

The Permeable Stage – Reimagining the Social

Performative Conference

October 7, 2018

The Permeable Stage is a proposal by Mette Ingvartsen.

This 3rd edition is developed in collaboration with Jenny Schlenzka for Performance Space New York.

Technical Directors: Hans Meijer & Jørgen Skjærvold
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth & Benjamin Kimitch

Produced By: Performance Space New York & Great Investment vzw

Associate Producer: Janet Rucker

Food Designer: Kim Upstill

Technicians: Alex Artaud, Clair Bacon, Robin A. Ediger-Seto, Antígona González and Curtis Marxen

Funded By: The Flemish Authorities and the Danish Arts Foundation

With Contributions From:

Patricia T. Clough

Annie Dorsen

Che Gossett

Mette Ingvartsen

Romuald Karmakar

Isabel Lewis

Carolee Schneemann.

Summary

In this third edition of *The Permeable Stage*, developed in collaboration with Performance Space New York, Mette Ingvartsen invites artists and theorists to share their work within the frame of a performative conference. The focus of the day is on how to reimagine the social, by including non-humans into the way we think about collective structures and notions of living together. The contributors are invited to share their perspectives on how they understand the relationship between humans, technologies, things, animals, plants and other matters, as these topics emerge directly out of their artistic expressions and theoretical work.

The idea behind *The Permeable Stage* is to open up a space where artistic, theoretical, social and political approaches can co-exist to produce conversations within a theater context. The public is invited to experience how the different contributions resonate with one another and to participate in making the representational space of the theater into a place for discussion, as well as for sensual occasions of experience and imaginative exchange.

Program Overview

1:00pm

Welcome by Mette Ingvarsten

DONKEY WITH SNOW, A Film by Romuald Karmakar, Germany 2010, 4 min

1:15-2:15pm

Hello Hi There

Performance extract and interview with Annie Dorsen

2:15-3:15pm

The User Unconscious: Post-Phenomenological Subjectivity and Datafication

Lecture by Patricia T. Clough

3:15-5:15pm

An Occasion hosted by Isabel Lewis

5:15-6:45pm

Activating Conversation

Between Carolee Schneemann and Mette Ingvarsten

7:15-8:15pm

Abolitionist Entanglement: Blackness, Palestinian Struggle and the Limits of "Solidarity"

Lecture by Che Gossett

8:15pm

DJ set by Isabel Lewis

Program

1:00pm

Welcome by Mette Ingvartsen

***DONKEY WITH SNOW*, A Film by Romuald Karmakar, Germany 2010, 4 min**

DONKEY WITH SNOW, a still life from Lower Bavaria. It's snowing. We see Bianca and Ugo, two donkeys, and Ole, a sheep named after a Norwegian cross-country skier. Their barn belongs to an auto-repair-shop. Wolfgang, the owner, got his first donkey when a customer couldn't pay his bill.

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1:15pm

Hello Hi There

Performance extract and interview with Annie Dorsen

In this presentation Annie Dorsen will show an extract of one of her earliest works, *Hello Hi There* from 2010. In this performance she uses the famous television debate between the philosopher Michel Foucault and linguist/activist Noam Chomsky from the Seventies as inspiration and material for a dialogue between two custom-designed chatbots: every evening, these computer programs, designed to mimic human conversations, perform a new – as it were, improvised – live text. As Chomsky and Foucault debate language, creativity, the roots of scientific discovery and the nature of political power, the chatbots talk on and on, endlessly circling the questions of the debate, and frequently veering off into unexpected, at times nonsensical, digressions.

The extract will be followed by an interview with Dorsen, focusing on how she uses technology to think about and to create algorithmic performances.

Hello Hi There Concept & Direction: Annie Dorsen, Production Design: Kate Howard, Systems Design: Jeff Gray, Scenography & Lighting Design: Edward Pierce, Chatbot Software Design: Robby Garner, Technical Management: Cyd Cahill, General Management: Lisa Schmidt, Co-producers: steirischer herbst (Graz), Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin), BIT Teatergarasjen (Bergen), Black Box Teater (Oslo), Performance Space 122 (NYC)

2:15pm

The User Unconscious: Post-Phenomenological Subjectivity and Datafication

Lecture by Patricia T. Clough

In this lecture, Patricia T. Clough will explore the meaning of subjectivity in these times of digital media and computational technologies. She will discuss the impact on human consciousness and human perception, as well as address the pre-affectivity or liveliness of the environment, or what has been referred to as a “worldly sensibility.” She will focus on the work of two scholars who have most influenced her thinking: Luciana Parisi and Mark Hansen, and conclude with some speculations about the working of unconscious processes invited by a post-phenomenological phenomenology.

3:15pm

An Occasion

Hosted by Isabel Lewis

Considered celebratory gatherings of things, people, plants, dances and scents, occasions hosted by Isabel Lewis take place in decorated environments where visitors can drift in and out of attention and sociality. Lewis unfolds a specific dramaturgy attuned to her guests and their energies shaping a live experience using choreography, music, spoken address, and storytelling in ways that allow for conversation, contemplation, dancing, listening, or just simply being. Easing the formalities of distanced observation typically found within the theatre and exhibition contexts, Lewis is interested in situations that generate relaxation where the entire human sensorium is addressed. Lewis's hosted occasions conjure the ancient Greek symposium, where philosophizing, drinking and the erotic were inseparable.

5:15pm

Activating Conversation

Between Carolee Schneemann and Mette Ingvartsen

In this conversation, Mette Ingvartsen and Carolee Schneemann will continue their ongoing dialogue established over six years ago – which has intensified over recent months without their ever having met. Their exchange will concern their affinities for each other's work and the ways in which their artistic processes collide. As they present extracts from their performances, motives will emerge that are coincidentally aligned, prompting intimate thoughts about the work. The resulting discussion will introduce cultural taboos, such as sexuality, pleasure, nudity, violence – as well as non-human agency and the materiality of objects and spaces.

7:15pm

Abolitionist Entanglement: Blackness, Palestinian Struggle and the Limits of "Solidarity"

Lecture by Che Gossett

In this lecture Che Gossett brings together Fanon, Sylvia Wynter, and Afropessimism as well as recent Palestinian films about animal necropolitics to consider both abolitionist aesthetics and how abolition -- which might be characterized as what Jared Sexton calls "abolition the interminable radicalization of every radical movement" -- and as anchored in black study, is an anti-colonial and interspecies affair. While Palestinian ecological struggle has been documented in leftist and solidarity struggles, there has been less work exploring how the animal is entangled in occupation and Che will discuss the work of Palestinian filmmakers — Giraffada and The Wanted 18 highlighting both Palestinian animal rights activism and ecological activism. Che will consider how abolition undoes the coordinates of the Human -- what Sylvia Wynter called the genre of Man and genre of the "animal" as well. Finally, Che will discuss how blackness radicalizes Palestinian struggle and how we might imagine moving beyond a grammar of "solidarity."

8:15pm

DJ set by Isabel Lewis

Patricia Ticineto Clough is a professor of sociology and women studies and teaches in Performance Studies at NYU. She is the author of *Autoaffection: Unconscious Thought in the Age of Teletechnology*, editor of *The Affective Turn* and co-editor of *Beyond Biopolitics, Essays in the Governance of Life and Death* and most recently the author of *The User Unconscious: Affect, Media and Measure*. She is a practicing psychoanalyst in New York City.

Annie Dorsen is a director and writer whose works explore the intersection of algorithms and live performance. Her most recent project, *The Slow Room* premiered at Performance Space New York in fall of 2018. Her previous work *The Great Outdoors*, premiered at Noorderzon Festival (Groningen) and has also been presented at Kampnagel Sommerfestival (Hamburg), Crossing the Line (NYC), and Théâtre de la Cité (Paris). Additionally, *Yesterday Tomorrow* (2015), premiered at the Holland Festival, and has been presented at Berliner Festspiele as part of Maerzmusik, PS122's COIL Festival (NYC), and Festival d'Automne (Paris). Earlier algorithmic theatre projects, *A Piece of Work* (2013) and *Hello Hi There* (2010), have both toured extensively in the US and Europe. In 2017 the script of *A Piece of Work* was published by Ugly Duckling Presse, and she has contributed essays for Theatre Magazine, Etcetera, Frakcija, and The Drama Review (TDR). She is the co-creator of the 2008 Broadway musical *Passing Strange*, which she also directed. In addition to awards for *Passing Strange*, Dorsen received 2018 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship (Drama and Performance Art), the 2018 Spalding Gray Award, a 2016 Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant to Artists Award, the 2014 Herb Alpert Award for the Arts in Theater, and a 2008 OBIE Award. She is a Visiting Professor in Theater and Performance Studies at the University of Chicago.

Che Gossett is a trans femme writer, an archivist at the Barnard Center for Research on Women and a PhD candidate in trans/gender studies at Rutgers. They are the recipient of the 2014 Gloria E. Anzaldúa Award from the American Studies Association, a Radcliffe research grant from Harvard University and the 2014 Sylvia Rivera Award in Transgender Studies from the Center for Gay and Lesbian Studies at the City University of New York, and the 2014 Martin Duberman Research Scholar Award from the New York Public Library. Most recently, they received a Palestinian American Research Committee grant and are currently serving as a 2017-2018 Queer Arts Mentor. They are working on a book project titled *Blackness, the Beast and the Non Sovereign*.

Mette Ingvarstsen is a Danish choreographer and dancers who lives and works in Brussels. Her work is characterized by hybridity and engages in extending choreographic practices by combining dance and movement with other domains such as visual arts, technology, language and theory. An important strand of her work was developed between 2009 and 2012 with *The Artificial Nature Series*, in which she focused on reconfiguring relations between human and non-human agency through choreography. By contrast her latest series, *The Red Pieces* (2014-2017) inscribes itself into a history of human performance with a focus on nudity, sexuality and how the body historically has been a site for political struggles. She established her company in 2003, and since then her work has been shown all around Europe, as well as in the U.S., Canada and Australia. She has been artist in residence at the Kaaitheater in Brussels, Volksbühne in Berlin, as well as associated to the APAP network. Ingvarstsen holds a PhD in choreography from Stockholm's University of the Arts.

Romuald Karmakar works with both feature film (*Der Totmacher, Manila, Die Nacht singt ihre Lieder*), and documentary film (*Warheads, Das Himmler-Projekt, Hamburger Lektionen, Villalobos*). His work has been honored at major international film festivals (Venice, Berlin, Locarno, Toronto) and has been presented in several retrospectives (Austrian Film Museum; BAFICI, Buenos Aires; Jeonju IFF, South Korea; Cinéma du Réel, Paris). In 2008, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, selected his film *Das Himmler-Projekt* as one of "250 important works of art that have been acquired by the Museum since 1980." In 2013 Karmakar was invited, together with Ai Weiwei, Santu Mofokeng and Dayanita Singh, to represent Germany at the 55th Art Biennale in Venice (German Pavilion). In 2014 he was awarded the DEFA-Foundation Award for outstanding achievement in German cinema. In 2017 he was invited to participate at documenta 14. Romuald Karmakar, Harvard alumnus, is a member of Academy of Arts Berlin. He lives and works in Berlin.

Isabel Lewis is trained in literary criticism, dance, and philosophy. Her work takes on many different formats: from lecture-performances and workshops to music sessions, parties, installations, and what she calls *hosted occasions*. She has created works around topics such as open source technology and dance improvisation, social dances as cultural storage systems, collaborative creative formats, future bodily techniques, and rapping as embodied speech acts. Her work has been commissioned and presented by Creative Time and Art Basel (2018), Gropius Bau/ Berliner Festspiele (2018), Tate Modern London (2017); Ming Contemporary Art Museum Shanghai (2016 – 2017); Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art (2015); Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève (2014); Liverpool Biennial (2014); Frieze London (2014); Tanz im August Berlin (2015); Kunsthalle Basel (2014); Serpentine Galleries (2012); Dia Foundation, New York (2016); and Palais de Tokyo Paris (2016). Lewis is Berlin-based, born in the Dominican Republic and raised on a man-made island off the coast of southwest Florida.

Carolee Schneemann is a multidisciplinary artist. As one of the most influential artists of the second part of the 20th century, Schneemann's pioneering investigations into subjectivity, the social construction of the female body, and the cultural biases of art history have had significant influence on subsequent generations of artists. She was awarded the Golden Lion Award For Lifetime Achievement at the Venice Biennale in 2017. In the same year, her first comprehensive retrospective traveled from the Museum of Modern Art in Salzburg, to the Frankfurt Museum of Modern Art — and then to MoMA PS1 in New York, where it opened in October. *Uncollected Texts*, a compilation of her writings, was released in February, 2018.

About Performance Space New York and the Posthuman Series

Performance Space New York was born in the East Village in 1980 as Performance Space 122 when a group of local artists occupied the empty building that had been home to Public School 122 and started making performance work as a passionate rejection of corporate mainstream culture.

This fall, the Posthuman Series invite artists to explore worlds that extend beyond the human perspective. Rather than positioning human consciousness as the primary source and content of all art making, the contributions to the Posthuman Series often blur distinction between 'the

human' and its other: namely nature, technology, animals, and gods.

Performance Space New York pays respect to the Lenape ancestors past, present, and future. We acknowledge that the work of Performance Space is situated on the Lenape island of Manahatta (Mannahatta) and more broadly in Lenapehoking, the Lenape homeland.

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Institutional support is provided by

The American-Scandinavian Foundation, Barragga Bay Fund, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Chromocell, Danish Arts Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, East Village Community Coalition, Ford Foundation, Harkness Foundation for Dance, Howard Gilman Foundation, Humanities New York, Hyde and Watson Foundation, Jerome Foundation, Lambent Foundation / Fund of Tides Foundation, MAP Fund, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Morrison Foerster Foundation, National Endowment

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