bit teatergarasjen

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C O N F I R M A T I O N

BIT Teatergarasjen is pleased to confirm that we want to collaborate with **Hordaland Kunstsenter** (HKS) in co-presenting two instances of HKS's extended radio play project entitled "Performance for Podcast", featuring works by **Mykki Blanco** and **Mårten Spångberg**. BIT Teatergarasjen will present a live performance event by the artist Mykki Blanco as part of Meteor 2017 in October 2017. The event will be held at Hordaland Kunstsenter and will be a live interpretation of Blanco's radio play. Later in 2017 (date to be confirmed) BIT Teatergarasjen and Hordaland Kunstsenter will co-host a live presentation of Mårten Spångberg's five part podcast opera based on the choreographic work *Natten*.

BIT Teatergarasjens contribution is mainly covering in-kind costs, such as m arketing support through our website, social media, newsletter, in-house and inclusion in our programme guide, technical support during the event and for set up, and production support and assistance from BIT`s production team. The live event during Meteor 2017 will be part of our *international expert program* that will gather 40-70 international curators, journalists, producers and researchers.

Sincerely yours,
Bergen January 31st 2017

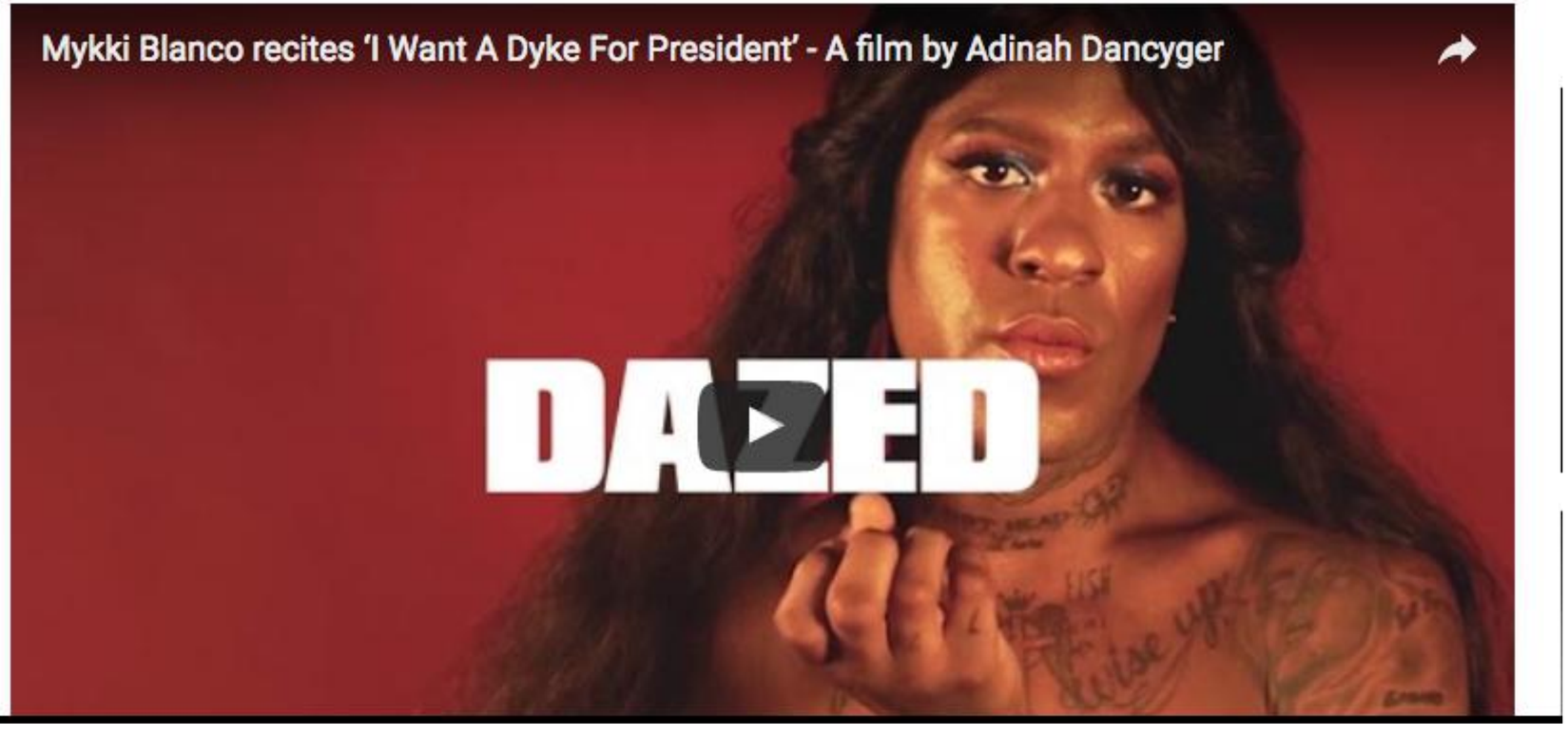
Sven Åge Birkeland
Artistic and managing director BIT Teatergarasjen

BIT Teatergarasjen produce, co-produce and present international and Norwegian contemporary art, theatre and dance, with specific emphasis on projects that stimulate international co-production and cooperation between different fields of art. BIT Teatergarasjen is one of the main producers and co-producers of international contemporary theatre and dance in Norway and cooperates with theatres and producers in several European countries as well as in US and Asia.
Sven Åge Birkeland is the artistic and managing director of Norways oldest and most prestigious international theatre, BIT Teatergarasjen www.bit-teatergarasjen.no , the dance biennial Oktoberdans www.oktoberdans.no and the theatre biennial Meteor www.meteor2009.no . Birkeland also curates art programs for festivals, theatres, museums and galleries in Norway and abroad. Birkeland lives and works from his base in Bergen, Norway. Before working within the art field he did studies at the University of Stavanger (culture, film and sosiology) and the University of Bergen (theatre science).

Watch Mykki Blanco perform 'I Want A Dyke For President'

The uniquely provocative rapper reads Zoe Leonard's 1992 poem to camera as America's election machine goes into overdrive

Music Dazed 25 3 months ago Text **Thomas Gorton**



APRIL 10–16, 2013 VOL. LVIII NO. 15 AMERICA'S LARGEST WEEKLY NEWSPAPER VILLAGEVOICE.COM FREE

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OUR NEW CRITIC STEPHANIE ZACHAREK: BEMUSED BY *WONDER*

MICHAEL FEINGOLD: SLIPS INTO *KINKY BOOTS*

GENDER NINJA

MYKKI BLANCO'S WARRIOR RAP

By Jenna Sauers

“Mykki Blanco is the most compelling rapper of his generation”
- i-D

“One of the hardest and most consistent recent statements in US hip-hop.”
- The Wire

“Prepare to be blown away.”
- Paper

The best music videos of 2016

02. MYKKI BLANCO – "HIGH SCHOOL NEVER ENDS" (DIR: MATT LAMBERT)

The visual counterpart to "High School Never Ends" matches the drama and cinema of Mykki Blanco's music. It's a queer retelling of *Romeo & Juliet*, shot in the German town of Freyenstein. With its backdrop of Neo-Nazism, it's a particularly necessary story given the rise of the far right in 2016. "This video was born out of months of conversations and writing between Mykki and myself, and a world and character Mykki knew he wanted to inhabit," director Matt Lambert told us when we picked the song as our #1 track of the year, "While commenting on the still-very-alive racism in old world Europe and timeless ideas of us vs. them, we also explore and humanize characters who weren't often humanized as well as show the moral flaws in all who preach hate and violence."


MYKKI BLANCO, 26
Blurring gender lines in rhyme
bigger than hip hop
Introducing the revolutionary rappers bringing the noise in 2013
WORDS Jeremy Abbott · PHOTOGRAPHY Matthew Stone · STYLING Matthew Josephs

Blanco’s debut album, ‘Mykki’ was released in 2016 to widepsread critical acclaim.

Mykki Blanco tour dates for 2017 USA tour

M Y K K I

MUSIC VIDEO TOUR STORE CONTACT

2/10 - **3S Artspace** - Portsmouth NH - **tickets**

2/11 - **Aurora** - Providence RI - **tickets**

2/12 - **Sinclair** - Boston MA - **tickets**

2/13 - **Theatre Fairmont** - Montreal QC - **tickets**

2/14 - **Velvet Underground** - Toronto ON - **tickets**

2/16 - **Cattivo** - Pittsburgh PA - **tickets**

2/17 - **El Club** - Detroit MI - **tickets**

2/18 - **Bottom Lounge** - Chicago IL - **tickets**

2/20 - **7th Street Entry** - Minneapolis MN - **tickets**

2/21 - **Waiting Room** - Omaha NE - **tickets**

2/23 - **Lost Lake** - Denver CO - **tickets**

2/24 - **Urban Lounge** - Salt Lake City UT - **tickets**

2/25 - **Neurolux** - Boise, ID - **tickets**

2/27 - **Neumo's** - Seattle WA - **tickets**

2/28 - **Fortune Sound Club** - Vancouver BC - **tickets**

3/1 - **Holocene** - Portland OR - **tickets**

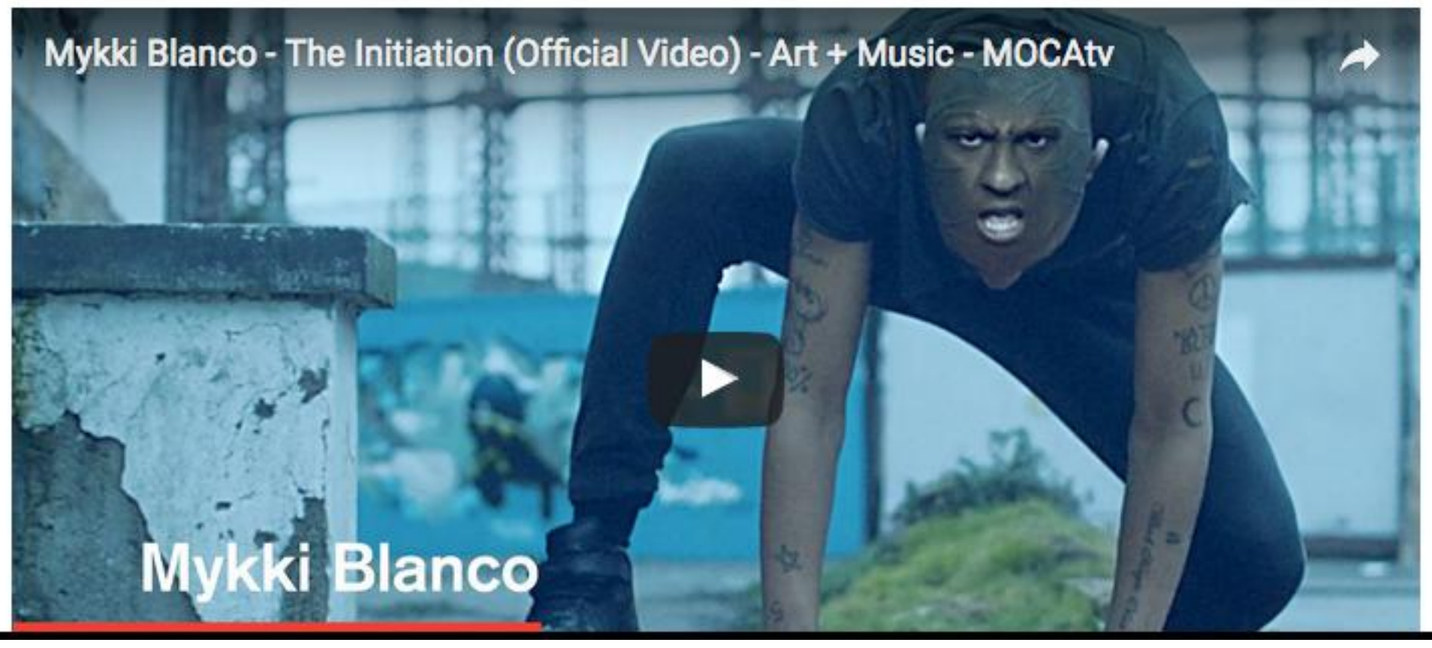
3/3 - **New Parish** - Oakland CA - **tickets**

3/4 - **Independent** - San Francisco CA - **tickets**

3/5 - **Roxy** - Los Angeles CA - **tickets**

3/7 - **Soda Bar** - San Diego CA - **tickets**


Mykki Blanco - "She Gutta" (Official Video)
noisey


Mykki Blanco - The Initiation (Official Video) - Art + Music - MOCAtv
Mykki Blanco

Still from Blanco’s 2016 music video, ‘Loner’.

Mårten Spångberg

Press 2014 – 2016

selection

FROM CYNICISM TO POETICS: A Conversation with Mårten Spångberg

Ana Vujanović : The Critical Practice publication *A Problematic Book* deals with the notion of the problem in critical thinking or art making. Knowing your work in dance and choreography for several years and comparing your recent performances with what you did previously, I noticed an interesting move from a generally cynical approach to a poetical approach. Does it make sense to you? You can go broader, but I am thinking mostly about your approach in, on the one hand *Spangbergianism* and to an extent in *Powered by Emotion* and, on the other, recent performances like *La Substance, but in English*, *The Internet* and *Natten*.

Mårten Spångberg : I think you approach something interesting here, something that also concerns me in the artistic work that I do but also in teaching, writing and in respect of life. I was never interested in cynicism as an approach but ended up there perhaps mostly because of a sense of despair, as in *Spangbergianism*, and earlier more in respect of a–how can I say– post-structuralist resignation in front of the decline, or relativisation, of value; the artistic act as always appropriated, subjectivity as show off rather than authenticity, and so on. For example, *Powered by Emotion* is a solo, appropriating dances from a film with Steve Paxton and, in a similar attitude, singing songs by Buena Vista Social Club. Totally cynical, in a way, but of course the piece I made was a kind of meditation around notions of coding and decoding, territory and deterritorialisation *vis a vis* capitalism. It goes without saying that those ideas again were hijacked from *Mille Plateaux*.

Concerning *Spangbergiansim*, a book that attacks everything and everybody in dance and its business, the over-the-top cynical approach was also a means to annihilate myself. The cynicism in that book was supposed to be so, (an embarrassing word), "badass" that I, the author, should come out as the most ridiculous, to degrade myself to the extent that whatever that book produced, with a sort of machine gun attitude, it could never be understood as "good" advice. The title's megalomaniac tone was of course also deliberate, both in the sense of "I am God" LOL, but also that I wrote this book, and I'm gonna be around whatever argument you want to have, fistfight included.

At that time, 2010 or so, during the recession, dance, from the perspective of the makers and doers, were so obedient, nice, polite, sympathetic and nobody dared to have any opinion at all – same now obviously – that I felt that I could not not write that book at least to shake the dormant climate that I lived in, and felt despair from being part of. I didn't leave, but wrote a book. This is getting long but one more thing, it is important for me that *Spangbegianism* was distributed for free and had no publisher etc. To put together such a book for the bookstore, impossible as at that moment, cynicism becomes high on itself or whatever.

Cynicism is not something that I have researched and I guess it's evident that I cannot take much more than a page or two by Sloterdijk. Then again there are quite some interesting approaches to cynicism historically, even though perhaps I'm more drawn to a kind of pessimism, Schopenhauer definitely.
I consider two approaches to cynicism, a structural and a strategic. The first one implies to detect circumstances, structures, and go around them. It is totally cynical to start with analysis of, for example, a commission, instead of with desire or spontaneous happiness. First we see how bad everything is, which it always is – cynical – but based on this initial passive aggressive attitude let's now turn it all around and figure out how the cynical vantage point can open up for happiness that will not backfire, isn't sustainable and, more importantly, is a happiness that we have enabled and not bumped into. In other words this is a cynicism that insists on becoming king of your circumstances, which also offers a kind of transparency. We know what we are doing and we are attackable, no one to blame. This, though, is an approach or attitude that can be experienced as threatening because, as much as it makes my operation transparent, also potentially exposes the operation of the structure inviting, or whatever it is. Strategic cynicism is more or less the contrary, in other words, we should just mention that, formally speaking, structures are always stable and open whereas strategies are malleable and/or closed; so, when structures proposes a certain openness, transparency that in its turn gives way to the possibility of change and re-distribution of power, as an example, then strategic cynicism does the opposite, it basically enables power and closes down the possibility for discussion, opposition, etc. So strategic cynicism is the instrument for the declining dominant discourse, thus the obvious strategy of today's male patriarch threatened as he is by more or less everything and knows it. Then again, such positioning can also from time to time be gainful, if the point is to make yourself into a fool, and that again is complicated because as dominant discourse you make yourself a fool on your own territory, perhaps the worst of the worst cynicism.

AV : It suggests that cynicism is also about not taking the position of "the undercommons" – to use the term from Harney and Moten – because it would mean leaving the stage, the battlefield, or disappearing somewhere else. So cynicism is still

about taking the challenge and trying to work with the circumstances as they are, and then maybe twist them. Can we say that?

MS : I don't particularly support the notion of undercommons, in particular in respect of the European political landscape. Considering say minorities in the US or people living in the border zone between Mexico and the USA, perhaps we can talk about an undercommons, but the way that Moten and Harney do, it's again a position taken by the one that can afford it. I find Harney seriously cynical and not in an inspiring way. To me, the undercommons becomes a new chill territory full of exciting vectors that scholars can appropriate. Ouch. What's the next book then dealing with the super undercommons, or the naked commons with an accent on Agamben – zoe commons. Endless regress.
I think this hints towards a shift, towards a poetic attitude, in the sense of a very different search or journey, which doesn't go from commons to under, to super-under – which is all a matter of staying in a discourse and operating through likelihood. A poetic, and poetic needs to be clarified as it has very little to do with poetry, instead remains and takes as it responsibility to set in motion the possibility for a different kind of change, a difference in kind instead of difference in degree. In other words, it esteems the possibility for contingent change, that obviously therefore also contingently undermines itself as discourse and power. The cynics stay on the scene pretending it's a different one, where the poetic stays around producing the possibilities for the stage to prominently change and contingently. That is to say, cynical transformation is always and harnessed in re-active transformation, whereas poetic approaches engage in the emergence of possible active change.

AV : If you think these two approaches in historical categories, what would be, in your view, the cases – authors, artworks, artistic practices – that exemplify them or probe them?

MS : There was something, I refer not least to conversations with Valeria Graziano here, wonderfully naïve with the avant-garde movements of the 20th century, both the political and artistic avant-garde. It is somehow beautiful to remember those men that with a heroic gesture considered the possibility of enlightening the ordinary citizen that they were worth fighting for, that emancipation was within reach. Avant-garde was not cynical, it was naïve; kind of cute that a bunch of white men already inscribed in the dominant discourse would bring emancipation to the people. What beautiful heroism.
When the plug was pulled any form of avant-garde became impossible, around 1970. What moved in instead was really, terribly cynical, and has become more and more so. I'm talking about institutional critique which I think was a terrible idea, exactly because it is something that can only be practiced by those who

are already invited, the ones that carry the key to the VIP space. Institutional critique was reserved for people like me, white guys from the west. Daniel Buren, Michael Asher, Tino Sehgal, it's only Andrea Fraser that contested the male empire. Obviously institutional critique was never a critique of institutions. It was just a tease, playing hard to get, or like kids testing boundaries, but of course always making sure that Mama's gonna love her little boy. Institutional critique suffered from the same problem as Chantal Mouffe's concept of agonism. All great but there is just that problem: one can only have an encounter with someone that has access to a political context, the ones that already have a voice, have been acknowledged by a majority. To me institutional critique can be an example for the worst kind of cynicism, one that it took me long to detect but also kind of nice, you know, things you learn late in life.

AV : And actually, it can function only within the system that presupposes it, that's the problem...

MS : Exactly. Nevertheless, I think Mouffe made some impact even though it backfired. A few years ago, a curator of a major European museum told me that they don't curate artists anymore but "urgencies". I nodded my head as one does just before some panel discussion got going and we all sat down, but I was thinking, urgent for whom? Under what circumstances? When and where? Urgency is one of those horrid terms that boils down to urgent in respect of the one with the wallet, the museum or whatever it is. Always urgent enough, never more than that because obviously what the museum can recognise is already not urgent for real.

I don't really know, but there is something pressing about this also concerning cynicism and poetics. I think poetics can live with it but cynicism can't for sure. If we want change, prominent change, it has consequences, collateral damage, so to say. Something's gotta go; with the introduction of something new something else will be pushed aside, a new currency will make other things incompatible. One has to recognise, in other words, that radicalism comes with a price, and there can thus not be gentle radicalism, or radicalism with a nice face, to paraphrase Zizek. It just doesn't happen. Liberalism and cynicism used as a smoke screen for one's liberal affinities, cannot handle radicalism for two reasons. First because capitalism requires radicalism and the liberal cannot sign up, and because secondly, the liberal cynic cannot live with the possibility that the ground, the foundation, is not stable. The liberal and the cynic argue, change, by all means, but only as long as it builds properly on the past and maintains the historical narrative as we know it. To approach something with a radical attitude implies to undo givens and to insist on not judging, only then can some thing emerge contingently.

AV : Speaking about radicalism and the price to be paid, I would like to go back to *Spangberianism*... While observing the life of the book, I think it made many people

angry – probably mostly people who hold certain positions that defined the art world in which you operated – but at the same time you got many "admirers", or many people who sympathise with you, especially among younger artists, students, or the people coming from very marginal contexts, like the Balkans. You have always been very welcomed in that context, probably because it has been very marginalised...

MS : I've always been welcome by people who have no money. I'm totally a favorite for the ones without means, but those are also the ones that invent new kinds of resources and turn stuff around. Those are the ones that have no choice but to use first instance, or structural, cynicism. We are fucked so let's go to work. Or, we are totally fucked anyway so let's make sure we are fucked well.
People who are privileged can afford to be greedy, and as soon as somebody that is not already authorised has a good idea, they get scared and feel threatened. It's not exactly news, but the situated tend to wish to sit on their resources. Sit on them until bitterness hits hard and they have to realise that they are just another sad rerun on a channel with three digits. In less situated parts of the dance world there's simply nothing to be snobbish about, so let's get down to basics and then we talk. No need for politeness and fancy ornamentation, but to be a true friend also means to say no, to understand but not agree.
Spangbergianism was put together like an evil omen, it was a matter of nailing everybody and let them, including myself, taste their spineless lack of conviction and desire to lean against convenient life. Where is your devotion? Because, if you're not in dance because of devotion what are you doing here? It's badly paid, no fame, bad parties, small cars, cheap wine and flights. So, and here comes cynicism, you are here because you're not good enough for anywhere else.
So guess who got mad and don't invite me any more. Exactly, the ones that stash the money in the mattress, including Sweden. All the rest have been hands in the air. It's pretty cute with Sweden, the book has been read by many, but the Swedish arts council or anybody that's an authority in dance, art or culture up there has never mentioned the book. Pretty sick considering that it's read from–and I'm serious– Argentina and Mexico, to Korea and Japan and back again, the whole of Europe, including the US and Canada. It's pretty comical to have written the most read book in dance in this century and my own context totally ignores it.
Yet, however cynical it was, it was also, at least, meant to be an unconditionally positive statement, around self-empowerment, autonomy and the will to create one's own circumstances. Shit – I know it's tacky, but – *Spangbergianism* was a just call for independence, and mind you, it worked.

You know, it's what I like best, to prove people wrong. Kind of like, you didn't believe in us, in what we did, what we were devoted to. Now it's too late, so good luck in your comfy chair in your corner office with a freaking glass and please go on complaining about budget cuts. We're out there changing the world in the meantime.

AV : Now, when you are explaining the cynicism you practiced in *Spangbergianism*, I think that in fact "problematising" is something most characteristic for your work, although it takes different shapes. So to speak, in *Spangbergianism* you formulate the problem from a *cynical approach*, while now, you are trying more and more to formulate it from a *poetical approach*. But in both cases it is about problematising and also attempting to formulate problems. What would you say about that?

MS : As I mentioned, that book was written out of despair, a sense of being unable to continue. But at the same time to give up is not an option. I don't mean to reference Beckett, obviously, but never the less in this inability to stop, I think there is passion. It is exactly devotion that doesn't allow me to stop. But devotion must always be contested and double checked, otherwise one risks becoming coquettish. Devotion is always on the move. To me, the price to pay for love, for devotion, is that I must always be, in a way, out of balance. Love implies to insists on always living a moment of constant *ungrounding*. Concerning love and art, my, *our*, responsibility is to never regulate or to stabilise, to never make something consolidate but instead generate openness to an ongoing process in which the self, my self is perpetually undermined.

AV : But where does that whole attitude come from? You know, it is unusual. That's why maybe you are a very good person to speak with about "the problem", since it's not typical that artists, theorists, etc., in the contemporary European dance scene problematise that much, and you do it all the time...

MS : If you, in your social context of Serbia and former Yugoslavia, started to problematise because of necessity, I did it because if I didn't what would that make me? I'd turn into an obedient surfer that would have difficulties having a look in the mirror. To problematise–if that's what I do–was my answer to growing up and working in a privileged context. Growing up in, and I definitely did, a social democracy–and Swedish welfare was absolutely wonderful–but the political climate I grew up in was extremely effective at sedating the people. At some point I figured out that I had to stay alert, always alert, and the way to do it was to problematise.
It's perhaps valuable to say that to problematize is not the same thing as having problems or solve something like a problem.
In fact, behind it all is probably a personal trauma. That's the first – you don't want to know but yes, I'm strongly revenge driven. The second is that devotion keeps me from getting bitter, which would be easy after such a long time in the business. Nothing in the world has been so violent to me as dance and art. Nothing has broken me more and nowhere I have I encountered more evil people. Cynicism is one obvious solution, but it's way too lonely for me.
It's also something about refusing to be world-champion in Stockholm. I left in the

mid ’90s partly because I couldn’t stand the self-pleasedness of choreographers making a little quintet spending quarter of a million euro. It’s really easy to be the champ in Stockholm, better to not be interested in the rest of the world, or tour, because we might just have to realise that what we do is not interesting, original, exciting, cool, smart, theoretically advanced, you name it. The only thing extraordinary with Swedish dance is that it’s Swedish.
Finally, you know, I’ve always been bad at everything. I have no degrees in nothing. I can’t dance, I’m a lousy musician, mediocre philosopher and all kinds of things, but it’s great because I have nothing to fall on, I have nothing to defend. Cynical in the first instance, but at a second glance, perfect: I can do what I want.

AV : Do you know of the term “dilettante” by Brecht? And in former Yugoslavia Aldo Milohnić wrote about “radical dilettantism”... It suggests that if you are outside the paradigm, then you can ask the fundamental questions about the paradigm, just because you are not complicit with all the tacit knowledge and rules that you get through official education or by being professional in the field. It’s a kind of position that cannot be complicit with the *doxa*, that is in a way free from it.

MS : Absolutely. A colleague, an architect, he has five years of education that he could not not defend. Not because he loves architects but because “I spent five years learning that shit”. The piece that you mentioned in the beginning of our conversation *Powered by Emotion* was quite explicitly addressing dilettantism, radical or not, and indeed as you mention the dilettante, so to say, carries with him or her the possibility to reveal. Like the child and the emperors new outfit. There’s just a little problem. At the same time as the educated is blinded by his debt he has something to sustain a practice. The dilettante is “free” but can easily sink into the mud of sensationalism. It’s a bit embarrassing to build a practice on revealing emperors, and the tendency is that it ends up in the dirtiest form of cynicism. I’m thinking Maurizio Cattelan. The recent toilet in gold installed in the Guggenheim entitled *America*, give me a break.

There was something very important working in close proximity to architecture, especially with this extraordinary man Tor Lindstrand. It taught me a lot about differentiating between structures and strategies; reading circumstances and understanding protocols, briefs etc., and differentiating organisation from expression. The educated is somebody whose practice is embedded in structure, but this can establish a strong causality in relation to expression, and this blocks “wild” navigation. On the other hand, the dilettante is somebody that can maneuver like a crazy person, or be super strategic, exactly because of structurelessness, but the back is that he has nothing to push against, nothing to produce a generative resistance. Good art, if you know what I mean, happens when the delicate boarder zones between structures and strategies start

to vibrate and as a result crack open the dichotomy between striation and smoothness. It is there, which is not a where, that problems show up, where "New" problems emerge.

AV : I have a straightforward question, to which the answer probably cannot be straightforward, but nevertheless... Since we have agreed so far that the problem is not about complaining or being indecisive etc., I'm interested in how you theoretically or philosophically understand the activity of problematisation and the notion of the problem. It is a standstill in the regular flow of action, a moment of resistance, of zooming out, so to speak, no? How would you reference these notions?

MS : "Problematise" as you said, to me has to do with a sympathetic relation to Deleuze & Guattari that I, as a "true" dilettante, obviously never read.
I think that the work of the philosopher, scientist and artist fundamentally is to make truth, make fact and make new kinds of experiences show up, rather than consolidate what we already know. An important sentence from *What Is Philosophy* comes to mind. From the top of my head: the responsibility of the philosopher, the scientist and the artist is the production of the possibility of an altogether new something." Western philosophy, largely Kantian philosophy, certainly is work of excellence: the philosopher clears all the debris and all the mess away, and here is the concept, the truth, what cannot be otherwise. Deleuze & Guattari rather work in the middle of the mess, as a means to generate other kinds of order. Instead of philosophy that consolidates truth or a science that proves this or that fact. This is a productive or generative philosophy. It's not a matter of consolidation of truth, fact and experience but instead a matter of generating truth, generating face and in the case of art generating new kinds of experience.
For Deleuze the "tool" used, or that he recommends, as we know is called a concept, but concept is a complex term not least in respect of its etymology. In Deleuze it is rather difficult to get what he means with a concept as it fluctuates from book to book.
The understanding of "concept" in English comes to a large extent from the translation of Kant's *Critiques* into English. When those translations were made, the German word *Begriff* could not really be translated to "term" or "notion". Finally the translator decided for "concept" – can't remember his name but Mario Perniola writes nicely about it in "Enigmas" – and this totally transformed the entire ideas of concept. *Begriff* as we know is a settlement, it's about nailing something. The fundamental *Begriffe* of a thesis, for example, should carry the same meaning from the beginning to the end – stability, consolidation, determination and in no way confusion.
The Deleuzean concept is altogether different; it's instead a machine for the production of indeterminacy. A concept in Deleuze is not a consolidation, a

clearing of the grounds, but instead a machine, an abstract machine that generate some thing, very different from conventional machines. A toaster, for example, is a machine that is successful, or good, when containing strong determinacy. Every toast should come out the same, that's the point. We can also understand a conventional machine through established modes of causality. This leads to that, and so on. The Deleuzean concept is an abstract machine producing indeterminacy, and being in itself indeterminate, one could even say singular and singularity obviously don't have determination.
Deleuze opens up for an alternative etymology, a Latin background where concept rather refers too conceiving something, *concipere* would be the latin origin. Concept here instead means bringing together, but to conceive is not just to bring together as in collecting a bunch of sheep. It's a matter of bringing together and forth. In ways it refers to drafting something, in particular in the sense that it is a bringing together of things, of stuff, of thought that is incompatible. To bring forth as an assemblage what appeared to be incompatible. To work with or on a concept therefore means not only to bring together incompatibles, but for this to happen we, the one engaged, need to change his or her understanding of what grouping, assembling can be, and contingently. What follows is a question from where then do these capacities "come"? Bringing something together that is epistemologically not possible to bring together?
What Deleuze is interested in is not knowledge but rather the indeterminate stuff that leaks out of the virtual, the immanence or a plane of consistency. What leaks out, if one can use such a metaphor, is not knowledge but the stuff knowledge is made of.
But why all this Deleuze mumbo jumbo? Deleuze might be arrogant and "French" but his philosophy is never cynical. Instead, to me, his thinking resonates strongly with the Greek notion *poiesis* that we encounter in Plato's *Symposium*. Summarised by Agamben in *The Man Without Content* (translated to English on in 1999 but published 1970), he differentiates between production – which is to make another one – and production as manufacturing.

AV : Technical reproduction.

MS : Exactly, which obviously can also be to bake bread, make children or whatever. Wait a second, children is a bit complex, maybe. Next to production then, *poiesis* which instead, proposes Agamben, would be "pro-duction", a matter of bringing some thing forth, previously unthinkable. This has nothing good or bad which is always something, but instead of bringing forth *some thing*. Production is a matter of organising another one (something) for the world, perhaps an alternative or version, and this production is based on knowledge; it is measurable and effective. *Poeisis* (pro-duction) instead, is bringing some thing *New* into the world, such production can not be knowledge based; it is immeasurable

and therefore affective. Not for Agamben, but for Deleuze it is important to add here that production always remains in the real of the possible (reality/the world), whereas pro-duction, *poiesis*, implies an engagement with the possibility of potentiality, and potentiality can be said to stuff that leaks out of the virtual into reality and the domain of possibility, a process that Deleuze, referring to Simondon, define as actualisation.

AV : Agamben wrote on *poiesis* of today, but he relies a lot on Aristotle. When I said "the poetics" at the beginning of this conversation, I also had in mind that classical idea of bringing something new, to appear in the world. But then, if we think about poetics in your case, like in many other cases, we don't need to speak about bringing matter into a shape, but bringing together matter and shape. That's why the works like *Natten* (premiered at Kunsten Festival 2016) are so intriguing and make us think or speculate. And it seems fruitful for me to go beyond Agamben and Aristotle, and think about just bringing something into the world, you know, without having that preconceived image that you project on to the thing that you bring. That's also a relatively open poetical proposal. But why I think poetics is still about problematising things or even criticising – just a different approach to the problem – is that when you propose something, when you bring something new, you also put it in the world, in place of something else. That kind of proposition could be also an implicit criticism or deliberately filling the world with the things that you think are worth filling it. This open possibility of the thing that you bring into the world might resonate with what you have done recently, hm?

MS : Certainly. I'm just thinking along with Agamben and I sympathise with his historical analyses that's obviously intimate with Aristotle but perhaps more in bed with Heidegger.
Over the last many years we've had a lot of debates around critique, its possible decline, resurrection, how capitalism has co-opted it, etc. On the one hand, it's been argued that criticism fails in scrutinising the position of the critic, making it into a positivist practice. On the other, one can argue against criticality, that prides itself with a superficial reading of the late Foucault but, as Foucault clearly warn us, ends up in being simple neoliberal opportunism, track-pad criticism. I've been, after putting out *Spangbergianism*, not least interested in problematising these positions and locating them specifically in artistic practices, and in dance in particular. In a few words. Critique: not as a means to an end, but as modes of companionship during and through processes. Critique: not in respect of probability and responsibility, but as contingent and irreversible, which implies practices whose outcome, revenue, is indeterminate and therefore not subject to interpretation, but instead offers the implicated to engage generatively or in processes of possible pro-duction, poietic production. It of course goes without saying that this pro-duction, the bringing forth is also indeterminate to, and for,

me. In this way I cannot know what to fill the world with, I can only "hope" that it can be filled with something else, something *Else*. And as you say, the bringing forth implies to put something in the world instead of something else. *Poiesis* comes with a price, collateral damage.
It's thus pretty comical how liberal people deal with *poiesis*, especially liberals in academia and the arts that tend towards a more classical value conservative liberalism. At the end of the day I want my work, *Natten* for example, to be minimally guiding. We are guided enough in life, directed and etc., by the state, the economy etc. We are placed in front of pre-fabricated choices – sushi or sashimi – which is choice as production. I've had it. My shows are there exactly for the possibility of *poiesis*. Things are there but no matter and form are brought together, no manual is passed out. Respect, every audience member can decide for themselves, the ones that decide to walk out probably have something better in mind and I'm not up for being convincing. My dances, my work since at least *La Substance, but in English* is not conceptual, they are concepts, passed on to not the audience, but to each spectator individually, each individual understood as a singularity.

AV : Would that be what differentiates it from cynicism? That of unleashing the guidance? Withdrawal of the "master-mind"?

MS : I am thinking that the cynical is somebody who detects anomalies and attacks them, but always contained in the discourse through which the anomaly has been able to appear. What I am interested in, and about what poetics can do, is rather to break with discourses. Poetics is not strategic in this sense, it's in a way, hope for the best, it's outcome is contingent, what the collateral damage is, who knows, it can even be the obliteration of the artist or the work, or the world.
Natten is a through and through a critical work, but it's poetic in a way, detecting anomalies and replacing them, not with something that we know but rather replacing it with something. In this respect, the move is also a matter of making my position unstable, ungrounding my position. The *poietic* moment necessitates a departure from subjectivity, from identity, and implies a sense of trans-subjectivity. In a way, poetics is always a matter of *queering*, not bring matter and form together.
The cynic makes sure he comes out on top. Like Jérôme Bel's performances. They know what they are talking about, attack this something and turn to the audience to make sure everybody gets what is attacked. Here we have the audience and everybody in the audience, a good multiplicity, go home to their husbands, colleagues, neighbours, dogs and cat telling them how amazing it was. "He is so spot on, so clever, so intelligent", and everybody agrees. Effective and completely stupefying.

Then, for us, scholars, etc. we are very happy in the foyer afterwards, because we understand everything and can apply it to loads of sexy theories. Because of this, Jérôme Bel can be successful, it's very economical. The investment to write about Jérôme Bel is very small, because it doesn't contest mine or anybody's relation to Lacan or whatever. Right?

AV : Maybe it's because it's in a way prepared to be written about.

MS : Exactly, which I think was very important at some point, but not today. I mean, especially when being prominently situated in every kind of privilege. I instead vote for practices of ungrounding, myself in particular, especially in respect of our current political situation. If we experience – this is the brief version – omni-present capitalism, any proposal or statement, any criticism must be a capitalist ditto. So rather than stating something – in the sense of Kant and *Begriff* – I'm interested in withdrawal, which is not just any kind of withdrawal, but that's for another day – withdrawal from coagulating form or tying it to matter. This is also what the performance passes to the audience, a kind of minimally active withdrawal that never becomes anything before the individual steps in, makes a move, generates.

Conventionally the audience is understood as a multiplicity. Not good, and we read this with Rancière and beyond, hopefully with Lyotard, etc. I want it the other way around; there must be no audience, only individuals: a specific kind of multitude – a set of individuals that cannot be brought together as group. There is no community here, if there is one it is one that we as individuals that don't belong to each other have to bring forth.
This mess is coming together. In front of a performance that offers itself as a concept, the individual audience member is possibly engaged in a process of coagulating, poietically, some things that are neither form nor matter. It is in this twining of withdrawal and individual (singular) coagulation or capture, or not coagulating but just being, of minimally formed and mattered, that the work is located. It is, to me, at this moment that something can show up.
After *Natten* people often come out after the show, it's 7 hours and 6 minutes, saying things like: "Not now" or something else like "Gotta go" and it seems it's because the experience, the twining is simultaneously too big and too weak, too personal and too generic. I like that.

AV : That is maybe the moment of creating the problem. At the end I would like to return once again to the problem of "the problem", and ask you about the role or the function of the problem in your thinking and creative process. Not every problem has the same strength and potentiality...

MS : Basically there are two kinds of problems. There are false problems, like: should you or should I pick up the kids from the kindergarten? I did it yesterday, you do it today, or we could hire somebody to do it. There are a number of solutions already available... not really a problem just negotiation and rhetorics. A real problem – this is, by the way, kind of picked up from Deleuze's book on Bergson. Real problems are problems to which there is no available solutions, they cannot be solved. Real problems are problems that "force" us to generate solutions, but again from where, or out of what, then these solutions are generated because if they were generated out of language, or through probability analysis, for example, they would indeed be conventional – a false problem. A real problem can generate solutions only through an encounter with the virtual, so to say, forcing a leakage out the virtual, immanence or whatever we choose for the real of the potential. Real problems are what one, or that's what I, cannot not engage with, when making art.
Thinking about this, I consider that art obviously isn't here to make the world, our lives or anything, better. That's design or simple economy that surrounds art extensively but is not synonymous with aesthetic experience. I rather think – and that's definitely not me thinking but general Kant – but I do think that art's job, or responsibility, is to make the world, modes of life, phenomena and things come to an end. Like Duchamp made sculpture come to an end around 1913 or so, and how Andy Warhol made originality, in a way, come to an end, or *Finnegans Wake*, Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz*, Gerhard Richter's out of focus paintings and so on. They all made something come to an end. After Duchamp, sculpture wasn't the same any more, he brought sculpture to an end, not as simply destruction but so that new positions of sculpture had to be articulated or take place, but it was not Duchamp who did, or was responsible for, this articulation. He was only responsible for the to-an-end, and contingently. With this in mind, the engagement with problems and to problematise is not a matter of articulating questions to which there might or might not exist solutions, but instead to provoke new answers, answers to which there are no questions. The poietic moment is one that generates answers to which we have to articulate accurate questions.

What I want, or what I think, art should pass on to the audience is the necessity to articulate a new question. For me, there is something about the difference between a modernist project and what I am interested in. Modernism was equipped with a shovel. If you just dig deep enough, then we would find essence and if we could find it we could have or gain consolidation. Capture essence. This was wishful thinking.
In accord with Deleuzean generative philosophy, I am thinking that my job is to engage in the production of the possibility for essence to show up, like from the future, in a way. What I am doing, what art's job is, is to make new answers

come to us from the future. Those answers, that are New, that are essential and must be, are obviously true, but only until the moment they have engaged in the process that we know as actualisation, which is the moment when they, so to say, enter representation, and be proxy become conventional. In other words, generating truth in order for it to vanish, and that's important because if truth would remain, life and stuff would not be better or worse, not come to an end, but simply freeze in a moment of eternity.
So my job as a person, and especially as somebody engaging with art, in production or audience, is to be alert, because those answers are not telling us when they are coming. When they arrive from the future, and this is embarrassing – I can't fucking believe I'm saying this but I also believe in the soul – okay, they come from a non-causal, non-regional opportunity and are prominently horizontal. In other words, they arrive from immanence. This is why I cannot stop making art, to engage in the possibility of the production of new answers. Answers that carry with them the possibility of contingent worlds. To engage in problems is to engage in the destruction of what is and through this destruction bring something forth. To leave cynicism behind and be courageous enough to open up for the absolute dread unleashed by *poiesis*.

Vienna, 16 August 2016

MARTEN SPANGBERG « DO THEY THINK THE LENGTHS OF THE PIECES ARE AN ACCIDENT?"

Guillaume Rouleau – MA Culture

Swedish « performance related artist » Mårten Spångberg, besides animating four workshops with Asad Raza and Adrian Villar Rojas, has presented three performances during ImPulsTanz – International Vienna Dance Festival 2016 : *Dawn*, created in collaboration with students of P.A.R.T.S. (dance and research center founded by Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker), *La Substance, but in English* (2015) and *Natten* (2016). If *Dawn*, played for the first time at the Odeon theatre, was a choreography inspired by the solar phenomenon (sunset and sunrise) and by a 75 minutes sample of Drake's song *Hotline Bling*, *La Substance, but in English* and *Natten* were more "rococo". In these two performances, respectively 4h15 and 7h06 long, the relationship between choreography and dance is being rephrased by Mårten Spångberg through a scenographic "mille-feuilles", an acoustic cocktail and a series of gestures introducing other relationship to the audience, other structures of choreography in which you can leave and come back as any time.

In *La Substance, but in English*, the stage set is a gold and silver aluminum patchwork of fabrics with numerous brand logos (Versace, Chanel Paris, etc.); a patchwork of clothes that the eleven performers wear and take off regularly; a patchwork of colors that the public can paint on a large panel, Mårten Spångberg leaning against it, his iMac on his knees, his Iphone within easy reach, connected to the soundsystem of the Kasino am Schwarzenbergerplatz where *La Substance, but in English* was performed. A polysemous title combining French and English which evokes the philosophical notion of substrate (the essence of things), and at the same time the narcotics which are presents on stage through golden cannabis leaves attached

to bamboo stakes and through different liquids (weed in two horizontal glass tubes), bottles of soda and candies scattered all over the stage, thrown into the public. The substance is gradually spread out over several hours. As the French philosopher Tristan Garcia underlines in *A first fragment for Marten*, cotemporary experiences are governed by the notion of intensity: an intensity (sexual, gustative, cosmetic advertising – Dior Homme Intense – *etc*.) that questions the human experiences (as opposed to the intensity in physics), about what is subsisting and what is changing in those experiences and with which strength. The abundance of signals in *La Substance, but in English* are for Mårten Spångberg a way to generate unpredictable situations within established structures: the one of capitalism and the one of choreography (which Mårten Spångberg dissociates from the dance); An intensity, which in *La Substance* is associated to pleasure enjoyment and coolness.

The intensity of the experience is also found in *Natten*, the Swedish word for overnight, where it stands for an extremely intense fearful night, a night during which we could experience the "nothing". *Natten* is an artificial overnight displayed composed by Spangberg in order to generate a nothing that cannot be named, which disrupts our experience as a spectator. *Natten*, at the MUMOK Hofstallungen, began with the crossing of curtains; two black curtains who seemed to cut this part of the old imperial stable (with its ceiling painted by Otto Zitko) from the rest of Vienna. We enter, without any dawn phenomenon, into the night – into a brown, dark green, silver cavern –walking along the walls of the room, the blankets that cover the floor attenuate the noise of our steps, piles of *Natten* books by Marten Spangberg are all around (*Natten*, Mårten Spångberg, 2016). At the far end of space, white and black clouds are projected in a continuous loop on the wall. Aluminum canvas are hanging from the ceiling. As in *La Substance, but in English*, Mårten Spångberg is leaning against a the wall, selecting the songs sporadically played, this time it is *New Dawn Fades* by Joy Division and *In the Event of a Sudden Loss* by Greg Haines we hear, instead of *Diamonds*by Rihanna and *Lush Life* by Zara Larsson; as in *La Substance, but in English*, phases of silence, of resting, of easy going interfere; but there is no glamour in *Natten*. *Natten* is about the dark part of our thinking, a point of non-understanding. "A Journey to the End of the Night" (Céline) with Mårten Spångberg and ten performers as our guides. I met Mårten Spångberg at the Café Liebling in Vienna to discuss *La Substance* and *Natten* (and to a lesser extent about *Dawn*) that put the cursor of the intensity on undetermined, but also to talk about Jérôme Bel, *World of Warcraft*, Cédric Price, *Harry Potter* and Kieślowski.

It is the Austrian premiere for *La Substance, but in English* a 2014 piece and*Natten* a 2016 piece. Did you adapt any aspects for the Kasino am Schwarzenbergplatz where *La Substance, but in English* has been played and for the MUMOK where *Natten* has been played?

No. (laughs) I'm very familiar with both spaces and even if the pieces that I do are very constructed but of course there are adaptations, especially with*Natten*, now it is in a place that is 30 meters long and 12 meters wide whereas a couple of weeks ago we did it in a room that was 17×17. I think about the work like this. It is this piece. It is very much like a theatre performance in that respect, but I also think about my work more like a visual artist in the

sense that *Natten* can have many variations in the sense that like when an artist makes an exhibition for the Pompidou Center then they have a lot of space, then next time they do it in some Kunsthalle in Aubervilliers, then of course they have a smaller space and they will look at the audience to know how are they. So it is two different exhibitions but it may even have the same name. I'm interested in thinking that there are versions. You cannot work when you exchange a text with a friend, then you send the PDF and then after a couple of days you have written more about it and send another PDF, so there are versions that are more or less calculated. And this is not a matter of adapting to the situation, there is a little bit of that, but it is rather to undermine, so (you have) at least two perspectives at the same time, the understanding of something completed.

If you write for a webpage, this is a different form of publication than the writer of a newspaper. With the newspaper you're dead, when it is out, it is out, than you have to suffer from it (laughs) whereas the web page, if somebody calls you back and says there's a misspelling or an error, you can always change it. How do we think this in respect of performances? Is it a product but a product can also be transformative. Which is not necessarily that it becomes better and better but well, if we do it in Asia for example than we can't go with the set design because it costs billions and so we maybe have to pick up a new set once we're there but we don't take it back with us because this would be idiotic. Or three performers are in some other job that is better paid, then we do it with a smaller group and so on and so on. So I'm thinking also, in respect of most of the productions, the way that we understand performances and for example say in pieces of some familiar choreographers like Jérôme Bel pieces, they are extremely set, they are factory work. So this piece should be exactly the same for somebody who has it in France, in Germany, in Finland and so on. A BMW 511B is everywhere the same and completely interchangeable. The experience of Jérôme Bel in the Pompidou Center is exactly the same anywhere else. Good bye! This I think is prominently old school and definitely politically unacceptable.

I'm interested in thinking about contemporary business. Instead of starting a factory and having workers there maybe instead we think that the labor that we start is a web magazine but it is also a platform for the possibility of this, and we also do concerts etc. And sometimes this brand is lower than this one, so I'm interested, not in order to become more neoliberal, but I'm interested in thinking and experimenting how can contemporary art product in a particular stage – think about the way contemporary business operate: in a factory, you have a lot of investment to build the machine that builds the car, then a long rehearsal process and then we trade them as a sustainable product. In the performance circulation that we have now (festivals etc.) nobody tours anymore but still people invest eight months in fucking making the show/job. We work for three weeks and then when we tour, we continue to work and if it sells it is great, then we continue to work on it, and if it doesn't sell, because what we did that was fucking out, then, cool, we use that knowledge for something else. Think about a work, when we make an ass, and then we should present it to the audience, this could be overwhelming, instead we spend 25% of the money for to make a pilot or a better version, we test it on different kinds of audiences and then they say yeah! Then we make "1.0" which we know is crappy but it is one we know that we can sell and then we will see what the response

is and then we put in the big money to do the marketing when we know that the thing is selling already.

You constantly update your performance.

Yes, I always update the performance! Maybe people don't see it, it is not only how it looks, it is also how it circulates, how we think about the work.

And you try to have this consciousness from the audience of the constant evolution?

That doesn't really matter. It is also okay to come in- like a television series, if you come in after three episodes it is also cool- if you don't have a better experience of *World of War Craft* because you started with the version 1.0 you also get a great game experience and you know that it probably had a history. And if you are a nerd you will investigate in that.

***La Substance, but in English* lasts 4 or 5 hours approximately while *Natten* lasts 7 hours. Why did you choose these formats?**

Precisely 4 hours 20. Usually it is not written and never ends up being exactly the time you indicate, normally it is 4h18 or 4h15 but the arrangement of the performance is 4h20 and it refers to weed smoking. Do you know that the international day of marihuana culture is on the 20th of April? *La Substance* is also all about getting in touch with the real thing, "la substance". So the arrangement also refers to losing track or rationality. And *Natten* is 7 hours

and 6 minutes. *Natten* is a performance about Satan and hell and the fearful basis, the dreadfulness, the darkness, the deeply unknown, the horrendous, anyway, yes, the performance is long.

And do you consider *La Substance, but in English* and *Natten* like two connected or two independent pieces? While *La Substance* is a great celebration of being together without a cause as mentioned in the booklet by different liquids, tissues, music, *Natten* is a reflection about the night and the enlighten part of the night. So are the two pieces connected for you or two different approaches, the dark side of Martin Spangberg and the bright side? (laughs)

Exactly! It is all psychological. I went to my shrink and then *La Substance*came out and then *Natten* came out and now I feel that I am ready to make good Jérôme Bel performances again with a long corporation and dynamic (laugh). No, seriously speaking, they have nothing to do with each other but I made them happen. I don't know if I made them but I made them make themselves. You don't need to see them together, they are definitely not like some Kieślowski film, you know. They are not siblings. They don't connect and you don't have to see number one to see number two. At the same time they have in common aesthetic features, not so much in the sense of display but they share an aesthetic landscape. Then I didn't do it deliberately but it is somehow *La Substance* is the beach version of the night. It is in the day and it is colorful and celebratory all over the place and crazy and smiley and you feel the community and togetherness and you can sing along.*Natten* is very withdrawn. It is a performance that you experience very much alone even if there are 200 people in the building. It is a lonely show. Whatever it is that I do, I avoid words or approaches such as interpretation or reflection, but I am rather interested in non-reflexive situations, in a productive situation instead of interpretation, when I interpret something then I localize that something. When I go to the museum and I make an interpretation of this painting then I locate it. It must be 16th century, French, you can see that it is a traditional portrait… under these economic circumstances. We can put it in the layouts of art history, no problem. Interpretation is the matter of making something harmless. Reflection is something that I do from my position. Of course I can interpret everything by saying "it is shit" for example. This is "nothing". It is a matter of dissolving the urge or desire for interpretation in favor of the possibility of an experience to witness. As a spectator I start to produce forms of language.

Do you follow any method when dissolving anterior forms of performances?

Yes, but I think you can't do it by deciding. Let's go to the studio and dissolve form. Then we'll bring a toolbox that we'll use for this dissolving but since tools know what they are doing, they also know how they dissolve so they will always dissolve in a reactive kind of way. There need to be other formations that offer a possibility for this dissolving of formation, of form, of reliable and determinable experience.

My job as an artist is to take my job serious. What I do is indeed to identify that I am not a worker, but I engage with praxis of dissolving the available for the possibility of something

else. What artists do is to make the world come to an end, it is not to make it a better place. I don't mean to come to an end as a sort of tsunami or volcano, but to come to an end in the sense of how we can experience the world and what is an experiencing agent. So we're seeing this in the respect of Duchamp for example, what he does with the ready-mades (the bottle and the fountain) is basically that he makes sculpture come to an end.

The moment we recognize the bottle as a sculpture we have completely transformed what a sculpture possibly can be, both after and before Duchamp. So what Duchamp does is to make the world of sculpture come to an end. When we have that experience, we have to reformulate our understanding of sculpture not in respect of what we knew before but in respect of what we only now know about what a sculpture necessarily needs to be. In this respect I can't do this as a worker. Work is something determinable, then there are maybe some side effects, but I'm interested to withdraw from wanting to be a worker. Art must not be qualified for how it works or what work has been introduced to it. Art has to be judged in respect to how it has made something come to an end.

And how are you doing this in *La Substance* and in *Natten*?

I have no idea! (laughs) But to think it in this way: What I do in my studio, in my head or in my office is to do this dissolving practice in a way. When I make the piece that is for example in the Kasino [*La Substance*], I know everything about that piece. Which of course I don't. Every day is different depending on the audience, the weather, my mood. The piece is completely set but it is set in a way that is not there to be in any respect convincing or guiding, nor is it there to be unconvincing or unguiding. It is there to be in difference to the perspective of the individual spectator. It is not there to confirm you as cultural consumer, neither is it interested in being confirmed as a dance performance, it's equally happy. There is no guarantee for anything. But it is constructed as a way of withdrawing from the possibility of being located or positioned. It is there to never become a "one", it is never a conceptual formulation. It is never conceptual at all. In a different way, it is not a matter of making the decision whether you found the performance good or bad; is it sushi or sashimi. The aim of the performance is to provoke the audience for the possibility of the production of a choice, not the taking of a choice (sushi or sashimi) but the production of a choice. There are no criteria available for that production to happen.

Could you develop about the display of this experience?

La Substance is a sort of superabundant, superimpulsed incompatibility. There is so much information, so many surfaces and signs and signifiers that basically the viewer will suffocated if he doesn't make a decision him/herself. There are so many stimuli or non-stimuli that most of it just goes besides. And it doesn't matter- we are completely non-focused. It is not like electro shocks, after four of them you will really be kaput. It is a matter of an endless flux of information, and most of it miss it but that's how it needs to be. Cedric Price, the British architect who worked in the AA (architectural association) was more of an educator. He was the architect of the "fun palace" in the 60's. He proposed that the task of the

architect is always the aim to miss, to fail for something. But then in a lecture that he gave in the AA 15 years ago he talked about the relationship to builders and commissioners and he said this sentence: “the task of the architect is the aim to miss”. And, out of the blue, he adds : “…and obviously the zone of the aim to miss is pink”. And there it becomes a little bit complicated, but one way of understanding it is that pink is not a clean colors, it is not signifying strength, it is weak, womanly, definitely not used by any military regime or Coca Cola or convincing brands. So the aim to miss is also the aim to miss oneself in the zone of the undetermined, right? If you want to aim to the undetermined zone you also have to make sure that your aim to miss is also a undetermined aim. That is something that I found interesting to think about.

It makes me think about your choice of the popish scenography and choreography in *La Substance*. Why did you choose to treat some topics that we just have talked about through pop aesthetics and a very specific kind of pop, a very contemporary one?

I thought, why is it that dance performances are always so fucking boring? And why is it that the costumes, the hairdos, the makeup and the set design are boring? It is always reduction! Instead of being reductive, when you think about conceptual choreographies, they are all about reduction. Boring! Instead there should be makeup, there should be hairdos, there should be glitter and gold and weeks and and goo and coke diet and Luis Vuitton and all of it at the same time. The understanding of contemporary that the contemporary dance has is a contemporarity that first of all I don’t think of as contemporary at all. It is deeply modernist in its understanding, maybe it is deconstructive in its methodology but as expression it is always deeply fucking deep modernism to the extent that they don’t even know about it. Jérôme Bel is a post-modernist that dresses up like a modernist and prominently. He wants to be recognized as the artist. He identifies with Andy Warhol as the last one. They love the heroic artist. And what they do is to make an “oeuf” (egg). Fuck that!

Do we need a lot of props?

I don’t need anything.

But is the publicity, as the one you use for the scenography of *La Substance*, essential to escape from the boring?

Not at all! We can use whatever, but this one, *La Substance, but in English* is a performance that wants to be as contemporary as possible in the most conventional way but still not deliver a conventional experience correlated to these conventional codes. But it is absolutely not interested in being special. It should be totally ordinary. However, in combination these ordinaries become perhaps something that doesn’t correlate in your comprehension. For example, pop music, except of very rare examples, is used only as semiotic examples or as a way of showing that now it is “party time” on stage. It is a kind of waste in time. I thought for a long time, how could I make this show where there could be pop song after pop song after pop song and people would love it and I would love it. And one of the problems is, if you put

on Rhianna and she sings « Diamonds » or if you put on Donna Summer and she sings « Upside down » then it is a semiotic text situation that you will look for. This is restitutes the conceptual times of the 90's. Jérôme Bel *The show must go* on, that's what people do on stage, kind of a conceptual tautology. This is not a good idea. And then exactly in *La Substance* there is not pop music played from the stage to the audience, but it is pop music played by a guy who sits in the audience and sings along with Rihanna. So with him singing on top, that is a stronger proposal than the proposal that the semiotics of « Diamonds ». It is stronger that he sings then, be Beyoncé or somebody else, and in this moment, pop could function. I thought: "Why should dance performance always be with music that I don't want to hear at any other moment?". When I go teaching the students, where they warm up, they always have the local pop music. So let's make a show with it! And then I thought if there is pop music there is at least something that the audience can like because everybody definitely loves Rhianna. This is the good thing- where the audience is not there to attend a performance but starts to have a kinesthetic reverberation with the situation. Normally the music in performances is from the stage to the audience, now it is from the audience to the stage. So the man singing in the audience is also a kind of permission for the audience to participate in their fantasy in the show perhaps also with movements.

Concerning *Natten*, I was wondering about the relationship between the performers and the audience. Is it the same approach with the music, *etc*.?

No, *La Substance* is about abundance and *Natten* is about withdrawal which doesn't mean that it has low volume or lights or minimal music, there are a lot of signs. It withdraws so you can never locate it. Of course it is a dance performance in Impulstanz but it also withdrawals. If *La Substance* is a play about the abundance of information in favor of the melting of this

information into a kind of substance to which you have to make choices as an individual, *Natten* is a matter of withdrawal into the "unknown unknown". So it is not a matter of showing the unknown as something that you should be scared of – decapitated people, rotting corpses, vampires or zombies, people with chainsaws – in *Natten* there is nothing like since these things are the "known unknown" or what we have in horror movies, whereas I was interested in an unknown to which there is no language. I want the audience to have a sense of fear; but not of something but of the lack of something. It is not the fear of nothing, it is the fear of nothing's nothing because nothing is already something. There is nothing in this cup but this is also something. What we want to awaken in *Natten* is nothing's nothing.

Like a metaphysical experiment..

Exactamento. *La Substance* is also metaphysical in a Greek sense but *Natten* is metaphysical more in a contemporary, speculative form of metaphysics. Or even worse like in Greek. *La Substance, but in English* is of course utterly stupid. The substance doesn't really need a translation; it is shit, right? We know it. « La substance » of course cannot be called that so I added « but in English ». Neither could *Natten* be called « The night ». Natten means in Sweedish « the night » but the thing is that in Sweedish you have the article in the last letter "n". So, « nuit » is « nat » and « la nuit » would be « nuila ». Ant Natten can't be called « la nuit » or people would think that it is a piano piece. It couldn't be « la notte » then it would be a film. *Natten* is not scary either but it has a very particular sense, it is a Novalis kind of night and it is romantic and fucking fearsome. It is so fucking fearsome that it doesn't even has to happen during the night, it is *Natten* in itself. It is the night in you, the eternal night… My work is never ever about something, it is something. Journalism is always about something, theatre is always about something, but dance must never be about something. It is not nothing, but it is never about.

How do you try to represent the nothing on stage if you think that the nothing can't be represented? Do you think the stage is the best place to represent the nothing?

Certainly not. I think it is the worst place and that's why I decided to choose it. And I don't think one can feel this. Nothing's nothing is not fellable. Nothing is fellable but nothing's nothing for sure not. It cannot be felt nor can it be experienced but it expresses itself as a sensation or it can be affectively flourishing in your body. In other words it is an experience to which there is no naming. You can only know that you have the experience, but this experience is not something. It is the experience that is the everything else or its own emptiness. Again, totally redundant end endless. But I am exactly interest in that because what do you do with this affect to which there is no surface or attachment? The work that I do is not about any politics, it definitely participates in more or less elegant contemporary regimes or politics or economy. *La Substance* is from one perspective a celebration of capitalism, totally, but that's not all of it. It is also the melting of all the signs, a sort of reappropriation and recontextualisation.

But nor is my performance a political critic but I think because I'm convinced that contemporary capitalism has managed to financialize language to the extent where language cannot be a tool or an opportunity for the possibility of insurrection or for a revolution or for another kind of thought or another kind of systematic. But an experience that only refers to itself as its own emptiness is one that has no proposition. There is only fear or bliss. I also think that in this moment it opens for the possibility of production of a contingent character. It gives the possibility for the production of a thought that is not associated to anything but can show up. And it is not a matter of displaying metaphysics for the audience. My intention is rather, through withdrawal (like in *Natten*), to open you for the possibility to have an encounter with a localized metaphysics or a localized absolute. In the spectrum of that moment, there is also the possibility for a production contingent. Something can show up but it's absolutely non-correlated. If so, that might be absolutely the conventional way but it might also be the first moment of an entirely different way of being human, or an entirely different way of making sure that this world comes to an end. But the chance to do it in language in our ubiquitous capitalism doesn't apply. Capitalism (not the state capitalism) cannot be overrun through any other means than giving up our knowledge, subjectivity and navigation.

In this reflection about the capitalism a major issue is the use of new technologies (references to the usage of cell phones, skype, facebook on stage)..

It's a way to coming back to "turn off your mobile phones". No, please don't. The dance experience is in the capitalism but what it generates is the possibility of an experience that is contingent in that capitalism. I don't think that capitalism becomes less evil or exciting if we turn off the mobile phone when we go to the theater. Turning off capitalism isn't going to bring it away, it's rather a kind of acceleration if you want : "No, let's keep everything on and see how disturbance and interference can generate"; a bringing together of chains of signifiers, that are strongly reliable or completely incomprehensive. There are different kinds of monsters: the monster of Harry Potter, the monsters in the Lord of the Ring, the monsters in poststructuralism, *etc*. There are always hybrids. Half an eagle and half a lion, that's Harry Potter monsters. All these monsters are surprising to begin with but then they are just conventional. It's just a half a salmon, half a princess or half a frog, half a prince. They can either be on top of each other or in time of each other. Boring. Ultra fucking boring. These monsters are surprising yet conventional. What we want is a monster that is ordinary yet overwhelming.

In *Natten* there is nothing weird happening but the experience should be such that I cannot name it. It withdraws from being named and in this way it also needs to withdraw from becoming separate. It's not this part and that part and that part. It doesn't need to be the first part and the second part. Well, the first part was scary then of course the second part just looked like a lion so that we know how to get rid of it. And at the same time it's neither a one thing performance because you would also need a dramaturgy, a tension. It's very rare that somebody can retell the show. This sort of ordinary yet overwhelming, that's what this experience is, for which I don't have any name. I like when the audience comes out of the performance and one friend says to another "That was kind of really quite …" and the friends

says “Perhaps…”. We were there and we need to talk about the performance but we don’t know what it is because we have no words for it. Instead of going for diner after the show in order to be brilliant, elegant, exquisite, sophisticated with our interpretations of saying the performance is the translation of the second chapter of Plato. No. That is what we hate! What we really want is the audience to go to dinner together because we have become so stupid that we don’t know how to go home. We have to talk. We have to go for a dinner because we have to talk about this, because I don’t know what it is. I can’t go home. We have to get drunk. The only time you can go home without knowing what it is, is when you go home with somebody and you’re so drunk that you don’t remember. This is what we need.

Is it something that has completely disappeared from performances today?

The only dance I have trust in or feelings for is French dance. Mark Tomkins for example. Jean Claude Vernant is also someone that I find quite fabulous as a performance maker. Cecilia Bengolea and François Chaignaud they have a tendency but they are so good business men that it usually disappears a little bit. For me, there are two kinds of artist and I don’t want to be one of them. The one, every work is an undoing of the legacy of the previous one. Xavier Leroy would be an example for it, the expression of the work changes but the underlying methodology. The other kind of artist is the one that invents a sort of recipe but then he changes the color of the cake. It is quiet easy to end up there. This year is about Egypt because they have their thousandth anniversary and so you can tour and show the work, which is good. The system of choreographic centers made that tendency a little bit too available. I have been very busy in choreography for 20 years expanding the understanding of choreography, detaching the choreography from dance to be a technology rather than a tool box to make dance, a technology that can approach the world. We have to have a choreographer when we make coffee see how it should be set up, different choreographies with different social setups. We can use the producing capacity of choreography and it’s analytical one. If I write a book or make a film, I need to make a decision which is, “do I do this as a film maker or do I do this as a choreographer that uses the medium ?”. It’s two completely different things.

Choreography organizes. Choreography sets up structure. I have made the effort of saying choreography is something autonomous to dance, which doesn’t mean that they cannot be correlated with great fun, but dance isn’t supported by choreography. You can also use dance for other structures. Right now, I’m interested in the dance part. Then years before I would come to ImPulsTanz to present choreographies now what I’m doing is “dance performances”. They are not performances, they are “dance performances”. Dance as something that we draw from structuring. Choreography is in a way something that domesticates dance. But can we think of a non-domesticated dance which again refers to a wild dance to which there is no applicable structure, meaning that it is the experience of dance as dance; but dance as dance is also an empty experience otherwise it has a structure. The experience of dance is the experience of oneself experiencing experience. And this moment can have no structuring, that’s what *Natten* is about. It is the production of the possibility of an experience which refers only to itself through the means not of choreography, although*Natten* is choreographed,

but it is a choreography that may allow the withdrawing from structure. So it is rather choreography as a giving up of the grant or generosity or whatever.

What was the feedback for *La Substance* and *Natten*?

La Substance is made for an audience that grew up with Internet. It's made for an audience that has not known scarcity. It's made for an audience that doesn't remember Cold War. It's made for an audience that has grown up in composed families; that has grown up in a situation where you don't educate yourself in order to get a job but you educate yourself because there is no work around. So you stay in education. It is done by people who have understood mobility very differently than a generation like mine that is from the sixties, or earlier. So young people, people born after 1980 are very happy about the piece and are very benevolent, saying that as an experience it is overwhelming but also that the dramaturgy is very differently thought in the sense that it is not mono climatic, it's superimposition rather than one after the other, abundance, rather than a sort of conceptual dance, sort of a subtractive attitude. You don't miss the discursive part or what it means.

The piece was also a reaction to my observation that all dance pieces are so fucking grey. Why aren't there any costumes? Why aren't there fabulous outfits? Why is there no hair, no makeup? Why is the set design always so sadly boring? So it's all a matter of making dance visible. Usually the way of making dance visible is white, male, heterosexual, Christian, academic, institutionalized, efficient, etc. and I wanted to make a piece that dealt with totally different opportunities and at the same time the fact to slow down the quality of the performers, it's also a way of withdrawing from personality and a sort of dancers dancing and dance is not more important than the bear glasses hanging over or one or another song or one

or another mystical, chemical transformation happening, because – it's not that I am against identity – but I'm interested in making works that don't deal with identity or whatsoever. In *La Substance*, the whole piece is about melting. La Substance is all a matter of making a situation where here is an object, here is another object but I don't know where they start and stop, where the outskirts of an object are. With all this melting and how the whole dance is constructed towards these improvisational part close to the end where people are dancing around with seven different songs. In a certain idée there is a climax there but I think that this climax comes way too late and there are many different ones. The breaking of the bear bottle is also a kind of climax and the big dance is another kind of climax. I was interested in making a dramaturgy that doesn't follow up a sort of heteronormative understanding.

Anyway, people were super happy about the piece except a few people who seem to think that if you don't make a disclaimer or if a dance is not an open critic of capitalism then it's a bad dance performance, it's an evil dance performance. This is a bit frustrating or surprising that certain people have such a constipated approach. If someone critics the pieces saying "it's banal", it's like a kindergarten, like a children party, doesn't he or she see a certain other level? Obviously the piece is dealing with a certain kind of innocence, a certain kind of childishness, a certain kind of idiocy but all of this is also smokescreens, right? See behind A LITTLE BIT. Because what they do is basically to say: "it's a serious politic critic" or "it's Anne Theresa" [de Keersmaeker].

Concerning *Natten*, the critics were more homogenous. There is this brilliant critic in a newspaper: the journalist said the piece is great but when you have to sit on blankets for seven hours it becomes unbearable. How can you be so fucking bourgeois that you don't stand up? Go for a walk then, idiot! The piece is seven hours. If you go for diner during one hour, you don't miss anything, I mean you miss something but that's okay. When you come back everything is the same and at the same time completely different. If I wanted you to have a comfortable position, I would of course have put fucking double beds there. Now you should understand that it was not a mistake if there were no mattresses. I think that one of the most important things in my work is that I am producing new kinds of audiences rather than using audience as we know it in order to look clever.

Also there, with a younger audience, it seems that *Natten* created quiet intense impressions. You have people saying that it was a wonderful experience, with a smile on their face and other people saying that it was great but that they definitively don't want to go back there because what they experienced was so dark; basically it opens up people. A lot of people cried but at the same time a lot of people slept, which I think is great. Two guys were sleeping next to me, sleeping as a couple which was great. When do you do this and feel confy while being next to another 65 people? *Natten*is a sustainable show. We did it in Belgium in a church, in Italy in a gym and in Norway in a classical theatre hall. *Natten* seems to be a game changer. Somebody said to me that he got interested into dance because of a conceptual work at the end of the 90's and that since then nothing interesting has happens until *Natten*. And this was an academically and scholarly trained person. He said that this was the first time he had seen something where he cannot immediately sit down and write something about it right away.

Regarding *Dawn*, could you tell me more about the choice of the music (cyclical sample of Drake during 75mn), the choreography and what you wanted to express with this piece?

Basically it's a great song, especially without singing. It's a piece that is supposed to be minimally interesting. It should be interesting but minimally interesting. *Hotline Bling* is exactly that. It's minimally interesting, especially if you play it sixty times in a row but it is still something that you sit there after fourteen times. Or, just go home and I'm fine. Why does every fucking dance performance either have a Tchaikovsky's symphony or an exciting music? *Hotline bling* is there to be minimally interesting and to make you think: "Here nothing exciting is gonna happen". So now, instead of expecting something exciting either ok, fine, I'm leaving, or things maybe start to show up in this landscape that make it worth to stay. *Hotline Bling* on repeat, the film by James Baning, is of course also minimally interesting and then the dancing is made out of six materials that are again minimally interesting but there is also a lot of construction that makes something appear, something go away, a new constellation comes to force, things that happening in the shadows of each other. The story that I hopefully never told you before but when I was little I went with my mother and my grandmother to the beach often in the fall and we went to the beach just to see the sun going down – we never saw the sun because everything is grey anyway – and the way it was disappearing in the dark. When it was dark, we still know that the waves are there and the sound is there and we could stay for a really long time and this is how *Dawn* should be: Minimally interesting, being there with a bunch of people, or in couple but we don't really need to talk we know each other too well and the sun is going down and the waves are still there, the dancers are still there. It is a place where I am allowed to have thoughts rather than being told what you think. 99 ou of 100 dance performances are so keen on telling the audience something whereas I think that what makes dance so exciting, so extraordinary, is that it can just be there, like a tree. Super. The best ever. But we have to be very careful about how to make those proposals, how to organize the making visible of indifference. In the piece, what becomes visible is an indifference. It doesn't matter in this piece if it's after five minutes or after fifty five minutes. It's just there like a tree. It's seventy five minutes of suspense because nothing is really going on. It's very scary in a way. At a certain moment what do you hold on as a spectator?

Next I want to make a theater piece. I think that it's too easy with dance now; the next thing is to conquer language. I grew up with television and television had a 'tableau' so you could skip through the different channels, one channel up, one channel down. This sort of dramaturgy is very different now. Now we watch television and you are on Internet and internet has a dramaturgy without tableau, it's individualized, which can be bad, but somehow you're making decisions, you're making choices on different levels. With The Internet, La Substance and Dawn the feeling that it should provoke and how it's done is like an internet dramaturgy: they have associations but they are not necessarily in style.

A zapping generation..

Exactly, and I wanted it to be like this, I want those people to see it not people that grew up with television. I want my work to be seen by the future and not by the ones that have already decided to die. Why should dance not be contemporary? Contemporary dance is not so contemporary. Why doesn't it treat Internet while other art forms have done it? When artist have already consumed it and thrown it away? Dance in this festival seems to be something that was created in the fifties. Horrid. And the internet proposes different kinds of attentions so "How are we attentive when we watch youtube or when we hang out on the web?", "What are the understandings?", "How do we comprehend stuff?", *etc*.

To tell you the truth, my aspiration is to do not just high culture but super high culture. The aspiration is not to do popular culture or alternative art, no. The work that I do should end up in the Paris Opéra. I mean or at least, it's the Paris Opéra that I want to change with this work. I don't want to be on some Indie label or whatever. The others, at the Opéra, they put more of the same of the old. It's still very strongly bourgeois. They change the semiotic but they don't change the grammar. I think Bob Wilson changed the grammar of the opéra. I think Stockhausen changed the grammar of music. I think Le Corbusier changed the grammar of architecture together with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe probably. Cunningham changed the grammar of dance. The common understanding of Cunningham tries to make him not have changed the grammar. So we read Cunningham absolutely wrong. It was not a reaction to Marta Graham that made him do what he did, it was an altogether story. It was necessity that made him do what he did and being the individual he was he had to do it with John Cage. And then it was a matter of thinking how can I not betray my sexuality and the person that I am without being excluded by the uptown dance context. If he had done anything that smelled gay he would have been kicked from New Jersey and he would never have been seen again. So I think that what both of them did was a kind of negative politics. So instead of showing camp gay queer stuff what they did was to go formalist : away from narration, away from composition, away from statement, away from hierarchical collaborations, so these kind of Cunningham pieces they don't state themselves as gay but they withdraw from the possibility of heterosexual capturing.

SØVNLØSHET

Kanskje er det på tide å innse at årvåkenhet er oppskrytt, skriver *Ina Blom*.

En relativt nøytral stemning gled over i noe mørkere og mer anspent: den tåkete følelsen av angst og paranoia som gjerne slår til hos søvnløse i 3–4-tiden om morgenen

Må man være våken når man ser et kunstverk? *Hvor* våken må man være? Er det i det hele tatt mulig å oppleve kunst i en halvbevisst tilstand?

Årvåkenhet er det offisielle idealet, frykten for å gå glipp av noe er konstant. Skal man yte et verk rettferdighet må man være fullt og helt til stede, ingen detalj må unnslippe. Dette kom klart til uttrykk da Morgenbladets anmelder skrev om Mårten Spångbergs åtte timer lange danseforestilling *Natten*, som ble vist på Black Box Teater i Oslo 3. og 4. juni. Det var søvndyssende, klaget hun.

Dårlig komponert, med andre ord. Men hva om dette var en forestilling der alt faktisk var lagt til rette for et halvsovende publikum? Og hva om forestillingen også kunne sees som et bidrag til de stadig mer kritiske debattene om søvnens politikk i en verden som er våken og «på nett» 24 timer i døgnet, og der kravet om full oppmerksomhet har både moralske og økonomiske dimensjoner?

Da vi ble sluppet inn i Black Box' store sal klokken halv tolv på kvelden – vanlig leggetid – ble vi tilbudt madrasser og tepper, ikke stoler. Noen sovende figurer – kulisser, men plassert i publikumsområdet – ga et hint om hvordan vi kunne forholde oss til situasjonen. Rommet lå i et grått halvmørke og sceneområdet var bare opplyst av noen spredte, svake lyskilder, som nattlamper. Ingen lyskastere fulgte dansernes bevegelser – de var mer eller mindre synlige avhengig av hvor de beveget seg i rommet. Store deler av tiden utførte de skyggeaktige bevegelser i presist koreografererte gruppeformasjoner, avløst av friere individuelle turer rundt i rommet.

Ikke noe var spesielt dramatisk eller slående, dansen utgjorde heller et slags diskrét mønster. Og musikken var basert på *loops*, altså på søvndyssende gjentagelser. Alt var med andre ord arrangert med tanke på svekket oppmerksomhet, muligheten for å ikke være helt til stede.

Slik ble vi bokstavelig talt danset i søvn. Ikke en såkalt «god søvn», men den typen halvvåken rastløs tilstand som mange av oss søvnløse kjenner godt til, der man ikke lenger vet hva som er klar bevissthet og hva som er drømmevisjoner. Jevnlige forstyrrelser – plutselige brudd i lydbildet, et enkelt kraftig signal – hindret de bedre sovehjertene i forsamlingen i å koble fullstendig ut. Og idet denne tilstanden var fullt etablert – det tok et par timer – ble det klart at vi ikke var lenger var publikum foran et show, men disponible kropper i en totalsituasjon som også inkluderte musikk, lys, koreografi og dansere.

Det var på dette tidspunktet at forestillingen skiftet gir. En relativt nøytral stemning gled over i noe mørkere og mer anspent: den tåkete følelsen av angst og paranoia som gjerne slår til hos søvnløse i 3–4-tiden om morgenen. Man er for våken til å ignorere det, men for søvnig til å gjøre noe med det. Man vet at nå er det bare å prøve å holde ut, til morgenen kommer. Og det var akkurat det forestillingen gjorde: Den holdt ut. Med en tett vev av detaljer jobbet den seg gjennom halvsøvnens ulike sinnstilstander, inklusiv en slapp tomhet. Den guidet det hele inn i roligere og mer forsonlige farvann, mot noe som kunne ligne på faktisk søvn, fulgt av langsom, ambivalent oppvåkning. Vi snublet ut i strålende morgensol halv åtte og greide knapt å applaudere. En god dårlig natt.

Med jevne mellomrom gir avisene råd om hvordan *du* skal forbedre søvnkvaliteten din eller advarer om helsefarene ved for lite søvn. Søvneksperter anbefaler pc-fritt soverom, legemiddelindustrien lover kjemiske snarveier. Men en voksende kulturhistorisk og politisk litteratur ser det hele fra et mer overgripende perspektiv.

Hos forfattere som Jonathan Crary (*24/7*), Simon Williams (*The Politics of Sleep*) og Matthew Wolf-Meyer (*The Slumbering Masses*) er alt søvnmaset bare et symptom på mer enn hundre år med intensivt fokus på oppmerksomhetens problem – et tema som preger alt fra skolesystemet (hvordan få *alle* til å følge med, hele dagen), til media (hvordan fange og holde på oppmerksomheten til så mange som mulig, gjøre den regulerbar og forutsigbar), til moderne arbeidsliv (du er i prinsippet våken og tilgjengelig når som helst på døgnet). Søvn er dermed ikke lenger en enkel fysiologisk funksjon, men et teknisk hinder: nok et aspekt ved det biologiske livet som er regulert, og som må kontrolleres og doseres ut på riktige måter.

Kulturlivet gir få alternativer. Idealet er å greie å «følge med» på en enorm og global produksjon i alle sjangre, og kunstkritikere har permanent dårlig samvittighet fordi de ikke har mentalt overskudd til nok en utstilling med lange videoarbeider. Men kanskje er det på tide å innse det åpenbare: at årvåkenhet er oppskrytt.

Kanskje er det, som Crary hevder, et frihetspotensial i den uklare tilstanden mellom våkenhet og drøm, med hele det arsenalet av assosiasjoner og følelser som oppstår når hjernen arbeider fritt og uten målsetning. I så måte var *Natten* det viktigste kunstver-

INA BLOM
Professor i kunsthistorie ved Universitetet i Oslo

Interview: Mårten Spångberg

July 4th 2016, Contemporary Performance

This spring, the Swedish choreographer Mårten Spångberg premiered a new performance,*The Planet (late at night),* created for the exhibition *Six Weeks, in Time* at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle, on view from March 26–May 8, 2016. The performance was part of an expanded choreography of objects—including, among other materials, a Polaroid camera, a pile of dirt, three pizza boxes, three Harley Davidson motorcycle gas tanks, and five stretched canvases left in the forest for eighteen months physically marked by the duration—that might be described as an installation within a gallery, but which Spångberg identifies as "a concept, a machine that produces indetermination." Three times throughout the exhibition dancers became part of this field of indeterminacy, moving amongst the scattered objects in a performance that reimagined the relationship between the performer and spectator as one of mutual recognition. Over the hour and forty-five minute performance, casual social exchanges in the form of conversation between the dancers interchanged with choreographed phrases. In this space, actions were recursive and dispersed, conceived in tandem with a fictional story Spångberg wrote titled *For Now*that speculated on the sublime horror of an endless present. *The Planet (late at night)* was realized with Nikima Jagudajev and featured Madison Bristol, Tzu-Nu (Jessica) Huang, Wei Mei (Dolly) Huang, and Sofi Rossil-Bolanos. The following conversation took place between Mårten Spångberg, Nina Bozicnik, Assistant Curator, and Emily Zimmerman, Associate Curator of Programs,over Skype in preparation for the exhibition.

Nina Bozicnik: In our conversations, you have started to touch on different methods and forms that choreography can more through—films and perfumes, for example. In the context of *The Planet (late at night)* for the Henry Art Gallery, I wonder how you are thinking about the multiple elements in that piece—the *For Now* story, the dances, and the multiple objects—and the constellation of ideas they are

holding, specifically in the context of the different economies of time that informed our early talks about this project.

Mårten Spångberg: From the mid-90s until 2012, I was asking, "What is choreography?" I was not thinking of choreography as strictly the art of making dances.

There is a relationship between choreography and dance, and when we speak about choreography vis-à-vis dance, it is dance as we know it, with trained bodies and people that are probably somewhere in their 20s, slender, and a lot of other things. I understand choreography as a way of writing—which I think needs to be expanded—but it is primarily a way of organizing. Architecture is the organization of space over time, and choreography is the organization of time over space. We know that architects fear mess and that is why they compartmentalize. The biggest form of architectural organization is of course a grave or a tomb. We put our people in a tomb in order to know where they are so they don't come and scare us in the night. If architects are afraid of mess, well then what about choreographers? They are people that fear movement, and therefore organize it. What choreography does is to domesticate movement. Choreography has a semiotic capacity and understanding it as such means that choreography can only say what semiotics allows. Similarly, when I am writing, I can only write what 25 letters allow me to write. It is a lot, but it is still within the realm of the possible.

Choreography was twenty years of my life. Choreography is not experience dependent. It can say more than "Oh that is a wonderful thing!" Instead, at that time, especially in the 1990's, we wanted to argue that choreography is discursive. Choreography can capacitate discourse. It can ask a question, it can pose problems.

Choreography is organized by rule. Dance is much more interesting. Dance is not organized; it is a floating something. What I am interested in is the experience of dance without structure, similar to my experience with the Caravaggio painting in which I was not able to structure my experience.* I had no devices by which I could organize what I was seeing, and therefore I could not remove myself from the experience until I was able to attach it to some other structure of meaning.

During the last three or four years, I have come to see that I need to be interested in dance. Because if something is not structured it can go beyond the realm of the possible and enter the realm of potentiality—that thought that I cannot yet have. If I watch a choreography, that which is organized, I can only go away from that and say, "Well, that was tops!" Being constantly in organization will not make me have another kind of thought. In the encounter with unstructured dance, something can happen that is beyond the explainable. This shift of interest happened in 2012 after 9/11, after Katrina, after the recession, and at the moment when we understood that capitalism has become omnipresent. So whatever I imagine, it is already co-opted by capitalism. However, if I do something that estimates potentiality, then that moment can also generate a thought that is beyond what capitalism can think. Of course this thought would be incorporated into capitalism the moment after, but this little, little moment of a thought is worth the trouble because you know art is not here to make the world a better place; art's job is to make this world come to an end. This world, how we think now, is to come to an end. So when I went to see the Caravaggio, what happened was that my world ended. I was another person when I came out. The world was another place. It sounds romantic, and it is. But I saw the world for the first time. That is the job of art.

If you think about what Duchamp did with *Fountain* and *Bottle Rack*, he brought sculpture to an end. After Duchamp we could not think of sculpture as we had in prior ages. Not only did Duchamp change

what sculpture was after Duchamp, but he also changed what sculpture was before Duchamp. What art does is not just add something to what we can already think; it brings a way of thinking to an end. So in that respect, philosophy, art, and science have something in common. Philosophy's job is to make truth. Science's job is to make fact.

[installation view]. 2016. Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle. Photo credit: Jonathan Vanderweit.

Emily Zimmerman: Each of the elements within *The Planet (late at night)* has a particular relationship to time. What is the symbolic meaning of the Lion Bar chocolates and their reference to Robert Smithson?

MS: The Lion Bar wrappers contain pieces of wood from a Robert Smithson monument. I was in Holland when work was being done to replace some of the monument's wood that had rotted. I asked if I could take some of these pieces of wood, and the answer was yes. Obviously the lion is the king of the jungle, like Smithson is the king of monumental sculpture, with this horribly male attitude of his that resulted in creating a piece such as*Spiral Jetty* so large that you can see it from the moon. So I thought a response to Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* is nine pieces of wood in Lion Bar wrappers arranged in a spiral on the floor.

The Planet (late at night)—the performance and the objects—are together monumental sculpture in the most cute and friendly way. It's like a monument in the shape of a puppy. It's a monument of a small utopia.

Another part of the story is that I asked a friend of mine who is a curator at PS1, "What do you think the most uncool thing in contemporary art is right now?" After thinking for a second she said, "Well, obviously, monumental sculpture."

So then I started to think about this and thought, "What makes a monumental sculpture monumental, and who draws the line?" A monumental sculpture is something that is in a context, but is not of that

context. An example would be the Monument to the Murdered Jews in Europe, in Berlin: it is in Berlin, but it must not be of Berlin. The suffering that you can sense when you go to the monument in Berlin is of an abstract character. It is for people, every Jewish person, and everyone who has been related to a Jewish person forever.

The experience of a monument is the experience of nothing. But it is not an empty nothing, it's a full nothing. A monument is the experience of a full absence.

The piece is called *The Planet;* it is not called *The World* or *The Earth*. The world, where Seattle and New York City and Vienna are connected, has an epistemic capacity. Earth has an animate capacity with buildings and horses and things that live under a stone. The planet however, is indifferent. It is fundamentally indifferent to us; it minds its own business. The planet is this *nothing*—something that is absolutely indifferent. The planet is 4.6 billion years old. Think how small we are from the perspective of the planet.

I'm interested in the undividability of the planet and its withdrawn ancientness. The planet is the monument, the earth is a sculpture, and the world is a picture of a sculpture. So the planet, the earth, and the world are a kind of Joseph Kosuth piece. The planet is undividable also in its indifference. That is why the piece is called *The Planet*—it is something that we cannot experience. We cannot read it. My experience is of the planet, but I cannot understand what this experience is. The experience of being non-differentiated is both the moment of absolute terror but it is also the moment in which everything is possible.

In the title, *The Planet (late at night),* the night is also a monument. The night is not dividable. The day starts with a great deal of light, and then it goes to twilight. But the night does not divide.

EZ: I'm reminded of the opening passage of Nietszche's *On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense*. I'm noticing an existential thread in the piece, between this idea of the planet as indifferent, and the idea of the horror of undifferentiated time, thinking about a passage from Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground*, where the character we are following loses all external cues of temporality.

MS: Which is also exceptional bliss. The experience of being non-differentiated is both the moment of absolute fear and of pure presence and possibility.

NB: And that is how your story *For Now* ends—with this sublime terror of an eternal presence.

MS: And this is what happens when we are in the monument.

On Thursday, I decided that I believe that we have a soul. Promise. I am convinced of this. I am very surprised about this. A post-structuralist now believes in a soul. And furthermore, I have started to read Merleau-Ponty. Can you believe that?

What happens when you are in the monument is that you are being touched by eternity. You can never touch eternity, but it is exactly this eternal now that touches you and is absolutely non-structured. So what is this fear and bliss? It is experiencing oneself as pure existence. At this moment I can be everything and unthinkable. I am contingent. It is dangerous to talk this way because it can be construed in terms of Universalist or Gaia theory, almost smelling of a fascist pureness of being. This is a disclaimer.

But I also think that we are in a very different time now. In art, the aesthetic experience is one that goes beyond what we have the capacity for as individuals; it is beyond identity. In the advent of an aesthetic experience everybody is equally, which is not to say equal. We are *equally*. And whatever you are is absolutely fantastic. The aesthetic experience is the space where identity and differentiation is not. At that moment, we are *equally*. You participate in the world in this way, somebody else in another way, but we are *equally*. In that moment we can begin to formulate new kinds of law.

In this particular piece [*The Planet (late at night)*], I cannot tell anyone what to do with an aesthetic experience. I should not even say that an aesthetic experience should happen. The coffee cups and the pizza boxes and the little bit of earth and all these objects are there not to produce an image but to produce a sense of "whatever," which the viewer fills in when they come into the gallery. "Whatever" not in the sense that anything goes, but Agamben's whatever, which says: whatever it is, it is of importance. It is the same as with love: you don't love your girlfriend because of her long legs or rich family; you love her because you love her. Whatever she does is important. In this moment, says Agamben, we learn not about each other, but we learn about the idea of love.

What interests me in the work that I do is to generate "whatever" of importance. Of course this generative "whatever" coincides with what Deleuze implies by the term *concept*. The work that I do is absolutely not conceptual, but the work is a concept. So when you walk into it, it's not an installation, it's a concept, a machine that produces indetermination. But it has to be delicately put together so that the indetermination teases you to introduce "you-ness." The best part of it is the lack of a relationship say between the pizza boxes and the pile of dirt, which invites a new kind of thought to show up.

NB: You use the term generative as a function of this associative landscape of objects. To generate connotes something different than to produce, which I associate with predetermined outcomes. To tie it back to capitalist value systems and what I perceive as a difference between to generate and to produce, is there a critique here in formulations of value?

MS: I think that the term generative comes down to a rather traditional historical understanding of poiesis. My conversation with Greek philosophy and later Arendt and Agamben is that poiesis is not to produce, it is the bringing forth of, it is generating something. And that thing is indeterminate. The best outcome from an aesthetic experience or performance is when you say, "Wow, that was sort of, kind of, a little bit, you know what I mean?" And your friend says, "Wait did we see the same show?" That is the conversation that I want to have with someone after a show. What you generated because of the show was something entirely different than another person. And then you need to go to dinner to reconcile the two points of view. The work is generating meaning in you. I am absolutely disinterested in work that you go and interpret. What is interesting is what I don't know and what you don't know either. It would be groovy if being with *The Planet*generated something in a spectator that made them change their mind about something, or to say I want to quit my job.

The piece that we are doing together is absolutely non-critical. The piece itself is not there to produce a critique. If someone reads a critique in it, that is fine. The piece is a speculative moment and the experience of the piece is a speculative moment.

Within what you call the "associative landscape of objects" it is not me or the spectators but rather the ancient subject in the objects—the coffee cups and the tennis racket, for example—that produces some tension that we can never access. This is what I mean by a soul. You go into a room or any kind of situation with people, and you can say, "That person is something extraordinary. I vibe with this

person.” What is that which vibes? I propose that it is the soul that vibes. Sometimes it vibes well and sometimes it doesn’t vibe at all. Most of the time the soul is a little bit on vacation. Capitalism puts the soul on vacation.

[installation view]. 2016. Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle. Photo credit: Jonathan Vanderweit.

Husserl’s phenomenology is one that stays anthropocentric with experience being accounted for as human experience. In this case, where was the planet before us? The problem with Husserl is that when we weren’t here, there was nothing. Merleau-Ponty on the other hand tries to construct a non-human phenomenology, and one of his proposals is that there is this ancient subject. It is a subject that we cannot have access to and that is in all of us.

This becomes interesting in horror. If you think about Cronenberg’s films, such as *The Fly*, where the human character starts to coincide with the body of the fly, and he experiences himself both as a subject and as an alien at the same time. The most fearful moments in horror are the ones in which there is a subject that loses control of themselves (which is, of course, what I am talking about in *For Now)*. What I am thinking about there is that silent voice, the voice or the presence of something that is there, but doesn’t speak, that is also indifferent to us, and can destroy us.

The fear of the world is easy. Worldly horror is a storyline such as this: some guy was treated badly, he comes back for revenge, and you shoot him. Earthly horror is a little bit scarier; it is when the natural elements come and take us, as in John Carpenter’s *The Fog*. But the real horror is the planetary horror of indifference that doesn’t acknowledge us and cannot acknowledge us. Planetary horror can wipe us out at any moment without noticing.

EZ: How do you see presence within the contemporary landscape of dance in the museum? I'm thinking specifically about Hito Steryl's recent article in *DIS* magazine on the*Terror of Total Daesein,* in which she argues that there is a certain capitalistic value behind the recent emphasis on presence in the museum and how that influences particular structures of time and attention.

MS: The cynical response is that capitalism saturates and then it expands. The museum world overtook sculpture and could not have another exhibition of work by Louise Bourgeois. So museums had to think about something new, which was dance. So that process suggests expanding the economy of museums. Dance is also an absolutely harmless art form at this moment. It is totally depoliticized. Yvonne Rainer, Simone Forti, Steve Paxton, Jérôme Bel, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker— all of them are great because their work is as dangerous as a Barnett Newman.

NB: Would you put yourself in that group?

MS: Totally. I have been thinking about this quite a lot. As I said before, I don't believe choreography is expression dependent. When you invite a choreographer into the museum, you cannot expect the results to be a dance. Instead, it is a way to invite someone who uses certain tools, which are different tools from a filmmaker or a visual artist. I use choreographic tools. What these tools are is difficult to say, but they are not necessarily there to make a dance.

What has happened now is that people invite choreographers to make small, harmless dances in the museum. After International Festival, I introduced a term we stole from Rosalind Krauss: choreography as expanded practice. This was all a matter of saying that choreography could be other than a dance. It's a mode of production.

What we have to think about now is that every society has the art that it deserves. The Louvre happened in a bourgeois society. It was there to show how great France was, and then it was there to teach how to be a bourgeois audience. The Pompidou Center and the Guggenheim are museums of industrial societies. So in part what the Guggenheim is doing is to show the grandeur of American production, celebrating America, and at the same time, teaching us how to be middle class citizens.

I am convinced that the Pompidou Center, the MoMA, and similar museums are there to celebrate a mode of production that is based in the manufacturing of objects. Now, in 2016, we live in a society that circulates abstract value, as opposed to industrial might. The twentieth century was the century of the architect. The twenty-first century is the century of one who has competence in movement, namely, the choreographer. The museum is now correlating itself to the society that it is in. The object goes away, and movement, relation, performativity, identity, and abstract values come in. The work is not there in the object, in the Donald Judd. It is not in the Dan Flavin anymore.

The appearance of all these dance exhibitions is a way of correlating to a society where production is otherwise. Obviously we don't go to the museum anymore in order to see an exhibition of work by Matisse. We go to Tate Modern to experience "Tate Modernness." To be at Tate Modern is to be a good citizen that engages in culture, engages in knowledge acquisition. It is not just dance but the entire museum that is transforming.

I think that dance is going to stay in the museum, but choreographers and choreography need to respond to this context in ways that take the invitation seriously. There are three options: make a piece in a museum that could be made in a theater. (Instead of making such an adaptation, stay in the theater where the lighting design is great and the dressing rooms have at least one shower.) The second option

would be to make a dance that stretches from the morning to the afternoon according to the open hours of the museum, or is redistributed in space, say in the Xavier Leroy retrospective, or all of the works by Tino Segal. (In this case, there is the same understanding of dance as in the theater.) The third option is the one that I propose, and that is we must not just respond to the time of the museum. A related thought is that museums exhibit death as a way of celebrating life, while theaters show life as a way of celebrating death.

We must ask ourselves, "When we put dance in the museum, how do we take it one step further?" It must be a museum dance. How does choreography transform because it is the museum? As a choreographer in the museum there could be no dancing; there might just be a drawing. When we think about dance exhibitions (or exhibitions dealing with dance) it is almost always a visual capacity—dance in front of an audience—that is being negotiated.

But we could also consider the production of an exhibition as a choreographic activity such that when the objects come to the museum they are choreographies in the way they have been processed. I find that artists shallowly deal with this idea right now. Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker has an exhibition at the Pompidou Center now that is an adaptation of a stage work. She is not going to change the way her dance looks because of the museum; nor does the museum want her to change the way her dance looks. Because the museum is known primarily as the place for painting and sculpture, dance in the museum potentially looks more like dance than it would in a theater because it needs to prove itself as dance. Otherwise, I might get mistaken for a visual artist, which would be bad for me because my stocks are in dance.

With the exhibition that we are doing I am extremely interested in how the objects are the choreography, not an installation, but the choreography. I was very intrigued by the invitation and the question, "How is this not the documentation of a previous choreography?" It is not a relic of what has been, but it is a choreography. That we have dancers coming in and activating it is a bonus. For me this is not the important part, it is the combination of objects.

At the end of the day, I am very happy that dance has entered the museum. But, I am a little disappointed in my choreographer friends that they have not brought it where it deserves to be. A few years ago I did a piece, *La Substance*, in New York at MoMA PS1. It is a 4.5-hour piece that did not submit to museum time, nor is the time of the performance adhering to theater time. Obviously a dance that is 4.5 hours long is not there to be attended to; it was about formulating a tension between theatrical time and exhibition time. With such tension people don't really know how to behave. Say, I am there to talk to my friend, but we recognize that we are in a museum, and it is a performance. My interest has been to consider if there is another way of talking that needs to be developed for that situation. Can we learn to talk to each other in a new way in that context? It is not the end of the world if I fall asleep or if I have a nap or talk to my friend, or Facebook a bit during the performance.

The piece is there to be a conversation partner. The best moment is to have two people sitting next to each other, looking at the performance talking to each other at the same time. The performance becomes a companion, like a dog in your house that can be ignored.

NB: In thinking about your work, do you consider a response such as, "That was boring," as indication of a generative condition, or something negative?

MS: The problem with boredom is that it stands in relationship to capitalism. Boredom interests me in that you lure an audience into a sense of indifference. But in order for this to happen there needs to be superimposed layers of time. These layers of time, or textures of time are difficult to talk about because

it is not a matter of rhythmic time nor is it a matter of intensive time (which is a time that expands in some kind of Deleuzian or Bergsonian sense). It is more time as being superimposed, incompatible phenomena, some of which are more rhythmic, and some that are desynchronized. I want to put my audience in a state of trained indifference in order for these migrations to become generative. It's a matter of the production of indifference; only through indifference can a contingent production take place. I know exactly what happens in a performance—it is never improvisation, it is 100% set—but it needs to be such that I don't know what it generates. It can be an amplifier for you to be what you are.

My work is not community work. Instead, it is an undoing of community so that we can form new kinds of community that is generated because of experiencing the work. Many years ago Žižek said in a conversation that there is a generosity of not having to say "hello." At the workplace, generosity is the condition of not having to be friendly. It is okay that you are not in the best mood today—I care for you anyway. A community that is based on a generosity of "not having to," an acceptance of whatever you are, is always important. In that moment, care takes on a non-economic capacity. The care that I want to talk about is absolutely non-reasoned; I care because I care and nothing more. Otherwise, I should optimize my care, and it becomes "Are you happy now? … Are you happy now? … Are you happy now?" and then it becomes surveillance in a way.

Now I am going to say something really sentimental. My Mother's friend says to me, "It must be so great to be a dancer because you can express yourself," and of course I say something friendly back, "Yes, it's great—I can express myself all over the world, all the way to Seattle. It's great!" But what I think is "You're all wrong." The reason I want to work with dance is because it allows me to be anonymous. When I dance, I don't have to be on show. Dancing is a way of not being occupied with

myself; it gives me permission to not be busy. I can go to the studio and just dance. When I dance it's a matter of becoming anonymous. To really dance is to become public.

*A few years ago Mårten Spångberg participated in a conference in Hong Kong. While there he was invited to see a Carravagio that was on loan to a local museum. He describes the experience in the following way: "I looked at this painting and was absolutely blown apart. I have never ever experienced something that powerful. It was a small painting called *Supper at Emmaus*. After standing there for 15 minutes, I realized it was not the figures who were interesting, it was the blackness, it was the dark parts. And ever since then I have not been able to think very much about anything but Caravaggio."

Nina Bozicnik is Assistant Curator at the Henry Art Gallery at the University of Washington in Seattle. She co-organized the exhibition *Six Weeks, in Time* this spring, and forthcoming this summer, with Chris E. Vargas, is co-organizer of *Trans Hirstory in 99 Objects* .

Emily Zimmerman is a curator and writer based in Seattle, WA. She is the Associate Curator of Programs at the Henry Art Gallery at the University of Washington. Most recently she curated *Gift City: A Project by Keller Easterling*, co-organized *Six Weeks, in Time*, and is on the curatorial team for *9E2 Seattle*, celebrating the 50th Anniversary of*Nine Evenings*. See more here.

Interview with Mårten Spångberg LiveArtsweek V, Bologna

Natten is among other things an inquiry into what in dance transgress the ocular. There is a significant difference between the darkness of dance and to dance in darkness.

April 13, 2016

ATPdiary

Natten is a performance realized by Mårten Spångberg with and by Tamara Alegre, Simon Asencio, Linda Blomqvist, Louise Dahl, Emma Daniel, Hana Lee Erdman, Adriano Wilfert Jensen, Else Tunemyr, Alexandra Tveit and Marika Troili. The project will be premiered during Live Arts Week V in collaboration with Xing at the MAMbo (Museo d'Arte Moderna) in Bologna on the **15th of April 2016 7pm**. ***Natten*** will kick off one week of live works (performances and experiences of sounds .and visions) in the week from the 19 to 23rd April 2016 at MAMbo.

Atpdiary held an interview with Mårten Spångberg about his upcoming premiere.

Francesca Verga: *Natten*, your last project, will be shown at the fifth edition of *Live Arts Week* in Bologna on the 15th of April 2016. Someone told me it will be partially performed in the darkness.. but if dance is made of a series of steps and movements, and for a time period this series of steps and movements could not be seen, what is perceived as dance by the spectator then?

Marten Spangberg: *Natten* is among other things an inquiry into what in dance transgress the ocular. There is a significant difference between the darkness of dance and to dance in darkness. *Natten* is a stretch between the horror of dance and the dance of horror, which however

excludes both obsession, such as in *The Red Shoes* or a more traditional version *The Rite of Spring*, and Willis. The point of departure is neither horror in the sense of literary nor film horror, but what excites me is horror on the terms of dance, darkness produced, given agency by dance itself. Perhaps even more exciting, for dance to be infested with fear it indeed has to be itself. It is when dance is thoroughly abstract that it can collide with the blackness of emptiness. So, mostly *Natten* is happening in grey scales of the almost visible, in the ambiguous moments of twilight, the times where contours and identity fades. Where even time erodes and becomes and endless now.

FV: How would you describe Natten to a reader?

MS: It's a dance piece, a really long one. Another way to describe it would be too long and vague to produce even half interesting images. But really I wouldn't make it if I knew how to describe it. The reason for me to occupy myself with art is to force myself into situations that does not offer description. From a, say, critical perspective. everything that can be described can be measured and thus assigned value, especially sustainable and consistent value. My interest is to produce experiences that, at least partially, escape description, capture, localisation, value. *Natten*, The Night in Swedish. So, the night is this; time without causation, an oneness that doesn't respond, a moment that devours mimicry. At the same time, the project builds itself on previous projects and interests, so I guess it will be more or less the same, just a little bit less party.

***FV:* Think of Malevich's black square, which is actually a very complex painting of different colours also seen as the 'zero degree' of painting… is your work the zero point of dance? In which way this antithesis of darkness/lightness is perceived in the *Natten*?**

MS: To me Malevich's paintings is most of all interesting as a political project. I understand his interest to be to produce paintings, artworks, that escape or transgress discourse, opinion, interpretation. It's a totally modernist proposal in ways, to capture painting in itself. If he managed, and it seems almost like it, his work situates itself outside time, or at least outside chronological time, human time, and coincides with the time of painting. Somewhere Barnett Newman stated, "I just want the paint on the painting to be as beautiful as it is in the bucket", a very dangerous proposal in ways, but approached with caution it also opens up for something – huh how should I say – wonderful. For me it is totally uninteresting to occupy myself with socially engaged art or, even worse, art that comments, especially on the art world. I'm interested in the position and potentiality of aesthetic experience in 2016.

Both the night and the piece *Natten* of course withdraw from the very idea of dialectics. Hegel and Marx won't get free tickets, nor will any phenomenologists, if you know what I mean. Indeed *Natten* is also researching the limits of human experience. Experience, I think, is what forces us to remain human in this way. Or, experience consolidates what one or the world can be. Experience is invested with knowledge. Experience is cultural, and art is exactly not knowledge not culture. Aesthetic experience, to me, is an empty experience. Not the experience of something but the experience of experience.

***FV:* What I also like in your works is that you use conservative institutions – e.g. the museum, the theatre – as a means to uproot conventions and suggest new contexts, no alternative institutions. What are the means of performing your work at *Live Arts Week* in the MAMbo – Museum of Modern Art of Bologna, versus performing it for another scenario?**

MS: Perhaps I'm upsettingly wrong but I've always understood site specific as a cheap escape. It's easy to amaze when you can lean against a great piece of architecture or a derelict luna park. Not for me. Alternative has also never been my thing. Alternative is not bad ass enough. It's just an

alternative, almost the same but it feels good. Alternative culture, that's like going jogging with a clown nose. A good alternative to capitalism is still something that confirms capitalist life. Deleuze and Guattari writes somewhere that it isn't a matter of staying on the margins, producing an alternative, but instead about being in the middle changing speed. The marginal is cute and something that the mainstream loves. The marginal is never dangerous, right.

When it comes to different dispositives I'm interested in superimposing different modes of time in order to produce forms of tension that makes time bend or tweak. *Natten*, especially, is even moving towards the very disintegration of time. A time dissolved. *Natten* is concerned with horror and darkness, not as in blood and splatter but on the terms of dance. Media specific horror, so to say. One of the parameters we are working with is to confuse time, to produce moments where past, present and future is undermined, where seconds don't follow each other but instead forget to be time.

For me Live Arts Week is one of the most important festivals in Europe, a context that questions and takes risks. Bologna and Italy should be super happy to have a festival like this one that has brought in many of the really exciting artists of our times. Not the most famous but the most advanced. It would just be cool if Italy understood the impertinence of festivals such as Live Arts Weeks and provide decent conditions. Finally, it's clear that museums today realise that displaying object is a thing of the past. The future of museums will be great as long as they don't try to also become museums of themselves but insist on operatating in out time here and now.

FV: **Many of your works have a proper stage with lots of objects and life cut-outs, in which the audience is involved in the final result. How do you foresee the experience your audience will have during *Natten*?**

MS: The night is the time of contemplation and introspection, at the same time it is also the time of dreaming and fantasy. It's the time of loneliness and gentle eroticism. The night is occupied by demons and longing, fear and bliss. When you come out of *Natten* it is my wish that the individual should feel absolutely happy being aware about that the experience is his/her's individually. *Natten* is shared at the same time as it is singular to each of us. I like this. If somebody asks you after *Natten* what it was, you should realise that you have no idea. Speechless and totally yeah.

Tio frågor: Mårten Spångberg

Av Joni Hyvönen

Han är mer influerad av eBay än av konst. Han bär t-tröjor med logor från Dolce & Gabbana och Coca-Cola, men menar att Coca-Cola Light är mer progressivt, valet hos en individ som säger ja till komplexitet. I helgen framför den frispråkiga svenska koreografen Mårten Spångberg sitt fyra timmar långa verk *The Internet* på Index i Stockholm. Verket premiärvisades i Berlin tidigare i år och på Index framförs två föreställningar under fredag och lördag, för att veckan därefter visas på Black Box Teater i Oslo, 21–22 mars.

Liksom Spångbergs tidigare verk bygger *The Internet* på ett episkt format som växlar mellan repetitiva dansnummer och vardagliga aktiviteter, och har till synes lite eller ingenting med internet att göra. Utformat för ett gallerirum, där besökarna tillåts komma och gå som de vill, fortsätter verket att utforska de nutida former av uppmärksamhet som stod i fokus för den fyra och en halv timmar långa *La Substance, but in English*, ett beställningsverk av MoMA PS1, som förra våren också visades på Moderna Museet.

Spångberg är bosatt i Stockholm och verksam som koreograf sedan 1994. Han har organiserat festivaler, undervisat vid Dans- och cirkushögskolan i Stockholm och skrivit kritik i Dagens Nyheter och Aftonbladet. I boken*Spangbergianism* (2011), baserad på texter ur Spångbergs blogg med samma namn, gör han upp med dansvärldens konventioner och rigida ramar. Tillsammans med arkitekten Tor Lindstrand drev han det tvärvetenskapliga konstnärskollektivet International Festival, som bland annat produceradeutställningen *Everything under heaven is total chaos* på Göteborgs konsthall 2010

Kommer The Internet *att skilja sig från premiärvisningen på Supportico Lopez i Berlin tidigare i år? Du har talat om återuppföranden som uppdateringar av operativsystem, vilka ibland också överlappar med eller mynnar ut i andra verk – exempelvis bygger*La Substance, but in English *på de tidigare verken* Epic *(2012),* The Nature *(2013) och* The Ocean*(2013). Hur förhåller du dig till det ursprungliga konceptet när du återuppför verk?*

De produktionssätt som dominerar i den etablerade konstvärlden sammanfaller i hög grad med klassisk industriell produktion, eller Fordism. Kanske inte produkten som sådan men ordningen för produktion, i relation till investering, process, produktionstakt, research, marketing, you name it. Detta är starkare inom scenkonsten än inom visual art; en produktion per år och så hoppas vi på turné efter premiären. Mycket investering i en produkt som after the fact förhoppningsvis ska erövra marknaden/världen.

Det är min uppfattning att konsten liksom alla andra ekonomier måste uppdatera sina produktionsmodeller för att korreleras mot samhället och dess flöden. Jag förhåller mig till mitt arbete och mina arbeten som operativsystem som uppdateras kontinuerligt. *The Internet* är, för mig, ett nytt operativsystem som fortfarande bär med sig spår från tidigare arbeten men trots det är starten på en ny ordning, en ny kunskap.

The Internet på Supportico Lopez var så att säga ett punkt noll. Att göra ett arbete för ett commercial gallery var en utmaning, och Marie-Christine Molitor gjorde ett fantastiskt jobb för att göra *The Internet* möjligt, men det var också ett strategiskt beslut då jag menar att dans behöver hitta ingångar till gallerivärlden för att etablera en autonom plats inom bildkonsten.

Axel Wieder på Index i Stockholm – som följt mitt arbete under lång tid – har sedan initierat möjligheter att ta fram en ny uppdatering. Om det är ett punkt ett eller om det är någon annan ordningsföljd spelar ingen roll, vad som är viktigt är att inkorporera – fixa buggar – erfarenheter från tidigare versioner, ta aktiva beslut i relation till förutsättningarna, från enkla grejer, som vad det är för space, ekonomi, arbetsmöjligheter, publik, framing, till mer komplexa kopplingar som i grunden handlar om att betrakta arbetet som en form för experimentell produktion, såväl praktiskt som teoretiskt. Operativsystemet är en struktur – eller flera beroende på vilket perspektiv som antas – och varje uppdatering betraktar jag som strategiska uttryck för strukturen. Varje uppdatering reflekteras sedan i strukturen, vilket ger upphov till nya motiv, tankar, turbulens, brytningar etc.

The Internet på Supportico Lopez i Berlin, 2015.

Detta gäller inte bara produktionen som sådan, utan också de personer och saker som är engagerade i arbetet, där de kan tänkas som appar som kopplar upp mot operativsystemet, men som också producerar nya möjligheter eller problem vilket gör att strukturen förändras. *The Internet* är inte ett projekt som visar upp eller – by god – kritiserar internet, utan ett projekt som approprierar, återanvänder, kuppar, remixar och förfalskar kunskaper eller strategier som etablerats genom och av internet och samtida digital kultur.

The Internet *vill inte koagulera i en enda sak, sa du i samband med premiärvisningen. Samtidigt är repetition en viktig ingrediens i flera av dina verk, inte minst när det gäller låtarna (av bland annat Christina Aguilera, Rihanna eller Kendrick Lamar) som upprepas in absurdum. Är upprepning ett sätt att underminera föreställningen om en enhet?*

Något spännande kan hända när man besöker en marknad. Massa grejer har placerats bredvid varandra, till synes utan ordning; det saknas prislappar, allt är huller om buller, ett stånd mixar junkig elektronik

med hemgjord honung, bredvid ett med gamla kläder eller nån som säljer vad som helst som går att göra några kronor på. Man gör ett fynd eller blir blåst, man köper nått man absolut inte behöver.

Ingenting oförutsägbart kan hända på IKEA eller H&M – där förefaller det som om alla de beslut kunden kan göra redan är estimerade. Visst, man kan ju sno nått eller en unge kan spy på en soffa, men det betraktas som olycksfall, inte som symptom. Både marknaden och IKEA betraktas som en sak men jag är nog lite mer inne på marknadsgrejen. På marknaden tillåts eller tvingas varje engagerad aktör att producera identitet och perspektiv – det vill säga elaborera former för navigation. Marknaden producerar nödvändighet medan IKEA tilldelar besökaren identitet och perspektiv, det vill säga skriver in besökaren i redan föreskrivna navigationsordningar. IKEA guidar besökaren och gör hen stupid, medan marknaden som inte guidar, producerar möjligheter för kunskap.

Från *The Internet* på Supportico Lopez i Berlin, 2015.

I en text från 80-talet menar Félix Guattari att konstobjektet, oavsett hur mjukt eller relationellt det är, alltid är inskrivet i marknader (kapitalism). Detta innebär för Guattari att konstobjektet inte kan producera kritik och än mindre producera motstånd eller vara subversivt i relation till marknader. Men om vi däremot förstår konstobjektet inte som en sak eller ett ting utan som en maskin, apparat eller ett aggregat, då kan något hända. Som objekt är konsten inskriven i marknader, men som aggregat är den något som producerar, förändrar, raffinerar, förstår, blandar. Och då är den möjliga produktionen inte med nödvändighet inskriven i marknader. I det här fallet inbillar sig inte Guattari att ett specifikt aggregat kommer att producera något nytt eller främmande, men säger att den här formen av aggregat kan producera möjligheten till nya perspektiv, nya metoder.

Något som är – eller vill vara – en, strävar också efter att förbli en, och att bli föremål för tolkning. Något som vill förstås som ett aggregat aspirerar istället till fortsatt heterogenisering, instabilitet eller undergrävande, och är föremål för vidare produktion.

Föreställningar om naturens enhet märks i ett antal tidigare verk. Titeln till La Substance, but in English *har du jämfört med havet, där allt är enat trots att havet i sina beståndsdelar ständigt flyttas runt och omformas. I den programmatiska stridsskriften* Spangbergianism (2011) *förklarar du att dans inte är affirmation av liv, utan istället öppnar upp för någonting som inte tillhör en själv, någonting underligt eller oorganiskt. Hur förhåller sig* The Internet *till idén om nätverk, delningskultur eller organiskt flöde – finns där en vilja att bryta upp idén om internet som ett enda objekt?*

Internet är bra som det är. Konstens jobb är inte att representera, på vilket sett det nu än händer, specifika ordningar, inte heller att kritisera, föreslå alternativ eller döma. Nej, konstens jobb är att producera möjligheter för att komplexifiera hur vi som människor förhåller oss till dessa ordningar. Det är för mig väsentligt att konsten – i västvärlden och 2015 – inte har någon som helst avsikt att förbättra eller försämra något. Konsten – i synnerhet inte den estetiska upplevelsen – kan aldrig värderas i relation till något annan än sig själv. Konstens very job är att deny any kind of teleology.

Det är av vikt att skilja på något konceptuellt och koncept. Något konceptuellt är något som förhåller sig till ett koncept och i någon form representerar detta. Ett koncept representerar bara sig själv som sig själv, uppenbarligen i relation till kontingent produktion. Ett koncept bär med andra ord inte på någon teleologisk ordning. Ett koncept är en enhet utan relation, på samma sätt som Substansen är en enhet utan relation, liksom universum, naturen eller *The Internet*. Det vi visar på Index i Stockholm och som veckan efter visas på Black Box i Oslo skulle ju aldrig kunna heta «Internet» och «Substance». Det vore otänkbart utan «La», och det är alltid *The Nature* eller *The Ocean.La Substance, but in English* på MoMA PS1, 2014. Foto: Charles Roussel.

Det episka har blivit en återkommande referenspunkt för dig, där traditionellt episka motiv som havet omvandlas i nutida digital kultur eller i rumsliga objekt. Om Epic Redux: The Nature *(2013) skriver du: «We like theatres when they are closed, or museum, or furniture shops, you know when the beds, chairs and chandeliers can be themselves and just hang out together. When they don't need to perform, or entertain. That's it, epic.» Vilken betydelse har tiden för dig, i motsats till rörelse, berättande och performativitet? Och vad föranledde dig att dra ut på dansföreställningarna i fyra timmar?*

Sociologen Georg Simmel beskriver att ett äventyr är en resa utan destination. Att boka en flight omfattar inget äventyr. Äventyr är inte en rörelse, it's a state of mind.

Jag tror det är av vikt att skilja på olika former av experiment. Falska och verkliga experiment till att börja med, vilket inte behöver betyda att falska experiment är mindre viktiga. Falska experiment omfattas av att göra ett antagande, vilket sedan genom experiment kan tas till bevis. Vi söker ett botemedel för en sjukdom. Genom studier identifierar vi vissa tendenser, vilka vi genom experiment kan säkra. Den här sortens experiment är projektiva, de estimerar en utkomst. Genom observationer kan vi sluta oss till… etc. Falska experiment vet vad dom vill och de utförs med tänt ljus.

Sanna experiment är som äventyr, de initieras inte genom ett antagande utan genom att göra sig själv eller något tillgängligt, tillgängligt för något som tidigare inte kunnat beräknas. Tillgängligt för whatever. Sanna experiment resulterar oftast inte i något världsförändrande utan i något tämligen

konventionellt, men när de resulterar i något världsförändrande är det inte något som förbättrar eller försämrar världen, utan något som förändrar förutsättningarna för vad världen kan vara. Sanna experiment har ingen föreställning om vad som är på gång och de görs alltid med ljuset släckt, dvs. de görs utan förutsättning för orientering.

The Internet på Supportico Lopez i Berlin, 2015.

För mig är det väsentligt att, även om det är tiresome, insistera på att konsten och i synnerhet den estetiska erfarenheten handlar om sanna experiment. För mig är det, med andra ord, avgörande att konsten och den estetiska erfarenheten är förankrad i spekulation. Konstens uppgift är inte att vara reflekterande, det jobbet ska vi med glädje överlämna till konstvetare och estetiska teoretiker. Dess uppgift är heller inte att projicera, det jobbet ska vi med glädje överlåta åt meteorologer och analytiker i största allmänhet. Konstens uppgift är att spekulera och spekulation handlar om att lämna något, också något värdefullt, bakom sig eller oss.

Sedan sent 60-tal har konsten övervägande varit upptagen med former av kritik, baserat på Marx, Frankfurter Schule och det postmodernas avsked till autenticitet och essens. Ingen dum idé men jag tror inte att kritik håller längre, det är för enkelt – it's a chickening out. Konsten kunde vara kritisk så länge världen höll sig med ideologi, men idag uppfattar jag att kritikens dörr står på vid gavel till dominant discourse. I vår neoliberala kultur har kritik, hur tuff den än må vara, förändrats till ytterligare en hejarklack för det rådande tillståndet. Konsten och den estetiska upplevelsen behöver inget, ska inte omfattas av något rättfärdigande, inte mot någon annan än sig själv. Om den förväntas rättfärdigande, skrivs konsten – tex genom kritik – in i teleologi.

Episkt låter som något grekiskt jättelångt. Jag menar epic, som en riktigt bra natt on the town, som något överväldigande.

Jacques Rancières ofta omtalade essä «The Emancipated Spectator» har sitt ursprung i en inbjudan du gjorde till den franska filosofen. Det krävs ingen fysisk aktivitet för att åskådaren ska vara deltagande, skriver Rancière, någonting som dina föreställningars monumentala form kan sägas omsätta i praktiken, eller som det står i Spangbergianism: «It is time to use illusion to fight illusions of democracy, equality or fair play.» Kan du berätta om bakgrunden till att du bjöd in Ranciére till föreläsningen i Frankfurt och på vilket sätt du själv förhåller dig till idén om åskådaren som deltagare?

För sådär hundrasjuttio år sedan bad jag Rancière ge en föreläsning i Frankfurt, han sa ja och bad om en titel. Chill, sa jag och skrev tillbaka, what about «The Emancipated Spectator»? Han sa nice eller nått på franska. Jag sa väl pas de souci. Rancières ingång var otroligt viktig, även om texten på många sätt flirtar med identitetspolitik. Då, 2004, kunde man använda begrepp som DIY, empowerment och emancipation utan disclaimer. Det går inte längre. Jag tror det är viktigt att skilja på Rancières emancipation i relation till politik och konst slash estetik. Om man inte är vaksam så blir Rancière rätt lätt kitsch.

Åskådaren behöver ingenting för att emancipera, och det är ju väldigt viktigt att konsten inte tar på sig ansvaret att frigöra någon överhuvudtaget. Kitsch kan man inte bota genom att flera delar cynism. Även om Rancières emanciperade åskådare lätt kan översättas till ett perfekt neoliberalt subjekt, rättfärdigar ju inte det någon form av vitalism och ännu mindre socialt engagerad konst.

Frågan om deltagande är kanske inte *om* utan *vad* åskådaren deltar i? Jag tänker mig att betraktaren är smart nog att delta i vad som passar för då och där. Konstens roll är inte att ledsaga utan om att producera möjligheter till who knows what, och där är jag så klart influerad av Rancières förståelse av emancipation, vilket inte är liktydigt med frigörelse utan snarare med produktionen av nya förutsättningar för röst.

Det är inte det performativa som står i centrum för La Substance, but in English*, har du förklarat, utan nutida former av uppmärksamhet, vilket märks inte minst i föreställningens längd på fyra och en halv timmar. I likhet med* The Internet *verkar digitala och sociala medier stå i fokus, men på vilket sätt har de påverkat dans, och hur kan dansen påverka dem?*

Projektet *The Internet* uppehåller sig till stor del kring hur internet och digital kultur påverkar koreografi, dans eller performance, och förhåller sig uppenbart positivt till detta. I Berlin frågade nån smart person, «men asså var e internet?» Det vore ju rätt embarrassing att göra en föreställning *om* internet, pros and cons typ. En kritisk föreställning om internet… det goes without saying att *The Internet* inte handlar om eller aspirerar till kritik, men det är för den skull inte nån slags fan-attityd. Kritik är precis en formering av perspektiv, till och med en förstärkning.

Från *The Internet* på Supportico Lopez i Berlin, 2015.

Perspektiv är något som ger en utgångspunkt och som gör det möjligt att kartlägga vad som är möjligt eller ej. Perspektiv är alla tiders i vardagen och förutsättningen för att vi ska kunna föra dialog, och politik är uppenbarligen avhängig av differenser mellan perspektiv. Men perspektiv kan i allmänhet bara konfigurera det redan «möjliga» – det redan identifierbara.

När det kommer till identitetspolitik är min erfarenhet att betoningen vanligen är på identitet, men vad med politiken, i synnerhet med bakgrund mot ett samhälle som omfattas av hyper-assimilativa ekonomier (neoliberalism). Identitet är så klart något vi inte*inte* kan ha, men en downside är att identitet bara kan omfattas av det redan möjliga, identitet är alltid i sista instans auktoriserad av neoliberala ordningar.

Vad *The Internet* är all about är att underminera perspektiv till förmån för horisont. Horisont omfattar inte summan av möjliga perspektiv, utan av potential. *The Internet* är an affirmation beyond the possible. Men – det här är trixigt, därför att föreställningen inte kan föreslå något utan måste istället lämna detta till betraktaren, den som tar del av sammanhanget. På så vis kan man säga att *The Internet* är indifferent till betraktaren och tillåter samtidigt betraktaren att vara indifferent till *The Internet*. Istället för performativitet: ontologi, varande.

Ibland tycks den kapitalistiska eller identitetspolitiska kritiken – ofta närvarande i dina verk – sträva efter en erfarenhet som skulle kunna sätta dess konflikter i ett förklarande ljus, och ibland frammanas det rakt motsatta, där ingenting sker på scenen. I alla dina verk finns en känsla av någonting extremt tillåtande: allt ska kunna sägas, göras och beredas utrymme i verkens smått extatiska och ibland också händelselösa inramning. Är detta en medveten strategi?

Det här har jag väl i viss mån redan svarat på. Frågan öppnar upp för en längre konversation kring förståelsen för det publika och general intellect. Jag är skeptisk till stora delar av samtida diskurser kring det publika, i synnerhet vad som definierar publika rum. Mitt arbete omfattar att producera förutsättningar för varje individ – i publiken – att producera *det publika*, vilket så klart inte är ett rum eller nått övergivet ställe i stan. Det publika är det som inte kan göras privat, det vill säga det som inte omfattas av perspektiv, det som inte kan formeras som egendom utan omfattas av horisont, och

horisont kan inte *inte* vara tillåtande. Horisonten *är* och den är kontingent. Det är inte så att horisonten är ett slags don't give a shit – på intet sätt, den är istället ett slags whatever, läst över Giorgio Agamben, en indifference av högsta vikt. No matter what, always of importance.

Det vore intressant att höra mer om hur du förhåller dig till teori, också eftersom mycket i dina arbeten tycks bygga på konträra positioner. Geotrauma Dance*, först framförd i Wien 2011, har du beskrivit så här: «The grey between black and white has many names: tolerance, difference, possibility, negotiation. Those terms all assume knowledge in respect of measurement [length], something is continuous and divisible.» Det som befinner sig mellan det svarta och vita är blankt, förklarar du, och i likhet med* The Internet *tycks*Geotrauma Dance *sträva efter det diskontinuerliga eller det som inte kan delas. Hur omsätts teorin i koreografi – hur skrivs det blanka in i dans?*

Jag är busy med konst, inte med att kritisera filosofer eller falsifiera genom konsekventa argument grundade på det ena eller andra. «Konst är konst» är kanske lite för enkelt, men ingången är att kontinuerligt förhålla sig till kunskap, arbete eller tänkande, som «non-standard» (François Laruelle). Mitt ansvar som konstnär – det där låter ju väldigt skitnödigt men whatever – är att alltid estimera ett slags betrayal of all sides, inklusive mig själv. Den där boken jag satte ihop var en variant. Arbetet i sig självt ska vara där, kanske inte som representation men som arbete. För att det ska kunna komma dit är första steget att skapa förutsättningar för ett ögonblick, ett sammanhang som inte är förhandlat (negotiated) utan som är blankt, som inte omfattas av tolkning eller perspektiv, men som nödvändiggör produktion, man skulle kunna säga produktion utan förutsättningar, men likväl produktion.

Du har kastat alla dina gamla skivor, sa du i en intervju i The Guardian *den 5 juli 2013, och lyssnar enbart på ny musik och läser bara ny litteratur. Varför är du så upptagen vid nuet och inte vid det historiska, vilket det samtida också är avhängigt av?*

The Guardian trycker bara oneliners, men jag menar vem orkar ha en massa vinyler stående. Det bästa man kan använda dem till är ju som pickup line på nån sunkig bar. Eller CD:s för den delen. Hello.

Vänd på det, jag är upptagen av nuet just för att det är avhängigt av det historiska. Det är inte nuet som intresserar mig, det är the contemporary, inte samtiden utan det samtida. Nuet som sådant kanske intresserar mig snart, men jag har inte kollat upp det än. Eftersom jag är upptagen av event så är det klart att nuet på något sätt finns med. Vad jag är busy med är – om man skrapar på ytan är jag rätt upptagen av historien – av appropriation, citat och remixing, men jag menar vem vill erkänna att man varit hooked på Tarantino? Det är ju jävligt corny att bevisa sig genom referenser och ännu mer lame att rättfärdiga sitt arbete genom self-referentiality, konstens historia i synnerhet. Vad som intresserar mig är att producera samtida estetiska erfarenheter, samtida på alla plan, the shows talks for themselves antar jag.

Vad kan vi då förvänta oss att se på Index i helgen?

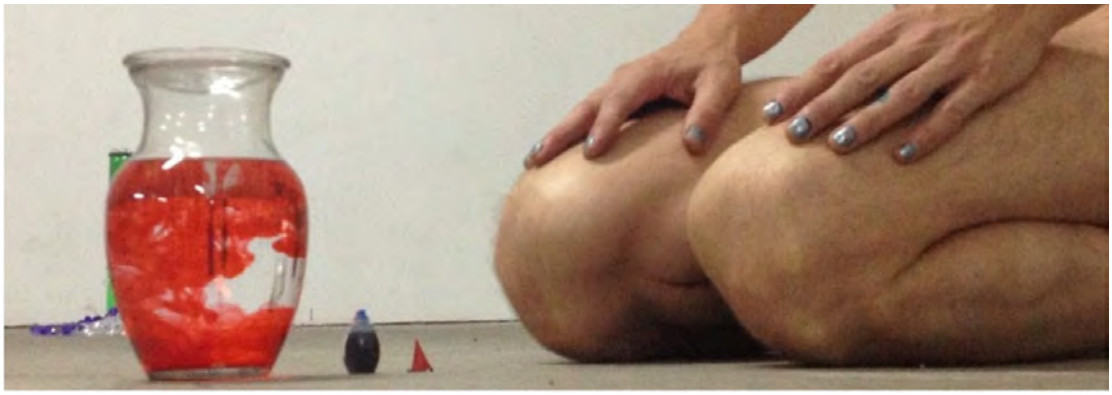
The Internet har kommit till i nära samverkan med dansarna Rebecka Stillman, Hanna Strandberg och Sandra Lolax, vilka också gör föreställningen – om det nu är en föreställning – och så min assistent eller supporter/vägledare Marika Troili. *The Internet* är en gallery show, men inte fullt ut, och inte heller en dansföreställning och defo inte en performance. Det är något som installerar sig asymmetriskt, skapar format diagonalt och avser producera möjligheter för oavhängighet, för det publika, och för att dissolve community and individuality at the same time.

Jag är skeptisk till öppenhet och i synnerhet till begrepp som tolerans och tillåtelse. Det är väsentligt att beakta skillnaden på öppenhet och det öppna. Det öppna korrelerar inte mot tolerans, det är inte förhandlingsbart. Det öppna är inte något politiskt, utan förutsättningen för Det Politiska. Det öppna initieras alltid av någon slags slutenhet, ett oavkortat beslut. Det är också förutsättningen för hur jag vill arbeta tillsammans med människor och saker. Allt är lika, everything is equal but can participate in different ways.

Vad som händer i *The Internet* är upp till (eller ej) var och en. Det kommer vara en massa nice dans, trevlig musik, gulliga objekt – jag obsessar just nu, i relation till det publika, på förståelsen för det monumentala som kategori. Vi har gjort en skitstor målning, med massor av snygga färger. *The Internet* vill liksom va som en riktigt bra brunch, nått som man kommer ihåg som as-nice men inte vad det var

Scenekunstens vidunderlige risiko

Venke Marie Sortland



- Interessant nok må Spångberg ut av teaterrommet for å lykkes i å skape en situasjon der utøver og publikum faktisk er avhengige av hverandre. Med utgangspunkt i forestillingen*Slowfall* på Dansefestival Barents diskuterer Venke Sortland hvordan det å gjenta en forestilling i ulike kontekster, påvirker Mårten Spångbergs koreografier.

Scenekunst.no - publisert: 16.12.15

Det er tilløp til trengsel utenfor inngangen til Gjenreisningsmuseet, der Mårten Spångbergs solo *Slowfall* skal vises under Dansefestival Barents 2015. Jeg overhører en kollega som håper på at forestillingen skal være utfordrende og kreve publikumsdeltakelse – han blir overdøvet av publikumsverten som roper til oss at vi må benke oss så tett som mulig ”for her kommer det til å bli trangt”!

Stemningen innenfor er imidlertid en helt annen. Publikum stilner idet vi tar plass på stolene, krakkene, mattene og langs veggene av dette alternative og midlertidige kunstrommet. Spångberg sitter på kne på gulvet foran oss, kikker, smiler, nikker anerkjennende. På gulvet rundt ham ligger små stasjoner av hverdagslige og allment tilgjengelige objekter – gafler, en brødrister, blomster, et par sko, en badmintonracket, noen Snickers-sjokolader, blanke papp-ark, tegnesaker, vannglass, skåler med maling. Når publikum har funnet seg til rette tar Spångberg ordet og ønsker oss velkommen. Han forteller at *Slowfall* ble laget allerede i 2008. Opprinnelig ønsket han å sidestille seg selv med objektene – men, sier han, mye har skjedd siden stykket ble vist første gang. Tonen i denne introduksjonen er vennlig og lett humoristisk – Spångberg informerer også om at forestillingen ikke inneholder noen imponerende dansebevegelser, og at vi som publikum kan gå når vi måtte ønske. Så reiser han seg, flytter seg litt lengre bak i rommet og kler seg naken.

Slowfall har mange av de samme elementene og strategiene som Spångbergs senere stykker *La Substance, but in English* (2014) og *The Internet* (2015), som begge har blitt vist på Black Box Teater i Oslo. Stykkenes materiale består blant annet av forflytning mellom

objekt-stasjoner av typen nevnt over, omorganisering av disse med tid og omhu, korte formale og frontale bevegelsessekvenser, omkledninger på scenen, og lavmælt lip-synking til kjente pop-låter. Alle stykkene har en forflatet dramaturgi der udramatiske situasjoner får utfolde seg over tid, og der publikum inviteres til å komme og gå som de vil.

Mer presist

Men heller enn bli en utvasket gjentakelse, opplever jeg at *Slowfall* på Gjenreisningsmuseet i Hammerfest er et mye sterkere, mer interessant og mer presist arbeid enn de påfølgende stykkene. Når Spångberg langsomt kneler ved sine Snickers-sjokolader og organiserer dem rundt seg i et slags stjernemønster, når han gnir grønn maling på rompa si for deretter å sette avtrykket på en papp-plate og stille den opp som et malerier i enden av rommet – flyter han ikke på ryktene som har gått om *La Substance*, han har publikums fulle oppmerksomhet.

La Substance ble opprinnelig vist på det internasjonalt anerkjente galleriet MoMa PS1 i New York i januar 2014. Valget om å vise arbeidet i en visuell kunstkontekst gir mening for Spångbergs ønske om å sidestille seg selv med objektene – eller som e-flux journal skriver det: ”Built around a conceptual approach that highlights choreography as a medium, Spångberg’s recent work considers the potentiality of dance as an object.”

Men når scenekunst presenteres i en slik visuell kunstkontekst, settes en del konvensjoner i spill – blant annet bruk av tid og forventninger til publikum. Satt på spissen kan man kanskje hevde følgende: I teaterrommet bestemmer koreografen over publikums tidsbruk, mens i galleriet er det publikum som selv bestemmer når de kommer og går. I teateret henvender utøveren seg til publikum som en gruppe, mens i galleriet møter man verket en til en. I teateret binder dramaturgien bevegelsene sammen til et hele, mens i galleriet kan publikum lage sin egen sammenheng mellom utstillingens deler. Og selv om disse konvensjonene til stadighet brytes og utfordres innenfor både scenekunst og visuell kunst, så vil jeg tro at friksjonen mellom de ulike sfærene gjør *noe* med både verk, utøvere og publikum.

For ordenhets skyld må jeg legge til at *La Substance* ble spilt i MoMas ”performance dome”, altså i et rom for performative uttrykk. Dette rommet befinner seg like fullt innenfor veggene til en kunstinstitusjon – ikke i et teater. Spillet mellom konvensjoner må dermed sies å være tilstede også her, selv om det er mindre ”synlig”.

Rykter om nerve

Jeg var dessverre ikke selv tilstede på MoMa-versjonen av *La Substance,* men fikk raskt høre ryktene om arbeidet – det syntes som om Spångberg her hadde truffet en nerve. Da stykket ble vist på Black Box Teater i Oslo et par måneder senere (mars 2014), måtte jeg dessverre konstatere at ”nerven” ikke (lenger) var tilstede. I ettertid har jeg spekulert på hva publikum egentlig opplevde i New York. Kan det være at verken *Slowfall* eller *La Substance* handler om materialet i seg selv, men heller om friksjonen *mellom* dette og konteksten det plasseres inn i? Og at forestillingene fungerer best i de tilfellene der situasjonen ikke er helt avklart –

der konvensjoner og forventninger på en eller annen måte er i spill – og dermed innebærer en viss risiko for utøverne?

Tilbake til *La Substance*: i en forestillingssituasjon der ”alt” tilsynelatende er lov, skal det ekstremt mye til for å vippe de dyktige utøverne Spångberg har med seg, av pinnen. Og om en uklar situasjon skulle oppstå, har Spångberg bokstavelig talt selv tatt plass mellom publikum og utøvere – han subber frem og tilbake mellom oss og spiller av musikk fra macen sin som står plassert innenfor publikumsområdet.

Men til forskjell fra MoMA PS1 vil jeg hevde at Black Box Teater er en tryggere og mer avklart kontekst for Spångberg og utøverne. Arbeidet vises i ly av anerkjennelsen han har opparbeidet seg i Norge de siste årene og for tilhengerne han har ervervet seg i Oslo. I en black box forsvinner spillet mellom ulike sett av konvensjoner som rommet for visuell kunst skaper. Noen stykker fungerer også best første gang de vises – altså i møte med et publikum som *ikke* vet hva de har i vente. Det uspektakulære, hverdagslige og langtekkelige materialet tenderer mot arroganse når vi i publikum vet at *dette* er alt vi kommer til å få. Misforstå meg rett – jeg er overhodet ingen tilhenger av spektakulær og formalistisk dans – men som publikummer til *La Substance* opplever jeg at det utøverne gjør ikke har noen betydning i det hele tatt. Materialet er like ”uviktig” som dansemattene på gulvet, utøverne fortsetter med sine oppgaver uanfektet av om vi i publikum velger å snakke om den siste filmen vi så, sjekke mail på telefonen eller ta en øl i baren. *La Substance, but in English* på Black Box Teater gir meg en opplevelse av at Spångberg ønsker å teste min tålmodighet: Hvor mange minutter (eller timer) kan han få meg til å bli sittende, før jeg selv tar ansvar for å underholde meg selv?

Et mer lunefullt publikum

Gjenreisningsmuseet i Hammerfest er sammenlignet med Black Box Teater et rom som krever mye mer både av oss i publikum og kunstnerne som viser arbeid her. Her er det ingen lysrigg, dansematter eller amfi – publikum finner seg til rette på pappkrakker og yogamatter. Og selv om Spångberg også i denne sammenhengen er omgitt av (noen) tilhengere, virker Barents-publikummerne også å være mer lunefulle. Når to på første rad – midt i forestillingen – velger å reise seg opp fra publikumsområdet, og vandre gjennom scenerommet for å sette seg på motsatt side av dette, forblir det uavklart for oss andre i publikum om dette er avtalt av Spångberg, eller om intervensjon skjer på eget initiativ. Er dette publikums måte å teste Spångberg på – eller tar de invitasjonen om at ”alt er lov” på alvor?

Det er videre tydelig at Spångberg påvirkes av å stå naken, tett opptil sitt publikum, med det grelle taklyset på. Vi kan alle se at han skjelver på hånden når han plasserer seg foran oss og møter våre blikk. Uten å forstørre eller pakke den inn, bærer han med seg denne skjelvingen gjennom hele stykket, som en subtil påminnelse om den innvirkningen vi som publikummere har på situasjonen. Utfordringen i det å fremføre en solo som man selv har koreografert, forsterkes ytterligere av at han – i motsetning til de utøverne han har med seg i sine senere stykker – ikke har en supertrent dansekropp.

For meg handler ikke *Slowfall* om hva Spångberg gjør, men hva som står på spill. Det handler om hans tilstedeværelse og vilje til stå løpet ut i en situasjon som krever investering fra både utøver og publikum for å opprettholdes.

Forbi produktet

Man kan hevde at dagens scenekunst til stadighet blir dratt lengre i retning av å bli et produkt der publikums tilstedeværelse, eller kontekstens innvirkning, preller av på utøverne som vannet på gåsa, og der forestillingen kan turneres upåvirket fra scenerom til scenerom. For meg blir *Slowfall* et forsøk i å motsette seg en slik trend, og et studie i den utøvende kunstenes potensial – som en situasjon som ikke produserer noe ut over seg selv, der utøver og publikum faktisk er avhengige av hverandre, og der forestillingen blir til i spillet mellom materiale og kontekst. Interessant nok må Spångberg tilsynelatende ut av teateret for å lykkes i dette.

The 2015 Oslo International Festival at Black Box Theatre

Andrew Friedman – spring 2016

Excerpt

The Oslo International Festival, now in its seventh year, has established itself as a vital destination on the experimental performance circuit. The festival and Black Box Theatre, which runs the event, serve a critical function in Norway's performing arts community. While Oslo is home to other prominent theatres, notably the massive National Theatre and the small company-run *Grusomhetens Teater*(Theatre of Cruelty), Black Box is the city's premiere touring and producing venue for international and domestic experimental work. Comparable to Berlin's HAU (Hebbel am Ufer) theatre or New York City's Under the Radar Festival, Black Box introduces Oslo audiences to preeminent global artists like Annie Dorsen, Forced Entertainment, Nature Theatre of Oklahoma, Showcase Beat Le Mot, and MOTUS, while producing Norwegian groups including Verk Produksjoner, Findlay/Sandsmark/Pettersen, and Vegard Vinge and Ida Müller. Started in 1985 in a former chocolate factory, the theatre and festival has been led by Artistic Director Jon Refsdal Moe since 2009. Commandeering the building's two dedicated theatre spaces, the lobby, and an adjacent dance studio, the nine-day festival featured fifteen productions. This year's events are emblematic of Black Box's role within the country, bringing together established and emerging artists from home and abroad with particular emphasis on works from Europe and Scandinavia.

The 2015 festival was organized around the question of faith in performance's potential/s. For the festival program, each artist or group was asked, "Do you believe in theatre?" Their replies—ranging from dismissal, critical reflection, to warm embrace—were collected in the brochure. The diversity of responses reflects the heterogeneity of contemporary performance in which conceptual, theoretical, and disciplinary lines are regularly blurred under the collective mantle of "performance." One predominant theme, among the works I attended, was the act of spectatorship. There was little uniformity to approaching audiences, but questioning what artists and audiences do, make, and mean in the act of watching was of continual concern. Mårten Spångberg's *The Internet* continues his interest in making performances that do not attempt to hold the audience's attention. Philippe Quesne's *La Mélancolie des Dragons* celebrates the generosity underlining the mutual construction of fantasy and belief. Dana Michel's *Yellow Towel*, meanwhile, short-circuits spectatorial expectations of how race is performed and thereby consumed. Rabih Mouré's *Riding on a Cloud* erodes the possibility of truth and authenticity in narrative and theatrical representation. Erika Cederqvist and Julie Solberg's *His Own Room* lovingly toys with spectators' assumptions about gender and sexuality. Despite their eclecticism, these works all concern themselves with (re-)thinking how theatrical engagement makes meaning.

The Internet (2015), co-commissioned by Black Box, is a continuation of the Swedish choreographer Mårten Spångberg's exploration of choreography as an "expanded field." As with Spångberg's two previous works, *La Substance, but in English* (2014) and *The Nature* (2013), *The Internet* extends its organization beyond bodily movements (dance) to construct calculated interactions between gestures, sounds, landscape, objects, and spectators. For the show's three-and-a-half hours, the choreographic exchanges unfold at a leisurely pace. Long stretches of time are spent watching the dancers check their phones, change clothes, make small talk amongst themselves, or carry out seemingly inconsequential tasks. Spectators meanwhile sit on the floor engaged (or disengaged) as sonic and gestural motifs emerge, slightly adjusting the atmosphere, pulling focus or setting it adrift. These little arcs suggest narrative–or rather invite us to project it–but the developments are all architecture, albeit one that resonates affectively. At times the performance feels like a loop, at others linear, and again like it is not moving at all. All that misshapen time opens up space to do what one wants with the show: make up a story, marvel at the performers' studious informality, let one's mind wander, or update one's Facebook page. The experience is something like a theatrical bird watching in which enjoying one's time in the environment is equal to seeing anything exotic.

Structured around a series of musical and physical repetitions, *The Internet* creates an atmosphere in which to measure incremental changes. The performance begins with a thirty-

minute loop of the melancholy piano refrain of Rihanna's pop-ballad "Stay" (2013). The song's plodding repetition is the show's *leitmotif*, returning in the final hour as an emotional mnemonic that frames the performance as cyclical. The three dancers, Sandra Lolax, Rebecka Stillman, and Marika Troili—all regular collaborators of Spångberg—stroll and stand around at the outset. They form circles and talk in whispers or crouch together on the floor. Their demeanor is unhurried but they are aware of their audience—half-smiles, glances, and shrugs punctuate their unheard conversations. It is hard not to see their behavior as permission or, better yet, instructions on how to nonchalantly watch the show.

The dancers intermittently engage in choreography that reveals a debt to modern dance, ballet, and the pedestrian movements first developed by Yvonne Rainer and Steve Paxton at Judson Church in the 1960s. Each performer operates on a separate track, occasionally synchronizing only to disassemble into their own patterns: one may adopt a variation of another's movements or shuffle off to read some notes or watch the other dancers. The fluidity of the performance masks its refinement, which is most noticeable in the performers' discipline hidden beneath layers of sangfroid. The breezy style aspires to create a performance space detached from expectation and consequence, cause and effect. The aim often requires the dancers to work against the other performance elements. As the music switches to Jennifer Lopez's 1999 party-anthem "Let's Get Loud," Lolax, Stillman, and Troili meander around the space or sit unaffected among the piles of props that constitute the stage. At other times the dancers are filled with a playfulness wholly detached from the performance itself. The performers disrupt any sense of causality by oscillating between laxity and commitment that responds or, at times, is impervious to the theatrical environment. Coupled with the musical and physical loops and slow pacing, the production works to circumvent expectations of progress. Allowing one's attention to drift or investing it, frequently produces a heightened awareness, a training of one's senses on minor developments. The audience is periodically alive with diffuse chatter before collectively refocusing itself on the performers. Occasionally, these shifts seem to stem from the dancers and at other times, they mysteriously originate from affective ripples in the larger room.

The strange, idiosyncratic scenic design features clusters of found and handmade objects—a mainstay of Spångberg's work since 2011—that change from production to production. His previous work, *La Substance*, was a pasteboard of sparkles and logos, gooey slime and syrups: the up-chuck of a teen shopping-spree sound-tracked by songs celebrating inhibition. *The Internet* has a more reserved tone. Here, a pastel rainbow tapestry hangs above a laminate floor of grainy color patterns evoking the warm-color palette of a kindergarten classroom. Objects are strewn across the floor—piles of clothes, soda cans, and Styrofoam sculptures, including an impressively gaudy pink charm bracelet whose bulk suggests the life-

sized anchor to Barbie's pink Yacht. These objects are drawn into the action (or ignored) as the dancers use buck-knives to whittle sticks atop a blanket or stand at attention with wooden rifles. Changing outfits, which occurs constantly throughout the show, constitutes one of the performers' main choreographic activities. The dancers' blasé swapping of clothes refreshes the landscape with new fabrics, textures, and colors. The allusions the attire produces are more utilitarian than those of Spångberg's previous works. Whereas the wardrobe for *La Substance* evoked a psychedelic lingerie show, *The Internet* features dancers in overalls, McDonald's uniforms, business suits, airline stewardess dress, and includes a runway crew member in an electric-orange jumpsuit. The costuming evokes dichotomies of labor and leisure, diligence and idleness, but given the show's overall opacity, even these generalizations seem like overstatements.

What one ultimately makes of *The Internet* may come down to what one thinks of its creator. A mercurial polemicist, Spångberg is a machine-gun of theoretical flotsam wrapped in the surfer-cool of a class-clown. He is, after all, always lurking in and around the performance to show us how to watch his productions. He moves through the audience, checking his phone, dragging a microphone to sing along to the show's playlist, snapping photos of the action, and conspicuously bolting to the lobby every thirty minutes or so. His performance is the theatrical equivalent of cracking a beer. It can feel forced at times, as when Spångberg cuddles up to the unsuspecting somebody for a selfie—a form of inclusion that feels at odds with the show's otherwise studious detachment. But his target is clear and his aim is steady: why persist with viewing behaviors drummed up in the nineteenth century when the world outside the theatre has changed so radically? Those who prefer the former path usually leave within the first hour. Those who stay, warm up to it, learning to take what they need and leave the rest. People watch and sleep, talk, take pictures, and spill beer bottles hidden in the tangle of lounging spectators. However you want to watch the performance is allright with Spångberg and soon enough, this permissive vibe permeates the room.

In his program notes, Spångberg cites the influence of monumental sculpture on*The Internet*. Both, for Spångberg, "exceed context, [and are] indifferent or simply material" (Mårten Spångberg, **http://www.blackbox.no/tittel/the-internet**). Visual artist Jason Dodge is a noted influence, whose works consist of displaying objects alongside matter-of-fact descriptions. In Dodge's most recent exhibition at New York's Casey Kaplan Gallery, for example, a yellow pillow is accompanied by only its title: *The Mayor is sleeping; A pillow that has only been slept on by the mayor of Nuremberg* (2014). Dodge and Spångberg share a common concern of not instrumentalizing the images they create. The role of interpretation is for the audience alone. But these are no Rorschach tests. The puzzling ambiguity of Spångberg's works never arises from abstraction, rather from the enjambment of obliquely

recognizable images, sounds, and movements. To pull one element free and elevate it to the production's meaning is a dubious task. This is the kind of indivisibility that Spångberg's program notes ascribe to the Internet as well as the universe, the ocean, and nature. The draw of these irreducible objects is their refusal to be rightly interpreted. Without interpretation comes spectatorial egalitarianism, or, for Spångberg, "in front of that kind of stuff, we are equal, unconditionally equal. (Ibid.)

Whether performance can ever be as indivisible as the Internet or nature, and produce an equality of spectating is questionable. But compared to calls to return to a theatre of dutiful, silent attention—spearheaded by the likes of Patti Lupone and Benedict Cumberbatch—Spångberg's work is filled with the fresh air of the twenty-first century. Nonetheless, the extent to which Spångberg and his collaborators need to embody the equality and informality they hope to engender highlights just how resistant audiences are to such changes—save for the group of friends who devoured potato chips and champagne throughout the performance.

Kicking Back: Nature of Choreography Revised, With Beer Cans

‘La Substance, but in English’ Tweaks Consumerism

By GIA KOURLAS JAN. 13, 2014

Debate swirling around the wave of dance presentation in museums hasn’t dissipated over the last couple of years. For one thing, economic inequality between the dance and art worlds isn’t likely to go away. Over the weekend at MoMA PS1, the Swedish choreographer Marten Spangberg added another layer to the conversation with “La Substance, but in English,” a four-and-a-half-hour work performed Sunday afternoon as part of the American Realness festival.

It was long — the final hour didn’t exactly fly by — but “La Substance” made for a hallucinatory experience equally illuminating and tedious.

Mr. Spangberg wittily transformed the MoMA PS1 Performance Dome into something of a marijuana den: Branches with giant leaves dangled over the stage. The floor was littered with pizza boxes, bottles of soda and costumes that the dancers wore and discarded with frequency. Music, a stream of hip-hop and pop songs, insulated the space with a steady, sensuous pulse. Cans of beer were passed around. Yet little was as casual as it seemed.

Mr. Spangberg has recently begun experimenting with ways to focus on an expanded notion of choreography — how the word implies more about constructing time and space than knitting together steps. (Which is

not to say that his talented cast of eight, wearing fantastical and disturbing stage makeup, didn't slip in a quick pas de chat or two.)

During "La Substance," which also featured Yoann Durant singing along to recorded tracks, audience members, seated on the floor or standing, were free to come and go. Yet most stayed put in this slow-cooker environment, which was a little like watching a sunset. It changed just enough to hold your gaze.

Some in the audience opted to spend time not watching, but painting colors on a mural sketched onto the same wall that Mr. Spangberg leaned against as he watched, tapped on his computer and signaled to his cast. The back curtain, a silver-and-gold patchwork design with large squares of material touting Chanel, Gucci and Louis Vuitton, contrasted with performers who walked and rose from or sank to the floor in slow motion, often pausing to look out at us as we watched them: a reflection of landscapes.

But there were jubilant, saucy dances, too, raw alternatives to more mechanical commercial interpretations to pop songs. The excellent Emma Kim Hagdahl, with tears made of glitter streaming down her cheeks, could gyrate her hips with playful insouciance or freeze time with an icy stare. At one point, the cast members, eyes closed, simply sat near the front of the stage. Behind them, the logo curtain fluttered. The amplified sound of an email being sent was a jarring interruption.

Within this oddly gentle, one-moment-rolling-into-the-next atmosphere was a stinging critique about consumerism in and out of the art world and, of course, the erosion of attention spans. In "La Substance," Mr. Spangberg makes sharp points as he examines the nature of time: Instead of bodies he choreographed air and, to his credit, that took a few hours really to sink in.

An afternoon with The Internet – Mårten Spångberg
Supportico Lopez

Text: Sarah Rosengarten - 06.03.2015, KubaParis

It is Saturday 3 p.m. and rainy. I am entering the gallery Supportico Lopez. There will be a performance taking place shortly. This already happened the day before and my friend M attended. She recommended it to me, which is actually the only reason I am showing up – I have not been especially excited about performing art so far.
I guess I am early, one of the first few in this place. The man who I spot as the artist and choreographer, Mårten Spångberg, throws an encouraging smile and a Welcome at me. Immediately I feel noticed in a nice way, somehow included.
The large room is rectangular. I enter, move a little bit away from the door and turn to the bigger side of the room, rabbit holes for the gallerists and the bathroom behind me. I am facing an area that seems to be installed as the performance environment. Spångberg uses a wild and colourful decoration: Patterned textiles (leopard, zebra and cannabis plant print, chess squares, a big panda chewing on bamboo, poke dots, flags and stripes) and golden and silver foils are duck taped on the wall to the right. The area that serves as the ground for actions to come is marked with a see-through foil stretched over a carpet of pink, violet and white squares. It reminds me of kindergarden plastic underlays as precaution in case toddlers suddenly start pooping or puking. Three wooden rifles are leaning against the wall textiles and closed Pizza boxes on a mobile are dangling from the ceiling. Spread out on the floor: chaotic heaps of clothing, bottles of lemonade and beer (Corona and Desperados), chocolate bars, crisp bags and paper bags from Whole Foods. A huge wooden chain attached to an oversized wooden anchor frames the play area, adding a humorous maritime air. Two blankets, with the word Unrendered printed in large letters on one and the term PDF on the other, are arranged on the plastic foil, as the only direct web reference I

can discover so far.

Not far from my current spot I discover nine wooden sticks plugged into Lion chocolate bar wraps, arranged in a loose circle. I am thinking it looks perfecting itself as a small artwork inside this larger installation. The sticks do remind of chocolate and of the scene in the movie American Pie when Stiffler is forced to eat chocolate candy that is actually human excrement. Generally, I feel as if the gallery room is prepped for ANY kind of spectacle. The objects suggest endless potential for big action: A salad bowl of symbols and possible references hopefully revealing a meaning soon.

While Mårten Spångberg is sitting on the side, three young women stand on the pink/violet ground and are facing each other, conversating in Swedish and giggling quite often. I do not understand them; it could be complete gibberish. Once in a while they come together and physically touch each other on their arms or legs, as if they want to create bridges so that their human energy can flow between them and through each other. They freeze in those positions. The human sculptures they create that way remind me of old oil paintings from the German North Frisian Islands, showing kids frozen in their performing of traditional round dances.
The high quality sound system next to the back wall is blasting poppy music. In the first second of the first song I think this must be BEYONCÉ. It seems to be a loop of the beginning of one of her tracks.
The performing young women are wearing working clothes; these typical bright orange uniforms used by the garbage men or construction workers on highways. They seem a little oversized for the frail dancers. It makes one think of kids dressing up as grown ups and being very serious about it.
I wonder what the performers are discussing. Are they mapping out the next steps in the choreography? Or could they be small talking or even gossiping about the audience? Would my focus change substantially if I understood Swedish and would I be very occupied trying to understand? I am thankful for my lack of comprehension of the Swedish language in this case.
The three performers appear to be incredibly charming. Every one of them has their special physical and behavioural traits that make her seem honest and sympathetic. So
I can easily forgive them that I am excluded from their conversations. I would probably forgive them anything. I wonder how much the artist had taken the audience's empathy into account. I am beginning to think that he is quite a clever guy.
Maccarena is being played and I am so surprised about the non-reactions. Not only the three women are unbothered, stand rather motionless in the middle of their little playground, but also the viewers don't even nod move their heads. Strange. It seems like an unofficial rule, that nobody has passed on to me, to not anticipate the rhythm physically. I can barely hold back.
Now they have put on these white sneaker-like shoes, stylistically rated between nurse and crocs. The tallest of the three who looks like she is the cousin of Eowyn from Lord of the Rings now squats in the back in a white hoodie while the two others are engaged in a sitting choreography on the floor, still wearing the orange work clothing. Their movements are harmonic and organic, like a dance of gratitude towards mother earth.
I associate mermaids, eels, growing lotus flowers, and fertility goddesses.
The young women are still nonchalantly ignoring the audience, no sings of arrogance though. It is more as if they have no real interest in anybody outside their small group.
The pop music supports their attitude towards the entire event. There is no pathos, exaggerated seriousness or superfluous placing of emphasis on anything, as it often bugs me in performance art.
I notice that none of the three women is either particularly feminine or sexy. That is supported through some of the lightly oversized and mostly gender-neutral clothing.
I slowly get convinced that everything is accurately planned while it looks effortless.
The movements flow and grow into each other very naturally. Again, in intervals the young women physically connect for a short moment, occasionally in rather acrobatic positions. I have to think of Sailor Moon, where the girls join to combine their astrological powers.
I suddenly remember the name of the performance: The Internet. I should probably have a look at the press release? Now or later? I am torn between discussing this matter internally and paying attention to what is happening in front of me. Being a good art receiver is a quite difficult task.
It seems to me that in his performance Spångberg brought the vibe of the Internet into an

analogue form. The incorporated objects are very haptic; the movements of the performers are strongly human and natural, even though I was silly enough to expect robot dances beforehand. The performance area is stuffed with a complex variety of symbols and motifs including labels and patterns, both characteristic for the web. Meanwhile the young females have come to sit down on the blanket with the word Unrendered printed on. They are now wearing stewardess uniforms, and each of them is carving with a knife on a piece of wood. It triggers a vision of girl scouts who build a wooden world (chain, anchor, rifles) inside this realm of colourful chaos. The sound of birds singing adds up to the image and for the first time the audio piece seems to support the visual aesthetics. This fantastic and very pretty scenario seems to me like a very literal image of the return to the analogue world.
I notice that the performers use little logbooks. Another celebration of the analogue way of doing things and/or simply a tool for them to remember their script?
The tallest performing woman then dances alone to a song repeating the word supernatural in the lyrics while the chains of movements loop as well. The moment I enjoy most in this choreography is when at one point she bends up forming imaginary revolvers with her fingers and playfully shooting around. The other two are attentively watching her like older siblings being proud of the youngest finally making progress in crawling. They acknowledge the rhythm by nodding and all three smile conspiratorially at each other. Occasionally the tallest one winks. I wonder if in this case finally the seductiveness of pop music succeeded or if the nodding is rehearsed. Shirts with big peace signs are put on. A symbol that is so incorporated in my daily vision that I forget what it actually stands for. Completely worn down by overuse, misuse and amusement it has become a cliché. I see it as an example for procedures in the web: Rapid reproduction/ multiplication and ironical transformation of symbols until they fully loose or change their original meaning.
Another outfit change into trainers is taking place which seems logical to me. Strangely this performance starts to make perfect sense to me without me being able to verbalize my understanding.
I wonder what is going on inside the heads of the young women. Is there any room to have thoughts that are unrelated to the performance? I wonder if this particular performance is one of those procedures that have the power to lift the one practicing it up into a very pure state of happiness? The performers seem to be lacking any burdening self-awareness or self-consciousness. I catch myself envying them and wishing to switch places.
Finally they nonchalantly open the coke bottles and chocolate bars. I enjoy that they are supplied with sugar as if I was being treated as well. They are probably in need of it by now.
Simultaneously, the music is playing while the young women are eating and talking without acknowledging the tunes at all.
In the next instance the wooden rifles are picked up. However, while I would have expected a childish hunting game to come along with these tools, they young women only pose with the fake weapons. Especially the tall elfish performer looks greatly decorated with the accessory, like an amazon or a warrior queen silently waiting for the right target.
What are the rifles representing, I wonder. Is the existence in the realm of the internet, in this case the gallery space as a metaphor for it, potentially equipping you with a weapon?
The song I am on top of the world is kicking in. It seems to lighten the performers moods even though they are as usual not anticipating the rhythm of the melody. I am feeling as well that it is lifting me up and carrying me to a happy cloud.
I am shifting my attention to the artist for a moment, observing his reactions to his piece. Seemingly he is concentrated and relaxed. On the first sight one would think he acts out some kind of an artist cliché by presenting himself in training trousers and a grey shirt, wearing his hair long and mildly messy, a designer stubble and unusually shaped glasses. I see him as extroverted and self-confident. But the longer I observe him and let the performance work on me the more I am neglecting my first impression. I have to think about the widely despised term authentic. In the end I cannot help to think that it is suiting for him.
And the performing young women I admire by now. They appear to be extraordinarily healthy, in a physical and mental way. Through them, exceptionally positive vibes are connected to the word Internet.
Now that I see that props are being used: When the hell are they going to drink the beer? It bothers me to see the alcoholic beverages ignored for so long.
The Whole Foods shopping bags indicate that some of the products must have been imported, while others, like theMcDonald's cups could have been bought in Germany. Does that indicate

that the specific labels have a meaning? WhyVittel and not Evian? Why Desperados and not Jever? I am trying to figure out the role of Whole Foods in this arrangement, searching through my brain for an idea what this chain stands for. All I come up with is the notion of healthy food and the idea that it is very popular amongst American celebrities.
It seems as if the products themselves are a topic of the performer's acting. They explore the labels and seem to read the ingredients. Maybe they are saying: We gotta convince Marten to get Bounty next time, this just tastes rotten! Or I should really not eat this since I am on diet these days.

Then two of the performing women, now in grey suits, roll around on the kindergarden plastic foil, sometimes one gets on top of the other or suddenly finds herself in headlock. For the first time I sense an erotic tension or a hint to it at least. I wonder if this is intended. It seems hardly believable to choreograph something like this without having sexual associations in mind. It is certainly a powerful image: two young women in business suit wrestling tenderly in a colourful playground. The third one is holding an IPhone wearing a McDonald's work uniform (Is she supposed to be texting, tweeting, instagramming or playing angry birds? Does she have a specific task given by the artist for this moment or is it only about the image of her holding this item?). I find it difficult to place this image in the context of the title The Internetbut have the feeling that something is being accurately conveyed here.
Slow motion movements are taking over while techno is being played (it triggers a feeling I had when I watchedSpringbreakers). Two performers are wearing the McDonald's work uniform and drink Coke. I assume it is an intended brand combination. Is Spångberg viewing those brands critically or does he position himself rather as an observer?
The performers are now moving quite slowly and canny, a way a McDonald's worker would definitely not behave.
Slowly I think of leaving. I have had three intense hours with The Internet by Mårten Spångberg. Strange enough, I am not waiting for the soon end of the performance.
However, I realise that my focus and concentration are not sufficient anymore.
I do not see this piece as something fitting to the assignment of suffering through.
There has been no suffering in this experience and to me there is no narration that has to be followed until the end in order to have the full experience. So I am slipping my IPhone and notebook into my backpack and let the beat carry me outside.

Når festen er over, eller ikke har begynt

Mårten Spångberg: The Internet, Blackbox, Oslo

Morten Langeland Scenekunst 23.03.15

Et tableau vivant for vår tid: En rolig dynamikk av overglidninger, avbrytelser, sidespor og stadige forsøk på de samme dansene, de samme låtene. Morten Langeland har sett *The Internet* på Black Box Teater.

«We chained our hearts in vain,» synger Miley Cyrus i monsterhitten*Wrecking Ball.* Under forestillingen*The Internet* på Black Box Teaters lille scene blir hun backet opp av en svært nærværende Mårten Spångberg, som i blant tar en mikrofon og synger over de sløye popsangene med den stemmen han har. Ordet c*hained* fester seg i tankene under det omlag fire timer lange stykket, som foruten koreografen innbefatter tre svenske jenter, dansende og pludrende på den lappeteppebelagte scenen. *Chain*som i lenke, altså, internett, og sannelig ligger det en stor lilla kjetting på scenen, og teppevev på gulvet, internett der også, da gitt!

Skjønt, nærværende er kanskje ikke det riktige å si om Spångberg og stykket hans. Til det varer det for lenge, med for mange stopp og mye dødtid både i musikk og dans. Og – for mange er en overdrivelse, beklager.Jeg mener bare at nærvær ikke er riktig ord, fordi dansen og sangene stadig hakker. Danserne bryter ned begynnelsene sine og dveler i utkanten av scenen og dansen, tukler litt med kostymene eller bare sitter og fomler. Jeg tenker heller på ordet *härvär* som poeten Anna Hallberg bruker det:

«En härvaro som med sin integritet och tröghet förmår bromsa tiden, tanken och tåget. På allvar. Inte bara så som vi förväntar oss att den ska göra. Utan med ett reellt och aktivt ingripande som gör skillnad.»

Ja, slik er det, tiden stanser ikke på Black Box Teater, men den bremser som tanken. Heller enn tog er flyet det foretrukne framkomstmiddelet i *The Internet*. Danserne har i hvert fall på seg flyvertinneuniformer, før de setter i gang med hyppige omkledninger som veksler mellom forskjellige plagg brukt av svenske arbeidsinnvandrere i internettalderen: McDonalds-skjorter, knallfarget veiarbeidertøy, kosebukser og karrierekvinnedrakter. Og når flyvertinnene slår to og to fingre ut til sidene for å vise til nødutgangene, er det morsomt, men det tar ikke av.

Fase, eller fane

Hvorfor sitter vi på gulvet, forresten? Jeg hadde vondt i fua allerede før jeg kom inn og kjenner hvordan skoene mine stinker sjenerende. Noen lukter krever andres tilstedeværelse. En tenåring merker ikke alltid lukta på datarommet sitt selv. Det lukter her også, av all chipsen voksne mennesker tyller i seg i teatersalen. Ikke bare chips, folk både drikker og samtaler. Det var nesten ikke til å få med seg at forestillingen noen gang begynte, folk snakket både i publikum og på scenen, før publikum av en eller annen grunn holdt opp, selv om verken lys, dører eller dansere

ga noen indikasjon på at vi skulle holde opp, plutselig var vi bare inne i en annen fase. Eller fane, så og si. Hva snakker de forresten om, danserne? Jeg kan ikke høre det.

Kjæresten min sier at hun instinktivt blir redd når hun kommer inn og ser tre vakre jenter stå og snakke og fnise seg imellom som et lite crew, og når de i tillegg ser på henne, krymper hun seg. Danserne er komfortable i sine posisjoner, innforståtte, de går rundt som selvfølgeligheter, skifter klær som ingenting, det er verken ritual eller illustrasjon. De blir sett og vet det, men er ikke henvendt, vil selv bestemme hvor og når de viser seg fram. Som om det går an. Spångberg begynner å synge, blir avbrutt av danseren som skifter sang, haha, internett, du og dine konsentrasjonsvansker!

Selv håpet jeg på litt øyekontakt med danserne, slik som i Spångbergs forrige stykke oppført på Black Box Teater i september i fjor, *La Substance (but in English)*. Det var en veritabel fest, med åtte dansere, glitter og glam, ølsalg på gulvet samt tilløp til sang og dans i publikum også. I denne nye forestillingen er danserne usminkede, de er ikke konfronterende, utfordrende eller flørtende, snarere fredfulle. Ikke ser de noe særlig på publikum heller. Der *La Substance* var en fest, har *The Internet* nok med seg selv. Uff, så vondt i ryggen har jeg, at jeg må ta på den.

Scenen ser ut som en opphopning av *props* og søppel, likevel var det mer kaloriestetikk i *Substance.* Festen er kanskje over. Vi ser cola og vann, diverse sjokolademerker, haugevis av nevnte arbeidsgevanter, uroer / dreamcatchere laget av pizzabunner og vannglass i taket. Bakteppets bølger ligner en tilfrosset windows-skjermsparer i gladfarger. En videoprojeksjon over hodet mitt peker mot scenen og gjør mest nytte for dem som sitter riktig til. Siden det er fullt på gulvet og trangt å bevege seg rundt, er det ikke så mange. Projeksjonen viser en speilet split screen med slo-mo-bilder av verden som ligner filmen *koyaanisqatsi*i deres urbane velde.

Avbrytelser og sidespor

Også danserne stryker seg over korsryggen, slik folk kan gjøre når de er ferdige med tungt arbeid. Det er en lite dramatisk demonstrasjon av slitet ved å være kroppsarbeider, bare en liten gest, gjenkjennelig, effektiv og til dels rørende for dem som har skulket yogaen. Yoga, ja, aktørene gjør flere bevegelser og positurer som imiterer å være dyr, som å holde fingrene opp som ører. Eller imiterer barn, som når de ligger i en mølje og vender på kroppene i et samspill mellom å løfte og bli løftet, bryting og elskov om hverandre. Eller man kan tenke på teambuilding- og tillitsøvelser. Men øvelsene er uten temperament, her er verken glede eller aggresjon, det er kjølig og funksjonelt interesseløst – som internett. Et*tableau vivant* for vår tid: En rolig dynamikk av overglidninger, avbrytelser, sidespor og stadige forsøk på de samme dansene, de samme låtene.

Plutselig klemmer to av danserne hengivent, som om de blir vår hverandre etter tre timer med kontakt. Det er sterkt, jeg ser etter den tredje danserens reaksjon, men den uteblir.

Jeg vil gjerne skrive at stykket er sårt, men det har ikke en slik emosjonell investering. Danserne hever skuldrene og står på tå før de slipper seg ned, slapper av, før de igjen prøver å være to steder på samme tid. Det er en opphopning av forsøk som ligner hverandre, og venting. I en

bruddscene spikker jentene på noen trebiter, og selv om knivferdighetene ligner, er det ikke Prøysens vise om julepresangen som klinger med. Her spikkes det verken målrettet eller for spikkingen selv, det bare spikkes. Kanskje er det derfor jeg opplever det som sårt, det ligner jo IRL, det virkelige livet, i sin putring.

De gjentatte forsøkene både i dans og musikk er som en åpen søknad om kontaktflater, noe også den evinnelige avspillingen av karaokeversjonen til Rihannas verkende slager «Stay» peker mot. Her er flust av forsøk på å komme dit et *härvär* er mulig, til hverandre, tiden og situasjonen. Og det tar tid. Før det er over som det begynte, uten større dikkedarer. Og man går hjem og legger hendene ned ved tastaturet, som når du leser dette.

Mårten Spångberg - THE INTERNET
BLACKBOX, Oslo

Sara Hammer – Natt og Dag 22.03.15

Litt tung i hodet etter i går? Om du er villig til å gå inn i en spångbergsk transe, kan den svenske koreografen tilby deg den ultimate kur

Mårten Spångbergs forrige forestilling, *La Substance but in English,* ble tidligere i år nominert til Osloprisen for Årets scenekunst, men gikk av mystiske grunner ikke av med seieren. Ikke til forkleinelse for Grusomhetens teater, men *La Substance but in English* var etter undertegnedes syn utvilsomt forrige kalenderårs mest minneverdige scenekunstopplevelse. Å sitte på gulvet og drikke øl i en fargesprakende scenografi, mens man betraktet suggererende dansing til deilig kommersielle radiohits, gjorde dessuten forestillingen til fjorårets beste vorspiel. Mine forventninger til *The Internet* var naturligvis skyhøye, men forestillingen innfrir – og vel så det.

The Internet føles mest av alt som å være flue på veggen i den eksentrisk innredede leiligheten til tre dansere med deltidsjobber som flyvertinner, veiarbeidere, sekretærer, sykepleiere og McDonalds-servitører. Store deler av forestillingen går med til at de skifter uniformer, klær og hårfrisyrer og snakker sammen i et volum som er for lavt til at vi kan høre dem, avbrutt av enkle, repetitive og sykt fine koreografier. Å se på noen skifte klær og frisyre i tre og en halv time høres kanskje ikke ut som det du vil bruke søndagskvelden din på, men tro meg; det er det.

Også denne forestillingen er laget etter kom-og-gå-som-du-vil-modellen, og siden forestillingens oppbygning – ikke ulikt det store internettet – mangler en naturlig start og slutt, kan du trygt forlate salen i en god halvtime, uten at det blir problematisk å hekte seg på igjen. Men hvorfor noen skulle ønske å forlate denne forestillingen for ett eneste sekund, har jeg problemer med å forstå. Det samme gjelder enkeltes behov for å snakke kontinuerlig gjennom forestillingen. Til tross for at *The Internet* legger opp til at den gjerne kan fungere som bakgrunnsstøy for skravlingen til byens kulturtanter, synes jeg personlig at man får best utbytte av forestillingen om man vier den sitt fulle fokus, slik at man går inn i en slags*spångbergsk* transe.

Der *La Substance* var en oppladende vorspielforestilling, fungerer *The Internet*mer som en kur mot fylleangst og annet slagg. Der hjernen føltes litt for stor for kraniet da jeg gikk inn på Lille scene i går ettermiddag, føltes kraniet nesten litt stort for hjernen da jeg forlot salen tre og en halv time senere. Kanskje er det ikke en heldig metafor, da den også kan tolkes dithen at *The Internet* gjorde meg dummere, men det ville vel uansett ikke være første gang noen påstår at internettet gjør nettopp det med oss.

La det uansett ikke være noen tvil: Denne søndagen bør stå i Spångbergs tegn for de av dere som ikke tilbragte kvelden på Black Box teater i går.


Denne gangen har Spångberg bragt naturen inn i forestillingene sine, og i en scene lydsatt med fuglesang, sitter de tre jentene og spikker. For det første er de åpenbart helt ubrukelige til å spikke, og det de gjør kan best beskrives som å skrape kniv mot tre. Ved en anledning spikker også en av jentene *mot* seg! Her må Spångberg ta ansvar og lære jentene å spikke på skikkelig vis.

SAMTIDSDANS SOM RELIGION

”La Substance, but in English” Black Box Teater, store scene

Annette Perdersen, Klassekampen 29.september 2014

Hovedscenen på Black Box Teater er for anledningen dekket med sølvfarget termoplast, mens publikum sitter langs to av scenerommets kanter på grå filt-tepper. Den svenske koreografen Mårten Spångbergs *La Substance, but in English* var opprinnelig et bestillingsverk på oppdrag fra museet MoMa PS1 i New York tidligere i år, og etterpå har forestillingen gått sin seiersgang på europeiske teaterhus. Sentralt i *La Substance* står spørsmål omkring hvordan dans kan eksistere i et museum og hvordan dansens parametre fungerer i forhold til museets romlige og temporale vilkår.

Men helt uproblematisk er det ikke å flytte en forestilling fra et museum til en teatersal. På museet bestemmer man sitt eget tempo, i større eller mindre grad, mens man i teatret som regel er underlagt noen andres bestemmelser og innordner seg deretter. Dette gir *La Substance* et litt konformt preg, da det tar litt tid før publikum tar seg mer til rette i rommet.

Scenen er et glorete skue: utøverne er kledd i lag på lag med fargesprakende klær og sminke, og rommet har en uendelig mengde rekvisitter (brusflasker, fjernkontroller, leketøyslim, glitter etc.) og bannere i gull- og sølvfarger. Estetisk har *La Substance* likhetstrekk med Vincent Riebeek og Florentina Holzingers forestillinger, nå sist med *Spirit* på Black Box Teater i vinter. Men evnen til å senke tempoet i publikum og hensette det i en slags meditativ tilstand gir assosiasjoner til Ibsen-forestillingene til Vegard Vinge og Ida Müller.

La Substance har en åpen, simultan og visuell dramaturgi, hvor utøverne holder på med sine respektive prosjekter parallelt. Tidvis opererer de alene, tidvis inngår de i tablåer med hverandre, og som tilskuer kan man selv velge hva man vil følge med på. På sidelinjen sitter en dj/sanger, som spiller av musikk via laptop’en sin. Han synger oppå popmusikk og lyden av mail som ankommer innboksen, sendes av gårde, bilder som blir tatt etc. blander seg inn i musikken sammen med fuglekvitter. Det er det uperfektes estetikk, en absolutt blanding av høyt og lavt, hvor ballettkoreografi blandes med musikkvideo-mooves.

Måten publikum enten sitter på sine angitte plasser eller fargelegger et stort veggmaleri (primært innenfor de gitte strekene), må sies å være nokså konform og konvensjonell. Samtidig er *La Substance et* udefinert rom for sosiale relasjoner, lange tanker (du rekker å tenke en del i løpet av fire timer) og suggererende popmusikk. I et intervju har Spångberg uttalt at prosjektet etterstreber seg en ”form for verdiløshet” – men ikke en ”community hippie sosial herlighet.” Likevel er det unektelig noe hippie-sekt-aktig over hele seansen, en litt innbitt ’teater er the shit’-holdning. Til tross for det mekaniske preget over store deler av koreografien, er hovedårsaken til at man blir sittende (og stående og liggende) likevel utøverne med sine svært sterke scenepersonligheter og tilstedeværelse. *La Substance* er (på godt og vondt) et åpent rom, en hyggelig sekt, hvor man selv bestemmer hva man henter ut av opplevelsen.

Critical Acts

Substance-resonance

Mårten Spångberg's La Substance, but in English

André Lepecki

Mårten Spångberg's multiple and concurrent activities as curator, visual artist, lecturer, essayist, editor, performer, rock-band musician, and choreographer have in recent years held a close dialogue with speculative philosophy (specifically with the Iranian philosopher Reza Negarestani and the "object-oriented" philosophers, such as Graham Harman) and political philosophy (primarily Slavoj Žižek and Jacques Rancière). This convergence between philosophical speculation and artistic-curatorial imagination takes a particularly powerful concretion in Spångberg's latest choreographic work, *La Substance, but in English*, presented in early January 2014 in New York at MoMA PS1's performance dome space.

La Substance, but in English, lasting 4 hours and 20 minutes, is set up with the

Figure 1. Shine, glitter, and two-liter bottles of Coke. Mårten Spångberg's La Substance, but in English. *MoMA PS1, 12 January 2014. Performers: Linda Blomquist, Aron Blom, Ludvig Daae, Yoann Durant, Emma Kim Hagdahl, Sandra Lolax, Linnéa Martinsson, Pontus Pettersson, Rebecka Stillman, Hanna Strandberg, Marika Troili. (Photo by Charles Roussel)*

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apparent casual informality of a Happening, but unfolding as a deeply formalist, minutely choreographed project. Performed by eight dancers (Aron Blom, Hanna Strandberg, Ludvig Daae, Sandra Lolax, Linnea Martinsson, Emma Kim Hagdahl, Rebecka Stillman, Pontus Pettersson), one musician/singer (Yoann Durant), Marten Spångberg himself, and (with different degrees of engagement and enthusiasm) occasionally the audience, the work is also performed, and quite importantly so, by dozens of glittering and sparkling quotidian objects carefully distributed across the scene: shiny gift bags, silk cloth banners sporting high-fashion logos such as Chanel or Yves Saint Laurent, tall glass vessels with improbable greenish contents, heated metal plates with containers filled with boiling wax, a pile of butter sticks softening under the white theatrical lights, four humidifiers vaporizing the energy drink Monster at full blast, chemical agents such as polyurethane, Hydrogen peroxide, dry yeast, dishwashing soap, two-liter bottles of Coke, bottles of Listerine (carefully lined up in gradations of blue to green) and of chocolate syrup, a pyramid of neatly arranged oranges, several deodorant sticks (including Axe roll-on, which dancer Rebecka Stillman applied to herself throughout), and many more objects (additional props built by Marika Troili). The accumulation of stuff does not create a sense of chaos or hoarding. Instead, clear lines arrange the disposition of things throughout the linoleum-covered performance area, just as there is a careful choreographic geometry in the many group dances that will appear and disappear throughout the piece.

Figure 2. A tall panel, paints, and brushes were available to spectators throughout the piece. Mårten Spångberg's La Substance, but in English. *MoMA PS1, 12 January 2014. Performers: Linda Blomquist, Aron Blom, Ludvig Daae, Yoann Durant, Emma Kim Hagdahl, Sandra Lolax, Linnéa Martinsson, Pontus Pettersson, Rebecka Stillman, Hanna Strandberg, Marika Troili. (Photo by Charles Roussel)*

In *La Substance*, dance is indeed a modulating force that momentarily invades the dancers' bodies, only to drop them cold, back to their absurd, or hollow, small tasks, or quite often, back to just being there doing nothing much other than squatting, idling, laying down. At these moments, the dancers' (in)actions mirror closely those of the audience, who are on the periphery, squatting, laying down, idling under the dome along with the glitter of all those substances onstage: human and nonhuman, visual and sonic.

The shimmering geometry, the apparently happy consumerist glamour where post-hippie and high-fashion iconographies mix, is disturbed by the vague, sweet, and slightly nauseating combined scent of all the organic and inorganic substances, vapors, and chemicals present. Perhaps even more of a disturbance for some is the physical exertion the audience goes through by simply sitting on the floor (or standing) next to it all for over four straight hours. Through these objects and their visual, olfactory, tactile, kinetic, and affective effects (enthusiasm and nausea, laughter and exertion), Spångberg and his dancers immediately destroy any illusion that dance is that art of harmonious flows and of "empathic resonance" (to use an expression in vogue in certain contemporary dance discourse) predicated on a shared humanity or shared corporality, or even a shared subjectivity. There is absolutely no place for empathy between subjects here. Instead, there is a rather demanding request for "spectators who play the role of active interpreters, who develop their own translations in order to appropriate 'the story' and make

Figure 3. The choreography made occasional references to Merce Cunningham and the backdrop to high-fashion logos. Mårten Spångberg's La Substance, but in English. *MoMA PS1, 12 January 2014. Performers: Linda Blomquist, Aron Blom, Ludvig Daae, Yoann Durant, Emma Kim Hagdahl, Sandra Lolax, Linnéa Martinsson, Pontus Pettersson, Rebecka Stillman, Hanna Strandberg, Marika Troili. (Photo by Charles Roussel)*

it their own story," as Jacques Ranciére would say, in his notorious essay *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009:22)—an essay, by the way, that Spångberg himself commissioned the philosopher to write, and that serves quite well Spångberg's own beliefs of what it means for an audience to participate in a work. Never has an artist so clearly promoted his own views on his art via such a high-profile proxy.[1]

Indeed, what matters more than the universality of dance as a corporeal language is the activation through dance of endlessly dissensual critical thinking—as long as this particular mode of production of thought remains, within the performance situation, a one-way street, coming from the artwork and heading towards the audience. In other words, audience participation will not disturb the flow of the work, its formalist and conceptual integrity. The issue *La Substance, but in English* brings to this whole question of a Rancièrian/Spångbergian emancipated spectatorship in dance is that, of course, there is no "story" to be built—neither by the choreographer nor by the audience—only images and sounds and smells and sweat and bodies and movement and objects and forces to be assembled, and disassembled, as images of thought. If the process is stren-

1. A version of "The Emancipated Spectator" was first published in English in *Artforum*, March 2007. A footnote to that edition states: "'The Emancipated Spectator' was originally presented, in English, at the opening of the Fifth International Summer Academy in Frankfurt, on August 20th, 2004" (Rancière 2007:280). A footnote to the reprinting of the essay in the homonymous Verso book (2009) acknowledges by name the one who had made the original invitation: "The invitation [...] came from Swedish performer and choreographer Mårten Spångberg" (Rancière 2009:1). Spångberg confided to me a few times, that once he read Rancière's book *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (the first French edition is from 1987), he knew he had found a philosopher who could defend the idea that participation does not require active physical engagement of the audience, but a passive intellectual activity. For a critique of this "passive partaking" or "disengaged methexis," see Lepecki (2013).

uous, Spångberg is generous: he leaves at the edges of the linoleum flooring, bridging the performance space and the surrounding space where spectators sit on the floor or lie down, cases of beer (the red and white of Budweiser 12-packs works beautifully with the preponderant blues and greens of the objects more in front). Spångberg also offers a large and tall white panel, defining one of the scene's boundaries, and several buckets of water-based paint, and brushes, so that whoever wishes to fill in a large semi-abstract, semi-childish, drawing by Spångberg on that wall is welcome to do so at any time during the piece. I was there on that wall for quite some time, and the experience of a relaxed and disengaged relation to the performance became quite important to me since it allowed me to realize how, no matter what I did, the work would not be affected. It had its autonomy; it was perfectly indifferent to my actions. Not to be creative, just to pass time: this is quite liberating in times of neoliberal high-performance anxiety, making what *La Substance* offers us such an increasingly rare gift. Importantly, there is no explicit invitation for the audience to participate in painting, or to drink the beer. The stuff is just there. What to do with them is up to us to decide.

Figure 4. Lots of stuff and a microphone at the ready. Mårten Spångberg's La Substance, but in English. *MoMA PS1, 12 January 2014. Performers: Linda Blomquist, Aron Blom, Ludvig Daae, Yoann Durant, Emma Kim Hagdahl, Sandra Lolax, Linnéa Martinsson, Pontus Pettersson, Rebecka Stillman, Hanna Strandberg, Marika Troili. (Photo by Charles Roussel)*

Time and criticality and geometry then—and also carefully choreographed group dances with a strong emphasis on unison movements. The choreography (with several references to Cunningham, as well as to pop music videos) is occasionally traversed by unruly uprisings. A kind of impersonal force cuts across choreographic composition and composure. In these irruptions, one starts to suspect what the substance referred to in the title might be: not a material element, but an affective force that powers and animates and crisscrosses both the organic and the inorganic. Speculative philosophy meets the nonhuman agency of the thing. In 2003, Spångberg created his solo *Powered by Emotion*, where the same affective principle applied. With *La Substance, but in English*, the level of depth in his affective choreography is mastered at a whole new level, where the impersonal takes precedence. As Brian Massumi clarifies in his classic essay "The Autonomy of Affect," emotion and affect are quite different entities, and affect is autonomous from the cultural-normative framings of intense sensations: "Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, [...] into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized. [...A]ffect is unqualified. As such it is not ownable or recognizable, and is thus resistant to critique" (1995:88).

But...what might be the English unqualifiable affect of *La Substance*?

From the moment we enter the space until the piece is over, songs almost never stop. I can only think of Pina Bausch's pieces after *Palermo, Palermo* as being so dramaturgically and choreographically dependent upon a non-stop string of songs. The obvious difference is that instead of Bausch's "world music" approach, Spångberg's soundtrack is overwhelmingly composed of black American hip hop in its multiple variations: from Junglepussy to Rihanna, from Beyoncé to Kendrick Lamar (whose "Bitch, Don't Kill My Vibe" is looped at a certain point for a good half hour). Songs, mostly black songs, suture the whole

performance. Sheer verbal and rhythmic force powerfully produces an altogether different substance: a black American substance whose sonic impact radically inflects the choreographic images and objects onstage. Spångberg sits on the same exact spot throughout the entire piece, laptop in hand, and keeps shooting out messages on Facebook, email, or Skype to his dancers (we can hear all the familiar sounds these applications emit as they perform their task, a really smart indication of the economies of communication and time underpinning the performance). But he also manages the songs from a very long playlist. Meanwhile, the singer Yoann Durant, sitting with the audience (sometimes it is impossible to distinguish him from the regular public), completes *La Substance*'s resonant image. Microphone in hand, mostly on his knees, and throughout most of the performance, he sings those same songs, those same lyrics rather unassumingly (it takes a while for one to notice this other voice, this subtle dis/resonance). A necessarily imperfect sonic overlap occurs, adding a distinct vibration, a disjunctive synthesis, a dis-harmonics, a third element, an accent to the songs. Through a sonic interplace, another substance enters the fray. We may call it the impersonal timbre or fugitive sound.

This third element, expressing an encounter between black hip hop re-resonated via the clash of Durant's voice with the recorded soundtracks, is, for me, the substance of *La Substance*: pure affect—not ownable, autonomous, impersonal. It can only emerge through the mutual performance of live and recorded singing; it is neither of the singer nor of the recorded songs; it is utterly impersonal and really grainy, non-spectacular and unruly. Thus, underneath choreography, songwriting, glittering high-fashion logos, the authority of the author, the sexy virtuosic techniques of the dancers, the choreographic references to Cunningham's geometries, the sudden eruption of a balletic port-de-bras, the subtle stench of all the chemicals and butter and opened beer cans—underneath it all, and powering it all, as a sweet nausea, a black substance operates its political-affective force: "those mutations that are always also a regendering or transgendering" where "lies the black thing that cuts the regulative, governant force of (the) understanding (and even of those understandings of blackness to which black people are given since fugitivity escapes even the fugitive)," as Fred Moten and Stefano Harney propose (2013:50). The political-philosophical unconscious of Spångberg's tour de force is this black power—it is an unconscious, however, that is not Spångberg's; it is an unconscious that does not belong to an author, nor to a subject, nor even to the subject of the "creative collective." The unconscious names the assembler and producer of all those affects already crisscrossing the undercommons of our existence, the movement of things independent from their masters and their encounters, and the "anachoreographic" (Harney and Moten 2013:50) collisions produced. Under the dome, under the glitter and shiny bottles of Listerine and Monster and Coke, the black (under)ground thuds its sounds, proposing a force no choreography can control. One may only unleash it and brace up for what it makes happen: dance's black matter, its dark physics, beyond emancipation.

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“Generosity That Can’t Be Mistaken For Kindness” Mårten Spångberg and the Vibe of Contemporaneity

By Andrew Friedman, Yale Theatre Magazine

The baseline of Kendrick Lamar’s “Bitch Don’t Kill My Vibe” was clearly audible in the cafeteria of MOMA PS1. Fifty-yards away, across the museum’s gravel court yard the song shook the floor of a Volkswagen-sponsored white geodesic dome. Inside, the art, dance, and performance worlds lounged on wadded-up blankets, played on their phones, drank beer, cuddled with their friends and, on occasion, paid attention to *La Substance, but in English*, Mårten Spångberg’s four-and-a-half-hour work of choreography, presented in conjunction with the 2014 American Realness Festival. Navigating the floor of spectators—like crossing a beach crowded with sunbathers—I found my friend who brought me up to speed: in my absence, “the smoke machine went off a little.” I was certain that I had missed something beautiful and entirely unimportant. A thin fog hung low across the silver-insulation flooring, drifting over Arizona Iced Tea cans, ribbons of blue goo, Axe deodorant, a pyramid of stacked butter, a trio of humidifiers, giant fuzzy-white dice, cylinders of mystery liquid, and piles of clothes that the eight performers languidly changed in and out of until each became a collage of competing fabrics and styles. The dancers, like the survivors of a fourth-grader’s beauty clinic, wore a riot of sparkles and chunky makeup—streams of glitter tears, bright orange eyebrows, a disturbingly pinkish chin—crowned with a jumble of wigs, braids, headbands, feathers and hair dye. Intermittently, their slow-motion behaviors erupt into dance.

Without making overt demands on the spectators’ attention, everything has the potential to deliver sensorial information: lazily painting one’s arms with Marshmallow Fluff, dropping Mentos into bottles of Diet Coke to volcanic effect, a peace sign constructed from remote controls, rustling cardboard in a box,

rearranging oranges on the floor, or the flash of balletic structures undergirding the movements. There are infinite opportunities for engagement but little direction. The perceptual horizontalism of Gertrude Stein's conception of "landscape" plays is a clear influence, offering a terrain of differing modes and speeds of traversing and, perhaps most importantly, one that cannot be misunderstood.[i] Upstage, hangs a massive tapestry of reflective gold and silver panels. Stitched together with the flags of high-end clothing designers—Chanel, Gucci, Yves Saint Laurent—the backdrop trembles with each pulse of bass. Overhead, a mobile of giant gold pot leaves sways, bouncing arcs of light through the haze. Nestled in the front row of the crowd, Yoann Durant, one of Spångberg's many collaborators, sings over each song as he reads the lyrics from a laptop. Switching from rap to pop, he faces the action; his gently amplified voice rides over the recorded tracks as if the entire performance were his own elaborate karaoke fantasy. Spångberg sits stage left floor, conspicuously cuing the show. He signals to the dancers using cryptic hand gestures and relays with Yoann via emails, texts, and Skype whose signature swooshes and ring-tones are audibly broadcast through the room. Like a self-described "mechanic" who hasn't invented the machine he tinkers with, but keeps it running smoothly, Spångberg busies himself tweaking sound levels or fetching an errant prop.[ii] Behind him, a mix of performers and spectators color in the outline of a huge psychedelic mural that, as if willed by the steady undertow of the performance itself, was completed as the evening drew to an ethereal close.

The mingling of the quietly profound and disposable is a hallmark of Spångberg's performances. Constructed from the products, behaviors, and technologies of twenty-first century popular and underground culture, the rich ambiguity of Spångberg's works distinguishes them from the standard juxtaposition of 'high' and 'low' references for ironic or dissonant effect. Neither critiquing nor reveling in this milieu, Spångberg reassembles the artifacts of contemporary life into alien habitats that are natural to its performers and obliquely familiar to audiences. The animate and inanimate objects that comprise his environments are governed by Spångberg's conception of choreography as a practice not exclusive to constructing dances, but as an expansive strategy for the organization of time and space.[iii] Sidestepping entertainment, the ambition is to create works that "leaves the audience alone."[iv] The compositions permit audiences to take in the event with as little or as much attention as they wish and without demanding they check their daily viewing habits at the door. Multi-focal modes of spectatorship are encouraged for performer and spectator alike: both use their phones, talk to each other, wander in and out of the space, take photos or videos of the action, eat, drink, and sleep. Uninterested in keeping spectators busy with amusement, critique, analysis, or virtuosity, sensorial experience presides in what Gia Kourlas called, "a little like watching a sunset."[v] The multiple and particular practices of engagement foster a sense of contemporaneity, what Peter Osborne identifies as "a coming together of different but equally 'present' temporalities or 'times', a temporal unity in disjunction."[vi] Embracing the partiality of one's own perception is the rule of both Spångberg's work and contemporaneity, which shrug off totalizing narratives born of Modernity and Postmodernity, as well as attempts to instrumentalize people

through appeals to common experience. Or, as Spångberg polemically asserts, "something political [in performance] is never contemporary, it's just more of the same," while evocation of opinions and feelings are similarly dismissed as "conventional, commissioned and co- produced."[vii] Yet, for Spångberg, the shows are an attempt to "produce something that neo-liberalism doesn't know how to cope with, at all."[viii] The task requires eschewing art's standard political strategies—especially critique and discourse—that are quickly co-opted and defanged by neo-liberalism, and to which audiences have grown accustomed. Instead of political utility, Spångberg delivers experience, which in the case of *La Substance*, is well summarized in Kendrick Lamar's repeated chorus:

I can feel your energy from two planets away
I got my drink, I got my music
I would share it but today I'm yelling
Bitch don't kill my vibe, bitch don't kill my vibe
Bitch don't kill my vibe, bitch don't kill my vibe[ix]

Defined by its ability "to transmit or express (a feeling, attitude, etc.) to others in the form of intuitive signals," as well as "perceive on the basis of such signals," vibe—the pop-cultural equivalent of affect—never crosses over into feeling or language leaving devoid of political applicability.[x] Spångberg's performances produce an abundance of vibe, filling the void of discernable narrative, conflict, or mirrored subjectivity.

Given the abstraction of such concepts—not to mention their echo of Gilles Deleuze among other theorists—it will come as little surprise that Spångberg's interest in dance was shaped in the academy, as a joint Ph.D. student of both the University College of Dance in Stockholm and the architecture department of the Royal Institute of Technology.[xi] Spångberg's career in dance began, however, as critic. Writing for Sweden's daily papers, *Aftonblandet* and *Dagens Nyheter* from 2002-07, he is well tutored in the medium's history as well as its institutional interdependence. His somewhat marginal status in comparison to many of his peers is, in part, the product of his lack of formal training. Working from the outside in, Spångberg has actively shaped the European dance and performance scenes by wearing numerous hats—curator, critic, theorist, professor, choreographer, and lecturer—since the mid-90s. The expanse of his engagements, according to the artist, also serves as a necessary form of self-authorization in lieu of practical education.[xii]

International Festival, a project spearheaded by Spångberg and the architect Tor Lindstrand in 2004, is founded on the overlap between choreography and architecture as practices concerned with spatial organization. The pair have collaborated on twenty-two works ranging from feature-length films and installations, to an open-air market and a temporary television station that made daily broadcasts to over a half-a-million homes in Tarfia, Spain.[xiii] *The Theatre* (2007) is a performance of architecture in which a functional one-hundred-and-

eighty seat theatre is designed and constructed by International Festival collaborators upon commission. The result is a freestanding structure that both houses and is itself a performance that blurs distinctions between what objects and bodies do.[xiv]

Spångberg has equally been integral to the launch and continuation of *The Swedish Dance History*, an annual, collaboratively created book documenting the year in Swedish dance in which all submissions, in any form, are accepted. The resulting texts are distributed free of charge at festivals throughout the world. These volumes function, like much of Spångberg's work, as an attempt to celebrate the contributions of practitioners, but also as part of a grander ambition to develop a broader, more interdisciplinary, and artist-driven field for the performing arts. *Spångbergianism* (2011), however, is the author's best-know text. The one-hundred-and-seventy-three page book, culled from the artist's blog posts, is a searing polemic dedicated equally to theorizing new modes of producing dance in the twenty-first century and to critiquing of the discipline's standard models and practices.[xv] Available as a free download, the book spawned a series of lectures in which Spångberg—who defines all of his works, including his talks, as forms of choreography— spoke uninterrupted for up to four hours. Dance scholar André Lepecki summed up one such lecture as having, "brilliant moments as there are infuriating ones; moments of deep resonance and of deep dissonance; moments one wants to correct a date or a wrong reference to a book's title and moments we wish we could be taping it all, for later consultation and slower pondering."[xvi] The torrents of language impact the thoughts and perceptions of the listener not by virtue of argumentation, but, as Lepecki reports, like a "parasite," worming its way into the "host"/listener who mutates under its influence.[xvii]

The contagion brought on by washes of sensory information applies equally to Spångberg's performance landscapes. Rudi Laermans calls this mode of nonhierarchical composition, "choreography in general," comprised of "mutually interacting forces or movements of a various nature that affect each other within a governed plane of consistency."[xviii] The approach, for Laermans, provokes the question, "not 'what does it mean?' but 'how does it work?'" Spångberg aspires to render both queries unanswerable. Within Spångberg's works, the question becomes one of potential; what can happen when we aren't waiting for something to happen? The potentiality of choreography, rather than its illustration of discourse or composition, preoccupies Spångberg's works from 2008 to the present.

Due to his concern for the total performance environment, Spångberg's works are generally categorized as *Konzepttanz* (conceptual dance), and alongside artists like Jérôme Bel, Tino Seghal, Xavier Le Roy, and Meg Stuart. Johannes Birringer defines the movement, which started in Western Europe in the mid-1990s, by its attempts to "examine the medium of dance, to lay bare the mechanics of the production process and negate its aesthetic modes of representation."[xix] Although sharing a body of aesthetics, André Lepecki reminds that chief among the concerns for those associated with *Konzepttanz* is the rejection of the moniker itself.[xx]

Nonetheless, the term has utility for Lepecki as a link between the presumed preoccupations of *Konzepttanz* and the preceding foci of conceptual art in the 1960s and 70s.[xxi] Spångberg's practice, begun in the mid-90s and based in Stockholm, is located within the crosshairs of the movement. As a result, he goes to great pains to distance himself from the association, noting that he presents concepts, but the productions themselves are not "conceptual."[xxii] At first blush the distinction seems semantic, but Spångberg's parsing of 'concepts' and 'conceptual' is integral to his work and, in part, accounts for the strange contrast between the theoretical inspirations for his projects and the experience of watching them.

Conceptual dance's fascination with choreographic, performative, and spectatorial structures echoes the critiques launched by post-modern theory and art practice against the autonomous artwork of Modernism. Within the development of dance, Lepecki sees *Konzepttanz* as engaging the innovations of Pina Bausch and Yvonne Rainer through the former's "distrust of representation, and an insistence on the dancer's presence" and the latter's "suspicion of virtuosity and the reduction of unessential props and scenic elements," as well as their mutual affinity for visual and performance art.[xxiii] Indebted as Spångberg is to such innovations, his work strategically diverts from this lineage with respect to Bausch's presence and Rainer's minimalism. The layering of minute gestures, stuff, and atmosphere make the productions counter intuitively maximalist. Amid the spectacle and sensation, dancerly presence and dancing in general—if impossible to wholly erase—are recast as one among many choreographed objects. Equity between dance, the dancers, and the other components of the space is established without egalitarian sentiment, but instead with a desire to de-emphasize the beauty, creativity, and subjectivity of the dancer. The discreet but intertwined elements, "staged concepts" as Spångberg calls them, "withdrawal" from audiences rather than illustrate for them, providing a potentiality, an open field, an opportunity.[xxiv]

Recent scholarship has taken on the appeal of potentiality in what Laura Cull has termed the "performance of immanence."[xxv] Traced through theatre and performance, Gilles Deleuze's understanding of immanence, according to Cull, eliminates a "fundamental separation or hierarchy between the nature of words and things, body and mind, subject and object, representation and the real, theory and practice."[xxvi] Yet, like Spångberg's compositions, the elements maintain a level of differentiation through what Cull terms "processuality," what Spångberg calls the creation of a "sauce" in which the ingredients combine into a unique blend that simultaneously retains the phantoms of its constitute parts.[xxvii] Given Delueze's influence on dance and performance scholarship, it is perhaps unsurpising how central the theorist is to Spångberg's work.[xxviii] His lectures, essays, books, and program notes, and casual conversation, are steeped in French post-structural thought. He quotes from this body of knowledge with ease and regularity, yet, his productions, clearly a product of this thinking, have an airiness, an emptiness that signals the evacuation of the conceptual that seemingly runs counter to his theoretical inspirers. The prominence of theory without the baggage of illustration is integral to Peter Osborne's definition of contemporary art as "postconceptual

art."[xxix] Its chief characteristic is the demonstration of its own existence by "projecting contemporaneity – the establishment of connections within the living present – as a task to be achieved."[xxx] Combining opaque images and gestures with a spectatorial permissiveness, Spångberg's choreography conjures a space for the "living present" through the production of connections. This sense of contemporaneity circulating in Spångberg's work can be traced from as far back as 2008.

Slowfall (2008) is the first of a series of works to engage the question of potentiality. Inspired by chakra breathing and drawing, the eighty-minute solo takes its name from a variety of confetti whose circular movement yields a fluttery and protracted descent. Standing naked before a white wall, Spångberg, underscored by chirping crickets, moves into a series of poses and, intermittently and methodically, draws images in an amateurish outline upon the backdrop: a yellow banana, a smoking skillet, green and red diamonds, a family of elephants. Juxtaposing the meditative pace are eruptions of stage smoke, Coldplay's melancholic rock anthem "Yellow" (2000) and Deep Purple's anti-Vietnam War crusher "Child of Time" (1970). But these jolts of energy never affect Spångberg's performance, which proceeds like a physicalized drone, never modulating even while switching between the tasks of breathing and illustration. The breach or possible relation between behavior and context is left for the audience to ponder or produce as they sit on the floor.

Slowfall features the chief structural and aesthetic characteristics that appear in Spångberg's following works: the production of space and a beguiling performance affect. Without the demarcating structure of seats, spectators must negotiate the space and their relation to one another in it: the bored recline, the attention hungry sit sideways, inserting their profile into the stage picture, all the while sharing the same light as the stage area itself. Meanwhile, Spångberg, and his performers strike a hybrid pose towards the onlookers and each other that registers as equal parts stony vacuity and a peacefulness prone to fits of playful whistles and squeals, screams and smirks. Despite keeping near-constant eye contact with the audience and each other, the performers' intentions remain masked. These looks lead to an array of actions: snapping photos of the audience or oneself, joining or shifting a dance in progress, or simply zoning out. Ranging from the fleeting to the uncomfortably long, these glances have a zoological air, like peering into a habitat populated by unthreatened animals who are available for inspection, but not without returning the favor. Yet these exchanges, not to mention seating arrangements, have none of the combative or utopian sentiments stemming from late sixties and seventies performance art, dance, and political theatre. The sense is not that the fourth-wall needs to be dismantled or that doing so fosters empathy, community, or intersubjective exchange. Mutual recognition instead summons the strange over the familiar, opening a gulf where other works might propose a bridge: "a generosity that can't be mistaken for kindness."[xxxi]

Nowhere is this strangeness more evident than in *Ride the Wave Dude* (2010) a collaboration between Spångberg and the Estonian choreographer and performer,

Krõõt Juurak. Designed as a "performance for dragons," the production is a series of behaviors and gestures that unfold slowly to a constant soundtrack of pounding tribal-surf-rock drums.[xxxii] Dressed in swimsuits, Spångberg and Juurak sprinkle water on the audience, hold and display various objects made from cardboard, take a beer break, hoist dozens of cardboard flags taped to thin-wooden dowels, dissect the stage space with a web of strings, paint their limbs red, tape forks to the backs of their thighs, and display a series of placards decrying Woody Allen: "spit on Woody Allen's space," which they then do by spitting on a small cardboard house placed within a miniature landscape of makeshift hills and towns scattered around the stage. The behaviors suggest the secret culture of surfers or cave people or mythical giants, or, equally probable, an entertainment for dragons. The plurality of possibilities is, of course, intentional and designed to register differently for each audience member. Aesthetic reference points—60s Happening, Jack Smith's object theatre, or the Judson Church—apply partially, but a clear correlation is lacking. Lineage, although traceable, is rendered enigmatic through Spångberg's efforts to separate choreography and dance as the accepted *Pas de deux* of the medium, resulting in a sense of disjointedness.

Epic (2012) is the first presentation of Spångberg's aesthetic concerns on a grand scale. At full length, the show runs over fours hours and follows "eight autonomous solos" that overlap and intersect within a baffling *mise en scène* of scattered objects.[xxxiii] As with all of Spångberg's works, the dances are assembled from fragmented traditions (ballet, hip-hop, modern), everyday behavior (smoking a joint, combing one's hair), and the culturally iconic (boxing, Miley Cyrus' now-infamous tongue wag). During rehearsals, the dancers produce the individual elements in response to a variety of prompts. The eclecticism of the material is further emphasized by Spångberg's ordering. As with the other choreographic behaviors, probability and patterns are noticeable but difficult to predict. A stripped down *Jeté* is as likely to move into further ballet, become top-rock breakdancing, or dissolve into informal shrug. Variety, the continual shifting of perspective and tempo produce a variability of movement. Sequences often shift throughout the stage—what is upstage eventually appears downstage—drawing attention to different coordinates of the space and the body. Movements and gestures recur in full or as fragments among the dancers. Like the symptoms of a virus spreading through the performers, the symptoms morph in intensity and pattern as they infect.

A single song typically sustains each sequence. In *The Nature* (2013), Oasis' mega-hit "Wonderwall" (1995) repeats for fifteen minutes as the four dancers wander in and out of the choreography, at times synchronizing, at others peeling off to swap clothes, cheer each other on, or follow a separate track of the routine only to reunite in a further mutation of the initial pattern. Although the entirety of the work is rigidly organized, a tension between freedom of expression and strictures persists. Even customary section dedicated to improvisation—found in *Epic, The Nature,* and *La Substance*—is meticulously scheduled and timed. Patterns, bits of scenography, behaviors, and costumes, reappear across productions. A process

Spångberg equates with upgrading operating systems, in which essential features are retained, but the overall look, feel, and organization are reconceived.[xxxiv]

When not dancing or engaged in other choreographed behavior, the performers shuffle through these worlds like packs of psychedelic zombies, their bodies distorted under a patchwork ill-fitted garments. The preponderance of brand-name products, logos, and popular music filling the environments, in conjunction with Spångberg's musings on capitalism and neo-liberalism, have led the works to be seen as commentaries on consumerism.[xxxv] As subtextless facades, Spångberg's choreography is more in league with other artists of life's surfaces—theatre makers Vegard Vinge and Ida Müller, video artist Ryan Trecartin, novelist Tao Lin, and filmmaker Harmony Korine to name a few—who have given up plumbing the mythical depths of human experience for efficacious meaning. Theirs are visions of existence thriving atop the horribly beautiful exteriors of contemporary cultures. An assertion of art's autonomy—not from social, political, and economic influence and structures—but from social, political, and economic utility. Or, as Spångberg rails, "Art is not in the world to be good, to help out, to make the world a better place, it is not here to be a lantern in the dark. Instead art and aesthetic experience is the opportunity to remain in the dark, to not be helpful, to not solve any problems but be just art, just an image beyond ethical prescriptions and well-meaning complacency."[xxxvi]

Over three hours into *La Substance,* something like a climax occurs: Christina Aguilera's "Genie in a Bottle" (1999) thumps on a loop as all eight dancers weave in and out of a stretch of choreography that disintegrates whenever it verges towards coherence. Finally, the dancers synchronize, suturing together their disparate motions into a show-stopping routine of pop virtuosity. Yoann, head bobbing as he purrs over the lyrics, suddenly puts down the microphone and makes his way through the crowd towards the exit; the warm light of his smartphone illuminating a cigarette hung precariously from his lips. There must have been somewhere else, right then, that he wanted to be.

[i] See Gertrude Stein, *Lectures in America* (1935; reprint,
Boston: Beacon, 1985).
[ii] Mårten Spångberg, interview with the author, February 7, 2014
[iii] Interview with the author, February 7, 2014.
[iv] MoMa PS1 Sunday Sessions Event Description "A new commission by Mårten Spångberg, La Substance, but in English," *MoMa PS1 online,* February 6, 2014, http://momaps1.org/calendar/view/478/.
[v] Gia Kourlas, "Kicking Back: Nature of Choreography Revised, With Beer Cans
'La Substance, but in English' Tweaks Consumerism," *New York Times online,* January 13, 2014,
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/14/arts/dance/la-substance-but-in-english-tweaks-consumerism.html?_r=0.
[vi] Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art*, (London: Verso, 2013), 22.
[vii] Mårten Spångberg, *Spångbergianism*, (Self-Published, 2011), 44.
[viii] Lyndsey Winship, "Mårten Spångberg, the bad boy of contemporary dance," *The Guardian online,* July 5, 2013,
http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/jul/05/marten-spangberg-epic-dance.
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[xxv] Laura Cull *Theatres of Immanence: Deleuze and the Ethics of Performance*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
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[xxix] Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art,* 51.
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Mårten Spångberg: – Kunst i dag bør etterstrebe en form for verdiløshet

…fordi kapitalen er überhappy over hver eneste form for motstand og kritikk. Det sier Mårten Spångberg, som nå tar med sin hyllede, fire og en halv times lange forestilling «La Substance, but in English» til Norge.

Først ut, hvorfor valgte du tittelen *La Substance, but in English*? Hvorfor ikke bare kalle forestillingen Substance, eller Substans?
– Jeg har aldri likt skuespilleren og komikeren Peter Sellers. Komedie er liksom ikke min greie. Når det er sagt, er *The Party* er en super-nice film. Her spiller Sellers en mislykket indisk-ish skuespiller i Hollywood som på grunn av en misforståelse blir bedt i en superhot bransjefest. Anyway, det skjer masse rart. Til slutt kommer det inn en elefant og hele huset fylles av skum og alt er perfekt. På festen treffer Sellers – som for anledningen er brunsminket for å se ut som en indisk person eller noe, noe som er ganske så *up in the face* rasistisk – uansett, Sellers treffer en dame. Hun introduserer seg selv som Peggy Sue, eller noe annet overfladisk og stupid, og Sellers svarer «Enchanté nice. Gupta, is the name I'm called». Det er på samme måte med *La Substance, but in English*. Nice og enchanté, men obviously helt seriøst ment.

Men flere steder står det at tittelen baserer seg på antikk gresk filosofi og Platons forståelse av substans? Er det bare bullshit?
– Altså, tittelen har noe med filosofi å gjøre, men det har jeg helt glemt bort. Det der med *but in English* er mest for at folk skal fatte at forestillingen vet hva den driver på med. *La Substance* er derimot uavhengig, absolutt uavhengig. Forestillingen også, den er uavhengig og på sitt vis indifferent til verden og publikum.

Helt likegyldig altså?
– Ja, og dette gjør at publikum kan gjøre hva de vil. Forestillingen trenger dem ikke, men er samtidig glad for at alle er der, selv om noen sover, er på Facebook, snakker med en kompis, klemmer, eller bare er der for no particular reason. Shit, en annen ting med Peter Sellers. En gang kom han til en filminnspilling i Italia og hilser på regissøren Blake Edwards. Sellers sier «Hello Blake» og Blake svarer «Hello Peter, welcome to Hollywood». «But this isn't Hollywood, this is Italy» sier Sellers, og får til svar «Peter, Hollywood is a state of mind». Sånt kan man like.

Definitivt. Men tilbake til *La Substance*. Her tar du visstnok sikte på å vise hvordan kapitalisme og sosiale medier har endret måten vi erfarer verden på. Hva er det som har skjedd med oss, tror du? Har vi blitt avstumpede mennesker?
– Ja, det der er mest med for å flørte med Kulturrådet. De liker beskrivelser av typen «Facebook ødelegger barna våre! Instagram gjør hele verden overfladisk!». Det var valg i Sverige for noen uker siden, og det gikk ikke så bra. Det er tydelig at vi ikke forstår hvordan meninger produseres og spres. Det er en feilslutning å tro at vi er et produkt av kapitalismen, teknologi og vår omgang med sosiale medier, for det er like mye vi som er produsenter av kapitalisme og kommunikasjonsmåter.

En slags gjensidighet her altså, men hvordan stiller forestillingen seg til dette?
– *La Substance* omfavner kapitalismen, sosiale medier, selfies, smartphones, brands, overfladiskhet, Instagram, og lar hele greia det smelte inn i en slags homeopatisk kamp. Det resulterer i en opplevelse uten egenskaper – en tid uten språk. *La Substance* er bare en vibe, og det handler om å bli ett med denne viben.

Mange vil si at det er kunstens oppgave å kritisere og bryte ut av kapitalistiske tankemønstre og betraktningsmåter? Rommer denne ideen om vibe og substanse en form for protest mot en kapitalistisk logikk?
– Det her er et ganske omfattende spørsmål, typ PhD-omfattende. Jeg tror at kunsten på 1900-tallet har kunnet være kritisk og en protest mot hvordan samfunnet formes, men jeg tror at vi nå befinner oss i en ny situasjon. Spørsmålet blir heller, hvordan kan vi bryte mot noe som er omni-present (allestedsnærværende jour. anm), noe som definerer liv som sådant? Vårt problem i dag er at kapitalisme på en og samme tid er fienden og sponsoren av tenkbar motstand. Kapitalen er überhappy over hver eneste form for motstand og kritikk, fordi denne kritikken blir en del av kapitalen. Kulturrådet liker beskrivelser av typen «Facebook ødelegger barna våre! Instagram gjør hele verden overfladisk!»

Så det finnes ingen mulighet til å protestere?
– I stedet for å drive med instrumentell kritikk av vår relasjon til verden, så tror jeg kunsten i dag bør ta en annen vei og heller strebe etter en form for verdiløshet. Det vil si å være kunst uten å være verdifull i relasjon til noe. Kunstens oppgave er ikke å vise elendighet og lidelse, eller å være opplysende. Dens oppgave er å produsere muligheten for helt andre former for opplevelser. Opplevelser uten egenskaper, uten aspirasjoner av noe slag. Substansen har en slik kapasitet, uten retning, krav, mål eller moral.

Så, er tanken da at *La Substance* skal være et fristed hvor publikum kan reflektere over, og kanskje bryte ut av, vår vante måte å erfare verden på? Hva da med ønsket om en mer langvarig endring, og det å bidra til politiske eller sosiale endringer? Er det noe du har gitt opp?
– Jeg tror ikke kunsten kan unngå å produsere politiske og sosiale forandringer, men samtidig kan ikke målet være å produsere beskrivende forandringer. Om dette var tilfellet ville vi kunne måle kunstens nytteverdi, men i hvem sine øyne og til hvilken pris? Her må vi skille mellom kunstnerens mål som menneske og kunstens mål, som er å være kunst.

Du er kjent for å være en eksperimentell koreograf, har du endret måten du tilnærmer og forstår dans og koreografi på i arbeidet med *La Substance, but in English*?
– Så klart. Hvert prosjekt handler om å skape nye forutsetninger, ikke bare en ny look. Jobben består i å befinne seg på tynn is og undergrave sine egne preferanser. Eksperimentet innebærer å stille spørsmål ved produksjonsgrunnlaget, begjær, form og innhold, men for meg er det klart at dersom en kunstner kan gis en slik etikett er han eller hun ikke eksperimentell nok, så jeg får heller jobbe hardere med den greia der.

I etterkant av forestillingen på MoMA var det mange kritikere som poengterte at 'noe skjedde', uten at det var helt klar hva. Hva tror du det er som skjer? Og var folks reaksjoner noe du forutså når du utviklet forestillingen?
– Altså, dette skjedde ikke bare i New York, det er på samme måte etter hvert show. For meg er det fantastisk, at folk hadde en opplevelse og var en del av noe de ikke har ord for. Ofte forsøker folk å si

noe, men det eneste de får til er å fysisk gripe tak i meg og si «great» eller «awesome». Det er kult å høre folk prate om showet, for det virker ofte som om de har sett helt ulike forestillinger. Noen sier «det her og det her skjedde», men har helt fucket opp rekkefølgen, og skapt sitt eget bilde og opplevelse. Det var litt av greia med *La Substance*; å gjøre en forestilling som et landskap heller enn en stige. Jeg er lei av forestillinger som guider publikum, jeg tenker heller at de smarte får klare seg selv. Når man følger en stige så vet vi alltid hvor vi er, og forestillingen vet hvordan publikum kommer til å reagere. Fuck det, *La Substance* åpner opp for publikums egne refleksjoner, og selv om alt er planlagt vet vi ikke på forhånd hva som blir resultatet.

I MoMAs beskrivelse av *La Substance, but in English*, sto det også at publikum erfarte en slags «delt ensomhet». Hva tror du ligger i denne tanken?
– *Poetry for the program leaflet*. Altså, greia er ikke å produsere en form for*community hippie sosial herlighet*, men en annen måte å forstå publikum på. I teateret er publikum å betrakte som én, som ett publikum. Du vet, vi sitter der i mørket og skuespillere ruller rundt over scenen og ned blant publikum, og vi sitter der, side om side, og skal tolke hva det er som skjer. Ikke så kult. I *La Substance* er hvert individ singulært. Det finnes ikke et publikum, det finnes bare individer, og hvert individ skaper sin egen opplevelse og finner sin måte å navigere gjennom situasjonen på. Dette inkluderer selvsagt det som skjer på scenen, men også de andre menneskene i rommet, soundtracket, luktene, småpraten, det å sove en stund, det å ta en pause, det å spise noe eller det å bare være der. *Shared lonelyness* eller hva enn formuleringen var, er forskjellig fra *community*, som forutsetter en felles idé. *La Substance* forutsetter ingen slik felles idé. *It is what it is*, og det er ok.

I The New York Times brukte de beskrivelsen «hallusinogenisk opplevelse»,. Kritikeren kobler dette opp til scenografien og tilstedeværelsen av marihuanalignende planter, men antydet også at dette har noe med lengden på forestillingen å gjøre. Er det en sammenheng her? Stiller du noen andre krav med hensyn til konsentrasjon og refleksjon enn det vi møter andre steder?
– *La Substance, but in English* stiller ingen krav what so ever. *La Substance* er kanskje hallusinogenisk, men ikke som dop. Den skifter og bryter form slik at alt er som det skal være, og ingenting er det samme. *La Substance, but in English*handler om å undergrave forutsetningene for persepsjon slik at individer kan skape nye forutsetninger for å oppleve. Det handler om å ikke vite, og å forstå uvitenhet som en ressurs.

SPIKE magazine No. 35 Spring 2031

Der Körper als Object / The Body As Object

The Force The Movie The Vague, mit Kööt Juurak CIAP, Hasselt 2011

In den letzten Jahren zeigte die Kunstwelt ein immer stärkeres Interesse für Live-Acts und zeitbasierte Praktiken. Es wurde viel über Performance und Performativität geschrieben, aber es wurde denjenigen zu wenig Beachtung geschenkt, deren Arbeit die engen Grenzen der Disziplinen Tanz, Performance und bildende Kunst erweitert haben. Das versuchte FILIPA RAMOS, als sie den schwedischen Performance-Künstler-Tänzer-Choreografen-Produzenten-Autor MÅRTEN SPÅNGBERG zu vier Begriffen befragte: Raum, Rhythmus, Erwartung und Verkörperung. Das Ergebnis dieser Begegnung lässt sich schwer beschreiben, da Gedanken, Konzepte und Wörter munter und wild herumsprangen. In einer so überwältigenden Geschwindigkeit, dass die Aufzeichnung selbst ein performativer Kraftakt war.

Over the last few years an even stronger interest in live-art and time based art has appeared through out the art world. Lot's of stuff has been written about performance and performativity but at the same time little has been explored in respect of how the boarders between dance, performance and visual art has been addressed. This is what Filipa Ramos aimed at when she approached the choreographer Mårten Spångberg with a number of terms: Space, rhythm, expectation and embodiment. The task appeared to be more difficult then expected as the artist shuffled terms and ideas with a speed that in itself produced a performative force.

RAUM / SPACE

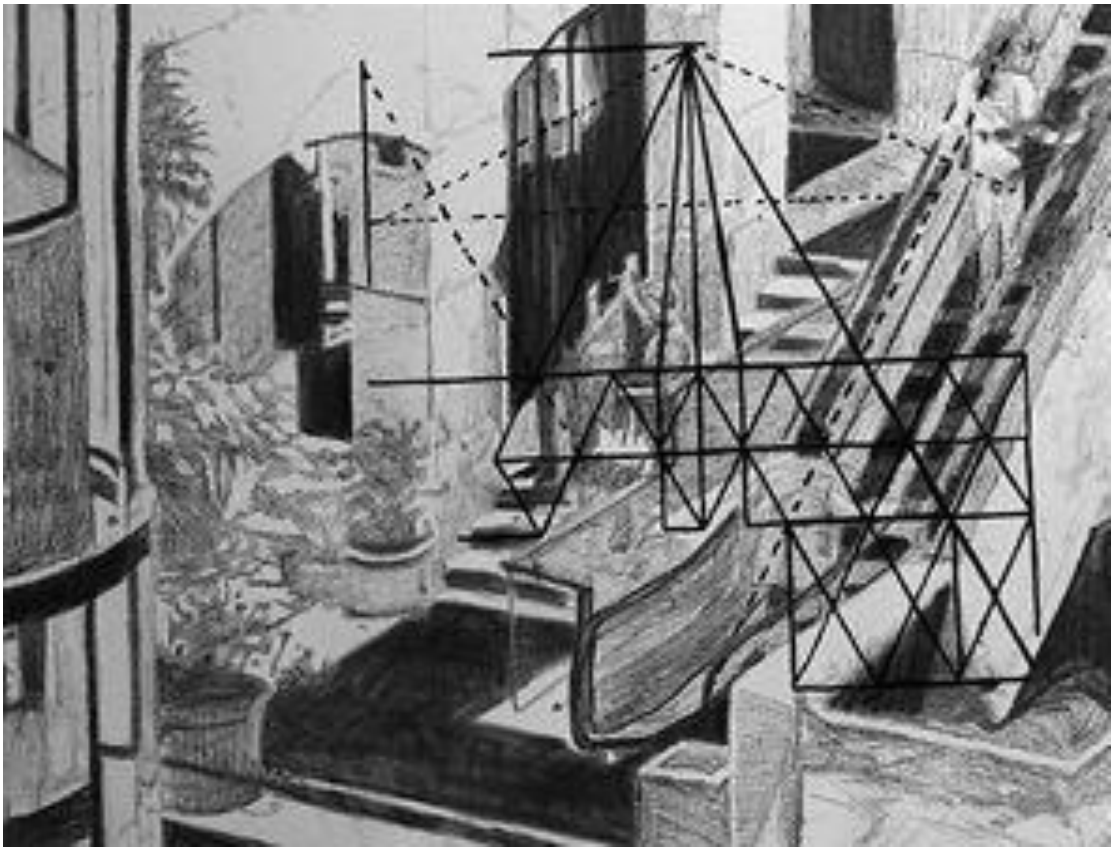
Architekten haben Angst vor Unordnung und Chaos. Architektur unterwirft und domestiziert Raum. Wir neigen dazu, Raum als etwas Stabiles zu betrachten, von dem aus etwas entwickelt werden oder sich öffnen, interagieren kann. Mich interessieren Räume, die ihren eigenen Verfall, ihren Zusammenbruch oder ihre Unterhöhlung in sich tragen: Räume, die aktiv Ungewissheit und Instabilität erzeugen. Die Räume, die mich interessieren, versagen dramatisch, versinken, werden verschlungen. Die Implosion macht Räume aktiv und produktiv »wovon auch immer«, oder anders gesagt, sie produzieren (oder werden produktiv) durch bloße Notwendigkeit, ein Fall von »ex nihilo«.

Die Moderne mit ihren Erzählungen rund um das liberale, individualisierte Subjekt, den »klassische Kapitalismus« und das Privateigentum neigt (oder neigte) dazu, Raum im Sinne von Besetzung zu verstehen – was sich vom Begriff der Nation bis zu den Occupy-Bewegungen an einer Vielzahl von Beispielen zeigt. Irgendein Ding besetzt, was noch frei ist, und Räume werden mit Strategien gefüllt, die an einer opportunen, lückenlosen und legitimierten Subjektivität festhalten. Raum wird über Gesetze, Messbarkeit und Macht verstanden. In diesem Sinn war die Occupy-Bewegung – die verzweifelt die Anerkennung durch den herrschenden Diskurs suchte – von Anfang an zum Scheitern verurteilt.

Ich würde Raum eher über eine andere Metapher als Besetzung verstehen: Schimmel. Schimmel und Pilze besiedeln Räume, die nicht mehr leer sind. Pilze ziehen nicht ein: nichts muss ausgeräumt oder umquartiert werden. Pilze besetzen nicht, sie überlagern. Damit diese Überlagerung allerdings wirksam sein kann, muss sie an den Raum auf unterschiedliche Weise herangehen, oder zumindest mit verschiedenen Formen von Subjektivität experimentieren. Es ist nicht so, dass der Schimmel sich einen Raum teilt, wie ein Doppelzimmer mit zwei Einzelbetten. Nein: Schimmel ist dem Raum unverträglich, er hat die Kraft, ihn auszuhöhlen und zu zerstören. Für mich ist der Zerfall Baumaterial. Die Zerstörung ist eine Raumpraxis.

Architects are people afraid of disorder and mess. Architecture is a way of taming or subjugating space. We tend to address space, even the most rudimentary, as a stability from which something can take off, open up or engage. Space in this sense become reactive and hence consolidating vis a vis territory, identity, life – a space of possibilities. I'm interested in the formation of spaces that implicit their own decay, corruption, collapse or undermining, i.e. a space that actively produce instability, especially produce indeterminate instability. Instead of a stability to take off from these are spaces to fall through, sink into, to be devoured by. It is in those moments of falling through that space becomes active, where they become productive of "whatever" or said differently that they produce or become productive through necessity, just one instance from *ex nihilo*.

Modernity with its narratives around a liberal individualized subject, "classical" capitalism, concept of property etc. tends or tended to consider space in respect of occupancy, from the nation to occupy movements. Some thing occupies what is not yet completed and spaces are filled through strategies that adhere to a certain, desired, completed and authorized subjectivity. In other words space understood through legislation, measurability and power. The occupy movement, that desperately desired approval from dominant discourse, in this respect was of course doomed from the start. Instead of occupation I'd like to address space through a different metaphor, mold. Mold and fungi approach space differently, they move into spaces that are already full. Fungus doesn't move in, nothing needs to be emptied out or evacuated, fungus fucks occupy it superimposes. However, for this superimposition to be effective it needs to address space through different forms, or at least experiment with different forms of subjectivity. It's not like mold kind of shares space, like double room with two single bed. No no, mold is to space as we know it like superimposed incompatible phenomena. This superimposition is one capacity for undermining and corruption of space.
To me decay is a building material. Corruption is spatial practice. Like, animals that live underground and dig canals they are great architects, the more they build or dig the more they corrupt the ground. Until one day, when it falls in on itself.



Everything Under Heaven Is Total Chaos, 2011, Zeichnung

RHYTHMUS / RHYTHM

Mich interessiert die Spannung zwischen Perspektive und Horizont. Ich hege eine Skepsis gegenüber dem Primat der Perspektive, das seit dem Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts herrscht. Durch ihren Angebotscharakter und ihr Verwertungsinteresse ist für mich Perspektive immer vereinfachend, diskursiv, gerichtet und funktional: Perspektive ist stellvertretend für Ökonomie, Territorialität, Reflexivität und Trivialität. Ich verstehe Horizont als nicht-territorialisiert, er entzieht sich der Messbarkeit und Gerichtetheit, und daher der Ökonomie. Perspektive kann in Hinblick auf Offenheit, Verhandelbarkeit und Teilbarkeit verstanden werden, doch der Horizont ist unbedingt und bereit, erobert, verbraucht und ausgelöscht zu werden. Perspektiven sind nicht notwendigerweise fix, aber sie bilden einfach dauerhafte und stimmige Verhältnisse. Anders gesagt, Perspektive ist messbar, während es beim Horizont um Intensität geht.

In der westlichen Welt haben wir die letzten 250 Jahre (angesichts der Geburt des modernen Subjekts und so weiter) Rhythmus als Funktion des Raums behandelt – nicht zuletzt durch komplizierte Notationssysteme oder Musik-Software. Rhythmus wurde architektonisch und perspektivisch. Kann man behaupten, dass Komponisten Angst vor
Klang haben und mit ihren Kompositionen die Musik unterwerfen wollen? Rhythmus sollte als Horizont und über seine Intensität verstanden werden, nicht als Reihe schwacher, durch starke und dauerhafte Verhältnisse ver bundene Elemente. Im Gegenteil, Rhythmus besteht aus starken Elementen mit schwachen und unscharfen Verbindungen.

Um mit Deleuze zu plaudern – zu denken, dass Strukturen großartig sind, Strategie schlecht, Taktik unterschätzt – Position, Statement, Definitionen sind so von gestern! Deleuze betont die Notwendigkeit einer Transformation von Wandel und Geschwindigkeit. Als Horizont und Intensität verstanden ist Rhythmus etwas, das seine Geschwindigkeit und sich selbst verändern kann.

I'm interested in the tension between perspective and horizon. Obviously I'm discontent with the primacy of perspective and I think this domination has been exponentially strengthened from day to day since the end of the 18th century. Perspective to me is necessarily reductive, discursive, directional and functional through affordance and investment, perspective is by proxy economical, territorial, reflexive and trivial. Horizon, and I don't just mean the 360 degrees, but horizon rather as a non-territorialized identity that withdraws from measurability and direction, and hence from economy. Perspective can be understood in respect of openness, negotiation and divisibility, horizon doesn't go there, it's open, it's unconditional and in ready to be conquered, consumed, annihilated.

Perspective, relating to the previous question, coincides with occupancy, in the sense that perspectives can be traced to one yet composed etymology and they are laid out next to each other, on top of, underneath, side by side etc. Perspective is like photoshop, layout. Perspectives in themselves are not necessarily strong but relations they form are strong and consistent. Said differently perspective is measurable where as horizon is a matter of intensity.

In the western world more or less since 250 years, considering the birth of the modern subject etc, we treat rhythm as a spatial capacity – not least through elaborate musical notations or through music software – rhythm has become architectural and perspectival. Can we dare say composers are people that fear sound and therefore tame music in their compositions? Rhythm should be understand as horizon and through intensity, not as weak entities connected through strong and consistent relations. On the contrary rhythm should be understood as strong entities with weak and fuzzy connections.

You know, gossiping with Deleuze – and thinking here that structures are great, strategy is bad (we will come back to why) and tactics are underrated and the shit [e.g. in relation to economy or artistic practices] – location, position, statement, definitions is so last Friday, it's all a matter of staying in the middle - and middle here is of course not a location but a dynamic - and changing speed. What Deleuze, or for that matter gossip, is talking about or emphasize is neither the speed or changing part, but a matter of transforming what or how both change and speed is. Rhythm, when understood as or over horizon and intensity, is something that can change change and speed, and always in the middle, as in fill circle.

Epic MDT, Stockhom 2012

ERWARTUNG / EXPECTATION

Vor Kurzem ist mir aufgefallen, dass ich immer ein Problem damit hatte, aufzutauchen. Ich meine damit nicht, dass ich immer zu spät gekommen oder am falschen Ort gelandet bin, das wäre eigentlich recht cool. Vielmehr war ich nie in der Lage, mir zukünftige Möglichkeiten vorzustellen (folglich zu planen), unfähig im Voraus etwas zu beurteilen oder einzuschätzen.

»Großartig, dass du« – das bin ich – »ein Typ bist, der be hutsam und mit Respekt auf die Welt zugeht, ein nachdenkender,« – und jetzt kommt's – »guter Mensch«. All das in Opposition zu Naivität, Unwissenheit und Unschuld. Aber gibt es eine dritte Möglichkeit, neben der Vernunft und dem esoterischen Hippie-Quatsch? Aufzutauchen wäre ein Ausweg, ein Ansatz oder vielleicht ein Schlusspunkt. Aufzutauchen ist wirklich nicht einfach. Godard sagte (Nicht schon wieder! Wieder ein kleiner denkwürdiger Satz, der die Argumentation unangreifbar macht), dass es kein »richtiges Bild«, sondern »nur ein Bild« gebe. Das zeigt das gleiche Rätsel oder Dilemma: nicht ein legitimiertes, einordenbares oder moralisches Bild, sondern einfach ein Bild, das auftaucht, ohne Vorgriff, Erwartung oder *telos*. Wir stehen einmal mehr vor einer zweifachen Herausforderung: Wie vermeidet man das »nur« zu moralisieren? Und wie vermeidet man strategisches Auftauchen, geleitet von Ökonomie, Angebots- und Investitions charakter?

Godards Worte entstammen einer spezifischen politischen Vorstellungswelt, die sich in vielerlei Hinsicht fundamental von unserer gegenwärtigen misslichen Lage unterscheidet. Auftauchen hat nichts damit zu tun, sich von etwas zu befreien; es ist keine Pädagogik, sondern es geht darum, die Vorstellung zugunsten eines anderen Prozesses zu umgehen. Oder besser gesagt, zugunsten einer anderen Produktion, die nicht erschafft, nicht an die Imagination (und damit an das Mögliche) gebunden ist, sondern sich stattdessen auf Potenzialität bezieht – oder besser, auf Alain Badious Begriff des Wahrheitsprozesses.

Recently I realized that I've never been able to show up. I don't mean that I was constantly late or had some issue with navigation and ended up in the wrong place. That would have been quite cool, more like I wasn't able not to reflect and hence project on to the future something already possible, not to in advance justify or judge. "Great, you're" – that's me – "a guy that approaches the world with caution and respect, a reflected and" – here it comes – "good person". All this in opposition to naiveté, ignorance and innocence, deception and darkness of the opposite, but is there a third option that doesn't sign up to either reason or some hippie esoteric mumbo jumbo? Is there something between - or course between here is a spatial address, so fuck that, but is there a different option, neither constipated conceptual artist that covers his tracks so meticulously there's zero sex and happy-coincidence hope-for-the-best that probably doesn't poop at all. To show up, describes this third exit point, approach or perhaps closure, not definition nor openness. To show up is really not easy, really not.

Godard [Not again. Another think-worthy little sentence that makes the arguments untouchable], said probably more than once, not a just image, just an image. Which indeed depicts the same enigma or dilemma: not a justified, measurable or moral image, but just an image, an images that shows up, without anticipation, expectation, telos etc. The quest however is, and it is at least twofold, how to avoid not to moralize "just", or how to not make showing up strategic, that is economical or a matter of affordance and investment?

Godard's words and add to that Deleuze's two books on cinema are obviously situated, the result of a particular political imagination that in many respects are fundamentally different to our current predicament. Showing up is not a matter of liberating ourselves from something; it's not a pedagogy but perhaps rather a matter of circumventing imagination, in favour of a different process… No, in fact, in favour of a different production, that is not creative or attached to imagination, i.e. to possibility, but to potentiality or, better, truth procedure.

The Last of the Mobile Hotshot, 2011, Austellungssansicht »Melanchotopia«, Witte De With (offsite)

VERKÖRPERUNG / EMBODYMENT

Identitätspolitik und das ganze Paket der Performativität erscheinen allzu romantisch. Sicher, Judith Butler und all die anderen waren unglaublich wichtig, aber vielleicht sollte man auch Gedanken ein Ablaufdatum geben, nicht nur Milch. Unsere Gesellschaften waren anders zusammengesetzt, als diese Dinge entwickelt wurden. Heute ist Performativität so neu wie der Wohlfahrtsstaat in den 60er und 70ern. Brauchen wir nicht eine Gegenbewegung, um uns aus den Fesseln der Performativität zu befreien? Man kann nur vermuten, was heute das Äquivalent zu Woodstock wäre. Sicher nicht Occupy Wall Street und sicher nicht die Berlin Biennale. Ich glaube, die ganze Idee eines Festivals oder Events ist indiskutabel. Das Problem mit der Verkörperung (oder ihrem Gegenteil) ist, dass sie das menschliche Bewusstsein als gegeben voraussetzt, sie ist sowohl anthropo- wie logo-zentrisch. Nicht der Körper ist das Problem (zumindest nicht im negativen Sinn). Das Problem ist das Bewusstsein: das menschliche Bewusstsein und seine Überlegenheit gegenüber allem anderen. Man muss erkennen, dass die »Semiotisierung« von Subjekt und Körper durch Performativität mit der allgemeinen Bewegung hin zur Finanzialisierung der Welt zusammenfällt. Semiotik ist der Zugang zu diesem Prozess, die Finanzialisierung von Bedeutung.

In einem bestimmten historischen Moment hatte Performativität eine emanzipatorische Kraft, aber heute, in einer völlig anders gestalteten Welt, wurde sie zu einem Geschäft. Ich erinnere mich, als Robbie Williams bei einer MTV Gala so etwas gesagt hat wie: »Ich möchte MTV für meine drei Häuser, fünf Autos und meine Supermodel-Freundin danken.« Das war sehr lustig, aber jetzt klingt es ziemlich schal. Er hätte sich für seine Performativität und für ihre Legitimierung durch eine andere Performativität, nämlich der von MTV, bedanken sollen. Heute hat der wertvollste Besitz nichts mehr mit materiellen Dingen zu tun, Autos, Villen oder Mädchen. Nein, der wertvollste Besitz ist die eigene Subjektivität, mit der man an der Welt durch Performativität teilhat.

Heute ist die Auseinandersetzung mit Verkörperung sicher nicht das interessanteste Problem.

Um den Philosophen Graham Harman zu paraphrasieren, ist heute nicht die Beziehung zwischen Geist und Geist oder Körper und Geist oder Geist und Körper das interessante Problem: das wirkliche Problem ist die Beziehung zwischen Körpern und Körpern. Nicht nur zwischen menschlichen Körpern, oder menschlichen Körpern zu anderen Objekten, sondern auch und vor allem die Beziehung zwischen Objekten und Objekten. Die erste Aufgabe ist es, sich diese Beziehungen ohne uns und unser Bewusstsein vorzustellen. Also nein zur Verkörperung und ja zum Körper, nein zum Körper aus der Perspektive des Bewusstseins und ja zum Körper als Objekt. Darüber hinaus ein Objekt mit einem Bewusstsein, das sich nicht darum kümmert, welches Bewusstsein auch immer wir haben oder nicht.

To me, identity politics and the whole package of performativity – with which I have engaged thoroughly over the last too many year – at the end of the day comes out as highly romantic. Sure, Butler and the rest were amazingly important but perhaps we should check out the expiring date on thought, not only on milk. When this stuff was put together our societies were differently composed. I'd say very differently, and the following twenty years has been an avalanche affirming both identity as politics and performativity, bring to that the whole narration on precariousness, immaterial labour, socially engaged art etc.

Performativity today is approximately as original as the welfare state in the 60's an 70's. And, why not, don't we need a movement against, which isn't possible of course… that could emancipate us from the shackles of performativity? One could just wonder what the equivalent to Woodstock would be today? For sure not Occupy Wall Street and certainly not the Berlin Biennale, and I mean the very idea of festival or even event is obviously totally out of the question.

The problem with embodiment or it's negative is that it takes for given a human consciousness, it's highly, both anthropo- and logo-centric. The problem to me is not the body (at least not in a negative sense). Consciousness, a human generalized consciousness, and the superiority of consciousness to anything else, that is the problem. The semiotization of the subject and the body through performativity we have to acknowledge coincides with a general movement towards the financialization of the world and the entry point to this process is semiotics, the finacialization of meaning. At some moment performativity carried the capacity of emancipation but today, in a world configured totally differently, it's become economy, it's become business and I mean big business.

I remember an MTV gala many years ago where Robbie Williams says something like: "I want to thank MTV for my four sports cars, three villas, two yachts and my supermodel girlfriend." Very funny obviously, but a decade later it sounds rather lame, what he of course should thank is his performativity and the authorization of it by another performativity, MTV. This is obvious, your most precious property today has nothing to do with material things, cars, villas or babes, no your most precious is your subjectivity, and the participation in the world of your subject is through performativity.

The interesting problem to engage in today is not embodiment, not at all. Perhaps paraphrasing Graham Harman: The interesting problem today is not the relation between mind and mind, nor between body and mind, or mind and body. No, the real problem is the relation between bodies and bodies. And this is of course not only human bodies, or human bodies to other objects but also, and foremost, the relationships between objects and objects, bodies and bodies. The first task, and it is a difficult one, how to think these relations without us, without or circumventing consciousness. So, no to embodiment and yes to the body, no to the body as vied from consciousness and yes to the body understood as an object. Moreover an object that has it's own consciousness, a consciousness that doesn't care or not about whatever consciousness we have or don't.

Ride the Wave Dude, mit Krööt Juurak Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius 2011

Aus dem Englischen von Ruth Ritter

*MÅRTEN SPÅNGBERG (*1968) ist Performer, Choreograf, Künstler und Autor. Seit 1999 arbeitet er an Solostücken und umfangreicheren Performances, mit denen er international tourte. Er arbeitete mit Xavier Le Roy, Tom Plischke, Lynda Gaudreau und Tino Sehgal zusammen, und gastiert zur Zeit mit »The Dancing Seminar« am MoMA P.S.1 in New York. Er lebt in Stockholm.*

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Lyndsey Winship, The Guardian 5 Julu 2013

Mårten Spångberg, the bad boy of contemporary dance

The Dane likes his audience to leave their phones on and has a troupe that's the choreographic equivalent of Occupy. He explains why he's aiming for 'something neo-liberalism can't cope with

You've seen contemporary dance, even if you don't think you have: it's actually been infiltrating the pop world for years. Some recent examples: Beyoncé filched great chunks of Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's classic Rosas Danst Rosas for her Countdown video; Kylie regularly hires "serious" contemporary choreographers such as Akram Khan and Rafael Bonachela for her tours; if you go to Latitude this summer you'll see dance companies sharing the bill with Kraftwerk and Bloc Party; and the Knife had a troupe of experimental dancers on stage for this year's Shaking The Habitual tour.

A bit further off the radar, when Swedish band Lune played in London recently, choreographer Mårten Spångberg could be seen looming over singer Linnea Martinsson in flowing robes and headdress, like an escapee from a particularly unscary Halloween party. A wild-haired, large-spectacled Swede, Spångberg has been creating enthusiastically academic and absurdly cool choreography for 20 years (he's 45 now). He's noticed the pop world's interest in dance, and he's got issues.

"Why is dance so fucking conservative as a response?" he wonders. "Dance should use pop to change what dance can be, not try to make something accessible. The problem is that dance tends to hook on to the wrong part of pop. Let's climb to the top, go penthouse level and see what pop can make possible. Pop should not be about reaching the masses, it's a matter of making the masses reach for you."

Rest assured that contemporary dance, Spångberg-style, doesn't look anything like Kylie. His current piece Epic, to be performed at this year's Manchester international festival, is like being at an intimidatingly hip squat party, with guests in neon sportswear and facepaint who never go home. Across its four hours, you rarely see anything you would recognise as a conventional dance step. At one point, the troupe pick up instruments and play charmingly unaccomplished versions of songs by Bow Wow Wow and Siouxsie And The Banshees.

Epic is totally unspectacular, and quietly revolutionary. No one will tell you to turn your phone off, for a start. "Of course not!" says Spångberg. "We also have phones onstage; we have notes on our smartphones. If you take a nap or go for a smoke or want to update your Facebook, that's also totally *d'accord*. I'm not interested in keeping the audience busy. I'm interested in how differently we can think about audiences today, compared with, say, 20 years ago."

The thinking goes that if the modern audience watches TV on laptops, while Instagramming and checking emails at the same time, why would contemporary artists ignore that and insist on trapping them in a silent black box for an hour? Rather than rail against our diminishing attention spans, Spångberg looks at this as an opportunity to explore "other kinds of attention". He's more interested in philosophy and economics and commercial culture than what's happening in other art forms. "I would say that eBay is much more of an influence to me than visual art," he declares.

In fact, Spångberg is so committed to being genuinely contemporary that he's thrown away his records and CDs and only listens to new music. The same goes for books. "For me, it's all a matter of the practising of contemporary life," he says. And that means throwing out some other old stuff too: systems, structures, the roles of artist and audience. Spångberg's shows are the dance equivalent of

the Occupy movement, and not just because there are some long-haired youths sitting around on rugs with guitars. "We have to produce something that neo-liberalism doesn't know how to cope with, at all," he says. Spångberg refers to his work as choreography, not performance; there's a difference. "It's a tool for organising time and space," he explains, whereas performance is about being an entertainer. "And you are not here to be entertained."
All this means Spångberg is unlikely to have his dance moves appropriated by a leading R&B star any time soon, although after his experiences with Lune, he quite likes the idea of being a rock star. "I'm quite excited about exploring the possibilities that a rock stage can offer. It is also quite fucking fab to play in front of 12,000 people."

There is actually already a choreographer who embraces the intoxicating energy of the rock gig and gets his audience moshing in the stalls: Hofesh Shechter's full-throttle Political Mother show has a stage of drummers and electric guitars kerranging at seat-shaking volume. But this is not Spångberg's thing. He puts it less tactfully: "Absolutely totally worthless choreography." For him it's old-world stuff, about representation and not form. Spångberg wants us to question what choreography can be, not give us what we already know. "The dance to come is an altogether different one, not even I can predict," he says. Beyoncé, can you handle this?

Conversation initiated by Nikki Columbus with Annie Dorsen, Ryan McNamara and Mårten Spångberg. In Parket Spring – Summer 2014

Attention Must Be Paid For

ANNIE DORSEN, RYAN McNAMARA, AND MÅRTEN SPÅNGBERG IN CONVERSATION WITH NIKKI COLUMBUS

NIKKI COLUMBUS: Thanks so much for taking part in this conversation. I've asked you all to participate because each of you incorporates or explicitly responds to new media and digital technology in your performance work, and all of you engage with modes of spectatorship, demanding audiences' attention in different ways.

Ryan, let's start with *ME3M: A Story Ballet About the Internet*, your work at Performa 13 in New York last year. It began with the audience watching a single dance performance onstage, and then we were separated to watch different performances in different rooms and areas of the theater. This seemed to allude to the ways we watch multiple things at a time, clicking from one YouTube clip to the next, with multiple windows open on our computers. Except that in your performance we didn't get to wander through the space on our own and decide what we wanted to watch; instead, you employed "people movers" who wheeled us around as we sat in our chairs. This seems contrary to how technological enthusiasts describe our contemporary experience of the Web, touting our ability to choose and "curate" what we enjoy.

RYAN McNAMARA: New technology and interactive media are run by giant corporations who have nothing to gain by empowering the consumer. The parameters are still relatively inflexible. Were we empowered when we were offered fifty TV stations rather than three? We had more options, and capitalism is about a proliferation of options. That doesn't mean that those choices express agency.

NC: Your exhibition last year in Rotterdam would seem to connect to this. You asked for audience participation: Visitors to the gallery and viewers of an online livestream were asked to fill out sur-

ANNIE DORSEN works in a variety of fields, including theater, film, dance, and digital performance. She is based in New York. *RYAN McNAMARA* is an artist based in New York. *MÅRTEN SPÅNGBERG* is a choreographer based in Stockholm.

RYAN McNAMARA, ME3M: A STORY BALLET ABOUT THE INTERNET, 2013, performance views, Performa 13, Connelly Theater, New York / ME3M: EIN GESCHICHTS-BALLETT ÜBER DAS INTERNET, Performance-Ansichten.
(PHOTOS: RYAN McNAMARA)

veys so that you could create unique performances tailored to each person's preferences. But our choices were so limited, it was like a consumer survey where you end up with a product that the company wants to sell you but you don't really want.

RM: Well, exactly. The piece is called *Survey*, and it was at this small project space called Showroom Mama. The curators loved to tout that a mathematician deduced there were 754,974,720 possibilities for a performance. But really there was just one option: a Ryan McNamara performance.

NC: Mårten, your work doesn't explicitly refer to technology, but in dance pieces such as *Epic*, which

MÅRTEN SPÅNGBERG, LA SUBSTANCE, BUT IN ENGLISH, 2014, performance view, MoMA PS1, New York / DIE SUBSTANZ, ABER IN ENGLISCH, Performance-Ansicht. (PHOTO: CHARLES ROUSSEL)

premiered in Stockholm in 2012, and *La Substance, but in English*, which I saw at MoMA PS1 early this year, you encourage audience members to text or e-mail while they watch the show. Several performers move about in front of a glittery backdrop, with lots of messy props and a great sound track of pop songs, over several hours. So you allow your audience to check in or out as they wish.

MÅRTEN SPÅNGBERG: I wouldn't say audience members are "encouraged" to do anything at all; there is simply the permission to do what one feels like. To me this is central: If the work encourages the audience to do something, it turns into something participatory, which doesn't interest me at all. Encouragement is directional, propositional; instead, in the works you mention, the visitor is given the opportunity to be part of a landscape, an environment that is open to all kinds of relations.

NC: You've said elsewhere that the treatment of the audience should be as contemporary as the performance. But really, this seems like a good way of managing viewers' boredom and keeping

them in their seats—they don't need to walk out to check their phones. And yet I was surprised to see how, well, *attentive* your audience was. I was pretty much the only one passing around beers and Doritos.

MS: I love Doritos, you were perfect. There's no "treatment of the audience." The audience is not a bundle of people, just individuals, and each individual should feel comfy to enjoy or not enjoy the show, according to his or her own vibe. We are together, but we—the performers, the staff, the audience, the set, the dances, our thoughts—are not a group; we don't form an economy, community, or society. To me, the theater as a frame reduces the individual to a faceless somebody without a voice who is required to be attentive to what's going on; the theater's job is to keep the audience busy. In my view, to empower someone is not to tell somebody what to do, to say you can do it, to keep somebody busy, to convince—especially not in 2014. On the contrary, empowering somebody has to do with making it possible to dissolve identity, politics, and economy, and to evacuate the regimes of performativity.

RM: In *MEM*, I wanted people to take photos and upload them to Instagram, Facebook, whatever. There was only one official photographer for the performance, and here there were a hundred potential photographers in the audience. Why not use them? I'm usually in my own performances, so I actually rely on the images and text posted by other people to experience what it is to be an audience member of my work. It's totally selfish.

It occurred to me that I could or should encourage the audience to take pictures. But thinking it through, I decided that I didn't want to give them instructions, which would be as blah as asking them to turn off their cell phones. I wouldn't discourage anything, and I figured people would go ahead and do it anyway, organically. And of course, they did.

NC: Annie, your theater performances would seem to demand more focus from the audience than Ryan's or Mårten's works. In *Hello Hi* [illegible] and *A Piece of Work* (2013)—both of which have been in New York but which have also traveled throughout the US and Europe—you've created a kind of performance you call "algorithmic theater," in which the human presence onstage is eliminated (or severely reduced) and replaced by computer chatbots. In *Hello Hi There*, they invent a dialogue about the famous debate between Foucault and Chomsky. In *A Piece of Work*, the text comes from *Hamlet*, but it's completely scrambled according to different rules for each act of the play. One could say that Mårten's and Ryan's pieces are more traditional in terms of what they put onstage—people in costume moving and dancing—but your work is more traditional in terms of the position of the audience—sitting in theater seats looking at a proscenium.

ANNIE DORSEN: The pieces play around with meaning and lack of meaning, so they are most interesting when people have a chance to get a bit absorbed and then wonder about their own absorption. So I do appreciate it when people turn off their cell phones. But there are no performers onstage demanding attention, demanding a response. On the other hand, text is in itself a kind of demand to read, to understand—even the authorless text that I'm working with makes that demand. In some ways, I'm questioning the "initial axioms" of theater: Is a human presence necessary? How do we judge what is a live event and what is not live? How does language function in theater to affirm certain notions of human nature? And so on. So I quite intentionally maintain the forms and frames of traditional theater.

But I agree with Mårten; I like the audience to be free to think. That's what I like when I'm an audience member: having my mind activated, both by what the piece invites me to think about and perhaps other things. I do a lot of my best thinking during other people's performances—like some people do in the bath. I find it's nice when audience members become aware of when and why

they get bored. Boredom can be very interesting.

NC: In an article for the *Theater* magazine blog, in 2012, you wrote, "Rather than a mystical exchange of energy between performer and spectator, or a process of identification or 'union' between the two, algorithmic performance creates an asymmetric relationship, in which the human spectator confronts something that can't confront him back. The spectator is left radically alone with her own mind, and is compelled to observe herself and the ways in which she constructs meaning." I always assumed you meant the spectator was constructing meaning as related to the work that he or she is watching, not having some internal digression! But the latter seems to be what you expect.

AD: I *think* they might; I really don't *expect*.

NC: So you're not trying to make that happen?

AD: No. It is a likely possibility in a performer-less performance, though. In the section of my essay you quote above, I am indeed talking about constructing meaning in relation to the piece. But at the same time, it's great when the bottom drops out—when people realize they've been investing themselves in watching a computer program perform, which brings up questions about how we assign value, what makes the communication between humans more consequential than that

ANNIE DORSEN, HELLO HI THERE, 2010, performance view, Steirischer Herbst, Graz, 2010 / HALLO SALÜ, Performance-Ansicht.
(PHOTO: W. SILVERI/STEIRISCHER HERBST)

ANNIE DORSEN, HELLO IN THERE, 2010, performance view, Steirischer Herbst, Graz, 2010. HALLO SALÜ, Performance-Ansicht. (PHOTO: W. SILVERI/STEIRISCHER HERBST)

between humans and objects, or between objects full stop. So the internal digression is also related to the external input of the piece. The digressions are very much part of the situation. And in these moments, people don't have to feel obligated to be good and generous audience members who make the performers feel appreciated.

NC: Why do you all think the art world is experiencing a boom in durational live performance at a time when we're told our attention spans have never been shorter? How do you account for this seeming contradiction?

AD: Well, I would say it's not at all clear that our attention spans are shorter than ever. We're certainly being told this—it's a kind of technophobia that blames all our social problems on Twitter or whatever—but it's also not clear what an attention span is.

RM: First, I think it may be a misconception, or just some pop sociology, that states that our "attention spans"—which is indeed a term that we take for granted—have gotten shorter. When I was growing up, there was a lot of noise on morning news programs and in magazines about the MTV generation and how their "attention spans" were being massacred by mass media. But they were talking about me, a person who was glued to MTV for hours and hours. It was one-directional attention, though. Now the call for attention has been dispersed. It's multidirectional. But I'm still paying attention.

NC: Part of that conversation back in the '80s wasn't just about how much TV kids were watching, but *what* they were watching. And the visual style of a lot of popular culture has certainly changed, with increasingly rapid-fire editing.

AD: I'm totally suspicious of these alarm bells about our poor attention spans—it's a marketing strategy used to sell drugs like Adderall—but more and more, I do feel I'm being yelled at by the world. I often feel like the object of multiple, aggressive manipulations, and I resent it deeply.

NC: Doesn't performance perhaps provide a place where we can sit and look at one thing and not be constantly bombarded by competition for our attention? In his recent book *24/7* (2013), Jonathan Crary describes our constant state of technological distraction as a result of the increasing takeover and financialization of our free time by a capitalist economy. He's pretty pessimistic about our op-

tions—sleeping seems to be the only method of resistance. But what about maintaining separate spheres of attention? Putting our phones away and enjoying the performance we see when we're not at work?

MS: From my perspective, the situation is reversed: Attention today is *post*-competitive. All forms of attention are part of the financial machine of our contemporary society, whether we're wasting time, slow cooking for a whole weekend, making art, or multitasking on a smart phone. Crary is ohhh so worried about the future, but the only thing he vaguely proposes is that it was better in the past, like perhaps in 1957—like that was a great year in the history of mankind, shoot me. In *24/7*, there's not a trace of how new forms of attention produce side effects that open up different opportunities. I'm rather sick of this once-I-was-a-Marxist response to contemporary phenomena. Crary just comes out like a snobbish bourgeois leftist without balls.

Our problem is that the enemy and the sponsor of the emancipation are one and the same. So what we need to work on is blurring, confusing, superimposing, disabling known forms of attention, so that individual audience members can make their own models of attention—or perhaps better tactics of attention that for a moment can produce a glitch; a moment when the audience member is not attentive to anything at all, to whatever, or attentive to attention. Why should I make a performance that demands that you only concentrate on the here and now, like some silent meditation center in upstate New York promoted by Leonard Cohen? Why treat the audience like idiots when they can mind their own business and manage their own attention? I find it rather embarrassing

MÅRTEN SPÅNGBERG, LA SUBSTANCE, BUT IN ENGLISH, 2014, performance view, MoMA PS1, New York / DIE SUBSTANZ, ABER IN ENGLISCH, Performance-Ansicht (PHOTO: CHARLES ROUSSEL)

when I go see work where you're asked to turn off your phone.

AD: Embarrassing? Because you feel you're being treated like a child?

MS: No, because it places aesthetic experience outside the social, outside politics, outside context. Why should performance, dance, or art be placed outside daily life? I like that audience members continue with life and deal, in their own ways, with attention, focus, etc. My work is there together with the audience as an opportunity to think and feel, and if somebody feels like looking, that's as good as somebody taking a nap, taking a picture, falling in love, checking e-mails. It's all part of the same thing. I like these sentences from Walter Benjamin—they're old, but read with some care, deeply valid: "Art ... presupposes man's corporal and spiritual essence—but no work of art presupposes his attention. No poem is meant for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the audience."

RM: It might be that an important role for artists today is to produce better bad audiences. I don't know that artists should be providing a free-for-all environment. Artists can either simply "reflect" their time, or they can create new proscriptions, thus making new circumstances for being a bad audience.

NC: What is a "bad" audience?

RM: With *ME3M*, I wanted to give the audience the conventions of proscenium performance for five or six hot minutes and then skew them. There wasn't much guidance in how to handle this mutation of traditions, and we could hardly predict how everyone would respond. Since the audience in effect became part of the performance—not in a participatory way, but simply by a very manual reorganization of bodies and the field of vision—I thought this might make audience behavior more visible, and thus put it under a different kind of pressure. In actuality, it turned out to be a good audience, with the exception of Kathy Halbreich [associate director at the Museum of Modern Art, New York].

NC: She tried to get out of her chair, right? Did you want people to do that? Or did you think they might?

RM: Yes. We actually anticipated more of that kind of activity. We called them "hackers." There was another woman who pleaded not to be moved. But she and Kathy were the only people who opted out of the system. In some sense, the piece became a way of activating, or foregrounding, passivity. Of course, the enforcers in the piece did tell Kathy to get back in her chair. Scolded her, really. Like an Internet nanny.

NC: Why did *ME3M* end with a good old-fashioned Martha Graham performance, danced by ten members of the Martha Graham School's company, as every audience member was returned to the auditorium?

RM: That was about the flattening of platforms. I call it the "Beyoncé moment." In 2009, you had all these Beyoncé fans filming themselves dancing to "Single Ladies," sharing the same media platform as Beyoncé herself. And of course, the choreography for Beyoncé's video was derived from a Bob Fosse clip she found on YouTube. Except for the Graham moment, all of the other choreography in *ME3M* was concocted from—or better, inspired by—online video clips of people dancing. At the end, I wanted to have a "direct quote" that everyone came together for, which was this late Graham work, "Ritual to the Sun," from 1981. It touches on how repertory is a mode of quotation, and also functions as a kind of contemporary mythology. But was the Graham a "direct quote"? I don't know, it's complicated. She's been dead for over twenty years. Many of the dancers I worked with weren't even alive when that piece was made.

But why are we talking about "attention" or, as Mårten said, "keeping the audience busy"? The proper rhetoric in art-world language is "spectacle," right?

NC: So it's spectacle if we watch a performance and don't Facebook at the same time?

RM: No. Facebook is spectacle.

AD: Yes, a most perfect form.

RM: "Attention" versus "spectacle." Is the former simply more of a focus on the individual vs. a mass? The finely tuned individual consumer being the ideal unit in a neoliberal capitalist system.

NC: Hasn't it been argued that mass audience is over?

AD: And of course, "attention" suggests choice and agency in a way that spectacle does not. Facebook is the perfection of that function of spectacle that simultaneously separates and reconstitutes as unity.

MS: Facebook offers a platform for the realization of the subject as spectacle.

NC: So you're engaging with social media in your work, and yet you think there's nothing positive to be redeemed from it?

RM: I love social media. It's an effect of capitalism, but hell, we're capitalist subjects. What's not to like?

AD: I don't know if mass audience is over. We are isolated, for sure, but we are mostly all busy making nearly identical choices.

MS: Perhaps what is over is audience—as in *the* audience. Today, each person in the mass should feel special in order to perform as an optimized consumer. What is gone is the passive audience member, the one who reflected with or through some sort of non-inscribed position. We all remember that Rancière piece on the emancipated spectator, which was about the individual producing him- or herself as a self-made entrepreneur. It's kind of comical to see that what Rancière proposed has become the modus operandi of neoliberalism. Being special and constantly occupied with one's own emancipation-slash-self-enhancement. Normcore as the new individualism.

NC: Are you referring to how people can upload clips of themselves to YouTube, or create their profiles on Facebook? But there's also a degree of horizontal communication newly accessible via YouTube and Facebook, from user to user. Sure, [illegible] monitored by corporations and governments, but as protests around the world have perhaps shown, it can't necessarily be controlled by them.

AD: I agree generally about the particularization of the mass, that each person in the mass should feel special and optimized, etc. But I don't think that old-school passive, alienated spectatorship is gone. Actually, I think we move between these modes quite fluidly.

NC: How so? Do you see that happening in your own work?

AD: I don't work with interactivity, but I was thinking of these cases of "Facebook depression," even suicides, among teenagers who feel this alienation at being an audience to the self-promotion of everyone they know. We perform this function for each other, switching between star and audience. There's a relatively new capacity for very fine individualization, and even finer manipulations. You know, we are all delightfully unique and eccentric individuals whose behavior can be predicted with deadly accuracy. So we still constitute a mass; we consume as a mass consumes.

MS: Social media doesn't want to control anybody, but to make us creative and expand possibilities. Facebook is equally happy with grandmothers and activists, gay men and protesters. Every single user is an asset even when not online—always. Our problem is that we are always active no matter what we do or don't. Passive is equally active.

RM: We should all be bossy bottoms.

AD: Well, I certainly agree with that last part.

NC: You all seem to be saying that even our activity is really a kind of passivity …

RM: It's a false dichotomy.

NC: I'm curious as to how audience participation fits into this. Mårten, in *Production*, which you co-created with Xavier LeRoy for the exhibition "Move: Choreographing You" (2010) at the Hayward Gallery, London, performers in the museum space rehearsed movements from dances until they encountered visitors, at which point they would engage the visitors in conversation.

AD: Yes, a most perfect form.

RM: "Attention" versus "spectacle." Is the former simply more of a focus on the individual vs. a mass? The finely tuned individual consumer being the ideal unit in a neoliberal capitalist system.

NC: Hasn't it been argued that mass audience is over?

AD: And of course, "attention" suggests choice and agency in a way that spectacle does not. Facebook is the perfection of that function of spectacle that simultaneously separates and reconstitutes as unity.

MS: Facebook offers a platform for the realization of the subject as spectacle.

NC: So you're engaging with social media in your work, and yet you think there's nothing positive to be redeemed from it?

RM: I love social media. It's an effect of capitalism, but hell, we're capitalist subjects. What's not to like?

AD: I don't know if mass audience is over. We are isolated, for sure, but we are mostly all busy making nearly identical choices.

MS: Perhaps what is over is audience—as in *the* audience. Today, each person in the mass should feel special in order to perform as an optimized consumer. What is gone is the passive audience member, the one who reflected with or through some sort of non-inscribed position. We all remember that Rancière piece on the emancipated spectator, which was about the individual producing him- or herself as a self-made entrepreneur. It's kind of comical to see that what Rancière proposed has become the modus operandi of neoliberalism. Being special and constantly occupied with one's own emancipation-slash-self-enhancement. Normcore as the new individualism.

NC: Are you referring to how people can upload clips of themselves to YouTube, or create their profiles on Facebook? But there's also a degree of horizontal communication newly accessible via YouTube and Facebook, from user to user. Sure, [illegible] monetized and monitored by corporations and governments, but as protests around the world have perhaps shown, it can't necessarily be controlled by them.

AD: I agree generally about the particularization of the mass, that each person in the mass should feel special and optimized, etc. But I don't think that old-school passive, alienated spectatorship is gone. Actually, I think we move between these modes quite fluidly.

NC: How so? Do you see that happening in your own work?

AD: I don't work with interactivity, but I was thinking of these cases of "Facebook depression," even suicides, among teenagers who feel this alienation at being an audience to the self-promotion of everyone they know. We perform this function for each other, switching between star and audience. There's a relatively new capacity for very fine individualization, and even finer manipulations. You know, we are all delightfully unique and eccentric individuals whose behavior can be predicted with deadly accuracy. So we still constitute a mass; we consume as a mass consumes.

MS: Social media doesn't want to control anybody, but to make us creative and expand possibilities. Facebook is equally happy with grandmothers and activists, gay men and protesters. Every single user is an asset even when not online—always. Our problem is that we are always active no matter what we do or don't. Passive is equally active.

RM: We should all be bossy bottoms.

AD: Well, I certainly agree with that last part.

NC: You all seem to be saying that even our activity is really a kind of passivity …

RM: It's a false dichotomy.

NC: I'm curious as to how audience participation fits into this. Mårten, in *Production*, which you co-created with Xavier LeRoy for the exhibition "Move: Choreographing You" (2010) at the Hayward Gallery, London, performers in the museum space rehearsed movements from dances until they encountered visitors, at which point they would engage the visitors in conversation.

MS: Yes, as soon as someone entered the gallery, the performer stopped dancing and struck up a conversation with the visitor. The discussion was not scripted, but it addressed notions of labor in contemporary society with respect to immateriality, property, subjectivity, and so on. We were interested in thinking about how a dancing individual can avoid becoming an object in the museum. In this way, the dance was only when people were not viewing; when the dancers were viewed, they turned into subjects that had a conversation that was theirs and only theirs.

NC: But you're only talking about this work from the performer's point of view, not the museum visitor's. By starting a conversation, you engage visitors in a different way from when they're just looking; you stop the internal digression that we mentioned earlier. Whereas you're doing the opposite in your theater pieces: You're letting the viewer's mind and body wander. In other words, aren't you importing into theater the model of a visual art audience?

MS: Art is about dissolving models and making them porous. The work with Xavier was specific to a certain context and collaboration. My work has a precise duration, there's no talking, you buy a ticket, it's not in some group show. It happens in the superimposition of two or more types of contract for social interaction and attention. It's the production of possibility of a different space or configuration.

NC: Annie, how did *Hello Hi There* change when you moved it from the theater into a gallery space? It was shown as an installation in a group show at Bitforms gallery in Chelsea last year. Did you get any sense of how the audience response differed?

AD: Well, there was an interesting and kind of funny phenomenon. The gallery assistant called me one day after the show had been up for a couple weeks, and he said, "It's weird, when people look at your piece, they stay for thirty-five minutes." Apparently, it was pretty universal. People would either take a quick glance and move on, or they would stay for thirty-five minutes. Nothing in between. In other words, viewers turned it back into a performance.

But I think they only had half the experience. They got absorbed, they got into the strange dialogue produced by the computers, but then maybe they had this moment when the language seemed to empty out—what I spoke about earlier—so they left. In the gallery, they didn't feel they needed to sit for any time with the empty language, which is maybe a pity. Because they missed the chance to get re-interested, or to get interested in other things. Perhaps all of this is really a question of whether we feel there is any value in patience.

RYAN McNAMARA, MAKE RYAN A DANCER, 2010, performance view, "Greater New York," MoMA PS1, New York / MACH AUS RYAN EINEN TÄNZER, Performance-Ansicht.

THE INTERNNET AT SUPPORTICO LOPEZ BERLIN

Interview with Marten Spangberg by Francesca Verga

Francesca Verga: *The Internet* is the first rendition of a new work, conceived for Supportico Lopez and realized on January 9 – 11 with Hanna Strandberg, Rebecka Stillman and Sandra Lolax. How long have you been working at? What was your main concern driving you towards this direction?

Marten Spangberg: It is an ongoing research in many directions at the same time – part of a long journey that starts in 2007. It took three-four weeks to arrive to where we are now and the first version of *The Internet*. This was, so to say, The Internet 1.0. At the same time it has also taken twenty years of practice, thinking, reading, writing and so on to get this together and formulate aesthetic strategies and a methodology to make happen whatever it was that happened. Instead of making one piece, one product, I rather think about a practice that has many end, a work is a knowledge. Up until the moment the performance starts I have contributed with my knowledge and the dancers contribute with theirs. It's very collective in this way, the contribution in respect of knowledge. But it is not a collective work in the sense of the initiation and organisation of resources. This is important, the understanding of collective or shared worked in respect of when, not only if or not but when and under what circumstances.

In any case my or the practice we share is not about making a statement passed on to the audience or the world, it is rather a permission to work with this material, build and learn

something, which is a collaboration between you or us and the world. It is not about interpretation, but instead about production and a making of. Organizing a new location that is previously weak, unknown, and inventing a place of relationship and a place of thought.

FV: Often in the piece the dancers alternate moment of stillness in which they perform, resembling Merce Cunningham's movements, and moment of rest in which they eat, drink, go away, stretch like in a practice room, laugh and talk – in swedish so very little people understand. Nothing seems too serious. How did you merge these happy and open moments within the choreography and what is the spectator's access to what is lived by the dancers?

MS: The Internet is a piece for a gallery space. I don't want it to end up recreating the attention that dance performaces normally ask for, in a gallery space, a museum space, an exhibition room the focus is completely different and the piece reflects this quality, or is addressing the tension between the social situation of the theatre and that of the gallery. The lights are up, there are paitings all over the place and then there's you and me; we talk about them or not, we talk about the art or maybe we talk about children. I like that kind of environment and find myself imprisoned or whatever when I'm forced to be seated, compartmentalized in the darkness of the theatre saloon. It can sure also be totally groovy but there's nothing that says that dance is better or best over there.
In this case all the talk between the dancers is one way of emphasizing the social capacity of the museum, of the exhibition. The audience is not asked to talk but there is a permission to talk as much as they like. If we wanted people to be silent we would have put up a sign. We neither ask people to turn off their mobile phones. So if you want to use facebook go ahead, we are super happy as long as you feel happy and open. Great. In *La Substance, but in english*, there are a lot of blankets where the audience hang out, people can have a nap and a little picnic. For The Internet there is no blankets, we don't want people to become immobile on the floor, or be too comfy. It's deliberate that they should somehow constantly disturb the show. Like you know a bunch of tourists disturb the painting, or irritates a sculpture.
I have seen a lot of contemporary dance performances that are often very contemporary on stage, but they are not exactly contemporary in the audience. We are still sitting there like we did in the 18th century, bourgeois installations, silenced and treated like an anonymous mass. Fuck that. I'm more interested in creating a contemporary experience where multitasking is as obvious as any other moment in life, where if in the performance I wonder what is this about, of course I google it. And when somebody is next to me I talk to that person; we look at the piece and the way we talk is influenced by how the piece is confronting us. By the way, I really can't stand people that come up afterwards saying something bla bla but I'd like it better if I, the audience, could move freely in the space, like in an exhibition. If you like that better super, but that's like going for sushi and afterward saying to the waitress: Hey, I'd like it better if it was a pizzeria. I also think it's really great with dance shows with the audience all over the place, but this one is obviously not one of those. It doesn't attempt to become an exhibition with bodies moving, it exactly is working on the tension between two modes of framing.

And even better one is “I felt there was too much, you know, distance between stage and audience.” No it’s not too much it’s exactly this distance, deal with it. Look, if we wanted a weak threshold or non at all, we’d do another show. But obviously these are comments made by a certain kind of curator that probably also would dizz movies for not being realistic. The thing is that they always want to fix the work to be exactly as they have “learned” that is should be when “good”, but art doesn’t need to be fixed but I’d be very happy to discuss the political consquences of this particular threshold between this or that.

FV: You pointed out at some time that Judith Butler is tightly important in your work – saying that our gender is built on the repetitiveness of gestures, on the performativity in the everyday life. 3,5 hours long choreography in which gestures are always similar and the songs are few and always in repeat. In which way repetitiveness of music interest you?

MS: I have no idea when it needed to be like this. However, at least the music should be groovy, if everything was bad with the show at least the music is something that should be enjoyable. I don’t know whatever musical taste people have, but for me the music has to be enjoyable. I use music with groove – it’s quite particular how the choices are made – in order to make the audience be kind of hypnotized, the music is there kind of like something between the radio when doing the dishes and suddenly realize you sing along and like when you thirteen years old and listened to like The Strokes because you had a major crush on, what was his name, Julian Casablancas.
In this performance, when the women are dancing almost all the music is the instrumental version of wellknown contemporary R&B and hip-pop songs. In the beginning for example “Stay” by Rihanna is repeated over and over again for twenty times or something but no singing, no lyrics. It produces a particular kind of suspence, but, at least to me, it again suddenly shifts and it’s like you and the voice in your head. I think it produces a permission to imagine, to metaphorically sing yourself. Judith Butler is of course important for more or less everything also to my work and I to some extent agree with her thinking, but I’m simultaneously skeptical to a tendency that everything is performative and performative is good. This is a long story and sort of complicated, not to dismiss gender and identity discourses but to cut a few corners Butler isn’t cental to my work. Everything that is in the world has or carries some kind of performativity, so of course for example *The Internet* performs something but instead of establishing identity and confirmation its attempt is to withdraw and never coagulate into some thing. I’m faschinated by formalism not identity, also the way the dancers perform is kind of to never become personalities, they are just persons. I love them and it’s a very particular way or technique we use, but they should give the sensation that it’s completely irrelevant who they are, but that that is exactly them is also, and exactly because they don’t claim anything, it is extremely important that it is them. See what I mean, they are whatever but it is exactly this whatever.

FV: And suddenly during the piece you sing. And that is not unfamiliar in your choreographies… that could remember *The Show Must Go On* by Jérome Bel – in which dancers were singing also to show up their failure in a way. So why you – the choreographer – sing? is that a similar approach to song?

MS: When I sing, along with the singer on top of a song, I become a sort of stupid entertainment. There are also many reasons but one simple thing is that a barrier needs to be crossed. During the performance one of the dancers, Rebecka, puts the music on and I sit with a microphone among the audience. In this moment I produce a kind of bridge and it's important that I'm not singing for the audience but for the stage. Nevertheless I am also fifteen years older than the people on stage, all women. When I sing I kind of make a fool of myself, doing something I'm not very good at. I don't put myself in the middle of the stage and tell the audience: here I am and here is my statement and make sure that it's respected. I do this rather as a way of showing how the piece is allowed to manipulate me. I also want to be in the space and make myself available for the audience, being in the audience in order for somebody to say it is awesome or to be pissed off and be able to go up and say: 'what the fuck is this?'. The least I can do is to say: I am available for a confrontation.
My singing in the piece is to music with text and it's only when the dancers are not dancing. I think this produce, or I refer to – you know – like in American ice hockey arenas, when there is a break or they teams are changing there is this organ thing going on. The singing becomes a moment to not care for the situation and still be in it. It's a sort of half-break.

FV: Sometimes you enter the stage and take something to drink. But what happens if the spectator will stand up and take a beer from the stage too. Could him be allowed to do that?

MS: Yeah, everyone could do this. No one did that in Berlin which was a little bit surprising but sure in a visual art space objects mean something very different than in a theatre space. Normally people take beers and even go on stage and take a few. I want to have this ambiguity, there is never an invitation "come come and take some!" but there is always an almost. All these gestures taking selfies on stage, checking txt messages, having the score for the performance on a paper or in the notebook, chatting with each other, going peeing during the performance without hiding and so it's all about disempowering the performance, making it weak and to produce lapsus in attention. The barrier between viewers and stage should be clear but should be extremely weak and blurry. It is not interesting if somebody would come on stage and dance with us. But there should be this feeling of collaboration and production of a piece together with the audience.

FV: There are interesting objects and settings around, the wood: e.g. during the show the three female dancers where cutting the wood and later they hold rifles made of wood. What is the relation between these three women and the wood?

MS: I had this image on my mind that is what I have to do. They sit on stage and cut wood using knifes, kind of potential weapons. They are not cutting something to make it shorter but rather cut something to shape it. It becomes a sort of round shape container that invites not something that communciate stay away. I think it's a very attractive image and although the piece has nothing to do with discourses around labour and that tired term immaterial labour or, even worse anything to with precariousness, it's something about the three women doing this together. It's a sort of silent conviviality, they take care of something. I believe that one could think about passivism in two ways: a passivism that resign and an armed passivism. The resigned passivism is conceptually boring and is counter productive, it rather says do whatever you like, we'll be like Sweden during wwII, just sitting there being cowards and scared.
I am rather interested in a kind of armed passivism, we are armed but we are not gonna use our arms, but just as a reminder. What the dancers are doing in the piece with the nurses outfit is also a way of saying: 'Check it out, we carry shit. You better keep the cool. We might look like harmless and we are passivists but if you don't play with our rules we would also have to do something about it.' This is a very weak performance anyway: they sit on the floor, most of the time lying down, taking on and off the clothes. The performance wants to become weak, and then the rifles show up and that is the moment when they said: 'we are the ones that decide how things should go.' I have felt that this was a nice tension to produce. Then again, it's also very intuitive. I built the first rifle, this oversized wooden one for DJ sets I did a few years ago. Now they are back, there is something childing, pittyful and potential about them that is very appealing to me.

FV: You define this piece as a form of 'weak monumental sculpture'... could you tell me more about that?

MS: Everything in the piece is thought through sculpture except the piece with the wood and the piece with the rifles. These two I consider to be paintings. The piece is addressing sculptural formation: especially when the dancers are sitting together in a kind of circle, or when they are rolling on top of each other.
I had a conversation with a curator and I asked her sort of playfully, 'what do you think is the most uncool ever in 2014?' and she said: 'Monumental sculpture'. In a way, I wanted to prove her wrong. To me it's interesting to think about when a sculpture becomes a monument. I think it is when what I look at is no any longer a man on a horse but instead the constitution or the nation itself. It formulates or articulates itself differently than other objects or any other things/phenomenon in contexts.
I think that – hopefully – when something gains monumentality is when it is in a context but it is not off that context, jet it doesn't stand out from the context. Monumentality is when something loses its meaning in a way, loses its symbolic value and becomes something in itself. A monument and monumental is not at all the same. In this piece this monumental-something is the experience but there are also objects that emphasize this. All these object is there to somehow carry this sensation of becoming itself. Now, to refer to the above, I think

that when something is in itself and as such, when something gain the status of monumentality it also exist the regime of performativity. Something that monumental exists but in away has no life. Or something monumental has nothing to justify, it just is, and this ontological status is quite problematic to deal with being human and being a subject. I don't think this works but it is interesting to me. When something become monumental it stops being performative. When something proposes a trajectory towards being itself and as a such, it cannot be performative because it is the opposite of what I have, which is an ongoing process of not being myself nor a such, but costantly under trasformation.
Something in itself and as such cannot want something from you as a spectator. Cannot give anything neither, it is. This is an interesting moment for me, which is when nothing on stage is there to confirm you being human, or confirm your performativity. It is there to be what it is for itself. In this moment, at least theoretically, we can take away all the layers of performativity from you and what sits there in the audience is you yourself and as such. This process communicates experience as experience.

FV: The dancers continuously changed their clothes, but most of these outfits were about service. Why service?

MS: The costume has to do with monumentality. It's all stuff that I buy from ebay. The piece is not there to say anything, doesn't have anything on its mind, but it is like a flight stewardess, somebody always there for you but who is also nobody, and should never become an identity a personality. The moment when she turns away, she doesn't exist. Gracefully anonymous. But she needs to be there to formulate the experience. The piece has not to do with internet critique, but rather with destabilisation of identity production. They dancers propose a landscape of service work, but they are also costantly changing in order to never become a "flight stewardess". One of the dancers costantly changes reading glasses, showing up as constantly new personalities. Constantly withdrawing from becoming a personality. Ongoing anonymous.

FV: Why the article "the" is so important in the titles of your last works: *The Internet, La Substance, The Nature…*?

MS: It is always about things that are one and indivisible, as La Substnace, the Nature, the Ocean, the Internet. It could never be called just 'internet'. One million thousands web pages but only one internet. One cannot understand how big it is. A small aprt of it is 500 million people on facebook. It is impossible to handle internet because the amount of images that are coming through is so big that nobody can ever "read" the internet. We can't really see it. The internet is not here to confirm me, and is indifferent to me or not, is equally happy for what I do or not do. I'm interested in making art that is non-perspective but full horizontal, which is not to lie down. Not divided and all around. Horizon is impersonal, its generic, it is and equally.