

Introduction (script)

AA: Welcome to this experimental session or performance called **How to do things with performance in alliance with things, concepts, bodies or plants?**

Tero: This session is organised by the four-year post-doctoral research project “How to do things with performance?”, which investigates what actualises in performance, when a performance is documented, and when it is analysed, often as an excess to what is expected.

Pilvi: We ask in what ways can we understand 'performance' today, in the light of new materialist theories of agential realism or post-humanism?

AA: This session will take place in three parts: 1) First this short introduction together, 2) then four parallel sessions, one at each table, and 3) lastly a discussion together again.

Hanna: Please do not eat your sweet quite yet, because it will be your ticket to the next phase of the performance. If you did already, keep the wrapper, so that we know you gobbled it up without permission.

Pilvi Porkola: My performance is based on my project “A Study on Objects” (2018), which is focusing on the materiality of everyday objects and performance. The research asks how we are related to the objects we are surrounded by, how we are living with material things like the clothes we are dressed in, a spoon we use or the spectacles we wear? How do objects influence our daily life and thinking? Are we using the objects or collaborating with them?

Tero Nauha: I will present a performance lecture with a modified Theremin. The question is what is the quality of thought, or say, the *gesture of thought*? In other words, how can we perform so-called performance thinking, or *fictioning*, or to view multiple gestures of thought as equal. Can we regard these as *gestures*, instead of representations or metaphors? The performance thinks ‘along with’ the act that runs through it. So, the question is not how we perform thinking, but how performance thinks.

Annette Arlander: I am exploring the possibility of performing with plants using video documentation of performances with a particular tree, a video called *Under the Spruce I-III* (2008) as a starting point, together with a text from 2010 called “Performing with trees”, for reflecting on the potential meanings of the idea of performing “with” trees. How can we receive strength from our symbiotic relationship with vegetation? How can we perform and collaborate with life forms unlike our own without assuming anthropomorphising narratives?

Hanna Järvinen: I am asking what remains of the materiality of past bodies, in this case the archived bodies of the kinds of sources I use as a historian, and what might be the relevance of such materiality in present performance practices, to our corporeal bodies. By looking at the limits of epistemology, and specifically, what and how the past can be known in terms of its concrete material remains, I ask how this kind of exploration of materiality and the not-known and unknowable inform how we create or write of our practices?

AA: So now, let's begin. Please compare the colour of your sweets with ours, let's match colours. (AA, Tero, Pilvi and Hanna show their sweets and invite people with similar colour sweets to join them.)

#### PARALLELL SESSIONS:

At the sound of the alarm (phone) all four tables are pushed together in the middle of the room...

Hanna: You may eat your sweet, now, if you have not already. Also, some still remain, here...  
\*eats one\*

Pilvi: I would like to hear more about the most important things that came up when we were considering objects...

Tero: My question is that when performatives are not truthful, but only successful or unsuccessful, and that they bring forth the social reality they are referring to, then how to approach equality of these gestures of thought, from very different social, political and material realities?

Annette: I would like think about how to combine live action with film or video (like the one you just saw) in a more experiential manner, when sharing work done with trees... There is the tradition of expanded cinema, but how to use it today?

Hanna: What emerged in the physical handling of the materials with the tools provided? What kind of motions are required by the archive? Could this be used to perform the archive in ways that instead of reproducing claims about the past, focus on the remains? [or if something more interesting emerges, I will focus on that]

Discussion moderated by Ulrika