initiative and creative energy into one-off events rather than systemic change. This understanding of the artist’s political role functions to reassure patrons and arts institutions and heroically minded artists that they are good people/organizations. If the real political object of this kind of art is the transformation of society into something more just, more accessible to all different kinds of people, a theory of art that enshrines a singularly brilliant artist and tasks him with giving voice to the powerless misunderstands the necessarily plural basis for equal access to representation, at the very least.

Art and architectural historian Miwon Kwon’s central argument in her book, *One Place After Another* from 2002, also tries to delineate the effect of an artwork. In her detailed analysis of the *Culture in Action* project curated by Mary Jane Jacobs in Chicago in 1993, Kwon contrasts “Invented Communities (temporary)” to “Invented Communities (ongoing)”. Because the first category is dependent on the institutional framework of the commissioning institution – in this case Sculpture Chicago – Kwon argues that it cannot sustain its political intervention beyond that framework. Further, she argues that because “both meaning and social relevance are circumscribed by the framework”, if the project dissipates at the end of the exhibition, its meaning and social relevance do as well.⁴

Yet this reliance on efficacy in its most narrow definition – quantitative change – conflicts with the indeterminacy of Kwon’s subsequent call for a projective practice. She argues that community is impossible, contingent on a void, and yet she simultaneously advocates a fixed sense of political effectivity. She relies on a notion of radical contingency selectively because she is still invested in the measurable impact of a work of art.⁵ Kwon’s recourse to effectivity assumes that even if the “community” is impossible, founded on a void, the criteria with which to judge political efficacy are not impossible, not founded on a void. Criteria for an artwork’s judgement can be objectively determined, because they can be related to a structural analysis of the social.

Despite the importance of Kester and Kwon’s respective critiques (especially in the US context) of the evangelical, quasi-fanatic hue to some community-engaged art practices, and despite their quite sensible call to let “communities” self-identify and self-represent—even be incoherent—I object to their certainty that art’s *effect on the viewer* can be evaluated using a binary system like effective/dissipated or politically conservative/politically radical.

The counter-argument is this: art cannot be reduced to the class identity of its makers, or to criteria that objectively define its usefulness or effectivity. Structural analysis in general and a

binary determination in particular cannot account for art's subjective, embodied, and disseminated meaning. Rosalyn Deutsche makes this point when she cautions against the reduction of an image's sense to the conditions that produced it. This move, in her view, assumes foundational meaning. She writes:

A similar logic underpins the idea that the politics of images can be reduced to the "conditions that produce them in the first place" and that changing these conditions is the *sine qua non* of public activity in the realm of visual culture. This reduction of an image's meaning to strictly external conditions echoes social theories that presuppose the existence of a foundation that not only forms the basis of but successfully governs all social meaning.⁶

In order for an image (or a subject, or a community) to be encapsulated with certainty, the wholeness of its constitutive elements must exist on some conceptual level. In order to establish that a relation between subjects means one thing, there has to be an objective standard to appeal to. Deutsche argues that when an image or the relations produced in an artwork are referred to an objective standard for determining political meaning – sustainability, measurable change, efficacy – and that standard is understood to be outside of art, a "a unique or privileged space of politics" is opened up. She continues her critique of this view of art on feminist grounds:

Feminisms have contested this image of politics since it has been mobilized historically to relegate gender and sexuality to mere auxiliaries of social relations thought to be more fundamentally political. Now, with stubborn circularity, this image of politics subordinates the feminist politics of images to a public space assumed to precede representation. When critics who endorse a practical aesthetics uphold this image, they diverge from the premise on which feminist critiques of representation helped to extend what I have called a democratic public space – the absence of absolute sources of social meaning.⁷

For Deutsche there is no democratic public space, and therefore no political space, that precedes representation.⁸ To claim that the political operates in a space preceding representation underestimates the extent to which representation is itself a political force. This is not to say that politics can be reduced to images and signs, but rather that images and signs produce politics because they produce the order of society.

When Deutsche claims that "feminist critiques of representation helped to extend . . . a democratic public space", she means that the feminism showed us the power of images and signs to force bodies into idealized forms and keep them in their assigned places within society's order. Images and signs are not reductions or abstractions of the world's material substrata – some place where "real" politics occur – rather they are the mechanism that regulates what is considered "real" and what is not.

Without sacralizing the artist-genius, without reinstating the alter of pure expressiveness, I want to give one example: Aretha Franklin, singing "A Natural Woman" at the Kennedy Center in 2015 to a crowded room that included the Obamas. Aretha Franklin letting her luxurious fur coat drop to the floor, throwing her hands in the air, bringing every single person in the room to their feet is the kind of aesthetico-political moment that cannot be tethered securely to any specific conflict because it figured forth an intersectional struggle.

Put otherwise: if the political is only thought of in terms of measurable efficacy, artwork *becomes* social work and is forced to perform within an epistemology of quantification. How much change?

Was it enough? These kinds of questions feel profoundly irrelevant in the context of Franklin's virtuosity. Her performance was a moment in which those thought to be uncountable by the hegemonic power structures were suddenly *those who were doing the counting* in a hyper-visible way. Questions about the usefulness (or uselessness) of the aesthetic register miss the point of Franklin's work, the form and significance of her presence on that stage, the significance of Barack Obama's display of emotion, and the histories of violence that are at play beneath the surface of the sparkling mass of bodies in the audience. Such questions cannot describe the transformation such performances have the power to inaugurate. Such questions obscure the possibility of transformation, try to tie it to "objective" categories; in a sense, the binary useful/useless when applied to art and aesthetics is a move to discipline form, in Michel Foucault's sense of that term.

II. Politics, Critical Art

The underlying assumption in the argument presented here goes well beyond art. *Politics* is not a stable category of action, it is not possible to know for sure who is enacting politics or where politics will take place. Following philosopher Jacques Rancière, I argue that politics produces a profound destabilization that counters any "natural" or strength-based understanding of the right to rule.

Politics is not, according to Rancière, an exercise of, or a struggle for, power. It is also not a theory of, or an investigation into, the grounds of power's legitimacy.⁹ Rather, politics is the *disjuncture* between systems of perception and *disagreement* about the distribution of roles within a social body.¹⁰ In Rancière's view, politics is *the relation* that defines human beings as subjects that gather around a contradiction. He refers to the gathering that both motivates and engenders politics as taking a/part: taking part, taking apart, partitioning.

Rancière arrives at this definition through a critique of the determined status of those who rule and are ruled, or those with power and those subjugated to power. Briefly summarized, his argument goes as follows: Plato, in Book III of the *Laws*, lays out a number of qualifications for the right to rule, the seventh of which is granted to one with no prior qualification other than the luck of the draw.¹¹ It is this seventh qualification that permits a rupture, in Rancière's view, because it permits no judgement about the qualification to rule—it simply grants it on the basis of luck.

Fellow French philosopher Claude Lefort's framework for radical democracy provides Rancière much of the intellectual scaffolding for his argument: Lefort proposes that the instigation of democracy created a void where the location of power used to be – namely in the monarch's body as God's chosen representative. He argues that this void was created when power was evacuated from the divine body of the monarch, into a conceptual social body made up of the "people." It is this void that allows for the conceptual indeterminacy of power's location crucial to the enactment of Plato's seventh qualification: the potential for anyone to rule, regardless of prior qualification, should chance dictate it.¹²

If power is evacuated from the monolithic body of the monarch only to be neatly assigned proportionately to sections of society (church, state, merchant classes, skilled labor, unskilled illiterate masses), then power is simply assigned according to a 'natural' hierarchy of birth and wealth in such a way that the right to rule is predetermined. The void Lefort proposes as the structural basis

for democracy is thus eliminated and replaced by the certainty that power is located to this degree in the church, to this degree in the state, and so on. In order for it to be possible that someone with no qualifications be in a position to rule, a certain degree of uncertainty about the location of power is necessary.

Politics, then, necessarily cannot take place if the location of the political is known, if the group of people capable of speaking politically is established ahead of time – there would be no rupture possible in the order of society if only acknowledged equals were capable of politics.¹³

The force that constantly acts to re-assign power neatly to established sections of society is what Rancière calls “the police”. The aim of the police is to maintain the established order by making invisible those who are not qualified to be counted as citizens and therefore unqualified to rule, while the aim of politics is to “lodge one world inside another”, to provoke a rupture in the way the police organizes society so as to uncover the void (politics), to point to the fact that the right to rule is not a matter of prior qualification.¹⁴ Politics is that which challenges exclusions from the existing order; that which seeks disrupt any established order so as to re-instate the uncounted, perpetually.

Rancière’s framework repositions politics as the examination of exclusion, or the negotiation of contradiction between one way of partitioning the social body and another. This means no community or discipline or set vocabulary can claim the political – it is by definition only rupture with the established order. Therefore, further, all discussions about the political efficacy of art and its usefulness in sustainable efforts towards social reform are missing the point that art is primarily capable of provoking a rupture in the way the structure of the world is perceived – and that this in itself is political.

The goal of politics is to maintain the instability of categories, to constantly remind us that there is no objective standard and that any claim to normativity is necessary but constitutively incomplete. It is therefore hypocritical to argue for “good” and “bad” political art as finite and objective categories when politically-engaged art is that which reasserts the *artificiality of qualification* at the level of society. Rosalyn Deutsche goes so far as to claim that uncontested evaluative criteria contain a latent claim to immutable universality – such as ‘taste’ or ‘good art’. She writes:

These standards are alternatively characterized as transcendent, natural, or consensual. And because they are attributed to an objective source, anyone who questions them is automatically placed outside the boundaries of the public and the aesthetic – indeed, outside “civilization.”¹⁵

It is precisely at the point that the relations produced by an artwork cease to be legible in the domain of art, cease to be qualitatively measurable by existing standards, that the possibility of rupture is inaugurated.

Rancière identifies two problems with how “critical art” is generally understood.¹⁶ First, simply explaining to the disempowered populations of the world their lack of power does not, in fact, empower them or rehabilitate their status.¹⁷ This is because most of these populations are already acutely aware of their disenfranchisement. Second, when art creates a sign that refers to the unacceptable structuring of power, it participates in that power’s desire to make all resistance symbolic, to assimilate it and thereby neutralize any threat posed by it. Rancière calls instead for “resistant appearances”, attestations to the intolerable that, because they are lodged between the

sphere of art and the sphere politics, neither simply document nor symbolically represent that which society should never accept.¹⁸

In this paradigm, critical art is simultaneously capable of both documenting and symbolically representing; and like opposite colors that visually vibrate when placed beside one another, the jarring contradiction saves them from slipping irrelevantly into either sphere. While art as a general category of production is in the business of defining the limits of the social through representation, critical art attests to the limitlessness of the social in its refusal to be subsumed entirely into either of the realms, politics or aesthetics. Despite its liminal status between the two logics of art, this third way must remain intelligible to both a political sphere of action and an artistic one – its foundation is a balancing act. For Rancière, the resulting tension produces critical art that is both legible as art and illegible as art, legible as politics and illegible as politics, in equal parts, simultaneously.¹⁹



Image Credit: Raumlabor Berlin

III. Case Study: *Eichbaumoper*

What does this “critical art” look like in practice? *Eichbaumoper*, a project by Raumlabor Berlin, appears to be successful in conservative political terms, and yet in order to recognize the transformation it enacts, I think it must be read as an intervention at the symbolic level. *Eichbaumoper* is transformative because it relies on what the body knows, which in the case of *Eichbaumoper* was a structurally invalidated form of knowing. I propose it as an example of artwork that requires

the viewer and aesthetic theoretician to abandon recourse to usefulness—not because it can't be argued for, but because it limits any deep apprehension of the project.

Eichbaum, or *oak tree* in German, is a subway and bus transit station off highway A40 between the cities of Mülheim and Essen in the region of Ruhr in northwestern Germany.²⁰ It was built in the 1970s as part of a large-scale infrastructure project for what would become an unrealized development in the area. Built as the precocious symbol for the modern German population's mobility, Eichbaum is now isolated by multi-lane highways on all sides. The station has gone from the idealistic forerunner of a seamless and industrious urban fabric between Mülheim and Essen to the dilapidated outpost of both in just thirty years. By the middle of the first decade of this millennium, Eichbaumoper had a reputation as a site for vandalism, rape, and assault.²¹

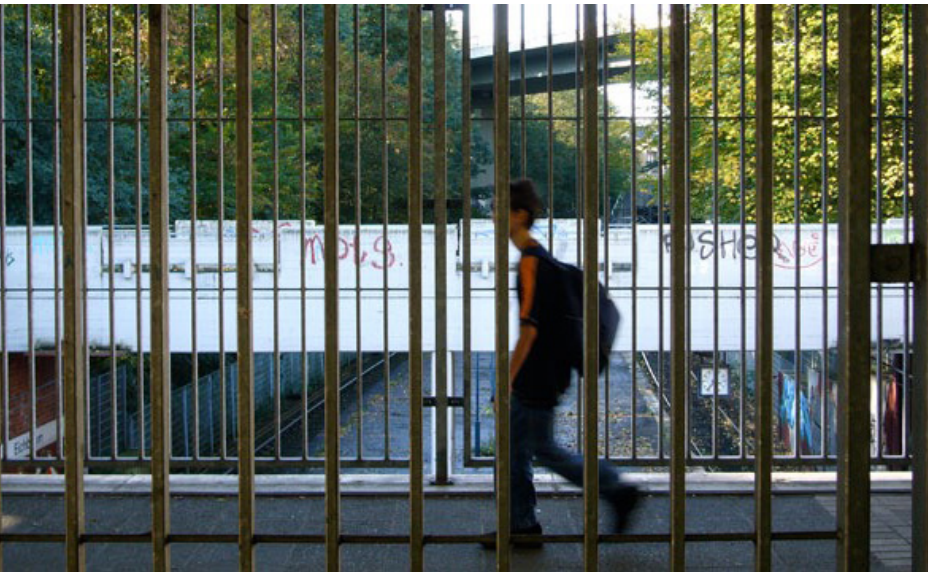


Image Credit: Raumlabor Berlin

David Bravo Bordas, an architect who reviewed the site's conditions for *publicspace.org*, noted that the local transportation department had tried a number of measures to improve the space's character, including "installing metal railings and video surveillance systems, [...] and] repainting the walls of the passageways when they were covered with graffiti."²² These measures failed due to the station's complex social and financial context. The once thriving industrial Ruhr region has been struggling for several decades to transform its economic base from mining and other heavy industries to modern service industries and education. The region has had difficulty both maintaining its population in the face of rising local unemployment and competing with professional opportunities offered by its urban neighbors, Mülheim and Essen. Bordas characterizes this as a density problem:

The run-down state and insecurity of the Eichbaum station are problems inherent to the low-density and thus not very intense urban model. The bleak, insecure nature of the low-density urban fabric arises to a great extent from the scant public presence and the low proportion of ratepayers in relation with the surface area of public land, thus considerably limiting capacity for investment in its maintenance.²³

In other words, Ruhr's low-density population produces its own insecurity. The lack of heavy traffic, or the region's insecurity at the socio-structural level, is reflected in the dilapidation of the Eichbaum station. It has come to be perceived by local residents as a deteriorated space and to be avoided whenever possible, further perpetuating affective disinvestment in the space.²⁴

To Raumlabor Berlin – an experimental architecture collective – Eichbaum station embodies the alienation that many in Germany and Northern Europe feel towards 1970s social architecture projects.²⁵ This alienation stems from a disconnect between the lived experience of this period's architectural plans and the utopian conceptual framework motivating a building's design. The problem of the Eichbaum station was already an aesthetic question; it had already failed to manifest its own coherent representation. "The idea was to give it an atypical function that would transform it into a landmark space capable of awakening a feeling of affinity between the regular users and local residents", writes Bordas. Raumlabor Berlin's intervention began, therefore, not from the building itself but from the alienation that pervaded it, a relationship the station's users had formed with it over time. They proposed a long-term project to transform the station into a temporary summer opera house, a place to attend with intention and anticipation as opposed to a place to move through ceaselessly, the means to some other destination. A space that had failed at the level of representation would be transformed through a shift in the surface of its social space.

In 2007, Jan Liesegang and Matthias Rick from Raumlabor took an interest in Eichbaum over the course of their research for *U(topie) 18*, a film project that took the U18 subway line, built in 1977 between Essen and Mülheim, as its theoretical point of departure. Local residents and transit users' testimonies were juxtaposed with testimonies from planners, politicians and business stakeholders.²⁶ The region of Ruhr was named the European Cultural Capital for 2010 and funding became available in 2009 for large-scale cultural projects aimed at urban transformation.²⁷ Raumlabor had already formulated the idea of reprogramming mass transit spaces and had executed a much more modest intervention in the town of Duisbülsen (also on the U18 transit line) in 2007, installing a temporary inflatable activity hub in the station for a series of walking tours through Duisbülsen for its own inhabitants. An opera in the Eichbaum station simply extended Raumlabor's existing interest in the exploration into the infrastructural systems' remnants.

Their Eichbaum intervention was formulated along two lines. Raumlabor invited artists, composers and musicians to develop formal responses to the space's aural and phenomenological conditions, examining how bodies moved through the station. This resulted in a series of opera performances during the summer of 2009. The collective also worked with local organizations to involve residents in writing the opera libretto by contributing their own experiences. Raumlabor describes the intention behind using quotidian narratives in the opera libretto as one way to draw the spectator out of a passive role:

Their [the station users and local inhabitants'] fears, hopes, dreams and memories walked directly into the libretto. The real everyday world began to merge with the artificial world of opera. ... The theatrical and the urban space are not separate from their partners. The *Eichbaum Opera* turned the dilapidated station into a space where there were no longer spectators.²⁸

The project addresses the site's transformation through people's experience of the space. The spectator is not drawn into some imaginary world; rather, the world of the opera is merged with a functional subway station. The gesture of lodging one affective register into another changes both

the space and the residents' experience of it.

In an interview with Germany's nationalized television station, *Deutsche Welle*, Liesegang describes the site's transformation in perceptual terms, instead of providing a conventional description of a site's transformation in terms of architectural renovation:

We hope this opera is just the beginning. The start of a real change of perspective so people feel that they can accomplish something here, that they can take charge of this space, meet people, celebrate and bring it some noise and life. We hope that there will be more events here, maybe another opera performance in our opera house.²⁹

In other words, the station has become an "opera house" through the residents' agency, their relational encounters, and a collective affective investment in the space – all of which transform how the space is constituted socially without laying new bricks or the leveling the station entirely.³⁰ According to the logic of Eichbaumoper, urban transformation is proven to be possible without the destruction of the past, it can be achieved through a social or affective re-investment in spaces and structures.



Image Credit: Raumlabor Berlin

Raumlabor and its collaborators built a café, a reading room, and several small artists' studios out of metal shipping containers in order to provide visibility for the project and points of contact for locals and passers-by alike. Instead of being used only by people in transit, the station became a workspace, a destination, and an end in itself. The café provided passers-by with a place to ask questions casually and linger in curiosity. It provided the option for anyone to participate on the margin of the project, silently and without commitment. In addition to the workspaces and the café, a series of workshops and seminars were advertised locally and held to generate both contributions for the opera libretto and ideas for grass-roots solutions to the station's dilapidation.

Image Credit: Raumlabor Berlin



In a video made by Raumlabor to document the project's beginning in 2008, the camera traverses an empty graffiti-covered entrance tunnel as uplifting opera music plays on an over-track.³¹ The message could be that high art saves spaces that have fallen into cultural dereliction, a dereliction that is more than adequately attested to in Raumlabor's video by their careful panning of graffiti tags scrawled over more tags on every available surface of the station. *Deutsche Welle* suggests such a reading when it claims that the project took "tales of daily life [and] transformed [them] into song. Many of the stories tell of work, poverty and loss."³² Opera lifts the spirits of the poor and transforms their subway station by virtue of its transcendent power. This narrative erases the difference between "work, poverty and loss", equalizing them through their transformation into song.

What *Deutsche Welle* fails to recognize is that *Eichbaumoper* is neither an image nor an opera performance; transformation does not happen on the level of music in this project. Liesegang emphasizes the transformation's intersubjective nature: "Our goal wasn't simply to put an opera at the Eichbaum Station, like *Don Giovanni* for example. We wanted to take this problematic site and work together with the local residents to spark a process of transformation."³³ Raumlabor describes the project's contents on its website as a list:

1. An underground transit station, which is the Opera House.
2. Compositions and libretti that are written there.
3. A music theater, which arrives for the performance.
4. Residents who are involved in the development of the opera.
5. Techniques and processes that organize and form the Eichbaum opera.³⁴

The station's structure is understood not as a subway station in which there is opera music, but as an opera house in which there are subway trains. The opera singers and the musical theater ensemble are from elsewhere and only arrive for the performance, whereas the residents assist in the opera's development, and the libretti are composed on-site.

Those silenced by the way movements and encounters are structurally prescribed by development plans that fail to take actually existing contexts fully into account, or those stifled by the threat of physical violence that haunts Eichbaum, are asked to tell their stories.³⁵ Opera director Cordula Daupner describes the opera's appeal in the following terms: "It feels like we're creating something of a little oasis here, a place where people feel their stories are being told and appreciated, where they can feel that what we are creating here is about our own lives."³⁶ Through the residents' testimony and participation, both the space and their experience of it is transformed from a place to be avoided into a place to collectively gather. The project ruptures the prevailing sense of alienation in the space by unfolding a social process in it – and this social process *is the work of art*.



Image Credit: Raumlabor Berlin

Eichbaumoper is not bound to one frame (art, for example) while simply gesturing towards another (urban planning), it truly exists between frames, and neither frame's critical apparatus is entirely appropriate for its evaluation. Interdisciplinary practices that do not resolve themselves completely into the category of art yet still make a claim to the frame of art require a transversal analysis. Such an interpretative methodology is not simply pluralist, reading factors from either discipline one on top of the other without privileging one over another – although pluralism might be a good place to begin.

In order to understand what is at stake in a project like *Eichbaumoper* and social practice projects more generally, the opera must be more than a means to revitalizing the station's surface, refurbishing its appearance as opposed to rethinking the way it is used. I argue that this binary – surface vs. structure – is false. The surface *is* structural. To rupture Eichbaum's surface of appearance *is* to rupture what is imaginable about the station, and therefore also what is imaginable about public space, public transportation infrastructure, and the vulnerability of low-density, post-industrial regions. Like the Yes Men, Raumlabor demonstrates the degree to which corporations and public spaces are already experienced as representations – in Eichbaum's case, the representation of disinvestment and alienation resulting from a failed vision for public development.

Transformation in the political sense is a process that unfolds at the level of representation *at the same time as* a process that unfolds at the level of the social. Just as the project engages with the station's imaginary, *Eichbaumoper* also entails a substantial process of community-organizing that accomplishes more than making bodies appear to be the audience to some singular event, or telling quirky anecdotes in order to fill the libretto. Participation is an unwieldy term because, like relationality, it is difficult to establish qualitative criteria for – and yet participation is what grounds Eichbaumoper's political gesture. A critical analysis of works like *Eichbaumoper* must be prepared to grapple with the social process unfolding in the Eichbaum station as both the work of art and as the *means to transformation* – as opera *and* music *and* event-making *and* coalition-building, simultaneously. This simultaneity means that the relationship between *Eichbaumoper*'s aesthetic purpose and its intentions towards social and structural reform can never be objectively mapped. I argue, therefore, that in order for either to be meaningful descriptions of artwork, a rapprochement of the terms "aesthetic" and "political" must be attempted.

Notes

¹ <https://gladstonegallery.com/exhibition/14525/press>

² "More specifically, I would contend that the function of the community artist can, in at least some respects, be productively compared with that of the reformer or social worker. Both the community artist and the social worker possess a set of skills (bureaucratic, diagnostic, aesthetic/expressive, and so forth) and have access to public and private funding (through grant writing, official status, and institutional sponsorship) with the goal of bringing about some transformation in the condition of individuals who are presumed to be in need." Kester, "Aesthetic Evangelists."

³ Kester, "Aesthetic Evangelists."

⁴ Kwon, 130.

⁵ To be fair, Kwon does argue that sustainability is not absolutely necessary to a good artwork, but she doesn't provide an alternative categorization, and she is still thinking about the problem in terms of success and effectivity. Kwon also under-estimates the role of the interpersonal exchanges by exempting them from her evaluative frame: "This is not to say that collaborations conducted by local artists are bound to be more successful or meaningful than those by artists from elsewhere, or that only local artists can create sustainable projects beyond the temporary framework of a public art program, or that sustainability itself is intrinsically of greater merit. Certainly the quality of the interpersonal exchanges between artists and their community partners cannot be measured in such terms. [...] But none of this guarantees the success of a community-based project, nor is a permanent project necessarily more effective or valuable than a temporary one." Kwon, 135.

⁶ Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002), 316.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Deutsche takes this point from Claude Lefort's theory of radical democracy, which I touch on briefly in my discussion of Rancière. His original formulation can be found in: Claude Lefort, "The Question of Democracy," *Democracy and Political Theory* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1988), 9-20.

⁹ "Thesis 1: Politics is not the exercise of power. Politics ought to be defined on its own terms, as a mode of acting put into practice by a specific kind of subject and deriving from a particular form of reason. It is the political relationship that allows one to think the possibility of a political subject(ivity) [*le sujet politique*] not the other way around." Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics," *Theory & Event*, Volume 5, Issue 3 (2001).

¹⁰ "Thesis 3: Politics is a specific rupture in the logic of arche. It does not simply presuppose the rupture of the 'normal' distribution of positions between the one who exercises power and the one subject to it. It also requires a rupture in the idea that there are dispositions 'proper' to such classifications." Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics."

¹¹ "The list ought to stop there. But there is a seventh qualification: 'the choice of god,' otherwise referring to a drawing of lots [*le tirage au sort*] that designates the one who exercises arche. Plato does not expand upon this. But clearly, this kind of 'choice' points ironically to the designation by god of a regime previously referred to as one only god could save: namely, democracy. What thus characterizes a democracy is pure chance or the complete absence of qualifications for governing. Democracy is that state of exception where no oppositions can function, where there is no pre-determined principle of role allocation." Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics."

¹² "But the theory of the structural void can be interpreted in two distinct ways: First, the structural void refers to *an-archy*, to the absence of an entitlement to rule that constitutes the very nature of the political space." Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics."

¹³ "Politics makes visible that which had no reason to be seen, it lodges one world into another. This is precisely why politics cannot be identified with the model of communicative action since this model presupposes the partners in communicative exchange to be pre-constituted, and that the discursive forms of exchange imply a speech community whose constraint is always explicable." Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics."

¹⁴ "The essence of politics, then, is to disturb this arrangement by supplementing it with a part of the no-part identified with the community as a whole. Political litigiousness/struggle is that which brings politics into being by separating it from the police that is, in turn, always attempting its disappearance either by crudely denying it, or by subsuming that logic to its own." Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics." "Politics makes visible that which had no reason to be seen, it lodges one world into another. This is precisely why politics cannot be identified with the model of communicative action since this model presupposes the partners in communicative exchange to be pre-constituted, and that the discursive forms of exchange imply a speech community whose constraint is always explicable." Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics."

¹⁵ Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002), 315.

¹⁶ Critical art is his term for what is otherwise referred to as "political art" or "socially and politically engaged art."

¹⁷ "On the one hand, understanding does not, in and of itself, help to transform intellectual attitudes and situations. The exploited rarely require an explanation of the laws of exploitation. The dominated do not remain in subordination

because they misunderstand the existing state of affairs but because they lack confidence in their capacity to transform it." Jacques Rancière, "Problems and Transformations of Critical Art," in *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, (London: Polity Press, 2009), 45.

¹⁸ "On the other hand, the work which builds understanding and dissolves appearances kills, by doing so, the strangeness of the resistant appearance that attests to the non-necessary or intolerable character of a world. Insofar as it asks viewers to discover the signs of Capital behind everyday objects and behaviors, critical art risks being inscribed in the perpetuity of a world in which the transformation of things into signs is redoubled by the very excess of interpretive signs which brings things to lose their capacity of resistance." Rancière, "Problems and Transformations of Critical Art," 45-6.

¹⁹ "It has to borrow connections that foster political intelligibility from the zones of indistinction between art and the other spheres. And from the solitude of the work, it has to borrow the sense of a sensible heterogeneity which feeds political energies of refusal. It is this negotiation between the forms of art and those of non-art which makes it possible to form combinations of elements capable of speaking twice over: on the basis of their legibility and on the basis of their illegibility." Rancière, "Problems and Transformations of Critical Art," 46.

²⁰ Raumlabor Berlin, "Eichbaumoper," accessed February 27, 2010, <http://www.raumlabor.net/?p=590>. For video documentation, see also Babelgum Metropolis, "New Urbanism: Episode 4 - Subway Opera," accessed April 10, 2011, <http://www.babelgum.com/channels/180303/clips/3023691>.

²¹ Volker Hagedorn, "Ouagadougou on the A 40, Music and Theatre on Location: The Eichbaum Opera To Redeem the Ruhr," *Die Zeit Magazine*, July, 2 2009, 50.

²² David Bravo Bordas, "Eichbaumoper: Mülheim an der Ruhr (Germany), 2009 FINALIST 2010," PublicSpace, accessed February 27, 2010, <http://www.publicspace.org/en/works/f030-eichbaumoper>.

²³ Bordas, "Eichbaumoper: Mülheim an der Ruhr."

²⁴ For broad-based reporting on how the station was perceived prior to Raumlabor's intervention, see: Andreas Wyputta, "Fear and Arias: Public Art in Mülheim," *Die Tag*, Tuesday June 23, 2009, 16. As reported on national German television station *Deutsche Welle*: "30 years ago, the station was built as a major hub directly on the main highway, but local residents have avoided the crime-ridden and decrepit area." Arts.21, *Deutsche Welle*, "The Eichbaum Opera - An Underground Station Becomes an Opera House in the Run-up to Ruhr 2010," accessed March 30, 2011, http://www.dw-world.de/popups/popup_single_mediaplayer/0,4439219_start_448_end_742_type_video_struct_7885_contentId_4414992,00.html.

²⁵ Raumlabor Berlin, "Eichbaumoper."

²⁶ Raumlabor Berlin, "U(topie) 18," Accessed March 30, 2010, <http://www.raumlabor.net/?p=552>. See also Gabriella Giannachia, "Recycling Site: A Performance Documentation of Raumlabor's Duismuumlsen U(topie)18," *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol. 19, Iss. 4 (2009), 461 - 475.

²⁷ *Deutsche Welle* "The Eichbaum Opera." For a complete list of funding bodies involved, see the project website: Raumlabor Berlin, "Partnrer," accessed March 30, 2011, http://www.eichbaumoper.de/wordpress/?page_id=47.

²⁸ Raumlabor Berlin, "Eichbaumoper."

²⁹ *Deutsche Welle*, "The Eichbaum Opera."

³⁰ In another interview, Raumlabor puts the same intention in terms of programming: "We aren't just dealing with the physical space, in other words the city's hardware, but also the program, the software. We want to find out how a place is programmed so that it might then be possible to change it." Elisabeth Schwiontek, "Opera On The Motorway – the Urban Strategies of the Berlin-based raumlabor Office," accessed May 10, 2011, <http://www.goethe.de/kue/arc/pan/en6182449.htm>.

³¹ Raumlabor Berlin, "Eichbaum," accessed March 30, 2011, <http://vimeo.com/1781845>.

³² *Deutsche Welle*, "The Eichbaum Opera."

³³ *Deutsche Welle*, "The Eichbaum Opera."

³⁴ Raumlabor Berlin, "Eichbaumoper."

³⁵ For examples, see Andreas Wyputta, "Fear and Arias: Public Art in Mülheim," *Die Tag*, Tuesday June 23, 2009, 16.

³⁶ *Deutsche Welle*, "The Eichbaum Opera."

FRONT

by Chrysa Parkinson



FRONT

HAD HE HIS HURTS BEFORE?
AYE. ON HIS FRONT.

HAD I AS MANY SONS AS I HAVE HAIRS,
I WOULD NOT WISH THEM TO A FAIRER DEATH.
BLESS'D WITH HIS MOTHER'S TONGUE AND HIS
FATHER'S FRONT,

HE HUNG DOWN HIS NEVER-BLUSHING HEAD
AND ALL WAS HUSH'D.

SEE MOUNTAIN FACES:
SUMMIT, PEAK, TOP, CREST,
CROWN, HEAD, PINNACLE,
APEX.

Excerpts from Webster's International
English Dictionary, 1939 Edition,
definitions of FRONT.

FRONT IS A NOUN.

A DICKY IS A FRONT, A SHIRT-BREAST
AND COLLAR WITH NO SLEEVES OR BACK.
A WOMAN'S HAIR PIECE, CONSISTING OF
JUST A BIT OF HAIR OVER THE FOREHEAD
IS ALSO A FRONT. THE BEGINNING OF
SUMMER IS ITS FRONT. THIS DISORIENTS
ME. IS SUMMER COMING FROM SOMEWHERE
ELSE? AND AS SPRING ENDS, SUMMER
ARRIVES, RIDING UP OVER THE HILL, JUST
IN TIME. IF SUMMER CAME LATE
WOULD WE HAVE NO SEASON AT ALL
WHILE WE WAITED? I THINK OF SUMMER
AS EMERGING FROM SPRING, BUT MAYBE
SUMMER COMES FROM FALL AND
DEPENDING ON HOW BIG A SUMMER
IT IS, ARRIVES MORE OR LESS SOON.
DOES A BIG SUMMER MOVE MORE SLOWLY?

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THE FRONT IS THE ZONE OF CONFLICT
BETWEEN ARMIES.

THE BORDERS OF NATIONS ARE
WHERE FRONTS MEET. I APPROACH
THE BORDER AND FACE IT AS I
HOPE IT WANTS TO BE FACED SO
THAT I CAN PASS THROUGH IT AS
QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. IT HAS ITS
OWN LAWS. I KNOW SOME OF THEM,
BUT ONCE I'M WITHIN A BORDER MY
RIGHTS ARE NOT THE SAME AS WHEN
I'M ON EITHER SIDE OF THAT BORDER.
A BORDER IS A FRONT-REALM AND
VERY DISORIENTING.

A WEATHER FRONT: "I LIKE WATCHING
THE THUNDERHEADS AND SUPER-CELLS
FORM, THE CLOUDS AND WHEN THE
AIR MASSES MIX. JUST WATCHING HOW
THE CLOUDS JUST CHANGE COLORS AND
CHANGE SHAPE AND FORMS AND THEN
THE WINDS PICK UP AND IT GETS COOL
AND YOU CAN JUST FEEL THE PRESSURE
CHANGE IN THE AIR AND THE SMELL
AND IT'S JUST FRESH AS A FRESH SNOW,
FRESH AS A FRESH CLEAN SNOW. IT'S LIKE
IT'S ALIVE BUT IT'S NOT ALIVE."

(WAYNE DAILY, LOST IN THE STORM PART 1,
NEW YORK TIMES, SEPT 13, 2018)
FRONT MEANS FOREHEAD, THIS IS ONE OF
ITS OLDEST MEANINGS. MY MOTHER OFTEN
REMARKED ON MY SISTER AND MY FOREHEADS.
I DIDN'T THINK OUR FOREHEADS WERE
PARTICULARLY REMARKABLE. SHE SAID WE HAD
BEAUTIFUL FOREHEADS. I REMEMBER NOTICING
HOW DEEPLY AFFECTIONATE THIS PLEASURE IN
OUR FOREHEADS WAS FROM HER. NOT PRONE
TO COMPLIMENT, SHE VALUED OUR FOREHEADS HIGHLY.

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3.
A FRONT IS SOMETHING TO HIDE BEHIND, LIKE A MASK, A FASHION, A BUSINESS OR MAYBE A LAWN.
PHONETIC (NOUN): THE FRONT IS THE MIDDLE PART OF THE UPPER SURFACE OF THE TONGUE, BETWEEN THE "BLADE" AND THE BACK.

FRONT IS A VERB.
TO FRONT MEANS TO SEND FORWARD.
TO FRONT ME TEN IS TO LEND ME TEN. TO FRONT CAN MEAN TO LIE, OR OBSCURE THE TRUTH. OR, IT CAN MEAN TO BRING ON, AS IN TO PRESENT:

"ENID DAILY FRONTED HIM WITH SOME FRESH SPLENDOR." (TENNYSON, IDYLLS OF THE KING)

PHONETIC (VERB): TO FRONT IS TO FORM THE K IN "KEEP", BUT NOT THE C IN "COOP".

FRONT IS ALSO AN ADJECTIVE.

THE FRONT OF A BODY, THE FRONT OF THE LINE. THE FRONT ROOM, OR PARLOR. THE FRONT GARDEN. FRONT SEAT. FRONT WHEELS. FRONT LEGS. IN THEATER, THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE MEANS EVERYTHING IN THE THEATER, INCLUDING THE PERSONNEL, THAT IS NOT BEHIND THE CURTAIN. IN RESTAURANTS THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE IS WHATEVER OR WHOEVER IS NOT IN THE KITCHEN.

PHONETIC (ADJECTIVE): TO FORM A FRONT SOUND IN ENGLISH IS TO MAKE A SOUND LIKE THE EEE IN "EVE" OR THE A IN "ALE".

4.
TO BE FRONT-LESS IS TO BE SHAME-LESS, MEANING WITHOUT LOYALTY OR CARE. BEING SHAME-LESS IS ALRIGHT, UNTIL SOMEONE GETS HURT OR ELECTED.

TO CONFRONT IS TO COME FACE TO FACE WITH AN ENEMY OR A PROBLEM. TO FACE THE PROBLEM'S ^{FACE} WITH YOUR FACE. "I WAS DISORIENTED, INCAPABLE OF CONFRONTING THE OTHER." (FRANTZ FANON, BLACK SKIN, WHITE MASK, GROVE PRESS, 1952)

TO AFFRONT IS SIMILAR, BUT ADDS A SLAP. TO BE AFFRONTED IS TO HAVE YOUR FRONT VIOLENTLY DISTURBED. A SLAP IN YOUR FRONT'S FACE. "I FELT THE KNIFE BLADES SHARPENING WITHIN ME." (FANON)

FRONT AND IDENTITY ARE SIMILAR. THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT FRONT HAS A LOCATION AND THE PERFORMER CAN FACE IT, OR NOT, WHILE IDENTITY IS A CLOUD, OR A STATUS GRANTED ON IMMIGRATION. FRONT COULD BE ANYWHERE OR ANY SHAPE, INSIDE MY BODY OR OUT.

I CAN CREATE AN IDENTITY. I CAN ALSO CREATE A FRONT.

I CAN ASSUME AN IDENTITY. I CAN ASSUME A FRONT.

I CAN BE ASSIGNED AN IDENTITY, LIKE A GENDER AND HAVE IT TO FIGHT WITH OR AGAINST ALL MY LIFE.

I CARRY AN IDENTITY. I PLACE A FRONT.

5.
IDENTITY CAN EMERGE FROM PLACE,
BUT IT IS NOT A PLACE.

FRONT IS A PLACE AND IT'S ALSO
AN ACTION. IT'S ALSO A QUALITY.
IN PERFORMANCE WE USE ALL
OF THESE MEANINGS.
THE PERFORMER'S FRONT IS A
PROJECTION: AN IMAGINED ATTENTION
SOURCE. CREATED AND PLACED, IT
BECOMES A MATERIAL TO WORK
WITH OR FROM OR POSSIBLY WITHIN.
FOR A PERFORMER, FRONT IS AN
ACT OF IMAGINATION, AN EXTENSION
OF SELF BEYOND SELF, CREATED
OUT OF WHAT THEY TEND TO
IN THE WORLD AND WHAT OTHERS
CAN TELL THEM ABOUT THEM -
SELVES ALONG THE WAY.
IN PERFORMANCE, PERFORMERS
ARE FRONTING. THAT'S THEIR JOB.
IF THEY ARE POST-MODERN REALISTS,
THEY FRONT REALISM. IF THEY'RE
ENID, THEY FRONT WITH SPLENDOR,
DAILY. THEY CANNOT FRONT THE
REAL WITHOUT STUDYING THEIR DAYS,
IN ALL THE PLAINNESS OF THOSE
DAYS. THEY CAN'T FRONT SPLENDOR
WITHOUT TENDING TO THE VERY
EDGES OF THEIR WORLD, THE
THUNDER HEADS AND SUPER-CEWS,
FRESH AS FRESH SNOW. "IT DOESN'T
HAVE A HEART BEAT AND A SOUL
BUT IT'S LIKE IT DOES, YOU KNOW.
IT'S LIKE A LIVING BREATHING THING
JUST FORMS AND JUST HAS ALL
THIS POWER. [...] YOU CAN DOOH

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6.
AND AAAH AT IT BUT DON'T GO
TRY AND PET IT." WAYNE DAILY,
LOST IN THE STORM PART 1, NY TIMES
SEPT 13, 2018.

A PERFORMER'S FRONT IS A SPELL,
INVOKED AND CAST, LIKE ANY POTION
IT'S MADE OF GESTURES, CREATURES,
SMELLS, HEAT AND WORDS. TOIL AND
TROUBLE. ALTHOUGH IT PLAYS, PRETENDS,
PERFORMS, FRONT CAN TEAR THINGS
UP. IT CAN SHARPEN THE BLADES
WITHIN. IT CAN BE THE SHARPENED
KNIFE BLADES. TO CREATE A FRONT
IS A RISK, A PRIVILEGE AND
RESPONSIBILITY. IT DEMANDS SKILL.
I CAN NEVER FULLY KNOW WHAT'S
SEEN, HEARD OR FELT WHEN I
CREATE A FRONT. I CAN ONLY
GUESS. MY GUESS EXTENDS OUT
AND RETURNS OVER ME, LIKE
THE GREEN ROOM OF A BREAKING
WAVE.

I'm interested in how performers
work; how in reaching toward
being seen, heard and felt
they create something other than
themselves. Concerned by the
use of the word "performing" as
a negative, I started this piece
of writing by studying The
Anti-Theatrical Prejudice, by Jonas
Barish, UC Press, 1981. After an
exhaustive examination of all

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the ways in which performers and performances have been vilified since Plato. Barish concludes this book with a defense of performance as a form of play. I also used the 1939 edition of Webster's International English Dictionary and the 1913 edition of Funk and Wagnall's English Dictionary. I worked with these old dictionaries in order to include the older meanings of front, searching for how meanings have sedimented. In 2017-2018 I held workshops in Porto, Berlin, San Francisco, Brussels and Stockholm in which I proposed ways for participants to experiment with their experience of front, facing and disorientation. This writing is a mix of all these influences. It's the first installment of a longer performance/writing project on FRONT, FACING AND DISORIENTATION.

Chryse Parkinson, September 2018
Stockholm, Berkeley

HOODS as aesthetic experience

By Venke Marie Sortland
Translated into English by Lillian Bikset

1. Fundamental concept - the heteronomous dimension of performing arts

In 2013 I wrote the text «When the Experience is the Artwork; the End of Performance?»¹, in which I used the German theater theorist Erika Fischer-Lichte's theory about the aesthetics of the performative² as a basis for a discussion about the relationship between the audience and the performance in choreographer Ingri Fiksdal's production *Urskog*. *Urskog* was a meditative situation in which the spectators sat close to the performers. The room was bathed in yellow-blue light, a coloration clothing the interior, the performers and the audience in a simple, but effective way. Furthermore, the performers were dressed in large black hoodies, with their heads and faces hidden by the sweaters and their hands in the hoods – both of which turned their movements into something unnatural and twisted. The movements, however, were performed so slowly and so subtly that the other elements of the situation became at least as prominent, for instance how the other spectators breathed or shifted positions or how the warmth from the next person could be felt by one's own body. Fischer-Lichte's theory opens up for understanding this situation as an event rather than a performance in the conventional sense, with the spectators as co-creators rather than distanced onlookers.

After following Fiksdal's artistic work over the course of years, I am no longer sure if Fischer-Lichte's aesthetics of the performative is the most interesting theory for examining the relationship between spectators and performance in projects such as *Urskog*. Its fundamental idea that the spectators are co-creators in the force of being physically present as «co-subjects», and that one, through so-called «feedback loops»³, influences another more or less unconsciously when being in the same place at the same time, seems far too generic. And even though Fischer-Lichte's theory provides an important insight into the fact that all performances are collective situations with distinct social and intersubjective dimensions, and that this should affect all aspects from the work of the performer to the choreographic choices, our analyses of the quality of the performance and the necessity of acknowledging that dissipation and artistic decisions always seep into one another, I question if the intersubjective and social aspects of Fiksdal's performance situations are what affects the audience the most.

Without giving up the idea that performing arts must be considered a process unfolding in the meeting between the performance and the audience, rather than an autonomous work, I would like to use this text to discuss what I think is a more useful theory in meeting projects such as *Urskog*; that is, a *pragmatist aesthetic*⁴ the way it is explained in the work of the American pragmatist pedagogue and philosopher John Dewey. In my opinion, this is a better basis if one is not just interested in concluding that performing arts is not only a process involving the audience and the performance alike, but is also interested in understanding, exploring and potentially even improving the potential *effect* of the process. An essential aspect of this is seeing the effect of the

performance as something the spectators must consciously and by choice contribute to creating, rather than something that automatically happens with them due to their presence; that is to say, without individual will or control.

This text begins with an introduction of Fiksdal's project *HOODS*, further developing the ideas from *Urskog*. Following this, I will introduce pragmatist aesthetics as it is presented in the work of Dewey. Ultimately, I will use pragmatist aesthetics to illuminate how we can understand and examine the spectators' co-creation process as being decisive in the effect of a performance, in the form of what Dewey terms as aesthetic experience.

2. HOODS

In the performance *HOODS*, produced in the spring of 2014 by Fiksdal in collaboration with set designer Signe Becker⁵, the ideas and material from *Urskog* are taken further. The purpose of *HOODS*, according to Fiksdal and Becker, was to create a work in which it was impossible to separate the set design, the choreography, the performers and the audience within the situation of the performance, with the aim of reaching, as one can read in Fiksdal and Becker's description of the project, a «category confusion in regards to who are performers, who are spectators, and what are puppets/set-design»⁶. To achieve this, Becker produced approximately ten human-sized puppets. They were dressed in the same costumes as, and put into motion by, the performers. The inspiration for the project came from the Japanese robotics professor Masahiro Mori's theory about «The Uncanny Valley», which is, in short, about emotional reactions experienced by humans in meeting humanoid creatures. Fiksdal and Becker wanted to explore how, and to what degree, it was possible to erase the difference between performers and spectators in the situation of a performance, and, although of secondary importance, if this situation could produce the emotional effect of «The Uncanny Valley» in the audience.

HOODS starts by providing all the spectators with costumes, before they are led into the venue in smaller groups. Inside the venue, the spectators can sit or move around as they wish among the stage design of bodies, consisting of performers and human-sized puppets. At this point, puppets, performers and spectators are all dressed in the same costume – capes or kites with hats, veils and hoods more or less hiding their faces. In the first situation, two of the performers examine the space together with the audience (as if they too were audience members), while the other two sit perfectly still among the puppets on the floor. This makes it harder for the audience to get the full picture of who is who (or what is what). The gradual entry has a function beyond the practical of dressing the audience in costumes, as it give spectators an early and obvious opportunity to participate for example by choosing for themselves to take on roles as stage design or performers.

Moreover, the space is divided by neon-colored textile fringes hanging from the ceiling, floodlights bathing the room in red or blue light, and small loudspeakers playing different fragments from the unifying sound image. This is combined with performers tending to work on different movement material in two or more parts of the space at the same time; movement material that is gradually and over a long duration of time established and expands. This creates a sense of decentralization. In other words, every part of the room is as important as another.

Even though the performers, the music and the light follow a (more or less) set dramaturgy and

choreography, the spectators must also have their own dramaturgical and choreographic processes through examining the space and approach the situations they find interesting. Thus, during the 90 minutes of the duration, the spectators can enter or use the situation of the performance as they wish, and this means that *HOODS* keeps changing as it is experienced by new individuals or groups. To expand on this, one may say that the performance doesn't just make it possible to sense through the visual and the auditive, but also to interact physically and tactilely with the material, through the necessity for the spectators to move across the room as bodies, but also through the audience's opportunity to touch, sit next to, mimic or even dance with the puppets and/or the performers. At the same time, it must be said that *HOODS* does not depend on interaction with its spectators. If the spectators choose to sit in the same spot in the room throughout the whole of the work's duration, their experience of it will likely be more limited, but the choreography, the music and the light will still run their courses.

If we look at *HOODS* in light of Fischer-Lichte's aesthetics of the performative, in other words, as a process in the intersection between the performance and the audience, we can first of all conclude that the spectators and the performers are most likely influenced by one another through «co-presence». Put differently, the audience and the performers are co-creators due to their shared presence in the situation. But to a large degree, this influence takes place independently of the performers' and spectators' consciousness and will, as a reaction to the event. When the audience in *HOODS* begins to move around and examine the room, or if a spectator starts rolling around with a puppet, this can be regarded as a result of spectators' transformation into «co-subjects», that they more or less consciously use the opportunities they are given to act. But the spectators' participation cannot be written off even if they, as I suggested above, choose to sit in the same spot throughout the full performance. And if the spectators do not feel welcome in the situation, if they feel estranged rather than included, one could still, according to Fischer-Lichte's theory of feedback loops, be able to talk about the effect of the social and intersubjective situation – as spectators and performers cannot not be affected by one another.

To make it interesting to discuss or to work artistically with the process that unfolds between the performance and the audience, in regard to the effects this process could potentially have, we need to go *beyond* the fundamental principle of the heteronomous dimension of performing arts. We must think of the audience's co-creation as more than its presence. And it is in this regard that I would claim that the concept of aesthetic experience is more relevant in confronting projects such as *HOODS*. With this, I turn to a short introduction of Dewey's concept of aesthetic experience and, with that, pragmatist aesthetics.

3. Dewey's concept of aesthetic experience

The concept of aesthetic experience, as presented in Dewey's book *Art as Experience*, first published in 1934, laid the foundation for what the American pragmatist Richard Shusterman almost 70 years later calls pragmatist aesthetics.⁷ Dewey (2005) writes that the background for a new theory of art is an experienced need to «restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience» (p. 2). In other words, Dewey sees a need to reinstate aesthetics in society beyond the artistic; specifically, that art should be available for all people, and that aesthetics should be an important part of our ordinary lives.

Aesthetic experience is Dewey's concept of art – in other words, art in this context is something that unfolds as an experience in an individual's meeting with, for instance, a performance. This has to be understood in connection with the fact that the fundamental concept in pragmatist aesthetics, and in Dewey's pragmatist philosophy beside it, is experience. For Dewey, *experience* is almost equal to living, as it is a continuous dynamic interaction between the individual and the world surrounding her. From this «general stream» of experiences *an experience* stands out, as a definite, unified period of time, marked by a clear start and end, of what I would call a heightened presence. Dewey (2005) explains this presence as an emotional state, even though it is important to point out that within this defined period, the whole individual is involved – emotionally, intellectually, practically and socially. An experience is aesthetic if it has value in itself, that is, if *the experience* is what remains at the end of it. This differs from an intellectual or practical experience where the result, such as solving a mathematical problem or digging a well, is, after all, more important than the process. Because the aesthetic experience does not produce anything besides itself, it is, for Dewey, considered the ideal or optimal experience.

At the same time, one could say that an experience, according to Dewey, is of instrumental value. This is because the individual is transformed by the experience, and this transformation leads to growth. In other words, experience as transformation leads to a reconstruction of the individual's earlier experiences. Even though there is no guarantee for it, the desired effect of an experience is, according to Dewey, that this reconstruction takes a positive direction; that the experience's transformation and following growth lay the foundation for increasingly deeper and broader experiences, in turn laying the foundation for yet new experiences. It is through such experiences, or moments standing out as particularly valuable, separate from the continuous stream of experiences, that new dimensions of the surrounding become available to the individual, and that the individual develops and forms.⁸ Because the aim of all experience is transformation and positive growth, one could say that the aim of an aesthetic experience is the same as the aims of intellectual, political and pedagogical experiences. The way Dewey describes it, an experience has value in itself *and* in the potential for the individual's, and thus the culture's, development or formation.⁹

The concept of aesthetic experience is often criticized for being imprecise and difficult to put to use, primarily due to Dewey's multifaceted and open phrasing, and, moreover, because the individual's experience is hard to measure. However, Dewey doesn't aim for a precise characterization or definition of the phenomena of art, or to establish final quality criteria for experiences defined as aesthetic. As Shusterman (2000) points out, pragmatist aesthetics' primary purpose is producing aesthetic experience. Within a larger context, this is connected to the way pragmatism doesn't rate theory higher than practice but rather sees theory as a way of improving and reflecting upon practice. On this basis, I will use the concept of aesthetic experience to illuminate the audience's co-creation in the production *HOODS*, and account for my claim that aesthetic experience is an interesting basis to examine how this and similar productions can potentially work.

4. The effect of performing arts understood as aesthetic experience

As we have seen, pragmatist aesthetics, as presented in Dewey's work, puts the emphasis on the interaction between the individual and the surrounding world, in this case between the performance and the audience, and the aesthetic experience this produces. Dewey (2005) explains interaction

through the dual process of «doing and undergoing», in other words, through acting and then «suffering», letting the consequences of the action work on you, or to perceive, and letting this perception sink in or mature. If there is an imbalance between doing and undergoing, the experience is less of a whole and «cut short of maturing» (Dewey, 2005, p. 46). This is the background for Dewey's claim that interaction is a prerequisite for aesthetic experience, as every experience demands individual doing, an aspect of activity, action, or initiative. The spectators need to turn to the performance and make the experience their own, meaning that co-creation must be understood as essential in the process leading towards the effect of the art. If the spectators do not interact with the experience, no aesthetic experience will take place, and the art object will be without effect. At the same time, we should not misunderstand interaction or co-creation as a purpose in itself.

On the one hand, Dewey sees a connection rather than a separation between «the artistic» and «the aesthetic», between the artist's and the spectator's experience, as they each include both an active and a receiving element. At the same time, he differentiates between the artist and the spectator in his understanding of doing and undergoing, as the artist's experience is primarily creative, intended to result in an artistic expression, and the spectator's experience is primarily aesthetic, based on an artistic expression. This means that doing and undergoing can include many different forms of interaction within his theoretic framework – co-creation or interaction does not necessarily have to be a physical activity or action. The forms of interaction in question may be easier to understand through the model presented by the theatre theorists Lisa Nagel and Lise Hovik, in the article «The SceSam Project – Interactive dramaturgies in performing arts for children» (2016). They establish a working model for the interaction between audience and performance, ranging from quietly absorbed observation, with a clear separation between the onstage activity and the audience, to creative collaboration through physical participation, in which performers and spectators together influence the performance situation through activities similar to improvisation or playing games. The point is, however, as Dewey writes, that absorbed observation should not be misunderstood as passivity:

...receptivity is not passivity. It, too, is a process consisting of a series of responsive acts that accumulate toward objective fulfilment. Otherwise, there is not perception but recognition. The difference between the two is immense. Recognition is perception arrested before it has a chance to develop freely (Dewey, 2005, p. 54).

In light of this, we can look at *HOODS* and conclude that even if spectators choose to sit in the same spot throughout the duration, they cannot be written off as passive rather than co-creative in the situation. On the other hand, sitting quietly absorbed and observing is not in itself a qualification for the effect of the performance, nor is rolling around in a pool of performers and puppets, for doing must be balanced with undergoing.

As we have seen, co-creation is essential in the interaction leading to an aesthetic experience. Within this context, when I refer to spectators as co-creative participants, it is on the proviso of both objective and subjective conditions. The individual must be provided with an opportunity to act and a range to act within, while this range and these opportunities must be experienced as available and must be chosen by the individual spectator, if the potential is to turn into reality. The artist can facilitate, but the spectator needs to use this range of opportunities in his or her own way. In other words, understanding spectators as active is crucial in Dewey's concept of experience. Because of this, we can never think of co-creation as a necessary consequence of what we do, but we must continuously work *as if* co-creation can be produced by art – it is not fully up to the

individual, nor up to the artists, to realize the potential co-creation can have.

In light of pragmatist aesthetics, when considering the effect of the performance in interaction with the audience, as an aesthetic experience, the question of quality can be phrased as two sub-questions: First, how can we best facilitate co-creation? Second, how can we affect the quality of the effect of different forms of interaction? In the following, I will briefly discuss both of these questions.

5. The dynamic relationship between interest and resistance

As an example of an entrance to how to think of facilitating co-creation, I will in the following look at the dynamics between interest and resistance that must be said to be fundamental in Dewey's aesthetic experience. Dewey writes that an experience begins with a sensation of resistance from one's surroundings that awakens the individual's interest. This resistance and this interest produce the elation and the emotional state an aesthetic experience can be said to be. The experience reaches its end when the resistance fades, and the interest, accordingly, decreases. In Dewey's pedagogical philosophy this is explained as balancing the pupil's world of experience against the scientific disciplines' world of experience. Translated into the arts, one could say that the artistic dimensions of the performance must be balanced against the audience's background of experience, in other words, balancing the art's autonomous and heteronomous dimensions. This means that the performance situation must provide its audience with the appropriate resistance. If there is an excess of resistance, or too much of a distance from the spectators' worlds of experience, it will result in too little availability for the audience to awaken its interest. On the other hand, if there is not enough resistance, or if the performance stands too close to the spectators' worlds of experience – if it becomes too much like a playground or just entertainment, the interaction will potentially become routine-like, and without the aspects that will awaken the audience's interest.

In the context of *HOODS*, we can clearly see the resistance in the situation the audience is invited into, in that the situation in itself is different from more conventional performance situations. As such, it demands that the spectators choose how to relate within it and to it. There is also resistance in the specifics of the space the audience steps into, which influence spectators in a specific direction. That the performers do not suggest an infinity of ways to move, but rather adhere to one movement task over a long span of time, and slowly but surely transform this into something new, contributes to resistance through limiting (if only seemingly) which movements are accepted or not. The autonomous dimension of the project is in what the room *in itself* is, and which direction this pushes the audience's experience towards. At the same time, *HOODS* admits anonymity to its audience – meaning that it eases potential embarrassment through providing costumes and through decentralization of the space. And the dance more or less consists of movements all spectators can do; rolling, twirling, jumping, etc. Even though the dancers perform these movements with professional skill, the material stands closer to the audience than much other performed dance, where movement material can be described in terms of technical brilliance and perfection.

On the other hand, one can use the dynamics between interest and resistance in developing the material further, in particular with the aim of accommodating the spectators who do *not* examine the space on their own initiative. Could it be because they feel too much resistance? Could the

artists accommodate this through taking the audience's experience background into consideration to a larger degree, for instance by giving even clearer information in the entrance situation, by avoiding calling the project a dance performance, or by letting the process of the performance unfold over an even greater span of time? Furthermore, it is possible that the audience transforms the situation into a playroom, where the artistic resistance does not stand in the way of an activity that could just as well have taken place in the playground outside. One should be particularly attentive of this when the audience consists of children.¹⁰

From this it is clear that the question about how to work on the quality of the effect of the performance, through facilitating co-creation, demands relational and pedagogic strategies, but not exclusively. It must also be an artistic issue, and intertwined with artistic strategies and reflection.

6. Aiming to improve the experience

For Dewey, the effect of performing arts must be understood as an aesthetic experience. The instrumental side of pragmatist aesthetics becomes clear when we realize that aesthetic experience is a successful transformation of earlier experiences, in a positive direction that makes new and other experiences possible. As a result, the question about the effect of performing arts also always includes a normative question about which experiences have a formative effect on the audience. If formation can be the purpose of art is a question I cannot discuss in depth in this context, but I would like to note that formation in this sense could also be physical or sensory.

This means that the desired effects of performing arts, as aesthetic experiences, can have a deeper or broader capacity in our sensory or physical meeting with the surrounding world. I will claim that *HOODS* gives a potential opening to this effect, perhaps predominately through the audience's opportunity to perform movements beyond the everyday, to experience the materiality of the body through physically feeling the difference between puppets and performers, to take part in the game that the category confusion between stage design/performer/spectator opens up for, or to explore the emotional reaction the unpredictability of the performance may trigger – here and now, everything can happen – within «controlled» surroundings. And it might be in this context that *HOODS*, at its best, leads the spectators to experience dance in new ways and with more of their senses than is common for more conventional performances, that the effect as an aesthetic experience has a potentially formative effect.

7. Conclusion

The premise of the text I wrote in 2013 was to see if the shift of focus from the work in itself to the process unfolding between the audience and the performance, could offer an opening for experimenting with other forms and formats in conveying dance. My interest in this springs from an experience that dance as an expression has a potential to act as a multi-sensory, physical aesthetic experience. I rarely find that this potential is fulfilled, and I think it is likely due to more or less unconsciously maintaining norms and conventions in dance as a scenic form of expression. The way I saw it, such a shift in focus could, among other things, challenge the established separation between art and pedagogy, art and politics, art and social work; that is, between dance as performing arts and different forms and situations in which dance is used as a pedagogical, political and social

tool. The idea was that when dance is seen as an event, *the performance*, in its conventional form – a form where performers dance for spectators to see – no longer has a role to play.

In this text, I have explained pragmatist aesthetics and Dewey's concept of aesthetic experience, using this as optics to discuss the potential effect of Fiksdal and Becker's performance *HOODS*. I have argued that the spectators' co-creation must be understood as more than their presence during the performance situation, namely, as individually conscious, chosen actions. Thus, the effect of projects such as *HOODS* must be said to be dependent on spectators making use of the opportunities for action the performance situation creates an opening for, whether this is done through sitting quietly, in absorbed observation, or through taking part in rolling in a pool of performers and puppets. The theory of pragmatist aesthetics makes it both interesting and relevant for artists to work on how to facilitate this co-creation, and further examine the aesthetic experiences different forms of co-creation produce – for instance through experimenting with different forms and formats to convey dance, where the audience is offered several and/or alternative ways to interact with the performance.

Notes

¹ The text was first published as part of the project and article collection *Writing Movement* (2014), initiated and supported by Dance Information Norway and Kedja. The publication was edited by Ine Therese Berg and Inta Balode.

² Fischer-Lichte presents her theory on the aesthetics of the performative in the book *The Transformative Power of Performance* (2008).

³ According to Fischer-Lichte, these so-called «feedback loops» occur between the performers and the spectators, and between spectators, in meeting and sharing time and space, as in «a given period of shared lifetime» (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 38). In her doctoral thesis *Feedbacksløyfer i teater for svært unge tilskuere (literally: Feedback loops in theatre for very young spectators)* (2010) theatre theorist Siemke Böhnisch describes Fischer-Lichte's feedback loops as an attempt at a systematic theory where the fundamental principle is that «humans cannot not react to one another when physically meeting» (my translation, p. 100). Thus, this influence must be said to be essential to every social situation in which people share the same space at the same time, including all performing arts. Here, it must be noted that Böhnisch (2010) argues against accepting the feedback loops as a general principle for all situations, and that she suggests that co-presence must be seen as a condition (though not a guaranty) for feedback loops.

⁴ In his work *Art as Experience* (2005) Dewey spells the term aesthetic *esthetic*. When referring to Dewey's work I will nevertheless use aesthetic rather than esthetic.

⁵ Participating artists were the dancers/performers Ingeleiv Berstad, Kristin Helgebostad, Pernille Holden and Eivind Seljeseth, composer/musician Camilla Barratt-Due Vatne and light designer Tilo Hahn.

⁶ Text from applications written by Fiksdal and Becker.

⁷ Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (2000).

⁸ In Norwegian this process would be named "danning". See footnote 9.

⁹ In this, I use formation as a translation of the Norwegian word "danning". In pedagogic philosophy, "danning" is understood as an individual and cultural process of becoming, at one and the same time, dependent on, and an expansion of and potentially a critical re-evaluation of, formal education.

¹⁰ The autumn of 2018 *HOODS* was revived, adjusted for children and youths (aged 8 years or over). The performance was then performed in the festival MiniMunch at the Munch Museum in Oslo. The author of this article was in charge of the revival, in close collaboration with Ingrid Fiksdal and the performers Ingeleiv Berstad, Kristin Helgebostad, Pernille Holden and Eivind Seljeseth. Music for the revival was reworked and performed by Ådne Meisfjord.

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Dance

By Mårten Spångberg

1. Human Face

There is something about paintings that I don't like. From one perspective I like almost all paintings. They are, after all, paintings, and that's quite nice. There's usually something to pick up and play with or allow to be reformulated, and if there isn't then that's even more interesting and something already.

Somebody might consider that a painting's responsibility is to tell the viewer something, perhaps even something important. I rather think that a painting that tells something also guides and diminishes the scope of what can be interesting, what can be picked up. It's difficult to make paintings that withdraw from having anything to tell, especially those that withdraw from saying something like "confirm me". It's not a painting's responsibility to convince me, neither is it my job to convince it, but instead to let it be – itself and as such – and that's a difficult and demanding undertaking.

Somebody might propose that to engage with a painting is some sort of detective work. So wrong. A painting is not a matter of alibi, evidence, deduction or getting it. Detectives might be able to see the bigger picture. The problem is just that it's *that* bigger picture and already there *tant pis*. Paintings are not puzzles where you are asked to add that last piece. If art was a matter of interpretation it would stay in the realm of knowledge and be a matter of putting clues together.

From another perspective I hardly enjoy a single painting. Almost all of them get lost and end up wanting to something way too much. The more paintings I see, the more of them are a waste of time, and the more of them appear to be painted in order to please the artist's subject, and the easiest way for that is for the artist to aim at pleasing the viewer. It is really disappointing to look at paintings that are playing hard to get.

But there is something particular about paintings that I don't like. In all of them, I think. It's time. Time is the problem that painting has to overcome. There is always time in paintings, in some or other, always time and it's always human time. It seems that paintings persistently look at back at us or me with a human face. It's never the time of painting, it is our time. I don't mean that there is a little face in the painting but that they always look back at us with a sense of confirmation. They tell us we are humans and good subjects. You look at me and I look back. In this way paintings become correlational. They tell us who we are and are at best probabilistic. Evidently a correlationist aspiration to art undoes the possibility for aesthetic experience, and doesn't it even transform art into sociology, where the artwork has been degraded to a token for social behavior and interaction.

Sometimes they (paintings) are just illustrations, too often – and illustration is not bad but not in paintings that think they are not.

I want to look at a painting that looks back with its own gaze or whatever it looks back with. Or perhaps even better I want to look at paintings that don't respond, that are minimally interesting and at the same time suck me in like a black hole. I want paintings without identity but that still are paintings or not not paintings.

Things that look back with a human face (most things) are great because they don't ask any other questions than those to which there is an answer. It might not be a pleasant answer but it is definitely an answer. Those things demand little and what they ask for can be calculated. They ask questions and therefore they stay in the realm of the probable. They make a bit of fuzz, nothing more than a little bit this or that, and nothing is really at stake. We can pretend but as long as something is recognizable it will not change anything, not for real.

I like paintings that don't look back, that don't whisper their name when I come closer. The best moment: it's a painting but what is that painting?

In a lot of paintings, or are they just illustrations, I can't even half avoid time. It's there, full stop. A group of people have a heated conversation over a meal, candle light. Aha – detective work, it's supper or if not it's probably winter and the people in the picture (whose age is always easy to depict) are having a late lunch.

Other paintings, maybe these are even worse, are paintings that abandon time in the sense of motif, what is *in* the painting so to say. These paintings speak time in respect to when a certain style or ideology was present. American modernism was the specialist. Newman's kabbalah or Daniel Buren's 8.7 cm. Please.

It is not a matter of erasing time but the painter's responsibility is to give way to paintings' time, but as that is a time that – at least initially – does not have representation one can never know what that time is and that's why it's urgent.

2. In The Bucket

In an interview, I have forgotten where, the American painter Barnett Newman is asked what he wants with his paintings. This was long time ago and I don't mean to propose that Newman is forever but his answer is still cool, or perhaps more sweet. He responds something in the direction of: "You know I just want the paint on the canvas to be as beautiful as it is in bucket." Personally I didn't know he used buckets, tubes would be favorable, as that would keep the scale more modest. Modernists, OMG.

In parentheses there's, for me, something strange about this quote, something that has nothing to do with the words but rather that it feels really odd to consider a person looking like Newman to say something so cute. Especially the older Newman, with a monocle, moustache and a lit cigarette. In my imagination somebody that looked very differently, somebody far less prominent or proud of him- or herself, formulated that beautiful sentence or is that nonsense? Certainly.

On the canvas whatever is there, whatever traces or not somebody has made on it, it cannot not be recognizable as something. It's like with clouds if you look long enough they start to look like something. They certainly always look like clouds and that's all great but then the shape of a dog appears or the three musketeers or, well, there's always something. What's on the canvas likewise is always something, this or that. It just can't be... because even "I don't know maybe it's..." is already something. Probably this or probably that and when it is, is already a location, a position to which one can formulate a perspective, an articulation. In the bucket however the paint is still untouched by probably this or that, it is all the possibly and not possibly. Even better it is also all that that is beyond what something can or not possibly be. The paint in the bucket is everything, perhaps one could even say that it is infinity. Not really, it's after all paint and in a bucket in the studio of Barnett Newman, but still.

The moment the paint ends up on the canvas it passes from the realm of potentiality to the realm of possibility. To me it's obvious that it is potentiality that Barnett Newman is referring to.

An impossible project certainly but – and it certainly had different implications in post-WWII New York – isn't that exactly what painting or art in general must circulate around. Potentiality.

In recent years the idea of aesthetic experience has re-surfaced. Nothing new and one can wonder what it is? Something tells us that an aesthetic experience is different from other kinds of experience, but what is that difference? If aesthetic experience is the same as any other experience one could compare the experience of watching a Kippenberger and having an ice-cream. Having an ice-cream is also an experience, first or second time. If this was the case it would also not be any fundamental difference to stand in front of a "real" Kippenberger or a reproduction in a book, and each time the Kippenberger would be more or less equally excellent, good or bad, too this or that. Might there be something specific about aesthetic experience after all? Might it even be so that the same Kippenberger only generates aesthetic experience once and only in a certain individual? If so we would have to consider that aesthetic experience is not just individual but that it is singular. It is this experience and only this one, it is singular.

Which is perhaps also why one can, when somebody ask why this Kippenberger and not this or that one, answer: "I don't know, I just love it". Concerning art, it is imperative to not love a painting for a reason – I love it because I love it. And we are back with Newman, the moment when you love something because because you don't love it for this or that, for what it possibly is. You love it, instead for all that it is and not, and for all the that it is that one cannot even imagine imagining.

It is no surprise why this idea of aesthetic experience has been silenced for quite some time and why it still resides in some sort of limbo. When Jacques Derrida proposed that language is the capacity through which we have access to the world it came with a price – along the lines of phenomenology – that only what could be accommodated by language could exist. In that very moment the only thing that could exist had to be probably this or that or, if you like, I don't know, which is still something. From Heidegger we know that nothing is also something and in that moment probability ruled the world. If there was something else that had to be put under a blanket and forgotten, hence aesthetic experience and potentiality had to leave the building. So if post-modernism was good at pronouncing the death of this or that, it certainly killed off art, not this or that art but the very essence of art, the specificity of aesthetic experience, an experience that carries the possibility of an encounter with potentiality.

Of course modernism got it all wrong. Aesthetic experience, the essence of art or potentiality, cannot be captured, put in a bucket if you like and observed. Well, even if one could capture it, the moment when it gains stability and is recognizable it has already entered the realm of the possible. There is no potentiality *in* a painting, none of them, but a painting, as any other art carries with it the possibility for the emergence of that peculiar moment that some call aesthetic experience, others potentiality and Barnett Newman called, “as beautiful as it is in the bucket”.

3. A Little Sol In The End

I like these beginnings.

Not in the “Sentences on Conceptual Art” but somewhere else Sol Lewitt writes something like, the great thing with conceptual art is that you can always cheat a little in the end to make it beautiful.

Sweet words but perhaps not that easy to decipher. It would be a bit too cynical to interpret the sentence as market benevolent or simply sloppy.

It’s intriguing that Lewitt stresses the end. Why the end and not the middle or half way, beginning? It seems like his work is carried by an instance of insight and when he knows, or has been able to navigate the insight, it’s not so important to state it. At that time, in the end, let it be beautiful.

Too often I wonder if that sentence or conceptual in art hasn’t been reversed into roughly; the great thing with art is that you can always cheat in the end by adding a conceptual edge – or even worse, adding some conceptual, thus fencing the work from all kinds of attacks or viruses. You can always say, it’s conceptual and that’s “Oh yes, I understand...”

Conceptual in art is like diplomatic immunity in politics. When conceptual is added in the end, like some icing, it might just be called smartass, and it definitely inscribes itself in dominant, if not downright male discourse. Conceptual in the end is like a father who responds to the teenage child “Because I say so.”

Conceptual in the beginning, as departure – like Sol had it – instead unveils a desire for transparency or a kind of exposure, if not dissolving of subjectivity. Not in the sense of Duchamp or minimalism where the point was to erase the artist’s subject, the traces of the artist – a gesture that often has been read as humble and a kind of glorious stepping down from a romantic male heroic image of the artist, but in fact functions the opposite way around. When Andy Warhol proposes that he wants to be a machine, it’s not cool it’s quite romantic and comes out as a desire to manifest the artist as superhuman or to reveal the human/heroic/genius by denying it.

Sol Lewitt’s conceptual is not a matter of denying or obscuring the artist’s subject but instead of remaining and faithful to something that has been set in motion, a process that might iterate a completely different subjectivity. To something that stays open – which means that it cannot be closed through a solution – but requires the coming into being of something or an experience that has yet to be given or acquire a name, an ambivalence to gain stability.

With a bit of a stretch one could even ponder the possibility that – contrary to the conceptual guys

obsessing with semiotics – Sol Lewitt’s work is queer. Queer not in the end, i.e. representation, but as or through a process that asks for nothing except devotion and that in the end is beautiful.

4. I’m just going painting

When Roland Barthes’ “The Death of the Author” was published in 1967 it started, and quickly, a total deflation of modernist ideals in visual arts. Art in general but most prominently in visual art and in New York. Overnight the idea of an essence to art was made obsolete. An artwork pointing to itself as itself was history and instead, at least in certain circles – and powerful ones at that – art became a matter of language, clusters of references and the artwork a bundle of signs held together by their very lack of originality.

I imagine Jackson Pollock having breakfast in the house in the Hamptons and after rolling a cigarette and about to put on his stained jacket saying to his wife Lee, “Hey, I’m just going painting.” That was in the end of the 40s or early 50s but what about if Pollock would have had breakfast after Barthes’ essay was public domain? There and then I’m just going painting might not have been such a good idea. I picture Lee starting to giggle slightly embarrassedly, one of those laughs that won’t stop. When the attack finally comes to an end trying to explain to the heroic painter that “just” painting implies a preserved understanding of essence, and that “just” simply is out of the question since there is no just in the first place. “Jackson, whatever you paint, however much it pains you, you and painting are always inscribed in a delicate network of references, skills, formats, conventions... you name it? You are not free neither are your paintings.”

Had Pollock stayed alive what had to happen there in the end of the 60s was that artists and art needed to articulate if not invent some new way of justifying artistic production. The time of innocence had come to an abrupt end. Purity sailed away and spontaneity had become a laughing stock.

Come to think about it, one could also say that art in this moment, had it been a human being, that it passed from being a free individual to be an individual that had individual freedom. Art passed from being a domain carried by sovereignty to constitutional freedom which obviously has nothing to do with freedom but at best with choice. From now on art had to earn also the illusion of its freedom.

Roland Barthes’ essay was perhaps not such a great contribution to artistic practice, not at all a welcome injection of who knows what but instead a few pages that opened the door to a huge amount of frustration. What if art couldn’t be *just* any more, what then...?

In New York in the late 60s, what could possibly offer justification to make art? Well, nobody, not even in the art scene, was a communist – “they” had been made extinct ten years earlier - but everybody, at least in the art scene was a Marxist. So where to start looking? What the art scene found in Marx was brilliant: critique. Marx’s first tool and nine years later the first issue of October came out and art’s obsession with critique was consolidated.

Awesome, “Lee, I’m going over to the shed to engage in my critical practice. Fuck, “I am nature” this is critique 24/7.”

But nothing says that art's relation to critique in any way is inherent. Art's job since 50 years, in certain circles has been critique but it is certainly not art's calling. It goes without saying that an art informed by Roland Barthes in any case would deny the possibility for a calling. No, art is something one does and gets paid for, it's reason, cognition and semiotics *c'est tout*, or?

It is this moment, this moment of crisis, from which conceptual art emerges and it is tragically an unconditional surrender to art's departure from sovereignty, which means to provide the very possibility of aesthetic experience.

It is as easy to be a posteriori clever, wise after the event, as it is to be in denial but perhaps it was Pollock who was brave, devoted and faithful. Who dared go into the studio unprepared for the possibility of being carried away by sovereignty and not the conceptual boys? Were they in fact cowards, so afraid of that something unnameable in aesthetic experience that they closed the door and locked it with critique? Was conceptual art guided by a bunch control freaks so paranoid that they anathematized any form or trace of indeterminacy?

5. It Was Possible

In an interview with Nicholas Serota from 2006, Gerhard Richter is asked how it at a certain moment happened that he started to make out-of-focus paintings. The interview is from a documentary and in this particular section Richter is sitting in an oversized totally fancy sofa. One can sense from the tone of Serota's voice that he is looking forward to a juicy response that will touch upon art's historical mysteries or secret conflicts nobody knew about circulating in the Cologne scene of the late 60s. Richter, dressed more like an archetypical Chinese worker than a stinking rich superstar touches his nose and changes position, says after slightly too long pause.

– Well you know, at that time it was... possible, adding a very generous smile. I can't recall what happens afterwards but it doesn't matter, the answer is intriguing enough on its own.

What first comes to mind is that Gerhard Richter is just another asshole that obviously and under no circumstances would reveal anything, especially nothing that in any way could smudge his genius. Gerhard Richter doesn't get inspiration, he is inspiration in its most pure form. If one Mr Richter ever gets inspired from somewhere other than himself it is from God and God only, but that is probably only when he has a headache or is haunted by a vague hangover after yesterday's opening party. Well, it was just some retrospective who cares where, really? Conclusion: Gerhard Richter is a shit.

But what about a different interpretation. Perhaps Richter said something more than about focused or out of focus paintings but instead touched upon something central to aesthetic production in general.

It was possible. Doesn't that mean that there were no reasons, or no no reasons? It was just possible and I, i.e. Richter did it, out of focus. Of course after the fact art historians or critics can make up a thousand feasible narratives. Do their detective work and track it all down to some childhood trauma, a revenge plot, technological development, a Marxist unpacking of a historical moment or why not just blame capitalism – neoliberalism was not invented at the time so capitalism will have to do.

But what if there were no reasons or no no reasons for real. It was possible, proposes that contrary to other kinds of decisions or unfolding aesthetic judgment or decision doesn't necessarily have anything to do with causality. Aesthetic judgement, what green color to choose, is not a matter of probability, at least not in its entirety. You ask a painter or whatever artist why that one there and most probably the answer will come across as rather silly if not stupid. – Cuz, you know... yeah, or something about emotions, feelings, energy or inner necessity. It could be no other way, and there was no negotiation or probability.

What Richter, the old modernist or not, says is that aesthetic judgement is beyond reason or rationality. It can be analyzed but some parts of it move beyond probability and measure. One could also say that aesthetic judgement is self-referential because it refers only to itself as itself and that the experience of taking such a decision, whether that is in the studio in front of the easel or in the exhibition space or museum, is not the experience of taking a decision but instead, since this experience by necessity is empty, means to experience oneself as potentiality. Perhaps that is the underlying feeling that determination that all aesthetic production comes down to, that feeling of generating a decision for no particular reason and to be touched however gently by potentiality.

With a different set of words perhaps what Richter said is that in aesthetic production, just because it is formulated around contingent decisions, hope resides.

6. August 1971

In August 1971 Richard Nixon during some kind of panic attack abolished the gold standard. Congratulations, universal equivalence, i.e. money was from then on free from any attachment, sailing about without being anchored to no nothing. Universal equivalence means money can buy anything, but when not connected to actual gold it also means that value in general is no longer attached to nothing at all. On the 15th August 1971 Richard Nixon abolished truth once and for all.

That same August Jacques Derrida delivered a lecture in Montreal called "Signature, Event, Context" where he for the first time – at least sort of – proposes, along with Austin's thinking around speech acts and performativity, that language can have no origin but is in its entirety performative. If language wasn't imposed on humans by some amazing superpower it can simply have no starting point, no substance, but is in fact through and through conventional and hence value, whatever value, cannot not be relative. In August 1971 Jacques Derrida abolished truth once, no second, and for all.

Remarkable, that was indeed a kick-ass month for humanity, as both money and language totally lost their reliability. From now on everything started to float and truth was just nowhere to be found (as if it had before). It is not far-fetched to claim that that week of 15th August 1971 was the day neoliberalism for real entered the competition and that there were no other contenders left. Shit happens.

From this perspective it's kind of comical to think about how Judith Butler twenty years later added identity. Until then one could at least, with a bit of good will, say things like "true for me" but with "Gender Trouble" not even that. I mean who me if at all in the first place?

August 1971 could also be understood as a performative turn or turn towards a hegemony of language and language, as we know, is conventional. Now, if Derrida argued something in the line of that language is the capacity with which we have access to the world it comes not just with *a* price but several. The first that postmodernism must be understood as altogether anthropocentric and the second (and there are more but not here), which is not exactly new but now better, that only that can exist can be contained, named or located by language. In other words, only that can be that is possible, that is already possible for humanity and language. Damn, but really, from then on only that that could be named had a place in the world, dreams and imagination included. If language is how we have access to the world and language is conventional, dreams, fantasy and imagination are too, however hard one tries. Thinking outside the box, which already felt a bit embarrassing, became in the fall of 1971 simply bogus.

That fall must obviously have been a terrible moment of crisis for any avant-garde attitude as Nixon with his gold also made the idea of explorer deflate and Derrida made sure that there was no such thing as an outside any more. But the men – they were always men – of the avant-garde quickly re-educated themselves and found a new name *institutional critique*. Brilliant and equally male. How many artists and art lovers mustn't have taken down their Yves Klein "Leap into the Void" postcard from the fridge that fall? Oops.

But there is one more thing, a thing that I think hasn't been considered properly, that Nixon and Derrida collapsed, which of course is aesthetic experience. Because if language is the capacity through which we access the world, art and its encounters cannot be otherwise and detached from the conventionality of language, from relativity or from performativity which means that aesthetic experience either simply ceases to exist or is transformed into something that can be dealt with through reason and ethics. Art can no longer be contemplated because there simply is no way out of teleology. At the moment when any kind of transcendence, truth, metaphysics or great outdoors is abolished art becomes synonymous with culture, something that can be measured and calculated, i.e. instrumentalized and smartass. In a way postmodern understanding of art in fact reminds us about pre-Kantian 18th century rationalism. In 1971 art lost its transformative capacity and postmodernism disgraced it by forcing it into the narrow world of possibility, or in other words into the predictable backyard of probability stealing away from art the universe of indetermination and potentiality.

It is paradoxically this moment when neoliberalism kicks in and makes art into policy documents and business proposals that that also is the greenhouse of socially engaged art. Of course if aesthetic experience has been ostracized and art has become brim-full of discourse social engagement makes perfect sense, but it certainly has nothing to do with aesthetic experience and again its judgment is not aesthetic but ethical or moral.

Recently though it seems we have bumped into a problem again. Derrida was totally crucial and so was Butler, but something has gone wrong when both language and then obviously identity has been down to its knickers co-opted by capitalism. Identity is big bucks and dollar signs and according to Franco Bifo, for example, we live in semio-capitalism where language itself has been financialized. So however much we were impressed by postmodernism and its companions might it not be high time to reclaim aesthetic experience and however much it feels weird to insist on aesthetic experience – which obviously is not an artwork but rather a possible experience generated through an encounter with an art work or situation – and that those experiences by necessity bring

with them a, however minute or tiny, encounter with something beyond language, value, history and convention, something that has many names and none of them are good enough. Yet, in the vagueness of those names resides the potentiality of other kinds of life – because if capitalism *owns* language we cannot imagine a way out of where we are now, but need those experiences that bypass the possible more than ever. That is the hope that resides in art, in those experiences that art carries within.

7. Private Art

"Tell me love isn't true/It's just something that we do" sang Madonna in 2000. At that time it sounded cool – cynical enough, smartass enough, apathetic enough. But shit, what a tragedy – if love is just something that we do then it's all a matter of calculation, measurability and economy. In Madonna's 2000 universe love has turned into nothing more or less than a decision, something we put on or off like a coat or maybe a diet. Or if love is something that we do it's turned into negotiation, investment and affordance. In 2000 love ended up being economy one 0 one.

Roland Barthes was a little earlier than Madonna: You fall in love, you fall out of love, you recover from love and you fall in love again. Holy Moses what a horrible thing to say, love is just something that we do and the last part *again* is really, really sad. Again proposes *another one* or *more of the same* and the book closes with the insight that love is comparable, measurable and simply different in degree, business as usual. There is nothing special with this love and there is certainly no singularity to love.

But why, why such a mediocre understanding of love? Well, for anybody who proposes the death of the author and the end of essence and authenticity it's evident that not even love is allowed to transgress language and have anything to do with magic, or feeling blown away or overwhelmed. For Madonna it might be the other way around and that the song rather proposes, if I just convince myself that love is something that we do, it means I can't really have a problem or be heartbroken. It's just reasons anyway.

If postmodernism and its entourage were keen on letting us know that language is the capacity with which we have access to the world nothing must bypass language and hence love must be degraded to something that we do, causality and reason. The other way around, since love is something that we do, that is negotiated, one can also be held accountable for one's actions, for one's love.

What about swapping love for art? "Tell me art isn't true/it's just something that we do". Well, in fact perhaps arts councils and venues, museums and commissioners should consider the sentence, because if art is just something that we do, it goes without saying that making art is something one also gets paid for. But then again if art is just something that we do, how come some of it is just valued so much more highly – monetarily or symbolically – and if art is just something that we do it would be difficult to argue anything about originality. If love is just something that we do wouldn't that mean that if there was a shortage one could also be okay with second best. Like, I really prefer Volvo but what the heck if you only have Volkswagen that's also o'rite. Or, if there's no Ad Reinhardt around I'm okay with that black wall.

As has been mentioned, if postmodernism claims language to be how we access the world it can

simply not allow art to be something else; art can't be magical, overwhelming or transcendental, because then apparently language is not the only, etc. But the price to pay for making art something that we do, or inscribing it into language, it also means that art always is calculable and measurable, in other words that it has become a matter of investment and affordance, simple economy and that the artist at the end of the day is just a manipulative shit, a seducer and that all artists are con artists. Moreover, it also means that the artist can be held accountable for his art and that a person who makes art that is weird or deals with awkward representations is somehow sick. An artwork in short becomes a prosthesis of the artist's fucked up mind. If this was the case quite a bunch of artists would be in trouble and Frances Bacon sent at least to Coventry. Aesthetics exchanged for ethics. Contemplation with policing.

When Judith Butler published "Gender Trouble" in 1990 that was absolutely terrific but an understanding of identity as performative is not all pros, because doesn't identity politics tell us that from now on it's all up to you. When identity becomes politics there is so nobody or else to blame, the only one responsible is you and for every decision or action you do or don't. You equal your actions and how you iterate "yourself" becomes a matter of affordance and investment. With "Gender Trouble" identity became 100% economy, and indeed identity was repackaged into commodity – you become private property and property – since there is only dynamics and relative value – that need to be surveilled and invested.

Two things come out and disturbing. If art is just something that we do and so on it ends up with that all art always is private. Art can of course happen, be, and exhibited in public/space, but it is always private, there is no public art. Not just in the sense of – who owns that paintings – but private in the sense of accountability. An art that is private, that can be owned is by necessity inscribed in the terrain of possibility, which means that it cannot carry with it the occasion of aesthetic experience.

Jacques Rancière, another poststructuralist who cannot extend art's life beyond language, writes that the definition of politics is the maintenance of two worlds in one. It is and has to be an endless negotiation, argument against argument until the sun goes down, which also means that politics is conducted through or within language. For Judith Butler identity is two "worlds" in one, it is always a negotiation. For these folks art is the same and must be – or their arguments crumble – it's two worlds in one, negotiation. It is not political but it's always politics, which at all times will stand in the way for it to be political. For art to carry within it potentiality it must withdraw from politics and from negotiation, only then when two become one can it slip out of reason, causality, accountability and give rise to the unconditional singularity of aesthetic experience.

8. Some Thing, Not Good Or Bad For Something

Across the street two guys are standing around smoking cigarettes and doing what guys do. It's rather unpleasant not least because they are doing what guys are doing, which already occupies space and in a somewhat aggressive way. One of them has had the brilliant idea of bringing his portable Bluetooth-ready loudspeaker to which his smartphone is connected. It's really great with Bluetooth and loudspeakers are one of the more extra-cool innovations. Great, but it is pretty much irritating that loudspeakers lately have turned into something people, i.e. men, carry with them to accompany cigarette smoking and doing what guys do. All of that is quite crappy but

what makes it really irritating is, however just a street corner or pavement, how these loudspeakers rearrange public space. Because a street corner is also public space and not to be underestimated, but with the loudspeaker-dudes these spaces are made private, perhaps just temporarily but even so transformed from environment to territory. From smooth to striated, authorizing only certain kinds of behavior and tagging the space with signs of ownership, not just through loudspeakers but also through other means of communication and code.

Perhaps one could say that my street corner has turned from being just a street corner to becoming a stage. In a way this is cute and something one should appreciate but really isn't this a slight problem in our times that the world to a larger and larger extent has turned into a stage. Not in a Shakespearian way which rather proposes that we are all part of some grand narrative that can't be escaped, it's inevitable and not so far from faith. Today the stage is another one where each and all of us are responsible for performing ourselves successfully. Shakespeare's stage one could say was public whereas today the stage has turned into private space, where destiny and faith have been swapped for affordance and investment. What happened on Shakespeare's stage was happening but was not performative. Today, however, even if something is not happening it is always performative. There is an important differentiation to be made: just because something is performed, in the sense of being carried out, it doesn't by necessity mean that it is performative. And the other way around, the moment something is in the world it cannot not be performative. A human being performs being a human being, she carries out being a human being, but that doesn't mean that being a human being is performative. On the other hand being a human being is always performing something into the world, in the sense of meaning or signification, and that is always performative.

Same thing with a painting. A painting carries out being a painting but isn't not therefore performative, but as a painting always performs something into the world it is always performative, or is carried by some kind of performativity. A painting is not by itself private, as an object it rather withdraws from becoming private as that in ways render it subject, but the moment when viewed from the perspective of performing something into the world it cannot not be private.

As long as something is public it can become anything, the public is open and, although not unconditionally, allows what is public to be, become or not whatever. One could say that in public some thing doesn't need to be something. The moment something becomes private, or leaves the public sphere, it automatically and by necessity becomes this or that and not anything or whatever. In the private sphere something cannot not be something and is never just some thing. Consequently, as long as something is some thing it cannot be held responsible. Only something can be accountable as some thing is that that slips through naming or so-to-say being located. But to the same extent as some thing cannot be accountable it can also not be owned and therefore not used strategically. On the other hand, as long as something is something, private and ownable, it can only and always be used strategically. Put differently, what is public is amazing because it is not good or bad for something which is exactly what is the tragedy of the private; in the private something is always good or bad for something and as long as it is it's not something else or ambiguous.

The public carries with it the promise of not being performative but just performed, carried out, whereas the private is always performative and as long as it is it is always less, less than itself as some thing, less than itself in any respect exactly because it is named.

Performative is nothing good. And it is not something that something can be more or less. For some thing to be something, or to be in the world or reality, it cannot be performative. Performative is not like a color, more or less red or blue. It is a condition that a certain understanding of the world makes inevitable.

As long as we view the world through an urgency of giving things soft or hard, more or less tangible identity this world has no other spaces than the private. Here, in the private, everything is owned and ownable and what carries the world is investment and affordance. That might be irritating like the loudspeaker men in the street corner, but really what is a tragedy is what this way of viewing the world – through the lens of performativity – or if you like a world to which we have access only through language, is doing and has done to imagination. The moment when imagination turns private one can only imagine this or that – what already *can* be imagined and as long as it is something. Public space or the public, might not or is definitely not a safe space, but it is a space where imagination is prominently free, where some thing can still be and remain some thing. An art addicted to performativity is petty – good or bad for something, private and ownable – whereas an art that insists on being public is an art that carries with it the promise of contingency.

In a world where identity is performative it becomes the responsibility of the individual to iterate identity. Every aspect of a person, every action, thought, mode of navigation and so on becomes part of a process to coagulate a seemingly continuous identity; however, we know that every moment implies a slight yet reiteration of how the individual is forming relations to the world. Within a performative regime where language is groundless or has no foundation identity becomes a matter of affording and/or investing in yourself as yourself. Here identity is not just a matter of politics, more importantly it becomes a matter of economy. Your identity is private and can be owned like any other something in the world. Since 1990 your identity has become a commodity like any other, and it is your most important asset. As we all know what you sell is ultimately your identity. Some identities are valuable, others economically uninteresting and hence packaged away or just stored in the lost and found bin. Your identity, if you are not one of those packaged away, doesn't just need maintenance, it also needs protection, both digitally and in the physical world. Your identity needs surveillance.

The price to pay for an identity that is understood as performative is a paranoid world where each and everybody constantly looks after and surveilles the position of their identity. The problem is not so much if your identity is stolen or hacked, but what is a problem is that somebody or everybody can want to appropriate your identity, attack it due some sort of power, capitalize on it for some reason or use information to tailor campaigns, trolling, commercials and that's what we know. Moreover, you always run the risk of losing the precious identity that you have invested in with a single wrong move, any utterance can be used against you and in today's world it is fairly easy to be disqualified and dismissed. And you know, we all know, that it doesn't matter what you did or didn't do there is anyway no grounds to what is right or wrong, only lobby and economy.

When Nixon sold out gold standard and Derrida language in 1971, what happened is that they disqualified any form of prominent stability – one of which and an important one at that, was ideology.

After 1971 there is only one ideology, which was an ideology of lack, lack of conviction and it's nobody's fault. It can be in no other way in a world that is governed by an understanding that all value is performative and has no grounding, no origin, no reasons to not change. But as nothing

in this world is fixed things are even better or worse, because without fixed points how can we know or verify change. It's all floating, Boss.

Ideology can perhaps be defined as “under no circumstances” or “over my dead body”, no fuckin' way, and this is a matter of principles, no matter what. Politics on the other hand is the very absence of permanence and instead we have negotiation, and the only thing that must not happen is that we agree that we reach a point of grounding, of settlement or index. A definition of politics might be “under these circumstances it is necessary to...” or “in this situation it has become important to...”. Ideology is stable, static, long term, grounded and heavy handed whereas politics is the exact opposite: unstable, dynamic, short term, floating and easy-going. Most of all politics is performative and as long as it is it certainly has no substance, it cannot have.

A world formulated around performativity is in many ways great but we should remember that is not only good but comes with a lot of darkness, and one of the darkest ones is called paranoia. Paranoia prompts fear, the building of walls and proprietary views of the world. In a world governed by performativity we will all tiptoe along acting as saturated heirs of Bartleby. I'd rather not since whatever I do can and will be used against me. Temporarily it might be the case but in the long run, performativity disempowers.

Performativity with its relations to phenomenology and postmodern or poststructuralist thought proposes that everything in the world, in reality or within symbolic order if you like, does not *exist* in itself but we can only access its representations. Things soft or hard, physical are not real but exist only as the sum of their relations in the world. This is our lucky day because had it been otherwise, if we could have a direct relation to things in themselves transformation would be impossible, and with that movement, time, dynamics, change. Something cannot not have relations and, however impossible, something without relations simply doesn't exist. Evidently relation doesn't mean to be friendly and engage in water-cooler chats, it simply means that there is the possibility for some or other cohesion, or transfer.

An interesting question is what happens to imagination in a, or our, performative regime. One possibility is that imagination simply vanished because the very idea of imagination is that it is ruled by totally fuzzy logics, impossible impossibilities, by non-relations, indetermination and contingency but such stuff cannot exist in our current regime as that would tear down the entire system inasmuch that some thing can exist without relations, at least to some degree at some point or moment. Another option is that we indeed fear imagination because it has this inscription of being unfaithful and contingent and who wants to end up contingently some where else? Scary shit and instead it seems that our current regime's capitalism plus provides us with tools that perform the illusion of imagination but the safe version, from retreat centers to computer games, from an afternoon in the spa or tarot reading, care practices (at least too many), Pilates and nameless forms of escapism, but it is never imagination. Animated Hollywood movies are perhaps a good example for how something that was created to stimulate imagination today has become so extremely saturated that there is no space for imagination left. Everything is delivered so that I don't need to feel haunted but instead consume properly and certainly don't imagine.

What is the place of art in a world that looks and operates like this one? With a bit of pushing and pulling one could say that performativity undid art. In this world there is no place for art, there is no place for contemplation because what art does is to open up for the possibility of losing oneself

– it is a letting go of the subject and identity, and that would be deep torture for a contemporary identity. In this world art has transformed into information, efficiency and participation, when in fact what we need is contemplation, uselessness and the promise of spaces where performativity is disqualified. Art’s job is not to make friends but instead to insist on the possibility of autonomy.

9. Gnomes and Trolls

In the beginning of the last century the Swedish artist John Bauer created a large series of illustrations to accompany stories for slightly older children. These books that were published on a yearly basis for quite some time were called “Amongst Gnomes and Trolls” and Bauer illustrated them in a Nordic jugend style full of mystery with stones that come alive, trees that run around, princesses, mousse and moose and lakes amazingly clean. They are fantastic.

It has been told that Edvard Munch from time to time left paintings that didn’t come out right in the nature. Who knows, in the forest behind his summer house, deep into the Norwegian wilderness, beyond people and civilization or something. I’ve heard both that he was convinced that the paintings would ripen and find themselves before he could start working on them again and, alternatively, that he punished the paintings to sit around in the bush for a bunch of weeks, scared shitless leaning against some ancient tree with moss and weird creatures.

One can basically consider two meanings for the word speculation. Either as in the stock market where one speculates on ups and downs, movements within given frameworks. Speculation on the stock market is based on probability. Something moves up, something else goes down, we win if we can predict probability. Difficult but not impossible. Another understanding is, one could perhaps say, philosophical. Speculate here is the opposite of projection, which is all about estimating the future based on what is already possible. Speculation implies the somewhat impossible project, to elaborate, for example, the future without grounding it in what is or can be known. This is a form of speculation that bypasses probability in favor of contingency. Evidently one cannot predict a result but has to suffice with whatever it is concerning speculation.

Speculation on the stock markets is not exactly rational but a matter of having an overview, information and people that creates watertight algorithms. Sharp tools make mucho dollars. Philosophical speculation on the other hand cannot be set out through reason or any tools that – which all tools have in common – knows its job. The first obstacle indeed is to bypass or un-hinge reason, history, probability, desire, hierarchies, patriarchy, fish, gravity, and so on and forth. There is only one tool that has the capacity to do this – and it comes with restrictions. This tool, that Deleuze and Guattari made so popular already in the 1970s (just kidding), is known as a concept.

This difference is important; speculation in regard to probability or speculation vis-à-vis contingency. The point has been made before, it is obvious that speculation on the stock market remains in the realm of the possible. You make more or less money, but never more than that. It all stays within the reasonable and makes total sense. The second kind of speculation which has nothing to do with money (or rarely) moves beyond the logical, causal and reasonable and into contingency which we can also name immanence or potentiality. It is not so tricky to figure out that speculation version one is both epistemological and performative, whereas the second, if not actually so at least close enough, is ontological and non-performative. Add to that one equals relational and

two is non-relational or in other words singular.

One should however keep in mind that just because something crosses paths with potentiality it doesn’t mean that what comes out is absolutely crazy, fucked up, amazing, weird or the solution to everything and a bit more. Pas de tout it just means that that is also possible and that that it is already enough of a promise, at least for some. Perhaps for, at least according to Deleuze and Guattari, scientists, philosophers and artists.

In parentheses potentiality is also a word that can have two connotations. On the one hand it has turned into meaning more or less possibility. A football coach or gallerist can say “that kid has great potentiality” which means worth investing in somebody that it already is fully inscribed in probability. On the other hand is the philosophical meaning of potentiality. Here, depending to an extent what philosopher one speaks to, potentiality instead can be described as the realm beyond, not just what is possible but also beyond what is not possible, i.e. to a realm beyond knowledge, signification, language, etc. Or if possibility is imagination, and unimaginable is the impossible, then potentiality is that that we can’t even imagine imagining. Yet, only potentiality can change something, the world, universe or the subject in ways that are not already predictable, possible, manageable, measurable or probable. Full *pêle-mêle* so to say, but that that it is already enough of a promise, at least for some. The first version points only to difference in degree whereas the second promises difference in kind.

A concept can be said to be a tool, but perhaps better a machine. There are two kinds of machines. Machines, such as a toaster, which knows its job and does it well. A toaster is good when it produces toast with strong determination. No matter what you put in it should come back up again with a different color. Most machines, or all of them, operate in relation to determination, they are reliable and that, most of the time, is good. But, and obviously a concept is the second kind of machine. It is a machine that produces indetermination, i.e. to which the outcome is contingent. There is a catch though, which is that there must be no determination to the indetermination either; therefore, it’s not just the result that is indeterminable but also the machine itself. Toasters are easy to build whereas concepts are motherfuckers to construct and you have no idea if they’ll work or not until it’s too late, and then what the hell they worked for or against. Concepts are machines you can’t know what they are good for.

Unfortunately concepts are often used as a way of defining. The concept of this or that is this or that. The concept of, for example, determination is a compressed explanation or even worse, a formulation such as “in this paper I intend to unpack the concept of”, *help me*. But equally often – and that’s where concepts, thinking or working with concepts is interesting and vital for, for instance, art – concept refers to a specific kind of machine.

More confusion. Conceptual has a lot to do with the first, unfortunate, version of understanding concept and very little or nothing at all to do with concept as in a machine that generates the possibility of indetermination. Conceptual in art, especially first generation, has rather to do with displaying concepts (first unfortunate version), or one could say translating concepts from text to some kind of visual representation. Joseph Kosuth’s work is a prime example, but also more recent artists, but we perhaps recognize them more as smartass than conceptual. Never mind in today’s art world it appears that conceptual is an art that appeals to cognition rather than emotions or energy. In fact conceptual is just something one adds in the end to seem a bit more deep but in a superficial way.

What about an art that forgets the conceptual and instead is a concept? No to conceptual art and yes to concept art. An art to which there is no good or bad interpretation, no answers or smartassness, no cynicism or institutional critique but where the engagement with the work is the engagement with a machine that so to say incorporates the viewer in favor of an indeterminate production, of contingency and the possibility of potentiality.

Now the question is, who do you want to be, John Bauer or Edvard Munch? Obviously neither of them but it seems obvious that Bauer just used his imagination and fantasized a bit whereas Munch in some or other way placed a kind of agency in the paintings themselves. In the most elementary and naïve way Munch didn't pass the paintings on to themselves, he introduced them to the indetermination of nature.

It's kind of cute to think about how when Bauer made paintings with gnomes and trolls in them, that Munch instead placed his paintings in the forest to spend some time with those gnomes and trolls. Sometimes gnomes and trolls are all you need for a brilliant concept.

10. What Is In It, Is Not What It is

There is, as we know, an intricate, fascinating and fundamental difference between what is in an image and what an image is. What is in an image is always something and that's good because then we can talk about it and smile, but behind, which is of course not behind, there is also the image itself. It is not behind or a background neither foreground nor margins but necessarily traversing all layers of the image. It is, after all, what the image is and it is no matter what dimension of the image is scrutinized. One could say that what is in the image always strives to hide, conceal or obscure what the image is, but at the same time the moment one tries to reveal, expose or show what the image is, it withdraws, dissolves or becomes something else. What is in the image is always carried by what the image is, but when there is nothing to be carried or supported what the image is calls in sick.

What is in an image implies a form of violence. The more there is in the image the more of what could have been is not. What the image is also a form of violence, or better what the image is presents itself as fear or anxiety, precisely because it doesn't offer any form of orientation. It is plain and simple, and that is to an equal extent bliss or fear.

Not that we are much into psychologizing art or paintings but just for fun, what is in the image refers to paranoia whereas what an image is instead has a liaison with schizophrenia, which is to say that for what is in the image meaning is directed to one single location, point or origin – everything means the same – and for what the image is instead everything means everything all the time – there is no destination or orientation to meaning whatsoever. However, the reversal is equally important, what is in the image holds on to meaning in order not to dissolve but is always contested and what is in the image always ends up meaning more than it wants. For what an image is the situation is almost identical, since it always means everything it so to say backfires and means only itself as itself. The paranoid image is trying to be pure but ends up being dirty and noisy. The schizophrenic image on the contrary is dirty and noisy but as it in no way is excluding it ends up conveying some thing pure.

We can conclude that what is in an image is always relational and the more it tries the more it removes itself from autonomy. What the image is instead is an ongoing production of autonomy, or rather what the image is is an engagement in processes of autonomization. Just for the fun of it we could also point out that what is in the image is always performative whereas what the image is is not, instead it has or carries autonomy and the price to pay is that it is non-relational and more over temporary or event based.

This is kind of comical because it proposes a causality that says that an image that emphasizes performativity at the same time is benevolent to restriction (narrowing) and gives up autonomy. Performativity and autonomy just don't sleep together, full stop. Following the thought through however proposes that what an image is is not performative but instead has or is carried by autonomy and is expanding ad infinitum. What is in the image is a perspective, what the image is is horizon.

Now, autonomy has nothing to do with being against nothing at all. It is neither something hard nor selfish, and it is definitely not a resistance group. To have autonomy (which also can be said to be impossible within reality) simply implies (and it isn't nice) to withdraw from or disown any kind of relation. Autonomy is lonely as shit not because it is empty, on the contrary because autonomy is so goddamn full. Autonomy is a full void, or prominent autonomy is immanence or potentiality.

It goes without saying that there is a relation between information and autonomy. What is in the image is always hooked to information, autonomy is the very absence of information. In politics or something autonomy tends to mean something closer to proud or non-aligned, or in art, without support from the government. This is all great but prominent autonomy has nothing to do with either but comes with a price, the moment when something "gains" autonomy it also loses the possibility to convey and opinion. Autonomy doesn't vote and does certainly not criticize, as that would dissolve exactly autonomy. Autonomy is goddamn costly and mind you has nothing to do with shared authorship or collectivity.

However, we have to turn this around one more time. The price for autonomy is high, but insofar as autonomy is non-relational – which is something very different than to disappear or dissolve – autonomy is an imminent threat to anything that doesn't have autonomy. Autonomy – when faithful – is a threat to governance, politics, identity, context, signification you name it – and "those" will do everything they can to stab autonomy in the back. But autonomy strikes back carried as it is by both sovereignty and singularity.

What is in the image offers solace, it is something with which you can identify with and talk to your friend about. Autonomy, on the other hand, offers nothing and gives nothing, it *is*, but as much as it doesn't offer or give it also doesn't claim anything – contrary to any performative regime autonomy lets you be yourself. Remember autonomy obviously cannot be captured, put in a jar and inspected, but in claiming nothing it opens up to the production of everything, infinity and truth.

"I don't need no taken care of!", exclaims a perhaps nine-year-old boy and waves a gun absentmindedly. In that television series Amy Adams is mysterious and a journalist back in her small-town trauma. Never mind.

I always thought autonomy is hard, aggressive and armed. Autonomy knows how to defend itself. Autonomy is fenced like private property, and autonomy brings a shotgun when under attack.

Autonomy is somebody alone in his car, who refuses to car pool. But no, that's not how it works.

It can be exciting to differentiate between strategy and structure. De Certeau thought about it and others, Levi Bryant for example. Simply spoken, a football field plus the rules is a structure, how to play the game is done through strategies. Structures are static and long term, whereas strategies are resilient and short term. A structure is the organization that enables strategies to unfold or play out. Meanwhile strategies animate structures that otherwise are dormant. Structures are stable, common or shared and therefore open. A structure can be navigated or used in a multiplicity of ways and doesn't instruct you how. Strategies on the contrary are dynamic, individual and proprietary or owned and therefore closed. A strategy often has strong teleology, it's directional and has a goal. If the strategy deviates it shifts to be some other strategy.

Remember those Ocean's movies? Con-artists analyze a structure and invent strategies that so to say play the structure. They use the openness of a structure and collapse it against the closed formation of a strategy.

Over the last 150 years or so the Western world has experienced a shift from a society built around strong structures to a cluster of societies that accentuate strategies and actively downplay structures. Foucault with Deleuze talked about a shift from discipline to control societies, same same. When Richard Nixon abolished the gold standard in 1971 he also dumped structure and proposed that from now on value is purely strategic. Nothing was actual anymore, just fluctuating and liquid. Jacques Derrida did the same the week after when he passed language into performativity. Tutti is floating, everything is relative and the structural reliance language once carried was never to be found again. Language became strategic.

Ideology depends on structures, on something fixed, otherwise there is no opportunity to state something like "under no circumstances" or "whatever the cost we will never..." Ideologies are stable but open. A society without structures – or a society where structures are hidden away – is obviously a society without ideology. What remains is politics, i.e. endless negotiations based on "under these circumstances" or "the economic situation doesn't allow for..." This is politics without a spine, without foundation, where what rules is investment and affordance.

Now, if we turn the argument around. If everything is floating and there is no grounding it means that the world becomes performative and hence also identity, well in fact the lot. The world we inhabit is geared by a politics without the possibility of ideology, it's essentially strategic, dynamic and closed and as long as it is it is the one with the largest resources that is on top, and will remain on top.

I've tended to consider that performativity confirmed something open and shared but of course not. Identity under the flag of performativity was free, dynamic and transformative – and to a certain extent it is – but with a bit of scrutiny we can see that identity that is process based, always masqueraded and practiced – not only fits brilliantly into contemporary political and economic interests – strong compatibility with neoliberal policy – but is proprietary and owned. Identity is mine and I'm ready to struggle either to keep it or to obtain what I don't have. Identity as being advocated today is perfectly liberal and submits to individualization and with that to personal and not in any respect to shared responsibility. Perhaps – and this sounds like Žižek – today the Left in order to step out of the shadows needs first of all to reject performativity. No revolutions were built on performativity and politics but instead on conviction and ideology.

Performativity is like a nine-year-old kid waltzing around with a gun, the total obverse of autonomy.

It's curious to think about what kind of art a society that lives, acts and thinks through performativity produces. Isn't it implicit that art is always strategic, closed and privatized, and if it is it's always owned, paranoid and it cannot with certainty be carried by autonomy but instead surveillance, self-interest and information (which is not the same as knowledge). In the world of performativity art at, the end of the day, both as things and experience become useful.

I was wrong about autonomy. Must it not be the other way around, for something to have or estimate any form of more prominent autonomy it can under no circumstances fence itself, in any case it can't because autonomy is structural, even considered as a one. Autonomy cannot have any interests, is non-hierarchical and non-gendered (if certain strategies are executed vis a certain structure it might occur or seem the structure is gendered but that doesn't say it *is*), it is unconditionally open and generous to the extent of self-eradication. Autonomy needs no fencing and doesn't arm itself. In fact autonomy isn't even a guy that rides alone, but can also be a car-pooling; however, it mustn't know where it's heading and in whose car.

Autonomy is not something that can be captured and put in a cage, and however autonomy operates on the very outskirts of language, if not in the great outdoors, aesthetic practices – if we consider aesthetic to be the "opposite" to ethic and hence not subject to any address of use or utility – that estimate autonomy, that strive toward – of great importance exactly because they are invitations to an unreserved imagination and a totally free experience. And this is the bonus, because autonomy doesn't guide or inform the viewer about anything, because the only thing autonomy offer is unconditionality, it is you who makes, who creates, the experience. But remember just because you made it, it's not yours, it is autonomous and belongs to infinity, to everything and itself as itself. Why would we otherwise make or view art if not exactly for that promise, the promise of a little bit of infinity itself?

11. Art Is Not Information

There is this story about a painting in some museum in St. Petersburg. The painting portrays the master saloon of Lenin's summer house whatever it's called, dacha, but there is also Lenin's wife together with a handful of bigshots from the revolutionary government all engaged in group sex. Nothing graphic but still without doubt an orgy. An American tourist looks at the paintings. Reads the wall text "Lenin in Moscow" and steps back again, now inspecting and inspecting again. Sherlock-expression but still confused. The tourist, a guy from Boston perhaps, now walks up to the guard – bored as usual – makes an attempt to communicate and when the guard has, asks: "But eh, where is Lenin?" and the guard responds with a smile "In Moscow".

Maybe now they have taken down the painting. Although this one is rather sad it's always slightly comical with these kinds of semiotic glitches, but what both the American and the guard are missing out is how they both transform the painting into a set of information. Or that they together transform the painting from art to culture. In a way they close the painting which now becomes subject to an entirely new regime of judgements. Did the painting communicate what it intended in a positive, clear and efficient way? Moreover is this information that we consider valuable and positive for the community that visit the museum or should the painting be taken

away because what it communicates is inappropriate?

Art is not information and it must not be. Think about it. An art that informs? Why on Earth would I go to a museum to look at mostly square flat things hanging on the walls if their purpose was to inform or enlighten me? Moreover if that was the purpose what would the difference between an actual Daniel Buren and a reproduction be? Or, wouldn't that make Isa Genzken total shit. Barbara Kruger too, not to mention, well all the good ones.

If art was a matter of information nine out of ten artists should probably just get a haircut and another job.

If art was a matter of information how would we consider contemporary chamber music or the work by, for example, Steve Reich.

Information is always directional, it tells us something and should be doing it well. Information is not seldom a matter of prohibition, from gendered toilets to no trespassing or worse. Information makes the world smaller. A toilet door without a sign is, so to say richer than one with one. An empty space on the ground floor is an opportunity until there's a sign informing the world that KFC is moving in.

Art has another job. Instead of diminishing what something can be, isn't its job to argue what is possible, what something can become. Information in this sense coagulates whereas art is more like turpentine – its job is to make something thinner and even better unclear, vague, dynamic and unpredictable. One thing is for sure information was never meant to make you dream away and trip. I mean who reads the New York Times in Berghain, when you can take MDMA and look at something nice Wolfgang Tillmans.

Next chapter. Information is there to make sense and be useful. Art's job cannot be to either or. Sometimes art mesmerizes me and I fall for it head over heels. I tell you information nah, I never found myself contemplating a piece of information. Sorry. It goes without saying that art should keep away from anything useful. And again, simple differences, information is good for what it makes clear not in itself – there is no intrinsic value to speak of, with art the situation is reversed, art is not good due what use it conveys but due itself. At least me, I look at art because what it is, not what it does.

Now, there is a complex differentiation to make, which in a way is what is in the, for instance, painting and an artwork's context and surrounding, actual and symbolic. Here Roland Barthes' essay "The Death of the Author" proposed something prominent as the author's death also meant that we should check out the art not the author's biography, identity and background – for art critique this was central – but one can also read Barthes from the other end as considering that when the "genius" dies then there is only context, identity and background. And it's of course great, okay and wonderful to be informed about something through art but that's not the art.

Aren't the worst in the world exhibitions that try to educate their audience about something urgent? If it's a matter of learning something about the art and the artist almost fine but art's historical rigor is a very different thing than a group show that wishes to enlighten the viewer about the social situation so and so. And who is the artist, who inscribed in the art world always capitalizes

on suffering, no matter what? I want to learn a lot about social situations and so much more but if it's about learning is the museum, concert hall or theatre stage the place to learn? Wouldn't it be better if we sat down and talked about it and skipped the art part or the aesthetic all the way? Because this is the worst right, art that wants to inform but package information a little bit poetic. Djzouz, oh yes I can totally support that information and knowledge often is strongly inscribed in Western determination but we don't overcome that through packing western knowledge with colorful poetics.

Art's job is not the same as the job of an institution.

Nor is art's job the same as the artist's and they shouldn't be mixed up. The person, the artist, is obviously responsible for the world like any other person. But their art cannot be accountable for saving or not the world. Art's job is to be good art not a service for somebody/thing else's struggle. How an artist is accountable for his or her work is a hard nut and ambiguous but it is definitely of importance to step away from a causality between the artist and the work. If so, artists could possibly only make nice and good art with friendly people and sympathy. But none of this isn't to say that the artist is not also the person making decisions and deciding if or not something should be shown for an audience.

It's heartbreaking to over and over again experience how art is made into culture, how art is made into information and service, and how art, exhibitions and even the experience of art and an exhibition should be useful. Consider that you exit the Venice Biennale and some fonctionnaire pushes a questionnaire in your face: In what ways was the exhibition useful for you? In what ways has it increased your knowledge about... exactly what is supposed to happen then, about what.

Even more, if art is a matter of information who is to decide what is good or bad information? Maybe the artist will have to call the government or an oracle or so to find out? If art hooks up with information it becomes a service. In other words it's the artist's goddamn obligation to refuse to inform and insist on art, only then can art reclaim an autonomy, an autonomy that carries with it the potentiality to change the world completely.

12. A Time Passed

Somebody proposes, and means it, that an artwork that cannot be understood and grasped under three seconds is rubbish. Somebody said that recently.

A car that doesn't start in three seconds is also not very good. There is a difference however. After the three seconds it takes to start the car you go somewhere, maybe on an adventure. When it comes to artworks after three seconds you slide your gaze to the next piece, and go nowhere. One of the best movie scenes ever when the three protagonists in "Bande à part" run through the Louvre in less than nine minutes. Smashing.

Only a socio-cultural context propelled by a performative regime can come to the conclusion that an artwork's relevance decreases second by second after three. And only a context that mistakes art for information can come up with something so clumsy and counterproductive in respect of the specificity and intrinsic value of art.

Although the deflation of indexical value, the exorcism of truth and the introduction of postmodern perspectives were all hunky dory and in many ways necessary it came with a price. When language took center stage, supported by some vague kind of phenomenology everything's attention turned to relations. And from attention the focus on relations has turned into obsession, first through identity politics but more recently boosted by both Latour and in the US by thinkers such as Haraway and Barad. Relations are everything and the more dynamic the better and all things and objects are bad or dismissed as commodities. Although Nicolas Bourriaud made an attempt in his 1998 "Relational Aesthetics" it is obvious that the harsh attacks the books gained were shadowing an interest in commodifying relations, making them matters of affordance and investment.

Never mind since the late 60s we have experienced a deep asymmetry between what something is and what its effects are, which is to say a shift from being to knowledge, but since when was art a matter of knowledge in the first place. Never!

In any case this passage from being to knowledge, from things to relations, further implies two things, first that aesthetics was replaced by spectacle, we could also say contemplation was swapped for admiration (not rarely monetary), and second that something laid out was exchanged for layout, or one thing after the other was replaced by coherence, or even worse dramaturgy.

Isn't it embarrassing to hear visual artists claim their work to be time-based? Really, and btw are you proud of it, dumbass. To define your art as time based is to pronounce that it has no value in itself but is the sum of its relations and on top to that spectacle. It's not brave to announce one's work as performative or time based, it's to chicken out and escape both the possible consequences of announcing something actual – relational has no grounding but is always negotiated - something undeniable, but it is also to give up on the possibility of aesthetic experience as something relational simply cannot be contemplated (in the first place) and certainly not, which since Kant has been imperative – contemplated without interest.

Zooming out a little it's easy to detect how this shift correlates with the shift from a discipline- to control-society. Which is neither good nor bad but as the name proposes control-society will by all means destroy any attempt to aesthetic appreciation or experience as these are phenomena that require a moment of sliding at least through if not out of control. Discipline is laid out whereas control always has layout. Something that has layout is relational and hierarchical, whereas discipline consists of strong entities that are not necessarily connected or in any way comprehensive at all. As semiotics would have it, discipline has strong entities and weak relations whereas control has weak entities and strong relations.

Dramaturgy is more or less a matter of managing intensity over time, it is a matter of controlling some kind of dynamic and making it efficient. One could say that dramaturgy is like a guide that through a play with dynamics, speed, placement, etc. manages attention. Good dramaturgy is good at manipulating the viewers' attention, and we know that this is again a matter of investment and affordance. Another way of announcing this would be to say, and this is a bit low res, that dramaturgy is controls soft versions of totalitarianism. It's just a totalitarianism that you can't really feel and more over that you can't revolt against.

Sometimes it is proposed that theater is totalitarian and exhibition spaces where people can wonder freely around is not, which is to say they are liberal. Ouch. It's nice to think about how

one converses and looks at art, spending time in front of something and making one's own choices. Bullshit of course but at least it's the illusion of personal choice.

But when visual art starts to talk about dramaturgy and conceives of exhibitions in respect to dramaturgy – at least considering a slightly more elaborate idea about dramaturgy. Because what dramaturgy does is indeed to confiscate the openness and chanceness that the museum room carries, carries in so matter that encounters and ways of navigating are minimally monitored and controlled.

And to us museum visitors please let's not ask for relations, correlations or guidance. Instead let's be brave enough to submit to a discipline of things and objects between which it is up to us to create relations or not, because we can also just lean back and let time pass, unmanaged.

STATE:

A Parallelogrammic Apparatus

By Amanda Steggell

STATE. Photo: Anders Lindén



Ingri has asked me to write an essay about altered states of consciousness, based on my feedback notes where one possible version of *STATE* was drafted out with an invited audience. The text could be about *STATE*, in parallel to *STATE* and/or it could be a work of fiction. The request came surprisingly. - The thing is this. My notes were written (more or less) spontaneously, as streams of consciousness, such as I experienced when attending the rehearsal of *STATE* in April 2016. - Long gone experiences of ritual dances and (pseudo) spiritual practices alternate with the memory of *STATE* and the entangled themes of Ingri's doctoral project. In essence, I was trying to recall, as one of an audience, how the performance affected me, with a gaze towards the phenomena of kinaesthetic transference.

My text begins with Beyoncé's participation in the Super Bowl 50, which took place about a month before the rehearsal of *STATE*.

STATE SOMETHING

On February 7, 2016 Beyoncé and her posse of black female dancers performed her new single 'Formation' at the closing ceremony of the Pepsi Super Bowl 50 in San Francisco, USA.

'With references to the Black Lives Matter Movement Malcolm X and the Black Panthers, Beyoncé's half-time show at the Super Bowl on Sunday might be the most radical political statement from the superstar in her 20-year career.' -Thus said a reporter for the Guardian newspaper. The headline; *Star makes political statement with dancers posing with raised fists à la Tommie Smith and John Carlos at 1968 Olympics.*¹

Videos of the event went 'viral', igniting numerous versions of the dance moves - watched, learnt, practiced, performed and published as videos on social media. Some pay homage to Queen Bey, the slayer, the high priest within the quasi-ritualized structure of the Super Bowl 50. Some are parodic and very critical. Others are portrayed as when dancing along with the dancers. Untouched by-, and/or unaware of the political connotations and controversies there-in (of which there are many), they seem to be uncontrived, enjoying the momentary dance moves and formations.²

Over two years have passed, yet cover dances and comments still come in, such as this comment, a question, by Ellu Saari;

*Can someone tell if her (Beyoncé) dance moves here are inspired by traditional African dances? It's just that she has done that before and I'm getting that kind of vibe ya know :D I'm uneducated so if they are I wanted to research the dances and educate myself a little.*³

About a month later two people responded. (1) No! They're African American dances. (2) which are influenced by African dances.

Mark the terms 'inspired' and 'influenced' as opposed to 'cultural appropriation' as others do say, explicitly or in a roundabout way.

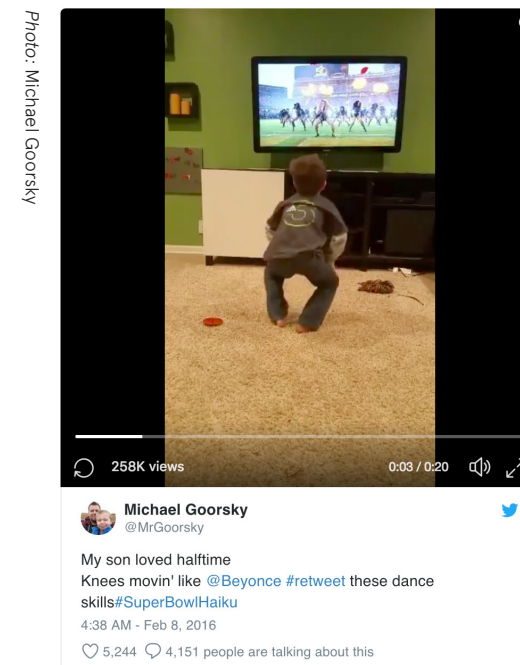
- I say, good on you, Ellu, for educating yourself. You have hit a note, a vibe of *STATE*, a part of Ingri's doctoral project.

"[I]f a new technology extends one or more of our senses outside us into the social world, then new ratios among all of our senses will occur in that particular culture. It is comparable to what happens when a new note is added to a melody. And when the sense ratios alter in any culture then what had appeared lucid before may suddenly become opaque, and what had been vague or opaque will become translucent."

– Marshall McLuan, 19624

LIMINAL STATES

While I am writing to you (Ingri) I am drinking the leftover dregs of a bottle of white wine. For several reasons it seems a fitting thing to do. For one, it's common knowledge that when



ingested in the body alcohol has the power to evoke altered states of consciousness. For two, alcohol has a varying socializing and symbolic value, such as when served ceremoniously as a medium for communicating with one's ancestors. And indeed, the wine does affect me a little bit, helping to conjure up the atmosphere of *STATE* and my personal experience of it, all be it in mystical and magical ways.

I bought the wine yesterday. The occasion, an unexpected visit of a former boyfriend who I haven't seen in yonks. Let's just call him 'X'.

I met 'X' at a house party in The UK in the mid1980s⁵. I was a student of dance. A country lass, little travelled, was I. 'X' was studying agriculture in the so-called 3rd World countries. A suburban lad, well-travelled and cosmopolitan was he. Between my education (quite feminist) and 'X' (he shared a flat with a Marxist and a Swedish lumberjack) I gained something of a social conscience. Short after I graduated (I was 19 years old), sick and tired of Thatcherism, I got a job as a dance teacher in Bodø, bang on the Arctic Circle on the coast of North Norway. During the winter period I was given leave to join 'X' in Morogoro, Tanzania, where he was on a field study concerning the cultivation of crops. The contrast of climate, culture and poverty was overwhelming. Most significantly in this context was that I was invited to participate in the closing ceremony where pubescent girls come out as full-blooded women.

What follows here might be a lengthy digression. As it is written from memory, I acknowledge that the information I am giving you might fall into fiction. As I proceed (I have lips on my fingertips) the memory of the experience becomes increasingly present and perceived as real. The plot thickens. The scenario goes like this.

The leader of a drumming team (I will call him 'V') led the ceremonies. We started at dawn, walking up into the steep sloping mountainous rainforests of Morogoro to the highest and very poor villages where the first ceremonies were conducted in an enclave surrounded by mud huts and trees. Then we walked down the mountain to repeat the ceremony in the lower villages, each becoming more affluent and less friendly when coming closer to the town.

In each village the sacred ground was prepared. Villagers and guests sat in a circle on the hot red dusty ground. In the middle was a large earthen pot filled with a local brew of sorghum and millet grains, first chewed and then spat out, the saliva accelerating the fermentation process⁶. Horrified, I feigned drinking from the ladle that was passed around the circle. All the time 'V' consorted with the elders, women and men alike.

*

Time passes. Now in the present.

– Samuel Beckett, 19847

*

Spirits are rising. The drummers enter the centre of the circle and start to play. Out from the forest comes a small procession. The children run to meet it. The initiate, her body completely hidden by layers of cloth, is being carried shoulder high by her male relatives, while her female relatives and friends surround her. The drumming becomes more intense. Women ululate in high pitched celebratory tones. The initiate is placed under a shady sacred tree set apart from the circle, the women comforting her. The dancing begins. Two rings are formed around the drummers. An inner ring for women who dance anti clockwise. An outer ring for the men who dance clockwise. The symbolic value of this cosmic formation seems quite apparent to me.

Though touching another's body is a no-no, the dancers constantly communicate with one another, spreading compliments, teasing and egging each other on. Several encourage me to improve my tentative dance moves (get down, make it hot). They show me their own moves, pointing towards the motion of hips, butts, boobs, shoulders and spines. The atmosphere becomes ecstatic - heat, dust, smell of sweating bodies, the repetitious rhythmic moves, beats, chants and ululations. Faster. Faster. Endorphin production building up in my body. I am riding on a high.

Skilfully avoiding my skin, a guy, still dancing, drops coins into my bra. A reward for my efforts. The woman behind me conveys to me that I should put my reward into the bowl placed close to the initiate's feet. She is in a trance, crying and shaking. I find it very disturbing and quickly returned to the women's ring. I notice that the circulation of money is going on all around me by women and men alike; a part of their culture, one based on a gift economy-or a micro-political one?

Each time money is placed in the bowl the initiate gets slowly uncovered. As the cloth comes peeling off the dance becomes trance-like. The drummers, prompted by the leader, are jumping and falling to the ground and up again. Pelvic thrusts and rolling around in the red dust makes a cloud that covers the enclave. Everything comes to a climax as the initiate's body is freed from the swaddling cloth.

The initiate is now semi naked. She is being paraded on the shoulders of her male relatives. She looks radiant. Then she is carried into the forest, now rebirthed and 'ready' to take on

her adult duties within the community. The drummers' job was done. At least in this village. There were more ceremonies to come before the night set in and the full moon prided the star-spangled dark blue sky.

Is all that we see or seem

But a dream within a dream?

– Edgar Allan Poe, 1849⁸

STATES OF OPAQUENESS

'What happens if the scenery in front of you is in fact from a very long time ago and the people walking around you do not actually exist...? How will our conviction about reality (CV) be affected if we can no longer distinguish between the events of the present and the past?

- S. Wakisaka, K. Suzuki, and N. Fujii, 2014⁹

This is the question that I addressed when on a field trip to Tokyo where I was introduced to the notion of Substitutional Reality (SR). Via a meticulously rehearsed performance score and a technological technique that borrows some aspects of Virtual Reality (VR), it is almost impossible to distinguish between reality and fiction.

July 2012

I am sitting on an orange chair sporting a black head mount display(HMD) in the laboratory for Adaptive Intelligence at the RIKEN Research Institute in Tokyo. I am about to make my debut within the realms of SR. Though a heat wave has hit Tokyo, the lab is chilly.

The lab is divided up into three rooms, all of which are relatively small from my perspective, but relatively large according to Tokyo standards. They are (i) a reception room with an orange sofa, paintings of ape heads on the wall and a 3d printed tiny sculpture of the principle researcher, (ii) a dark room; an audio and visual control station, and (iii) a white covered curved room. The control station is connected to the white room via a folding door.

I am in the white room. In the middle of the room stands a panoramic video camera. I can only see the room via the HMD and I can only hear through the headphones mounted inside the helmet. I have been instructed to sit on the chair for the duration of the experiment.

The principle researcher ('Z'), sporting a checkered grey-and-red shirt, black jeans and glasses, enters the white room. He comes over to me and adjusts the HMD helmet. 'Is the helmet comfortable'. I ('A') say; 'quite okay, thank you'. The experiment proceeds like this.

Z: Some people experience vertigo, especially when they turn their heads. Can you turn your head, to the left ... good ... and to right? Does it feel okay?

A: A bit heavy, but otherwise okay.

Z: Can you see your hands?

Z waves his hands, shoulder high. 'A' mirrors his gestures.

A: Yes, I can.

She notices that there is a lag in her movements. She begins to doubt the reality of the situation.

Z: There's some delay in the video reception. A lag, that's just what it is. - Do you believe that I am really here?

A: Yes, I do.

'Z' walks around and chats with me. The door opens. Another 'Z' walks in. There is something fishy going on here. A doppelganger? (Yikes!) I will call him 'z'. He walks towards 'A'.

z: Do you believe that I am here?

'A' is quite dumfounded and confused.

A: No, I don't believe that you are here.

'z' holds his right hand out. 'A' reaches out her right hand. Though she is having some movement coordination issues they manage to shake hands.

A: Do I believe that you are here? Right here, right now?

No doubt about it. I know you are here because I can feel your right hand in my hand-right?

'A' and 'z' laugh.

'A' has almost forgotten the other 'Z' who is nowhere to be seen.

'z' leaves by the door. The door opens abruptly. Another researcher ('W') enters and stands in front of the door. He is wearing a black and dark blue cardigan and black jeans.

W: Hello. Can I take a photo of you?

A: Yes, you can.

W: How are you doing. Is everything all right?

A: Quite alright really. I am just a little cold and a little bit confused.

W: Don't worry. I'll see you later. By the way, do you think that I am real?

Without waiting for my response 'W' exists through the door.

'A' sees an image of herself as perceived from above. Time slows down. She feels in limbo, an out of body experience. The sensation makes her feel very cold and lonely. Sometime later (was it some seconds or some minutes, it's hard to tell) 'A' was transported back to ground level. How this happened she did not know, except that it happened when 'Z' and 'W' entered the white room together. We make some small talk. As they exit something else is going on.

- A fast fade transition. Instead of seeing the white room she sees a panoramic scene of the notorious Shinjuku crossing. She turns her head and the scene reacts accordingly. She sees many pedestrians revolving around her point of view. It doesn't feel real, oh not at all.

- A fast fade transition from Shinjuku to the white room. 'Z' is leaning against a wall. 'W' comes close to 'A', his blue and black cardigan covers her view.

W: I am going to take off the HMD. Are you ready?

A: Yes, I am ready.

W: Here we go.

A split second later (an eclipse) I feel 'W' taking off the HMD, thus returning me back to reality.

'Z' is looking straight into my eyes. I am really very confused. Where is 'W'? He emerges from the back of the orange chair. He is carrying the HMD. The illusion exposed. There are blind spots between the 'virtual' panoramic video and the 'physical' architecture of the white room.

Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that I could be so receptive to the trickery of this experiment, which affectively hijacked my audio and visual senses. In doing so, all other sensory capacities were blocked out or suspended.

What I had been subjected to was a sequence of live scenes captured by the panorama camera and past scenes previously recorded at the same location (with exception of the Shinjuku scene). Through the headphones I could hear the sound track of the recorded videos of scenes from the past. The role play of the team of two was exceptional as they moved between the switching scenes in the white room and the operations of switching between live and pre-recorded video in the control station.

**

RELATIVE STATES

In 2013 I took a group of Master students of KHIO (choreography and theatre instruction) to the RIKEN SR lab. Particularly astounding for me was that the researchers had the exact physical features (including clothes, glasses and hairstyles) as when I first met them in 2012. Much like my encounter of SR, all four students could not distinguish between the live scenes and the scenes of the past, some of which were recorded three years earlier.

**

In conversation with Dr. Naotaka Fujii ('Z') and Sohei Wakisaka ('W'), two of three inventors of the SR technology, I asked whether they had envisaged some commercial applications of SR. One possibility stood out. It goes something like this: - Have you ever wished that you could bring back cherished moments that you, once upon a time, had shared with a deceased loved one?

"Reality is that which, when you stop believing it, doesn't go away."

- Philip K. Dick (1978)¹⁰

LIMBIC STATES

3 of 21 affirmations to prepare oneself for a rebirthing ritual.

"I am glad to be out of the womb so I can express myself freely and fully."

"I am no longer afraid of my breath."

"The universe is singing in my atoms."

- Leonard Orr, 1980¹¹

In the summer of 1981 (I was 17 years old) a boyfriend (my first love) took me to visit his bohemian big brother. I will call him 'BB'. The 'bad boy' of an upper-middle class military orientated family. 'BB' lived in a collective cottage in the rural landscape of Oxfordshire, UK, where he worked as a musician and a carpenter.

As a wayward teenager in the 1960s' he was packed off with a one-way ticket to Australia via a state sponsored youth migrant scheme. He worked as a farmer's apprentice for several years. Eventually he earned his passage home with many detours along the way. 'BB' left England as a London-based Hells Angel and came back as a hippy, which was certainly not the result that his parents had envisaged.

To be sure, the visit was my first encounter of alternative living, one borne out of the New Age milieu in Western countries in the 1970s. The cottage, a redundant vicarage, became a hang-out for intellectuals, artists, poets, musicians, authors and the likes. Some were very famous (and I mean very-very famous). Here they could relax in the seclusion of the countryside dwelling. The atmosphere was right. Recreational drugs and mostly home grown vegan food were on the menu. In the attic a resident (I will call her 'Y'), a psychologist -stroke -Shaman, performed ritualized rebirthing sessions with her clients.

After one session 'Y' s boy-child was nowhere to be seen. He was later discovered on top of the roof, deliriously happy, tripping on a LSD tab that he had found in the cottage.

Shocking!
Totally unbelievable!
Bad karma
A reality check

That evening a house meeting took place. The residents decided that the rebirthing sessions should be held elsewhere. The end was marked by cutting down a rotting oak tree in the garden that bordered onto the graveyard beyond.

"The ultimate vocation of micropolitics is this: enacting the unimaginable."
– Brian Massumi, 2008¹²

It is political in that people experience the unimaginable - for good (utopian) or bad (dystopian), totally horrific (terror), religious (death cult) - depending on what one's stance and beliefs are.

END STATE

I am indebted to Andrew Morrison for helping me with the manuscript in the making. Through several discussions he came up with the term 'Parallelogrammic Apparatus'. The term became both a part of the title, and a device for thinking through how the writing and the reading of *STATE* could begin to take shape.

September 2018

Notes

¹ Elgot, J. (2016, February 8.). Beyoncé unleashes Black Panthers homage at Super Bowl 50, *The Guardian*, Retrieved April 22, 2016, from <https://www.theguardian.com>

² Bergad, G (2016, 10 February). This kid nails Beyoncé's dance moves better than you could. *The Daily Dot*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailydot.com>

³ Beyoncé (2016, 9 December). *Beyoncé -Formation*. YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com>

⁴ McLuhan, M (1962). *The Making Of Typographic Man*. The Gutenberg Galaxy.(p.41). University of Toronto Press.

⁵ I liked to dance to the DJs' mixes of low bass lines, beats, loops, scratches and assemblages of sampled music coming from without and within 'Europe'. The lights and sampled videos synchronised to the beats made for an immersive synaesthetic experience.

⁶ I thought it was a welcome drink, though I now know that I was attending a libation.

⁷ S. Beckett (1984) What Where. In *Samuel Beckett. The Complete Dramatic Works of Samuel Beckett*. Faber and Faber LTD 1986.

⁸ Poe, E. A. (1849). *A Dream Within A Dream*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org>

⁹ Wakisaka S., Suzuki K., Fujii N.(2014) *Substitutional Reality system*. RIKEN No.: 23946. Retrieved from <http://www.riken.jp>

¹⁰ Dick, P. K. (1978) *How to Build a Universe That Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later*. (Essay). Retrieved from <https://urbigenous.net>

¹¹ Battista, M. (1980, July 22). Rebirthing. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com>

¹² Mckim, J. & Massumi, B. (2008). Microperceptions and Micropolitics. *INFlexions No.3*. SenseLab. Retrieved from <http://www.senselab.ca>

Landscape dramaturgy: "Space after perspective"

By Ana Vujanović

To answer the question: What does dramaturgy have to do with the landscape? I can blatantly say that if dramaturgy is about drama and landscape about pastoral idyll – nothing. However, the recent cultural history of Western world has brought deep changes in both conceptions.

Historically, dramaturgy in Western theatre indeed started with the drama, as a play, a written text which long served as the backbone of the theatre art. However, in the 20th century two important 'turns' appeared: performative and affective turns. Performative turn manifested as a paradigm shift from written text to performance consisting of various 'texts' (speech, bodies, costumes, lights, music, etc.) which all express and produce meaning. Affective turn, which brought the focus on the embodiment, the bodily experience of a situation or event, not predetermined by the meaning, came as a subsequent challenge for dramaturgy. The problem is that the drama play belongs in the long Western tradition of logocentrism, in the realm of performing arts rooted in Aristotle's legacy. Therein the primary concern is the play, which comprises the semantic skeleton of performance: its story, narrative structure, and the sensible order of events and actions (the *emplotment*). In that conception of the theatre, the performance itself: *opsis*, *mise-en-scene*, aesthetics, is there only to present the story to the audience through an affective event. Accordingly, dramaturgy was to preserve the meaning of a play in performance, which was fully dependent on it and dealt with by the linguistic model of representation. But when performative and then affective turn appeared, dramaturgy lost not only its culturally well-rooted tools, it also lost its culturally well-rooted thought, the linguistic, logocentric thought, which thinks that speech represents thoughts and texts represent speech, and that is incapable of thinking how these representations themselves produce situations, experiences, feelings – meaning if you want. Contemporary dramaturgy thus operates in new registers, as it regards performance not only as a non-teleological semantic composition, which is typical of post-dramatic theatre, but first of all as an affective and meaningful event, an expressive social situation, a shared experience, a here-and-now of human coexistence and communication. Over recent decades dramaturgical thought thus 'spaced out' and moved from a depth of logocentrism over inter-textual plateaus to a surface of environment.

On that slippery terrain I identify a tendency in contemporary performing arts that I name 'landscape dramaturgy'.¹ Here we cannot speak of traditional Western idea of landscape, which has human inhabitation as its ultimate purpose and which involves humans' interventions into the Earth's surface as the integral element. (Stilgoe 2015) In an artistic sense, we thus cannot speak of the traditional landscape oil on canvas, where the land is staged for the viewer as 'scenery'. To carefully approach the tendency I call landscape dramaturgy, apart from the changed conception of dramaturgy, we should accept a new notion of landscape as the morphology of the Earth's surface, which is not a 'shoveled land' – as Stilgoe plays with its etymological root, the *landschop*

(Ibid.: 2) – and thus entirely defined by human needs and purposes. Landscape dramaturgy is therefore a metaphor that has a strong epistemic rationale, grounded in rethinking the position of the human mind and human agency in the world. It may be especially cogent if we associate the landscape with an indifferent thingness of the world in the moment of the epochal questioning of the Anthropocene and indeed detrimental results of humans playing the main role in the life of the Earth.

Living on surface: experiments with spacing out

When I say ‘landscape dramaturgy’ I think in poetic prior to analytical terms. So, for instance, I recall the experience of straying. It is about a slow pace and not exactly a straightforward journey, like traveling by night train to Istanbul with a stranger in the same compartment, or Googling for a needle in a haystack for hours and getting lost surfing the internet, or staring at the TV and lazily zapping between the channels... I also visualize a vast panorama where I find myself amongst objects, living organisms, signs, thoughts, and affects as one of them... There I enjoy solitude which is not loneliness and which is a condition for contemplation as a daily life practice. Therefore, when I speak about landscape dramaturgy I don't have a strong concept of a dramaturgical model. It is rather a theoretical intuition, which comes from my own long-standing questions and from my experience of attending several performances at the European contemporary scenes in recent years, such as Doris Uhlich's *More than Naked* (2014) and *Boom Bodies* (2016), Isabelle Schäd's and Laurent Goldring's *Collective Jumps* (2014), Mårten Spångberg's *La Substance, but in English* (2014), *The Internet* (2015), and *Natten* (2016), Sebastian Matthias' *Groove Space series* (2014-2016), Anne Imhof's *Angst II* (2016), Linda Blomqvist's *Cosmos the Beach* (2015), etc. Reflecting on that experience, I lightly outline landscape dramaturgy as an analytical approach, which can help us to reveal some new problems in performing arts and open new discussions around them.

To contextualize it briefly, I would remark that a landscape is not a new dramaturgical concept, although the way it appears now ultimately belongs to our present-day social, political, and cultural context. In different manners it appeared throughout the 20th century from Gertrude Stein's plays to the post-dramatic theatre of the 1990s.² Furthermore, I don't see landscape dramaturgy as an invention which exclusively exists in performing arts. How directors and choreographers like Doris Uhlich, Mårten Spångberg, Isabelle Schäd, and Sebastian Matthias dramaturgically approach their recent performances has certain resemblances with slow cinema and post-Internet art.³ In addition, the recent trend of programming dance in museums has also left its mark on the performing arts world and landscape dramaturgy with its usually long, slow, and spatially stretched performances can be seen as an echo of that trend. In a broader sphere I associate landscape dramaturgy with new social organizations, especially the recent protests, assemblies, and self-organized communities across neoliberal Europe, where less representative and more horizontal ways of gathering, relating, and co-presence have been probed.

Clearly, I cannot speak about this rich and dispersed field within the scope of the present article. Moreover, I do not want to do that because it would mean squeezing it into the frame of few pages. So I would rather leave it broad and somewhat vaguely delineated, while focusing on one aspect of landscape dramaturgy – the space. I see it as one of two main aesthetic and epistemic aspects of today's landscape dramaturgy, the other one being temporality, which I will tackle in my future writing. To enter that space, I would propose paying attention to an intention of



Top: La Substance. Photo: Dieter Hartwig
Bottom: More than naked. Photo: Theresa Rauter



Top: Mekong Hotel
Bottom: Groove Space. Photo: Katja Illner

spacing out, which is present in most of the ideas of landscape in performing arts, and where the surface replaced logocentric depth. Thereby, in the first step the visual became the main domain of performance in which its meaning was disintegrated, and visual dramaturgy opened the performance to intertextuality, where even the audience contributed by their different ‘readings’. Contemporary landscape dramaturgy, however, attends to another question of spacing out: the question of perspective as a question of inhabiting that (post-logocentric) surface together. So it is not about a return to a pre-discursive paradise, although most of the performances I refer to have a strong visceral dimension. It rather seems that the previous artistic experiments and theoretical attempts succeeded in proving that the meaning is not a condensed unit of human rationality that you can carry around, from context to context, medium to medium. As a result, they left us with a semantically underdetermined environment, without a teleological narrative to follow. Once we find ourselves in the midst of a proposition that is progressively spacing out and doesn’t provide us with clear guidance through the experience, the question of perspective becomes unavoidable. It is happening in the situation where although we are not sure how the environment is organized, we can perceive that the classical perspective doesn’t function. As a paradigm deeply rooted in how we (are trained to) see the world, the one-point perspective becomes visible especially when it ceases to function. Landscape dramaturgy therefore questions the classical perspective as a still-predominant model of seeing and thinking the world, which results in creating performances (and films and installations) as wide, composite, and tentative spaces of cognition, affection, and sensation.

Perspectival organization of common affective space

When we speak about the problem of perspective as a problem of inhabiting semantically underdetermined spaces of performance together, the perspective doesn’t only address set design and *mise-en-scene* (Bleeker 2008: 12-15). As Hubert Damisch defined it, perspective is conceptual as much as it is optic, and as such it is a paradigmatic symbolic form (Damisch 1995). Therefore, to fully comprehend it as a productive force of performance, optic terms are insufficient and I would share Bleeker’s standpoint that: “Perspective as invention of the Early Modern period [...] is fundamental to the development of the modern scientific world view and the constitution of the modern scopic regime.” (Bleeker 2008: 12)

As a visual technique, a method for representing space on a surface, the linear perspective was devised in the early 15th century by Italian architect Filippo Brunelleschi and systematized by Alberti in his 1435 treatise *Della Pittura*. From that time onwards, the one-point perspective has been the common method for perspectival representing space on a surface in Western culture. The main idea behind it is that the picture functions as a window through which the observer, from their first-person point of view, looks at an outside world. Perspective is thus used to represent something actually existing, but it in fact visually represents what is seen and in which relations and proportions it is viewed from a particular point of view. Therefore, far more than being just a technique of visual representation, the one-point perspective has affected our conception of the visible world and its hierarchies, the relationship between that world and human subject as its observer, and even the definition of the individual person.⁴ On the one hand, this perspectival organization of the world is pretty centralistic: individualist and anthropocentric. But on the other, in its beginning the linear perspective was an emancipatory move, which replaced an abstract, godlike position of observing the world, with a mundane, human point of view. Thereby, in the first Albertian epoch of perspective, it introduced what Norman Bryson describes as ‘spectating

body' (Bryson 1983). According to him, in Raphael's perspectival representation, the viewer of the picture is offered a position of the presence. In front of such a picture we feel like almost being in the world we see and observe it from the point which was originally occupied by the painter – and which is located exactly between the retina and the brush. (Ibid.: 104) In the final form of the one-point linear perspective, with Titian and Vermeer, this embodiment disappeared and “the only position for the viewing subject proposed and assumed by the image will be that of the Gaze, a transcendent point of vision that has discarded the body of labor and exists only as a disembodied *punctum*”. (Ibid.: 107) This position of the viewer, whether embodied or an abstract *punctum*, is highly interesting: although we know that the correspondence between image and reality depicted is vague and that the linear perspective in fact falsifies dimensions of and relations between the parts of reality, it convinces us on the basis of that subjective feeling of presence. In other words, in a perspectival drawing, we turn a blind eye to the distortion of reality because in turn we obtain a central observational position in the world, from which the world looks unified and well composed.

In the field of performing arts, although the perspective doesn't only address set design, scenography largely and in different manners adopted a one-point perspective from the 16th century onwards. In baroque and neoclassical theatre and opera, for instance, stage décor, directly employed its rules, and depicted or physically presented on side-wings buildings, trees, streets, and objects in the first plane bigger than those in the second and third planes, while the vanishing point was projected on the backdrop to create the illusion of depth. Even in more contemporary cases, the perspective operates conceptually, helping us to organize the visual experience of performance:

In theatre scenography, the spectator sees singular phenomena appearing at singular moments and seen from specific perspectives. Scenography rests on hiding things in principle and displaying them at specific times. Even in the black box, which is containment itself, there is always some logic of upfront and background, of covering, and of differences of perspective. (Pristaš 2013: 59)

What Pristaš points to is that even when we don't have the perspectival set design, the logic of perspective influences how we usually organize the space by attaching more attention and importance to the actions upfront, while those in background are often counter-actions, lateral events, latent streams, or additional information about the main action.

Accordingly, a profound way to tackle the problem of perspective should draw on Damisch's idea of the perspective configuration as a “model of thought”. (Damisch 1995: xiii) Only as a model of thought, associated with how we see the world, the perspective becomes a productive force, with which we shape the world. The problem of perspective with which I'm concerned and which I notice at contemporary European scenes seems to operate in this register. And after contemporary theatre, dance, and performance challenged the sovereignty of an author's subjective view as the perspective that configures the whole field of vision – which happened already in historical avant-gardes, reappeared in the 1960s with happenings and environments, and then in the 1990s with participatory, site-specific, and immersive performances – today's landscape dramaturgy challenges the perspective by tactics that are more expressive of our time and context. As characteristic ones, I would identify: multiplying personal views, the challenging of the one-point view, and propositions for sharing a view. All of these dramaturgical tactics are about a democratization of social organization, taking place in the situation of performance, and sometimes they speculate even further about humans' position in the world beyond their society.

Multiplying personal views

Multiplying personal views as a way of problematizing the perspectival representation of landscape is known in 20th century Western art history, the main source being Paul Cézanne. In his still lifes and landscapes, he ignored the rules of linear perspective, freeing the scene from the centralistic personal gaze and allowing an object (apple, bowl, tree, house, mountain, etc.) to be independent within the space of a picture. That approach was later developed in cubism, especially in George Braque and Pablo Picasso's landscape paintings. Their intervention demonstrated that a two- or three-point perspective doesn't liberate landscapes from the centralized, personal view, and instead of multiplying vanishing points they started multiplying first-person points of view within one picture. Introduced in the field of performing arts, the dramaturgical tactic of multiplication of personal views on a shared space has a strong impact: it destabilizes a displayed ground and scatters it in a multiplicity of particles. We can see that process in Sebastian Matthias' *Groove Space* performances, especially *X/ Groove Space* (2014), where the audience and performers share the same space and create an environment together. In that – densely populated – space, the audience members must move and look for the performance around them. It seems that Matthias here returns to an earlier idea of the perspective and *incarnates* again the individual viewer, who is physically present and addressed by the performance. Bryson described that approach when analyzing Raphael's *Marriage of the Virgin*:

In operating the codes of monocular perspective the viewing subject creates a self-definition as this body approaching the image in this space: where the space of Byzantium had been physical, had been somatic, yet the body was never individually interpellated and never saw itself, Albertian space returns the body to itself in its own image, as a measurable, visible, objectified unit. (Bryson 1983: 106)

These embodied viewers of *Groove Space*, however, and in contrast to Albertian painters, don't have a perfectly open and arranged space in front of them and for them. On the contrary, they don't manage to see all movements, sequences, and scenes presented by performers because other people are around and obstruct their gaze or because the events are simultaneously taking place. In an interesting manner, this work brings together Raphael's incarnation of the individual viewer and the cubist approach to landscapes, and associates them with the experience of living of modern cities' mobs.

If we turn our focus to the audience, we could say that this performance shapes the audience as a mass of individuals who all 'have the right' to their singular view. The tricky point is, however, that there is still a whole that no one – among the audience members – can properly see. This is different from cubist landscapes. It can become especially problematic when the performance space is less egalitarian, such as in Imhof's *Angst II*, where the physically unique space is dramaturgically divided into the strictly choreographed and stylized performance and audience members who wander around like crowds watching a spectacle, political speech, or similarly directed event. Although they physically share the space, in aesthetic and conceptual terms the space is composed of two unequal registers, insiders and outsiders, those who have and know the script and those who try to figure it out. The slight difference from *Groove Space* is that *Angst II* doesn't react to the multitude of perspectives of the audience, and hence it's scattered only from the singular viewpoint of an individual spectator, while in *Groove Space* there is at least a direct, human contact between performers and audience, which to some extent allows the performance to be affected by the audience's views.

Since this proposal in principle maintains the multiplication of perspectives within the frame of having rights to singular views, I don't find these and similar performances especially critical or visionary but I do consider them an accurate symptomatology of the social organization in neoliberal capitalism, which is, in theory, referred to as the multitude. In that sense, I would also mention that this dramaturgical tactic of being together is inherited from the post-dramatic theatre of the 1990s as a part of deconstructing the teleological perspective of the drama, and it is now intertwined with social networking and the experience of daily life of smart mobs and creative workers. It thus comes as no surprise that multiplication of personal views can also and in a more radical form be found in Amalia Ulman's *Excellences and Perfections* and Ann Hirsch's *The Scandalishious Project*, where we can follow two phases of that process. Both of these post-Internet performances in the first phase expanded from the basic author's proposition into an abundance of Instagram and YouTube 'posts', integrating in the next phase 'comments' coming from 'followers' into the performance tissue. These performances, utilizing the technical possibilities of the medium, 'space out' in as many directions as there are the viewers and eventually comprise all of them, thereby changing themselves along that process. In a surprising way, they are epistemically very close to cubist landscapes.

Challenging of the one-point personal view

Another tactic of organizing the experience in semantically under-determined environments that landscape dramaturgy proposes is a cancellation of the personal view on a performance space. This proposition is more difficult to achieve, because it has to go against the whole theatrical apparatus, which struggles with the default total view and where, as Pristaš spotted, "[e]ven in the black box [...] there is always some logic of upfront and background, of covering, and of differences of perspective". I find this tactic even more democratizing, and recognize the attempts at breaking the theatrical apparatus of hierarchy between planes in Spångberg's and Uhlich's recent performances. Objects, bodies, and spaces are on stage in their actual sizes, shapes, and proportions, and they are arranged or moved around without a conceptual and visual point of view to define their rationale. For instance, the movements taking place in the back are not a background – as they are in ballet or drama theatre – but can have equal importance as those upfront. If we think about the audience, these and similar displays are, in a special way, engaging because they give an impression of not being composed and meant to be watched by anyone in particular.

If I move to the cinema, this tactic may become more apparent, since the film cannot help but create a particular view. So, what we see on stage as a non-hierarchical and impersonal total view has its dramaturgical counterparts in the off-center frame, vista, *mise-en-cadre*, and frame-sequence of Belà Tarr's, Apichatpong Weerasethakul's, and Tsai Ming-liang's slow films. For different reasons they all look as though they have been poorly composed in relation to the central observational position, that is the position of the film director and later viewer. Banners with brands and logos, huge painting canvas, performers, clothes, and objects of various kinds are in a similar manner scattered through the performance space of *La Substance*. Similarly to the dancing bodies in *More than Naked* they are all present all the time on stage, but look unaware of and disinterested in being watched by the audience. What is especially intriguing here is that this tactic, even when we are aware of it as a dramaturgical tactic, produces an effect of the undetermined – if not equal – value of everything that is there. In a similar fashion, hospital scenes with comatose men, a building site with a bulldozer working, or the scene in the canteen in Apichatpong's *Cemetery of*

Splendor (2015) are created by long shots and distant views, without trying to absorb the viewer. Moreover, in some of the frames we see crucial actors appearing on the margins, while others, usually considered marginal – like a hen with chicks – are occupying the frame, not because they feature in the narrative action created by the director but because the director tries to withdraw from his own narration and give space to the life in which the story is taking place. In Apichatpong's *Mekong Hotel* (2012) the scenes where we can see this impersonal view are the ones with two lovers in the hotel room or the film's ending with a long take of a river, which I will soon go on to discuss. These are long shots, which are so emptied of excitement, accents, and action that we lose the author's wink of "Look at this or that" and must look at everything appearing on the screen, like observing a landscape. The performances where I see similar tactics in fact stop struggling against the total view and let it be. This 'let it be' is however not about celebrating a spontaneity of the state of affairs, but, as I am trying to show, a delicate artistic gesture and a deliberate invitation to think and live differently.

In Ivana Müller's performance *Egdes*, this dramaturgical experiment of impersonalization that contests the hierarchy of assembling whatever is there on stage reaches its final speculative instance. The performance starts with an empty stage over which fog is hovering. The introductory dialog of two interlocutors, which we hear from the off, goes like this:

JB: Last night I had a dream.

A: Really?

JB: Yes.

A: And what was happening in your dream?

JB: Well, I was dreaming I was inside of a painting.

A: How strange.

JB: Yes. It was one of those paintings with many details, many people, many animals, also with objects, houses, trees...

A: Mmh... And how was it?

JB: It was good. It was very... lively. A lot was going on. Except that very soon I realized that I was... invisible...

A: Mmh... Invisible to whom? To those who were in the painting with you or to those who were looking at the painting?

JB: Actually, for both.

After that, the performance starts from a visual and mental zero point; that is, without anyone to look at on stage to tell us where to look. And it proceeds from a margin, as a story of unknown and unacknowledged 'extras' in film, or in history. The main curiosity of this and other performances presented above is that they do not address us; they are dramaturgically turned to themselves and their inner world. Thereby, they enhance an indifferent thingness of the performance landscape, where we really need to think and examine how to get in.

Sharing view

Thinking in the direction of democratization, at the end I'd briefly like to introduce a dramaturgical tactic that almost doesn't exist in contemporary performing arts, to my knowledge at least, but which may be a proposal worth examining. There is an experiment with looking and watching in Apichatpong's *Mekong Hotel*, which intrigues me. It's about the film's ending with a vista of a river,

whose subtle proposal could be called ‘sharing view’. This is a very long (6-minute) shot, which comes after a shot of a couple, who we see on a balcony, from the back, looking out at the river. In that previous shot, we hear the two men almost indistinctly chatting and our gaze is focused on them. But gradually, we notice the river in the background, in front of them, and after a cut there is a new shot, the ending one, which is the shot of the river itself. This is where we start observing the river together with its observers within the film’s frame. According to Karl Schoonover, what is at stake in that shot is an intertwining of a view of the couple, who we previously saw, and our own gaze. (Schoonover 2012) Our gaze is at some given moments even gaining predominance since the men from the preceding shot never appear again and we forget about them, while our gaze is for long time left to hover over the river. Schoonover remarks:

The shot’s variegated temporality confronts the viewer with a tension between individual and collective registers of looking: an assortment of differently paced micro-events and seemingly inconsequential actions make looking seem both individualistic (distraction is decidedly personal) and communal (sharing a durational observation with other humans onscreen and off). (Schoonover 2012)

Although temporality is not my subject of choice here, I must mention that, by the slow intertwining of the perspectives over time, the last shot of *Mekong Hotel* in fact breaks with the idea of endless present of the perspectival image and opens up its time.

Un espace d’après les raisons

In conclusion, I would remark that understood not only as a scopic regime but as a model of thought above all, the paradigm of one-point linear perspective was already challenged in early 20th century art by cubism, futurism, suprematism, and neoplasticism, as Damisch noted (1995: 28-30). In the theatre of that time, we find that approach in Gertrude Stein, in whose plays the landscape does not have much to do with ‘the natural landscape’. Stein’s artistic principles and her idea of textual spacing out of imaginary situations closely relate to those of cubist painting and avant-gardist collage and montage in cinema, visual arts, and theatre. Today, due to the development of mass media, social networks, and networked society, as well as the social organization of the multitude and alternative political practices of non-representative democracy, the classical perspective paradigm might be completely inadequate, in optic, political, and philosophical terms. The performances I discuss here show an open distrust in that organization of the world. However, that distrust departs from the postmodernist nostalgia for a nature that existed before culture, and in difference to the historical avant-gardes it seems to be less loud and raged. Rather, the distrust in the perspectival organization of our presence in the world and hence our world today results in calmer and almost melancholic attempts at creating the performance as a semantically under-determined landscape of various things in which the only way to situate ourselves is to enter as one of the components. It’s a space coming from the future.

While commenting on Jean Paulhan’s thesis that what lay behind cubist painting was an idea of ‘space prior to reason’ (*un espace d’avant les raisons*), Damisch wrote:

But the fact that perspective must be challenged, that the attempt must be made to break it down, to deconstruct it, makes it clear that we are dealing, rather, with a space “after” or “according to reason” (*un espace d’après les raisons*). (Damisch 1995: 39-40)

Referring to Damisch, I would call that ‘futuristic’ space of contemporary landscape dramaturgy ‘a space after perspective’. Yet we cannot speak about a new, robust paradigm, which is just replacing the perspective. The attempts at creating landscape on stage partly come from deliberate experiments with democracy, while partly requiring a truly new epistemic of perceiving the space around us, be it mental, physical, emotional, political or social. The dramaturgical tactics of co-existence in that space as one of its elements largely emerge from probing that new, post-Anthropocene, so to speak, epistemic. They are uncertain. They promise new beginnings. We may best understand them as prefigurative artistic experiments for a time that is coming.

(2018)

Notes

1 See a general outline of contemporary landscape dramaturgy in Vujanovic 2017.

2 For historical references see Stein / Vechten 1946, Marranca 2005, Lehman 1997, Marranca 1996, Bleeker 2003.

3 See The Art of Slow Cinema <https://theartsofslowcinema.com/> and Wallace 2014.

4 For instance, one of the main definitions of the person in analytic philosophy – as well as in cognitive science and philosophy of mind – is “the holder of the first person perspective”; see Baker 1998: 327-348; 2000; 2005: 25-48.

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