

Workshop Performance Art - Walkthrough

'being with ... performance as research as experiment as tool'

by Annie Abrahams

6th of July, 2016

14:30-17:00 h

Lipsius Building, studio K031, Universiteit van Leiden, Cleveringaplaats 1.

Can we construct, building only on what we are, a radically horizontal performance? Can we, at the same time, research the agency of objects in our relations? Let's try. Who, what are we? We? Find an object, discover the object, make it exist, don't talk, observe, write, change, rediscover, We, What is we?, don't discuss, utter, do, observe, write, change.

In this workshop we will all be, and the conceptors, and the performers and the audience (involved observers). We will formulate and execute, while continuously changing roles, a changing script written by all.

In the context of

The Politics of Performance and Play. Feminist Matters

The Leiden University Institute for Philosophy.

Thursday 7th and Friday 8th July, 2016 Conference.

Min. participants 4 – Max. participants 12

Material: camera (my cellphone) – two times 12 notebooks, 12 pens. Some small ordinary objects – f.i. hand kerchief, cellphone, book

Introduction : Sitting together. Who are you?

Who am I? : I am a performance artist with an online networked practice, that focuses on collaboration and online communication. Some years ago, in Ljubljana, I met Martina, who had written a book on collaborative dance practice. I was interested.

As an internet artist I stay fixed in front of a screen quite a lot of time. During a performance I am "chained" to my webcam and computer, restraint in my actions, but oh so excited.

There is a discrepancy in how you use and feel your body in online performance.

When I had an occasion (commission turbulence.org NAE in 2014, 15) I didn't hesitate and asked Martina to develop a project together.

We combined my interest in working with internet tools on communication limitations and possibilities with her interest in things / objects in the dance practice. (human non-human intra-activity, anthropocene, attention for the agency of objects – disposal – garbage, nuclear waste).

Together we worked in a way that mixed art and research.

In this workshop we will do the same. Performance as research and research as performance. We will be our own audience. There will only be experiments, a few rules and a lot of liberty.

We will work on a short **performance** where couples, of persons and objects, will bring alive different kinds of being in the world.

The objects should be considered partners, not be regarded as tools. No instrumentalization. There are two kind of things: objects and persons. We are things too; feeling things.

Objects influence us, we influence objects and together we make a world.

We will be using a **method** called reformulation (and transmission) that I borrowed from a couple of dancers / choreographers called Deufert and Plischke :

It is a way of working together that is not based on consensus, but on passing on material, spending time with it individually, making the necessary decisions with it, transforming and reformulating it without the need of immediate negotiation or justification. This is when a plurality of voices comes into the work and personal competences for an activity can transform into shared responsibilities for the material: handing over material, taking it seriously, spending time with it, contributing to it.

During the rest of the workshop we won't talk - discuss, explain, negotiate.

We will write.

Without talking, without discussing we will write this performance together in a radical horizontal way. We will change roles, be writer, observer and performer.

A performance : bodies and objects, both things in space – a duration.

I will be your guardian, of time, of protocol. I will talk.

Each participants chooses an object and puts that in the space somewhere.

Just an ordinary object. There will be as many objects as there will be participants. These objects will be our things.

15 minutes of exploration : Go to an object that is not the one you choose.

What is this object? What can it be? How can I relate to it? How does it relate to me? And how do I become a thing too in this relation. (a feeling thing)

Don't forget you are preparing a performance and that how you move in space matters.

Leave the object behind, sit down. Write the name of the object you worked with on the cover of a **notebook**.

Now you have 15 minutes to **write an instruction for a 5 min long performance** based on something you discovered, thought interesting in your exploration.

Then you give the instruction to someone else, who will perform with the object following your instructions.

You have 5 min. to read the instructions and to prepare.

Notebooks back on tables. Everyone takes one that he she didn't touch yet.

Execution and observation.

5 min. Half the group executes their instructions, the others observe with a special attention for the couple they have the notebook for.

5 min. change roles.

Now everyone takes 15 minutes to **rewrite** the performance they just saw. Take care the idea is not to change it, to make it more of your taste, but to think about how it could become better, leave of the superfluous to fill in more details, while keeping in mind :

What is this object? What can it be? How can I relate to it? How does it relate to me? And how do I become a thing too in this relation.

You have 5 min. to read the instructions and to prepare in silence.
Notebooks back on tables. Everyone takes one that he she didn't touch yet.

Execution and observation.

5 min. Half the group executes their instructions, the others observe with a special attention for the couple they have the notebook for.

5 min. change roles.

We interrupt the no talking rule. **Discussion together** : What can we do better in the process? Is there something lacking? Should we change time frames? What does it mean, how does it feel to become a thing among things?

We continue the process of reformulating and executing with shifting the attention to the total of what is happening in the space in the last iteration.

Half an hour before the end.

Discussion together and maybe one final execution by all.

(voice can be used, doing nothing also creates a relation, start and end should be thought without becoming narrational – I can point to this.

Don't forget to make some photos.)