

## besides, what are we doing?

We started out with three very different meetings (see [turbulence.org/commissions/besides](http://turbulence.org/commissions/besides)) and then decided to continue to explore one of them further; we restricted ourselves to a theme and made the project on "meeting online =" also a research on the relation between objects/things, text and the voice.

We started experiencing and experimenting the performances as

**an other method of thinking together about both object agency and online collaboration.**

We stage a collaborative performance project online.

Meeting online =

We are meeting online, trying to get more grip on what is actually happening in online webcam communication.

This is a research project where we use performance as a tool.

Using performance as a tool, is a way to create a common responsibility.

We use an interface which doesn't permit that either of us two can become dominant, an interface that has flaws, glitches, bugs, an interface that cannot be domesticated

We are not developing a performance - our performances are part of a research process.

*My performances are a research tool, not an object ansich, not something to show off.*

(See [digicult.it/digimag/issue-058/annie-abrahams-allergic-to-utopias](http://digicult.it/digimag/issue-058/annie-abrahams-allergic-to-utopias))

But the audience? Why should they be interested, What is it for them?

**They can think with us!**

Until now?

*besides, the person I am becoming 1/06 2015*

There are :

**the interface** : two webcam images side by side, one managed by Martina, one by Annie. Both images have exactly the same size and presence there is no power relation.

**a text** : a remix, done together, of phrases read and heard, collected over one month by Annie and Martina individually. We determined before who would read what part of the text.

**objects** : things : we will not use personal objects, things with a very specific personal history and they should not be too beautiful, as ordinary, casual, daily as possible.

What did we mean by that, why? We didn't want things to be symbols. We almost entirely excluded also natural objects as flowers, leafs etc., because, they are already alive on their own and so are too symbolically loaded too.

The objects were placed in front of the webcam at before undetermined intervals.

**the hands** : hands who lay down the objects carefully.

**two voices** : as neutral as possible. Because the interface merges the sound of both webcams in one stream, there is no way for the audience to distinguish if a voice comes from the one or from the other webcam. They can only hear that there are two different voices, **there is a dialogue.**

*What dialogue? Who is talking to who, who is addressed? Who receives? The objects replace the faces we are used to see in webcam images. We see them in close up - they become actors - we can believe them to be intimate, to have a relation. They too have a / are in dialogue. They too are elements being in the event. (1)*

**This is where the two subjects meet. This is where we meet.**

In *besides, the city is not a tree*, 22/07 2015 we used a different, more narrative, mix of the same text collection. We decided to abandon the neutral voice and let the exchange be more natural allowing for affect to transpire (2). We speeded the rhythm and alternations. Hands should be just careful installers, shouldn't manipulate, nor stay too long in the frame.

For *besides, smaller than a single pixel* 28/11 2015 we made a new text collection. No natural objects at all were allowed anymore. Would the perceived agency of the thing change if we would enter and exit them at specific moments in the text? If we stopped talking while changing the objects? Would the objects become more present, have more influence if we allowed for moments without text?

We stayed with speaking the text in an ordinary manner. Would the dialogue be more fluent if we decided to use the texts fragments randomly? Would that give more dialogical power to our voices and rhythm? Would that help us to use text and objects equally in our perform thinking experience?

**We perform experimenting thinking together using words and things and the affects transferred via our voices. We experiment performing thinking together using words and things and the affects transferred via our voices. We think performing experiments together, We experiment thinking performance together, We experiment performing thought ...**

(1) "According to Bakhtin, in order to 'overcome' the separation and opposition between art and life, between art and culture, the elaboration of a 'first philosophy' is required: The philosophy of event-being. Art and life cannot and must not tend towards identification, as was the case with the Situationists, for example. But, in order that the enriching, excessive and productive difference between art and life be able to express itself, it is necessary to possess a theory which, whilst maintaining the irreducible differences between these two dimensions, articulates them in the achievement of the event." Maurizio Lazzarato in Dialogism and Polyphony.

[geocities.ws/immateriallabour/lazzarato-dialogism-and-polyphony.html](http://geocities.ws/immateriallabour/lazzarato-dialogism-and-polyphony.html)

(2) "According to Bakhtin, the voice or intonation, not yet captured in the 'phonetic abstraction' of language, is always produced 'on the threshold of the verbal and the non-verbal, the said and the non-said' and it is through it that it addresses itself to the other. This address is affective and ethico-political rather than linguistic. It 'appropriates, travels, avails itself of linguistic and semiotic elements, confirms and drifts away, critiques and legitimates meanings and established intonations'. .....It is only when the voice penetrates and appropriates words and statements that the latter lose their linguistic potentiality and turn into actualised expression. It is only at that moment that words and statements are encumbered with the *a unique and non reproducible* role in verbal exchange." Maurizio Lazzarato

[generation-online.org/p/fp\\_lazzarato6.htm](http://generation-online.org/p/fp_lazzarato6.htm)

Notes 03 2016 by Annie Abrahams

Martina in an email of 26/02 while I was writing these notes reacted :

I like it a lot to look at our performances as research-tools the way you describe it. This is probably also what interested me very much in the collaborative performances with you from the start. They allow a degree of experimentation and contingency that I experience very rarely in other performance-making processes where the focus is often on the construction of an evening-long piece, and then the relation between preparations and creation of material and showings is very different.

I like it that we don't look for the perfect result but for the differences in our encounters.

This resonates in what you marvellously say in your interview: „for me, intimacy indicates a situation where one deliberately relinquishes control –to some extent– in order to approach another person. This is a very dangerous situation.“ The contingency in the way of approaching each other during the performance is one of the most interesting aspect in *besides*,.