

Disturbing Thoughts.
On the Relationship between Sensory Perception and Reflection in Performance

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Abstract

The topic of my doctoral artistic research is the relationship between sensory perception and reflection in the context of contemporary dance performance. Approaching the investigation from the perspective of the dancer/performer, the main questions are: what effect does consciously altering one's physical state and awareness have on one's way of thinking, and vice versa: How can conscious activity of the mind alter the body's perception in relation to itself and to others?

My background as dancer/performer is significantly shaped by *Body Weather*. The practical investigation of my doctoral research builds on one of the core elements of *Body Weather* training practice: the so-called *Manipulations*. Usually practiced in couples, one person *manipulates* the body of another through a specific application of touch, weight and pressure. Currently, I am revisiting a research-score in which I *imagine* to be manipulated (= without an actual giver) while attending to thoughts and sensations simultaneously.

My presentation combines a demonstration of this research-score with reflections on the specific modes of thinking that are enacted in its performance. In particular, I will relate to Simon O'Sullivan's ideas about the production of subjectivity. Instead of drawing conclusions I will share some observations about how thinking in performance might differ from other forms of thinking in which sensory perception plays an implicit (and neglected) role. I hope to thereby contribute to a more differentiated and detailed understanding of what it could mean *to think in performance* and how performance can possibly alter *what* and *how* we think in performance.

Keywords: *Artistic Research; Change; Contemporary Dance Performance; Embodied Reflection; Imagination; Subjectivity.*

References:

O'Sullivan, Simon, 2008. *The Production of the New and the Care of the Self*. In: *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New*, ed. Simon O'Sullivan and Stephen Zepke, London: Continuum, 2008, pp. 91-103.

O'Sullivan, Simon, 2006. *Academy: 'The Production of Subjectivity'*. In: *Academy*, ed. Irit Rogoff et al., Frankfurt/Main: Revolver, 2006, pp. 238-44.

Short Bio:

Joa Hug studied History, Political Science and Sociology at the Universities of Freiburg and Oregon/Eugene (US), and Choreography at the *School for New Dance Development* in Amsterdam. He worked as independent dancer with *Body Weather Amsterdam* a. o. and completed his M. A. on *Artistic Research* at the University of Amsterdam (2009). Based in Berlin, he currently follows the artistic doctoral research programme at the Theatre Academy Helsinki.