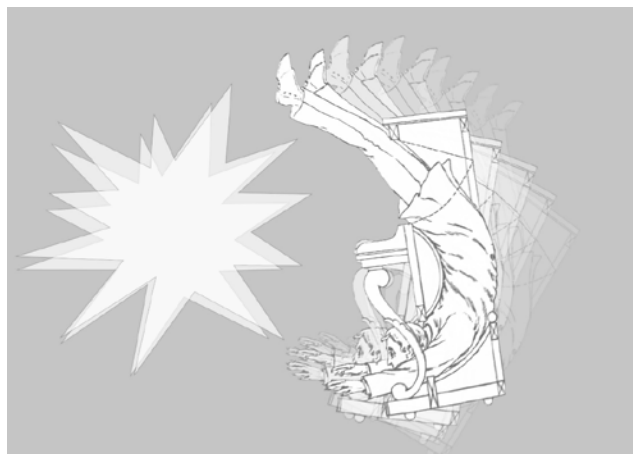


Research Day II

Materiality of and in Performance

2 March 2018, 10.00-17.30
Theatre Academy of the Uniarts Helsinki
Auditorium 1



ABSTRACTS

Rick Dolphijn: How Art Objects	2
Taru Leppänen & Milla Tiainen: Trans-becomings in Western classical singing: An intra-active approach ...	2
Pauliina Hulkko: Materiality and Performance Dramaturgy Five Years After	3
Hanna Järvinen: On the Postcolonial Materiality of Dancing Bodies.....	4
Tero Nauha: The interval between matter and perception of ‘something’ in a performance	4
Pilvi Porkola: A Study on Objects - Work in progress	4
Annette Arlander: Return to the site of the Year of the Rooster	4
Mirko Nikolic: apparatus x assemblage x common: minoritarian intersections.....	5
Jaana Laakkonen: Material(-Discursive) Strangers Demanding for Better (Material-)Discourses!.....	6
Max McBride: Becoming Fluid: a Performance Prospect	6
Julia Adzuki: Resonant Bodies – somatic and sonic ecologies.....	7
Jay Mar Albaos: “Becoming” through Artistic Immersion: The <i>Bayanihan</i> in Helsinki	7
Christiana Bissett & Josh Widera: The Truth of the Matter – Materiality and Inaesthetics.....	8
Olga Spyropoulou: Speculative dialogues with Matter: Being in <i>Conversations</i>	9

KEYNOTE

Rick Dolphijn:

How Art Objects

Michel Serres once called it the only thing that actually makes human societies different from societies of other species; the invention of the object. But be careful, Serres is highly sceptical about the object, whose only goal it seems to be, is to slow down history, to stop change, to keep the status quo. We can think of many examples of objects that have indeed served that purpose, from the totem in religion, to money in capitalism; every time the aim is to secure the position of those in power, and to make sure the rest of society does not find a way to object to this. The history of art is unfortunately very much entangled with the history of the object. Within the sacred spaces of the church, but also within the sacred spaces of the museum, the artwork is objectified, placed under a bell jar, where it is stewing in its own sour air, and worshipped.

In this keynote, I want to explore the way the artwork, and the artwork alone, refuses to be suffocated by the object today. And by objecting, by allowing matter its perpetual movement, it allows a burst of creativity to materialise itself. I want to study this materialist activism giving some examples from contemporary performance, the field that has, traditionally, always been uncomfortable with the idea of the object. The aim is to explore how performance gives rise to a new materialist theory of art *that matters*.

Dr **Rick Dolphijn** has a background in philosophy and art theory and is interested in the theoretical humanities at large, media and performance theory in particular. He wrote (with Iris van der Tuin) *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies* (Open Humanities Press 2012), has written on new materialism, ecology/ecosophy and art and is interested in the developments in continental philosophy and speculative thought. His academic work has appeared in journals like *Angelaki*, *Rhizomes*, *Collapse* and *Deleuze Studies*. He edited (with Rosi Braidotti) *This Deleuzian Century: Art, Activism, Life* (Brill/Rodopi 2014/5) and *Philosophy after Nature* (2017).

Taru Leppänen & Milla Tiainen:

Trans-becomings in Western classical singing: An intra-active approach

This paper examines transgender experiences and existence in relation to voice and the performance of western classical singing. A key inspiration for our approach is our collaboration with Finnish singer, voice teacher and trans man Demian Seesjärvi. Thus, our propositions reverberate in-between Seesjärvi's vocalizations, his spoken and written reflections on his performing body/voice and artistic activities, and the research interests that we bring into these encounters.

The paper explores the interrelations of trans existence and vocal performance through Seesjärvi's distinctive practice in classical singing. Our accompanying theoretical aim is to participate in the discussions, which have been expanding for the past 15 years, about how materiality - or better, materialities - matter a great deal both in the (performing) arts and in trans modes of being and self (e.g. Kontturi & Tiainen 2004; Barrett & Bolt 2013; Hayward 2008; Vaccaro 2010; Barad 2015).

We focus on Seesjärvi's activities as a classically trained singer by asking how his artistry and perhaps the music-cultural field of classical singing more generally prompt important insights into the co-compositions of body, voice and sex/gender in trans ways of being. How do material, socio-cultural and discursive processes interrelate - or, in the terms used in this paper, *intra-act* - within these formations? How do new materialist ideas concerning the emergent, instead of passive or predictable, character of matter and the intra-active

unfolding of phenomena (e.g. Barad 2003; 2007) inspire an understanding of trans forms of being as trans-becomings: as material, corporeal, social and temporal processes that trans-form the lived body/self (cf. Hayward 2010)? We will conclude the paper by summarizing what renewed understandings of materiality, voice, and sex/gender our approach proposes for trans studies and the study of music as performance.

Dr **Milla Tiainen** is a musicologist who works across performance studies in music, voice and sound studies, cultural and feminist musicology, and new materialist and posthumanist thinking in relation to music. She has published widely on these topic areas in such journals as *Australian Feminist Studies*, *Body & Society*, *Cultural Studies Review*, *Current Musicology*, and *European Journal of Media Studies*. Her books include the co-edited *Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari* (Bloomsbury, 2017) and *Becoming-Singer* (University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming). Milla is Senior Lecturer in Musicology at the University of Helsinki and editor-in-chief of *Musiikki*, the peer-reviewed journal of the Finnish Musicological Society. She is one of the founding members of the EU-funded COST networking action "New Materialism" (<http://newmaterialism.eu/>) and a postdoctoral researcher in the Academy of Finland-funded project "Localizing Feminist New Materialisms" (2017-2121).

Taru Leppänen is Senior Lecturer and Research Director ("Localizing Feminist New Materialisms", funded by Academy of Finland 2017-2021) in Gender Studies at the University of Turku. Her research engages with feminist new materialisms, and feminist and cultural studies of music. Her monograph *Powerless and unruly music: Children's music cultures in Finland of the 2000s* (2010; in Finnish) concentrates on the formation of children's gendered subjectivities vis-à-vis music. Taru is also co-editor of *Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari* (Bloomsbury, 2017).

Pauliina Hulkko:

Materiality and Performance Dramaturgy Five Years After

In my address, I discuss questions that concern the relation between materiality and dramaturgy: How do we understand dramaturgical matter or material? What do these two consist of? How does the notion of matter/material relate to ideas about composition, structure and form? In my artistic doctoral dissertation entitled *From Amoralia to Riitta: Suggestions for a Material Ethics of the Stage*, I outlined performance making based on materiality. The emphasis was on the materiality of all scenic objects, in general, and on the corporeal materiality of the performer, in particular. In conclusion, I outlined a 'material ethics', in which all scenic materials are encountered and treated equally.

Now, five years after the dissertation, I wish to test its propositions. The aim is to update and test my own understanding of materiality in relation to dramaturgy – and hopefully open some interesting insights that we could share and discuss together.

Dr **Pauliina Hulkko** is a director, dramaturge and artistic researcher. She works as the professor of Theatre Work (acting programme) at the University of Tampere, Finland. Pauliina's research interests extend from dramaturgy and composition to performer training and performance ethics. Contacts: pauliina.hulkko@staff.uta.fi

Hanna Järvinen:

On the Postcolonial Materiality of Dancing Bodies

The trajectory from the old materialism of Marx through Foucauldian questions of bodies as subjects of power has been under revision for a good reason. Our digitally connected global world moves, and the intersectionalist call to decentralise both theoretical and practical takes on our bodies is acute in research and pedagogy of bodies. In this paper, I illustrate how to apply some of the strategies postcolonialist theoreticians have suggested to the specific context of researching art.

Tero Nauha:

The interval between matter and perception of 'something' in a performance

In this presentation I will regard few points of view to how performance works with matter, or how in the performance there remains to be as 'something'. It might be 'stuff' or an experience of something, that will be reflected upon. It may manifest as a thing, idea, or a product. We might recognize or distinguish what this something is and treat it accordingly. In the performance we might be thinking *with* something, also. We might argue that thinking itself is matter. We retain elements from the matter that interest us. There is an interval between matter and conscious perception and because of this interval, we perceive matter *minus* something, which, then, is distinguished as a thing. This presentation is a short inquiry of regarding an interval as 'performance thinking'—an interval, which has no correlation with a possible representation, but still insist.

Pilvi Porkola:

A Study on Objects - Work in progress

A Study on Objects is an art project focusing on materiality of everyday objects and performance. The project has started from a notion that we are surrounded by unlimited number of objects in daily life without really thinking how we are related to them. I'm interested in how objects carry inform and how they are related to knowledge production. At this stage of process – at the very beginning – I explore on objects and test what kind of different theoretical and other perspectives I can take when focusing on them. In this presentation I'm going to present a current situation of the project and its method.

Annette Arlander:

Return to the site of the Year of the Rooster

This presentation continues the explorations of *Animal Years* (2003-2014) a series of video works or performances for camera on Harakka Island, and the possibility of their re-assembly, perhaps into a digital form of autotopography (Gonzalez 1995; Bal 2002; Heddon 2002) a notion I was interested in at the time, by focusing on *Year of the Rooster* (2006) and *Christmas of the Rooster - Tomten* (2006). Returning to the site of the performance twelve years later serves as a starting point for reflections on the materiality of the site. Could the small birches in the images, still growing there, be regarded as co-performers or artists, following a recent suggestion by Michael Marder (2018), or be understood as partners in a sympoiesis of sorts (Haraway 2016)? Does such an attempt to rethink the performer-environment relationship as "performing with" living beings in the landscape really matter?

Mirko Nikolic:

apparatus x assemblage x common: minoritarian intersections

Other-than-human agency has partially been reinstated in the wake of science studies, environmental humanities, 'matter-realist feminism' (Braidotti); the question, however, remains: *how* do some modes of matter come to matter and how do some get excluded from mattering? In this short intervention, a work in progress, i will analyse three different dynamics of material performativity in view of theorising-practising multispecies justice, that is, enacting performances that take timespace inside-but- athwart the infrastructures of late neoliberalism.

Dispositif (apparatus) is, after Foucault, a discursive-material 'multilinear ensemble' (Deleuze, 1991: 159), a dynamics that works through 'cuts' that determine "coming together and apart" of agencies (Barad, 2007: 148). *Agencement* (assemblage) dynamics, in Deleuze and Guattari, De Landa (2006) and Tsing (2015), accounts for perhaps wilder interspecies meetings characterised by rhizomatic openness and dispersal. Recent reworkings of common(ing) in more-than-human perspectives (Tola, 2015; Dolphijn, 2016), highlight commitments of care and reproductive labour (Federici, 2010), and open up towards naturalcultural notion of material community (nikolić & Skinner, 2018). These discourses and dynamics have points of conjunction and disjunction and, in my view, standalone they are not sufficient to analyse and confront the complexity of present naturalcultural entanglements. Rather, i believe that these concepts, and others, entangle with each others to create spacetime-matter manifolds which we recognise as our material landscape. Performances of multispecies justice need to situate themselves in relation to these dynamics and enact and prefigure orientations and possibilities that are not yet contained in the present.

I will argue that through an intersectional approach that operates between these concepts and disposes them towards collective becoming-minor, a multispecies exodus from neoliberal art, university and the social can be conspired with earth others. In the present asymmetrical landscape of knowledge, affect, and power, this implies a weakening of our theories, 'deprioritising' certain relations and codings (Stark, 2017), a 'situated-dispersal' (Górska, 2016), an occupied withdrawal...

Bio

My praxis, through performance and theory, seeks to prefigure more just collaborations among different species and heterogeneous bodies. In recent projects, i have worked on extractivist ontologies and anti-mining strategies, translation of atmosphere into finance, industrialisation of animal labour, and unlearning of anthropocentric and capitalist survival ideologies. At the moment, i am engaged in developing a multispecies tactical media platform entangling forest, mineral and human modes of being in North-East Finland. Their works have recently been exhibited at Art Sonje, Seoul; SIC Gallery, Helsinki; KC Grad, Belgrade; P3 Ambika, London. mirko holds a PhD in Arts & Media

Jaana Laakkonen:

Material(-Discursive) Strangers Demanding for Better (Material-)Discourses!

"There is no 'I' that exists outside of the diffraction pattern, observing it, telling its story. In an important sense, this story in its ongoing (re)patterning is (re)(con)figuring me. 'I' am neither outside nor inside; 'I' am of the diffraction pattern. Or rather, this 'I' that is not 'me' alone and never was, that is always already multiply dispersed and diffracted throughout spacetime(mattering), including in this paper, in its ongoing being-becoming is of the diffraction pattern." (Karen Barad, 2014, *Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart, Parallax*)

What it matters and means for an art practice done with paint, communication and documentation to take seriously the material-discursive entangledness, intra-action and the entanglement of epistemology, ontology and ethicology, proposed in Karen Barad's *Agential Realism* (e.g. Barad 2007)? This is a 15-minute cut (together-apart).

Jaana Laakkonen graduated as Visual Artist (BA) in 2010 from Tampere University of Applied Sciences and holds MFA (2014) from Finnish Art University's Academy of Fine Arts and finished a 'master after master' degree in Master of Research in Art and Design programme of Sint Lucas University of Arts Antwerp in 2017.

Max McBride:

Becoming Fluid: a Performance Prospect

This work examines performative possibilities of boundary and becoming. It searches for what is possible when non-human and human bodies are explicitly acknowledged as performance co-collaborators and co-influences in fluid states of becoming. By exploring the explicit processes involved in the *incorporation* of the "sensible and the sensuous" (Abrams) this work examines strategies that aim to destabilise, refocus and reengage human performers and spectators as well as querying the interconnecting collaborative potentials of human and non-human materiality in order to offer a method of "re-enchantment" (Gablik) with/of the world.

What does it mean, politically, poetically and performatively, for the human performer to play with and be played by the performing material?

This performance lecture / incorporation practice will involve all the human attendants as all will be invited to partake in becoming fluid using water, pitchers and drinking glasses provided by Max.

Max McBride is a puppeteer, performer, theatre designer and doctoral candidate in Artistic Research in the Performing Arts Research Centre in the University of the Arts Helsinki. Her artistic research queries, confuses and tangles with the boundaries, influences, reciprocities and interconnections amongst human and non-human bodies within performance environments.

Julia Adzuki:

Resonant Bodies – somatic and sonic ecologies

The sensorial experience of resonance, be it acoustic, poetic, kinaesthetic or empathic, is the perception of dynamic entanglement. An 'Intra-action', as proposed by Karen Barad, that although often invisible, connects and transforms bodies more-than-human, matter, states of being and memory. In this sense, sonic and somatic practices are deeply connective, they are potential portals to remembering our entanglement within ecology.

Resonant Bodies is a string instrument made from the hollow trunk of an ancient Ash tree. When the strings on this instrument are played, the physicality of sound as vibration undulates perceptibly through its hull and through all bodies in contact. The whole self becomes an ear, every cell listens. An experience that has been described by participants as evoking visions and memories, changing mood and even easing physical discomfort. Resonant Bodies was developed together with Sindri Runudde and Teresia Lindberg, through the intersection and sharing of a somatic practice; Skinner Releasing Technique and the experience of visual impairment and deaf-blindness.

This instrument is now the starting point of an artistic research project in which acoustic, poetic, kinaesthetic and empathic, resonance are explored through somatic and sonic practices. The questions; How can sonic and somatic practices support communities in deepening connection with place? How can the collective experience of resonance extend choreography into social sculpture? And how does resonance in performative encounters relate to, embody or challenge theories of new materialism?

Julia Adzuki grew up in Australia and came North to work with ice and snow. Making ephemeral sculpture and wearable art lead to an interest in movement and sound practices, and ongoing collaborations with Patrick Dallard and Deniz Soyarslan as SymbioLab, since 2009.

In 2017, Julia certified as teacher of Skinner Releasing Technique and completed an MA in Choreography, specialisation in New Performative Practices at DOCH / Stockholm University of the Arts. As part of *Känbart* exhibition, Resonant Bodies toured Sweden from 2015-2017 and is now on exhibition at Scenkonstmuseum in Stockholm.

Jay Mar Albaos:

“Becoming” through Artistic Immersion: The *Bayanihan* in Helsinki

Matters matter through matter.

Bayanihan took place at the Theatre Academy Helsinki last November 27 to December 1, 2017. It was a participatory and socially engaged project where we (Filipinos, international participants, and local Finnish colleagues), built a traditional Philippine hut (kubo) inside the Theatre Academy for five days. In the final evening, after sharing dinner through a banquet using bare hands, the group carried the kubo outside the academy to Merihaka. The kubo stayed outside Teak for the next five nights and five days until it was finally removed by a crane.

For the Research Day, the kubo will be my material of departure in responding to the question: What is the matter of performance? The collaborative project Bayanihan gave the kubo an opportunity to present itself as a matter - a medium for conversation between the “local” and “migrant”, the “othering other” and the “othered other”. How did the building of the kubo at the Theatre Academy opened up discussions about manifesting, of “becoming”?

Migrants matter through matter.

To “matter” is to view something with significance. To “become” is to be something. My research method, artistic immersion, became beneficial as I explored the performative ripples created by Bayanihan and kubo-building. Through Bayanihan and the kubo, plights of the “labor migrant” can be experienced, as struggles to find spaces and recognition endlessly thrive.

We matter through matter.

Jay Mar Albaos (1991) currently explores how Filipino labor migrants create places and realize themselves in foreign environments. He is interested into how far his method, artistic immersion, can further the encouragement of artistic creation through recognition and participation.

He was a cultural community worker who have worked with Indigenous Peoples. He was also a theatre community performer before leaving for Finland to study MA Live Art and Performance Studies at the Theatre Academy Helsinki. Jay moves from doing solo pieces to working with communities, silent protests to public- sensitive interventions, research writing and creative writing, working and doing nothing. He is a native of the Philippines.

Christiana Bissett & Josh Widera:

The Truth of the Matter – Materiality and Inaesthetics

This presentation takes the form of a dialogue between two maker-researchers in order to present provocations in how we might understand matter in the wider framework of aesthetics.

Christiana Bissett’s performance research in Helsinki has focused on the physical practice of dowsing for underground water currents with metal rods, the resulting movements of which can be framed as a complex performance of interacting material agencies. This concrete example will serve as a starting point for a critical engagement with the way more-than-human performativity is often investigated and displayed.

While the expansion of performance to account for objects and other material is important and timely, we see such performance and art at risk of simply incorporating such agents for their material properties. The artistic legitimacy and aesthetic potential are then drawn from the outside and only point to the performative capacity of the object’s scientific possibilities.

Perhaps, performance can do more than incorporate agents as 'bearers of scientific truths.' In their performativity, could these agents point further than to their own material properties? We propose that for generative works of art, that might stimulate artistic truths, the performativity of the more-than-human objects must also be more-than-possible. How then, might performance tease out the "im-properties" of material agents?

Christiana Bissett and **Josh Widera** are two of six members of The Doing Group, an international collaborative performance group concerned with the process of ‘doing’. Projects of the Glaswegian experimentalists have taken multiple forms and seek to explore the limits and boundaries of artistic research. Christiana Bissett is a current student in the pilot MA project in Ecology and Contemporary Performance at the Helsinki Theatre Academy. She is supported by the Dewar Art Award. Josh Widera is a Fulbright scholar undertaking an MA in Aesthetics and Politics at the California Institute of the Arts.



Olga Spyropoulou:
Speculative dialogues with Matter: Being in *Conversations*

Rooms may be
using us.
[...] And if
we're their instruments –
the valves of their
furious trumpets,
conscripted but
ignorant of it –
the strange, unaccountable
things we betray
were never our secrets
anyway.
Kay Ryan, *Blue China Doorknob*

{Research}

Speculative dialogues¹ with matter: being in *Conversations*²

[Performance]

The *conversation* has already started.

Instructions:

Wear a lab coat. Enter a room. Locate a surface. Place people, if any, around that surface. Apply transparent cling film on the surface. Then, place items on that surface carefully, one at a time. Items should be placed at the order they desire. Items should be placed in the manner they desire. The position of the object is to be determined by the object itself. Stay there.

[Thinking]

Matter is. Being makes sense. Matter thinks. Thinking makes non-sense. Thinking manifests itself through performance. Mapping performance can offer an alternative mapping of thinking. Exploring this thinking might result in an alternative thinking of thinking. Exploring this thinking might result in failing.

[Conversation]

Thinking has been institutionalized. Yet, this thinking is not all-encompassing. Performance-as-research and research-as-performance belong to the recent move towards 'reclaiming the institute' manifesting "an interest in changing governing structures from within rather than critically denouncing their power structures from the outside."³ I suggest we move all thinking into the institution. Let the institution be the terrain where all matters shall be placed in the manner they desire. Let matters perform.

(Silence)

Let us prey –
upon thinking.

1 The dialogical form is one favored in Western philosophy with the example of Plato to be one of the most prominent.
2 *Conversations* is the title of a series of performances I have started in October 2018. These performances – I believe – materialize thinking.
3

Turn, turtle!: reenacting the institute.