

How are things done, produced or effected with performance?

The Finnish network for performance studies and the research project How to do things with performance? organise a joint research day **8 November 2017** 10 am to 6 pm at University of the Arts theatre Academy, Auditorium 1.

We invite everybody interested in performance studies, research on and in performance art and live art and in performance as research to debate the topic in English or in Finnish. The main speaker of the day is performance theorist and performance maker Bojana Cvejic, whose most recent work *Choreographing Problems* (2015) discusses the relationship of philosophy and experimental choreographic practices by analysing some central works of contemporary dance. Her approach can be linked to performance philosophy as well, the aim of which is to bypass and overcome the abyss between making and thinking, art and philosophy. (Laruelle, Ó Maoilearca, Cull, O'Sullivan). Cvejic is one of the founding members of the group Walking Theory, which represents the new critical theory of the former Eastern European countries. She is professor in dance at Oslo National Academy of the Arts.

Performance studies can be understood as the study of various practices and processes besides cultural and artistic performances. As art making in artistic research in performance studies performance or performing can function as a central research method or as one way of presenting research results. (Allegue et al. 2009; Hunter & Riley 2009; Kershaw & Nicholson 2011; Nelson 2013)

Performance studies and artistic research, too, are part of the broader performative turn in social sciences, influenced by J.L. Austin's linguistic theory of performatives (How to Do Things with Words? 1962; Näin tehdään sanoilla, 2016) and the idea developed especially by Judith Butler (Gender Trouble 1990; Bodies that Matter 1993) of cultural performatives, identities that materialize through repetition. Although the performative turn began as a reaction against linguistically oriented structuralism, it has been criticized for placing language and the linguistic at the centre in a similar manner. New materialist research (e.g. Barad 2003, 2007; Van der Tuijn 2015) has emphasized the inseparability of materiality and discursivity. Through posthumanist research (e.g. Braidotti 2013) performativity widens to concern more-than-human dimensions as well; performance is not only a human activity.

Austin's performatives are not true or false as the constatives, propositional statements, but rather felicitous or infelicitous depending on whether they produce the strived for change in the world. Within art research Dorothea von Hantelmann (2012) has asked, how to do things with art, and within performance studies Edward Scheer has inquired How to Do Things with Performance Art? (2014). In the context of artistic research Barbara Bolt (2008; 2016) has recently returned to discuss its performative character and challenged us to consider what artistic research produces and effectuates. In the context of artistic research the performatives could be a challenge to the nature of knowledge: artistic research does not operate on the axis of the true and the untrue but rather in relationship to the change that the research creates in the world. What about performance studies, what kind of change does performance studies generate? What and in what way are things done with performance?

In the research project How to do things with performance? (2016-2020) funded by the Academy of Finland we have looked for answers with the help of some concepts like fabulation, fictionalising, framing, reimagining and repeating. Fabulation refers here to the social way we are creating shared meanings. Fictionalising, on the contrary, is a mode of thinking which does not strive to any kind of equivalence in relation to the real or reality. Repeating with variation can be linked on one hand to learning, the stabilizing of impact, and on the other hand to the production of difference.

These are of course not the only verbs central for performance and performing. We invite everybody interested in these issues to ponder how and in what way things are done with performance. Our aim is to compile a thematic issue on the topic to RUUKKU, journal of artistic research in Spring 2018.

Please send abstracts of proposals for presentations, in English or Finnish **no later than 9 October** to annette.arlander@uniarts.fi

Welcome!

Annette Arlander, Helena Erkkilä, Hanna Järvinen, Tero Nauha, Pilvi Porkola, Taina Riikonen ja Helena Saarikoski