

How Are Things Done, Produced or Effected with Performance?

Research Day 8 November

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Bojana Cvejić:

Imagining and Feigning

Poetics can be distinguished from other kinds of thought exercised in art by the capacity of pondering a curious question: "What is the art I would like to see before I can see it?" To muse on a poetical principle, for instance, *how to be with empty hands* in a performance, is different from creation by posing (or choreographing) a problem or devising a technical procedure within a received theoretical framework. While problems are posed in order to be resolved in composition and procedures are applied to technically shape a process, poetical principles direct the thought of creation toward imagination into futurity often leading to a poetic usage of language.

This talk will explore elements of contemporary performance poetics in which imagination gains ground. Rather than a faculty of forming images, imagination here accounts for the ability to think of something not presently perceived, for thoughts without experiential content. It involves feigning, as in Spinoza's sense of knowingly entertaining fictions, and abductive reason, as in Charles Sanders Peirce's notion of conjecturing a hypothesis without firm evidence. I will discuss these poetical principles in a close reading of a few recent works by Mette Edvardsen, Anne Juren and others.

Bojana Cvejić's work spans philosophy, theatre and performance education. She is author of several books in performance theory and philosophy (*Choreographing Problems*, Palgrave 2015, *Public Sphere by Performance*, with A. Vujanović, bbooks 2012 etc. *Drumming&Rain: A Choreographer's Score* (co-authored

with A. T. De Keersmaeker, Mercatorfonds 2013.). She has collaborated as a dramaturg in a number of choreographies by X. Le Roy, Eszter Salamon, Mette Ingvartsen, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, C. De Smedt). As a co-founding member of TkH/Walking Theory editorial collective and performing arts theory magazine, Cvejić engages theoretical-artistic research projects, currently an investigation of performances of the self and transindividuality. In 2013, Cvejić curated the exhibition *Danse-Guerre* at Musée de la danse, Rennes. In 2014, she devised a choreography and lecture program titled *Spatial Confessions* for Tate Modern's Turbine Hall. Cvejić is Associated Professor of Dance and Dance Theory in KHIO Oslo and she also teaches at P.A.R.T.S. Brussels.

Natalie Waerden:

Transition and Transformation

This talk discusses the potentiality of performative actions for transition and transformation. The discussion will be framed using a work that I recently produced titled *The Best Thing that I Ever Made// 7 Rituals of Self Destruction* (2017).

The wall text for the work read as follows:

A rite of passage for queers performed by Natalie Wearden. A demand for ownership of Christian rituals to mark a transition from one state of being to another. A collage of my life, a story of fulfilment of teenage dreams. From Cyberdog selfies to sadomasochistic practices; from dancing in a queer club to being a performance artist. Getting closer to the body, a quest for authenticity, breaking down the space between my body and the world, my body and other people's bodies, to find presence, to be a moving body free of an agenda, totally present. An ordination of a queer graduate, artist, person.

Natalie Wearden (2017)

The ideas explored in the paper will be framed around the work which involved seven performances that took the following seven distinct forms, all based around an action intended to perform a transformative function. A lot of the language used borrows from Christian rituals as the work sought to create a queer rite of passage (passing from one state of being to another).

WATCH// - a confession

DELETE// - deleting images from Instagram

CUT// - a recreation of Yoko Ono's cut piece

WASH// - washing off make-up

BEAT// - being beaten with a whip

SHED// - shaving off of hair

DANCE// - dancing to celebrate the completed transformation, to bring people together.

The work was performed with six different queer women and involved a power exchange, whilst borrowing from the rituals of the church intended to perform transformations the work explores how pain, destruction and performance can transform our sense of self.

Hanna Järvinen:

Democratic Bodies in Contemporary Dance

By looking at how differently 'postmodern dance' signifies in the dominant American and local Finnish contexts, I attempt a critical reading of how the notion of 'democracy' is intertwined with quite particular dancing bodies and ideas of nation and ethnicity. Using the contrast between the hegemonic centre with what is constituted as a (geographical, linguistic, ethnic) periphery reveals how 'democracy' is used in contemporary dance discourses to obfuscate power relations inherent to the institution of art and to the academic research on dance.

Elina Seye:

Practices of Performing at Senegalese Sabar Dance Events

In my PhD thesis *Performing a Tradition in Music and Dance* (2014), I analyzed *sabar* dance events as "places" for (re)constructing social relationships, identities, and tradition. In these celebrations the participants in a sense perform themselves and their relationships to others present, at the same time embodying and sometimes also challenging communal conceptions of their social roles and the related norms and values, which are defined by, for example, gender and age. These performances of self can thus primarily be identified as cultural performatives, following Butler, but at the same time they happen in the frame of the dance event, which enables also expressions deviating from the performatives of everyday situations. In my presentation, I will consider how the modes of performance in *sabar* dance events can be named in addition to the obvious repetition and variation of traditional dance genres.

Lea Kantonen:

Performance as a Methodology in Indigenous Studies?

I have conducted artistic fieldwork together with my husband Pekka Kantonen in the Wixárika community of Tsikwaita on the Sierra Madre mountains since 1999, and since 2006 we have participated in the planning of a community museum Tunuwame and a community museum network (Kantonen and Kantonen 2013, 2015, 2017a). We have noticed that the teachers' meetings for museum planning as well as many official and non-official pedagogical moments we have witnessed are interesting events in themselves, moments in which knowledge is produced and shared (*Ki ti 'utame yu'uximayati* 2017).

Mieko Kanno:

Musical Performance and Algorithmic Thinking

This presentation aims to illustrate algorithmic thinking embedded in musicians' practice and musical performance culture. An algorithm is understood as a predetermined set of instructions for solving a specific problem in a limited number of steps. We associate algorithms with computers, but the procedural technique has a long history. Music is one discipline in which we can find many interesting examples of this technique over the centuries. Despite the fact that much of the use of this technique is discussed in the discipline of composition, I observe that algorithmic thinking is present everywhere in performance too: ranging from practice or rehearsal strategy, to fingering or bowing choice, how musicians 'digest' multitudes of information (historical, contextual, notational, and many others) and, perhaps most prominently how musicians 'put everything together' in performance (typically captured in the question: 'how did you do that?'). My observations lead to two hypotheses: first, algorithmic thinking has a strong link to how musicians perform music; and second, the arresting power of musical performance can be seen as a result of algorithmic processing taking place. My contention is that algorithmic thinking and musical performance have an ontological connection. I will illustrate the points through a discussion of 'live' elements in real-time generative composition and performance.

Elisabeth Belgrano:

An Orna/Mentor's Performance

Entering a(n original) line, making it part of an everyday breath; taking a good look at a specific detail: spiralling into its very centre, starting to cut and chop it into parts, searching for every possible aspect of the thing-in-itself, touching its surface and finding it all tremendously curious; in the midst of the sensuous experience silence rises like a bridge ahead – opening up for unknown points on the other side: points being other narratives, other imaginations, other associations. Resting at the foot of the bridge, reflecting on the situated context of being in

silence
desire

Starting to move upward and forward, keeping the gaze onto the wondrous encounter on the other side; leaving worries, fears and shame on the shore behind; looking around for points of interest; following these points away from the expected path; walking for days in a completely different direction; still caught by a certain-something that is about to be found and explored somewhere else (only the orna/mentor knows what and where); in the midst of it all, a light is shining strong from far away, telling something, demanding attention, telling the orna/mentor to re/turn to the original. It's like a beaming light of a lighthouse informing the traveller about the route; the orna/mentor knows from the shining light that the original line is coming up very soon, confirming that the orna/menting has come to an end, even if it's only for a short while. Soon it will start all over again.

The orna/mentor's path is irrational, allowing curiosity to guide. What's left in the orna/mentor's footsteps is a trace being crystallized and clearly visible. The dots that were ahead, they have become a firm line behind. The orna (read as: urn, pot or thing-in-itself) has been cared for by a mentor's mind and doings. The orna/mentoring hand. The caring has created endless variations of things-in-themselves: ornamented versions of the original. The doings of the orna/mentor are original and can never be made the same. The effect can be read as a translation of one doing to another doing to another doing. Creating multiple understandings/narratives/fabulations/doings based on a simple original (doing).

Conclusion:

An orna/mentor's acts are: to follow and to divert, to oppose and to compose, to complement and to confuse, to clarify and to reassure. The performances by an orna/mentor are things/materialisations in multiple versions. The effects of an orna/mentor's doings can be observed as isolated mad scenes, or landscapes governed by wilderness; or they can create a desire to pick up an ornamented thing-in-itself and continue an irrational performance of ornamented translations on the original (doing) again and again.

Susanna Hast:

Musistance as Feminist Labor

Revisiting *musistance*, musical resistance, as a feminist work for the first time, I talk about the momentary, material, feminised body as resistance to a politics of 'feminising the artistic and masculinising the scientific'. Reclaiming the feminised body as a performing body, I try to transmit or share the experience of not feeling at home in university spaces, at Hilton hotel meeting rooms, and in the world. Being of excess while *girled* to act carefully and appear non-visible, a contradictory existence spills out and over as musistance.

Tero Nauha:

Fictioning and Performance Thinking

If everything thinks, what is performance thinking? In this presentation I will suggest some aspects of research on performance and philosophical gestures of thought. I will consider thinking as intensities, forces and movement, where the proper gestures of thought are implements of these movements. The question then is, what we can claim about the performance thinking, not 'as philosophy' or 'as thinking', but thinking which has consistency but doesn't necessarily exist.

Annette Arlander:
The Cliff Revisited

“The Cliff Revisited” is a video essay that returns to *Year of the Monkey* (2005), the third part of *Animal Years*, a series of video works performed and recorded on Harakka Island, off Helsinki, during the years 2002-2014. By revisiting the site where this performance was repeated, by combining some of the videos related to the work and by referencing texts, which use this work as an example written at the time or shortly after, the essay serves as a compilation and a reflection on the work from today’s perspective. By focusing on the most visible movement in the image, the growth of the vegetation, with philosopher Michael Marder’s (2015) ideas concerning the being of plants in mind, the work is regarded as an example of performing with plants, albeit accidentally in this case. The beginning of the video essay will be shown in this presentation.

Pilvi Porkola:
Tools for Teaching - Perspectives of Performance Pedagogy and Live Art

What does *embodiment* mean in a class situation? What is the role of *space* in teaching? How about *duration* or *materiality* in the context of university teaching, are they just given or do they effect the learning?

This presentation is based on a case study I did at Turku University in the fall 2017. The aim of the study was to offer performance art tools for university teachers to adapt to their teaching. My approach was based on my experience as a performance artist and teacher as well as a researcher in the context of Performance Studies. Using some key concepts of performance - like *embodiment*, *space*, *duration* and *materiality* – I search perspectives to reflect on pedagogical situations.