

SITUATED AGENCIES

Mediating Places through the Body



NATHALIE S. FARI

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

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Abstract

At a time when our ways of experiencing and inhabiting places in the city have become increasingly entangled with – or even dictated by – technology, the *Situated Agencies: Mediating Places through the Body* examines how site-specific performance practice can be addressed through an embodied and documentary approach. By employing the notion of *agency*, this artistic research project explores how we can enter, access, and uncover the multiple layers of a specific place – its historical connotation, social meaning, cultural value and so forth – to collect and generate a performance and/or documentary material. In this process, a special emphasis is placed on grasping and sort of excavating the *hidden narratives* of a place which in short, refer to all the potential narratives that are neither representative of a place, nor correspond to certain clichés and expectations, but which may be untold, unmanifested or unexpected.

With such an emphasis, a series of performance laboratories were carried out in collaboration with artist researchers from different disciplinary fields. Using approaches from place-based research, posthumanism and performance documentation, these laboratories aimed to explore the relationship between embodiment and audiovisuality. On the one hand, through designing a variety of exercises which focused on enhancing a bodily/environmental awareness and on the other, through experimenting with how the audiovisual traces of a laboratory work can serve both as data and a creative source. The claim that by challenging and expanding the documentary status (or truthful meaning) of such traces, new forms of narrativisation and agency may arise, appears here as an approach to site-oriented screen performance research.

As a result, this artistic research project offers a contribution to the exploration of how specific places, in this case, two public squares – Götaplatsen and “Praça Mauá” – and a small island in Rio de Janeiro can be (re)framed, (re)performed and especially, *rewritten* through both an editing and archival process. All this is done with and through the co-presence of different cameras and bodies and thus, through the ways in which the *situated agencies* emerge and operate within an environment.

Keywords: embodiment, agency, site-specific performance, performance documentation, screen performance research

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Preface

My entry point to drafting a PhD project started in 2016 at the heritage site “Teufelsberg” (EN: Devil’s Mountain) in Berlin. With an architecture inspired by Buckminster Fuller’s Geodesic Dome, the Teufelsberg is an artificially constructed mountain of debris which functioned as a radar station during the Cold War. At this disputed and increasingly touristic place, I carried out two 10-day performance laboratories. Gathering an interdisciplinary group of artist researchers, participants, and special guests, these laboratories explored not only issues around embodiment and site-specificity, but also served as a basis for what came afterwards: my PhD position at the Artistic Faculty of the University of Gothenburg, which led to my move to Gothenburg in 2018.

Not knowing anything about the city, I found the idea of discovering a new place quite exciting, as I assume that every artist who is interested in site-specific practice, would consider this as an opportunity to obtain new insights, establish new collaborations or, to encounter new cultural habits and customs. Yet, such a move is also inevitably accompanied by a feeling of displacement or “uprootedness”, be it from what we call home or from those places with which we have been artistically engaged (in my case, with Teufelsberg). However, since I am a “cultural hybrid” (German-Brazilian) accustomed to moving between places, I consider this feeling of not really belonging to any place as part of the development process of my artistic practice.

From this perspective, I will offer a brief sketch of my research trajectory (2018-2024). Shaped by my engagement with the research community at both HSM and HDK-Valand, this trajectory entailed a range of different activities, from teaching and supervising at the Contemporary Performative Arts Program, to working as a PhD representative for the Research and Doctoral Education Committee, as well as forming part of the Admission Board for new PhD positions at HSM, establishing international collaborations and, finally developing a new course syllabus in Performance Documentation and Digital Practices. Amidst all these activities, there was a pivotal

moment of my PhD project when suddenly, humankind was forced into social isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic that swept the planet in 2020.

For me, this moment not only represented a chance to re-think how we can connect with each other while finding ways to continue living on an destabilised planet, but it also forced me to take a 9-month break from everything. Since COVID-19 hit me quite badly in 2021 (I was affected by the “post-Covid” syndrome with several indescribable, often unbearable symptoms), I had to ease myself slowly back into my PhD project. But as research takes time to flourish, this slower pace at least helped me to look at things in a fresh, new way.

Introduction

This PhD research is concerned with the relationship between the body and a specific place, or between the body *situated* within a place and the multiple agencies that are co-involved in this process. But how do we begin to establish a relationship with a place? How can multiple agencies – the human agency of the performing body, the material agency of a place or the narrative agency of a camera – contribute to develop a place-based inquiry? And how, in turn, could such an inquiry be mediated and/or translated through the body, or a type of *situatedness*?

Departing from these questions, this PhD research is grounded in the notion of *embodiment* which, in its essence, refers to the dissolution of the Cartesian body/mind duality by seeing the sensorimotor abilities of the body inextricably linked to an environment. In doing so, this notion is explored here through three different approaches: a) ‘embodied technique as knowledge’ by Ben Spatz (2015), b) ‘emplacement’ by Sara Pink (2009) and c) ‘posthuman subjectivity’ by Rosi Braidotti (2013). While all these approaches position the ‘lived body’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) – its flesh, bones, and organs – at the centre of a human’s experience, each of them also proposes an embodiment process as a research methodology. In the case of Spatz, such a methodology refers to the acquisition and sedimentation process of an embodied technique and the ways in which such an acquisition can be manifested as performance, gender, or identity. For Pink, in turn, this means to foreground and include one’s own bodily senses – seeing, touching, smelling, hearing – in the ethnographic process of observing and/or participating in a specific place or social milieu. When it comes to Braidotti, the notion of embodiment relates to a political and feminist discourse within the field of humanities, which seeks to decentralise a human’s anthropocentric view by including non-human or more-than-human forms of agency.

Drawing from these approaches, and especially from my own embodied experience as a female performance artist and somatic practitioner, I have looked more closely at how a specific place can be grasped, sensed, or documented. More specifically, at how a certain body/place constellation, arrangement

or structure can be transferred and/or translated into different forms of mediated expressions (e.g., performed photography, or screen performance). In doing so, I have carried out a series of performance laboratories in collaboration with artist researchers from different arts fields, to foster a creative dialogue and exchange around those issues, especially through exploring the relationship between embodiment and technology.

By taking into consideration that our ways of experiencing the world have become increasingly entangled with – or even dictated by – technology, I have implemented digital technologies in the research design of three performance laboratories: Lab #1, Lab #2, and Lab #3. On the one hand, by promoting an exchange between human bodies, digital cameras, and a place; on the other, by proposing a revised methodological approach to what the term performance laboratory and its synonyms – curiosity, investigation, and innovation – means in our digital age. Historically associated with what was labelled as ‘theatre laboratory’ (particularly in the context of the Russian avant-garde theatre of the 1920s) and with notions such as ‘place of observation’, ‘studio practice’ and ‘secluded space’ (see Brown, 2019), a ‘theatre laboratory’ refers to a type of activity which according to Mirella Schino:¹

cannot just be a zone where theatrical knowledge is developed over a longer-than-normal timeframe. It is not even an area *parallel* to artistic creation, but it has a precise relationship with it: it turns its back on artistic creation, but only to get to this destination via a longer, more winding road.²

Here, such a long and winding road did neither pursue the results of an artistic creation, nor some of the parameters associated with a theatre laboratory such as the commitment to a unique performer training lineage, to a unique place

1 Schino’s contribution to the topic is primarily drawn from Jerry Grotowski’s canonical work and approach to theatre laboratory as well as from his legacy (e.g., Eugenio Barba’s Odin Teatret).

2 Mirella Schino, *Alchemists of the Stage: Theatre Laboratories in Europe* (New York/London: Routledge, 2009), 77.

and community or, as Schino puts it, to a sort of ‘theatre enclave’ or strict routine of ‘psychophysical exercises’ (Zarrilli, 2009). In other words, to a type of ‘master-apprentice’ model in which a theatrical – and I will add, somatic knowledge – is mostly transferred and sustained through a top-down, rather than a horizontal approach.

For this reason, a key approach of the performance laboratories was to create so-called “temporary communities” of experts and like-minded (no more than 8) to share our embodied practices and ways of preparing the body for performance. Since my performance practice is grounded in different embodied techniques (e.g., Yoga, Movement Improvisation, 5Rhythms®)³, I found it important to spend time in the studio exploring ways of moving, interacting, thinking and being with one’s own body. Besides that, a key focus lay on trying out how such a studio practice can be extended to an outside environment, especially by situating the body in an existent socio-political and/or spatio-temporal context.

With this particular emphasis, we carried out a series of exercises both in the studio and in public space which aimed, on the one hand, to map, sense, and document the myriad events and manifestations of a place. On the other, they explored *how* and *where* we could place the camera in the space, whether it was by framing, zooming, or accentuating a certain angle, or by staging and portraying a certain narrative. However, before elucidating any further, what follows is a short summary of each performance laboratory:

Lab #1 (Autumn 2018-Spring 2019): Carried out in collaboration with the artist researcher and dancer *Charlotta Ruth* and the visual artist and filmmaker *Katxeré Medina*, this 5-day Lab focused on develo-

3 My interest in embodied practices started at the age of six with swim training and gymnastics. Then, with eleven I moved to dance (Modern Jazz, Isadora Duncan) which sparked the desire of pursuing a professional career. Yet as I had problems with my feet, I had to take another path which led me to Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga with twenty-five (also becoming a teacher in the so-called “Mysore Style” in the lineage of Sri K. Pattabhi Jois). However, as this yoga style is physically quite demanding, I have been over the years, adapting this practice to my ageing body. Therefore, I also started, after my move to Gothenburg, with water gymnastics and more recently, Pilates.

ping *Hidden Choreographies* at the public square *Götaplatsen*, in Gothenburg. By combining movement improvisation with site-writing, these choreographies aimed to play with modes of disappearing, merging, or “hacking” into the space.

Lab #2 (Autumn 2019-Spring 2020): Carried out in collaboration with the artist researchers *Cecilia Lagerström*, *Ivani Santana* and *Walmeri Ribeiro*, this Lab was part of a research trip to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. On this occasion, in addition to participating in the artistic research project “Territórios Sensíveis” organised by Walmeri Ribeiro, I also had the chance to develop a 5-day Lab which focused on exploring a performance documentation practice in a public space – in this case, at the square “Praça Mauá” in the central area of Rio.

Lab #3 (Spring 2022-Autumn 2023): Carried out in collaboration with the performance maker *Charlotta Grimfjord Cederblad* and the performer *Kristin Rode*, this Lab did not follow the structure of the previous ones. Instead of preparing an intensive 5-day Lab, the focus was to design a series of activities and/or meetings (between 2 and 5 days each) which aimed to explore the Hasselblad Memorial at *Götaplatsen* public square, in order to develop a screen work which thematised the human relationship with cameras.

In terms of artistic research, the focus of these performance laboratories lay more on exploring methods and methodologies that could contribute to develop an embodied and documentary engagement with a specific place than on artistic production and consequently, on creating a reflexive documentation of my artistic work (only the Lab #3 was more artistically driven). This choice draws from my interest in working in a process-oriented way as well as in creating co-shared learning environments. Apart from that, it relates to my site-

specific practice, or forms of dwelling, immersing, and embodying a place, which when compared to any staged performance, demands a different time-scope and level of commitment.

Structure

The structure of this PhD research is a *compilation thesis*, which includes a so-called “KAPPA”⁴ and several publications. The thesis is divided into six chapters in which the different materials that came out of the performance laboratories such as articles, video-essays, questionnaires, laboratory reports, and film, are presented and discussed. In addition to that, it provides an epistemological and methodological overview of the concepts and approaches that were relevant for exploring site-oriented performance documentation and screen practice.

In chapter 1, the focus lies on the selection and sort of “excavation” process of a place, especially by using the concepts of *hidden narratives* and *performative moments*. While the latter concept refers to the capturing process of bodily gestures, movements, or expressions, the former alludes to the narratives that allow one to reframe, reinterpret, or *reimagine* a specific place. This is expanded in chapter 2, where the field of site-specific performance is introduced, especially by looking at how the notion of site-specificity can be approached through different forms of agency.

In chapter 3, which is considered the core of the PhD research, the history of performance documentation is highlighted by, on the one hand, examining how documentation has been contributing to mediate and/or translate a performance work and on the other, by exploring how the camera work can (re)inscribe the body both in a specific place and in the recorded material. This is elucidated further in chapter 4, where the main research methods – mapping, sensing, and recording – that were used to generate and collect the data of the performance laboratories are disclosed.

4 The Swedish term “KAPPA” (synonym for cloak or coat) refers to an aggregation model, inspired by the social and natural sciences, where the submission of the PhD thesis is a collection of published papers, and an accompanying document that indicates how this collection of materials demonstrates their research contribution.

In chapter 5, a practical insight into the design process of the screen work *I am the camera*, is given, which emerged from Lab #3 at Götaplatsen. Based on the engagement with the Hasselblad Memorial, this screen work explores the human relationship with the camera. By developing the co-presence of three characters – influencer, documentary filmmaker and clown – and their technological devices, it stages an interview with THE CAMERA that landed on the moon. Additionally, this screen work exemplifies how the audiovisual traces of a performance laboratory can be used both as data and as a creative source. A matter which is described in the closing chapter 6, which is devoted to the editing process of *I am the Camera*, as well as to the idea of using montage as a way of (re)writing and/or (re)imagining the space of the image.

Throughout and in-between the chapters, are the publications which were produced for different journals and/or contexts. While these publications offer an insight into the performance laboratories and how they connect with other artistic research projects (e.g., “Territórios Sensíveis” in Brazil), they also reflect the research trajectory from site-specific practice to screen performance research. Hence, this compilation thesis interweaves academic writing with audiovisual materials, bodily traces with staged actions, and performative moments with memory, all at the same time, by situating and placing the body in an environment.

Ethical considerations

Since the performance laboratories involved a collaboration with other artist researchers as well as the participation of students and/or performing artists, I have created a written agreement in which each participant was asked for his/her consent to appear either in the video documentation or in my compilation thesis. This agreement not only had the purpose of building trust amongst the participants, but also of acknowledging the importance of their presence (as bodies, minds, and souls) in the research process.

Another ethical implication of the Labs was the research activities in public space where we are not only subjected to

the regulations of a city’s municipality (which may change according to neighbourhood or location), but also to a series of unpredictable factors. Based on that, the main ethical guidelines were a) to be attentive to how and whether a potential audience member (e.g., a random passerby, tourist, or local inhabitant) became involved in a performative action, whether through direct invitation or through his/her curiosity (which is not unusual), b) not to violate any personal boundaries and c) not to damage anything in the public space or intervene in the infrastructure of a site.

Besides these guidelines, there was another ethical implication which can be seen as problematic: the idea of “hacking” into a space (something we explored in Lab #1). By this, I mean an artistic strategy which seeks to slightly subvert a particular situation in public space, or to enter an inaccessible or even, forbidden space. Even though this implies taking some risks and possibly losing control of a situation (or ending up in trouble), I have applied such a strategy as a way of testing how far I/we could push the boundaries of a certain situation towards performance.⁵

Regarding the video documentation in which the Lab participants were involved as performers or documenters, a special attention was paid to the topic of facial recognition, or the consensus that no faces in the public space should be filmed (if so, they should not appear for more than three seconds or should be blurred in the editing). If any individual became part of the documentation, and consequently, of any form of public exposure, I asked for their consent.

5 Here, I will mention an incident which occurred during Lab #1, and which made me aware of the ethical implications of “hacking” into a space. It took place in the context of a city walk organised by the welcome services of the University of Gothenburg in which we took part in order to learn more about Gothenburg’s history while exploring the concept of hidden choreographies. In so doing, we joined the walk by improvising a series of small, sometimes absurd actions, for the “hidden camera” (in this case, two GoPro’s and one external camera). However, since we had only asked for the consent of the tour guide and since we did not reveal our research purpose to the whole group, some participants complained later, especially in connection with the documentation (therefore, I have decided not to use any of this material). Nonetheless, this incident gave me the chance to reflect upon our “hacking” strategy as well as to revise some ethical guidelines of my PhD project.

1 Entering a relationship with a specific place

The question of how the body can establish a relationship with a place, or how a specific place can serve as a basis for developing a performance work, has occupied me for over twenty years. My interest in grappling the subject started during a period in my hometown of São Paulo when I was pursuing a degree in art education, while also forming part of the theatre laboratory group of the Brazilian Director Antunes Filho.⁶ As back then I was already interested in an interdisciplinary practice, especially at the interface between the visual and performing arts, I found in the field of performance art a fertile ground for exploring the relationship between the body and the space. First, by creating performance-installations in which my body was the central medium; second, by developing collaborative site-specific performances (especially after moving to Berlin in 2004); and third, by designing performance laboratories with an emphasis on the concept of *Body Mapping*. In this way, places such as a corridor in the university building, a foyer, a public square, an abandoned building, a heritage site, and other alternative spaces, turned into fascinating spatial and social contexts in which I could not only place and situate my body, but also explore different types of a body/place relationship.

Accordingly, I consider the selection of a 'suitable' place (whatever suitable may mean to any given individual) to be the first and most important step to take. Not only regarding what a place may offer for a site-specific work, but also to what degree one can associate, or even identify with it. But as in every relationship, such a process is not so easy to predict, neither to where it may lead the work, nor to what it

6 Considered the pioneer of theatre laboratory practice in Brazil, Antunes Filho developed a complex performer training method based on Asian embodied techniques such as Suzuki and Butoh, Stanislavski, Jungian Psychology, and Oriental Mysticism. From 1982 until his death in 2019, he coordinated the "CPT" (Centro de Pesquisa Teatral) in São Paulo where besides creating a series of acclaimed performances, he was also dedicated (along with, for example Jerry Grotowski) to working both on a strict psychophysical training and the transformative power of acting. See link: https://www.sescsp.org.br/centro-de-pesquisa-teatral-cpt_sesc-agora-tambem-na-internet/

may take to become part of a place, or according to Arijit Sen and Lisa Silverman, to practise a kind of ‘embodied place-making’:

“To embody” also suggests the act of becoming part of a body. Viewed as an act of incorporation, embodiment allows us to see the powerful ideological role played by place in the formation of human subjects. In other words, the experience of place can constitute – that is, be a substantial part of – our senses of individual and communal self-identification and can situate us within larger contexts.⁷

With this possibility of being situated within a socio-spatial context while co-shaping it through one’s own body, this chapter gives, on the one hand, an insight into the selection of *why* the Götaplatsen and “Praça Mauá” public squares became case studies. On the other, it elucidates some of the key concepts of the performance laboratories and *how* these were used to dig into a place to collect a performance material.

Digging into a place

Besides the fact that I do believe that places come to us for a reason, here follows some general criteria that I consider to be equally relevant when choosing a site: a) historical relevance or the question of what distinguishes a place regarding its cultural and embodied history, b) public life or the question of which social activities, constellations and/or manifestations constitute a place, c) architecture or the question of which are the spatial, material or sensory attributes of a place, d) functionality or the question of how a place is used, appropriated and/or inhabited.

In the awareness that “choosing any one place over another to be the site of a performance implies some concession

7 Arijit Sen and Lisa Silverman, “Embodied Placemaking: An important Category of Critical Analysis”, in *Making Place: Space and Embodiment in the City*, ed. Arijit Sen and Lisa Silverman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 2014), 4.

to limits and a narrowing identification”⁸, the criteria described above were used here as entry points to the public squares Götaplatsen and “Praça Mauá”. Both historically and socially relevant for the urbanisation process of a city, these public squares carry the imprints of different time periods. While Götaplatsen was conceived as a prominent portal to the Tercentennial Jubilee Exhibition of Gothenburg in the early 20th century, “Praça Mauá” was reinaugurated in 2015 as part of a re-urbanisation project for the former port area of Rio de Janeiro. In this case, those entry points offered me a first impression of the main tourist attractions (e.g., the Poseidon statue (God of the sea) at Götaplatsen, or the neo futuristic building “Museum do Amanhã” at the “Praça Mauá”) and possibly the chance to observe and discover how they are frequented by the public. Furthermore, they served to discern whether these squares had some of the attributes I often search for: a historically significant place in the city with a diverse public and cultural life, or in other words, a multi-layered place with a wide range of possibilities for communicating and interacting with both human and non-human forms of agency.

For example, in the case of Götaplatsen, such a multi-layered place is characterised by a well-planned and designed built environment which assembles the major municipal cultural institutions – Stadsteatern, Konserthuset, Konstmuseet and Konsthallen – around the Greek inspired Poseidon statue and fountain. These institutions not only represent a part of Gothenburg’s cultural life and art scene, but also point to a European urban planning strategy of shaping *the image of the city* and consequently, of making it attractive as a touristic and global capital. My first impression of Götaplatsen was also that this square represents the postcard image of the city. On one side, you have the prominent stairway above the Konstmuseet from where you can observe the skyline of Gothenburg; on the other side, the main avenue (designed in the style of the Champs Elysée) connects the square with the heart of Gothenburg’s trading history: the “Göta älv” river. However,

8 Phil Smith, *Making Site-Specific Theatre and Performance: A Handbook*. (London: RED GLOBE Press: 2019), 56.

over time, my impression of such a distinctive architecture faded into the background and changed according to how the square was frequented, inhabited, or used by people (e.g., the workers cleaning Poseidon and watering the plants, tourists taking pictures, locals meeting for a drink or people gathering for a political demonstration). Therefore, the selection of Götaplatsen was mostly determined by the ways in which I/we could participate in the day-to-day activities “that take place in but are not visible in the managed and selective representation of the scene depicted”.⁹

In this regard, another key aspect when it comes to choosing a site, is to grasp whether it contains something I refer to as *hidden narratives*: all the potential narratives that are neither representative of a place, nor correspond to certain clichés and expectations, but which may be untold, unmanifested or unexpected. However, here, I am not proposing the compilation of a type of counter-narrative which usually stands for opposing or contradicting certain facts. Rather, what catches my interest are those narratives which, metaphorically speaking, may tackle the “invisible forces” of a place or according to the concept of *hauntology*:¹⁰

a state in which that which is not there, that which is past or lost, or simply not clearly visible manifests itself as a ‘seething presence’. Ghosts are the signs of that presence, the ways in which that which is absent is made apparent to us.¹¹

Even though this is not so easy to put into practice – mostly as it implies approaching a place not necessarily through what is already there (or first catches the eye), but rather through what

9 Malcolm Miles, “Critical spaces”, in *The Practice of Public Art*, ed. Cameron Cartier and Shelly Willis (London: Routledge, 2008), 76.

10 Coined by the philosopher Jaques Derrida, this concept refers to different ideas regarding the return or persistence of elements from a social and cultural past in the form of ghosts. Within the environmental humanities, it is often associated with the idea that our geological age and time can only be rewound by conjuring up some Earthly ‘ghosts’.

11 Mark Fleishman and Jay Pather, “Performing Cape Town: An Epidemiological Study in Three Acts”, in *Performing Cities*, ed. Nicolas Whybrow, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 108.

may be stored in it - the idea of haunting can nevertheless contribute to reinterpret and especially, *reimagine* a place. For Cecilia Lagerström, such a way of engaging with the invisible, perceptible, or unwritten narratives of a place propose a form of ‘imaginative attention’ which,

activates observation of experiences and impressions through the senses but also interprets and imagines them. (...) It is a matter of perceiving details one did not notice before and reading familiar situations and patterns in new ways.¹²

In that way, Götaplatsen and “Praça Mauá” offered a platform from which we could either – according to Lagerström – activate “immediate sensorial perceptions, memories, associations, and imagination raised by the moment and the surrounding events”¹³ or from where we could search for – and capture – a potential hidden narrative.

For example, in Lab #1, this happened through the creation of a notation system based on the observation of different gestures, rhythms, and movements of three pre-demarcated areas within the square. By using some catch words to describe what we could identify under each category, these notations served, on the one hand, to access some of the succinct or recurrent behavioural patterns of Götaplatsen. On the other, they were used as a basis for developing a series of subtle, imperceptible, or almost invisible actions which we labelled *hidden choreographies*. With the focus on finding ways of ‘hacking’ into a space, these actions were inspired by Augusto Boal’s *Invisible Theater*:¹⁴

Boal’s work takes theatre to an audience who don’t even recognize themselves as audience, and stages with them

12 Cecilia Lagerström, “Spies of the everyday: From attentive walking to performative writing”, in *Artistic Research: Being There Explorations into the Local*, ed. Luisa Greenfield et al. (NSU Press, 2017), 157.

13 *ibid.*, 158.

14 Mostly known for his ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’ approach, Boal carried out these interventions in collaboration with other actors during the Brazilian Dictatorship in the late 1960s.

a discussion about specific issues of labor. For Boal, a political agenda requires precise aesthetic solutions. It is crucial, for example, that the actors do not reveal themselves to be actors.¹⁵

Yet here, the invisible quality of this form of theatre did not serve the purpose of involving and mobilising an audience around a specific political topic. What interested us more was exploring how our rather non-verbal actions (in opposition to Boal's discursive model) could respond, shadow, or mirror the spontaneous encounters we had at Götaplatsen. Hence, our hidden choreographies were not necessarily simulated situations as in Invisible Theatre, but rather a type of embodied practice in which the gestures, movements and rhythms of everyday life enabled us to both access a place and create a performative language.

In the case of Lab #3, the process of searching for a hidden narrative occurred through a long-term engagement with a specific area of the square, namely, the Hasselblad Memorial. Designed by the Swedish artist Ulf Celén for the centenary of Hasselblad's birth, this monument represents a male figure standing alone under the protection of two trees at a particular spot on Götaplatsen which is often overlooked. Apart from the fact that this monument embodies the predominance of male statues in public spaces (which European city does not have a monument honouring a male public figure?), for Marc Augé it also denotes the following:

The social space bristles with monuments... which may not be directly functional but give every individual the justified feeling that, for the most part, they pre-existed him (sic) and will survive him. Strangely, it is a set of breaks and discontinuities in space that expresses continuity in time.¹⁶

15 Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London/New York: Verso, 2012), 123.

16 Marc Augé quoted by Malcolm Miles, "Critical spaces", in *The Practice of Public Art*, ed. Cameron Cartier and Shelly Willis (London: Routledge, 2008), 77.

From this perspective, the Hasselblad Memorial allowed us, on the one hand, to engage critically with what it symbolises, in this case, the achievements of a Swedish citizen who (together with his wife Erna Hasselblad) developed the cameras that were used by NASA in the Apollo programme and in turn, contributed to the first moon landing in 1969 (further elaborated in chapter 5). On the other, it served as a basis for collecting narratives around the *hidden camera* of the Hasselblad Memorial, or particularly, around the exact position that this camera (or inanimate object) takes at Götaplatsen. Oriented towards the entrance of the Stadsteatern, this hidden camera operated as a location from where I could both observe and document everyday life at the square and create an imaginary world. Alongside this, it also helped to define some areas which invite or are already 'marked' by performative interventions (e.g., the prominent stairway above the Konstmuseet, which holds the traces of Gothenburg's dance scene, or the large fountain around the Poseidon statue, which is a key location for student celebrations and other public events).

In summary, these different engagements with the narrative quality (or force) of the Götaplatsen, opened a new positionality and access to the square or, to what Derek P. McCormack points:

To recognize that relation specificity does to site specificity what situation does to site. Put another way, relation specificity is always a processual arrangement of agencies and actors that never precipitates site as a 'stable point of origin' or a specific 'knowable' point of destination.¹⁷

In the case of Lab #2, which was carried out in a different cultural context and environment, such relation specificity evolved in another way. Instead of departing and returning always from the same place and position for an extended period, the "Praça Mauá" was explored more in a 'site-general' than in a site-specific way. Having spent only a week there, a

17 Derek P. McCormack, *Refrains for Moving Bodies: Experience and Experiment in Affective Spaces* (Duke University Press, 2013), 35.

key emphasis lay in engaging with pre-demarcated areas of the square through a type of double positionality which I refer to as *performing while documenting*. By this, I mean a type of embodied practice in which the performing and/or documenting body experiments with how to handle, move, or be moved by a camera *while* getting both an inside and outside view of what is unfolding within the space. For example, at the “Praça Mauá”, this consisted of executing a series of pre-conceived scores *while* finding ways of integrating and placing the camera in them. Otherwise put, while we were interacting with both each other’s bodies and a multitude of agencies (e.g., scooters, vendors, tourists, security, pigeons and so on), we were experiencing a performative state which Monica Sand describes as:

Entering into another relation with the space, our bodies become vibrating spatial tools by walking around, and sonically trying out different materials in rhythmic movements in dialogue with the others. By touching, moving, and making surfaces and movements resonate together, resonance becomes more than a sonic method; it is an attitude, a corporeal dialogue with, in, and through space, in connection with the things happening around.¹⁸

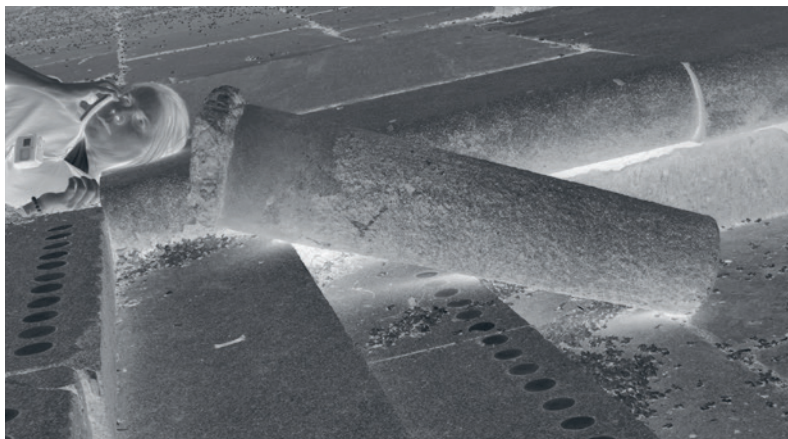
According to this, our double positionality within the “Praça Mauá” not only enabled a corporeal dialogue with the square by letting it “resonate” within our bodies, but it also generated a documentary material (or audiovisual traces) and thus, the possibility of reinterpreting or reimagining our performative experience. In short, an archival process through which the documentary status and value of an audiovisual material can be expanded by exploring the boundaries between fact and fiction, or between the events that happen in real time and space and those that are staged for the camera.

Before deepening these issues in the next chapters, I will

18 Monica Sand, “Resonance in the steps of Rubicon”, in *Performance as Research: Knowledge, Methods, Impact*, edited by Annette Arlander et al. (London/New York: Routledge: 2018), 307.

present the essay *Götaplatsen and its bodily/material traces*. Written in the context of the doctoral course “Human Footprints” which I attended at the University of Stockholm in May/June 2019, this essay illustrates how the process of digging into a place can contribute to (re)tell and (re)frame an embodied and performative encounter with it.

Götaplatsen and its bodily/material traces



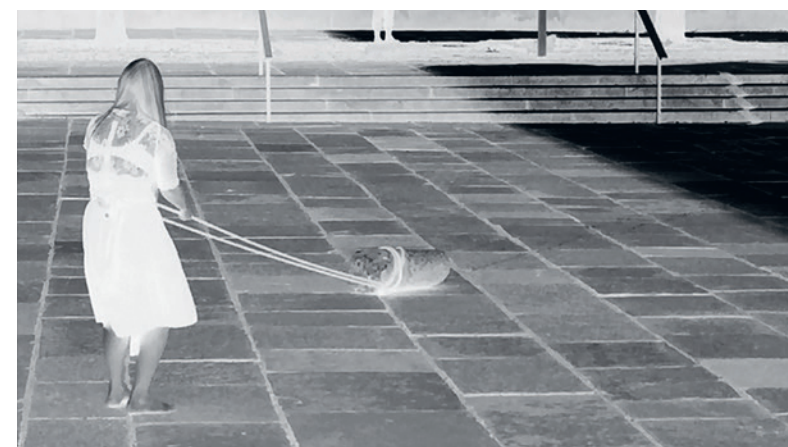
Prologue:

There is a body lying on the ground. Only parts of it can be seen: a face gazing up, a hand holding something close to the ear, an almost buried fist, and a breast with an attached object. This body seems to be completely integrated into the concrete landscape: three stairs marked by tiny circles on which rest a fallen pillar, approximately in the size of one leg and a half. How this pillar ended up exactly in this position isn't so clear, nor how it's related to the lying body. It might be that they have found each other at a site which was probably built a long time ago, maybe even in pre-industrial times. If so, it remains to be clarified which material story they must tell...

After describing an image, I will unveil the site where the lying body and fallen pillar are situated: Built in stages, starting in 1921 when the city of Gothenburg celebrated its 300th anniversary, this site stands on what was formerly a plot of farmland at a time when earthly rhythms were still natural. In earlier days, swarms of human beings came to this site to climb the monumental concrete stairs, whether it was to enjoy a view of the city-landscape or to visit the pioneers of "Nordic Art". Over time, new concrete buildings started to appear in the alcoves and hollows of this site, until a cultural assemblage and dense materiality formed what is nowadays known as Götaplatsen. More than an assembly of significant institutions – Konstmu-

seet, Konsthallen, Konserthuset, Stadsteatern – as well as statues such as the Greek inspired Poseidon or the one created in homage to Viktor Hasselblad, this public square also preserves the geological imprints of singular bodies. Imprints from diverse passersby, visitors or tourists that navigate daily through Götaplatsen or from those who go there only on certain occasions such as parties, the Pride Parade, a marathon, a political demonstration, a vintage car gathering or any other kind of social activity. On one such occasion, my curiosity was captured by an artistic intervention:

There is a group of women spread on the square. Three of them are playing with some strings attached to the walls of Konsthallen and another one is dancing on crutches. Their movements are silent, unpretentious, and almost, unnoticeable, until the moment I see a white and blond woman moving very slowly. Attached to her body is a heavy object which she is trying to move around as if she is going through some sort of salvation ritual. Suddenly, I can recognise a concrete pillar, approximately in the size of one leg and a half. Wait a moment! Isn't this the same pillar of the lying body? And if so, how did it end up being part of this intervention? I don't know the answers for these questions, but at least I have an image:¹⁹



¹⁹ I took this image in August 2019 at a presentation of the students of the Dance education program of the Academy of Music and Drama, organised by Ami Skånberg.

Although this image does not reveal the real effort the woman is making, it still may say something about the pillar. In fact, if it were not for its presence on the site, this intervention would not have taken place; if it were not for its performative quality, it would have stayed untouched on the ground. Hence, I will claim that the material agency of a site may come to the surface through an embodied engagement with it, for example, through the movements and gestures of a performing body. As Serenella Iovino puts it:

As bodies are what they are via their permeable boundaries (membrane that causes the flows of energy and matter), so, too, bigger entities and formations follow the same dynamics. A city, for example, is a porous body inhabited by other porous bodies, a mineral-vegetal-animal aggregate of porous bodies.²⁰

By considering Götaplatsen as having such a porous membrane as well as being a sort of excavation site for *hidden narratives*, I will mention another type of intervention that I came across there on a Monday afternoon in late summer:

A man is standing at the backside of Stadsteatern, at the sunniest spot of the square. He is only wearing shorts and a pair of sandals. His eyes are closed as he listens to something (probably some instructions). In a highly focused way, he is stretching his arm up to the sky, while keeping his feet grounded and moving only his chest as if he's trying to stretch his heart. I am so fascinated by his movements that I go to observe him from behind a tree... Suddenly, a young man approaches me, asking what I think this man is doing (he shows me a post of him on Instagram). As I have no clue, I suggest that we go there and ask him personally. "Sorry", I said, "may we ask what kind of practice you are doing?" The man stops his exercise, takes off the headphones and gives us a big smile (some teeth are missing). I think he has just been waiting for this moment. After

20 Serenella Iovino, "Bodies of Naples: Stories, Matter, and the Landscapes of Porosity", in *Material Ecocriticism*, ed. Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2014), 102.

a few seconds, the words spill out of his mouth as a waterfall (partly in Swedish, partly in English) about the most puzzling thing that I have heard in a long time:

We human beings are governed by a big machine that knows everything about us, not only what we consume, but also the way we feel and act (we are only numbers). Especially the functions of our brain are connected to this big machine and to the people that are running it. Besides, there are also many doctors aware of this big machine and apparently some of them have discovered how we can travel in time and space and access other dimensions (not only virtually, but also physically). But since the doctors are not willing to work for this great 'master plan', they are committing suicide and disappearing from planet Earth. By the way, our planet isn't round as Galileo thought of, but completely flat. At its centre is the Arctic and it doesn't matter from where we start, we always end up in the Arctic...

This narrative (or science fiction) is only an excerpt of everything else he told us. He went on to say, for example, that his body is full of implants and that he is a sort of secret agent travelling back in time..., and that he has suicidal thoughts 24 hours a day and therefore, he executes these exercises from the Chinese practice called "Falundafa". When this information came up, I could at least understand what he was doing there or from where he was taking all these imaginative, powerful ideas... But as I cannot say any more about it, I must conclude that sites such as Götaplatsen contain a *narrative agency* (or poetic force) by which "all bodies, human and nonhuman, are metamorphoses of each other, blends of material elements in their formative and performative histories."²¹

Epilogue:

There is a woman's body lying on the ground. Only parts of it can be seen: a dubious face, a hand holding a green notebook close to her ear, an almost buried fist, and a chest with an attached GoPro camera. Apparently, she has found a perfect spot amidst

21 *Ibid.*, 110.

the concrete landscape of Götaplatsen: three stairs marked by tiny circles on which a fallen pillar rests, approximately in the size of one leg and a half. How this pillar ended up exactly in this position isn't so clear, nor how the woman's body is connected to it. Yet, they aren't situated there by chance. Perhaps they are trying to feel the vibrations of the ground or simply, touch its porous surface..., who knows? The fact is that through the Go-Pro camera, one could see that at a certain point, both the woman and the fallen pillar were almost completely buried in the concrete floor. It still isn't clear how this happened, but luckily someone (apparently a white woman dressed in black) has found her green notebook in which one can read: "feeling the air, searching for holes, looking down, arms shaking, knees crossing, disappearing into the ground, screaming on a phone: Hej, kan du hjälpa mig?"

Collecting performative moments

Regarding the excavation process of a site, I will highlight another working procedure through which a performance material can be created or collected. Termed as performative moments, this procedure consists of capturing those moments when the performing body is immersed in an action or entangled with a place. Having the quality of revealing something, those pivotal moments represent a singular gesture, movement and/or expression or in terms of documentation, a potential image.²² As John Berger puts it:

A photograph preserves a moment of time and prevents it being effaced by the supersession of further moments. In this respect photographs might be compared to images stored in the memory. Yet there is a fundamental difference: whereas remembered images are the *residue* of continuous experience, a photograph isolates the appearances of a disconnected instant.²³

Keeping in mind this potential of simultaneously making visible and isolating an embodied experience, I have employed the camera to frame and secure a performative moment. Mostly emerging during improvised actions or scores, such a moment is considered as the first instance through which an imagery is created. By this, I am suggesting tracing not only what has happened during this pristine moment, but also which types of imprints it may have left both in one's own body and in the space. A process which can be carried out objectively, for example, through making a pre-iconographical analysis of an image, i.e., "to look at all the flat 'forms' of

22 Since my incursion into performance art, I have developed an interest in photography. During the first years of my work, it was also my preferred medium due to a series of factors: a) the nature of my performance work which was often grounded in a singular action (making it attractive for photographers), b) that I considered photography more suitable for capturing the energy or "aura" of a performance and c) the possibility of producing potential artworks to be circulated or acquired by a museum or private collection (a strategy that many performance artists still pursue today).

23 John Berger, *Understanding a Photograph* (London: Penguin Classics, 1967), 64.

silver nitrate, consider how they may be interpreted as icons, and ask questions that emerge from the very images.”²⁴ While such a close reading may lead to the discovery of certain details that are only visible in the image (e.g., the light, colour, or atmosphere of a spatial arrangement), it may also help to gain an accurate overview about a specific event.

Another possibility would be to look at the narrative quality of an image or at what it elicits in terms of a visual and/or performative language. Even though such an analysis may be subjective, it can still allow us to ascribe an image with new meaning. As an example, I will refer to a performative moment which emerged during a lab session that I facilitated for the participants of the project “Territórios Sensíveis” at the cultural centre of the small island of “Paquetá” in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Being a residue of my engagement with that place and community, this moment alludes to a situation in which I was leaning out of a window, half inside, half outside, in-between a living room and a small road. Bodily wise, not such a comfortable position but one which nevertheless made it possible (with the contribution of an attentive photographer) to generate an image or to *freeze* a pose which according to Rebecca Schneider,

is a posture, a stance, struck in the reiterative gesture often signifying precedent. In this way, a pose can be said to be reenactive, citational. Even if the precise original of a pose is unclear, or nonexistent, there is still a citational quality to posing due to the fact that a pose is arrested, even if momentarily, in what is otherwise experienced as a flow in time.²⁵

According to this, the citational quality of such an ‘arrested pose’ allowed me, on the one hand, to recognise the micro-potential of a performative gesture, and on the other, to

24 Eric Padraic Morrill, “What can we learn from Photographs of Happenings? Allan Kaprow’s Transfer”, in *Fluid Access: Archiving Performance-Based Arts*, ed. Barbara Büscher and Franz A. Cramer (Hildesheim/Zürich/New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2017), 136.

25 Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: art and war in times of theatrical reenactment* (London: Routledge, 2011), 90.

create a photo series entitled “Em busca da natureza perdida” (EN: In search of lost nature) which tackled some of the environmental issues of “Paquetá” such as water pollution and toxicity of the soil. By reenacting the pose of my body lying on the ground at different spots on the island, this series confabulated a “post-apocalyptic” scenario in which the island had become an uninhabitable, devastated place on Earth. Alongside this, the act of arresting or rescuing a pose within a specific time and space brought to light a performative moment, and through it, the possibility of treating a documentary material as Sophie Berrebi suggests:

Rather than being presented as visual documentation on viewing tables or hanging on walls with detailed captions, the photographs are turned into objects themselves. Their object-like quality upsets the idea of documentation. As a consequence, the material items that have been collected and archived become the documentary source of the artwork.²⁶

With such an emphasis, follows an essay I wrote for the edited volume “Territórios Sensíveis: Práticas Artísticas no Antropoceno” (EN: Sensitive Territories: Artistic Practices in the Anthropocene) published in 2023. Written first in English and then translated into Portuguese, this essay uses the photo series mentioned above as a basis for not only evoking an embodied experience on the island of “Paquetá, but also for (re)tracing and (re)framing a performative moment through both a documentary and archival approach.

26 Sophie Berrebi, *The Shape of Evidence: Contemporary Art and the Document* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2014), 75.







Body and image: How to capture a performative moment

By Nathalie S. Fari

Connecting to a community and place

The backdrop of this essay is a performance laboratory session that I facilitated for a group of artists and members of the local community during the artist-residency of the project “Território Sensíveis” on the island of “Paquetá” in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Anchored in a site-oriented and somatic approach as well as in performance documentation (Spatz, 2020; Arlander, 2012), this laboratory proposed to foster the relationship between the body and the environment. By emphasising how to raise a spatial awareness as well as a sense of ‘togetherness’ (it was the first time this group-constellation had come together), it took place at two distinct places: the former living room of a small villa which nowadays accommodates the cultural centre of Paquetá (where we were also staying) and the public park “Darque de Mattos”.

At the cultural centre, I proposed two laboratory sessions (approx. 2 hours each) which consisted, on the one hand of warming up and opening the body by focusing on meditative and immersive states²⁷ and on the other, of using movement improvisation to explore a) the spatial attributes of the place – its gaps, holes, surfaces, atmosphere, objects etc., b) the interaction with other bodies and c) the emergence of possible actions and/or scores. To offer an insight: during the second session in which I suggested to move together as if we were a plant, something special happened: by moving very slowly in the space and by attuning to each other’s breath, we became more and more a unity or an enmeshment of cells, tissues, and organs. This plant – or at least the imagery of it – created a feeling amongst us, as if we were a living organism or collective body, lightly touching one another while letting all tensions and preconceptions one might have towards each other drop to the floor. Thus, our skin became more porous and open towards each other’s sensations, especially by entering a psychophysical state which the artist researcher Tania Alice describes as:

27 In the first session, I gave an ashtanga vinyasa yoga class and in the second, I facilitated a 5Rhythms® session with an emphasis on the breath.

By keeping a distance that allows us to give space and light to what we feel and perceive, we can more attentively choose the energies, intentions, and words we pronounce in the act of performing and thus, potentialize the scope of a performative practice. The performance can then become a liberation ritual and mutual help for all participants, considering that we are in this world to love and heal each other. Art can assume this role with a very specific potency, especially when we manage not to get lost along the way, blinded by the emotions associated with our ego.²⁸

Although I resonate with the idea that a performative and somatic work can be healing or at least activate different energy channels in the body, I cannot affirm that this session had some of those qualities.²⁹ Nonetheless, what I can say is that this emotional state of breathing together as a sort of plant, enabled us to connect both to our inner selves and to the environment. As the cognitive scientist Mark Johnson puts it:

We must see how our bodies, our brains, and our environments together generate a vastly meaningful milieu out of which all significance emerges for creatures with bodies like ours. We can call this nonconscious dimension *immanent meaning*. (...) This requires us to explore the continuity that exists between our mostly nonconscious experience of embodied meaning and our seemingly disembodied acts of thinking and reasoning.³⁰

28 Tania Alice, *Performance como Revolução dos Afetos* (São Paulo: Anna Blume, 2016), 137-138, my translation.

29 In my own artistic journey, I have also gone through some 'mystical' (or maybe healing) experiences which deeply affected not only my personal development, but also the understanding of the world that I inhabit. I suppose many artists who have been interested in ritualistic and healing practices can resonate with this. Yet one should not forget what such an endeavour demands at all levels: a dedicated self-reflection and evaluation process in which one's own preconceptions and assumptions are constantly put to the test. Thus, I agree with Tania Alice that art has the potential to change society, even if only at a micro-level.

30 Mark Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding* (The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 31.

Attuned to such a meaningful milieu, the sessions at the cultural centre enabled a sensing experience by, on the one hand, allowing that all sorts of memories – whether conscious or nonconscious – might arise. On the other, they explored a type of 'attentiveness' and 'responsiveness', be it through simply touching each other's skin or through simply feeling a presence which does not need words to exist. Like this, we could not only get a deeper understanding of the proprioceptive qualities of the body, but also situate ourselves within the environment. According to posthumanism, such a subjective agency could be described as:

By approaching sensing differently, not as the senses or as a human point of mediation, it is possible to account for the ways in which sensing practices resonate with particular entities and relations. Sensing is not a project of a human mind or organs decoding external substantialist phenomena, but rather could be understood as the ways in which experience is expressed through subjects.³¹

With this intention of dealing with sensing as a rather complex net of relations and circumstances than a singular, often overwhelming human experience, I will draw the attention to the last laboratory session (approx. 3 hours) at the public park "Darque de Mattos". Beginning with a silent walk from the cultural centre to this park where the "Morro da Cruz" is located (a strategic viewpoint of the catholic monks that used to inhabit the island), this session had the intention to foster the body's ability to *listen* to an environment. By working in couples, it consisted of a) choosing a spot in the park to lay down, b) centering and relaxing the body as if it were deeply rooted with the ground and c) witnessing and supporting each other's experience.

Here, this simple act of lying down not only evoked a feeling of being more grounded or held by the gravity of "Mother

31 Jennifer Gabrys and Helen Pritchard, "Sensing Practices", in *The Posthuman Glossary*, ed. Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova (London/New York: Bloomsbury academic, 2018), 395.

Earth” (or Gaia). It also had the intention to touch upon some of the ecological issues of Paquetá, especially the consequences of water pollution and toxicity in the soil, mainly due to the voracious oil industry in the Guanabara Bay. Being aware that such an environmental awareness, in this case, through connecting to the ground and listening to what might be in disbalance, even if only on a micro-level, is not enough to create an impact, it nevertheless can offer new perspectives or narratives one might have upon a place and/or personal journey. To return to Johnson, “meaning is not just what is consciously entertained in acts of feeling and thought, instead, meaning reaches deep down into our corporeal encounter with our environment.”³²

Arresting a performative moment

I am lying on a wooden floor which pulsates with every movement of the group. I cannot recognise exactly where those movements are coming from, but they sound quite close. I also cannot recognise where I am within the space, as so many things have happened before. The only thing I remember is that I asked the group to let go of the interaction to explore the space. Everyone is invited to engage with the space through the senses, especially by allowing the body to guide one to the places it feels attracted by. Hence, the group starts to wander around, sometimes slower, sometimes faster and often without any clear direction. There are moments when I notice that someone has found a spot and others in which someone is, metaphorically speaking, ‘tapping in the darkness’. I can hear a piano, of a chair being moved, of stairs being walked up and down and of the floor being scratched. All this reminds me of a typical studio situation in which bodies are improvising freely. In any case, we continue to explore the space until I feel it is the right moment to say: “FREEZE”. At this point, everyone must find a posture and/or position at a chosen spot which represents something or gives meaning to the experience. Once this posture is found, each person should stand up to walk around and take pictures as if we were in an imaginary museum.

32 Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding*, 25.

At a certain moment, I also stand up to go to my chosen spot which has been beckoning me since the beginning of the session (to me it represents the connection between the inner and outer world). I take in my position and start to breathe deeply, in and out. It doesn't take long for me to realise that I have put myself in a quite uncomfortable posture in which my stomach is pressing against something very hard. But as we do everything for art's sake (or in my case, for a good image), I stay here until the moment I get a sense of what this posture is trying to tell me...

The narrative you have just read is drawn from the laboratory session at the cultural centre of “Paquetá”. Written a few months later in my studio in Gothenburg, it not only offers a glimpse of what happened (or might have happened) at this given space. It also alludes to the process of finding, tracing, notating and/or documenting something I call *performative moments*. Considered as potential images – both still and moving – a performative moment not only emerges through one's own body, but it also holds in the *here and now* a singular bodily gesture, movement and/or posture. A procedure which according to the performance theorist Rebecca Schneider:

The freeze or lag in time that is the moment of arrested stillness defines a pose as a pose and might grant the pose a kind of staginess or theatricality, as if (paradoxically perhaps) theatricality were the very stuff of an inanimate stillness.³³

By focusing on how to create such theatricality (or performativity), I have been implementing performance documentation in the design of a laboratory work as the one in “Paquetá”. In doing so, I have been not only exploring how to capture, record or in the words of Schneider – ‘arrest’ a sort of stillness – but also how documentation can be used as an artistic-research tool. For example, by experimenting with how a generated material can serve as a source for elaborating an artistic

33 Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: art and war in times of theatrical reenactment* (London: Routledge, 2011), 90.

work or piece.³⁴ In practice, this might imply to compose or add new narrative layers onto the material, whether those layers that disclose the particularities and history of a place or by inventing completely new facts and situations. While such a procedure would allow to complete some of the missing or underrepresented parts of a performative experience, it would also instantiate the ways through which it can be remembered and/or portrayed for both present and future audiences. As the art historian Jessica Santone argues:

The drive to produce documentation stems from a need to produce a truer account of the past, a more complete history of what happened and how something was perceived. However, the layers of documentation around the idea of an original, around a fragment or single moment of the thing itself, cannot be thought of as nested hierarchically in terms of value. Each document touches at its root the idea of the original, and then moves out from there, diverging in various ways, connecting to other documents, and producing an accumulation that is best understood collectively.³⁵

In this way, if a single document can, according to Santone, move away from its origination point and produce new meanings, which would be the added value of such a document or in this case, of a (hopefully well) documented material? How to invite one's own imagination into this process? And how in turn, could documentation challenge the ways through which a performative experience and material is transmitted and mediated to an audience?³⁶

34 Here, I will add that I do not mean primarily the re-enactment or re-performance of a documentary material (a noticeable trend in the performance art and contemporary dance fields, for example, of Marina Abramovic's *Seven Easy Pieces* project at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2005). What I am more interested, is in looking at how documentation can operate as artistic practice (something which has been explored in the visual arts since the 1960's).

35 Jessica Santone, "Marina Abramovic's *Seven Easy Pieces*: Critical Documentation Strategies for Preserving Art's History", *Leonardo* 41, no. 2 (2008): 150–51.

36 In this respect, one should not forget the often unpredictable or unexpected circumstances in which a certain performance work and especially, its

With these questions in mind, I will return to the laboratory session in "Paquetá" or more specifically, to a certain performative moment. The moment in which I had found an open window to place my body, half-inside, half outside, in-between the confines of a living room and the public life of a small road, in-between a cement wall and a wooden surface. A moment or according to Schneider, 'an arrested pose' which represented for me not only being at the verge or edge of something. Furthermore, it also gave me the chance of exploring the border between the documentation of a performative event and its archival process. A type of 'performing archive' which can always be revisited or which for Matthew Reason:

is not so far from the state of all archives: but the archive as detritus turns around the presumptions of neutral detachment, objectivity, fidelity, consistency, and authenticity – instead claiming partiality, fluidity, randomness, and memory.³⁷

Hence, what follows below is both a documentary and fictional narrative that is based on the still image generated during the laboratory session and a photographic series that was produced afterwards and in which I (re)performed the posture of my body leaning against something, as if time had stopped or as if my body had been arrested.

(...)

After many years away from Brazil, I arrive again at the small island of "Paquetá". The first impression is that of a post-apocalyptic scenario (or post-corona world) from which human beings seem to have been banished. From all angles, the island looks like

documentation became part of a performance canon (or artistic milieu). Something which would not only demand to examine when, why, and how a certain performance work became of public interest, but also which pathways or dissemination channels it took until it was validated. Yet as such a task would take me too far away from the performance laboratory in "Paquetá", I will keep this as an open matter.

37 Matthew Reason, "Archive or Memory? The Detritus of Live Performance." *New Theatre Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (2003): 89.

an uninhabitable, uncomfortable place on Earth. I really don't know why, as there are no visible traces left, no signs of living matter. Yet to find out more, I decide to go for a walk (there must be some sign of life). I take a small, dusty, and extremely dry road (apparently it hasn't rained for quite some time) where, after a while, I can see some remains of old houses, from a time in which this island seemed to be properly inhabited. I continue to walk attentively until, to my surprise, I arrive at a small entrance. Hanging from the middle of it is a sign on which I can make out the following letters: "Cemetery of the Birds". Yes! I do remember this place, especially as it was considered one of the most remarkable ones on the island. Not necessarily due to its stunning architecture, but rather for its unique use. The following passage, taken from a book I found during my first visit to the island, illustrates this:

Let's try to imagine how many times or in how many parts of the world, a photograph, a slide, or a film is shown to illustrate the curiosity of a Brazilian island, in the Guanabara Bay, where birds enjoy a distinguished privilege in the world. A place where they are treated with so much affection by its inhabitants, that they even deserve a cemetery of their own, where they are respectfully buried after their last flight.

How many tourists who visited Paquetá in the first half of the century, kept in their memories this beautiful image of the Island of the Lovers? Certainly many... It was a scenic or 'sui generis' landscape which caused them such a surprise. There were very few who didn't get off the carriage to take pictures of the garden. The scenery was beautiful! It harmoniously combined the work of men with the work of God. The monuments were simple, beautiful, and suggestive. To add to its originality, the neighbourhood of the human cemetery of Santo Antonio lay side by side with the bird graves, connecting the deaths of both men and birds.³⁸

38 Marcelo A. Limoeiro Cardoso, *Lendas de Paquetá* (Rio de Janeiro: Gráfica Brasileira, 1975), 15, my translation.

My intention, in quoting this passage, is not to highlight the peculiarity of this place even more. Although I have often wondered whoever could have come to the idea of building a cemetery for birds (I later learned it was an artist and landscape architect named Pedro Bruno), I prefer to emphasise what this built environment evokes in me (I remember that I had the same association when I came here for the first time... too late). In the words of the literary scholar Ursula K. Heise:

In our own historical moment, the rhetoric of decline has culminated in the trope of the end or disappearance of nature, which in various ways has come to form part not only of environmentalist perspectives, but also of theories of contemporary culture and society more broadly.³⁹

In the case of this cemetery, the decay of nature or the consequences of the human footprint on Earth, is associated not only with the post-apocalyptic scenario mentioned above. Further than this, every single bird that was buried here is connected to what environmentalists have labelled "the sixth mass extinction of species in the history of life on Earth"! Phew! When I read this, I do feel my stomach hurting again as if I were leaning out of the same window. How can this sort of thing happen? After all, I assume everyone has had a glimpse of how animals have been suffering under massive deforestation or fires (e.g., Amazon Forest) and, to what extent plants and ecosystems have been losing their territories. Consequently, this fact is not only alluding to an unprecedented time in history marked by decay, death, and extinction (when I think about "Corona", it feels even closer...), but also to the ways in which human beings have been dealing with the resources of this planet. A long, sad story which I could spend hours writing about. But as there are already several novelists as well as scholars working lucidly on the issues around this catastrophe, I prefer to focus on a lighter, slightly absurd angle I came across in Heise's article:

39 Ursula K. Heise, "Lost Dogs, Last Birds, and Listed Species: Cultures of Extinction", *Configurations* 18, no. 1 (2010): 49.

Comedy is a celebration, a ritual renewal of biological welfare... Literary comedy depends on the loss of equilibrium and its recovery. Wherever the normal processes of life are obstructed unnecessarily, the comic way seeks to return to normal.⁴⁰

Thus, I will bring this essay to a close, not by disseminating any more words, but by trying to celebrate the absurd times in which we are currently living... a strange situation which, sooner or later, will go back to normal... but what is normal after all? Is there any type of normality in view and if so, what would it look like?



Interlude I: Questionnaire Lab #1

Drawn from the book chapter *Performer Training: Researching Practice in the Theatre Laboratory*,⁴¹ follows a questionnaire that Charlotta Ruth and I answered in connection to the preparation of the Lab #1 at Götaplatsen.

What is my relationship with the studio work under scrutiny and how does this impact on experience, documentation, and dissemination of the research?

NE - My relationship with studio work is sporadic. Besides my yoga practice (which I can do anywhere), it is not part of my routine to spend time in the studio developing a performance work. When I am in the studio, it is mostly connected with a workshop which I am taking part in or to my teaching and performance laboratory work. Besides that, I am interested in establishing a studio work in an outside environment such as in public spaces or heritage sites. This preference comes not only from my site-specific and rather nomadic practice, but also from my intention of exploring all sorts of “frictions, gaps and fissures” that a place may offer. Therefore, I consider it essential to leave one’s own comfort zone (or the confines of the studio walls) to find ways in which the practice can be adapted and integrated into the place. Although this implies taking more risks, such a strategy may enhance a higher degree of attentiveness and responsiveness, especially towards one’s own social and creative agency.

Thus, the impacts of such a studio work on the research are less controllable, less evident and this in turn, pushes the researcher to always look for new paths to arrive at a possible result. In this way, I consider laboratory practice as a valuable framework, not only for developing a series of exercises, but especially for testing how they may have an impact on the spatial explorations carried out in a public space. How can the exercises done in the studio be transposed to the outside environment without losing their

41 Richmond Pitches et al., “Performer Training: Researching Practice in the Theatre Laboratory”, in *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 137-61.

intensity (or integrity)? And which exercises would be needed to enhance a state of attentiveness and responsiveness both inside and outside the studio? These are some key questions.

CR - In my studio, I practise yoga, tai chi, etc., I prepare, I rehearse, I try out set-ups, I construct set-ups, I prepare my dance training, I read, I go online, I answer emails, I take a nap and I think. But I do not consider this as a studio practice, but rather as a working space to which I can come back. The practice is livelier if it stays connected to changing contexts and places (this becomes quite noticeable when I am doing something in public). Therefore, I can only prepare up to a certain degree. Until a few years ago, the studio practice, or rather training, was associated with the idea of getting prepared or getting in shape for the rehearsals and pieces that I was performing. Around four years ago, I started to connect the idea of training with my research interests in *liveness* and especially, in the memory as an unstable recording medium. Although this specific training is seldom the way I prepare myself for a performance, it has given me the possibility of approaching the studio work as research practice.

How do I address the complicated terms of translation and transmission in my research and how do I manage the transition from one mode of operation to another, from movement to words, for instance?

NF - The term translation has different meanings and connotations for me. One is related to my biography, especially to my bilingual education (German and Portuguese) where I am used to switching between languages and adopting a certain tone and attitude when speaking each one. This has become so natural for me, that it has given me the chance to work as a translator (mainly as an interpreter) in different contexts. Yet I do not consider such work as my artistic practice, but rather as a source of income and a way of acquiring new knowledge.

What interests me more, is to look at how a site-specific engagement can be translated into a bodily and performative language. In other words, how a specific place can operate as a SOURCE A (e.g., text) and the bodily/performative language as the SOURCE B (e.g., gesture, movement, or action). Albeit such a process does not involve

words (as in a classic translation), I am intrigued by the idea of how a place can 'speak' to the body and how, in turn, the body can find possible answers, or as I like to say, *performative responses* to it.

One way of doing this could be reading the space as if it were an empty vessel to be filled with new contents and meaning. While such a reading process would always be informed (and sometimes disturbed) by the history and/or contingencies of a place, it could also help to strengthen the ability of the body to sense, interpret, and possibly, translate what is at stake. In short, I am looking for a translation model which requires more steps than just the simple 'a to b' and thus, new ways of reporting and documenting the "frictions, gaps and fissures" within a body/space relationship.

CR - I have been using translation as part of my art making. For me it has become crucial to think beyond some conventional media and to try out something which may turn into a dance, a text, or a video. One example is my last project *Living Documents*, in which we have explored how documentation can transform live performance by playing with both the act of documenting and of being the documentation itself. This practice of translating between different media has contributed to moving my art making into a terrain which not only encompasses dance. Yet, it has also shifted the ways in which the borders between the "real" and the "non-real" (or meta-level) are perceived, and often blurred. Within the artistic research field, there are different ways of approaching translation. Often, there is the copy and paste method from the humanities where the meta-level may be used to explain an artwork (in a way that may deconstruct the magic) rather than letting it stand on its own. I write this because this question addresses the complex issue of dissemination within artistic research, where the results cannot be measured as in the humanities. Therefore, I tend to keep a certain level of poetry in the translations I do, no matter which media I am working with. That way, I can always redefine how the newly translated materials (e.g., choreography into words) can correspond to the "moods" or circumstances of any particular work.

How do I bridge the chasm between the analytical and experiential - the gulf between 'writing about' and 'writing from' practice?

NE - There are several empirical approaches which aim to overcome this chasm, such as auto-ethnography, sensory ethnography, or performative writing. A key aspect of all these approaches is to deal with the writing process through a phenomenological perspective, i.e., using the notions of 'being-in-the-world' and the 'lived-body' (1967, Merleau Ponty) as the main sources for describing a certain practice (or research enterprise).

In my practice, I have been exploring such an approach through a rather abstract and metaphorical language. Terms such as "empty vessel", "raw material", "seismograph", "body as translator", "space-scripting" or "body mapping", operate as concepts for describing and touching upon a somatic experience at any given place. Yet as words are often not enough (or accurate) to illustrate such an experience, I also have been using other media (e.g., photography and video). As such, my aim has been not only to grasp what happens when the body is entangled with a place, but also to create forms of scenery and/or imagery.

CR - Maybe I began answering this question above. My tactic has been to include the "about" from those who have a more genuine one time-experience. This means, for instance, that I include the documentation (e.g., questionnaires) of the people who took part in my participatory performances. Furthermore, I have also invited guests to write about the experience, although from a more detached and objective perspective (I have a certain problem with artists explaining their own work, but I highly appreciate it when they explain *how* they work). Therefore, I consider the external viewpoints of others as more relevant, unless it is about explaining my own artistic motivation or practice.

How do I manage any shifts from facilitator, to participant, to (co-) researcher?

NE - From my previous experience, I can say that I am quite comfortable with shifting and assuming different roles. I have always found it important to change perspectives within a work. For example, while the facilitator role allows me to design the experience, the role of a participant enables me to immerse myself in it, and possibly acquire new insights. When it comes to the (co)researcher's role, I consider it important to always remain in a sort of research mode, regardless

of which perspective. This allows both the facilitator and participant to gain deeper insights into the work, while keeping the curiosity alive. That way, I usually experience these different roles with the same level of intensity and commitment to the work.

CR - This is for me something almost like translation... I find it so fascinating to switch between these roles and for instance, to approach my work as a dancer more closely to nurturing a choreographic idea than of being solely a body. What I appreciate the most as a (co) researcher, is the possibility of listening and following someone else's ideas and drive (I am more attentive to this than 15 years ago). This helps me to avoid being "too proud" of my ideas, but also to enjoy a certain degree of freedom to suggest things in a natural flow. Therefore, I find the tasks of participating and co-researching to be substantial for my work, especially as they help me to develop the role of the facilitator. All in all, I do believe that it is possible to navigate through these roles if it is clear what the expectations and responsibilities are.



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Embodied Research

Notes from a Zoom 5Rhythms® session

Editorial video-essay
Duration 05:00 min.



In connection to my studio practice, I will point to the video-essay *Notes from a Zoom 5Rhythms® session* which I published in the special issue on “Embodiment and Social Distancing” of the *Journal of Embodied Research* (JER) in 2020. Thematising the global move of embodied practitioners into the digital realm during the Covid-19 pandemic, my contribution for this special issue (of which I also was part of the editorial board) departed from a three-hour 5Rhythms®⁴² online workshop.⁴³ By focusing on how an individual and collective bodily awareness can be accessed and enhanced through a digital engagement, this video-essay explored on the one hand, the documentation process of an embodied practice, in this case, of the rhythmical patterns – flow, staccato, chaos, lyrical and stillness - of the 5Rhythms®. On the other, it shed light on how the new technologies that emerged during this time were used to promote other forms of collectiveness, togetherness or even, closeness.⁴⁴

42 Founded by the American dancer and musician Gabrielle Roth in the Esalen Institute, California, the 5Rhythms® is a movement meditation practice (or conscious dance) which explores specific maps, or levels. Each map explores emotions, relationships, and psychological patterns. “It is a map to everywhere you want to go on all planes of consciousness – inner and outer, forward and back, physical, emotional, and intellectual.” Gabrielle Roth quoted by Gibson-Vargas et al., “The 5Rhythms® Movement Practice”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Wellbeing* (Oxford University Press: 2017), 719.

43 Since my 5Rhythms® community was based in Berlin where I practised intensively from 2011 to 2020 (as well as assisting some of the teachers), it meant a lot to me to be able to practise online. Yet after the so-called “Zoom hype”, it became clear to me that the digital environment could not fully replace the experience of moving together in a physical space.

44 Besides all the somatic practices that were given online during this time (and which continue until today), the performing arts field also promoted a series of events on the internet which experimented not only with digital platforms, but also with ways of integrating and displaying the camera in a live performance. This has pushed the development of performance documentation into a new terrain, especially in connection with digital art practices such as ‘cyberformance’ (see Gomes, 2014).

2 Delineating a spatial practice

When I started to design the performance laboratories, I had one major research area which combined site-specific practices with spatial theory and ethnographic approaches (e.g., Ingold, 2000; Thrift, 2007; Pink, 2009).⁴⁵ At this point, a key emphasis lay on examining how the relationship between body and space, or a type of ‘embodied place’ (see Fari, 2015), can be fostered through performer training. Since most examples are grounded on the creation and devising process of a site-specific performance, I saw the potential of looking more closely at how to prepare the body for such practice.⁴⁶ Not only in terms of enhancing an environmental awareness, but also of establishing a close dialogue with a site, be it through finding ways of dwelling, listening, attuning, or responding to it, or through getting an insight into how it is used, structured and inhabited.

However, at a certain point I felt that the focus on performer training and of eventually developing a method of my own was not fully aligned with my research process and exploratory nature. Even though I consider the execution of exercises as central for entering and “being” at a specific place, I nevertheless prefer to see them as complementary to the performance work. In addition to that, I became increasingly more interested in exploring ways in which site-specific practice can be translated into different media than in the actual performance on site. In so doing, what follows first is a brief introduction into the field of site-specific performance, and second, a collaborative article which explores the notions of site-specificity and emplacement through different artistic positions.

45 As I completed an interdisciplinary master’s degree in “Space Strategies – Exploratory Arts in Public Contexts” at the Weissensee Kunsthochschule Berlin in 2007, my entry point to site-specific practice draws rather from the visual arts, (especially public art) than from theatre. See link: <https://kh-berlin.de/en/studies/departments/ma-spatial-strategies/ma-spatial-strategies>

46 Here, I will mention some training examples that I consider as preparatory for site-specific practice or for deepening a body/space relationship: Anne Bogart’s *Viewpoints* which borrows its name from Marie Overlie’s complex training system ‘The Six Viewpoints’ (see Perucci, 2017), Andrea Olsen’s ‘Body and Earth’ training (2002) and Sandra Reeve’s publication ‘Body and Performance’ (2013). While Bogart’s approach is mostly used in the context of theatre-making, the other two are part of the growing field of ‘eco-somatics’.

Beyond the Black Box

Since at least the early 2000s, the genre of site-specific performance has become a common practice. While several performances have emerged, which, in essence, seek to disrupt, transgress, or expand the so-called 'black box', there are also several publications devoted to mapping and examining the field (e.g., Pearson, 2010; Smith, 2019). Besides offering a practical insight into the complex and often time-demanding development process of a site-specific performance, most of these publications refer to its connection to site-specific art. This lineage can be traced back to two main periods: The early beginnings in the 1960s, when artists associated with the land art movement such as Robert Smithson ('spiral jetty' earthwork), Ana Mendieta ('earth-body' aesthetics) or Carl Andre ('sculpture as form – sculpture as structure – sculpture as place') started to use the physical attributes of a site as the main material and context of their works (see Lailach and Grosenick, 2007). By addressing the interplay between the site and the work as central, they contributed to a type of practice that "articulates exchanges between the work of art and the places in which its meanings are defined"⁴⁷ Thus, not only did the site have an impact on the aesthetic and artistic choices, but also the work itself had the potential to transform and re-define the site. As Richard Serra stated:

Site-specific works deal with the environmental components of given places. The scale, size, and location of site-specific works are determined by the topography of the site, whether it be urban or landscape or architectural enclosure. The works become part of the site and restructure both conceptually and perceptually the organization of the site.⁴⁸

In this regard, Serra's statement that "to remove the work is

47 Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific art: Performance, Place and Documentation* (London: Routledge, 2000), 1.

48 Richard Serra quoted by Miwon Kwon, *One Place after another: Site-specific art and locational identity* (Cambridge: MIT Press), 12.

to destroy the work" became a hallmark of the early period of site-specific art. From the late 1980's on, such a position started to pave a way to decentralise site-specific practices from their locational identity. For many artists (e.g., Suzanne Lacy and Andrea Fraser), a key strategy was to no longer commit to the inseparability of artwork and site, but rather to conceive art works and projects that could move around and be adapted to as many sites as possible. This shift in site-specific practice was not only a response to an increasingly commodified, globalised art system in which the value of an artwork was generated through its mobility and versatility. It also represented a new way of dealing with the notion of 'site-specificity' which the frequently cited Miwon Kwon describes as:

The work no longer seeks to be a noun/object but a verb/process, provoking the viewers critical (not just physical) acuity regarding the ideological conditions of their viewing. In this context, the guarantee of a specific relationship between an artwork and its site is not based on a physical permanence of that relationship (as demanded by Serra, for example) but rather on the recognition of its unfixed *impermanence*, to be experienced as an unrepeatable and fleeting situation.⁴⁹

According to this, what began to constitute site-specific practice was not only its 'nomadic character', but also the ways in which artists could assume a new set of roles; away from solely being artmakers, they became facilitators, coordinators, promoters, or organisers of cultural and/or social events. Yet the question of what such a development implies for site-specific practice at a time when GPS (navigation systems), Google Earth, as well as virtual and augmented reality, have dramatically changed our ways of accessing and perceiving spaces and places, is a field that remains to be explored.⁵⁰

49 Ibid., 24.

50 In this regard, I want to mention the Swedish artist Marika Hedemyr who has been developing site-specific walks and performative experiences (e.g., "Next to You at Korsvägen" from 2017) with AR and MR technologies, especially by giving an emphasis on embodied interaction and the notion of 'situatedness' (see Hedemyr, 2023).

When it comes to the performing arts field, the notion of ‘site-specificity’ operates in another way. Connected with the idea of foregrounding “spatiality as a locus of performance meanings”⁵¹, this notion is often used to develop forms of dramaturgy (e.g., script, score). Instead of focusing primarily on an aesthetic experience of a place as in site-specific art, such forms of dramaturgy deal with the performative engagement and reinterpretation of spaces beyond the stage. Whether they are heritage sites, abandoned buildings, construction sites, public parks or any other sort of space, a key aspect of site-specific performance is to explore such spaces through forms of participation, inclusion, or immersion. While this may promote “new ways of seeing, understanding, and experiencing the links between larger, often controversial, social discourses and lived spaces”⁵², many site-specific performances seek to renegotiate how a specific place is arranged, perceived, or inhabited.

To give an example, the site-specific performance “BR-3” (2006) of the Brazilian theatre group “Teatro da Vertigem”⁵³ used the spatial context of one of the country’s most polluted rivers (the “Tietê” in São Paulo) to tackle issues of national identity and social inequality. By taking the audience on an interactive journey, the performance proposed a critical reflection on Brazilian’s socio-cultural identity of Brazilians: “the spectacular (the carnival, natural beauty, football, modern architecture, etc.) versus the non-spectacular (the confines of the country, a sort of “no-man’s land”, impunity, indigence, etc)”⁵⁴. In this way, site-specific performance not only offers the chance to create a public discourse, but also to explore the nature of performance itself “as bracketed activity, as a spe-

51 Fiona Wilkie, “*Out of Place: The negotiation of space in site-specific performance*” (PhD diss., University of Surrey, School of Arts: 2004), 2.

52 Susan Haedicke, “Beyond Site-Specificity: Environmental Heterocosmos on the Street”, in *Performing Site-Specific Theatre: Politics, Place, Practice*, ed. Anna Birch and Joanne Tompkins (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 106.

53 Coordinated by Brazilian director and theatre scholar Antonio Araújo, the “Teatro da Vertigem” has developed a type of site-specific performance research which has brought up an impressive body of work, mostly in the contexts of abandoned sites such as a hospital, church, or prison. (see Araújo, 2011)

54 Teatro da Vertigem, “BR-3”, accessed September 01, 2023, <https://www.teatrodavertigem.com.br/br-3>

cial world, as sensorium, as field, as site of cultural intervention and innovation, as utopia, as heterotopia.”⁵⁵

In this PhD project, I have engaged with site-specific practice by exploring the notion of *agency*. Understood as the human capacity to act upon an environment, I employed this notion as a way of situating the body in a place through a type of ‘posthuman subjectivity’ which, according to Rosi Braidotti “expresses an embodied and embedded and hence partial form of accountability, based on a strong sense of collectivity, relationality and hence community building.”⁵⁶ This practice of relating to others and of creating environmental interconnections, proposed not only how I/we could attune and intervene in a place, but also how we could strengthen our “response-ability” towards a multitude of agencies: a singular agency which is entangled in a specific group dynamic, a collective agency which is affected by the socio-spatial conditions of a place and a non-human or more-than-human agency which is constituted by the affordances of an environment.

Here, all these ‘agential qualities’ (or initiating capacities) served to explore a site-specific practice which addressed the locational identity of a place through “the stories, sites, and resonances where memory is to be located – in a photograph, a remnant of fabric, a building, a landscape, a site”.⁵⁷ More specifically, by implementing a technological device (a camera) to map, sense, and document a place through forms of narrativisation and play. Therefore, the following questions became central to me: 1) How to use a place as a documentary source to generate performance material? 2) Which documentation and/or documentary strategies would be needed for such a process? 3) How in turn, could they contribute to developing a mediated performance work (or screen performance)?

Before delving deeper into these questions in the next chapter, follows an article which in my view relates to a posthuman subjectivity or ‘agential-like’ site-specific practice.

55 Mike Pearson, *Site-Specific Performance* (London/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 14.

56 Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 49.

57 Felicity J. Colman, “Agency”, accessed September 01, 2023, <https://new-materialism.eu/almanac/a/agency.html>

Co-written and published in 2021 for the special issue “Collaborative Research in Theatre and Performance Studies” of the *Global Performance Studies Journal*, this article explores the relationship between embodiment and the notion of ‘territory’ in a Latin-American context. By giving an insight into the artistic interventions that were realised at two former fishing colonies of the Guanabara Bay in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, it addresses the environmental issues of these insular places through a micropolitical and imaginative approach.



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From embodiment to emplacement: Artistic research in insular terri- tories of the Guanabara Bay

By Cesar Baio,
Nathalie S. Fari,
Ruy Cezar Campos and
Walmeri Ribeiro

Introduction: Actions between embodiment and emplacement

In face of the current global crisis, especially within the Brazilian context of colonisation and excessive exploitation of the natural resources, the serial project “Territórios Sensíveis”⁵⁸ has been establishing, since 2014, collaborations amongst artist-researchers, scientists, environmentalists, and local communities. By focusing on the impacts of climate change and contemporary ways of living, these collaborations have been proposing different modes of co-existence and co-creation, especially by strengthening ethical-political and participatory ways of making art (Kester, 2008; Bishop, 2012).

Throughout 2019, the project took place in the highly polluted Guanabara Bay in Rio de Janeiro, specifically at two places: “Colônia Z-10” (one of the first fishing villages of Brazil) which belongs to Ilha do Governador, and the island of Paquetá. To give an insight:

For over 100 years, “Colônia Z-10” (located on the river banks and mangroves of the Jequiá) and its several fishermen families has stood on land donated by the Brazilian Navy. Nowadays, it is completely suffocated by the water pollution of the Jequiá river and the Guanabara Bay, and as a result, only 400 out of 5000 inhabitants can make a living out of fishing. This heavy pollution is part of the everyday lives of the community, creating serious health issues that are almost imperceptible to such bodies asphyxiated by the neoliberal system.

Paquetá also has a fishing history, but the island is better known for its nickname “Island of the Lovers”. Not only the King of Portugal used to spend his holidays there, but also the famous soap opera “A Moreninha” was shot in the 70’s. Nevertheless, these days Paquetá has similar problems to those of the “Colônia Z-10”, which in summary can be described as moving between a distant past and a close future, between local

58 The “Territórios Sensíveis” project is supported by FAPERJ — Research Foundation of the State of Rio de Janeiro, “Young scientist our State” fellowship E-26/202.778/2019. Between 2019-2020 the project had a grant from Prince Claus Fund and Goethe Institute. See Link: <https://www.territoriosensiveis.com/baiadeguanabara>

traditions and environmental crisis, and/or between survival and the formation of new narratives.

Within this troubled scenario, four artistic laboratories were set up, gathering a group of 12 artists and 10 collaborators. These laboratories consisted of performative actions, somatic practices, workshops, performances and discussions. Anchored in the methodology of Performance as Research – PAR (Arlander et al. 2018; Hunter, 2009), these laboratories aimed to produce a form of embodied and situated knowledge by always focusing on the making process and the engagement with the local communities. Furthermore, they served as a framework to explore concepts such as territory (Haesbaert, 2013), embodiment (Spatz, 2015; Massumi, 2002) and emplacement (Pink, 2015). For us, these concepts operated in two different ways: on the one hand, as a driving force for the proposed actions on the islands and on the other, as a source for deepening the relationship between the body and territory.

In terms of Rogério Haesbaert's (2013) account of considering a territory in Latin America as a complex understanding of processuality, the specific conditions of the two islands and the more general scenario of the Guanabara Bay offered us: a) a common ground on which new relations and life pathways were created, b) a dynamic process through which some particular aspects of the socio-political and environmental issues of the islands came to light and c) a higher awareness towards our bodies and the ways in which it is always situated and traversed by the multidimensional, material and immaterial trajectories of a territory. In addition to that, we see our artistic and embodied practices not only belonging to the socially engaged art, but also to the Brazilian performance art's tradition of the 60's and 70's of the last century (e.g. Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Clark and Lygia Pape) which has been influencing the ways in which such a situated (or Latin American) body is enlivened and/or manifested.

By keeping this tradition partly alive, this collaborative writing will provide an insight into four of the twelve actions that were realized during the aforementioned laboratories, while sharing some of the manifold entanglements, knots, and trajectories which emerged out of the waters of the Guanabara Bay.

“Colônia Z-10”: Bodies in movement with the Jequiá's Mangrove and its petro-political degradation

Surrounded by the Jequiá river and mangrove, the Z-10 colony holds layers of memory and bonds to what it means to live in the Guanabara Bay; a sacrifice zone⁵⁹ due to the progress of the devastating oil industry. Surprisingly, the inhabitants of this community are not so aware of how important such a mangrove ecosystem is for the maintenance of their daily lives. By acknowledging its existence and memory, the artists and locals engaged in a type of place making in which the mangrove and its flying roots were center staged. Like this, their bodies entered into a process of constant displacement, while pointing out and crossing issues that form an embodied knowledge which according to Brian Massumi (2002), emphasises the experiential dimension of a body in movement.

Attuned to this idea, Walmeri Ribeiro and Ruy Cézar Campos carried out the following actions. In the case of Walmeri she worked with the children of the Colony through the simple actions of breathing, meditating, feeling, listening and dreaming. How can we breathe with the mangrove? What does it bring to us? From a sensory experience, surprises, dreams and learnings emerged which were then transformed into drawings and phrases. The discovery of the mangrove as being part of their bodies/homes as well as the discovery of its movements, sounds and flying roots.

After that, Walmeri invited the residents as well as the collaborators and the artists of the project, to participate in a performative action together with the mangrove and the wall/frontiers that suffocate it. In a simple gesture of standing still and of breathing with the eyes fixed on a certain point of the mangrove, the following directions were given: Remain still. Turn to the right. Keep the rhythm of your breathing. Look at a point on the wall. Remain still. Turn to the left. Turn your eyes back towards the mangrove.

59 Naomi Klein understands the places in an extractivist economy as "to their extractors, somehow don't count and therefore can be poisoned, drained, or otherwise destroyed, for the supposed greater good of economic progress". Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate*. Allen Lane., 2014), 169.

Breathing together and becoming-mangrove was a performative gesture, a sensory and political action. Through synchronizing the rhythm of our lungs with the movement of these flying roots, we learned that we can rethink our small gestures and habits by disrupting our ways of living and inhabiting the world as well as by bringing change – even if micro-geographically. We also acknowledged that there are ways of sharing the mangrove’s strength, flexibility, porosity, and capacity for the creation and life reinvention – even when it comes to adapting to unexpected materials such as a duct piece.

In the case of Ruy’s action, we found during the first visit to the “Colônia Z-10” a 5-6 meter-long black duct lying on the mangrove’s muddy ground. One of our collaborators, Tiago Caiçara, explained that it had floated across the Guanabara Bay, moving through the tide reflux directly to the mouth of the Jequiá river, where it damaged a few small boats. Caiçara got the others to help him drag it out of the river and placed it on the ground close to the mangrove’s roots. He used a small part of the duct to make flower beds on the village’s main square. The duct piece that was left became a video-installation assembling the sounds of the mangrove, with a collage of different images and moments of perceptual engagement with the village memory.

Luiz Antônio (L.A.), one of the few younger fishermen who is respected by the elderly, took part in a performative walk and sound recording moment through the mangrove to formulate questions to be posed when we interviewed the most traditional fishermen, Mr. Geraldo (G) and Mr. Zuca (Z). By doing that, we evoked, provoked and knotted together dispersed intergenerational stories and memories of this place, as they remembered the time it was flooded by the oil spill of an Iraqi vessel, in 1975.

(L.A.): Do you remember seeing any odd trash of your past?
 (G.): - Of course! (Z.): - Yes! (G.) - There was one time this burned down. - There was a fire. A huge fire here in... 1974, right? (Z.): - Yeah. (G.): - In 1974. A big fire, yeah. Some ships... .. from Petrobras... (Z.): - It spilled oil! (G.): - Yeah, it spilled some oil. That oil was black and invaded this

place. The waters suffered, here on the mangrove. This mangrove, from here to there, all the way to there, wasn't here. It was sand. The mangrove was from this point to that over there. That destroyed everything. Why? There was some disagreement or so. The fire started here. (Z.) - It was a fuss! (G.) - It was ruined here. People were trying to get out.

They also shared with us that in the year 2000, a duct disruption caused a dramatic oil spill in the Bay. A month later (and after our laboratory had finished), due to another oil spill, the fishermen went on television to demand the attention of the authorities towards the health of the Guanabara waters.

This type of petro-political narration as well as the walking, breathing and sensing together with the children and youngsters of the “Colônia Z-10”, were the base of our artistic mediations on this territory. Like this, our gestures moved from embodiment to emplacement: a form of place making that was affected by a shared performative and sensory experiences made within the mangrove. For both the artist-researchers and community, these complex experiences enhanced the understanding of this territory, of its ecological past and present. This can also be seen as an artistic-political and pedagogical act or the ways in which life moves on despite the fact of living in the sacrifice zones of the Anthropocene.

Paquetá Island: relationship between body, place and decay.

During the laboratory in Paquetá, Cesar Baio and Nathalie S. Fari created subtle interventions that aimed to make visible some of the hidden narratives of the island. By using different yet complementary approaches, they looked at how the relationship between embodiment and technology (in this case, the technological device of a camera) affects not only one’s own perceptual experience, but also the ways in which images evolve. First, to give an insight into Nathalie’s experience: while she got a sense of the indigenous ancestrality of the island, especially due to a somatic and performative work she facilitated to the participants of the project (based on the

moving meditation practice of the 5Rhythms® as well as on improvisation), she also created a photographic series in collaboration with a local member of the community, in which she enacted the position of lying down (or of being dead) at different spots of the island in order to (re)imagine a process of devastation and decay.

This experience or her somatic, site-oriented and documentary approach to performance practice, is attuned with Ben Spatz's (2017) concept of the 'embodiment as first affordance'. Anchored in Gibson's (1979) notion of 'affordances'⁶⁰ Spatz takes a step further, pondering on what else embodiment can be and do for us, beyond the already accepted approaches of the dissolution of the division between body and mind, or the phenomenological 'lived body'. Instead of just emphasizing how the body acquires and sediments a specific technique by, for example, engaging with a specific place, Spatz makes an attempt to place embodiment at the junction between ecology and technology:

Our bodies, in other words, are an intermediate zone - a hinge, pivot, or junction - between the ecological and technological. (...) It is only in recognition of the urgent disbalance between ecology and technology that we have cause to prioritize embodiment as the fragile junction between these domains. In light of this disbalance, embodiment is not just any affordance, but first affordance, the affordance from which it might be possible to reorganize the relationship between technology and ecology.⁶¹

When trying to hold on to such an intermediate zone, we must be aware of the tensions (or discrepancies) that might arise at the junction described by Spatz and that is: between the goal of pursuing an artistic and/or embodied practice and

60 In Spatz's article, this notion is explained as "those possibilities that a given physical environment offers, provides, or furnishes to an animal that lives within it". Ben Spatz, "Embodiment as First Affordance: Tinkering, Tuning, Tracking", *Performance Philosophy* 2, no.2 (2017): 259.

61 Ibid, 267.

the urgencies of an environmental crisis which can barely be put into images or words. In the case of Nathalie's action, this might imply that although she made an effort to embody and portray the specific ecology of Paquetá, it cannot be assured that her intention restored some of the environmental disbalances of the island (this can probably be applied to all the other actions). Nonetheless, the images of her body lying amidst the corners and edges of Paquetá, brought to light not only the remains of the paradisiac status of the island, but also its more recent problems with waste, pollution and toxicity. With that, we will emphasize Cesar's work entitled "Obliterrações".

The point of departure was to investigate the ways in which the inhabitants relate both to the garbage stranded on the beach and to the beach itself. In doing so, a group of inhabitants of the island joined the artist on a series of walks along the beaches in order to open their senses towards the sand, especially, towards the sight of ships, oil platforms and the floating garbage moored on the beach. The next step was to enable the group to search for lost objects that they could use to cover parts of the visible landscapes. What parts of the island should be seen and which unseen?

As in Nathalie's work the body became a mediator between the technological and the ecological. In Cesar's case, it happened through a body that relates to an object as part of a world yet to be known and built. Like this, the artistic action provided meaning to what was once an industrial product and now a homogeneous and impersonal object which is free of any subjectivity prior to the state of being a discarded object.

A core issue of embodied mind theory is the refusal of the separation between perception and action. As such, once perception and action evolved together by depending on each other, the enactment turned into a key concept to understand the way we relate to the world (Varela et al., 2016). From this embodied perspective, to know the world means to act upon it. In *Obliterrações*, the found garbage became a way of producing knowledge and of acting upon the world, or of what Pasquinelli (2006, 235) considered a 'workable object' in reference to Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'practicable' object.

With this found object, an imaginary landscape can be cre-

ated that is neither a scene of everyday life, nor the idyllic mirage seen by the traveler. At the moment in which this landscape emerges, it embodies the subject who has invented it, while reallocating the state of the knowledge about both the place and the subject. The body of the found object, the one that makes up the observed landscape and the one that is the subject of the experience, generates a new place. Although ephemeral, what is engendered at this moment has already changed the status of the place, and the scenes of what emerges is documented in the photographs shown in the artwork. Although using photography as media, this artwork does not intend to create a representation of the world, of a subject or of a community, it aims to build a place to be inhabited by the artists, local collaborators and the community's members. A place as vast and perennial as the artistic act itself.

Final considerations: Entanglement with embodied territories

A key intention of our collaborative writing, was to exemplify how the aforementioned actions offered us different ways of embodying a territory/place or as Sara Pink would ask:

How can we learn to occupy or imagine places and ways of perceiving and being that are similar, parallel or indeed interrelated with and contingent on those engaged in by research participants?⁶²

Although we cannot give an answer on behalf of all the participants of the *Sensitive Territories* project, we can affirm that our shared laboratories fostered a common ground for enhancing as well as re-situating our embodied experiences, be it in connection with the more general environmental and/or petro-political issues of the Guanabara Bay or more specifically, with the past, present and possible future configurations of the two islands. In that way, both our artistic processes and the encounters we had with the local communities were cen-

tral for generating, on the one hand, a series of artworks and research outcomes and on the other, a type of apprenticeship which consisted not only of learning how to listen and sense an environment, but also of how to access and integrate its multiple layers of memory and history. As such, this process of embodying a territory or of becoming 'emplace' enabled the co-creation of new narratives or even better, new imaginary spaces, while being co-constituted through something we denote as affect.

By looking closer at the 'affective encounters' we had in the Guanabara Bay, we might argue that while for Cesar it meant grasping the familiar yet toxic landscapes of Paquetá through the non-human agency of objects, for Nathalie it offered the possibility of accessing through her own body the rather mythical and forgotten past of the island. When it comes to Walmeri and Ruy, we will say that while for Walmeri such an encounter had the connotation of being deeply entangled with both the mangrove and the inhabitants of the "Colônia Z-10", for Ruy it represented an ethnography-based approach of uncovering the traces of an embodied technique and/or craftsmanship. In doing so, all these encounters enhanced not only the aforementioned 'body-mind-environment' continuum or the oscillation between embodiment and emplacement, but also the empowerment of multiple agencies, whether human or non-human.

In this regard, we will conclude by stating that such embodied territories touched upon the ways in which an embodied technique or embodied knowledge might affect (or be affected) by a territory/place that is neither fully captured nor conquered, i.e., a territory that trains our bodies to be *all eyes, all ears* and *all hands*. In other words, while our eyes, hands and ears helped us to create the performative actions at "Colônia Z-10" and "Ilha de Paquetá", they also might have been responsible for changing some of the ways in which the local communities perceive or even influence, the development of their troubled and threatened environments.

62 Sara Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (Sage Publications: 2015), 34.



QR-Code to the
video-essay on VIMEO

Paquetás resting body or (re)- tracing its docu- mentary meaning

Video-essay

Duration 08:23 min.

As the *Global Performance Studies Journal* asked us to add media contents to the article, I have produced a video-essay entitled *Paquetás resting body or (re)tracing its documentary meaning*.

The video-essay⁶³ opens with a voice-over and the sound of hands typing on a computer: “This button. Share screen. Share sound. Optimise for video-clip. Oh yes, there it goes.” While these words (which have become prominent since the pandemic) indicate that a “Zoom-lecture” has started, they also invite the viewer into the digital realm in which according to Vivian Sobchak, “space becomes correlatively experienced as abstract, ungrounded, and flat – a site (or screen) for play and display.”⁶⁴ After this introduction, a series of black and white photographs of devastated landscapes start to unfold on the screen with the following sentence: “After many years away from Brazil, I arrive again at the small island of Paquetá. The first impression is that of a ‘post-apocalyptic’ scenario or ‘pos-Corona’ world from which human beings seem to have been banished.”

With this sentence, the video-essays sets not only a documentary tone, but it also gives clues about a fictional narrative. Connected to the environmental issues of the island of “Paquetá” such as water pollution and toxicity of the soil, this narrative conjures a future scenario in which the island has become an uninhabitable place on Earth. In minute 0:52, the voice-over states: “ I really don’t know why as there are no visible traces left, no signs of living matter. Yet, to find out more, I decide to go for a walk” ...

What comes next (after the reading in Portuguese from a book) can be considered the central scene of the video-essay: the image of a human body lying on the ground at the bird cemetery. Belonging to a photographic series, this still image

63 This conceptual description was written after the publication in 2022, in the context of the doctoral course “Theoretical constructs in artistic research” from the Artistic Faculty at the University of Gothenburg.

64 Vivian Sobchak, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (University of California Press), 158.

(re)enacts the same pose at different spots of the island while alluding to multiple forms of agency: a) the human presence within a space devoted to other species, b) the gesture of a body resting, c) the statue of a bird looking at the camera and d) the allusion to death. In terms of montage, this image served as a basis for exploring the tensions between the documentation of a performative action and its mediation process. As such, from minute 04:02 (when the screen is overlaid with the images of the Zoom-lecture and the virtual background of birds at a landfill), the author enters a mode of action which Eyal Sivan describes as follows:

The question of staging is in this case crucial: the stage is the frame. The choice is between staging a reality or staging with reality. While fiction construes a frame and then goes on to stage a narrative within that frame, the documentary stages and makes visible the frame itself: the frame is being framed.⁶⁵

According to this, while the documentary dimension of the video-essay is being framed through the author's engagement with bird cemetery, it is staging a performative action within the same frame and thus, creating a sort of fiction. This fictional dimension is highlighted not only by a subtle change in the narration - from reading facts to improvising in front of the camera - but also by quoting a passage from the article *Lost Dogs, Last Birds, and Listed Species: Cultures of Extinction* by Ursula K. Heise:

Comedy is a celebration, a ritual renewal of biological welfare... Literary comedy depends on the loss of equilibrium and its recovery. Wherever the normal processes of life are obstructed unnecessarily, the comic way seeks to return to normal.⁶⁶

65 Antonia Majaca and Eyal Sivan, "Montage Against All Odds", in *Documentary Across Disciplines*, ed. Erika Balsom and Hilla Peleg (The MIT Press and Haus der Kulturen der Welt), 199.

66 Ursula K. Heise, "Lost Dogs, Last Birds, and Listed Species: Cultures of Extinction", *Configurations* 18, no. 1 (2010): 69.



By emphasising on how such a comic approach can be used to refer to a scenario of catastrophe, the video-essay ends with the sentence: "I will try to cease and finish this lecture by letting this image, this last still image or document be here, and we could all try to do something that I will try to do now which is: I will try to return to normal, whatever normal means" and with the frame of the author standing in the middle of the room (or Zoom space) as if the body has become the statue of a bird or, as if it has risen again from death. What remains open is the question, whether the video-essay creates a fiction or an electronic space which for Vivian Sobchak points to:

Now, historically, it is the technologic of the electronic – and not the residual logic of the cinematic – that dominates the form and in-forms the content of our cultural representations. And unlike cinematic representation, electronic representation by its very nature structure phenomenologically diffuses the fleshly presence of the human body and the dimensions of that body's material world.⁶⁷

Finally, the fleshy, diffuse presence of the author on the screen traces not only a documentary and fictional engagement with a specific place, but also represents the disembodied space of today's digital beings or of what has become the "new normal".

67 Sobchak, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*, 161.

3 Mediating a performative action and/or space

Throughout my PhD research, the previously stated questions: 1) how to use a place as a documentary source to generate performance material, 2) which documentation and/or documentary strategies would be needed for such a process and 3) how in turn, could they contribute to developing a mediated performance work (or screen performance), became pivotal for exploring a type of site-specific practice in which translation operates as an artistic strategy. By this, I am referring to how a translation process which is “not only connected with linguistic competence, but with intertextual, psychological and narrative competence”⁶⁸ can be used to get in touch and uncover a specific place. For example, by developing a translation model in which a place may be treated as Source A and the body as Source B. A model which I tried to put into practice in Lab #1 at Götaplatsen, where we used our observations as Source A and their translation into bodily movements and gestures as Source B. However, since such a process is not so easy to describe or systematise, especially as it involves one’s own subjectivity and sensory awareness, I needed to redefine the notion of translation in my research. Therefore, I first engaged with discourses around performance documentation, which are often related to processes of translation and/or mediation (e.g., in the form of reenactments), and secondly, with filmmaking, where such processes are an integral part of an artistic expression. Hence, what follows is an outline of the concepts and/or discourses which were key in disclosing my approach to a site-oriented *screen performance research* practice.

Performance Documentation

Projected into the future, the documentary material that remains from the performance is not just a visual proof of an event but constitutes the ability to comprehend the

68 Umberto Eco and Alastair McEwen, *Experiences in Translation* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 13.

image as an index of its various future forms of existence as image, trace, and object.⁶⁹

This passage, penned by Barbara Clausen in the edited volume *Histories of Performance Documentation*, points to the growing interest there has been, over the past twenty years, in documentation and archival practices within the performing and visual arts fields.⁷⁰ Anchored in discourses around the ephemerality, temporality, or immediacy of performance, these practices have, on the one hand, been grappling with canonical references claiming, for instance, that ‘performance becomes only through its disappearance’ (Phelan, 1993), that ‘live performance is always part of a system of reproduction and mediatised cultures’ (Auslander, 1999), or ‘that performance can be engaged as what remains, rather than what disappears’ (Schneider, 2011). On the other hand, they have been exploring how the relationship between documentation and its transfer process into photography, film, or performance can be made accessible and collectable through new digital technologies (a trend which has been accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic). Nevertheless, the documentation of live performance – whether online or offline – as forms of embodied co-presence, auratic space and communal experience are often compromised by these technologies. An inevitable factor which, nonetheless, has been contributing to develop new forms of documentation and thus, new ways in which performance histories are constructed and canonised for a future audience. In this regard, I will first highlight the history of performance documentation from the perspective of photography; subsequently, I will discuss the notion of *performing archives*.

69 Barbara Clausen, “Performing the archive and exhibiting the ephemeral”, in *Histories of Performance Documentation*, ed. Gabriella Giannachi and Jonah Westerman (London: Routledge, 2018), 98.

70 Here, I will mention two significant projects carried out during this period: the exhibition *Moments: A History of Performance in 10 Acts* from 2012 at the ZKM (Zentrum für Kunst und Medien) in Karlsruhe, Germany. (See link: <https://zkm.de/en/exhibition/2012/03/moments>), and Re-act Feminism, a mobile archive of feminist, queer and gender-critical performance art from the 1960s-80s which travelled throughout Europe from 2011-13. (See link: <https://www.reactfeminism.org>)

Historical records

Considered as the foundation of performance documentation, photography was the first technology available for documenting and preserving a performance for posterity (it was only in the early 1980’s that video-technology became a preferred medium). While artists such as Chris Burden, Gina Pape or Vito Acconci started, in the 1960’s and 1970’s, to consider documentation as an integral part of their artistic practices,⁷¹ a new discourse around those practices started to emerge. When Michael Kirby stated that “tomorrow’s past is the presence”⁷² documentation was no longer used merely to produce historical records, but also to perpetuate them into the future (it is no wonder the New York scene became so prominent). For him, photographs were somewhat like ‘surrogates’, in the sense that they should allow the viewer to reconstruct a performance mentally, or even experience it again. In other words, they should provide *objective records* rather than *subjective interpretations* of a performance and thus, remain as close as possible to the original work. To give an example of such an objective record, follows a description by Kirby of Jim Dine’s performance *The Car Crash* from 1960:

The man in silver was standing by the blackboard, a large, thick piece of chalk in his hand. With a few quick moves, he drew the outlines of a large car (perhaps yellow, then added a window-eye and a huge smiling mouth. As he worked, the soft chalk crumbled and broke, falling on the floor. His heavily made-up face contorted as if with the effort of his drawing, and he uttered a series of noises that sounded as if he were about to say something but could not quite begin a word.⁷³

71 Photographs of the performance *Shoot* by Chris Burden, for example, have become iconic for this period, not only due to the radicality of his action (some references argue that Burden only staged this action for the camera), but also due to the historicization process around it.

72 Michael Kirby cited by Philip Auslander, “Performing Texts”, filmed at University of Richmond, 2013, video, 1:14:05, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njnAztE5ASY>.

73 Michael Kirby quoted in Carrie Lambert-Beatty, “Documentary Dialectics:

In this case, Kirby's report, or insight into Jim Dine's performative action, was not based on the viewing of a photograph and thus, on a historical record, but on his physical presence at the event. Hence, to what degree such a reconstruction may emulate the live experience of a performance and what it means to "stick to the *truth*" of a past event remain contested questions.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, what becomes clear through these early positions in performance documentation, is that photography has the potential of carrying forth the political agency and experiential dimension of a performance work.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning the notion of performed photography as another complementary, yet distinctive approach to performance documentation. While the latter relies mainly on producing images of a preconceived performance, performed photography foregrounds such images mainly through staging a performance for the camera (e.g., the iconic image *Leap into the Void* by Yves Klein). A process which for Nick Kaye suggests "a mode of work that frequently announces itself in articulations of the intervals and slips of tenses and times between event, act, and record."⁷⁵ This means that the dynamics between the documentation and the event, or between the act and its recording, are associated with the production and meaning of the work. In doing so, the documentation and display of a performance via photography points to two places at the same time: to the past of the event and the here and now. This mediation form can also be described as what Philip Auslander has termed 'the performativity of documentation itself' or:

The act of documenting an event as performance is what constitutes it as such. Documentation does not simply generate images/statements that describe an autonomous

Performance Lost and Found", in *Live Art on Camera: Performance and Photography*, ed. Alice Maude-Roxby (John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton, 2007), 67.

74 A different and more recent position is taken by Amelia Jones (2010) who writes about performance works only through experiencing their documentation.

75 Nick Kaye, "Photographic presence: time and the image", in *Archaeologies of Presence: art, performance, and the persistence of being*, ed. Gabriella Giannachi et al., (London: Routledge, 2011), 242.

performance and state that occurred: it produces an event as performance.⁷⁶

According to this, Auslander has developed an influential ontological position regarding how performance works can be distinguished between those captured *live* on a camera (considered as documentary) and those that were constructed in the space of the image (theatrical). This position has not only led to a lively discourse around the interdependency and contingency of performance *and* documentation, but it has also changed the ways in which performance documents (or photographs) have become commodities of exchange and value. To quote Auslander:

They are framed as performances by being presented in galleries or by other means and there is an initial audience to which the performer assumes responsibility as well as a second audience that experiences the performance only through its documentation.⁷⁷

So, if documentation can be used as a translation process from one medium to another, how could we approach it as a compositional and/or dramaturgical tool? And how, in turn, could such an approach contribute to expanding the indexical traces of a documentary material? These are questions to be examined further.

Performing Archives

As a result of this discourse, especially in connection with the performance histories of the 1960's and beyond, a new approach to archival practices has emerged. Notions such as 'archival impulse' (Foster, 2004) and 'the will to archive' (Lep- ecki, 2010), have contributed to rethinking the term archive in contemporary performative arts as well as fostering an explo-

76 Philip Auslander, "The Performativity of Performance Documentation", in *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History*, ed. Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield, (Bristol/Chicago: Intellect, 2012), 53.

77 Ibid, 54.

ration around the medial transfers, transmissions, or transpositions of performance events (see Foellmer *et al.*, 2019). No longer associated with collecting, cataloguing, or preserving artefacts from the past, archival practices have destabilised the fixed notions of time and place to become forms of eventhood. As Emma Willis describes:

The archive is not simply its objects, just as an image is not simply a copy of reality. *Performative responses* to and renderings of the archive demonstrate that it is not so much a repository of historical truth as it is a set of materials from which new sensible aesthetic and social systems might be drawn.⁷⁸

From this perspective, such performative responses to an archive also point to how archival processes have become more fluid, malleable, and open-ended. A type of *performing archive* which allows a series of interventions, from reviving a performance tradition, to reenacting a performance document, forming a counter-narrative, or creating new display modes and accessibility to an archive (increasingly on the internet). While these interventions often seek to redefine and expand how performance archives are constituted, organised, or claimed, they also indicate the role and relevance that documentation plays in such a process. As Heike Roms argues:

The shift from ‘documentation’ to ‘archive’ as the critical term in this debate denotes a shift from a concern with *how* performance is evidenced to a critical address to how performance itself is evidence for certain lived experiences.⁷⁹

78 Emma Willis, “All This is Left: Performing and Reperforming Archives of Khmer Rouge Violence”, in *Performing Archives / Archives of Performance*, ed. Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2013), 124, my emphasis added.

79 Heike Roms, “Eventful Evidence. Historicizing Performance Art”, in *Fluid Access: Archiving Performance-Based Arts*, ed. Barbara Büscher and Franz Anton Cramer (Hildesheim/Zürich/New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2017), 96.

According to this, if archiving is synonymous with documenting, one should not only analyse what a performing archive may reveal about its artefacts – recordings, notations, objects and so on – but also consider its medial transformations and inscriptions. Additionally, this would imply reading such archival inscriptions as performance, or even, as *performing documents*.

In this PhD research, this type of archival strategy was pursued by inviting the sources of imagination and play into the reframing and/or rewriting process of a performance document. Yet this does not mean inventing a whole new story (or narrative), but rather fostering a creative engagement with the documentary contents and traces of a performance archive. For example, by expanding the boundaries (or limitations) of a documentary material, while looking for ways in which it can be mediated and/or translated into a new context. As Paul Clarke states:

Rather than securing the archive and canon as economic capital, we might characterize this resource of past practices as a palette or muse – interactions with its documents produce inspiration for innovations in performance across generations.⁸⁰

With such a possibility, I will mention an exercise which I proposed during a seminar in the context of the online symposium *Transmitting / Documenting / Narrating: Performance practices and the exhibition as sites of research*.⁸¹ Based on some of the ideas mentioned so far, this exercise consisted of using documentary material (mainly photographs or video extracts) as a source for creating a *performing document*. By making an

80 Paul Clarke, “Performing the Archive: The Future of the Past”, in *Performing Archives / Archives of Performance*, ed. Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2013), 378.

81 This two-day online symposium which I co-organised with the curator and researcher Nick Aikens in Autumn 2020, focussed on exploring how performance and curatorial practices can operate as sites of research. Bringing together 13 contributors from different disciplinary fields (the key-note speakers were Adrian Heathfield and Irit Rogoff) and an online community with experts and enthusiasts, we looked, on the one hand, at how the processes of documenting and archiving can be seen as an integral part of an artistic practice; on the other, we explored how the field of exhibition making and curatorial practices can be approached through a research process.

analysis of the data or facts (e.g., context, location, people involved etc.) and historical meaning of such a document, it explored how we could (re)frame and/or (re)perform it by adding new narrative layers. For example, in the case of one participant, this was addressed by adding information (the declination of a residency Visa) which was not directly connected to the documentary material, but which had a strong impact on the further development of it. While this may sound like abstract or random information, these performing documents – or at least glimpses of them – served as a basis for an online ‘Zoom-improvisation’ (see QR-Code to the video documentation) in which we were performing *while* recording and (re)inscribing our gestures and movements into the documentary material. Alongside this, they also attempted to include the sources of imagination and memory into an archival process so that in the words of Matthew Reason:

They present a documentation that is far from clear, accurate, or objective, which does not speak to recreate the performance, but does perhaps manage to achieve the result of replicating in the reader some of the experiences of the audience.⁸²

To sum up, while every documentation form precedes the disappearance of a performance – or later, the appearance of images – it also brings forth a series of performance documents, and thus, the chance to (re)view and (re)visit them anew.⁸³

Cinematography as process

To widen my approach from performance documentation to screen performance practice, I will highlight the role of the



82 Matthew Reason, "Archive or Memory? The Detritus of Live Performance." *New Theatre Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (2003): 87.

83 With such an emphasis, I published in 2015 the Anthology *Embodied Places* in the context of the Month of Performance Art Berlin. For this occasion, I invited some artists who were part of the events that I curated for the platform, to elaborate essays which aimed to explore how a documentary material can be put in a new context, especially by adding some fictional layers onto it. (see link: http://nathaliesfari.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/nsf_cat_embodied_places.pdf)

camera in my research. Not only as a recording device for documenting and eventually securing an event for posterity, but also as an artistic research tool for developing a cinematic language. By this, I am referring to the emergent field of screen production research which, according to Susan Kerrigan, proposes “an iterative process of practice and reflection by a researcher who is also the screen practitioner and a theoretical perspective that informs the overall research.”⁸⁴ While such a process draws from the researcher’s ontological and epistemological position, a key emphasis lies in employing the camera to bring forth a screen work as a research output. In doing so, my interest in working with the camera, departs, on the one hand, from an embodied approach to screen practice which according to Vivian Sobchak, suggests that “we experience films not only with our eyes. We watch, understand, and perceive films with our whole physical being.”⁸⁵ On the other hand, it stems from my experience as a performance artist who is not only acquainted with being in front of the camera, but also with creating performances “in the space of the image”. In short, with exploring how a certain body/space relationship can be framed, captured and, especially, translated into still or moving images.

From this perspective, I have engaged with a filmic and/or documentation process by looking more closely at how I can attribute agency to a camera. In other words, I explored how I, as a performing and documenting body, can play with the materiality of a camera through something I call, its *narrative agency*; for example, by allowing the camera to take different positions and roles in the space and, in turn, by letting go of the control of what is being filmed or the type of audiovisual material that is being generated. Even though this may compromise the filmic result, or to some degree, what was envisioned, it can nevertheless permit the camera to be both a recording device and a sort of “co-author”.⁸⁶

84 Susan Kerrigan, “A Logical Explanation of Screen Production as Method-Led Research”, in *Screen Production Research: Creative Practice as Mode of Enquiry*, ed. Craig Batty and Susan Kerrigan (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 25.

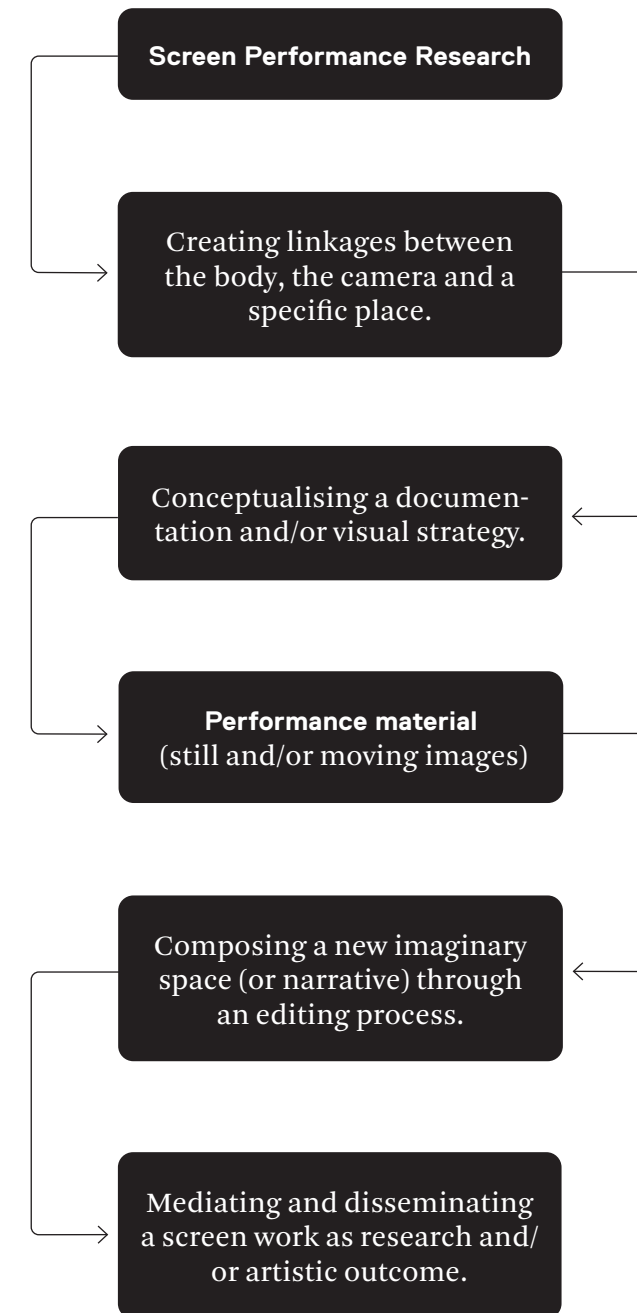
85 Vivian Sobchak quoted by Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Heger, *Filmtheorie* (Hamburg: Junius, 2007), 149.

In terms of screen production research, such a cinematographic approach can also be compared with a visual strategy that Cathy Greenhalgh describes as follows:

Primarily, I view cinematography as a type of thinking, as sketching and scripting, and try to find ways of working which foreground this habit. The ‘footage’ is acquired through a material, embodied process, improvised performance, and reflective, contemplative periods of editing, rather than rigorous structuring methods.⁸⁷

According to this, I consider the narrative agency of a camera as, on the one hand, a way of creating linkages between the body and a specific place or, between an embodied and performative engagement with a place and its mediation process; on the other, as a way of experimenting with how the narrative qualities and structures of an audiovisual material (and all its potential contingencies and surprises), can be (re)framed and (re)performed in the editing room or, in “the space of the image”. To further elucidate such an approach, follows a graphic and, subsequently, an article entitled *Performing while documenting or how to enhance the narrative agency of a camera*, published in the Theatre, Dance and Performance Training Journal in 2022.⁸⁸

- 86 On this matter, there have been further explorations in artistic research, such as, for example, Roni Hardiz’s concept ‘animated camera – camera conductor’, which compares the recording process of a camera with CCTV (closed-circuit-television), especially by considering the camera operator as “both a conductor of an orchestra and conductor of resonances.” Ronny Hardiz, “How Do We Look at Animals? – Decolonising Documentary Art Practices and the Global Crisis for Donkeys,” *Film Education Journal* 6, no. 1 (2023): 55.
- 87 Cathy Greenhalgh, “Cinematography: Practice as Research, Research into Practice”, in *Screen Production Research: Creative Practice as a Mode of Enquiry*, ed. Craig Batty and Susan Kerrigan (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 155.
- 88 This article can be seen as the culmination of my PhD research, especially as it consisted of the longest peer-review process (interrupted by my Long-Covid illness), starting in July 2019 with the first version and ending in December 2022 with the third and final version.





1



3



2



4

- 1 Video-Still (Katxerê Medina), Lab #1, HSM, Gothenburg, June 2019
- 2 Image (Nathalie S. Fari), Performance Documentation Course (participant: Cia Eriksson), HSM, Gothenburg, March 2020
- 3 Image (Nathalie S. Fari), Performance Documentation Course (participant: Anna Wennerbeck), HSM, Gothenburg, March 2021
- 4 Image (Nathalie S. Fari), Lab #2, Instituto do Ator, Rio de Janeiro, December 2019



QR-Code to the original
publication on Theatre, Dance and
Performance Training Journal

Performing while documen- ting or how to enhance the narrative agency of a camera

By Nathalie S. Fari

Introduction

This article proposes to create new linkages between the performing body, the material affordances of a camera and a specific place. Drawn from notions of site-specific performance (Kaye, 2000; Arlander, 2012), performance documentation (Auslander, 2006; Schneider, 2011) and screen production research (Lichtenfels et al. 2020; Craig and Kerrigan, 2017), it will examine how the camera can operate as a mediator and/or translator of an embodied and documentary engagement. By taking into consideration that “video cameras entangle bodies in ways we are only beginning to understand, and which pose significant aesthetic and epistemic problems for live performance”⁸⁹, this suggests to not only address videography as research practice. It also makes a case for a methodological approach to performance documentation practice, especially through being in a mode of performing *while* documenting. More specifically, through exploring how the performing body can be both in the front and behind the camera *while* creating a deeper awareness of where to place it in the space, which images (or imagery) are wanted or simply, when is the right moment to press the button ‘record’ and when not.

Even though such a process may be subjective and here, always dependent on the often unpredictable circumstances of a place, it nevertheless can contribute to develop something I call the *narrative agency* of a camera: To employ the recording abilities of a camera to fathom and possibly, blur the tensions and/or boundaries between the documentary and fictional or between an event that happens in real-time and space and one that is mainly staged for the camera. In practice, I am suggesting looking more closely at how we can identify and/or experiment with the narrative qualities and/or structures of a recorded material or how we can use documentation and its mediation and archival process to reframe, reinterpret and especially, *rewrite* the performative experiences made at a specific place. As Matthew Reason argues,

89 Ben Spatz, *Making A Laboratory: Dynamic Configurations with Transversal Video* (Punctum Books, 2020), 176.

there can be no concept of documentation without a sense of that which is not (or cannot be) documented. A documentation that tells the whole story is not documentation, but the *whole story*; not a recording, but the thing itself.⁹⁰

By valorizing the openness as well as inaccuracy of such recordings, this article will offer an insight into the documentation process of a performance laboratory that took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2019). In addition to that, it will demonstrate how a recorded material can be used as a basis for elaborating different narratives – whether as words or images – which seek to expand the documentary status and meaning of such a material. Although this implies to scrutinise the originality, authenticity and/or *truthfulness* that are often expected from a documentation and which according to Reason, will never tell the whole story, it nevertheless can challenge the ways in which performance documents or research outcomes are mediated, validated and/or archived.

Therefore, I recommend watching first a short video that I have produced especially for this article. Drawn from the documentation of a series of actions undertaken by a performing and documenting group at a public square in Rio de Janeiro, this video plays not only with a multilayered and multi-screen editing process. It is also inspired by what video-technology made possible or as the pioneering video-artist Bill Viola puts it:

Video in the late twentieth century realised the dream of painters from the Renaissance to the late nineteenth century: to *embody motion*. Not only could artists now capture the cresting wave of the moment, but also, they could observe themselves in the midst of it from a point of view outside their bodies.⁹¹



90 Matthew Reason, *Documentation, Disappearance, and the Representation of Live Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 27.

91 Bill Viola quoted by Barbara London, *Video Art: The First Fifty Years* (London/New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 2020), 41, emphasis added.

I open my eyes: What I can see are four bodies moving in a slow, quiet rhythm. I cannot say exactly where they are or what they are doing. The only thing that I can get a sense of are some movements which seem to be not fully synchronised or following the same patterns; on the contrary, while one body moves, all the others are standing still, as if nothing is happening, as if time had stopped for some unknown reason. Yet, once a movement starts to unfold in the space, there is a sort of chain reaction to it. I can't really say if these micro-responses are correlated only to the movements or also to the surroundings. Independently from this, I can see that these bodies are situated on a round, wooden surface on which two predominant structures are apparent: On one side, a pillar construction with a metallic formation on top of it, which reminds me of a palm tree, and on the other, a long, symmetrically perforated surface resembling a shelter or ceiling. Together, these well-designed structures form a type of built environment which reminds me of an island. Yet, a rather small island which seems to be unreachable or disconnected from the outside world... At least, it looks like that this island has a quite constricting effect upon the ways in which the four bodies are moving and affecting each other's position, be it through the 'affordances' (Gibson, 2014) or through the tiny screen that brings me into being.

Setting the conditions for performing while documenting on site

To contextualise my approach to site-oriented and expanded performance documentation practice, I will introduce the performance laboratory of Rio de Janeiro. Being part of my practice-based PhD project at the Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg, this five-day laboratory gathered three 'co-researchers' – Cecilia Lagerström (Sweden) Ivani Santana and Walmeri Ribeiro (Brazil) and a small group of MA-students⁹² – to collaborate on the design of a series of exercises.

92 These master students (Bruna Felix, Gabriela Bandeira, Pietra Mazzilli and Verô Messo) were part of a performance research group that Prof. Walmeri Ribeiro coordinated at that time at the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) in Rio de Janeiro.

Anchored in our own performance practices (Cecilia in physical and site-specific theatre, Ivani in dance and technology, Walmeri in performance and video art and I in performance art and body mapping) these exercises focused on mapping, sensing, and recording the specific places that were chosen for this laboratory: A small black box studio without any windows and a quite noticeable air-conditioning known as the “Instituto do Ator”⁹³ and a public square called “Praça Mauá”. By giving an emphasis on the implementation of different cameras (in this case, two GoPros, one 360-degree and one digital Sony Alpha 7300), these exercises not only explored how we could get in touch and attune to the history, social fabrics and/or architecture of these almost opposite places; the studio as a sort of ‘theatre enclave’ (Schino, 2009) and the “Praça Mauá” as a sort of public arena for ‘invisible actions’ (Bishop, 2012), but also how we could use these places as the main documentary source. Yet to give an insight, follows a brief description of some of the applied exercises:

1. In the exercise proposed by Cecilia Lagerström (documented with the GoPros, the 360 degrees and the Sony Alpha 7300), we carried out a silent movement improvisation in which the interplay between our bodies and the surroundings was central. By moving together, yet one at a time - sometimes slower, sometimes faster and sometimes in an almost unnoticeable way, we developed a sort of chain of movements or ‘kinesthetic responses’⁹⁴ to each other’s impulses and executions.

2. In the exercise proposed by Ivani Santana (documented with the GoPros and the Sony Alpha 7300), we formed couples with the intention of enabling a subjective experience of the space. While one person had their eyes closed while moving freely, the other was narrating in the ‘I’ mode, everything she could see, hear and/or

93 See link: <https://institutodoator.wixsite.com/novoinstitutodoator>

94 Here, I am referring to the ‘Viewpoints’ methodology developed by the American choreographer Mary Overlie in the 1970’s and later by the director of the New York based SITI Theatre Company Anne Bogart.

perceive. In doing so, we explored the space through the subjective perspective of someone else of the group.

3. In the exercise that I proposed (documented with the Sony Alpha 7300), we executed a group improvisation (only once in the studio) which focused on exploring our main ‘heterotopic place’⁹⁵: a small island (in this case, a small wooden platform which resembled the round wooden bench that we had decided to work with at the “Praça Mauá”). By staying in complete darkness, we improvised a fictive scenario of us being stranded on this small island due to a flood and consequently, of us having to find a way out to survive. Here, a special emphasis was given on creating rather an internal landscape than a theatrical representation of such a scenario.

In terms of site-oriented performance documentation practice, all these exercises not only enabled us to deepen our sensory and creative awareness towards the presence of a camera (especially in public space where cameras are omnipresent), be it through placing it on a tripod, through moving with it in the space or through attaching it to the body. Alongside this, they were an invitation to practise how we could stay attentive and responsive towards the multiple agencies we were dealing with: Our human agency as a performing and/or documenting body, our collective agency as a performing and/or documenting group, the material agency of an object, the socio-spatial agency of a place and finally, the so-called *narrative agency* of a camera.

In this laboratory, all these ‘agentic qualities’ served to approach the body as “a source of sensory feedback that intervenes between the external world and the internal world either to filter out or focus on certain elements of the exciting environment”⁹⁶. Additionally, they helped us to map, sense and record our performative experiences made between the

95 Coined by the philosopher Michel Foucault, this term refers to a physical representation of utopia and sort of parallel space.

96 Carrie Noland, *Agency & Embodiment: Performing Gestures/ Producing Cultures* (Harvard University Press, 2009), 63.

remoteness of the studio and the public life of the “Praça Mauá”, especially through finding ways in which such experiences could be translated and/or mediated into a narrative. A type of working procedure which Annette Arlander describes as:

When the first choice of landscape of framing the image and the choice of action or body position is made, the rest is repetition, routine and enjoyment of the minute details that are changing in the landscape and my reaction to it, and a sense of security. When everything else is in a constant flux, at least, something remains almost the same: the place, the pose, and the pause. Afterwards, there are the traces, the documentary materials to be edited and condensed to produce a private historical record – a comforting sense of (non-human) cyclical time – or a score.⁹⁷

In opposition to Arlander’s approach (in which she returns several times to the same location to enact and document the same pose)⁹⁸, our rather temporary and ephemeral engagement with both the studio and the “Praça Mauá” explored not only the documentary and fictional dimensions of these places. It also afforded us the chance of iterating how a camera can be handled and/or placed *while* generating a recorded material and thus, a myriad way in which such a material can be revisited, edited and/or archived.

I open my eyes: I find myself on stable ground again. I do not know exactly how this happened. Around me are those intriguing structures again. Yet now I can also see a wide and open space where many people are passing through. Suddenly, someone is taking me for a walk. I have no precise direction, nor do I have that familiar step-by-step movement. Also, seeing things clearly is not so easy anymore as the frame is constantly changing. But

97 Anette Arlander, *Performing Landscape – Notes on Site-specific Work and Artistic Research* (Theater Academy Helsinki: Performing Arts Research Centre, 2012), 360.

98 See link on the Research Catalogue: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=470471>

there is a strange voice saying things like: “My hand is feeling, touching the air. I am looking for an answer in the air... Maybe I can find it. Following the movements around me. Children playing, running, fighting with swords. Ah, yes! I’ve got you. I’ve got you. Yes! Ah...turning around, swinging, sensing. My hands are looking for something. Where can it be? I am following one thread. Forward. I am following something. Maybe I will find it. There is one thread to hold on to. And I think I’ve got it. There is an energy I am following. And there is a kind of vehicle passing by, taking me in different directions. And there is a big guy. He is on a segway. A big segway. A big guy. He looks like a square, like a box. And there is also a box. It is a square. And I am outside the square. The square is made by the “Museu do Amanhã” because there is a trademark. I don’t know what it is, but it is keeping me out of something. Maybe it is something dangerous. Maybe it’s something risky. I am outside the square, touching the air, touching the fences, the prison, feeling. How does it feel to be inside the box? Hmm, I don’t know. I’ll try. Hopefully I won’t fall into the hole. I’m not sure if I should be standing here actually. Because there must be a reason why they have put up this fence. I am holding onto the fence, just in case. How can I get out? Feeling with my feet, feeling with my hands. Feeling with my leg. Perhaps I’ll make it. I’m trying as hard as I can...”

Giving agency to a camera

Based on the exploration of the tensions and/or boundaries between the documentary and fictional⁹⁹ or, between an action captured *live* and one that is mainly staged or pre-recorded for the camera, I have been looking at how the *narrative agency* of a camera can operate both as a documentary and creative source. On the one hand, for designing and planning a documentation process, for example, by creating a floor plan for the cameras, by choosing the adequate technological

99 In times of the so-called ‘post truth’ era, marked by social-media and the propagation of fake-news, these complex boundaries have become almost indistinguishable, not only in terms of what we define as ‘fact’ and what as ‘fiction’, but also of how we understand and receive a given reality (see Wynants, 2020).

devices or by envisioning a type of cinematography.¹⁰⁰ On the other, for elaborating narratives that may offer multiple views and accesses to a recorded material, especially through an editing and archival process. How can we identify and experiment with the narrative qualities, layers and/or structures of a recorded material? Which editing and/or archival strategies are needed for such a process and how in turn, would this process challenge the documentary status or value of a recorded material? These are some central questions to me.

For this reason, I have been implementing different cameras in a performance laboratory work (preferably accessible and consumer-friendly) to generate not only some research data and/or audiovisual material, but also to explore both ‘what can be seen’ and ‘what else could be seen’ in such a material. By this, I am suggesting looking beyond what a camera has eventually captured, especially by making things visible that were or even, are ‘hidden’ in a space and that might accentuate or convey a story. As Hernández, Gutiérrez, and Aguilar point in a special edition of *Performance Matters* dedicated to ‘copresence with the camera’:

The frame made by the camera creates a container that cleanly separates its own reality, making it independent but also a double of time that “exists outside” as an excess outside of it. Whatever is inside the container has been isolated and extruded from some supposedly pre-given reality for which the image stands.¹⁰¹

By giving an emphasis on how such a container or a set of images can be reframed and reinscribed with a new given reality, I will demonstrate in the next section of this article how the recording material of the laboratory work in Rio de Janeiro, served as a basis to, on the one hand, play with the ‘subjective

100 Here, I will add the importance of involving rather the people that are part of the laboratory work in this process than of inviting someone from outside to do the documentation (as it is often the case in conventional performance documentation).

101 Diego Aguilar et al., “On ABSENCE Doings: The cuts of Disappearance”, *Performance Matters* 6, no. 1 (2020): 178.

voice’ of a camera and, on the other, to create a type of archival inscription which for Ben Spatz allows:

If technologies of notation and audiovisual recording carry any discursive, argumentative, or rhetorical power, that is because they are capable of instituting and tracing spaces of experimentation in which the circulation of powers can intersect in unexpected and even unprecedented ways.¹⁰²

I open my eyes: The lights are switched off. Complete darkness. There is only one ray of light coming out of a door which is constantly being opened and closed again. The whole space looks empty, vast, as if taken over by certain ‘invisible forces’ - sounds from a piano, scratching on the walls, curtains falling upside down, chairs moving around and a ladder clinging on a box. Nothing really seems to be in place. Nothing seems to create meaning, besides the presence of a voice whispering in the darkness. For a moment, this voice sounds as if it were giving instructions, such as: “Try to evoke real sensations for this situation, rather than representing what it might be.” Moments later, the same voice says: “Imagine that you are isolated on a small island from which you are trying to escape after there has been a flood.” The voice continues to reverberate in the space, giving the sense that there must be something strange going on. But as there is still darkness, it is only possible to guess: perhaps there are other living beings in the space responding to what is being said, or maybe this space is mere fiction and nothing else. Who knows? Suddenly, the lights are switched on again and what I can see is the following frame: six female bodies gathered on a tiny square located at the back of a so-called ‘black box’. Their eyes are closed, while they are leaning against each other. They seem to be struggling with an uncomfortable situation which is pushing each person towards their own boundaries. While at one moment, a body makes every effort to leave the space, at another, the other ones help each other by grasping either a slippery foot,

102 Ben Spatz, *Making A Laboratory: Dynamic Configurations with Transversal Video* (Punctum Books, 2020), 136.

a sweaty hand, or another body part. This gives the impression that there is nothing to hold on to, besides each other's presence and a struggle for survival. Consequently, this whole situation or scene goes on and on, taking a series of twists and turns which recede only in the moment when the whole group is disrupted. Finally, one body finds its way out by climbing onto the ladder which has been there since the beginning, since the voice started to haunt the ghosts of the space...

Experimenting with a recorded material (or audio-visual traces)

After a performance laboratory comes to a closure, also comes the moment of having to evaluate it and to think about how to make use of the hopefully well documented material. A process which might be not so exciting as the performance work on site, but which nevertheless can offer some insights into the documentation. Here, follows the steps that I usually take in such a process: Firstly, the viewing of the raw material (which can be quite time-consuming), secondly, the selecting of some excerpts, clips or as I like to say, *performative moments* or in short, of all the images that may indicate, accentuate, or 'say' something in connection to the themes of the laboratory work or to potential narratives and thirdly, the composing and/or editing of the selected material (by keeping already in mind which publishing format and/or context is aimed). Hence, all these steps are not only seen as relevant for the reviewing process of the documentation, but also as an archival practice. As Paul Clarke puts it:

The act of documenting can be perceived as the decisive gesture that marks the (process-based) performance work finished. Documentation is the work that finishes the work, marks its temporal closure.¹⁰³

103 Paul Clarke, "Performing the Archive: The Future of the Past", in *Performing Archives / Archives of Performance*, ed. Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2013), 381.

Yet here, the focus lies neither on how documentation produces historical records or as Clark asserts, holds and determines a temporal event, nor on how it might contribute to the formation and perpetuation of a certain performance history or performance canon. Even though it may be important to find ways in which a finished performance work can be spread and brought forward (e.g., through creating 'reenactments')¹⁰⁴, I am more interested in how documentation can be addressed as a form of authorship and ownership. This not only towards the recorded material that is generated through a documentation, but especially towards the ways in which such material can be reframed and especially, be *rewritten* through an editing and archival process. To give some examples, follows the experimentations I did with the recorded material of the laboratory work in Rio:

The narratives *I open my eyes*

Based on the documentation of the exercises mentioned in the first section of this article, these rather poetic narratives give not only an insight into the execution and specific circumstances in which these exercises took place. In addition to that, they are an exercise of taking the subjective position or perspective of a camera to describe and/or portray a given situation. For example, in the narrative based on the exercise given by Ivani Santana, I combined writing with the transcription of parts of the recorded material (in this case, of Cecilia Lagerström guiding me through the space) to provide a glimpse of our sensory experiences made at the "Praça Mauá", especially through the perspective of what the camera (in this case, a mounted GoPro camera) might have captured and/or sensed during the exercise.

Even though this might attribute to the camera a sort of 'authorial voice' (something difficult as we are talking about a *thing*), it is nevertheless an effort of making visible things that were unseen or imperceptible at first glance and that may give

104 Since the Early 2000's, this has been a noticeable trend in the performance art and contemporary dance fields where artists have been operating with notions such as the 'body as archive' or the 'body as document' (see Lepcecki, 2010).

another hint about what happened in real-time and space. Hence, all the narratives entitled as *I open my eyes* are an allusion to the actual moment when a camera is switched ‘on’ to capture an action or event *while* giving myriad meanings to what else is eventually at play or on display.

The short video

Based on the documentation of the last day of the laboratory work when the whole group came together for the last time to intervene at the “Praça Mauá”, this short video (04:55min) provides a sort of ‘close-ups’ of our actions. By giving a special emphasis on the micro-dimensions of these actions, this video makes use mainly of the recorded material of the GoPro cameras to provide a perspective from the body to the space rather than the other way around (e.g., when a camera is placed on a tripod from a distance). Furthermore, it also illustrates how such a small technological device can be implemented in a research inquiry:¹⁰⁵

To extend the sensory capacities and affordances of the researcher’s body: whether it be picturing more detail than the human eye can process or making visible things that move at speeds beyond human perception.¹⁰⁶

In that way, the editing process of this video focused on the one hand, on accentuating specific angles and/or fractions of our actions *within* the “Praça Mauá” and on the other, on highlighting and/or alluding to things that were present in the space during the recording process, but which make only sense when they are (re)incorporated in the narrative outline. This can be exemplified in the following editorial choices:

105 For this reason, the Gopro camera is not only known for recording outdoor activities such as biking or skiing, but also for more research and artistic-driven activities such as urban intervention or parkour.

106 Bradley L. Garret and Harriet Hawkins, “Creative Video Ethnographies: Videos Methodologies of Urban Exploration”, in *Video Methods: Social Science Research in Motion*, ed. Caroline Bates (London: Routledge, 2015), 151.

- In the juxtaposition of the recorded material (e.g., of the scene where I am holding an umbrella) with a historical image of the “Praça Mauá” when it was still functioning as the main port area of Rio de Janeiro.¹⁰⁷
- In the creation of cuts that may suggest potential ‘hidden narratives’, for example, the two pigeons as sort of co-narrators (something which is only revealed after the final credits, when Walmeri Ribeiro tells me again about the boys who she had engaged in her work) or the man sitting on the bench looking at his mobile phone (a gesture or technological device which is omnipresent in public space).
- In using the sound that was created through scratching with a beer can on the metallic surface of the artificial palm tree as the main soundtrack (and as a way of adding an element that emerged through my embodied engagement with the place).

With such editorial choices or way of (re)organising a recorded material, I have aimed to elaborate a rather suggestive, playful and ‘non-explanatory’ video (in opposition to the truthful accounts that may be expected from conventional performance documentation), especially by approaching editing as an intuitive and embodied practice or as Karen Pearlman puts it:

What an editor may be doing in making rhythm in moving pictures is engaging her corporeal memory and/or mirroring, neurologically, parts of what she sees and hears. Some part of what she sees or hears in the movement of rushes will light up the editor’s mirror neurons

107 This image from the 20’s of the last century was chosen from the website Vitruvius dedicated to architecture and urban planning. See link: <https://vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/arquitextos/16.187/5885>

or her kinaesthetic memory, and that part will be selected and juxtaposed with another part that also lights up her lights, so to speak.¹⁰⁸

Attuned to such a kinaesthetic memory, in this case, shaped by both the rhythms and/or movements of the recorded material and my embodied experience of performing while documenting at the “Praça Mauá”, follows the link to the video on the blog of TDPT Journal. (<https://theatredanceperformance-training.org/2022/12/performing-while-documenting/>)

Conclusion

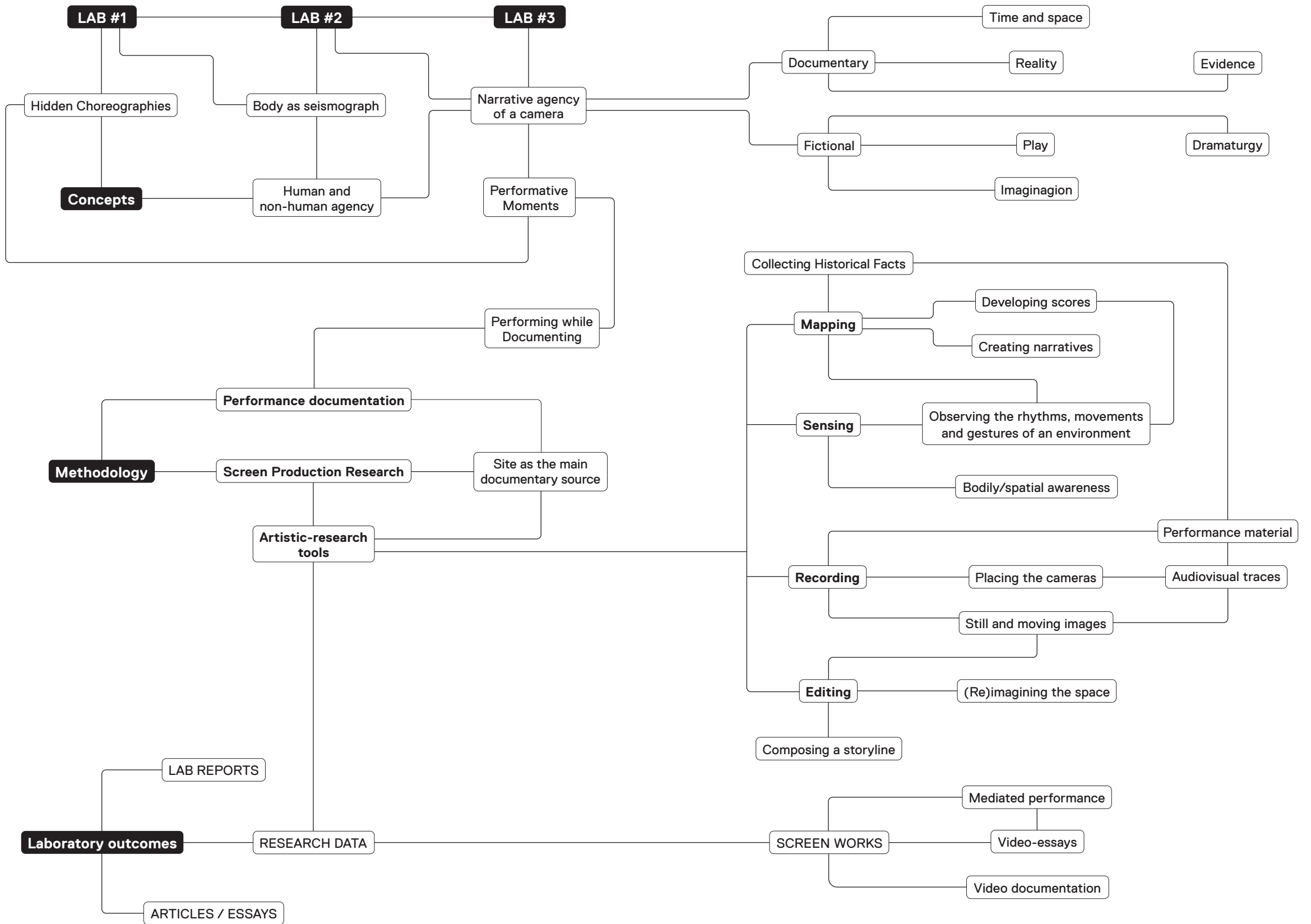
By acknowledging the potential of a site-oriented approach to performance documentation practice, this article has not only disclosed ways of how the mutual agency between the performing body and a camera can contribute to the *rewriting process* of a specific place. Alongside this, it has offered insights into how to explore the position and/or role of performing *while* documenting or, of how to be both in the front and behind a camera *while* executing an action (or score). While this might foster a sensory and creative awareness towards a place, especially towards the *performative moments* that unfold within it or through the camera gaze, such an embodied and documentary engagement also brings forth a recorded material and as result, the implications of *how* to treat, review and/or (re)conceptualise it. Therefore, I consider the editing process – whether in the form of writing or audiovisuality – as being intertwined with the *narrative agency* of a camera and thus, with the ways in which a documentation process sets or affects the conditions and parameters through which (a hopefully rich and diverse) recorded material comes into being. Namely, with such a material in hand (or temporary stored in a hard drive) there remains the chance of creating an archival inscription that may not only provide evidence to what has happened in real-time and space, but that may also challenge

108 Karen Pearlman, *Cutting Rhythms: Intuitive Film Editing* (Focal Press, 2009), 21.

the documentary status and value of a recorded material. To cease in the words of Barbara Clausen:

When we speak about a past performance event, we are speaking about the event itself as well as its translation into a variety of media, transformed by temporal and spatial settings into two-dimensionality. (...) Whether documented or staged for the camera, performance becomes the material of its own documentation, the product that brings the event of the performance, independent of its witnesses, into circulation.¹⁰⁹

109 Barbara Clausen, “Performing Histories: Why the Point Is Not to Make a Point.” *Afterall* 23, no. 23 (2010): 3.



4 Creating parameters for documenting on site

This section focuses on the research methods applied to collect the data and create a performance and/or documentary material through the engagement with a specific place. By applying principles of mapping, sensing, and recording, these methods aim to uncover the narrative quality of a place, especially through three different dimensions: documentary, historical, and fictional. While the documentary dimension focuses on capturing events that happen in real time and space, the historical tackles certain facts and discoveries that are made in connection with the place (e.g., social meaning, cultural value and/or heritage). The fictional dimension deals with developing and staging actions for the camera or in terms of screen practice, an imaginary world. Regardless of which dimension, a key emphasis lies in exploring how the relationship between embodiment, site-specificity and audiovisuality can contribute to developing a videographic and/or cinematic language. To offer an insight, what follows is an outline of the three methods – mapping, sensing, and recording – and some examples in connection with the Lab works.

Mapping: Inscribing the Body

In various disciplinary fields, mapping commonly refers to the activities of measuring, organising, or representing a space (e.g., by creating maps or inventories). Within the arts fields, for example, mapping is often used to create ‘content-specific’, ‘audience-specific’, ‘site-specific’ and ‘issue-specific’ works in which the artist assumes the role of a cartographer (see O’Rourke, 2016). For the Situationist International (SI) movement of the 1950’s and 1960’s, mapping can also be associated with the practice of psychogeography or a form of aimless walking and drifting through the city called *dérive*. This subversive practice of refusing to acknowledge the city as a mere stage for consumerism can be found later in the design of participatory audio-walks or a “type of walking in the city which is freed from daily purposes by pointing to another form of narrational-historical spatial

perception”¹¹⁰. In other scientific fields such as embodied cognition and environmental psychology, mapping operates as a research tool to analyse the sensory and motoric systems of the human body or to “observe and record behaviours in a particular setting at a particular time”.¹¹¹

These are only a few examples of how mapping can be used to create interventions in a place, promote activism and playful encounters in the city, record cognitive and behavioural patterns, or simply to navigate and find ways through a space. For Tim Ingold, such forms of place and mapmaking can also be seen as a type of inscription:

The map, like the written word, is not, in the first place, the transcription of anything, but rather an *inscription*. Thus, mapping gives way to mapmaking at the point, not where mental imagery yields an external representation, but where the performative gesture becomes an inscriptive practice.¹¹²

With such an intention, I have been using mapping as a sort of ‘appropriation strategy’ (see Fari, 2018) to not only get in touch with the history of a place, but also to (re)inscribe the body in it. A type of mapping, which in the case of Lab #1 at Götaplatsen, happened through the following procedures:

- Observing and identifying some of the behavioural patterns of three pre-demarcated areas: *The Square* (a transit zone close to the entrance of the Konstmuseum), *Hasselblad* (an area around the statue where there are hardly any people) and *The window* (a spot on the glass-wall of the Restaurant “Toso” which reflects the other two areas).
- Creating a notation system for these observations

110 Nina Tecklenburg, *Performing Stories: Erzählen in Theater und Performance* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014), 225, my translation.

111 Cheuk Fan Ng, “Behavioral Mapping and Tracking”, in *Research Methods for Environmental Psychology*, ed. Robert Gifford (Malden/Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 47.

112 Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling, and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2000), 231.

based on the following categories: rhythms, movements, and gestures. These observations served not only to depict how these areas were used by people, but also to develop potential scores and/or actions. Here are some notations: walking strangely, lifting legs, turning feet, lifting arms, twisting, taking one step after the other, crawling on the floor, tapping feet, looking around, pointing to something, clapping hands, using a smartphone, smelling plants, running, crossing legs, lying on the on the floor, sitting, holding an umbrella, taking off shoes, getting lost, talking with a stranger.

Even though such a working procedure is inevitably based on a subjective experience and on the special circumstances that one may encounter on a certain day (which can sometimes completely change the course of an inquiry),¹¹³ it is nevertheless an attempt to acquire an inside view of the place or to become part of it, even if only temporarily. However, to illustrate this further, I recommend watching the video *Hidden Choreographies*. Based on the documentary material of Lab #1, this short video (11:13 min) offers an insight into our performative engagement with the specific areas of Götaplatsen, especially by using editing to compose two hidden choreographies: *Hasselblad’s dance and Dörren till Göteborgs Konstmuseet*.

113 This happened to me once when I was doing a mapping session at the Poseidon statue (an area which did not belong to the Lab #1). On that day, I noticed that the usual sort of people visiting the place, such as elderly locals on their way to the Stadsteatern, or tourists, were replaced by a much younger crowd, giving me the impression that there was another sort of event going on. Curious, I decided to leave my position and head off to Konserthuset, where I discovered that the so-called “X-talks Gothenburg” (inspired by the TED talks) were taking place. I decided to change my plan and spend the whole afternoon witnessing these talks (a decision which allowed me to develop a conference paper in which I (re)enacted a sort of “fake” X-talk).



Sensing: The Body as Seismograph

Imagine that you are standing in the middle of a public square. Your feet are grounded, your knees soft, your gaze steady. Even though you are in a fixed position, you have a 360-degree view of where you are. You don't need to turn your head to know what is behind, above or beneath you. Now imagine that your internal line, starting at the top of your skull and travelling down your spine and all the way to your feet, is opening towards the ground, forming many little channels and pathways that allow you to feel the internal pressure, temperature, and density of the lithosphere or the Earth's crust, and the membrane of the public square on which you are standing.¹¹⁴

The psychophysical exercise described above employs the principle of sensing – touching, smelling, and hearing – to establish a relationship with a place. By foregrounding how a place can be approached as a sort of “skeleton” surrounded by a porous, malleable, resilient skin, this principle seeks to train the sensory abilities of the body to *listen* to an environment. A cognitive process which not only allows the body to reach out and tune into the myriad – and often fleeting –

114 Excerpt from a lecture-demonstration that I gave in the context of the *Body IQ Festival* at the Somatische Akademie Berlin in November 2019.

manifestations of any given socio-spatial context, but also “incorporates passive dynamics, structures information, and determines unique sensory signatures that help to create perceptual experience”.¹¹⁵

In alignment with such a perceptual experience and environmental awareness, I have explored sensing or the notion that “technique structures embodied practice not absolutely but provisionally, through an engagement with the affordances of embodiment”¹¹⁶, by considering the body as a sort of “seismograph”. Commonly used as an instrument to record the seismic waves of an earthquake, an explosion, or any other Earth-shaking phenomenon, here the seismograph operates not as a technological device, but rather as a way of entering and connecting with a specific place. More particularly, by employing one's own bodily agency to record, notate, or document the spatial, material, and performative attributes of a place. While this suggests getting in touch with the appearance or so-called “aura” of a place, such a somatic approach can also be compared with Rosa Barba's idea of using the camera as a ‘drawing instrument’¹¹⁷:

Turning the body into a medium – which leads the movement like a curved line toward the capturing of the camera – is a journey that includes the idiosyncrasy of the artist and activating and including the subconscious as a mechanism in order to reach the space beyond. It is an uncertain space, since it exists with no anchors, as none are created through this perceptive approach, and it manifests itself as a temporal condition articulated in space – temporal because the movement can never be repeated in the same way.¹¹⁸

- 115 Lawrence A. Shapiro, *Embodied Cognition* (London: Routledge, 2011), 66.
 116 Ben Spatz, *What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research* (London: Routledge, 2015), 43.
 117 Here, I am referring to Barba's work *Vesuvio Recordings* in which she attached a seismograph to her body to notate and record the movements of the crater left by the explosion of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD. See Link: <https://www.rosabarba.com/invisible-act-2010-1>
 118 Rosa Barba, *On the Anarchic Organization of Cinematic Spaces* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2021), 76.

Accordingly, the idea of the body as a seismograph can not only be used to capture, detect, or record the movements (or narrative qualities) of a place, or – according to Barba – to draw and expand a space by the means of a camera, but also to translate a perceptual experience into a performative language.

As an example, I will refer to a Lab session (3,5 hours long) that I facilitated for two Master Students (Tuva Hildebrandt and Minna Wendin) from the Contemporary Performative Arts Program at the Academy of Music and Drama. Based on the question: *How can we access a heightened state of awareness by both performing and notating what unfolds within the space?* I have structured the session into four phases: a) a floor warm-up which focused on the fluid aspects of the body, b) an exploration of static bodily postures by letting them appear and dissolve into the space again and c) a combination of the two previous phases by activating a more structured improvisation through the demarcation of “imaginary lines” in the space and d) a documentation and writing exercise which served as a basis for creating a score to be improvised outside the studio.

In terms of the translation process, in this case, of the studio work into a public intervention, I proposed selecting an image (see below) that was taken during the improvisation to a) write a documentary account of what had happened or of “what can be seen” in the image or b) compose a performative account of “what else could have happened (or be seen)”:

One space. One curtain. Two feet standing alone. The colors are white and brown. The floor has endless lines. The curtain has defined lines. Vertical and horizontal lines. The feet are connected to the lines. There is also a small light. I don't know if this light is real or imaginary. The feet show me that there must be a body standing still behind the curtain in the darkness in front of the small light. I'm wondering how long this body has been standing here as if it belongs to a person or to space. The problem is, I don't know how to ask the body this question. Maybe, “Hi body, are you here often or just for a moment? You look so still, but also so clear. I would love to be standing next to you and discover what you



are doing here. Can you give me an answer?” “Yes!”, the body says. “I am standing here behind the curtain to count the movements that people make in this room. Every new step is part of a collection of steps.” “Wow, that's fantastic,” I reply. “Something that functions as a counter. But why is it so important to count the steps that are taken in this

room?”, I ask again. The body replies: “It is to protect the space and connect the movements that are made with all those that have been made before. It is an ‘imaginary step museum’ that has existed for many years now and I am here to ensure that it stays alive. (Nathalie S. Fari)

The next steps of the translation process consisted of drafting our score based on four words: STEPS, WOOD-FEELING, RESTING, FLATTENED which, in turn, served as a foundation for our intervention (or group improvisation) in the corridor of the university building. During this intervention, there was one moment – or as I like to call it, *performative moment* – which can be seen as exemplary for a seismographic approach to space. It emerged while Tuva, Minna and I were standing by a balustrade observing many students at the café (they seemed quite relaxed, not really noticing what was going on) and I had the sudden impulse to lean over the balustrade, letting my feet dangle in the air. Instantly, the other two became quite anxious about my position. I had no idea why, but this gave me the impression that I needed to find another impulse or an end... After our intervention they told me that three weeks earlier, a student had tried to jump over this balustrade, failing only because some of the students had held him back. As Tuva and Minna had been present on that occasion and since I was at the same spot from where the student had tried to jump, the situation became somewhat tense...

Regardless of whether or not the act of positioning myself at this “loaded” spot was just a coincidence, it was at least an attempt to sense and respond to what is present in the space. Thus, while such a seismographic approach may unveil some of the hidden narratives of a place, it may bring forth a new array of spatial, sensory, or performative signatures.

Recording: The co-presence of a camera

In comparison to the methods of mapping and sensing or, to what I like to refer as *Body Mapping*, the recording method deals explicitly with the implementation of technological devices, especially cameras. By placing the emphasis on how the camera can operate as an artistic research tool, I have grappled with publications such as *Video Methods: Social Science Research in Motion* edited by Charlotte Bates (2015) and the special issue of *Performance Matters Copresence with the camera* edited by Lynette Hunter et al. (2020). While these publications draw attention to the materiality or the phenomenological agency of a camera, they also point to an increasing interest in using video and film methods for a research inquiry. For example, Ben Spatz’s *Dynamic Configurations with Transversal Video* method which proposes a video notation system based on the relationship between three distinct roles - the director, the performer, and the videographer:

DCTV appropriates the relatively old technology of the video camera and brings it into a space of dynamic configurations structuring embodied roles and relations, with the aim of overturning established hierarchies of knowledge and reinventing audiovisuality from the perspective of embodiment.¹¹⁹

Having had the opportunity to engage extensively with Spatz’s method in the context of a course syllabus that I developed during my PhD project, the DCTV approach offers, on the one hand, the possibility to explore the decentralisation and (re)

119 Ben Spatz, *Making A Laboratory: Dynamic Configurations with Transversal Video*. (Punctum books, 2020), 43.

distribution of the three roles (or power relations), especially by sharing and circulating different materials (e.g., a song, a sequence of movements, a scene). On the other, it proposes rethinking how the camera can be included in a laboratory practice, especially by dealing with it in a somatic – rather than operational – way. For example, by finding ways in which the camera can operate both as a recording device and as a ‘co-performer’ of an experiment.¹²⁰

With such an emphasis, I have implemented different cameras to trace our embodied and performative engagement with the specific places of the laboratory work. Since I was dealing mostly with public spaces, where the presence of cameras has become ubiquitous, I favoured easy-to-use portable devices. In so doing, these devices served to design a *multi-recording* process in which the focus was on exploring the different positionalities and/or roles of a camera in the space and, in turn, generate a diverse, multi-perspectival, possibly, rich audiovisual material. To further elucidate this, follows an insight into this process.

Outside view

To capture different angles, nuances, or frames of an action such as wide shots (orientation in the space), full shots (what bodies are doing) or close-ups (facial expression), I have employed handheld, lightweight digital cameras (e.g., Canon SX260 HS, Panasonic HC-X2000). Instead of placing them mostly on a tripod, a key focus was to explore how they could circulate within the space and especially, how we could reassign the task of documenting and/or shooting amongst us. Another central aspect was to practise how we could be both in front of a camera and behind it or, how we could be co-involved in an action while at the same time finding the right place, angle, or position of the camera. A process which Heather Nolan and John Zibell also refer to as “montage”:

120 While for many embodied practitioners the intention of ‘somatising the camera’ has been applied within rehearsal processes, there are many performance groups that have been using the camera in a highly participatory way (e.g., the 24-hour performance *Show me a Good time from Gob Squad* (2020) which was live broadcasted on Zoom).

You are into the ecology of both in and out that you have trained for, that is needed for the present moment and the next physical action. At the same time, when you are in the process, there is no transition from one moment to the next. When you are out of the process, you are aware of the discrete moments for which you have prepared. When you are in and out, they flow.¹²¹

Yet here, such a process did not serve primarily to train the performer to work with the camera, but rather to enhance a bodily/spatial awareness or a more *focussed view*. By this, I mean the ways in which one's own visual perception or gaze can be directed towards both what a performer and a space offers in terms of images and/or scenes. A procedure in which the camera may help not only to make visible what is unfolding within the space (or before one's own eyes), but also to simulate forms of interaction, play, and connectivity.

To offer an example, I will highlight a teaching session that I gave for the performance documentation course. Carried out in a dance studio at the Academy of Music and Drama, this session consisted of a group improvisation (120 minutes) in which the participants were invited to explore the spatial attributes – its atmosphere, soundscape, fissures, gaps and so on – of this environment through the lenses of one's own camera. In doing so, they were asked to move in the space by creating – and possibly capturing – *a performative moment* while also keeping the attention both on the camera display and on the surrounding space. After a while, this improvisation led to a scenario (which I often look for) in which one could no longer discern who/what is filming, who/what is being filmed or which images are being created and for whom. Hence, the inclusion of the camera as a 'co-performer' may contribute to enhancing a sensory awareness of the *here and now* while shaping, or even shifting, a collective and performative experience.

121 Heather Nolan and John Zibell, "Action with camera: Making the Future Audience Present", *Performance Matters* 6, no. 1 (2020): 148.

Inside view

To delve deeper into the process described above, I have also introduced some small, easy-to-handle devices (e.g., GoPro, mobile phone, 360 degree). Often mounted on the body (or on an object), these cameras not only had the function of capturing narrower, more fragmentary angles of an action such as bodily movements, sensations, or moods, but were also used to reveal certain details, dimensions, or attributes of the space. Alongside this, they served to provide a closer, intimate, or subjective view of what we were doing on site, especially from the perspective of *the body to the space* rather than the other way around (as is often the case in conventional performance documentation).

In this regard, a key technological device was the GoPro camera or the so-called "POV". Commonly used for outdoor activities (e.g., biking, skiing, or diving), the GoPro is known for providing a special insight into a bodily/spatial experience, especially by depicting it from an immersed, rather than from a distanced, point of view. Another aspect is a wide-angle lens which generates a type of footage which may give the viewer the feeling of being amidst what is taking place. Therefore, the recording abilities of the GoPro have also been a valuable research tool for exploring environments in which the camera needs to be sort of 'hidden' or embedded in the context. In the words of Bradley L. Garrett and Harriet Hawkins:

The presence of the camera can indeed go relatively unnoticed by the user and the community, less by virtue of habituated use and rather as a result of the automated workings of these devices. Focus, light levels, and shot are all determined in advance, either fixed, or only able to be manipulated in a minor way before the camera is body mounted.¹²²

122 Bradley L. Garrett and Harriet Hawkins, "Creative Video Ethnographies: Videos Methodologies of Urban Exploration", in *Video Methods: Social Science Research in Motion*, ed. Caroline Bates (London: Routledge, 2015), 153.

According to this, the hidden quality of the GoPro allowed us not only to distract passers-by from the fact that we might be performing in public space – or even trying to hack into it – but also to capture our different ways of moving through the space. Since one’s hands remain free most of the time, liberated from the task of looking into a display to adjust the light, focus, or angle, the GoPro may also help to obtain a deeper sense of the proprioceptive qualities of the body, which, according to Maxine Sheets-Johnstone are:

a sense modality that evolved over eons of time from an external system of self-awareness in relation to the environment – an essentially *tactile* mode of movement awareness – to an internal system of awareness.¹²³

In this way, the GoPro camera helped us to become more attentive and/or responsive towards both each other’s movements and those which we could perceive from outside, be it from a passer-by or a specific soundscape. As such, while we became more conscious of our own movement patterns and/or performing habits,¹²⁴ we became more habituated and skilled in the use of such technology. In short, whether from an outside or inside viewpoint, a key aim of the multi-recording process was to explore the double-positionality of the performing/documenting body, especially by generating a multi-layered, diverse material which could offer a way to mould imagery, performance, and spatiality into a mediated expression. As Barbara London argues, “competition is steep, now that the smartphone has turned everyone into a movie maker and blog writer, with new kinds of narratives being formed almost faster than we blink”.¹²⁵

123 Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, “Phenomenological Methodology and Aesthetic Experience: Essential Clarifications and Their Implications”, in *Performance Phenomenology: To the thing itself*, ed. Stuart Grant (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 40.

124 For example, my movement patterns and/or performing behaviour are often oriented towards creating certain frictions in the space as well as towards finding ways to interact with people unexpectedly. What I mean by this is that I am particularly interested in the absurdities of everyday life and in highlighting a more satirical approach to human behaviour.

125 Barbara London, *Video Art: The First Fifty Years* (London/New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 2020), 156.



Images (Ivani Santana), Lab #2, “Praça Mauá”, Rio de Janeiro, December 2019

Interlude II: Questionnaire Lab #3 on Zoom

As preparatory work for the Lab #3, I had invited Andrea Keiz from Berlin¹²⁶ and Charlotta Grimfjord Cederblad to discuss some core issues connected with my PhD research. Below is a transcript of our discussion (edited for better legibility), held on Zoom at Götaplatsen in August 2022.

What is your relationship with the camera?

AK - Very brief. First thing, it's my working tool. That's what I use for work. And work in this case, means to choose a perspective towards an event by using the footage I receive as feedback of the filmed event. Using the translation from the live into the digital as a feedback loop so that it can respond to what the live act was and help me to sharpen my perspective of what happened or what I want to achieve, especially in the field of artistic research.

NF - I like the idea of the camera as a tool.

CC - My relationship with the camera is a bit ambiguous, since I come from a background in theatre and acting. The camera has been a place or situation where I should perform something and preferably, look beautiful at the same time. And do something which should be realistic, and I like elevation, fantasy, fiction and craziness. So, I think that often I don't completely understand what is expected of me... But when I took the agency of the camera, then I started to feel more comfortable. So now, I like working with the camera, even though I have this history of not liking it, especially when someone else has the agency.

NF - In my case, I have a similar experience as a performer, where I'm expected to be in front of the camera to play, pose or to do whatever.

¹²⁶ At this stage, Andrea Keiz (whom I had met during the online symposium *Transmitting/ Documenting/ Narrating* in 2020) was considered a collaborator, especially as she has an expertise and long-time experience in performance documentation (mostly within the dance field). However, since I decided to change the structure of the Lab work from what was previously a five-day work to a series of Lab meetings and activities over a timespan of one year, Andrea did not participate in the further development of *I am the Camera*.

But over the years this has changed, and the camera has become more what Andrea mentioned, a “working tool”. So, I was able to strengthen my relationship with the camera. Probably due to what Charlotta said, that I could acquire a type of agency and authorship towards the images that I want to create, rather than simply having someone else documenting.

How would you work with the idea of the ‘narrative agency’ of the camera?

CC - For me it’s this kind of letting go of control which is a double-sided thing. Because I think it’s necessary to be prepared, but sometimes preparation can also allow you to give up the control of things and see what happens and how the camera can pick up what you don’t in a way.

NF - You mean pick up what you didn’t expect?

CC - Yeah. That could be and, if you do, for example what you are talking about, performing while documenting, then you have maybe an idea in your head about what the camera is picking up. But then when you see the footage, maybe it looks different from what you had expected. And maybe it has filmed something that you didn’t see at the time and then you see it afterwards and OOH, someone did that in the background. And that you could call the narrative agency of the camera.

NF - It’s in some ways what the camera can talk about that we don’t see, the telling aspect or how the images speak for themselves and their unexpectedness. And for you Andrea?

AK - I see the camera in connection with the body and how I, as a body, can handle it. I see it as an additional sense and this way, I cannot avoid the option that it might co-narrate the images that I produce. I might have a certain aim, or I might have a certain point of view and maybe I want to show something specific. But if someone else watches the footage and I am hesitating a little bit here, it might be different than in a real film set. Now on. Now off. People from the right. People from the left. It might be different, even if there is an option of seeing images through a certain narration,

especially when giving people an instruction on how they should watch them. For example, last autumn I had the opportunity to revisit some footage from my archive and it was quite amazing, to watch a footage that I took 20 years ago and to see what it tells me now 20 years later. There are all these layers of what it tells; something about my professional practice, something about my interest, it tells something about how different life was, it tells me something about how much I was involved in dance practices, all these things. Of course, it has a certain narration for me because it tells me something about my development and my biography, but if I take bits out of it and make video clips, they can have a completely different narration, especially if I look at them in the context of NOW. For example, I recently generated some footage in Moldova and then two weeks later, the war in Ukraine started. Suddenly, I was aware that this kind of situation might not happen anymore, meeting in Moldova with Ukrainian people, people from Belarus, all these things. This means, a sociopolitical context might change the narration of a footage.

NF - That’s interesting! This was a bit the case when I was choosing the texts for this Lab or when I came across the film *Man with a Movie Camera* by Russian director Dziga Vertov. Suddenly, I had a different perspective on this footage, which was shot almost 100 years ago, and this was probably due to the current political situation. Therefore, the narrative agency of the camera is something that changes over time and history. The same footage can acquire different meanings over the years, especially when dealing with archival material. I have also been trying to find archival footage about Hasselblad on the internet and it’s interesting to look at such material through a historical perspective. So, in some ways, narrative and history are correlated.

AK Just to sum it up, this means that the camera, or the images produced by a camera, surely have the potential for narration. It might be used this way, or not. Or it can be used as an open field, like a dance performance, where you know what to do, where you have your role and where I, as a spectator, can project what I see. So, image also delivers a surface on which we can project something. If I look at you, Nathalie, sitting at this place and I hear the kids, I think there must be a playground somewhere and they are running around. Of course, this is just my imagination, even if I don’t see the kids and

only hear them, and that's part of what I perceive. And as a human being or a person, I love to create a bigger picture than the one I see.

NF - Humm. So, we come back to this idea..., I am placing the camera differently here. I am performing while documenting. I am trying to do both things at the same time. I am taking care of the camera as well as everything else. So, this is part of the training. And what you just said reminds me of how important imagination is when working with the camera.

AK - Charlotta, can you hear us?

NF - Charlotta is frozen again. But I will add the third question in the chat...

How would you distinguish between the notions of documentary and fictional?

NF - I have placed the third question in the chat, which you could probably spend a whole lifetime on..., but it's just for us to try to answer it from our own artistic practices. Here, I also have been having some difficulties. Should I call it the tensions between the documentary and the fictional or, between documentation and fiction? Because there is also a distinction to be made between documentary and documentation. But this is the kind of PhD work you must do... Any thoughts?

AK - A very simple, immediate response would be that I always understand the documentary as something serving a bigger project, a bigger idea which is not necessarily mine. When I am working as a documentarist, I take responsibility and then you are right, I am doing a documentation or documentary of someone else's project in which I am included, to provide the person from the outside, an understanding of what has happened in time and space. And the fictional, is something where I use the footage of the documentation in such a way that I'm free to organise it the way I want. And thus, to disrupt the linearity of space and time, of how the events happened and to leave gaps and to take away or add information, or just to open a space outside the screen.

NF - I like this idea of opening a space outside the screen! It's a nice image..., a nice way of thinking about fiction. And you Charlotta? Do you live more in a documentary or in a fictional world?

CC - That's a good question, since I am not a filmmaker.

NF - Sorry, now you have those motorcycle guys.

AK - You'll have to mute yourself for a while.

NF - I can mute myself.

AK - Oh, now it's better.

CC - Anyway. For me the documentary has been connected to a film genre and in my case, I am a performance maker. But there is something called "documentary theatre" within the performing arts field in which the performers are not playing roles, but mostly acting as themselves. And I never liked playing roles and I never really liked plays. It's not that I am totally against it, but it's not my focus or my medium. So, I always come from a place within myself, from my own experience and from what I want to explore. I don't take another name or personality, but I kind of enlarge different sides of myself or I explore different sides of my mind. Therefore, I always feel that what I do is documentary. The text that I write for my pieces is documentary, but then I place it in a fictional framework. As I just said, I am myself when I perform, but I can also elevate something. A special feature of myself or I can create a world where I invite people and where everything is real, but at the same time, a constructed situation. So, for me it's hard to tell what's what when I make art.

NF - Yes, there has been a big discussion about this within the performing arts and filmmaking... When I started to think or write about this tension, I was putting a versus between the documentary and fictional. But since we are living in the so-called "post-truth" era where our accessibility to cameras and image-making has changed dramatically, it has become more difficult to create such a distinction. Therefore, I have been trying to explore it more as a tension, especially as we are constantly switching, no longer knowing what's what.

Yet if we made a distinction, then the documentary would be closer to “reality”, but for many filmmakers such a reality is often seen as fiction. Within the performing arts, we would say that we make a documentary “about” something and that the fiction is inside it..

And like you Charlotta, I also never liked playing roles. That’s why, I have worked with performance art for many years. And now, when I am interested in working with fiction, characters and so on, it’s still different. I am thinking of the characters as indicators for some sort of fiction, especially in the form of props. For example, the nose of Kristin’s clown as a narrative layer, the helmet alluding to an adventure in space, or even the camera as a fictional prop, and so on. So, I am thinking more of how we as practitioners could bring in these elements to explore this tension in a spatial way rather than only through a script.

CC - Yeah, I get this!

How would you deal with a place as the primary documentation source?

NF - To give you insights on this question, I will refer to my site-specific practice. Here, I am trying to consider a site as the primary documentation source in the sense that all the performance material is generated through it. I am neither coming to a place with something “ready-made”, nor am I solely referring to its history. There are more layers to be considered and I am wondering if you have dealt with this idea in any of your projects.

CC - I think for me it’s a challenge, but a fun one. I have done a lot of site-specific work, but when it has been my own stuff, then it’s often the case that I place my pieces in a space or a room which is not specifically for the performance. And then I let the piece kind of “communicate” and talk to the space. This means that I can also move the piece to another space and let it talk with that space and see what happens. And I also have been part of things, where the piece is coming more from the place itself, but then I mostly come later in the process, more as a performer. So, I am curious what it will be like to give myself to a place and see what comes up. And it’s a bit scary too if nothing happens... What if I go totally blank? But it could also

be fun to bring some material and see how it communicates with the place. And it doesn’t have to be a finished work, it can be a suggestion. And since I know a little bit about the area, I can’t ignore the architecture and history connected to the Hasselblad Memorial. Now, I am just associating freely. I hope you can bear with me. But lately, I have been studying a bit about architecture and public art and many of those sculptures that you can see in public spaces are mostly of male figures. It’s very seldom that a woman is portrayed. And for me, as a female and feminist performance artist, I think this fact will be there when I meet the place we are going to work with.

NF - I have an idea for the third prop: a wig for Hasselblad!

CC - Humm, hum...

NF - And yes, I did a master’s degree focused on public art and it’s true that most memorials are created by men and for men.

CC - I don’t know if I answered the question though.

NF - Yes, you did! And Andrea?

AK - Yeah, I think you partly answered the question yourself at the beginning, when you introduced me to the place, when you named the buildings around it or when you described the surrounding architecture. This shows that we can’t avoid these kinds of buildings, or we can embrace them and get a sense of how they create a certain atmosphere and scenery. And another thing for me is to be there without a plan, without a pre-concept, to touch surfaces, to get a sense of the materiality and to observe how people use the place. This is my way of approaching a place as a documentary, a documentation, or as a document. I mean, I don’t know if it’s everywhere in Göteborg, but in Berlin a wall like this would be full of graffiti. So, it’s constantly an exchange between the people and the architecture and the way they use it. Something which will inform my decisions of how to focus on certain details of a place and to create an essence, which in my case is a bit more sensorial than just audiovisual.

NF - It’s nice to hear that. It has also been my approach, to use

sensing as a way of embodying a place or of creating closeness. But what I am considering here, is not only everything in connection with the Hasselblad Memorial, but also with what his sort of "fictional camera" allows me in terms of documenting and/or shooting. Therefore, I have been coming here to document exactly from his perspective and what I really like is that Hasselblad's camera is pointing towards the Stadsteatern. This is a fictional layer for me which may help Charlotta: If nothing happens, there is always the possibility of taking Hasselblad's position and just observing what happens... In that way, all of us will be performing while documenting, including Hasselblad...

Which artistic strategies would you use for an expanded documentation practice?

CC - What do you mean by artistic strategies?

NF - Maybe you could associate artistic strategies with artistic tools. For example, the way I am thinking about the narrative agency of the camera could be seen as an artistic strategy. In terms of an expanded practice, this means to explore different ways of using the camera or of dealing with its presence. For example, now I have placed the camera in a more conventional way on a tripod behind my chair, but it could be placed differently. It can also be related to the material, to the ways in which we could experiment with it and more in general, how we can approach documentation as an artistic practice.

AK - I'm not sure if I can answer your question. But I would always start with the body. And I would always start without the camera. I would always start with sharpening the awareness on what to focus and on how to give the body a sensorial experience. Then I would include the camera as an extension of the body into this practice.

NF - So, would you see the camera as a cognitive extension of the body?

AK - Physical extension. Not cognitive. And at the end, it might be the camera on a tripod, and it might be a cognitive decision of how to embrace a bigger concept, or of how to transmit the information of a physical experience as a moving body, a performer in space and time.

CC - I don't know completely, and I know that you have a schedule and I know some bits and pieces of what we will be working on. And I know that there is an emphasis on filming and/or documenting. I think it could be interesting to see what happens through a documentation practice. To see if it feeds back, if it creates texts or other materials which don't need to be used in your work. But I think that an expanded way of documenting will always give birth to a new work. And to keep your mind open and not say "no" to something, but to say "yes" to everything that comes up in a documentation process.

AK - For sure, I would not exclude other ways of documenting, if I understand you correctly Charlotta. Since it's a time-based medium, it has a lot of possibilities, but also writing. I mean, the body as a medium is always a reference point in this process, especially in terms of an expanded documentation practice.

NF - This may be a way of considering documentation as an artistic practice in which the camera not only serves to record an event, but also to mediate a sensorial and spatial experience and in turn, to generate a performance material. In this respect, it's clear for me that the outcome of Lab #3 will be a video slash film work, especially as I am interested in the editing process. But many things are still open...

5 Designing a site-specific performance for the screen

This chapter discusses how the Lab #3 at Götaplatsen served as a foundation to create a screen work or, in this case, a site-specific performance work designed for the screen. With an emphasis on exploring the tensions between the documentary and the fictional, or between the profilmic and imaginary world, I have grappled with some positions within documentary filmmaking, especially with the *Essay Film*. In the words of Caroline Eades and Elizabeth A. Papazian:

Film genres have been commonly identified through the various modes of address they use towards the indeterminate community of spectators. The essay film might therefore be understood as a text negotiating the tension between strategies of avoidance and explicit modes of address, from the gaze into the camera to subjective framing to voice-over narration and the presence of characters/narrators.¹²⁷

Yet here, the focus lay on integrating elements from performance documentation (e.g., the co-presence of a camera and the notion of *liveness*) to expand the ways in which a documentary construction can be framed and/or staged, especially by treating the audiovisual material as both indexical traces of a real event and a potential narrative. To exemplify this, what follows is the narrative outline of the screen work *I am the Camera*.

The narrative outline of *I am the Camera*

Departing from the site-specific engagement with the Hasselblad Memorial, the narrative outline of *I am the Camera* consisted of three distinct phases: character development, documentation/shooting process and editing work. While the first

¹²⁷ Caroline Eades and Elizabeth A. Papazian, "Cinéma-vérité and Kino-pravda: Rouch, Vertov and the Essay Form", in *The Essay Film: Dialogue, Politics, Utopia*, ed. Caroline Eades and Elizabeth A. Papazian (London/New York: Wallflower Press, 2016), 99.

two phases implied a collaboration with two invited performers; Charlotta Grimfjord Cederblad and Kristin Rode (whom I had met during the performance documentation course), the last phase consisted of a solo experiment, or a series of editing exercises with the footage that we had generated during the Lab (elucidated further in chapter 6). To offer an overview of how these phases helped me to elaborate a screen idea, I will present a revised version of the document which served as a guideline for our small crew of performers/documenters.

Conveying a story

1. Synopsis

In a time marked by algorithms, fake news, and digital narcissism, two individuals meet by chance at Götaplatsen in Gothenburg: An influencer who goes there to produce content for her social media channels and a documentary filmmaker wanting to discover more about the iconic image “Earthrise” taken with a Hasselblad camera. Each equipped with their own technological devices, the two embark on an absurd mission to shoot an interview with THE camera that landed on the moon and that forever flipped, humankind’s anthropocentric view of Earth.

2. Plot

The idea of the plot of *I am the Camera* emerged during a visit to the exhibition “Hasselblad on the Moon” at the Hasselblad Centre in November 2022 (during the character development phase). On this occasion, we went there already as characters, with the intention of not only finding out more about the history of the Hasselblad cameras used by NASA, but also of executing a group improvisation in the exhibition space. During this improvisation, there was a moment when Charlotta was standing in front of a glass cabinet (displaying different models of a Hasselblad camera), preparing herself for a live broadcast on social media. This moment, or as I call it, *performative moment*, seemed to be appropriate for playing with the main motivations of our characters: on the one hand, an influencer eager to make things public and on the other, a documentary filmmaker searching for a good story. In doing so, my charac-

ter came up with the idea of making an interview with one of the cameras in the cabinet which from this moment on, became central in the development of the plot.¹²⁸



Video-Still, Character development phase, Nov 2022

In this regard, a key source was Joe Moran’s article *Earthrise: The story behind our planet’s most famous photo*, which I had found on the internet. Upon reading it, I not only became aware of the historical significance of this image, taken with a Hasselblad camera in 1969, but also of what it may denote in times of the “post-truth” era.¹²⁹ To quote Joe Moran:

Earthrise was edited for anthropocentric ends. The Apollo 8 crew saw Earth to the side of the moon, not above it, and to them it seemed tiny. Anders compared it to being “in a darkened room with only one visible object, a small

128 When I approached the Hasselblad Centre with the idea of shooting an interview with the camera in March 2023, I learned that the permanent exhibition “Hasselblad on the moon” had changed to “I am the Camera” (the same title of the Hasselblad Memorial at Götaplatsen). I was therefore obliged to readapt the original idea of shooting in the exhibition space to the one offered by the institution, in this case, the library of the Hasselblad Center (only accessible by appointment). However, this change was in fact a gain for the plot, especially as we were able to sit around the camera at the table and spend some time alone with it.

129 This era is marked by Donald Trump’s election as President of the United States in 2016 and by the Brexit referendum in Great Britain. For the Oxford Dictionaries, *Post-truth* is an adjective defined as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.” (See link: <https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/2016/>, accessed on 04.07.2023)

blue-green sphere about the size of a Christmas-tree ornament". NASA flipped the photo so that Earth seemed to be rising above the moon's horizon, and then cropped it to make Earth look bigger and more focal. *Earthrise* was an Earth selfie, taken by earthlings.¹³⁰

Yet, how to approach such a fact, or in cinematic terms, how to tell the story of a camera which represents mankind's achievements in space and which, in turn, was used to create some sort of illusion? Since I did not want to address this question, neither by writing a script for the interview with the camera, nor by using special effects to make a camera speak, I needed to find other ways. Besides that, my main interest was not in making a documentary about the Hasselblad camera that landed on the moon, but rather in using its kind of "star quality" as a narrative element.

With such an intention, especially of exploring how far our documentary engagement could move towards fiction, I have applied some principles of the Mockumentary. Derived from the term "to mock", which means to make fun of a situation, to ridicule something, or to simulate a situation, this unconventional film genre appropriates narrative elements to stage a fiction within the framework of a documentary. As Jane Roscoe and Craigh Hight describe here:

The mock-documentaries represent the 'hostile' appropriation of documentary codes and conventions and can be said to bring to fruition the latent reflexivity which we argue is inherent to mock-documentary's parody of the documentary project. Despite their apparent subject matter, there are the texts where the documentary form itself is the actual subject. Here, the filmmakers are attempting to engage with factual discourse, and effectively to encourage viewers to develop a critical awareness of the partial, constructed nature of documentary.¹³¹

130 Joe Moran, "Earthrise: The story behind our planet's most famous photo", *The Guardian*, December 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/dec/22/ behold-blue-plant-photograph-earthrise>

131 Jane Roscoe and Craigh Hight Quoted quoted by Oliver Fahle, "Mockumen-

Aside from some ethical implications (e.g., making an audience believe that a "fake" story is actually real), what becomes evident in a mockumentary is an affinity for creating a parody and/or satire about a subject matter. While this may expand the often-serious tone of a documentary, it also challenges the documentary conventions and its adherence to a filmic truth.

Here, the principles of a Mockumentary were not necessarily used to feign a story and consequently, to mislead an audience.¹³² What became central to me was to explore how we could simulate the camera as a *real* interview partner, especially by dealing with its co-presence in a naturalistic way (rather than pretending we were talking to an inanimate object). Alongside this, I considered a satirical approach (towards which I am inclined) as productive, not only in making fun of an absurd situation, but also for raising a sort of critical awareness regarding the omnipresence of cameras in our digitalised society.¹³³ Hence, while the plot of *I am the Camera* stages an interview with the camera that landed on the moon, it seeks to (re)imagine a documentary reading of a profilmic world or, according to Frank Kessler:

Being contextualized, arranged, oriented, discursively framed, no picture 'speaks for itself'. Viewers have to judge for themselves whether to go along with the discourse proposed by the images or read it differently: they can either trust or reject it, and the meanings that are explicitly presented can be assessed, negotiated, evaluated and interpreted.¹³⁴

tary – Eine Theorie", in *Durchbrochene Ordnungen: Das Dokumentarische der Gegenwart*, ed. Friedrich Balek et al. (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2020), 89-90.

132 Here, a good example of a related subject matter is the Mockumentary "Dark Side of the Moon" (2002) directed by William Karel which claims that NASA loaned a unique lens to the film director Stanley Kubrik to simulate a fake moon landing inside a studio. See link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJJoNK4uICTY>

133 When researching this topic, I also came across the documentary *And the King said, What a Fantastic Machine* (2022) by Axel Danielson & Maximilien Van Aertryck which thematises in a satirical way, the human fascination for the camera.

134 Frank Kessler, "What you get is what you see: *Digital images and the claim on the real*", in *Digital Material: Tracing New Media in Everyday Life and Technology*, ed. Marianne van den Boomen (Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 193.

3. Structure

To offer associative and imaginative readings of a story, especially by considering the camera as a fictional being, I have structured the plot based on some guidelines of a conventional short film proposed by Michael Sergi and Craig Betty:¹³⁵

- **One location:** in this case, Götaplatsen, where the Hasselblad Memorial and the Hasselblad Center are located.
- **One time frame (i.e., the story takes place during one continuous period):** in this case, the story unfolds during the timeframe of one day.
- **A small cast of characters, all clearly emotionally and psychologically opposed to each other:** in this case, the three characters – influencer, documentary filmmaker and clown, are not fashioned as in a conventional feature film. Instead of focussing on the emotional or psychological features of each character, their development process stems from their performative and documentary engagement with the Hasselblad Memorial, especially from their interest in working with the camera.
- **One big problem that has imminent, dramatic consequences for at least one of the characters, and which the audience can quickly and easily comprehend:** in this case, there is no big problem to be solved or any sort of dramatic arch, but rather a documentary drive to carry out an interview with THE camera that landed on the moon. Here, a key emphasis lies on playing with the (im)possibility of such a task, especially by dealing with a series of unforeseen situations.

135 Michael Sergi and Craig Betty, "Understanding the Underlying Principles of the Short Film", in *The Palgrave Handbook of Screen Production*, ed. Craig Betty et al. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 55-56.

Characters as artefacts

When it comes to the three characters, their development process was grounded on the camera work on site, especially on what the chosen technological devices of each – an iPhone, a digital camera, and a GoPro – could offer in terms of a performative and cinematic expression. For example, for the influencer, to explore and stage the self-image; for the documentary filmmaker to question a given reality; and for the clown, to interact with the environment. Thus, the character formation did not stem from the emotional and psychological features of an invented persona (as in mainstream realism), but rather from what Jens Eder refers to as 'artefacts':

The manifold *representational devices* of film impart characters with physical concreteness in image and sound. The primary contributing factors here are cast, star image, performance styles, mise-en-scene, camera work, sound design, music, and editing. These production-related concepts can aid the description of the mode of appearance of characters, which would otherwise be most difficult to grasp.¹³⁶

According to this, the three characters represented not only the modes of appearance or attributes of their technological devices (also considered as props), but especially what they enabled in terms of mise-en-scene and embodiment. For example, the mobile phone camera as a sort of cognitive extension of the body, the handheld digital camera as a physical presence in space and the body-mounted GoPro as a form of surveillance camera. From a stylistic point of view, this allowed us to consider that the role of the camera is,

to open a space for others, creating a community, and ultimately a public sphere. This is not simply a matter of the subject-I with the camera-eye interacting with the public sphere, but the creation of a new space.¹³⁷

136 Jens Eder, "Understanding Characters", *Projections* 4, no. 1 (2010): 26.

137 Caroline Eades and Elizabeth A. Papazian, "Cinéma-vérité and Kino-pravda:

In this case, the creation of such a public sphere both in the space of the camera and on site, was approached not only through the character's relationship with the cameras, but also through a comic and/or satirical performance style. While this choice emerged from the practices of each performer (Charlotta in postdramatic theatre, Kristin in clown technique and myself in performance art and experimental theatre), it also aimed to address the character's formation – whether of the subject-I or the camera-eye – in a playful way. To quote Charlotta:

I do not take another name or personality, but I kind of enlarge different sides of myself or I explore different sides of my mind. Therefore, I always feel that what I do is documentary: I write the texts for my pieces and then, I place them in a fictional frame. So, I always come from a place within myself.¹³⁸

With such an emphasis, what follows is a short description of each character based on: a) the performative and cinematic expression of each camera, b) some references from film history and c) the main motivation.

- **Influencer:** Performed by *Charlotta Grimfjord Cederblad*, this female character is the protagonist of the story. Drawn from today's mediatised culture or the Web 2.0 user-based and user-centric generation of the smartphone¹³⁹, this character reflects the ubiquitous practice of self-documentation. A phenomenon which, according to Benjamin Koslowski, points to the following idea:

Rouch, Vertov and the Essay Form", in *The Essay Film: Dialogue, Politics, Utopia*, ed. Caroline Eades and Elizabeth A. Papazian (London/New York: Wallflower Press, 2016), 105.

138 Charlotta Grimfjord Cederblad, Zoom meeting, August 2022.

139 The first mobile phone with an integrated camera was launched in 2000, the year of the so-called "digital natives". From this moment on, almost everyone could make use of the mobile phone recording functions, especially regarding a videographic practice (See Kaihei Hase's contribution "Backstage: Transmuting the mobile phone video into art, based on the concept of Japanese short poetry" to the Screen Works Journal: <https://screenworks.org.uk/archive/volume-7/backstage>)

The relationship between performers and audience has shifted dramatically: users of digital social platforms are not just consumers of content, but performers, who try to create and convince their audience of a certain image of the self, based on who they are offline, and how they want to be perceived online.¹⁴⁰

From this perspective, this character employs a simple V-log system (iPhone 12 mini, selfie-stick, light panel, and microphone) to both produce content for her channels on social media and to construct and stage an online and offline presence. Having a key interest in art-related topics and for what is going on in the cultural scene at Götaplatsen, her main motivation is to create interesting posts and to acquire new followers.

- **Documentary filmmaker:** Performed by myself, this female character is seen as the antagonist. Inspired by the cameraman (Mikhail Kaufman) from the iconic essay film *Man with a Movie Camera* by Dziga Vertov (1929), this character or the analogy of the "Woman with a Moving Camera"¹⁴¹ illustrates the technological progress of cameras and "the embodiment of the idea of man working with the film-apparatus".¹⁴² Here, this character uses a handheld digital camera (Panasonic HC-X 2000) not only to portray and participate in the everyday life at Götaplatsen, but also to potentially find a BIG STORY. After reading an article about the iconic image "Earthrise" taken with a Hasselblad 500 EL in 1969, finding out more about the camera that shot this image became her motivation.

140 Benjamin Koslowski, "The mediating city: Towards a mise-en-scène for interaction online", in *Filming the City: Urban Documents, Design Practices and Social Criticism Through the Lens*, ed. Edward M. Clift et al. (Bristol/Chicago: Intellect, 2016), 229.

141 This analogy or feminist perspective is also inspired by Karen Pearlman's short film *Woman with an Editing Bench* (2006) in which she foregrounds the role of the female editor (Yelizaveta Svilova) of Vertov's Essay Film.

142 Caroline Eades and Elizabeth A. Papazian, "Cinéma-vérité and Kino-pravda: Rouch, Vertov and the Essay Form", 92.

- **Clown:** Performed by *Kristin Rode*, this female character embodies a feeling of astonishment and amusement towards the technology of cameras. As the only one who does not speak, this character is inspired by Jaques Tati's clown Mr. Hulot, especially by his performance in *Playtime* (1967) in which:

The experience of the city becomes most intensely mediated at thresholds: at windows, doorways, vestibules, landings, security checkpoints, commercial checkout counters; and other middle spaces between buildings, between office partitions, between insides and outsides, even between cars. Hulot's entrance into the film from the socially entangled back door of a public bus, and his farewell gift exchange with Barbara (via a Hulot-like intermediary) at the front door of a departing tour bus, establishes mediating thresholds as a primary paradigm of the film's double plot.¹⁴³

With an emphasis on exploring such thresholds, in this case with a body-mounted GoPro camera, the character wanders on and off the screen, before and behind the camera, inside and outside the film set. Since she is not physically visible to the other two characters, she is considered a sort of hidden narrator who, through nothing but images and sounds, provides an insight into the unfolding of the story.

Shooting the scenes

As already mentioned, the shooting process of *I am the Camera* did not follow a conventional screenplay, but rather the elaboration of a series of scenes. Divided into the execution of exercises and the improvisation of actions, these scenes not only aimed to create an interaction between the characters/

¹⁴³ Lisa Landrum, "Architects of Playtime: Cities as social media in the work of Jacques Tati", in *Filming the City: Urban Documents, Design Practices and Social Criticism Through the Lens*, ed. Edward M. Clift et al. (Bristol/Chicago: Intellect, 2016), 75-76.

performers, their devices, and the space, but also to explore the specific locations of the plot, especially in the way Luisa Bravo suggests:

The camera frames architecture and spaces, but mainly it offers human stories, evolutions of feelings; it captures details of social interactions, while the urban is moving around. The city, as seen through the lens, becomes a *tale*, open to multiple interpretations.¹⁴⁴

Thus, the architecture of Götaplatsen, or in this case, the area around the Hasselblad Memorial, served as a sort of "outdoor studio", with an extended space at the Hasselblad Center in which we could explore the encounter of the characters and their endeavours. Furthermore, it also enabled us to look for ways in which the co-presence of the cameras could be used to create both a documentary and a fictional space. To illustrate this, what follows is a list of the major scenes and exercises that were carried out on site:

Major Scenes (Fictional)

Götaplatsen/ Hasselblad Memorial	The characters creating links to the "hidden camera" of the Hasselblad Memorial. The characters trying to "hack" the surveillance camera pointing towards the Hasselblad Memorial. The influencer and documentary filmmaker trying to enter the Hasselblad camera.
Hasselblad Center/ Exhibition	The influencer in a monologue about her relationship with the camera. The documentary filmmaker discussing the Earthrise image. The clown cleaning the cameras in the space.
Hasselblad Center/ Library	The camera being taken from the safe by the staff. Interview with the camera that landed on the moon (different versions).

¹⁴⁴ Luisa Bravo, "Public Life and urban humanities: Beyond the ideal city", in *Filming the City: Urban Documents, Design Practices and Social Criticism Through the Lens*, ed. Edward M. Clift et al. (Bristol/Chicago: Intellect, 2016), 207, emphasis added.

Major Scenes (Documentary)

Götaplatsen/ Hasselblad Memorial	The influencer creating posts on social media. The documentary filmmaker investigating the Hasselblad camera. The clown cleaning the Hasselblad Memorial.
Hasselblad Center/ Exhibition	The characters visiting the exhibition. The influencer and documentary filmmaker discussing the omnipresence of cameras in our daily life.
Hasselblad Center/ Library	The influencer and documentary filmmaker interviewing the staff about the Hasselblad camera used by NASA.

Exercises

Götaplatsen/ Hasselblad Memorial	Various warm-ups: a) spacewalk; a slow walk inspired by a passage from the book: <i>Diary of an Apprentice Astronaut</i> by Samantha Cristoforetti and b) 5Rhythms@ waves and c) circulation of practices. Different Micro Labs based on Ben Spatz's DCTV method, for example: a) Charlotta creating posts on social media, b) Kristin cleaning the Hasselblad Memorial and c) Nathalie setting up her camera at the same position of the "hidden camera" of the Hasselblad Memorial.
Hasselblad Center/ Exhibition	Creating a photograph in connection with one of the exhibited works which may reveal a) the character's motivation, b) a personal aspiration or c) a projection into the future. A script writing exercise based on the relationship of the characters with the camera.
Hasselblad Center/ Library	Warm-up: Spacewalk with an emphasis on moving with and through one's own technological device. Reading about and discussing different materials in connection with the historical importance of Earthrise.

Based on the development of these scenes and exercises (and a series of sub-scenes), we have approached the different locations of the plot in a somewhat nomadic way, rather than by establishing a film set. Since we arrived at the shooting already dressed in our costumes and with our props (or

cameras), this enabled us not only to practise how we could perform *while* documenting, but also how we could be both in front of and behind a camera. In addition to that, it encouraged us to stay flexible and adaptable to the spatial conditions and circumstances we encountered each day, whether it was by borrowing some requisites we needed for our scenes, by incorporating the sounds of the environment into our actions, or by discovering new positions for our cameras. With such a site-oriented approach to the documentation/shooting process, we participated in the everyday life of Götaplatsen (or the Hasselblad Center), while generating a multifaceted audiovisual material and thus, the possibility of (re)framing and/or (re)imagining it in the editing room.

To give a first impression about the editing process of *I am the Camera* (to be further elucidated in the last chapter), what follows is a an experimental short film entitled *Shoot – Kameran, Går* (11:05 min). This film gives an insight into the shooting process described above, yet from the perspective of the camera work on site rather than from the characters.



Video-Still *Shoot – Kameran, Går*, February 2024





Interlude III: Script writing exercise on Zoom

In the context of a doctoral seminar which took place in February 2023, I proposed to my colleagues (Anders Carlsson, Cecilia Lagerström, Esaias Järnergard, Litó Walkey, Mark Tatlow and Maria Bania) a collaborative writing exercise on Zoom (10 minutes) in connection with the scene "Interview with the camera that landed on the moon". Here, the main idea was to write only questions that could be made to the camera from a material rather than human-centred point of view.

14:22:00 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:

Based on my reading from Joe Moran's article *Earthrise: The story behind our planet's most famous photo*, which questions come into your mind in connection with the scene of Charlotta and I interviewing the camera that landed on the moon? If you were able, what would you like to ask the camera?

14:25:19 From Esaias Järnergard to Everyone:

How does a place without sound, sound?

14:25:34 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:

If you were on the moon today, how dark would it be?

14:25:42 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:

Do you see earthlings?

14:26:07 From Litó Walkey to Everyone:

Did you see them looking back over themselves?

14:26:12 From Anders Carlsson to Everyone:

Was that image as special to you as it is for us earthlings?

14:26:14 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:

What was the weather like when you were out there in space?

14:26:18 From Maria Bania to Everyone:

What do you like about this place?

14:26:45 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:

Did your calculations keep?

14:26:51 From Mark Tatlow to Everyone:

Has time stopped still?

14:27:01 From Litó Walkey to Everyone:
Are you as cold and hard as the marble in my hand?

14:27:05 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Can you see us standing here?

14:27:17 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
How was it to be held by a human hand?

14:27:23 From Anders Carlsson to Everyone:
Can you remember the breathing of Mr Anders as he clicked that picture?

14:27:29 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Are you floating freely in space? How does it feel?

14:27:47 From Maria Bania to Everyone:
Can you see the sun?

14:27:51 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Can you see me floating at Götaplatsen?

14:27:53 From Anders Carlsson to Everyone:
Are you a weapon?

14:28:06 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
I breathe with you...

14:28:08 From Mark Tatlow to Everyone:
Did you feel young or old?

14:28:08 From Litó Walkey to Everyone:
Did you hear a sound falling?

14:28:12 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
What noises could you hear inside of you?

14:28:30 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
Click, click, click?

14:28:31 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Were you falling when the sound came?

14:28:36 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
Or zoom, zoom, zoom?

14:28:40 From Maria Bania to Everyone:
Do you prefer to be there?

14:28:51 From Litó Walkey to Everyone:
Did you feel pierced through the chest, through the middle?

14:28:56 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Can you tell us all about it?

14:29:13 From Maria Bania to Everyone:
Is it scary?

14:29:15 From Litó Walkey to Everyone:
Or was it like a soft brush on your shoulder?

14:29:20 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
How was the feeling of having no gravity? Did it make any difference?

14:29:23 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Are you cold?

14:29:24 From Litó Walkey to Everyone:
Do you know what a shoulder is?

14:29:37 From Anders Carlsson to Everyone:
How is it to catch images which will never be as important as Earthrise?

14:29:37 From Mark Tatlow to Everyone:
Did you speak to the moon, like you do on Earth?

14:30:00 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
How is it to become so famous?

14:30:02 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Is the shoulder cold?

14:30:03 From Maria Bania to Everyone:
Is the moon communicating with you?

14:30:07 From Mark Tatlow to Everyone:
If Earth is mother Earth, who is moon?

14:30:18 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
Is the moon the father?

14:30:24 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Are there more sides to things up there?

14:30:39 From Maria Bania to Everyone:
Can you describe how you interact with what you see?

14:30:44 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Can you perceive elbows and corners?

14:30:58 From Anders Carlsson to Everyone:
Are all these questions exhausting for you?

14:31:07 From Mark Tatlow to Everyone:
Did you believe what you saw?

14:31:12 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
How is your shape these days?

14:31:17 From Maria Bania to Everyone:
Do you think our questions are dull?

14:31:32 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Do you have faith?

14:31:44 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
Do you believe in God?

14:31:54 From Anders Carlsson to Everyone:
What does asking you - as a camera - many questions, make of me?

14:31:57 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Is there an answer to loneliness?

14:31:58 From Mark Tatlow to Everyone:
Did you feel more or less healthy on the moon?

14:31:59 From Maria Bania to Everyone:
Are you just a tool?

14:32:17 From Litó Walkey to Everyone:
Were they all with you when you took the photos? I mean, the Gods?

14:32:21 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
Why did you come back to the Earth?

14:32:33 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Any Gods?

14:32:38 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
Any goods?

14:32:40 From Anders Carlsson to Everyone:
How much money would I get if I sold the metal you are made of?

14:32:57 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
In armour?

14:33:13 From Litó Walkey to Everyone:
Are you in love now?

14:33:15 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
Is the metal that you are made of the same used for making weapons?

14:33:15 From Mark Tatlow to Everyone:
Did you want to come back to Earth? Or would you prefer to have stayed put?

14:33:15 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Would you welcome coming back?

14:33:15 From Maria Bania to Everyone:
What in this journey made the biggest impression on you?

14:33:47 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Is there something to sell?

14:33:49 From Mark Tatlow to Everyone:
Why do we have so many questions for you?

14:33:54 From Litó Walkey to Everyone:
Who has pressed into your chest, onto your shoulder, and behind your eye?

14:34:06 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Feeling pressed?

14:34:08 From Litó Walkey to Everyone:
Why don't you say anything?

14:34:19 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
I cannot hear you?

14:34:19 From Nathalie S. Fari to Everyone:
Who is the owner of the image taken with you?

14:34:32 From Cecilia Lagerström to Everyone:
Can I?

14:34:35 From Anders Carlsson to Everyone:
Typical inanimate objects to be so silent!

6 Editing as (re)writing a space

Before providing insights into the editing process of *I am the Camera* or, the question of how a documentary material can be organised and potentially, be expanded in the editing room, I will first disclose some editing approaches which were relevant for my PhD research. Moving between performance documentation and filmmaking, these approaches or, what Sergei Eisenstein has termed as *montage*, served on the one hand, to carry out a series of editing exercises with the documentary material of the performance laboratories and on the other, to rethink how video and/or film editing can be used as a way of (re)imagining and especially, *rewriting the space of the image*.

The audiovisual traces of a performance laboratory

As already mentioned in the *recording* section of chapter 3, a key procedure for generating a documentary material was drawn from Ben Spatz's video annotation research method DCTV. First, by examining how the camera can be included in the laboratory design, for example, through the circulation of the three roles – director, performer, and videographer – and second, by generating some audiovisual traces of our performative engagement with a specific place. While such traces provide evidence that something has happened in real time and space, for Spatz they are seen in the following way:

At one extreme, DCTV video data could be fed into a qualitative analytic process by tracking words, gestures, eye movements, or other discrete elements across bodies, space, and time. At the other extreme, it could be made into a kind of video art, perhaps analogous to screen dance, where the audiovisual material stands alone on its aesthetic merits, without explicit methodological framing.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Ben Spatz, *Making A Laboratory: Dynamic Configurations with Transversal Video* (Punctum books, 2020), 137-138.

Even though each performance laboratory brought up such video data, I did not prioritise dissecting and evaluating it mainly through the researcher's eyes. Instead of analysing certain aspects, qualities, or forms of our bodily interaction with a specific place to recognise some movement and behavioural patterns (something I did in Lab #1), I became increasingly interested in exploring issues around the audiovisuality and imagery of the recorded material. On the one hand, I wanted to explore what editing could do with a material, for example, creating "cuts" in a sequence, following the continuity principle, or developing a narrative time and/or arch; on the other, I looked at how I could challenge and possibly modify, its intrinsic nature and meaning. A process which for Annette Arlander, is connected to the idea of creating "agential cuts":¹⁴⁶

A further type of apparatus or measuring agency is activated in the editing process. In these cases, the appearance of a (new) reality is produced by removing, rather than adding, slices of material while editing. Usually, I use all takes in the order of recording, leaving out only the parts where I enter and exit the image. Thus, an illusion of continuity is created in the final work, a rough form of time-lapse imagery.¹⁴⁷

Here, Arlander is referring to her video practice in which she engages with a specific place or landscape by performing for the camera (usually by recording the same bodily position and frame for a longer period) and by considering that images are produced "by creating a split between what is within and what is outside the frame".¹⁴⁸ This brings forth a type of documentary material which, in comparison with the DCTV method, does not carry the imprints of a collaborative research process (or of a co-authored editing work), but rather of an editor who envisions a specific imagery (or who wants control

146 This concept is drawn from Karen Barad's seminal theory in quantum physics, most particularly from her notion "agential realism". (see Barad, 2003)

147 Annette Arlander, "Agential Cuts and Performance as Research", in *Performance as Research: Knowledge, Methods, Impacts*, ed. Annette Arlander et al. (London: Routledge, 2018), 143.

148 Ibid, 142.

over the image). A position which I have assumed within the laboratory work, due to my interest in not only doing the editing work (hence creating an imagery), but also experimenting with the images.¹⁴⁹

In this regard, another aspect which I needed to take into consideration is the type of audiovisual material that emerges through a performance laboratory and which may hold the signature of so-called "poor images". While such images are usually associated with a low-resolution format (e.g., MOV or MP4), they are also a consequence of the accessibility to editing software and tools and, in turn, to the proliferation of all sorts of mediated expressions.¹⁵⁰ For Ben Spatz, they are also connected to "poor video" or to a "space of embodied encounter" in which video operates "as a fourth relation and instantiates a different link with the 'outside' of laboratorial space".¹⁵¹

Thus, what started as a recording process of those images which may isolate or trace a gesture, movement, or action by creating "cuts" from a laboratory space, became a playground in which to explore how they could be (re)organised and (re)framed through an editing process. Yet to do so, I also needed not only to look more closely at some editing techniques and principles, but also at how I could attribute the "poor image" a different quality, even a new meaning.

Editing as embodied activity

An important way to enhance my editing skills was to attend the course *Physical Cinema* led by Kersti Grunditz Brennan from Uniarts in Stockholm (as it was during the pandemic, it took place on Zoom). On this occasion, I not only had the chance

149 For this reason, I made an agreement with the collaborators of each performance laboratory asking for their image consent and for the rights of the material. This did not imply that they were not involved in the editing process, but rather that I had the freedom to edit the material the way I wanted to.

150 With the progress of artificial intelligence, video editing may become even more accessible to a wider audience (see, for instance, the Vimeo platform). Yet what this may imply for a skilled editor or for screen practice remains to be seen.

151 Spatz, *Making A Laboratory: Dynamic Configurations with Transversal Video*, 142.

to analyse the editing work of some well-known films (e.g., Walter Murch's *Apocalypse Now* from 1979), but most especially, to explore how such a work can be understood as an embodied activity. Drawn from Karen Pearlman's approach to film editing¹⁵² and the notion of "kinaesthetic empathy" which, in short, refers to our ability to read, decode and react to movements in space, this activity can be described as follows:

Editors shape the film's final structure and rhythm. They modulate hundreds of disparate pieces of film into a narratively and aesthetically coherent experience for an audience. Editors' processes require responsive, embodied, and distributed thinking about how a mass of moving material in front of them might be pieced together to make a dynamically structured and rhythmically engaging whole.¹⁵³

Even though it was not my aim to edit a conventional narrative film (which at this point, would have been far beyond my expertise), Pearlman's approach of including one's own cognitive abilities to shape the rhythm and movement of a film can be helpful in achieving what every editor aspires to: making shots, scenes and/or sequences feel "right". Therefore, both Pearlman and Brennan like to compare editing with the work of a choreographer who also employs his/her embodied cognition, as well as experience, to sketch bodily movements and rhythms in the space.

From this perspective, such an approach served as a basis for viewing and organising the audiovisual material of the performance laboratories, especially by treating it in a more subjective, arbitrary way, rather than following a chronological order. Since the material consisted mostly of loose shots of our performative actions within a space (instead of a set

152 Karen Pearlman was also the main supervisor of Kersti Grunditz Brennan's PhD project which focussed on using editing techniques as a method for developing characters in film (see link: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/profile/show-exposition?exposition=1944857>)

153 Karen Pearlman, "Editing and Cognition Beyond Continuity", *Projections* 11, no. 2 (2017): 69.

number of scenes as in scripted drama), I needed to find other ways of creating a narrative line or, according to Pearlman, of "cutting rhythms":

However, in shaping the rhythm of the film, time, energy, and movement are the salient factors. They shape the qualitative experience of the story and information. The movement through time and energy of all the filmed images is shaped into phrases of related movements and grouped emphasis points. These phrases are then varied, juxtaposed, interpolated, and shaped within themselves and in relation to each other to make the overall experience of time, energy, and movement in a film that is known as rhythm.¹⁵⁴

Yet before highlighting how I applied such an editing principle; I will present some additional points which were touched upon during the *Physical Cinema* course:

- In filmmaking there is a common understanding that editing should be *invisible* in terms of creating a continuous flow, rhythm or pacing of sequences through a specific trajectory in time and space. Yet to achieve such a flow (which is more a feeling than what the camera has shot) an editor must train his/her intuition or in other words, enhance his/her ability to respond to the movements and rhythms of the material.
- There are three different times in the editing process: *physical time*, *experience time*, and *narrative time*. While the first category refers to the timeline in the editing program, the second one is directed towards an emotional or cognitive experience of the intentions (or limitations) of the material; the last one is connected to the unfolding of a story or to what the film is about.

154 Karen Pearlman, *Cutting Rhythms: Intuitive Film Editing* (New York: Focal Press, 2016), 47.

- A core aspect of editing is the creation of tension curves or how scenes or sequences anticipate and release specific events of the story. While these *tension curves* are essential in drawing the attention of an audience and keeping it on track, they also determine the overall rhythm (or cognitive experience) of a film. Therefore, the matter of *anticipation* is highly relevant in editing, as it precedes how a scene or sequence is conceived and perceived. This can be done either through the movement of the camera (angles, perspectives) or through the editorial choices.
- Commonly, the editing phase enters the filmmaking process quite late. Yet to obtain a better result, a useful strategy could be to already include the editing within the shooting process, for example, by reviewing and analysing some of the selected materials to possibly spot some of the gaps, potentials, and features.¹⁵⁵
- Editing is synonymous with creating an *imaginary space* or in other words, considering the editorial choices as a way of mediating a spatial trajectory; this can be done by juxtaposing, overlaying, or placing images in the timeline, creating a sonic landscape, or by inventing a new pictorial language.

Short Film *I am the Camera*

With the focus on editing a short film with the audiovisual material of Lab #3, I carried out a series of editing exercises. The aim of these exercises was not only to create edits of max. 20 min (as expected from a short to medium film format), but

¹⁵⁵ In conventional filmmaking, such a strategy is not so easy to apply, as it requires a different sort of planning, especially during the shooting. Yet in the context of a performance laboratory work usually involving a small crew, this strategy has been helpful for thinking more thoroughly about the material that one has in mind.

also to acquaint myself with the audiovisuality or visual vocabulary of the recorded material. Since the material had been shot with different technological devices (an iPhone, a GoPro, and a digital camera), one of the challenges was to find ways in which the quite different audiovisual tracks could speak to each other and compose a unified scenery. A type of scenery which could provide the viewer with a sense of spatial continuity, while at the same time giving an impression of the different formats and/or frames of each camera: a vertical image standing in opposition to a wide angled, horizontal one and a square image which only illustrates certain perspectives or details of a scene.



Video-Still, Editing Exercise 1, November 2022

Starting from these premises, I first explored the editing principle of juxtaposing and/or overlaying the images so that I could either recognise some key differences such as proportion, colours, or atmosphere or try out different ways in which the images could merge. This made it possible to get a better sense of the interplay between the different camera shots, while experimenting with a pictorial language, especially by blurring the boundaries between the appearance and disappearance of images, or between the formation and dissolution of frames. A procedure which Craig Hight describes as:

A laborious process of sifting through possibilities to find the editing strategies that begin to create meaning

for viewers. Inevitably this relies also on serendipity, epiphanies discovered through practice and most importantly experience with what does and does not ‘work’ in putting images together.¹⁵⁶

Inspired by this, I became fascinated by the visual effects that editing can give a material and, in terms of the “poor image”, transform a simple snapshot into an aesthetically appealing – or at least inviting – imagery. Yet to convey a story, it may not be enough to rely solely on an artistic experimentation with images (as is often the case in video art). Another factor may be to look at how the audiovisual material can support the development of a script, or in other words, how the pre-recorded images and sounds could serve to create a new fictional (or imaginary) space. By this, I am proposing to approach editing as both an organisational tool and writing practice, or more particularly, as a way of placing and composing images in the timeline while exploring how they can (re)perform a narrative. Therefore, I consider the editing room as a performative space, or a type of site-specific screen space in which I can translate images, sounds, feelings, atmospheres, and so on in a cinematic language. For the acclaimed editor Walter Murch, such an approach also points to the following:

In many ways, the film editor performs the same role for the director as the text editor does for the writer of a book – to encourage certain courses of action, to counsel against others, to discuss whether to include specific material in the finished work or whether new material needs to be added. At the end of the day, though, it is the writer who then goes off and puts the words together. But in film, the editor also has the responsibility for actually assembling the images (that is to say, the “words”) in a certain order and in a certain rhythm.¹⁵⁷

156 Craig Hight, “Shoot, Edit, Share: Cultural Software and User-Generated Documentary Practice”, in *New Documentary Ecologies Emerging Platforms, Practices and Discourses*, ed. Kate Nash et al. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 223.

157 Walter Murch, *In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing* (Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 1995), 26.

Even though the structure of the Lab #3 was not as predetermined as Murch describes, in the sense that we neither followed a preconceived script, nor a conventional labour division (for example, I took alternately the role of the director, performer, videographer, or editor), this comparison can be helpful for discovering new narrative elements within an audiovisual material and, in turn, for depicting a yet hidden narrative.

From this perspective, I will highlight some key points which were central for editing, or (re)writing the short film *I am the Camera*:

- Using the iconic image *Earthrise* (shot by Bill Anders from the Apollo 8 crew in 1968) as a narrative line and conceptual framework to touch upon its historical relevance. In the film, this image appears in a catalogue which one of the characters is holding in their hands at the permanent exhibition “I am the Camera.”
- Developing a sort of “dramatic arch” with the selected audiovisual material, which in this case consisted of a) the characters waiting for the camera to be taken out of the safe by the staff, b) rehearsing and shooting the interview with the camera, c) flipping the perspective of the two main characters regarding the question: Who is the camera? (e.g., the clown looking into the main camera or the influencer standing in front of the glass cabinet surrounded by cameras) and d) dissolving the action with an abrupt cut and using the soundtrack of Stanley Kubrick’s epic film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) as the ultimate climax and return (or looping effect) to the initial scene of the *Earthrise* image.
- Employing the three distinct audiovisual tracks (from the iPhone, GoPro, and digital camera) as narrative indicators of the relationship of the characters with the camera, especially regarding its meaning and functionality. For example, for the in-

fluencer, a digital tool for documenting one's own life, for the documentary filmmaker, a window to the world and for the clown, an intriguing object.



Video-Still, Editing Exercise 2, June 2013

Departing from these editing strategies, a key aim was not only to give the film an overall rhythm – or in terms of Pearlman, to create “trajectory phrases” so that the shots feel right for an audience – but also to develop a non-linear narrative. This means a narrative which does not primarily seek to solve a problem or conflict, but rather to promote a reflection about a certain topic. As Ken Dancyger suggests:

The non-linear narrative may not have a resolution; it may not have a single character with whom to empathize and identify; it may not have characters who are goal-directed; and it may not have a dramatic shape driving towards resolution. Consequently, the non-linear narrative is not predictable. And here lies its great aesthetic potential, because of that unpredictability, it may provide an audience with a new, unexpected experience.¹⁵⁸

My intention with such an editorial choice (which may surprise an audience) was, on the one hand, to use a satirical ap-

158 Ken Dancyger, *The Technique of Film and Video Editing: History, Theory, and Practice* (New York: Focal Press, 2002), 391.

proach to philosophise on a human's relationship with the camera, and on the other, to attune with – and to some degree, be honest about – the type of audiovisual material that I had in my hands: partly documentary (with some audiovisual traces of a performance laboratory work) and partly fictional (with shots of improvised actions and scenes). To exemplify how I approached editing as a writing practice to fictionalise and (re)imagine a space, follows the link to the short film *I am the Camera* on Vimeo.



Video-Still, *I am the Camera*, October 2023

Closing Notes

The choice of closing this compilation thesis with the short film *I am the Camera* not only reflects my claim that the audiovisual traces of a site-specific work can serve both as data and creative source to generate artistic and/or research outcomes; it also points to my research trajectory from a performance laboratory practice to screen performance research, or from designing psychophysical exercises *for* a specific place to developing a lens-based exploration *with* the co-presence of cameras. However, throughout my research trajectory, one element was always present and that is, the engagement with one's own body. Whether as performer, seismograph or translator, the body was used not only to create a relationship with a specific place, but also to foster a research environment in which the collaboration with human and non-human forms of agency, or what I have termed *situated agencies*, was central. On the one hand, for gaining a deeper understanding of *where* I/we were placed in terms of geography, ecology, or history and on the other, for exploring how such a positionality could bring forth performance and/or documentary material. In doing so, I will highlight three issues of my research trajectory which I consider to be concluding, or which at least, bring something to a possible, but not definite closure.

The relevance of pedagogy in my performance laboratory work

The reason for choosing the framework of a performance laboratory to explore site-specific practice stems from my interest in creating learning environments in which the Lab participants – co-researchers, students, special guests – assume the role of “peers”. By assembling a variety of expertise and experiences which may be relevant for the place in question, such learning environments aim to promote a cross disciplinary exchange in which the body emerges as an agential force. While this means to engage with the proprioceptive qualities of the body, such an experiential process also offers:

Fostering somatic pedagogy within a learning environment requires consideration of a few key aspects that intentionally integrate the body into knowledge sharing. These elements include the importance of three embodied elements: dialogue, reflection, and cognition.¹⁵⁹

Attuned to this, these embodied elements are not only used to enhance one's own sensory awareness towards other bodies, or one's own feelings, sensations, impulses and so on, but also towards how we can co-create an environment. A process which depends on a series of factors and often unforeseen circumstances, but which are necessary to "leave one's own comfort zone" and thus, to step and open oneself for a (yet) unknown territory. Therefore, I consider the public space, or any kind of alternative space, as highly valuable for promoting a learning process in which one needs to find one's way of communicating and negotiating with each other and the environment. Even though this may give rise to all sorts of frictions and intricacies, this way of navigating and adapting to the ever-changing conditions and contingencies of an environment can also, according to John Dewey, be described as follows:

As living organisms, we simply are always already active; we simply are always already in transaction with our environment. This does not mean, of course, that we do not learn as a result of our transactions with the world. The whole idea of experience is precisely that we undergo the consequences of our 'doings' and that we change as a result of this.¹⁶⁰

In this regard, I can state that every performance laboratory that I have carried out so far has contributed to ameliorate my communication skills, be it by listening to what the *situated*

159 Tara L. Horst, "The Body in *Adult Education: Introducing a Somatic Learning Model*", *Adult Education Research Conference* (2008), 5.

160 John Dewey quoted by Gert Biesta, "Why 'What Works' Won't Work: Evidence-Based Practice and the Democratic Deficit in Educational Research", *Educational Theory* 57, no. 1 (2007): 14.

agencies within a place have to say, or simply by opening myself to other forms of interaction and/or relationality. Furthermore, they have helped me to become aware of what it means to have a body with a porous, malleable, and sensitive skin; in my case, a white female body which despite of carrying the imprints of traumatic experiences, has the privilege of navigating between different cultural contexts and places and as a result, of cultivating a somatic knowledge. In that way, the framework of a performance laboratory offers the chance of exploring modes of co-existence, co-creation, and co-learning, while deepening one's own bodily and environmental awareness.

The idea of *hiddenness* within my site-specific practice

In comparison with the notions of *embodiment* and *agency*, which have contributed to approach site-specific practice in a somatic, experiential, or serendipitous way, there has been one idea which I do not consider as fully resolved but worth unpacking further. Framed as "hiddenness" or, what I have labelled as *hidden narratives* and/or *hidden choreographies*, this idea concerns the ways in which a performance material can be collected or, metaphorically speaking, "excavated" from a place. A process which in the case of Götaplatsen consisted of different artistic strategies (e.g., hacking) and methods (e.g., body mapping) which, in summary, were always aimed at one thing: to find a point of view or access to the place which has not yet been uncovered, touched upon, or manifested. In other words, to find a sort of *blind* spot within the place where the ghosts, shadows, or any form of invisibility can come to the surface as a narrative, a score, or a script. Inspired by the aforementioned concept of *hauntology*, this suggests entering and viewing a place as if it was seemingly a blank page open to discovering what might be stored within it, or what might be lurking beneath the surface. For example, in a previous performance laboratory that I carried out at the Teufelsberg heritage site in Berlin (mentioned in the preface), such a process consisted of:

Instead of reproducing a story that already exists in each corner of the place, we wanted to work with the idea of rewriting or even better, “unwriting” the place. How this might happen, seemed quite abstract at first glance. But there were ways of enabling this vision, for example by seeing the place or workplace as a white surface that hides within its gaps, multiple stories.¹⁶¹

Even though it is not so easy to fathom the “invisible forces” of a place (or of all that which we cannot see, but only feel), the idea of “unwriting” has stayed with me since then, or at least of trying to access a place in an insidious, hidden, or unconventional way. However, as Götaplatsen has a completely different character, as well as architecture, to Teufelsberg (a former spy station which has become the biggest open-air museum for graffiti in Europe), I needed to find other strategies how to uncover some of the blind spots within the place.

For this reason, I can state that the applied strategies and methods to address the *hiddenness* of Götaplatsen, led me – whether by chance or not – to the Hasselblad Memorial, and in turn, to the narrative around the camera that shot the iconic image *Earthrise*. In doing so, what started as a site-specific engagement with the area around the memorial through different activities – movement improvisation, site-writing, documentation, shooting a short film etc. – became a platform for transforming the idea of “unwriting” to “rewriting a space” through an archival and editing process. Thus, the idea of hiddenness, or of searching for hidden narratives, may offer an alternative approach to site-specific practice, especially to how performance material can be both collected on site and translated into different media.

161 Nathalie Fari, “Mapping Teufelsberg or How to embody history”, in *Urban Appropriation Strategies: Exploring Space-making Practices in Contemporary European Cityscapes*, ed. Flavia A. Mameli (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2018), 57.

The role of the camera in my research

The reason why the camera has taken such a prominent role in my PhD research can be traced back to a series of factors: a) my background in performance art where the camera is involved in creating performance archives and/or documents, b) my research emphasis on performance documentation and filmmaking which requires the use of a camera, c) the (unexpected) encounter with the Hasselblad Memorial which stands for the technological progress of cameras and d) my approach in designing performance laboratories in conjunction with the camera. All these factors have contributed to consider the already mentioned “co-presence” of a camera as an interface between the site-specific engagement with a place and its mediation and/or translation process. While this has implied dealing with the camera in an embodied rather than technical way, I was also confronted with a series of new implications, which according to Susanne Foellmer, point to the idea that:

Thinking about transfer in the performing arts is embedded in an ongoing discourse about the frictions of moving from one medium to another, from body to image, or from movement to text, as well as in questions regarding the losses occurred in the process of change.¹⁶²

Inspired by this, I became increasingly interested in thinking more carefully about the documentation in the sense of not primarily outsourcing the camera work to someone external, but rather of including it in the research process. This interest also led me to create a new course syllabus in an expanded approach to performance documentation (see in appendices), which not only sparked the interest of other practitioners from different fields, but also gave me the opportunity to enhance my skills in working with the camera. In other words, in acquiring an own agency over the

162 Susanne Foellmer, “Dance, performance, media, transfer: sketching notions and problems in the field”, in *Performing Arts in Transition: Moving Between Media*, ed. Susanne Foellmer et al. (London: Routledge, 2019), 19.

images that I want to create and, potentially, assemble in the editing suite. A process which nonetheless required me to look beyond the discourse of performance documentation or, as Foellmer points out, the recent trends of (re)enacting, (re)performing or (re)framing a certain performance work and history.

In this respect, there was a turning point in my documentation practice, when I came across the emergent field of screen production research (mentioned in chapter 3) “where the researcher is making a screen work and observing their own actions whilst making it”.¹⁶³ Suddenly, I was not only amongst performance and media theorists who think about what a camera may bring forth for analysing a performance work (or pictorial language), but also amongst practitioners who employ the camera for generating an artistic and/or research outcome. Despite not being trained as a filmmaker, this field allowed me to explore an approach to screen performance practice *as* research, especially by grappling with the notions of embodiment, site-specificity, and agency. Hence, with my eyes turned to a future prospect in this field, I will conclude that the questions related to the media transfer from site-specific performance to moving and/or still images, became a fruitful playground for engaging with the camera. In short, for using it as an artistic research tool to trigger, disrupt, challenge, intervene, or reveal what happens (or might happen) within the space of the image, the body, and a place.

163 Susan Kerrigan, “A Logical Explanation of Screen Production as Method-Led Research”, in *Screen Production Research: Creative Practice as a Mode of Enquiry*, ed. Susan Kerrigan and Craig Batty (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 11.

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Film References:

- *And the King said, what a Fantastic Machine* (2022, Sweden)
Directed by Axel Danielson & Maximilien Van Aertryck
- *Dark Side of the Moon* (2002, USA) Directed by William Karel
- *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929, Russia) Directed by Dziga Vertov
- *Playtime* (1967, France) Directed by Jaques Tati
- *Woman with an Editing Bench* (2006, Australia) Directed by Karen Pearlman

Appendices

Appendix 1: Lab #3 Report

To provide an insight into the research design of a performance laboratory work, in this case, of the Lab #3 at Götaplatsen, follows a short resume of the meetings that took place from September 2022 to September 2023. This resume does not contain the preparatory work as well as pos-production, but only the activities and exercises that were carried out on site.

Character development I:

05.09.2022 Götaplatsen 10:00 – 12:00	Sensory mapping exercise of the area around Hasselblad Memorial based on hearing, smelling, touching, and viewing (10 min for each). After that, recording of the sensory experiences through using words and sounds.
HSM – Studio 13:00 – 16:00	Reading of the article <i>The Story behind our planet's most famous photo</i> and viewing of the documentary <i>Man with a movie camera</i> by Dziga Vertov (only 20 min). Discussion of the three different dimensions: a) documentary, e.g., the everyday life at Götaplatsen through Hasselblad's hidden camera, b) historical, e.g., the iconic image Earthrise and c) fictional.
06.09.2022 HSM – Studio & Götaplatsen 10:00 – 12:00	Warm up with a 5 Rhythms® wave (30 min). Site-writing exercise based on the idea “what can you see” and “what else could you see” from three different perspectives of Hasselblad’s memorial: front, above and within (15 min for each). After that, sharing the notations and impressions.
Götaplatsen 13:00 – 16:00	Performing while Documenting exercise (90 min) at the area around Hasselblad Memorial based on some ideas and/or motivations of the characters: Kristin’s clown landing on Earth (instead of landing on the moon), Charlotta doing interviews and having “fika” with Hasselblad (a typical Swedish expression for coffee or tea break) and I trying to find out about the possibility of doing some “time-travelling” at Götaplatsen. After that, sharing of the experiences.
07.09.2022 HSM – Studio 10:00 – 13:00	Viewing of the footage and discussion about the narrative outline. Feedback of my supervisor Cecilia Lagerström on this occasion: The footage has a “sketch” character which makes it fresh when viewing. The three characters; Charlotta as a moderator, Kristin as clown, and I as a documentarist work well together, especially as each of us embodies a unique universe, besides of relating so differently to the Hasselblad Memorial. Yet what should be further clarified is how I intend to address the three different dimensions in the recording, documentation and especially, rewriting process of the Hasselblad Memorial.

Legend

HSM = Högskolan för Scen och Musik

HC = Hasselblad Center

Character development II:

07.11.2022 HSM – Studio 10:00 – 12:00	Viewing and discussion of the footage. Group improvisation based on the relationship between the characters and their specific cameras.
Götaplatsen 13:00 – 16:00	Site-writing exercise II based on the idea “what can you see” and “what else could you see” from three different perspectives of the Hasselblad Memorial: front, above and within (15 minutes for each). After that, sharing of the notations and discussion about the presence of cameras in public space.
08.11.2022 HC 10:00 – 12:00	Visit to the exhibition “Hasselblad on the moon” at Hasselblad Center as characters (with the cameras) through exploring some potential actions.
Götaplatsen 13:00 – 16:00	Performing while Documenting exercise II (90 min) at the area around Hasselblad with an emphasis on exploring the three different dimensions through the camera work. After that, choose one image (or shot) of the recorded material to execute a writing exercise. Here is my output based on an image I took in front of Stadsteatern: <i>Shoot – Kameran, Går! Is this the title of a piece? And if yes, what is it about? When I was at Götaplatsen today, I noticed that this new piece must have premiered recently, yet I did not hear much about it. Anyway, the title seems so appealing for what we are doing here. And if I had to resume what the work is about, what would that be? I would say that it's a satire about our relationship with the camera and the ways in which it has shifted our understanding of reality in times of crisis, war, pandemic and so on... Thus, when I see this image Shoot – Kameran, Går, it could also be associated with “shooting” someone rather than with shooting a film. So, why should I go to the theatre to watch this play? But since the entrance seems so appealing and in an old-fashioned manner, I could simply go to meet someone or something else at the other side of the moon, balloon, moon..., now I am missing the right words. My head is gone, and I am just standing here waiting for the other two to appear to work, to shoot, to Shoot - Kameran, Går!</i>
09.11.2022 HSM – Studio 10:00 – 12:00	Viewing of the footage and discussion of the narrative outline. Go to the play “Shoot – Kameran, Går” at Stadsteatern to see if it may be interesting for our work (it turned out to be not so relevant).

Shooting/Documentation work I:

09.05.2023 HC – Library 10:00 – 12:00	Discussion and brainstorming about the scenes to be shot during the week.
HC – Exhibition 13:00 – 14:00	Mapping exercise in the exhibition “I am the Camera” with the focus on documenting the exhibited cameras (there are 5 in total: 2 real ones and 3 on print) and on reflecting upon the character’s motivations.
14:00 – 17:00	Improvisation/shooting of the scenes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencer and documentary filmmaker having a conversation about their relationship with the camera. • The characters searching for THE camera on the poster of the exhibition. • The clown is wandering around.
10.05.2023 HC – Library 14:00 – 17:00	Warm-up: Spacewalk based on a passage of the book Diary of an Apprentice Astronaut by Samantha Cristoforetti (40 min). Discussion and brainstorming about the major scene “Interview with THE camera” and after that, execute an improvisation/shooting of it.
11.05.2023 HC – Library 10:00 – 12:00	Improvisation/shooting of the scene “Interview with THE camera.”
HC – Entrance Hall & Götaplatsen 13:00 – 15:00	Improvisation/shooting of the scenes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The characters trying to exit the museum. • The characters landing at Götaplatsen.
12.05.2023 Götaplatsen 13:00 – 15:00	Warm-up: Space walk with headphones (20 min). Improvisation/shooting of the scenes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three characters creating a “link” with the Hasselblad camera (20 min). • The influencer entering the Hasselblad camera (20 min).
Götaplatsen 13:00 – 17:00	Micro labs based on Ben Spatz’s DCTV method (20 min each and rotating the three roles – director, performer, and videographer): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlotta producing content for social media. • Kristin cleaning Hasselblad’s Memorial. • Nathalie arranging the camera at the same position as the one from Hasselblad.
	Improvisation/shooting of the scenes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three characters trying to hack the surveillance camera (20 min). • The three characters exhausted lying under the trees (15 min).

Viewing/analysis of excerpts of the audiovisual material:

- 26.06.2023**
HDK Valand – Black Box 1
10:00 – 12:00
- Viewing/analysis of the material shot at the exhibition based on the questions:
- What does the exhibition space add to the story or to the characters?
 - Are there potential scenes or actions visible and if so, which should be reenacted?
 - How to differentiate between scenes and exercises?
- 13:00 – 16:00
- Viewing/analysis of the material shot at the library based on the questions:
- How to identify the three different layers – documentary, historical and fictional – within the footage?
 - Which ideas or meta-levels can be seen and possibly described in a few words?
- Read passage of Kersti Grunditz Brennan and Karen Pearlman's article *Creating character in editing and reflect upon the three cinematic positions – character, filmmaker, and viewer*: "These cinematic positions can also be applied to two questions that often come up in the editing process: whose perspective is put forward and where the story/character is created/perceived to be created?" (2023, 20)
- 27.06.2023**
HDK Valand – Black Box 1
10:00 – 12:00
- Viewing/analysis of the material shot at Götaplatsen based on the questions:
- How to create a connection between the Götaplatsen (Hasselblad Memorial) and the Hasselblad Center (Library)?
 - Does the footage or characters indicate that?
 - In terms of imagery, which would be the main distinction between the scenes that were shot inside and the ones outside?
- 13:00 – 16:00
- Present my editing work (20 min) of the fictional version and after that, do a collective mind mapping based on the questions:
- In what ways does the edited version refer to the plot? Which is the main topic and how does it refer to the Hasselblad Memorial?
 - Which scenes should be reenacted?
 - What scenes and/or images are missing?
 - In which category or genre does the edited version fit?
 - How was the experience in May and which structure would be needed (or wished) to finalise the Lab work?

Shooting/Documentation work II:

- 17.09.2023**
Götaplatsen
10:00 – 12:00
- Warm-up with a 5Rhythms® wave (40 min).
Site-writing exercise based on the narrative qualities of the area around Hasselblad: a) perception (what can be sensed and felt), b) memories (what have you witnessed or experienced there) and c) associations (what comes into your mind when observing or being at the place). After that, sharing the notations and impressions.
- 13:00 – 15:00
- Improvisation/shooting of the scene of the characters meeting at Götaplatsen for the first time:
- The influencer introducing Götaplatsen and the Hasselblad memorial on a live broadcast (based on a script).
 - The clown appears in the background coming from Stadsteatern with a map to clean the Hasselblad Memorial.
 - The documentary filmmaker approaches the influencer to ask where the Hasselblad Center is (she has an appointment there).
- 15:30 – 17:00
- Micro Labs based on Ben Spatz's DCTV Method:
- Cameras moving around the Hasselblad Memorial through rotating the roles (director, performer, and videographer).
 - Photo shooting of the characters at the memorial.
- 18.09.2023**
HC – Exhibition
10:00 – 12:00
- Warm up: Spacewalk (20 min).
Script writing exercise in connection to the character's relationship with the camera: meaning, functionality, work, fascination, pleasure, and appearance.
- 13:00 – 16:00
- Shooting of the individual scenes:
- The influencer having a monologue about her relationship with the camera in front of the glass cabinet (based on a script).
 - The clown cleaning Hasselblad and his camera on the poster of the exhibition.
 - The documentary filmmaker reading the info-table of the exhibition based on a passage from the Guardian article.
- 19.09.2023**
Götaplatsen
16:00 – 18:00
- Warm-up: Circulation of practices (each performer suggests an exercise of 15 min targeted for Hasselblad's area).
Improvisation/shooting of the major scene entering the Hasselblad camera.

References:

- Brennan, Kersti Grunditz, and Karen Pearlman. "Creating Character in Editing." *Media Practice and Education* (2023): 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25741136.2023.2172655>.
- Cristoforetti, Samantha. *Diary of an Apprentice Astronaut*, UK: Penguin Science/Autobiography, 2018.
- Moran, Joe. "Earthrise: The story behind our planet's most famous photo", *The Guardian*, December 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/dec/22/behold-blue-plant-photograph-earthrise>

Appendix 2: Course Syllabus Performance Documentation / Digital Practices

From 2020 to 2023 I have designed and coordinated a new course in Performance Documentation in collaboration with Charlotta Ruth and Ben Spatz. The first three rounds (20/21/22) were given as a “hybrid” freestanding course for Master students from different programs of the Artistic Faculty at the University of Gothenburg. In 2023, the course was redesigned as Digital Practices and given for the Master Program in Contemporary Performative Arts at the Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg. Below, what follows is first the last version of the Performance Documentation course from 2022 and second, the version of the Digital Practices course from 2023 (both without the bibliography).

1 Performance documentation

Course content and structure:

This freestanding course explores new ways of documenting and archiving body and time-based performance practices. By focusing on an expanded approach to performance documentation, this course aims to disclose ways of employing an audiovisual and/or performative language. The structure of the course is divided into three workshops with the following artist researchers:

Workshop 1, Nathalie S. Fari

The first workshop will focus on the notion of *Performing Archives* or the processes through which performances are historicized and/or canonized. Taking a selection of documented or archived performance works (from different artists or one’s own archive) as an example, we will explore how to (re)frame, (re)contextualize and/or (re)enact such works. In this process, a special emphasis will be given on the tensions between the documentary and fictional, theatricality and performativity, embodied experiences and memory, and authorship and publicness.

Preparation:

Each participant should select one to three photographs that they would like to work with. These photographs can be from any period, from one's own performance archive or from an artist's oeuvre that is seen as a reference (or inspiration) for one's own work. An important aspect when choosing these photographs, is to look at their historical meaning and value or the ways in which they could become part of a performance canon.

Structure:

The workshop will be divided into the following sections:

1) A theoretical introduction into the history of performance documentation and its different forms of representation and mediation, 2) An analysis and discussion about some specific documentation works and archival strategies, 3) A practical exploration of how to (re)conceptualize and/or (re)enact the chosen photographs (or performance documents), especially through one's own artistic practice.

Workshop 2, Charlotta Ruth

In this workshop, we will focus on the development of a documentation concept for an artistic work/ project/ performance or alternatively, for an ongoing practice. By working with different group tasks, playful interviews and practical try-outs, the main aim of this workshop is to explore how to include documentation in the planning process of an ongoing artistic work/project as well as how to make the adequate choices for it.

Preparation:

Each participant should create an account at the Research catalogue platform. Besides that, each participant should choose a project/work and/or on-going practice for which they would like to develop a documentation concept. To help this process, here are some questions to be answered in advance:

- Why do you need to document? Who is the audience of your documentation?

- Which documentation form are you familiar with? Give examples of previous experiences with documentation.
- Do you like the way other artists employ documentation? Give examples including possible links.
- Which documentation form are you most interested in artistically? Why?
- Which project, work and/or ongoing practice do you would like to focus on during the course? Why?

Structure:

The workshop will be divided into the following Zoom sessions:
 Day 1: a) Documentation strategies, ethics and planning, b) Short presentation of each participant's chosen performance work/project, c) A lecture based on the notions of "live - versus not live". In this lecture, we will look at what happens when a performance or another ephemeral material is turned into documentation. The lecture will be followed by a debriefing of how such procedure can be included in the individual project/documentation concept, d) A group work based on mapping different documentation platforms and contexts.
 Day 2: a) Intro to the Research Catalogue as a documentation platform, b) Exploring positions of interviewing and being interviewed and, c) Clarifying questions and/or personal needs.
 Day 3: a) Presentation of work in progress and clarifying questions, c) Passing on (Swedish Tradera) - lecture about the process of sharing and transferring material through a documentation approach, c) Clarifying group questions and final assignment.

Workshop 3, Ben Spatz

This workshop will introduce a set of practical techniques for short-circuiting embodiment and audiovisuality, which may be useful to practitioners in a variety of fields including but not limited to performing arts. I will draw on two primary resources in attempting to get beyond the model of performance documentation. The first is my own experience as a scholar-artist, with roots in live theatrical performance, who has increasingly turned to experimental forms of video recording

and editing as historically new media through which to articulate embodied knowledge and practice. The second is the rapidly growing field of videographic film criticism, which I argue has developed important approaches to videographic thought that can be incredibly productive in dialogue with performing arts. The workshop will involve practical video labs based on Spatz's method of "dynamic configurations" to produce genuinely experimental video material, which can then be analyzed and reworked through creatively interpretive video editing. We will use a variety of techniques that have been explored in the videographic *Journal of Embodied Research*, which I edit, as well as experimenting with new ideas developed in collaboration with videographic film scholars. Additional perspectives will be drawn from critical cultural analysis, particularly relying upon critical Black and Indigenous studies to understand how embodiment and emplacement are reconfigured in audiovisual modes of thought.

Preparation:

There are two aspects of preparation for this workshop: First, please bring some *embodied material* that you would like to work on as well as teach. These can be simple: a song, a text, a score, a sequence of movements or postures, an exercise, etc. The material should be fully memorized and ready to practice. (It should not be a complete or finished performance, but something still open to being transformed.) You can prepare as much material as you like, but please be ready to lead/teach 10 minutes of work and to practice independently for up to 30 minutes.

Second, you will need to have access to a *video camera* and *video editing software*. The principle here is to work with whatever is at hand, focusing on the epistemological aspects of video recording and editing processes, rather than any specific technologies. With that in mind, it is absolutely fine to use a mobile phone camera and a simple, free video editing app. On the other hand, if you have access to a more advanced camera and/or editing programs, you are welcome to use those.

2 Digital practices

Course content:

The overarching theme of the course is to explore one's own artistic practice in connection with different digital tools or working procedures. Based on specific fields within artistic digital practices (e.g., screen performance, performance documentation and videoart), the student will explore and reflect upon these fields through workshops, lectures, and one's own artistic work. The student is expected to participate actively in the course. The structure of the course is divided into two modules which will be held in English and Swedish by the following artist researchers:

Module 1: Camera work and performance documentation

In this module, *Nathalie S. Fari* and *Kersti Grunditz Brennan* will introduce a set of practical techniques for exploring the relationship between embodiment and audiovisuality. In Nathalie's teaching sessions, the focus will be on an expanded performance documentation practice that draws on her experience as a performance artist, with roots in visual arts, and her current PhD project which emphasizes a site-oriented and experimental approach to screen performance.

In Kersti's teaching session the focus will be on editing from an embodied perspective. Drawing from her background in dance and filmmaking and her PhD research into character creation based on kinesthetic empathy and experiences of living in the physical world, both the notion of performance and documentation will be explored along an axis from performer through the camera and the editing to the viewer.

Preparation:

There are two aspects of preparation for this module: First, please bring some documentary material from your current MA project in the form of photography and/or video footage that you would like to work with during the course. The only criterion for choosing this material is that there should be some form of human agency in front of the camera.

Second, you will need to have access to a camera and video editing software. The principle here is to work with the technological devices and/or tools that you are familiar (also mobile phones can be used). In the case, you have access to a more advanced camera and/or editing programs, you are welcome to use those.

Structure:

Nathalie's teaching sessions will be divided, on the one hand, into a practical exploration of principles such as 'performing *while* documenting', 'performative moment' and 'performing archives' and on the other, on viewing, analyzing, and discussing about specific and historically representative artistic works that employ experimental approaches to performance documentation and/or documentary filmmaking.

Kersti's teaching sessions will dive into ethical and aesthetical ramifications of editing as an artistic practice through short assignments, group exercises, discussions, and guided analysis of both external references and course work. The sessions will spark further practical work with film footage – using methods like movement scores, drawing and architecture to explore expressive potential and meaning making in montage.

Module 2: Online digital tools and conceptualization:

In this module led by *Charlotta Ruth*, you will experiment with online digital tools, online dramaturgy and how to share work online. We will practice how to create *liveness* in online contexts, especially through examining where an art experience begins, and which ethical issues are implied in relation to advertisement and social media.

Preparation for the 1st session:

How do artists whose work you admire create their online presence? Are there any best practice examples that you get inspired from? Do a bit of research and be prepared to share with the group.

Preparation for the 2nd session:

- Reflect upon which interesting online art experiences you were part of and ask yourself what made them interesting.
- Reflect upon how you have been using online tools either in your artistic work or on a private basis. Be prepared to briefly show/demonstrate tools that you have been working with.

Preparation for the 3rd session:

Create accounts and/or install tools that you are interested in working with (different tools will be presented at the first and second sessions).

Preparation for the 4th session:

Work in progress and presentation of your ideas, including online framing.

Svensk Sammanfattning

Denna avhandling behandlar förhållandet mellan kroppen och en specifik plats, eller mellan kroppen som är lokaliserad på en plats och de olika agenser som är delaktiga i denna process (t.ex. den mänskliga agensen för den utövande kroppen, den materiella agensen för en plats eller den narrativa agensen för en kamera). Genom att lägga tonvikten på praktiker inom platsspecifik performance har denna avhandling tagit sig an begreppet förkroppsligande ("embodiment"), eller upplösningen av den Cartesianska dualismen mellan kropp och själ, genom tre olika angreppssätt: a) "förkroppsligad teknik som kunskap" av Ben Spatz (2015), b) "placering" av Sara Pink (2009) och c) "posthuman subjektivitet" av Rosi Braidotti (2013). Medan vart och ett av dessa tillvägagångssätt placerar den "levda kroppen" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) – dess kött, ben och organ – i centrum för en människas erfarenhet, föreslår de också en kroppslig gestaltningsprocess som forskningsmetod.

I Spatz fall syftar en sådan metodik på processen för att tillägna sig en förkroppsligad teknik, särskilt de sätt på vilka en teknik kan manifesteras som performance, kön eller identitet. För Pink innebär detta i sin tur att man lyfter fram och inkluderar sina egna kroppsliga sinnen – att se, beröra, lukta, höra – i den etnografiska processen att observera och/eller delta på en specifik plats eller i en social miljö. När det gäller Braidotti är begreppet förkroppsligande kopplat till en politisk och feministisk diskurs inom humaniora, som syftar till att decentralisera människans antropocentriska syn genom att inkludera icke-mänskliga eller mer-än-mänskliga former av agenser.

Med utgångspunkt i dessa metoder har detta doktorandprojekt tittat närmare på hur en specifik plats kan förstås, förnimmas och/eller dokumenteras. Mer specifikt, hur en viss kropp/plats-konstellation, arrangemang eller struktur kan överföras och/eller översättas till olika former av medierade uttryck (t.ex. performed photography, eller screen performance). I samarbete med konstnärliga forskare genomfördes en rad "performance-laborationer" för att skapa en tvärvetenskaplig

och kreativ dialog kring dessa frågor, särskilt kring förhållandet mellan förkroppsligande och audiovisuella medier.

Mot bakgrund av att våra sätt att uppleva världen har blivit alltmer sammanflätade med – eller till och med dikterade av – teknik, syftade dessa performance-laborationer å ena sidan till att verka för ett utbyte mellan mänskliga kroppar, digitala kameror och en plats. Å andra sidan att föreslå ett reviderat metodologiskt tillvägagångssätt för vad termen "performance laboratory" och dess synonymer – nyfikenhet, undersökning och innovation – betyder i vår digitala tidsålder. För att ge en inblick följer här en kort sammanfattning av varje performance-laboration:

Lab #1 (hösten 2018-våren 2019): I samarbete med den konstnärliga forskaren *Charlotta Ruth* och bildkonstnären och filmskaparen *Katxerê Medina* fokuserade denna 5-dagars Lab på att utveckla "Hidden Choreographies" på Götaplatsen i Göteborg. Genom att kombinera rörelseimprovisation med platsorienterat skrivande syftade dessa koreografier till att leka med olika sätt att försvinna, smälta in eller "hacka" sig in i rummet.

Lab #2 (hösten 2019-våren 2020): I samarbete med de konstnärliga forskarna *Cecilia Lagerström*, *Ivani Santana* och *Walmeri Ribeiro* genomfördes detta Lab som en del av en forskningsresa till Rio de Janeiro i Brasilien (i samband med det konstnärliga forskningsprojektet "Territórios Sensíveis"). Genom att fokusera på att utforska en performance-dokumentationspraktik i det offentliga rummet befattade sig denna 5-dagars Lab med torget "Praça Mauá" i centrala Rio.

Lab #3 (hösten 2022-hösten 2023): Denna laboration genomfördes i samarbete med performance-konstnären *Charlotta Grimfjord Cederblad* och scenkonstnären *Kristin Rode*, och följde inte samma struktur som de tidigare Laborationerna. I stäl-

let för att förbereda en intensiv 5-dagars Lab var fokus att utforma en serie aktiviteter och/eller möten (mellan 2 och 5 dagar) i syfte att utforska Victor Hasselblads minnesplats på Götaplatsen för att utveckla ett filmarbete som tematiserade människans förhållande till kameror.

Avseende konstnärlig forskning ligger fokus för dessa performance-laborationer mer på att utforska metoder som kan bidra till att utveckla ett förkroppsligat och dokumentärt engagemang med en specifik plats än på konstnärlig produktion. Detta val grundar sig inte bara på ett intresse för att arbeta på ett processororienterat sätt och att skapa gemensamma lärandemiljöer. Det är också relaterat till platsspecifika praktiker, eller former av att bebo, fördjupa sig i och förkroppsliga en plats, vilket jämfört med en iscensatt föreställning kräver en annan tidsram och nivå av engagemang.

Struktur

Strukturen för avhandlingen är en sammanläggningsavhandling, som inkluderar en s.k. "Kappa" och ett antal publikationer, inklusive rörlig bild. Avhandlingen är uppdelad i sex kapitel där resultaten av performance-laborationerna, såsom artiklar, videoessäer, frågeformulär, laboratorierapporter och film, presenteras och diskuteras. Dessutom ger den en epistemologisk och metodologisk översikt över de begrepp och tillvägagångssätt som var relevanta för att utforska en platsorienterad performance-dokumentation och filmpraktik.

I kapitel 1 ligger fokus på urvalet och "utgrävningen" av en plats, särskilt med hjälp av begreppen dolda berättelser och performativa ögonblick. Medan det senare begreppet syftar på att fånga kroppsliga gester, rörelser eller uttryck, syftar det förra på de potentiella berättelser som gör det möjligt att omformulera, omtolka eller om föreställa sig en specifik plats. Detta utvidgas i kapitel 2, där fältet för platsspecifik performance introduceras, särskilt genom att titta på hur begreppet platsspecificitet kan närmas genom olika former av agens.

I kapitel 3, som kan ses som kärnan i doktorandprojektet,

presenteras performance-dokumentationens historia. Å ena sidan genom att undersöka hur dokumentation har bidragit till att förmedla och/eller översätta ett performance-verk och å andra sidan genom att utforska hur kameraarbetet kan (åter)inskriva kroppen både på en specifik plats och i inspelat material. Detta belyses ytterligare i kapitel 4, där forskningsmetoderna – kartläggning, avkänning och inspelning – för att generera och samla in data (eller audiovisuella spår) från performance-laborationerna beskrivs.

I kapitel 5 följer en praktisk inblick i arbetsprocessen för kortfilmarbetet med *I am the Camera*. Baserat på mötet med Hasselblad-monumentet på Götaplatsen, utforskar denna kortfilm människors förhållande till kameran. Genom att utveckla den gemensamma närvaron av tre karaktärer – influencern, dokumentärfilmaren och clownen – och deras tekniska utrustning, iscensätter verket en intervju med KAMERAN som landade på månen. Dessutom exemplifierar detta verk hur de audiovisuella spåren av en performance-laboration kan användas både som data och kreativ källa. En fråga som behandlas i det sista kapitlet 6 som ägnas klippningsprocessen av *I am the Camera* samt till idén att använda bildmontage som en form av (om)skrivande och/eller (om)skapande av "bildens rum".

Inflätade i och emellan kapitlen återfinns artiklar och es-säer skrivna för olika publikationer, där författaren bidragit. Samtidigt som dessa bidrag ger en inblick i performance-laboratorierna och hur de är kopplade till andra konstnärliga forskningsprojekt (t.ex. "Territórios Sensíveis" i Brasilien), speglar de också forskningens väg från platsspecifik praktik till "screen performance". Denna avhandling blandar alltså akademiskt skrivande med audiovisuella medier, kroppsliga spår med iscensatta handlingar och performativa ögonblick med minnen, allt på samma gång, genom att lokalisera och placera kroppen i en viss omgivning.

01. Monica Lindgren (Music Education)
Att skapa ordning för det estetiska i skolan. Diskursiva positioneringar i samtal med lärare och skolledare
ArtMonitor, diss. Göteborg, 2006
ISBN: 91-975911-1-4
02. Jeoung-Ah Kim (Design)
Paper-Composite Porcelain. Characterisation of Material Properties and Workability from a Ceramic Art Design Perspective
ArtMonitor, diss. Göteborg, 2006
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At a time when our ways of experiencing and inhabiting places in the city have become increasingly entangled with – or even dictated by – technology, the artistic research project *Situated Agencies: Mediating Places through the Body*, examines how site-specific performance practice can be addressed through an embodied and documentary approach. Drawing from place-based research, performance documentation and posthumanism, a series of performance laboratories were carried out in collaboration with artists/researchers from different disciplinary fields at specific places in Gothenburg and Rio de Janeiro. At the core of these laboratories was the exploration of the relationship between embodiment and audiovisuality; especially by experimenting with how the audiovisual traces of a laboratory work can serve both as data and a creative source for developing different forms of narrativisation.

NATHALIE S. FARI is a performance artist, researcher and lecturer dealing with questions of documentation, mediation and translation of site-oriented performance practices.



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