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The Making Of The Making Of

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Residency May - June 2006

Mette Ingvartsen

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MEDIA MOTION ou comment les médias mettent notre corps en mouvement

Mette Ingvartsen

La chorégraphe Mette Ingvartsen introduit ses sujets de recherche : le rapport entre film et performance, l'importance de l'affect dans notre conception de la relation entre l'artefact et le spectateur, la recherche théorique des méthodologies et de l' « open source », et les nombreuses associations d'idées, doutes et autres questions liés à ces thèmes de réflexion.

INVENTAIRE des projets qui se sont réalisés au cours du projet The Making Of The Making Of. *Mette Ingvartsen*

MEDIA MOTION, or how media moves our bodies

Mette Ingvartsen

A talk that never took place based on thoughts developed in collaboration with Mårten Spångberg, Peter Lenaerts, Elke Van Campenhout, Andros Zins-Browne, Bojana Cvejic, Sandra Iche, Anne Juren, Mette Edvardsen, Manon Santkin, Kajsa Sandstrom, Eleanor Bauer, Jefta Van Dinther, Anne-Linn Akselsen, Justin Garrick, Lucia Glass, Heike Langsdorf, Camilla Marienhof, Tawny Andersen, Inneke van Waeyenberghe, Peppe Ostensson, Maria Winton

rock 'n' roll opening,

let's give up on chronological descriptions and clarity

too much has been done already to say it all.

I tried to start from the beginning by giving a halfhearted lecture on the importance of changing the understandings and conditions of work and I realized that I was once again repeating myself.

Yes, I know that the institutional frame I work in affects the work I can do and that there is ultimately no artistic freedom, even when I am doing research I will not entirely escape evaluation and judgment, and thank god for that.

Research is not a place of anything goes but rather of everything should be possible. Experimentation while not knowing where to end up but still being clear about how to start.

Even when you begin with nothing.

Make a clear definition of what it is that you really want to question and try not to fall into the trap of what is commonly known to be accepted as models of research. The relationship between process and product for sure is an issue but not in itself. I mean what would a pure process be? A process needs to process some *thing* or does it?

I'll try again.

I am really interested in the relationship between live performance and various other media, especially cinema. Why? Let me think. I had a conversation with an older man about how in the 70s everyday life was the topic of artistic work and how important that was as a movement. I thought he didn't like the spectacular nature of what he was seeing on a video projection I had just finished. I tried to explain that today everyday understanding of life is 100% connected to media and that in order to navigate in a hyper-spectacular world one needs to be able to navigate spectacular expression. How they can be produced, what they can mean and how their meaning can be transformed. Resistance is no longer saying no, but rather knowing how to navigate and participate in the expression of the world at the speed that it is moving.

So let's pick up speed and not look back.

I want to be as animated as an animation figure. A superficial appearance does not mean that there is nothing but surface. Anyhow we know that the body is a tube and that the inside is no different from the surface of our skin.

wait.

Let's try to get this right because it is an interesting thought. If media representations are surface expressions, does it then mean that they cannot communicate depth? Let's think of an example, think of Second Life figures, avatars being controlled by their real life initiators. Escapism from the 'real' world or rather an attempt to become virtual, to experiment with virtual money, virtual relation, virtual democracies and utopias, virtual game and fame realities, virtual communications and connections. The complexity of these relations goes far beyond their representational expression. The virtual has never been the opposite of the real, but rather in opposition to the actual.

Fuck, if I keep writing like this I will never be published anywhere else than where I should be, on the net. There I can post the lousiest but also the greatest writing ever done. Maybe no one will read it but at least it will be available for circulation.

www.everybodys.be

A page for performance art discourse and circulation. I wish it would work. How could it work or maybe rather how can we make it work. We need a mailing list. What do you want to discuss? The current state of the art? Affects and sensation? Open source or methodological challenges or something entirely different. Intuition is a sure way to have absolutely no idea what you are doing but still be doing it. A methodology never stands alone, it is always connected. It is a conglomerate of different methods, a collection of ways of working that together propose a kind of consistency. Let's not misuse or even just confuse it with a simple method.

Okay, but then how do you make up a methodology. And secondly, does knowing how you work really make you any more capable of working? The danger is of course to analyze yourself to death with formal continuations. I make a grid where I combine the different areas I am interested in working on in various ways.

A diagram.

A combinatory system made to make connections between as yet unconnected areas. It goes like this: first you need to define the separate territories and to do so you make a list to organize your thoughts. Here's an example

ANIMATION, METHODOLOGY, CONCERT, GAME FIGURES, VOICE, STUNTS, FIGHT SCENES, SOUND EFFECTS, LIGHTS, COSTUMES, AFFECTS, EXPLOSIONS, THEATRICAL SPACE, OPEN SOURCE

Once you have defined the territories you start to combine them in all possible ways. What does a space have to do with the voice, or the voice with the animation, or the sound effects with the costumes? Lets make an experiment and create a voice animation and define how it is different from an animation voice. We could also do a concert stunt, where the main singer disappears in smoke and comes back in a different costume in so little time that you think *it must be a double*.

A stunt double.

You can imagine a fighting couple multiplied, so three couples replacing one another, but basically fighting one fight. During the scene one person's role can be taken over by somebody else, creating a time lapse that produces speed. In cinema this is done through editing: you see the same situation from various different angles in very short time, which gives the feeling of a feverish, heated situation. This way you might forget who in the beginning was the original.

What if there were no original but only sets of digital copies? VHS is over and out anyhow since the new millennium.

I double my favourite singles. I did not know them until I started thinking about how the voice can be used in pop music when it avoids words, cheesy lyrics and sentimentality. The 5,6,7,8's do it greatly. Japanese girls singing rock 'n' roll and you have absolutely no idea what they are saying. The voice is interesting when it is exactly not functioning within speech. How many ways can the voice express without actually saying something. Not that it doesn't communicate, just that the oral expression is stronger than what it signifies in language.

Like crying.

I cry when I am hurt, I cry when I am in physical pain, I cry when I lose someone, I cry when I forget my wallet for the 15th time, I cry when I want attention, I cry when I am a Lynch character masturbating without coming, I cry when my lover just died, I cry when I'm watching a sentimental movie, I cry when I stand on the top of a beautiful mountain, listening to beautiful music. The cultural definitions of cause and effect are fortunately not that fixed. So lets remove the psychological motivation and the narrative buildup and cry our lungs out for the pure pleasure of oral duplication. What does it mean when crying is no longer connected to narratives of suffering, pain and misuse? Is it possible to radically alter the understanding of a coded oral expression and how can this become empowering rather than an abusive manipulation of the senses?

The understanding of emotional expression is connected to cultural codes of recognition. But maybe the codification simplifies what can actually be experienced. Is an experience only understandable as an experience when it can be recognized?

Feelings and emotions are in the realm of recognition but what about affects?

I am trying to figure out what affects are and how they can be produced. Pre-personal, preconscious impulses that have not yet become emotions or feelings. Emotions are cultural, feelings personal and biographical, the rest is slightly impossible to speak about.

Affects are unformed and unstructured, which exactly is what makes them impossible to work on. Manipulating affective mechanisms or navigating spectacular expressions as I expressed I was interested in before, is in that sense a contradiction in terms. The moment an expression is recognized and the experience becomes known to the spectator, s/he can no longer be in an affective mode of experiencing.

Contradiction: Isn't it that the spectacular precisely works though effect and recognition and if so, how can it be connected to non-recognition and affect?

Effect and affect are clearly two different things that should not be mixed up, but that doesn't mean that there is no relation between them.

I suspect effects to be more likely to produce feelings and emotions rather than affects on an experiential level. Affects cannot be worked on, they work on you. But maybe they work on you in between the effects, in the connections and the travelling from one representational regime to another. Maybe they work in the moments when perception moves faster than the recognition and reflection of the percept? One strategy would be to use effective expressions by trying to turn or twist them out of their place of belonging, to connect them in totally strange ways to displace their reception and recognition.

Ah, now we have ended up in pure speculative speculation. Maybe it is time to stop writing and start doing. The end of something is always the beginning of something else, so now I will start making a video screen-play for a dance performance and get confused about which media are capable of what. Or maybe we should finally follow through this idea of making "The Making Of" a performance that does not yet exist to reverse the process. Why not make "The Making Of" into the film itself instead of the by-product to the effective filmic experience.

A media is only a media when it can no longer be turned off and Hollywood is all around.

GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD LUCK.

Mette Ingvartsen 26-06-06

INVENTORY of projects taking place as part of The Making Of The Making Of

THE GREEN SPACE

the building of a flexible work space, a cinema, a lecture hall, a rehearsal space, a library, a writing place, an internet zone, a film set, a dance studio, a stage design, a temporary hotel, an interior decoration, a meeting place, an installation and anything else you could imagine it to be.

THE QUESTIONS ON METHODOLOGY

a questionnaire written to start a discussion on how methodologies can be understood and misunderstood in performance. An invitation to reformulate, change, overwrite and exchange position and opinions.

THE DOUBLE SCREENINGS

Mårten Spångberg and Mette Ingvartsen worked on the double screenings as a genre rather than as an artefact. A way of practising connections and relations: conceptual, experiential, visual, auditive, affective, virtual, and actual.

THE WORKING GROUP

a group of people meeting to discuss current issues of general and personal interest. Discussions so far included: Affect, virtuality, methodology, method, procedures and operations, source material, technology/technique.

THE VOICE AND SOUND IN CINEMA

a collaboration between Mette Ingvartsen and Peter Lenaerts working on possible transposition from cinema to performance. Focusing on the voice and sound in cinema. Diegetic and non-diegetic uses, layering, amplifying, recording and replaying

THE GREEN SPACE ANIMATION

developed through using the green space as a score or model for action. Jefta van Dinther and Mette Ingvartsen worked chaotically on principles of performance. Searching for ways to think 'what is a performance model?'

THE OPEN-SOURCE DISCUSSION

2 days of discussing the possible implication and application of open-source strategies into performance making.

THE STUNT/STAGE FIGHT WORKSHOP

Peppe Ostensson and Maria Winton taught a five-day workshop on stage fight technique. Specifically unarmed and quarter-staff. The workshop was a test of how a learning process can become a performance event by contrasting very spectacular expressions/capable bodies with the body that is learning.

THE CONCERT AND THE CRYING CHOIR

a practical continuation of the voice and sound research. Testing the performance capacities of a mediatized body. A concert body with all its mannerisms and belonging to genre and musical identity. Doing covers of the 5, 6, 7, 8's practising the expression of incomprehensible vocal articulation.

EVERYBODYS

a web page dedicated to the distribution and circulation of information relating to performing arts and its discourses. It is a database and a library, a site for exchange and long-term investigatory discussions. It's everybody's.

context

During her residency, the choreographer Mette Ingvartsen applied a process of 'overproduction'. Through the use of diverse strategies and procedures she aimed at creating as many test situations as possible, bringing to light the relation between live performance and cinema. For this she reconstructed the workspace of PLATEAU into a 'green space': the floor, walls, and furniture were transformed into a 'green key' studio (a version of the blue key used in the film industry). As a result, the workspace lost its identity as a performance venue, becoming a recording studio-cum-theatre-cum-film set-cum-stunt workshop-cum-discussion platform ... in which she involved a number of artists and theoreticians from various fields: Mårten Spångberg, Peter Lenaerts, Elke Van Campenhout, Andros Zins-Browne, Bojana Cvejic, Sandra Iche, Anne Juren, Mette Edvardsen, Manon Santkin, Kajsa Sandstrom, Eleanor Bauer, Jefta Van Dinther, Anne-Linn Akselsen, Justin Garrick, Lucia Glass, Heike Langsdorf, Camilla Marienhof, Tawny Andersen, Inneke van Waeyenberghe, Peppe Ostensson, Maria Winton.

Each week saw the exploration of a different aspect of the parallels between film and stage, consecutively focusing on the voice (experiments with dubbing, sound mixing, live production of film sounds, ...), movement (organization of a stunts workshop), object animation (live animation and recording of objects), double screenings (simultaneous projection of two films), etc.

Alongside these initial, mainly practical experiments, there was a second, more theoretical line of research into the development of performance methodologies, focusing on correct understanding of the term 'affect' (as used by philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze and Brian Massumi) and the use of Open-Source methodology and terminology in performance.



nadine is a workplace for transdisciplinary arts, comprising two venues, each with its own character. PLATEAU offers long-term laboratory residencies of two to three months during which artists are afforded an opportunity for research and collaboration with colleagues, scientists, critics, The results of each residency are archived on our website, in a publication, and on DVD. In TANI we are currently setting up a new media space where artists can experiment with new media applications.

Artists who would like to come and work in PLATEAU or TANI are invited to send us a short description of their project, accompanied by some visual material (video/dvd/photos,...) if possible. Projects are considered by *nadine*'s artistic team and interesting proposals will be discussed during a meeting with the artists concerned to determine their feasibility within what we have to offer. The period, duration, presentation and communication strategies, technical and intrinsic support may vary according to each project and will be adapted to the artistic process as much as possible.

Proposals can be sent to: info@nadine.be

DINA 2 Residency: May - July 2006 Mette Ingvartsen The Making Of The Making Of

Published in November 2006 by *nadine* Herderstraat/rue du Berger 30, 1050 Brussels email; info@nadine.be http://www.nadine.be

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supported by: de Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie van het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest, de Vlaamse Overheid, de gemeente Elsene/commune d'Ixelles