

## Afterthought

The following five-points-in-sketch is the beginning of a written reflection on what I found through the presentation of *Two Bodies in Space (with yarn)* at the Floating Peripheries conference January 2019 at the University of Lapland. Among other things, I lay out short thoughts in relation to collaboration and learning.

1.

### DESCRIPTION

This text on the collaboration *Two Bodies in Space (with yarn)* by Norwegian visual artist Tina Jonsbu and myself is written from my perspective as artist-researcher with a background in contemporary expanded choreography. Although the exposition that Tina and I presented at the Floating Peripheries Conference is co-signed, I sign this text alone because Tina is currently engaged in another writing process that demands exclusive concentration and focus.

*Two Bodies in Space (with yarn)* was a durational performance performed in a theory room of the University of Lapland. Over the course of six hours, Tina and I were laying out yarn. Simultaneously to the laying out of yarn, we were video recording our actions and putting selected recorded material from the video camera onto a laptop so that people attending the performance could view what we had been doing the previous hour. Our interest in performing yarn was guided by a curiosity: Could such a simple action – laying out yarn – would be a solid enough doing to create a performative set up? Another open question was how the audience would partake in this doing. When people stepped into the room I welcomed them – while rolling off the yarn from its cone – telling them that they could walk wherever they wanted. I also hinted to sheets of paper on a table where they could leave a note, comment, or question. Interestingly, some people started to undo the yarn from the cones with us. At the end, Tina and I lifted the yarn spread onto the floor and hung it onto three walls of the space so that it was partially suspended in the air.

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### HOW WE MEET

To the field of craft and art, textile and art which is mostly populated by women-artists (e.g. Chiharu Shiota, Karla Black or Hedwig Vinge) *Two bodies in space (with yarn)* contributes ponderings on collaboration and learning among artists. Co-signing a work is something I have barely done so far and I always wondered how collaboration in the sense of co-authorship in the arts actually operates - if it is not about cooperation and getting together in order to maximize resources. Through my collaboration with Tina I discovered how collaborating in the arts can be

different to what Bojana Kunst calls “projective temporality”<sup>1</sup>: a temporality where artists are hunting projects and ultimately end up with no time to actually work. The temporality I have discovered with Tina is characterized by a rather slow pace, low ambition and constant respect and negotiation with each of our family situations. When we meet and work we work on ways of co-working, co-signing.

3

#### AN INTEREST OF MINE

Lately, I have been interested in learning processes in the visual arts. When studying descriptions of how children build their drawing competences, much literature refers to constructivist theorist Jean Piaget and his idea of learning as a process of equilibrium between assimilation (receiving and integrating a new input from the environment) and accommodation (modifying a new input from the environment). I speculate that his model for learning is also useful for approaching collaboration as learning in *Two bodies in space (with yarn)*. Collaborating as learning implies an ongoing process of reception and modification of how Tina and I build our work together. Working together also entails failures, misunderstanding or even friction: sometimes, I am unable to receive or modify, unable to learn, unable to change, because I am too caught up in inner constraints. Then, listening comes in. A deep kind of listening; taking in the silence as a form of care for the Other and myself. Collaboration as a situation for learning proposes artistic practice in the first place as a practice of dialogue in the context of art. Dialogue that leaves matters of artistic identity behind and introduce vulnerability and care.

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#### A POSSIBLE OUTCOME: A POSSIBLE QUESTION (BORROWED)

In relation to care, Bellacasa poses in her book *Matters of Care* on page 92 a simple question: “*How are you doing?*”. She addresses this question in the context of academia. And though Bellacasa does not explicitly name artistic research in relation to academia, I would like to invite you, reader, to add in the following quote artistic research when Bellacasa writes “contemporary academia” : “It [ the question] could indicate curiosity about how other people keep care going in the dislocated world of contemporary academy and other fields of technoscientific knowledge production with its managerial corollary, the anxious delirium of permanent reorganisation: “I

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<sup>1</sup> Kunst, Bojana. *Artist at Work Proximity of Art and Capitalism*. Alresford: John Hunt Publishing, 2015.

can't go on. You must go on. ". Thus How are you doing? sometimes might mean How are you *coping?*".

5.

#### REPERCUSSION

*Two Bodies in Space (with yarn)* was an opportunity to listen to Tinas answer how she answer the question "How are you coping" as a mother-artist with the hop-on-hop-off structures and precarious working conditions in artistic research and art. Once in the theory room of the University of Lapland and laying out yarn, we did not verbalize these types of questions, but I believe they were with us, floating peripherically.

