



## **Pilvi Porkola**

Uniarts, Helsinki

Professor in Artistic Research, Uniarts Helsinki. Performance artist and a writer. Researcher in a post doc research project How to Do Things with Performance?

### **QUESTIONS OF TRANSLATING IN LIBRARY ESSAYS**

The question of translating performance is multifaceted it concerns not only a language but also a context. In his text “Translator’s Task” Walter Benjamin 1997 problematizes translation of language by stating that fidelity in translating the words can never render the meanings they have in the original. In the context of performance Diana Taylor 2003 has also problematized translation what is considered as a performance in one society might be a non-event elsewhere. Performances are always located they have their contexts. Moreover, when thinking the question of translating from artist-researcher’s perspective there is one more layer how to talk or write about performance, so how to translate action to words? In this presentation, I focus on questions of translating in my performance Library Essays #1 “Elephants are always drawn smaller than life”. The original version in Finnish was performed in an empty library building in a suburb of Helsinki. The translated versions in English were realised in very different contexts: in a yard of University in Sao Paulo and at the busy city library in Turku. If we accept Benjamin’s proposition that you can’t translate the ‘essential’ thing of an artwork, what was translatable then? And what for?

#### Key Words

language, context, performance, translation.



## Hanna Järvinen

Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki

Dr Hanna Järvinen works as a Lecturer at the Performing Arts Research Centre of the University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland and as a Senior Researcher in the Academy of Finland research project *How to Do Things with Performance?*, 2016-2020. She is docent in dance history at the University of Turku and an Honorary Visiting Research Fellow at De Montfort University, Leicester. A specialist in early twentieth-century dance, her interests lie in the epistemology and ontology of dance, particularly issues of authorship and canonisation. Besides works in her native Finnish, she is the author of *Dancing Genius* Palgrave Macmillan 2014, and her articles have appeared in e.g. *Avant*, *Dance Research*, *The Senses and Society* and *Dance Research Journal*.

## MIGRATING CONCEPTS IN PERFORMANCE – RESTAGING, REMAKING, RECONSTRUCTING, REIMAGINING

This paper is part of a panel, which brings together approaches to performance from separate disciplinary discussions like performance philosophy, dance history, and artistic research. The purpose is to show how material-discursive practices, migrating concepts and translations have a direct bearing on how we make, experience and understand performances. My contribution focuses on how, although we take for granted that any performing art exists in the moment of performance and changes at each performance, the past of performing arts are reiterated through practices of restaging, remaking, reconstructing and reimagining that all still largely rest on a formalist discourse of work and authorship where a canonical work of art has to re-emerge on stage as ‘the same’ as a historical precedent. The lexical differentiation between various degrees of change to whichever is considered the ‘authentic’ iteration of the ‘original’ work is different in re-staging, re-making, reconstruction, and so on. But what happens if these lexical differentiations – these re-doings – are taken as the fictions that they are: as attempts at creating a canon of art that would incorporate earlier performance practices whilst ignoring corporeal difference between past and present bodies as well as how ‘art’ or ‘work of art’ or ‘author’ are understood? Does translating the vocabulary have an effect on the practice? What happens when these translated concepts and the understanding of performance they contain are re-translated into English? This presentation offers one case study of a re-imagining of a Russian choreography performed in Paris and London in 1913 and reimagined in Finland in 2016.

### Key Words

repetition, reperformance, dance



## **Annette Arlander**

Stockholm University of the Arts

Annette Arlander, DA, MA, is an artist, researcher and a pedagogue. She was professor of performance art and theory at Theatre Academy Helsinki 2001-2013, professor of artistic research at University of the Arts Helsinki 2015-2016 and Postdoctoral Fellow in the Arts at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies 2017. At present, she is professor of performance art and theory at Stockholm University of the Arts engaged in the artistic research project performing with plants and visiting researcher at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki. She is principal investigator of the Academy of Finland funded research project How to do things with performance? Her research interests include artistic research, performance-as-research and the environment. Her artwork moves between performance art, media and environmental art. For publications and works see <https://annetearlander.com>

## **MIGRATING CONCEPTS IN PERFORMANCE: AUTHORSHIP, AGENCY AND PERFORMING IN “YEAR OF THE DOG - SITTING IN A TREE”**

This paper is part of a panel, which brings together approaches to performance from separate disciplinary discussions like performance philosophy, dance history, and artistic research. The purpose is to show how material-discursive practices, migrating concepts and translations have a direct bearing on how we make, experience and understand performances. If we assume with Karen Barad, following Niels Bohr, that concepts are material arrangements, which are productive of the phenomena they measure, that is, determine what matters and what is excluded from mattering, concepts like authorship and performerhood, if such a term can be used, influence our understanding of agency, of who and what can perform. As pointed out by Diana Taylor in her introduction to the Archive and the Repertory, to explore alternative terms for performance used in various languages can call into question our taxonomies and point to new interpretive possibilities. For her the untranslatability of terms like performance has a positive function as a reminder that we do not understand each other and that we should start from there. This presentation focuses on two notions in Finnish, on one hand the single term for author, maker and factor, *tekijä*, and on the other hand the two different terms used for performing, the transitive *esittää* and the intransitive *esiintyä*, which can be used to expand our understanding of agency. They are particularly helpful in understanding the practice discussed as an example, namely performing with plants, which is here approached through returning to Year of the Dog - Sitting in a Tree 2007 twelve years later. Comment by Pilvi Porkola

### Key Words

performance, performing, authorship, agency, performerhood, plants



## **Tero Nauha**

Theatre Academy of The University of The Arts Helsinki

Tero Nauha is an artist and a postdoctoral fellow at the Academy of Finland funded postdoctoral research project *How To Do Things With Performance*. He was a postdoctoral fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies in 2017. He defended his doctoral research at the Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts in Helsinki in January 2016. In 2015, he published his first fiction novel *Heresy & Provocation* for a Swedish publishing house Förlaget. His performance art projects have been presented at the Frankfurter Kunstverein, Theatrediscouter in Berlin, CSW Kronika in Bytom, Poland, Performance Matters in London, and at the New Performance Festival in Turku, among other venues.

## **MIGRATING CONCEPTS IN PERFORMANCE: PERFORMANCE AS THINKING OR PERFORMANCE PHILOSOPHY?**

This paper is part of a panel - which includes proposals by Annette Arlander, Hanna Järvinen, Tero Nauha and Pilvi Porkola - brings together approaches to performance from separate disciplinary discussions like performance philosophy, dance history, and artistic research. The purpose is to show how material-discursive practices, migrating concepts and translations have a direct bearing on how we make, experience and understand performances. The difference between the conceptual apparatuses of performance as thinking and performance thinking are elaborated in this presentation, which is linked with the discourse of performance philosophy. The performance philosophy insists that the definition of thinking and research need to be kept open, when it is regarded as process of relating with the world. But how performance thinks in what it is performing or how it performs what it is thinking? My research project relates with migration through non-standard thought, presented by François Laruelle. It is a radical interpretation of heresy- a freedom to choose or a deviation from the proper thinking. If performance thinks, is it proper thinking? Can we make a choice, or do we need to make thinking meet with universal principles and standards of thought, i.e. philosophy? This paper relates with a research project on non-philosophy and performance. It ties thinking with the generic and the Other, or recognition and the common sense in performance. The proper thinking is the sufficient organization and generation of the world, which simultaneously predetermine positions for a subject and the Other. However, the argument goes like that, that the human is not central for performance thinking, but it is the performance that thinks. It is an experimentation with thought itself. Will be commented by Hanna Järvinen in the panel.

### Key Words

performance philosophy, non-philosophy, heresy, orthodoxy