

Date	22.03.2016	Overall rating	6
Panel	KY16 Art Research		
Experts	Dibben, Georgelou, Knudsen, Kodres, Lehmann, Leman, MacDonald, Shaw-Miller, Stara		
Support reviews			
Application No.	296767		
Call	Academy Project funding 01.09.2015 - 01.10.2015		
Applicant	Annette Arlander		
Research topic	How to Do Things with Performance?		

1 Research plan

1.1 Scientific quality and innovativeness of research plan

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Guiding questions: Is the project scientifically significant and innovative? Is the project ambitious and does it have potential for breakthroughs? Does it have potential for exceptionally significant outcomes? If the project is multi/inter/transdisciplinary, what is the added value of this?

This proposal contains some key questions and subjects with great relevance to today's interdisciplinary research on performance, connecting performing research within the field of artistic research, and aiming at closing the gap between the materially and the textually discursive. The focus is on collaborative writing and working process in progress, dealing with central theoretical questions in performance theory, linking it with questions generated out of New Materialism. The general question is very broad and ambitious, addressing how to do things with performance in a practical sense. The methodology is focused on performative writing in different multimedia platforms. The project's idea is inherently collaborative and the project seeks to enact changes in the institutions in which the project takes place: in academia, in art, in archives and museums, in public spaces like libraries, and in relation with the larger socio-economic changes, such as migration and labour. Perhaps the most convincing aspect is the publication/participation concept of the project with its different formats (from an exhibition to workshops) and this also the most potentially lasting impact. The approach promises the beneficial consequence of reaching out to the public, including non traditional audiences. This project is also significantly willing to take the risk of not projecting potential outcomes and findings, because it concentrates on experimenting with processes and modes of production in theoretical and practice-driven performance research. This is methodologically brave and looks to provide significant findings for the field of performance studies more generally.

1.2 Feasibility of research plan

Guiding questions: Are the objectives and hypotheses appropriately presented and is the research plan realistic? Are the research methods and materials appropriate? Does the applicant acknowledge potential scientific or methodological problem areas, and how are alternative approaches being considered? Is the management of the proposed plan appropriate and well planned? Does the research environment support this project, including appropriate research infrastructures?

The proposal is generated from a vast background of experience and precise knowledge of theoretical debates. By focusing on the material-discursive practices, the project tests and develops further ideas related to the agency of matter and to performance, refuting the separation of the material and the textual-discursive. The project therefore continues the critique, and rethinking, of the meaning of performativity developed by Karen Barad in the tradition from Foucault to Braidotti, albeit with a focus on practical investigations and experiments as well as texts and academic performances. As artistic research, the project's results are expected to be available in the form of performance events for audiences outside the academic context. Such audiences and participatory groups include immigrant workers, the unemployed, and the mentally ill, as well as children, expatriates, farm workers, library users, and audiences of art. Engagement with these kinds of audiences is one of the known results of the project, although what the affective, emotional, social, and discursive effects of such engagement will be can only be surmised. The role and relevance of the project on schizoanalysis is, however, questionable in the context of this project. As an approach this runs the considerable risk of misunderstanding the complexity of schizophrenia and its reality as a devastating mental problem. Coming out of the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari it is now regarded with considerable skepticism in the English speaking academy and replaced by more subtle methodological nomenclature. The planning and implementation of the project are elaborate and realistic. The host institution is an ideal environment for the conduction of the project.

1.3 Ethical issues

Guiding question: Are there any ethical issues involved and, if so, how are they taken into account?

The ethical issues have been considered (use of the University of the Arts Ethical Guidelines).

2 Competence of applicant(s), quality of research collaborations	
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2.1 Competence and expertise of applicant(s)

Guiding questions: What are the merits and scientific expertise of the applicant(s)? Are they appropriate and sufficient for the proposed project? What are the competences of the applicant(s) in terms of supervising PhD candidates / postdoctoral researchers?

The PI is an outstanding researcher and there is no doubt about her competences in the field. The project benefits from the experience of the twelve-year project “Performing Landscape” (2002-2014) and the resulting series of video works *Animal Years* as material for critical self-reflection. Together with the research team, the applicant explores performative writing and performative documentation as material-discursive practices, but the particular focus lies in digital archiving and online publication. The project would be manageable and the applicant can draw from an impressive range of experience in research and publications. The topic itself has implications for the outcome and the methodology of present and future PhD projects and postdoctoral interdisciplinary pursuits.

2.2 Research team, significance of research collaborations

Guiding questions: Does the research team bring complementary expertise to the project (if applicable)? Is the project involved in national and/or international research collaborations that can significantly contribute to the success of the project? Does the research project support researcher training?

The research team appear well matched to the project. The diversity of approaches is well chosen as well a complementary corresponding with a variety of publications formats and the distribution of its outreach into the public. The project will provide postdoctoral research positions to two recent graduates of the Doctoral Programme of Artistic Research in Performing Arts. The relevance of the PhD project on schizoanalysis is not evidently linked to the entire project, however and in the panel's view need reformulating (see comments above). All of the participants actively teach performance and practice-based methodologies and will continue to do so during this project. The teaching plan is professional and plausible.

2.3 Researcher mobility

Guiding questions: How does the mobility plan support the research plan?
Does the receiving organisation stand out in the respective field of research? Is the length of the mobility period appropriate and is its timing right for the project?

The Senior Researcher will spend a single, six-month residency period at one of the Performing Arts Research Centre exchange partner universities. The precise location is dependent on the Centre's current negotiations with strategic partner universities in Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The purpose of the stay would be to finalise the Senior Researcher's book on her individual project as well as to strengthen the partnership between the host institution and universities where artistic research has a focal role on the doctorate and postdoctoral level. The mobility plan will also comprise several trips to the specific area of a case study in order to run the workshops with the local participants and the artist-collaborators, to gather material for further research, and to create the proposed results of the first stages of an individual project, for instance – a performance, a documentary film and a short fiction film. The proposal for Nauha to work for 12 months in Andalucía, Spain to gather material for further research, and to create the proposed results of the first stage of an individual project is not thoroughly explained, it remains obscure as to why this location is crucial to the project. In overall, the mobility is well planned out and plausible.

2.4 Research consortium (if applicable)

Guiding question: If a consortium is involved, what is the significance and added value of the consortium for the attainment of the research objectives?

This is not a consortium project, but it has invited a group of leading experts in the field to act as an Advisory Board that will follow the project online and participate in some of the events. They will comment on the various project results and evaluate the mid-term progress of the project in 2018 as well as towards the conclusion of the project in 2020. The members of the Advisory Board have also agreed to participate in the final symposium to be held in 2020. It is important, that the Advisory Board is involved in a final international evaluation of the project.

3 Overall assessment

3.1 Main strengths and weaknesses of the project, additional comments and suggestions.

Please note that the final rating should not be a mathematical average of the sub-ratings.

This is a very ambitious project with a clear theoretical framework and it possesses the potential for a paradigm shift in performance reattach and understanding. In this project it is asked what can be done with performance? - what actualises when a performance takes place and what is at stake when it is documented? how can it be written about. Through these epistemological questions, the project re-addresses the ontology of performance, asking: in what ways can we understand 'performance' today, as a new materiality, as presence, and in the international, multilingual context where words, documents, and practices of different connotations that are shared in online environments. The project thus seeks to relaunch the theory of performativity vis à vis new materialist theories of agential realism and 'non-philosophy'. The chosen methodologies of this process-oriented research are not very explicit and the outcomes are therefore bound to be indeterminate but worthwhile to explore within the context of this ambitious project. Envisioned publication formats are most promising. *How to Do Things with Performance?* seeks to provide radical, new perspectives on what 'performance' might be, where its limits are and how this field can take shape in the context of Finland and beyond.