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EXPANDED CHOREOGRAPHY: Shifting the agency of movement in The Artificial Nature Project and 69 positions

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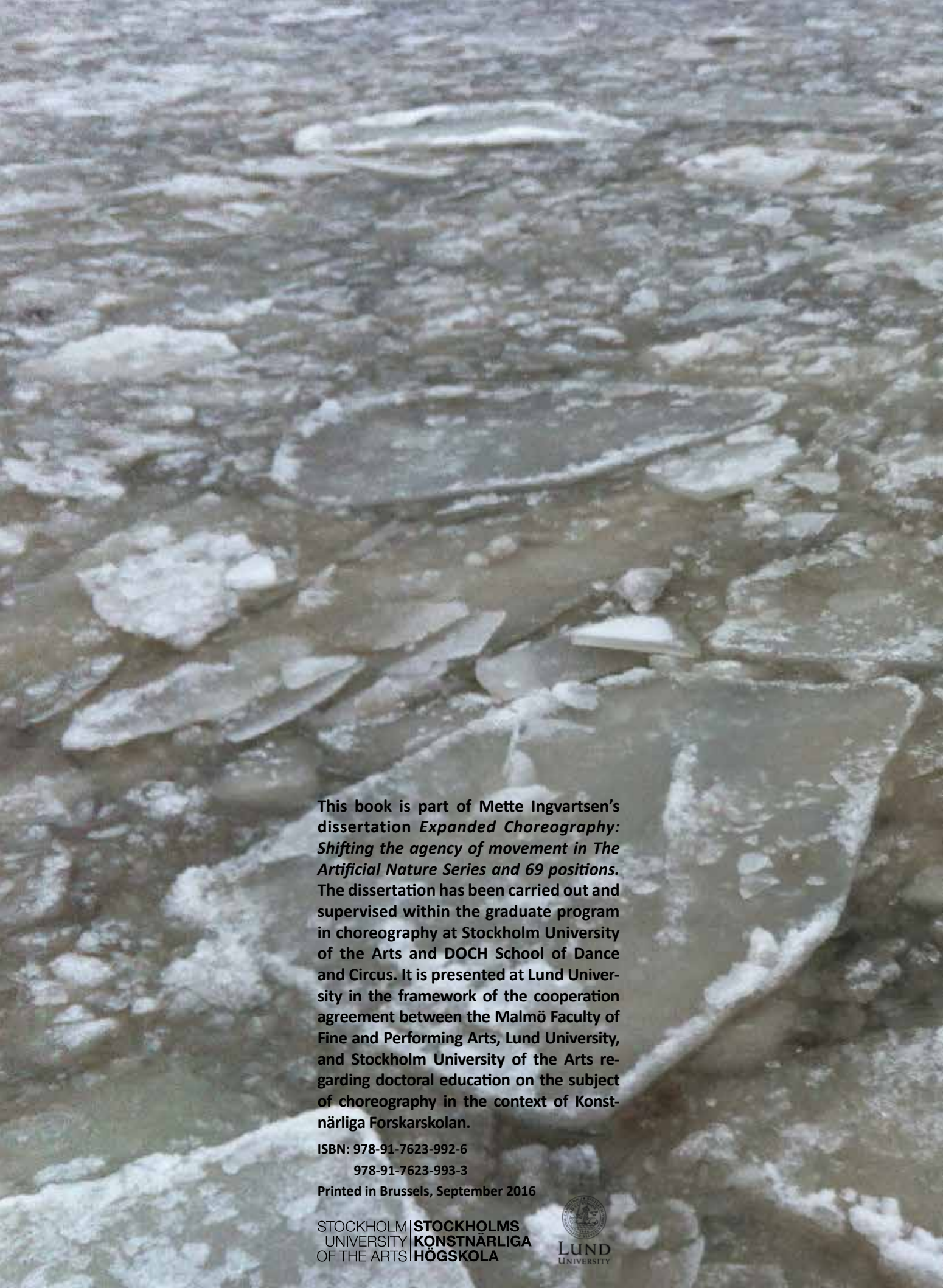
The Artificial Nature Series

Mette Ingvartsen

The Artificial Nature Series



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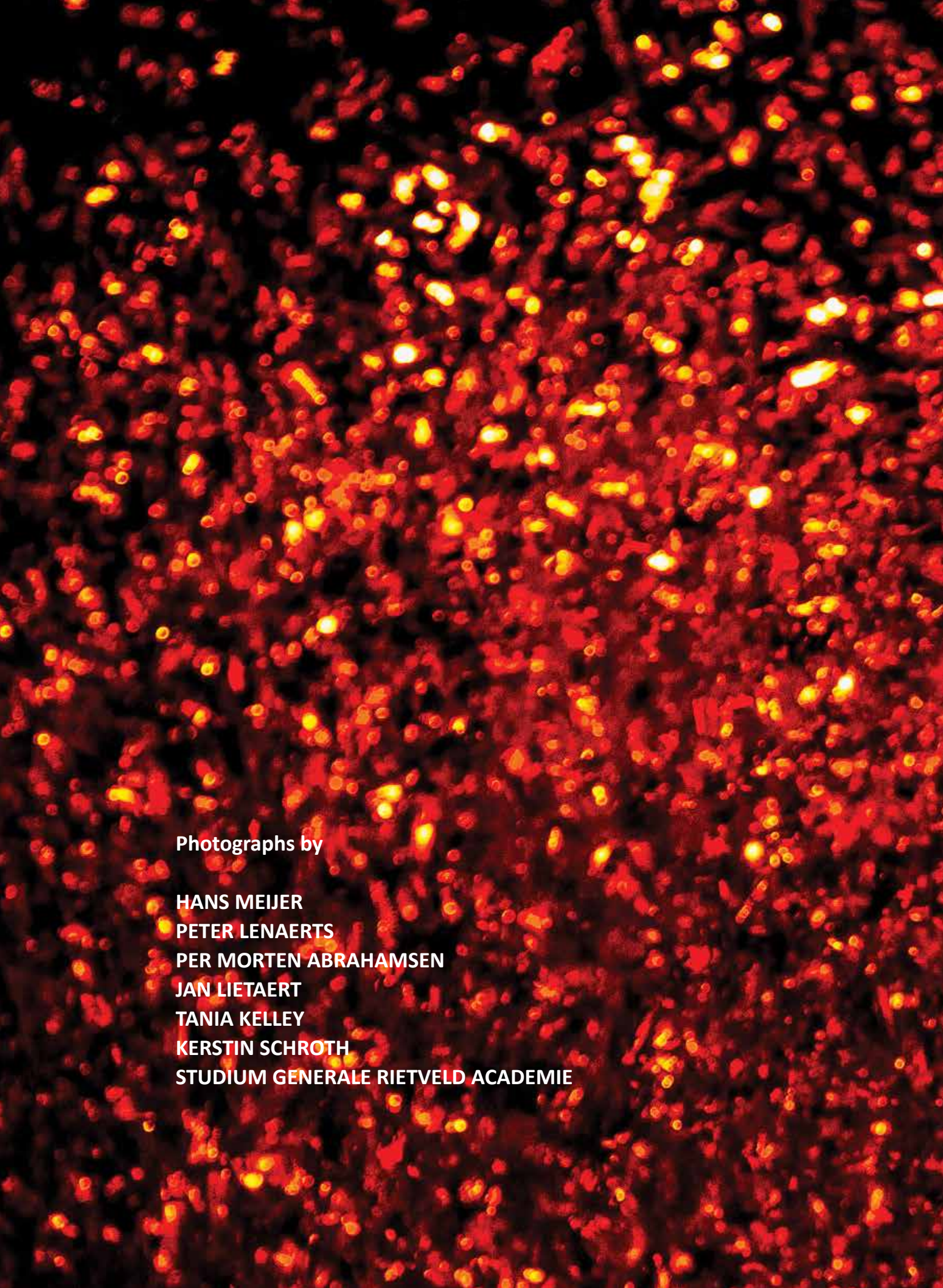

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Contents

Acknowledgements X

1. Introduction – The Artificial Nature Series 1
2. Poetic Principles of Performance 3
3. evaporated landscapes (2009) 12
4. The Extra Sensorial Garden (2010 and 2012) 22
5. The Light Forest (2010 and 2011) 20
6. Speculations (2011) 50
7. The Artificial Nature Project (2012) 69
8. Afterword – The Permeable Stage 131

Performance Chronology and Credits 140
Photo Credits 144
Notes 145
Bibliography 147
References 149

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1 Introduction - The Artificial Nature Series

Contrary to what one might expect from a choreographer making dances, this book is not about the body and its movements. Instead, it is about another notion of choreography, conceiving of movement as an extension of the body – and even beyond it. Or, maybe more precisely, a notion that composes itself in the interstitial space between human and nonhuman actors, actions and motions. In this book you will find five choreographic experiments I made between 2009 and 2012, the initial and most determining one being *evaporated landscapes*. In it, I literally removed the human performer from the stage, in order to examine what such a radical removal could lead to in terms of performative expression. What interest could one possibly have in watching *things* in themselves, without the presence of humans? At the time I did not have the faintest idea. I was unaware that this seemingly non-dramatic idea and question was going to lead to *The Artificial Nature Series* including the performances; *evaporated landscapes, The Light Forest, The Extra Sensorial Garden, Speculations* and *The Artificial Nature Project.* Meanwhile, I was surprised by the fact that every time I started a new project the same ideas kept resurfacing; the vibrancy of matter, the agency of things, the capacities of materials, light and sound to act as triggers for the production of sensations and affects, sensorial participation in the spectator, color perception, immersive stage environments, air flows and last but not least, the desire to work with the imaginary and virtual aspects of making performance.

When I started working on *The Artificial Nature Series,* I was mainly concerned with questions of immateriality and not actually with questions regarding nature. I was thinking about flows within giant cities, imagining dystopic futures and the movement of nomadic people traveling across landscapes. However, 2008 was also a period when I found a renewed interest in spending time outside. I was obsessed with looking at cloud formations, mountains and the sea – while simultaneously considering how strange it was to have spent 10 years locked up inside the city. I was struck by the strength of my sensorial, bodily and affective experience and by how suddenly everything appeared so incredibly vibrant. While I enjoyed observing the mist and the clouds moving from the top of a mountain, I also remember reading some of the most terrifying facts about nature. Tsunamis, hurricanes, CO_2 pollution, melting ice, raising seas levels, flooding; the most apocalyptic predictions becoming reality as the days and the clouds drifted by. In my dystopic speculations about these predictions, I remember thinking how the theater might one day become the only possible space for experiencing nature. And out of that perhaps pessimistic thought came a series of works focused on staging artificial nature. The performances I made were not about a

moralistic concern for the decay of nature, rather they were about the autonomous forces of the nonhuman world and our bodily experience of it. Or, perhaps more importantly, about choreography and our capacity to see the movement and agency of things as they constantly appear in the environments that surround us.

This book aims to give access to the larger questions, thoughts and ideas that have stimulated these works. The negotiations between macro and micro scales of expression- between what is happening in the world outside and what is happening inside the theater- have been permanent throughout the making of these works. Nevertheless, in spite of the ambitious character of some of the larger questions that I attempt to pose, the focus of my writing remains on how to make choreographies; how to conceptualize, discuss, articulate, materialize, sense, affect and be affected by creating performances.

The book is divided into 6 different chapters: The first, elaborates the poetic principles that can be transversally extracted from the performances in the *The Artificial Nature Series*. The subsequent texts aim to answer a series of smaller questions directly connected to my practice of making choreography. *What* is it that moves (if not human beings), *how* is it set in motion and what does its movement mean to us? When do objects start to gain a life of their own? How can an object have agency? What does it mean to address the force of things, materials, objects and matter as something that acts upon humans? Chapters 2 to 6 focus each on one of the five performances within the series. Whereas the first pieces were made as small-scale, short-term experiments, *The Artificial Nature Project* took two years to develop and would have been impossible without the preceding experimentations. In the different sections you will find concrete explanations about how these works came into being, the questions they addressed, the scores and scripts behind them, the images taken during rehearsals and performances, as well as other archival materials grouped together piece by piece. In assembling and writing further about these performances, the relationships between the different works have become a material in itself. One that I hope will become visible as another form of extended choreography, performed in and through the materiality of language.

2 Poetic Principles of Performance

1) Nonhuman Choreography:
Attributing to inanimate things the capacity to express, act and affect

Recently I went to listen to a presentation by Isabelle Stengers of her new book *In Catastrophic Times*. It made me think that perhaps the works in *The Artificial Nature Series* have all along been connected to the ambiguous notion of the Anthropocene. Still under debate among geologists, scientists and critical thinkers, the Anthropocene is the proposed name of the current epoch, one that signifies how the development of the Earth's geology and ecosystems have come to be entirely dependent on human activities and interventions. In this epoch there is nothing natural about nature – all there is are series of causes and effects, stemming from our anthropocentric desire to act, control, exploit, abandon and therefore artificialize nature. However, as Stengers argues in her book, the newly achieved success of the Anthropocene epoch in both scientific and academic fields signifies a transition in the understanding of our relationship to the environment, but not necessarily a growing capacity to overcome the problems that we are facing. In her book she names the consequences of the Anthropocene and the uncontrollable forces of nature- Gaia (after the Greek goddess of the earth) and explains what we are now up against as follows:

> Gaia is ticklish and that is why she must be named as a being. We are no longer dealing (only) with a wild and threatening nature, nor with a fragile nature to be protected, nor a nature to be mercilessly exploited. The case is new. Gaia, she who intrudes, *asks nothing of us*, not even a response to the question she imposes. Offended, Gaia is indifferent to the question "who is responsible?"

Anthropomorphizing the nonhuman force of the earth by giving it a superhuman name signals yet again the inability to think beyond our own anthropocentrism. At the same time Stengers obviously understands Gaia as an assemblage of nonhuman forces acting beyond human control. Her gesture also proposes something else; the power Gaia acquires by taking the form of a being makes her physically palpable and consequently unavoidable. A power and force that one cannot ignore, whose anger can lead to unknown effects – including the total annihilation of humankind, if we follow Stengers' predictions. By making the forces of the earth into a ticklish being and naming it Gaia, Stengers suggests that a new composition of reciprocity and interaction between humans and nonhumans has to be found. Despite

Gaia's indifference to us, this new composition gives rise to an interesting poetic principle[1] in regards to nonhuman theater. It is a principle that attributes to nonhumans the capacities to act, express and affect those who are paying attention. A principle where human bodies move with and through the nonhuman world, not for the sake of one's own survival, nor to feel one's own body moving, but to start practicing movement as a *relation* to external environments and nonhuman actors. This poetic principle of anthropomorphizing things, can however NOT be one of resemblance – of wanting nonhumans to look or behave like human beings. Rather, the principle has to transform the understanding of our own bodies by entering into composition with nonhumans in ways that also challenge our sense of self. And by that, allow the resulting expression to disturb our centralized notions of what a moving body is.

2) Material Agency: Creating a sensorial problem

If a moving body is no longer conceived of as human - our way of looking at it in theater must also transform. What follows from this, is another mode of watching performance, one that does not rely on the usual mechanisms of recognition, identification and communication so often central to theater as a human and social encounter. Instead, by sitting in front of non-human actors – light, sound, foam, bubbles, particles, colors, stones, minerals or vibrations – the spectator is confronted with the sensorial problem of how to translate what is seen in one medium of expression into another; from nonhuman utterance to bodily experience. Sensorial response is nevertheless exactly what these works aim to produce by creating an encounter with non-humans that uncannily starts to talk back, to act and to express. The sensorial problem created for the spectators emerges from the following questions: How can theater propose a space for listening to things that don't speak in a human language? What is the relationship between the animate and the inanimate world? What does it mean to make a choreography for materials, where human movement is no longer the center of attention? These questions distinguish the performances in this book from other more anthropocentric forms of theater. Perhaps they rather resemble questions that could have been posed regarding the reception of art-objects, where visitors are confronted with a similar problem of medial translation. Another visual arts characteristic within these works, is how proximity to the nonhuman objects under observation is accentuated by using immersive and perceptive stage environments. Nevertheless, the performances in this book were presented as temporal *choreographies* with dramaturgies to be experienced from beginning till end – specifically framed as such – to maintain their relationship to the history of choreography.

4) Immersive Stage Environments:
Removing the distance between the body of the spectator and the stage

All the works, except *The Artificial Nature Project,* dispense with a conventional frontal theater stage. The reasons for this are many. By removing stage frontality – *vision* as the primary sense through which we receive choreography and dance is put into question. Secondly, the *distance* to the stage that a fron-

tal set up favors is substituted by environments that envelop and touch the spectators, placing them inside the performance area. Another question I posed repeatedly regarding these works – bringing the performance even closer to the body of the spectator – was how to make a performance that literally would take place *inside the body of the spectator* and by that, make the *spectator into the location of the performative event.* (see specifically, *The Extra Sensorial Garden*)

4) The Use of Space: Formatting spatial performativity

With *evaporated landscapes*, the spatial *dispositif* was purposely made very small. The stage was only five by eight meters large, with two rows of platforms on the long sides to sit on. The audience literally sat inside the materials: Their feet were covered by the low fog that invaded the space, or their heads enveloped by the smoke that reflected light just above them. One motivation behind this was to question how theater-effects are most often used in large-scale productions, to enhance the visual and psychological intensity of a theatrical expression. By removing the spatial distance to the public – as well as to the human performer – I attempted to create a different kind of spectatorial position. The intimacy and proximity with which the audience was allowed to observe the materials, gave the performances a stronger sensorial impact. In *The Extra Sensorial Garden,* the notion of space was diminished even further by asking the audience to wear a pair of white-out glasses (see chapter 4 for details), erasing the possibility of seeing space and replacing vision with a huge field of undifferentiated white. At the same time, the visitors wore headphones canceling out sound as a possible source of spatial orientation. The idea behind these artificialized visual and auditive erasures of space, was to give the visitors an even stronger feeling of being immersed in the performative space and to prompt them to focus on their sensorial experience. The aim was to produce an intensification of sensation through sensory deprivation and at the same time through sensorial overstimulation. An opposite strategy was used in *The Light Forest*. Instead of bringing the stage so close to the viewer that all divisions of space would dissolve, the notion of the stage was extended as far as possible beyond the walls of the theater into a natural landscape. By installing lights in an actual forest, the notion of the stage space was opened up to include the entire terrain of the woods, but also the city that was visible from it. The audience was invited to “step on stage” by walking through the forest, and thus make their physical movements part of the performance.

In the first two cases, the idea was that the shift from frontal to adjacent or intimate space would suggest a rethinking of spectatorship, by favoring synesthetic experience and the collaboration between the different senses, rather than placing vision as the primary sense through which we perceive theater. The stage configurations were made to allow this shift to take place, by attempting to erase the division or to minimize the distance between the stage area and the perceiver. In the case of *The Light Forest*, the aim was that the physical activity of the spectator, while walking over the forest stage, would place her sensorimotor activity as the primary action stimulating perception. The shift towards sensorimotor activity was

proposed by choreographing the paths to be followed throughout the forest. Sometimes the audience would walk on existing paths, sometimes through bushes or uphill following sporadically flashing lights, thus highlighting the physical awareness of bodily engagement needed to complete the walk.

5) Sensorial Participation: Activating sensory perception

Besides the spatial poetics that run through these works, another defining principle of the different dispositifs explored was how they stimulate sensorial participation in the spectators' bodies; a form of participation that is composed between seeing, hearing and moving (in *The Light Forest*), in other words as sensorially active ways of receiving performance. By reducing the information flow that emanates from the "stage", the audience is invited to focus on the minute changes happening in the evaporating materials, or in the immaterial movements of colors, lights and sounds. In this case, perception becomes an extremely active state of co-constituting the performance, where the performative expression is composed between "what is being represented" and how every different body sensorially responds to it.

In his book *Action in Perception*, philosopher Alva Noé clarifies how perception is not something that happens to us, or in us, but is something that we do.[2] Specifically, he writes about our perception of colors, and the notion of "color constancy", as a way of explaining his point. Color constancy is, for instance, when your mind makes you perceive a wall as being entirely white, while it is in fact quite colorful, due to shadows and light reflections. Your brain reduces information and narrows down the colors in order to help you identify objects. Color constancy dominates over your actual perception of the wall as being full of different nuances, which are visible to you depending on the *light conditions* that illuminate it, *your position* in space and *your way of moving*. Noé argues that simultaneous to the constancy of the color white you attribute to the wall, your ability to also see the other colors depends on your implicit understanding of the aforementioned factors as sources of sensorimotor knowledge. In his book, color constancy is also used to "illustrate the difference between the *representational content* of an experience (how the world is presented by the experience) and the *qualitative or sensorial properties* of the experience (what the experience is like apart from its representational features)". [3] In my mind, this difference is interesting to think further on in relation to theater: a difference between what is represented on stage (in my case, processes of artificial nature) and how the sensorial quality that the pieces propose can also be considered a content in itself. This approach opens up a non-representational way of understanding these works, towards articulating a different economy of expression through working directly on perception.

6) The Use of Time: Intensifying sensation by slowing down the time of perception

The color perceptions activated in *evaporated landscapes, The Extra Sensorial Garden* and *The Artificial Nature Project* are defined by gradual and invisible modulations, asking the spectator to zoom into the expression in order to have a perception of it. Changes in intensities, tones and colors happen so

slowly that it's impossible to identify the moment when a shift is taking place. You can only conclude that a change has happened once it is already too late. For instance, when you suddenly realize that a foam mountain has transformed its color from white to slightly blue to green to yellow and into deep red without you registering the limits between one color and another – you might also realize that your perception is working faster than your recognition. The knowing, or becoming aware, of how perception is faster than recognition, gives rise to a very specific kind of experience. I call this mode of receiving performance *sensorial participation* to signal that perceiving is an action that the spectator is part of creating and not something that is simply happening to her, in spite of the immersive and sensorially impressive nature of the environments. The form of conscious sensorial participation that results from this adds *perceptive awareness* to the topics of investigation that these works delineate. *Perceptive awareness* is connected to our capacity to understand how audiovisual materials communicate and operate on our bodies in order to create affective and sensorial responses. Perceptive operations of images are implicitly connected to the *speed* and the *time* that they are given to create sensations. Obviously, most cultural images produced today are dominated by fast cuts, sudden interruptions and loud surround-sound effects. The over-stimulating and easily manipulative economy of images that results from this could perhaps be counteracted- not by abandoning affective stimulation- but by offering a slower temporality with its altered sensorial effects?

7) The Production of Affect: Linking sensory perception to verbal articulation

The awareness of bodily mechanisms – the fact that the speed of your perception is faster than the speed of your recognition – directly connects to affect. At a very early stage of trying to figure out what affect was, I remember someone trying to explain it to me like this: First you run, then you fear the bear.[4] Your body reacts to the lurking danger of the bear before you have actually formed an explicit and conscious image of it. This example is intriguing and also quite amusing for us here because of the explicit reference to the threating danger of an encounter with wild nature (the bear), but also because of the choreographic image it produces of a panicking body running away without knowing why. The mismatched temporalities that exist between affect and the understanding of affect render the body very fragile. While trying to figure out how affect is subconscious – thus rendering the body vulnerable to affective manipulation as it operates outside of conscious awareness or rational control – I found a text[5] by Brian Massumi pushing this point even further. In his essay, he makes the fragilization of the body directly political, explaining how affective fragility renders bodies susceptible to governmental control. In his text he shows how the color coding system – installed to signal the levels of danger in the US post 9/11 – created a permanent state of fear in the population, rendering their bodies vulnerable and prey to affective control. The explicitly political character of affect exemplified by this story has an entirely other dimension than what one can undertake in a theater of artificial nature. Nevertheless, I remember how it elucidated the question of affective control in a very concrete manner, triggering other thoughts and

questions regarding the nature of theater. What is the relation between subconscious affective experience and sensory manipulation, and how is this expressed in theater? How can perceptive awareness be used to bridge the gap between subliminal sensory experience and verbal articulation? How can the theater become a space to practice and train our ability to build these bridges?

When I, together with Manon Santkin, was working on *The Extra Sensorial Garden*, we were confronted with how to make a performance that on the one hand would create minute perceptions and, on the other, would allow these perceptions to enter into consciousness and language. The performance was divided in two parts; a very strong, almost manipulative sensorial experience, followed by an invitation for the audience to talk about their experience for the same amount of time as the immersive environment had lasted. The aim was to link the experience of sensory deprivation to a verbal articulation of it, including potential questions regarding sensorial manipulation. When we showed it for the first time, someone described her experience as pure sensorial torture, while someone else recounted her's as the most pleasant experience she had ever had. By this contradiction, we realized that there was nothing neutral nor universal about the experience we proposed, in spite of the physiological conditions that the spectators obviously shared. Instead, we started to work on the relation between perception, imagination and language articulation and how passages between these different modes of expression could take place.

8) The Use of Time: Using language to create imaginary movements

Imagination as a poetic principle created a link between language and the more abstract sensorial approaches that I used in the pieces, to express the vibrancy of matter, the force of things and notions of artificialized nature. As a constructive principle, imagination was not a dreamlike utopic mode of floating in the sensations provided by these pieces, rather it was a strategy for how to pass from bodily sensation into language articulation. The performance that made this principle the most explicit was *Speculations*, in which language was used as a choreographic material to create an imaginary reality within the minds of the spectators. In this performance the topics of investigation were similar to those of the other works, but were demonstrated not only by showing material agency, but also by speaking about it. *Speculations* took the imaginary space opened up by the dissolution, evaporation and elusive qualities of the other performances one step further, by simply dematerializing the choreographic expression to become an imagined reality.

9) Immateriality: Staging processes of evaporation, dissolution and dispersion.

The fact that language was used extensively to produce all of these works – even as a choreographic material within several of them – reveal that the material processes of evaporation, dissolution and dispersion were closely connected to immaterial processes of discussion, articulation and communication. What comes from reading transversally though these works is perhaps exactly a connection between the

material, sensorial and affective aspects of these choreographies, and specific ways in which they relate to discourse and language production. As I stated in the introduction, when I started working on this series I was interested in understanding the notion of immateriality, its relation to our material bodies and what this might mean to choreography and dance. Immateriality was a word I tried to discern as diversely as possible. I wanted to understand the fluctuating movements of air streams and flows of materials, because I felt they also related to understanding invisible flows of money, information and communication characteristic of our current immaterial labor economy. I thought about how, in this economy, our bodies are no longer material workers creating objects in the factory assembly line. Rather, we are permanently called upon to also participate in the labor economy with our affects, sensations, ideas and imaginations as a way of developing projects, improving services, communications and information, to enhance experience as a new product.

What was provoked by these reflections on immateriality, was a reconsideration of how movements could be formed beyond the human body in its intersection with materials, machines, imaginations, affects and sensations. This was a way of turning attention towards processes of dematerialization, but of course it was also a way of proposing a non-anthropocentric notion of dance and the body, by including the expressions of non-human elements. The specific understanding of bodies that arose from these works – light bodies, sound bodies, particle bodies, foam bodies, fog bodies, bubble bodies that burst and disappeared into air – were all produced by using mechanical and technological extensions. Machines that were obviously created by humans, at the same time producing stage realities that aimed, through their theatrical fictions and imaginations, to compose a feeling of autonomous material expression and agency within non-human worlds. This use of technical extensions of the body also echoed how bodies today are no longer separated from technology and how subjectivities are permanently being shaped by technological prolongations. What also appeared through working on these bodies of material evaporation, dissolution and dispersion, was perhaps a reflection on the precariousness of these bodies on the edge of existing; bodies that easily burst, dissolve and disappear.

10) Artificial Nature: Forming a poetics

In the beginning, the external frames of what my theatrical questions could be connected to outside of the theater were blurry to me. As I progressed through the works, but also through the writing of this book, I understood that they corresponded to the poetic principles outlined above. I also realized that producing stage expressions through these principles was an attempt to understand movement processes as they happen outside the theatre, specifically in regards to notions of artificialized nature. The focus of the poetics they developed – although the pieces sometimes also “represent” nature – was primarily concerned with staging the *processes* of nature and how this potentially could give rise to less familiar experiences of matter. This interest developed from a desire to experiment with choreographing nonhu-

man movements and to making them visible both inside and outside of the theater. The processes that concretely interested me were; the unpredictable configurations of clouds, the invisible movements of winds, the turbulences of hurricanes, the shadows of trees, the surface reflections of the sea, the chaos of fires, the viscosity or forcefulness of volcanic eruptions – but also the movement of industrial and immaterial forms of labor production as they create uncontrollable effects in the nonhuman world.

To name this approach *artificial* nature was important for two reasons: On the one hand because artificiality reflects how today, in the Anthropocene epoch, the concept of unspoiled nature has ceased to exist. I mean this in the simple sense, that even when we think of the most desolate and untouched landscapes representing "pure" nature within our imagination, we are aware of the fact that these landscapes are being effected and denaturalized, if not by pollution or capital exploitation (ski resorts, mountain climbing, para-gliding etc.), then by climate change and its effects. On the other hand, if we take this fact seriously, that unspoiled nature no longer exists, then consequently neither does the natural body. And this radically challenges and changes how we can think about the body in dance.

An artificializing approach to the body, where its naturalness is no longer a given, distinguishes itself from a specific history of dance where the natural body has dominated ever since Isadora Duncan symbolically danced with her bare feet in the grass. Her approach was to break with ballet and classical notions of a centralized and hierarchical body by dancing in nature while physically imitating the movements of wind and water. Much later, towards the end of the 1960's, the naturalness of the body in dance was reinforced by various dance practices; release technique and contact improvisation making the correct anatomical use of the body into a "natural ideal" for how to move in sync with ones own physiological conditions. In the same vain, Body-Mind Centering, as well as somatic practices such as Feldenkrais and Alexander technique, started to accompany dance training by favoring inner sensation and awareness of anatomical functionality over form. The concept of the natural body drawn by this history always places the human being as the center of the dance (reflecting a general anthropocentrism), while the body's biological and physiological functions are often conceived of and performed as given truths. This is, for instance, also exemplified by discourses like "the body never lies" or by Martha Graham's notion of dance being motivated by an inner natural drive towards self-expression through movement. This unquestioned relationship between choreography, dance, nature and self-expression, which for so long and still today defines a widespread conception of dance, is very different from what the works in *The Artificial Nature Series* try to show; that dance or choreography does not necessarily come from within the body, but can also be entirely decorporalized or created in the intersection between humans and larger nonhuman environments. The body in these performances is either external to the nature represented, or operating in conjunction with the "nonhuman forces of nature" that in *The Artificial Nature Project* are staged as independent, autonomous, threatening and even overwhelming to the human body moving within it.

By questioning the naturalness of nature itself and by choreographing movements of the nonliving, the conception of bodies proposed by these pieces places the human in a decentralized position. Or, in the case of *The Artificial Nature Project*, in the position of working alongside with materials, machines and all the other elements within the stage environment, producing a confrontation between the body and the untamable forces of nature represented by the performance. To place the body within a network of relations between human and nonhuman actors, and to confront the problems it poses to theater and to us as human performers, no longer in the center of attention, is both fascinating, absorbing and highly problematic. Throughout the work on *The Artificial Nature Project*, it was a difficult challenge to make sense of being in this peripheral position and to understand human agency as a relation to be composed with nonhumans. To think of these works as a way to practice a decentralized or inverted relationship to the material world, or as a way to try to disrupt theatrical anthropocentrism, was a mindset that helped to resolve the difficulties encountered while making these works. It was a way to think of these works as analogies of how to implement anti-anthropocentrism in the world outside the theater. And also, how to create a space for experimenting with ways of coexisting and composing with nature, dead matters, machines and other unpredictable nonhuman forces.

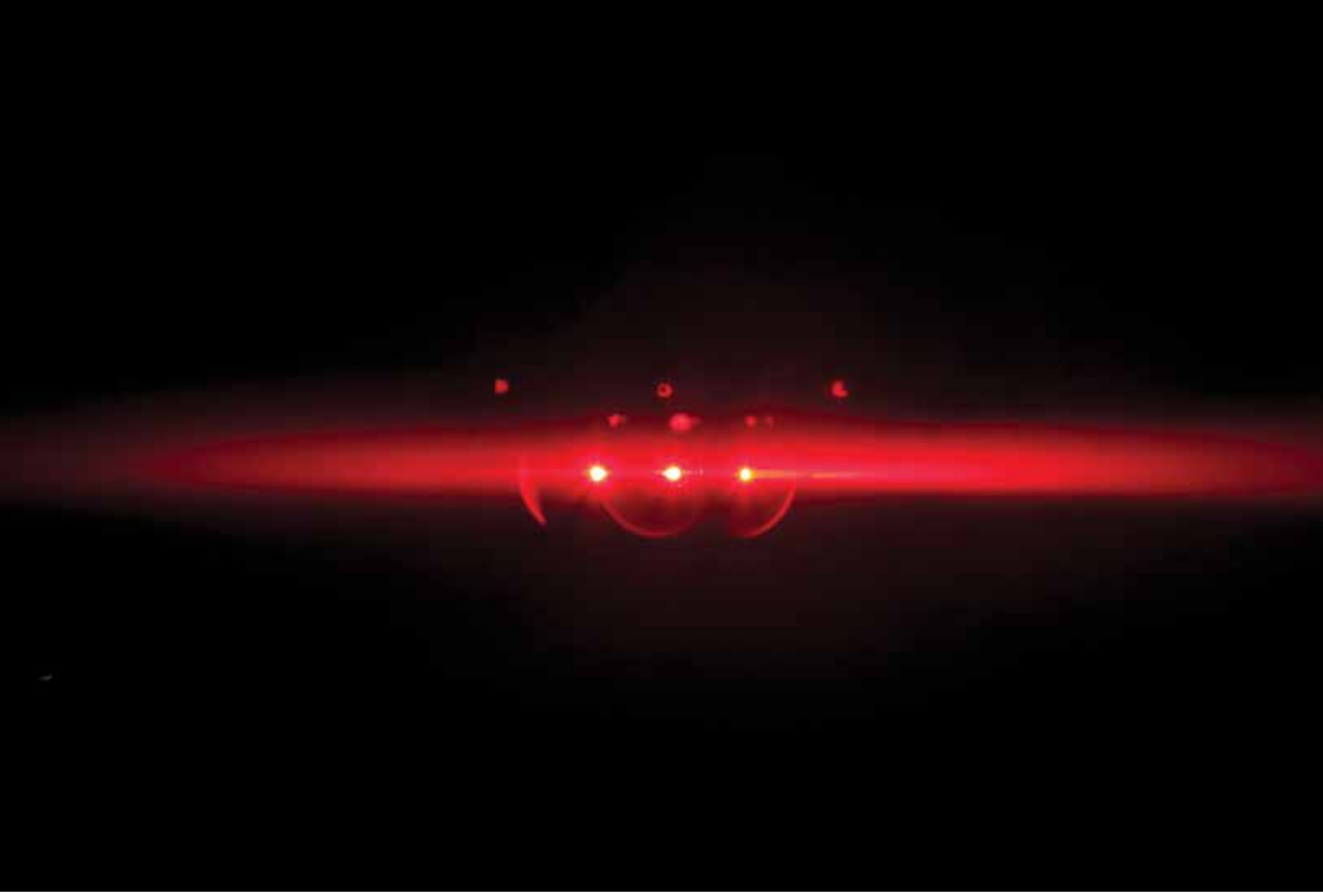
3 evaporated landscapes
A Minute Description of a Piece That Resists Capture

You are walking into an entirely dark space. Once in a while a white light flashes. Bright white – almost blinding. The frequency of the light flashes makes you stop – and start – and stop – and start again until you find your way to your seat. The situation is slightly disorienting as the space you just walked into is far from a conventional theater set-up. In front of you is a small stage that is momentarily illuminated from five light sources placed on the ground. On two sides of the performance area, two rows of seating are built out of wooden panels without chairs. You consider which of the four rows to choose from before sitting down. Then, you start looking at the other people still arriving, stopping and going as you just did. As your eyes get used to the darkness, you start to be able to decipher what's creating the flashing light. It looks like little white clouds or mountains that are flickering on the black floor, as if from a faulty electrical connection. When all the spectators are finally sitting, the light flashes stop and a penetrating darkness surrounds you. After a while, four lamps on the ground at the edge of the stage fade in, casting a shadow on the opposite side of the "mountains" on the floor. What you see resembles a miniature mountain landscape. The more the intensity of the lights increase, the more the woman standing far out on the opposite side of the lights becomes visible. She is standing behind a manual machine that looks extremely used and old. It has a long tube coming from it that reaches into the performance area. As the

woman starts lifting and lowering a rod with a handle plunged into the machine, a low fog waves over the stage. As she lowers the handle, a big wave moves across the space before it evaporates. The third time she lowers the rod, the entire stage fills up, the fog moves and whirls around the mountains, and transforms from one evaporating image to another – mist, clouds, waves, streams, currents and under-currents drift into one another. After a while the fog lifts up a little higher. As the mountains are almost entirely covered, the fog starts to resemble a cloud formation, a moving mist or even a storm. The height, the force and the speed of the fog flowing in over the landscape looks like a huge flood wave, swallowing up everything it passes on its way. Strangely, it makes you smile. You are sitting with your feet inside the fog and even as it obtains the force of a tsunami it hardly covers the level of your knees. It makes you feel like a giant sitting with your enormous feet inside the water. You notice that there is a wind blowing, or maybe it is just the sound of it. Slowly the fog evaporates and disappears. Out of the tube streams the secretion of the machine, leaving a slight mist drifting close to the ground. It is wet on the floor, which is shining black. A white light now emanates from the mountains. They seem to be made of foam and they feel cold from a distance. You hear the sound of dripping water. The acoustics in the space make you feel as if you were inside a wet cave. The woman at the machine is focusing all her attention on the foamy lights shining on the floor. After looking at her for a while, you start looking at the mountains as well. As you return your gaze to them, you see that they have become slightly blue. The space feels colder than before and while you are starring at the mountains you continuously fail to see the moment when they

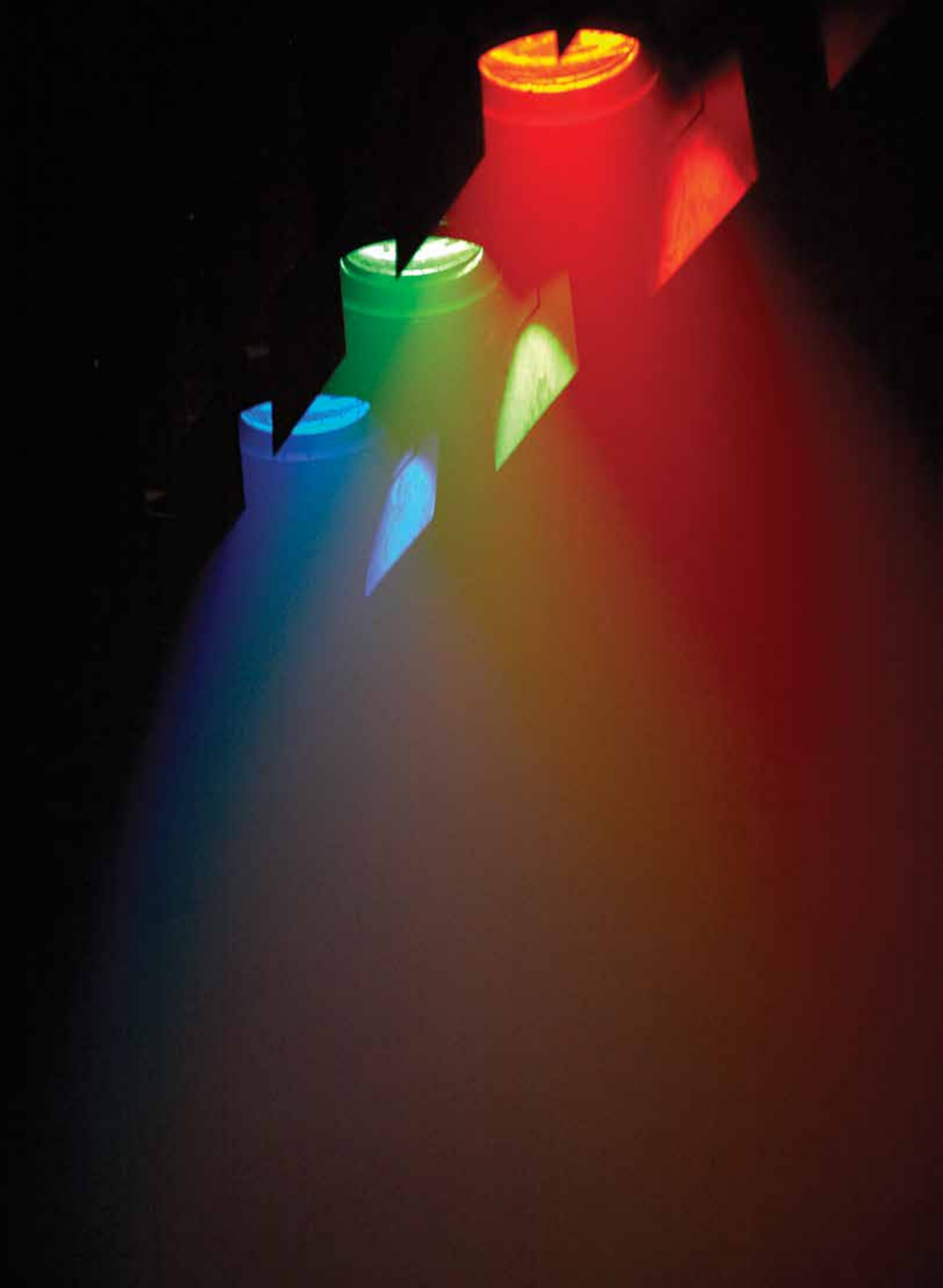
change from one color to the next. It's like a magical effect that is happening so slowly, you only see that a change has happened at the moment when it is already too late.

You hear some unidentifiable sounds, materials rubbing against each other, maybe rubber. As the sound dries out, the mountains have moved through yellow, orange and are now slowing turning red. You can see the people on the other side of the tribune in the glow of their light. They are entirely absorbed by the color transformations. The five lava-like masses on the ground are now almost flickering red, while their intensity is continuously decreasing. As the light of the masses blacken, you begin to hear the sound of fire. In the complete darkness, a hallucination of tiny little light reflections appears in front of your eyes. It's impossible to say what creates this effect. Thousands of microscopically small red dots look as if they are floating or flying in the air. It makes you think of fireflies, a huge swarm moving right in front of you. You still don't know what produces this reflection. From the top of the room another two red lights come on. They make the swarm of flies multiply vividly. The lights also shine on the floor, making the image slightly less illusory than just a few seconds ago, yet you remain mesmerized almost absorbed by it. The sound has turned from recognizable fire sounds into something almost tonal, maybe produced by materials like crystals or glass. In the middle of the space a blue light now appears, transforming the shape and the movement of the light swarm that moves in front of your eyes. Instead of feeling that the particles are falling, you now have the sensation that they are floating up towards the blue light that is



shining from above. The triangular cone of light almost sucks the particles into the air. An arch of particles appears in light blue, mixing with the dark blue already present, opening the airspace from two opposing sides. You feel a lightness in your belly from looking at this phenomenon. When the last two white lamps in the row come on, you see how the effect you've been looking at has been produced all along by two bubble machines standing on the edges of the stage. The bubbles still reflect light, resembling particles falling on the ground like snow and you see how they are piling up on the floor under the machines. Again people sitting on the opposite tribune become visible, but slowly they start dissolving in front of your eyes, as the white light fades into another complete blackout. While the lights are fading, a loud noise is overpowering the melodic, harmonic and material composition that filled the space. There is something dystopic about the noise, as if a danger is lurking. The darkness swallows you while the sound fills you up, and the tribune under you starts trembling. After a minute or two the wave of sound diminishes and a calmer blackness encloses itself around you. A reminiscence of the melodic tones again soothes the space, as a smoky red sky appears right above your head. You can reach your hand up to touch it. The sky is full of cloud formations drifting across the room. Sometimes it empties out, other times it fills up depending on the fluctuations of air.

You look at the smoke, as you look at clouds. It makes you think about other things; everyday things, dream like things, things in general. You no longer feel like a giant. You even feel tiny under the red sky.



Maybe it's just because the perspective has changed and you are no longer literally on top of what you are seeing. A blue cone reenters from above and is graphically drawn out by its encounter with the smoke. The red sky cuts straight across it, in an architectural line. There is something digital about how the two colors intersect one another. Then, another red lamp lights up from above resulting in a color-mix between deep blue and red, a vivid pink. As the red sky disappears, another green lamp lights up next to the blue, creating yet another mixture of colors. All gradients between green, cyan, blue, magenta and red show up in a light phenomenon played out upon the last evaporations of smoke in the space. As you see these red, green and blue lights dim, you notice that the foam mountains, barely remaining on the floor, are now flickering in the exact same colors. The flickering is so fast that you are not entirely sure if the red-blue-green oscillation is what you are actually seeing or if the light is simply white. The sound has an electronic feel to it, like electricity running through cables or explosions happening from very far away. And then it all stops. The lights go out, the sound dies and you find yourself sitting in deep darkness.

Immaterial Choreography
On evaporated landscapes and GIANT CITY

evaporated landscapes was made in June 2009 during a two-week long residency in Vienna. I had been invited by Sigrid Gareis and Joachim Gerstmeier to participate in a program called *Insel #7: Gravity*. The invitation was to make a performance sketch within a short period of time and to present it to an audience in order to open a space for experimentation and discussion. I couldn't quite grasp what was meant by performance sketch and I thought instead I would simply use the opportunity to develop something I had long been wanting to do; a choreography for theater machinery, scenography, objects and materials. Already in my early investigations for *Why We Love Action* (2006), I had tried to create a scenography that would move by itself and that could be sufficiently performative to stand on its own. In *Why We Love Action*, only a four minutes long sequence of moving materials actually made it into the piece, in spite of having worked and researched for weeks and months on how to make chairs, tables, pillows and blankets move by themselves. It was only 3 years later, when I finally returned to this idea, that I realized the materials I needed would have to be ephemeral.

evaporated landscapes started from the idea of an immaterial set-design, from how to create a space that would be elusive, changeable and transformative, but at the same time have real properties like temperature, color, density and locality. Initially I thought I was making the set-design for another performance that I was simultaneously working on called *GIANT CITY.* However, when the sketch invitation arrived, I decided to test if it would be possible to finally make a performance entirely devoid of human presence. I contacted sound designer Gérald Kurdian and lighting designer Minna Tiikkainen, with whom I had already collaborated before, to join the first research period at CENT 4 in Paris. In this enormous rehearsal space where I had a residency for 2 weeks in January 2009, each of them came to work with me for a few days. We discussed and tested how to remove the human performer entirely from the stage, to work solely with materials and what they might be able to perform as an isolated proposition.
In that period, we had two huge RGB neon-lights that we wrapped in densely woven fabric in order to make the colors of the neon tubes mix. We also had one bubble machine, one smoke machine and, on Minna's instructions, a light-stand with a red, blue and green profile lamp. Gerald had two simple speakers to play his first material sounds from. In this extremely low-tech setting, we made a first score. It quickly became clear that what the smoke and the bubbles were capable of expressing, was much closer to what interested us than the two meters long, neon lights covered in heavy fabrics, which remained immobile on the floor, no matter what happened. This element on the floor also negatively reminded me of working with solid objects (tables, chairs, mattresses, pillows and blankets) and it clarified how the

materials we were going to continue working with in Vienna had to be elusive, evaporating and capable of dissolving into air.

We created a score that was based on how to make the bodies of the spectators become the site where the performance would be played out. During the performance, the spectators' sensory perceptive systems should be activated by the movements of light, fog, smoke, soap bubbles and sound. One of the first experiments we did had to do with examining how people reacted when walking into an entirely dark space that would be lit only by sparse flashes of light, so as to give a glimpse of the seating areas, which would be organized in an unconventional manner. We were curious to see to what extent people would be able to use their sensorimotor memories of what they saw during the light flashes to navigate towards their seats. The idea was to let the spectators sit inside this transforming space. Not watching the materials from a distance, but rather to be immersed in them, sitting with their feet in the dry ice, or being able to reach out and touch the bubbles or the smoke. It became a work on scale and proportion, proximity and how to produce feelings of intimacy towards evanescent materials, as if they were animate objects. We attempted to create an interactive, artificial space; a miniature world that would create a frame in which bodies could travel, if not physically, at least in their sensation and imagination. By removing the human performers, the idea of performance presence itself became dematerialized, no longer connected to a moving subject.

Relational Movement

When I started working on *GIANT CITY* and *evaporated landscapes*, I was interested in the idea of immateriality in the broadest sense of the word: immaterial labor, immaterial flows, immaterial movements such as sensations and affects. In *GIANT CITY*, I wanted to focus on the relations between bodies as a way of shifting our attention away from the materiality of the body itself; rather making a choreography for the space in between bodies. I started to think about the relationship between bodies as a form of immaterial architecture that would be transformable, flexible and mobile. I was fascinated by thinking and reading about the city as a way to understand the relationship between material and immaterial architectures.[6] I analyzed the city as a place where palpable and ephemeral elements were juxtaposed. I was especially influenced by the architectural distinction that can be made between hard conventional construction work and the immaterial flows that circulate inside and around such stable structures. I looked at and studied streams of people passing through buildings. I thought about flows of information

running though cables, and how exchanges of money were permanently taking place in digital and immaterial spaces. I questioned how all these immaterial movements were part of what governs bodies and conditions patterns of behavior within the network society.

In the same period, I was highly influenced by discourses on immaterial labor and how living in a knowledge-based economy has changed our understandings of production. I spend a lot of time reading about how goods are no longer 'goods', and how products today include everything from exchanges of information, to services and deliveries of experiences. The description of this reshaping of reality, of the transformation of modes of productions and conditions of work, resonated with my own situation as a performer working within artistic processes. The in-distinctions between work and life, the fact that dealing with ideas makes us susceptible to being invaded by work at any hour of the day, felt familiar.

The texts I read[7] corresponded closely with two specific questions I had about making performances: On the one hand, I was interested in how to work on what I called relational movement,[8] rather than on the movement of the body itself. On the other hand, I wanted to find a way to include the mental capacity and activity of the performer – what she's thinking about while performing – into the choreographic process of creating relational movements. How to make a choreography that would be about the visibility of air, while at the same time being about the investment of the performers imagination and making this visible, at first seemed like a contradiction. This double questioning finally led me to make two different performances instead of one. The focus on the movement of air – an interest that is present in both *GIANT CITY* and in *evaporated landscapes,* became more clear after separating the two performances.

In *GIANT CITY* the questions we posed had to do with how *inter-relational space* is constructed. How bodies interact or respond to each other on the level of bodily communication. How bodies are being moved and how these flows of movement take part in constructing space and the possibilities of exchange within space. The main question we tried to answer was how to become aware and perceptive of that which is normally immaterial, invisible and non-graspable but nevertheless fundamental to understanding contemporary movement. Our main concern was how to *render space tactile*. The idea of making space or air visible, making it into something directly perceivable, was one of the clearest responses we came up with in relation to working on these topics.

However, I quickly realized that making the invisible visible, or giving visibility to that which structures behavior and governs bodies, was a little overambitious a goal for a non-verbal choreography, as the qualities of invisible structures are much more elusive than what can be demonstrated though movement. The performances I made did not attempt to resolve this dilemma. Rather, they tried to emphasize and show dematerialization processes within choreography as a way of reflecting the topic. In the case

of *evaporated landscapes*, this was the process of dematerialization that that occurs when the physical body is no longer the driving force within the performance, when elusive materials move before dissolving into air. Or, in the case of *GIANT CITY,* this was rather the dematerialization of choreography that takes place when the movements that are choreographed are rather in the relations between performers, as well as in the structure of their thinking and imagination. In both performances, the movements the spectators experienced were visible and invisible, concrete and imagined, sensed and thought at the same time. In my mind, the complexity of these double binds were directly related to the problematics posed by the experience economy, despite the fact that the performances did not directly represent anything pointing in this direction.

I was thinking about how theatre performances were perfect examples of products within the experience economy and it became a focus to try to create a rupture in the logic of how these "products" would operate on the bodies of the spectators. Instead of producing an already valorized and recognizable experience, what I attempted to do was to create indeterminate and indefinite expressions, giving rise to sensations that would be hard to place and therefore to questioning the efficiency of the experience.

Looking back at it today, I think I considered producing slow performances as a way of resisting the permanent overstimulation of the senses that I saw in many different 'experience' products like 3D cinema, interactive videogames, mainstream entertainment, etc. But I also considered slowness as a personal way of resisting the over-mobility that resulted from the precarious work conditions that I was subjected to.

Somehow, these performances were direct material reflections on more general questions of how to deal with the rootlessness of living a nomadic life, the physical instabilities created by the precarious workforce and the bodily tiredness resulting from permanently exercising this flexibility. The performances were attempts to use the theater as a place for potentially slowing down the speed of overstimulation, to tune in with a slower time of perception and reflection, as a temporary antidote against the demands for speed, flexibility, mobility and transformation.

3 The Extra Sensorial Garden (Sensorial Choreography)

In 2010 I was invited by Danish choreographer and performer Kitt Johnson to participate in a site-specific festival that she organizes yearly in different parts of Copenhagen. 2010 was dedicated to Nørrebro, a part of town that had become increasingly more difficult to move through due to the gang shootings that took place in 2008 and 2009, leading the city to close down access to various streets and squares. Kitt was politically engaged and wanted to make a festival that would give Nørrebro back to the people living there. I was concerned as well, despite the fact that I was living far away from Denmark. At the time, my sister was working on one of the squares where the shootings had taken place and I had frequent reports from her on how the situation was developing. My first response to Kitt's proposal was to do a guided tour through the streets where the shootings had taken place, looking at exactly how they had happened, choreographically speaking. I quickly discarded this idea, as it gave me the uncanny feeling of becoming an "old news" reporter. Nevertheless, while I was walking through the streets trying to figure out where the shootings had taken place, I found a little closed off green area that would hardly qualify as a garden. It was probably an old sports field, no longer being used for its purpose. However once inside of it, I had the feeling of being in a totally different area of town. It felt like a little opening – a perfect space for trying to create a heterotopia. I began to think that opening up the possibilities for how to consider Nørrebro

was probably better than reducing it to the battle field that it was so easily represented as in the media. I went back to Brussels and started working on *The Extra Sensorial Garden*. It became a sound piece to be listened to, in the "garden" on Nørrebro, wearing white-out glasses that I had started constructing out of plastic decoration balls, elastic, glue, furry fabric and straps. Once again I worked together with Gérald Kurdian who began to compose a sound score out of concrete natural sounds that could blend in with the noise of the city. Manon Santkin, my artistic collaborator since the very beginning of my work, joined the project and together we started to develop the sensorial score. The glasses were done. The soundtrack was in the making and Manon and I had started experimenting with additional sensory stimulation: A piece of long grass touching the neck of the visitor so softly that they would not be able to tell if it was the wind, or something else passing. A gust of wind created by big cardboard panels that we waved at them to simulate a breeze. A cyan color filter held up between the eyes of the visitors and the sun – so that they would suddenly see an entirely cyan blue sky. These were only some of the experiments that finally made it into this first version in Nørrebro.

The visitors arrived guided by someone who led them from one artist's proposition to another, as was custom during the site-specific festival in which the piece was presented. The members of the public gathered around a tree outside the field and listed to a recorded message explaining to them how to put on the glasses and the headphones prepared for them. The 7 volunteer helpers and myself led the 21 visitors into the garden. On specific time cues, we executed the action-score comprised of the additional sensory stimulation that we performed on the visitor's bodies. Unexpectedly, it was only 2 or 3 persons in each group of 21, who actually moved around on the sports field, while the rest remained entirely immobile on the spot where we had left them, until we came to pick them up again. I was puzzled by this fact. Why this immobility? Of course the fact of wearing the white out glasses would make it a little scary to move around, but I had the feeling that something else was going on. After talking to the people who witnessed this first version of the performance, I understood that it had to do with wanting to "feel what was happening fully", as if moving would take away from the audio/visual stimulation.

Two years later, together with Manon Santkin, we decided to work further on this proposition in order for it to become an actual performance that could take place in a theater. Manon created all the adaptations and changes in the sound score and I was busy with the lights. While making it, the following questions came under discussion:

1. *How does sensory experience stimulate thought and imagination?*
2. *How can the duration of the experience offer a time for contemplation?*
3. *How do concrete sounds and abstract color-experiences allow for differentiated associations in each visitor?*
4. *How do these audio-visual experiences connect to memory, recognition, sensation?*

5. *How can this work be considered as an invented nature in the theater, a replacement for a possible lost nature?*
6. *How do sensory deprivation and sensory overstimulation resemble each other?*
7. *What do these sensory experiences resonate with in society?*
8. *What is the danger of sensory manipulation?*
9. *What is the pleasure of immersion?*

In what follows, you'll find the score and the script of the final indoor version of the performance that was finished and presented at the *Burning Ice* festival, an initiative of Guy Gypens, taking place at the Kaaitheater in Brussels.

The Extra Sensorial Garden
Script and Score

After gathering outside, a small audience of maximum 9 people enter into a room. They are invited to take off their jackets and leave their bags on a rack, before sitting down around a table. Once they are all seated Mette Ingvartsen or Manon Santkin give the following introduction:

Welcome to *The Extra Sensorial Garden*.

In a little moment we; Manon, Joachim and myself, will lead you into the garden that is located behind this wall. In order to enter the garden, we ask you to wear the glasses and the headphones that lie on the table in front of you. Before you put them on, I'm just shortly going to explain how to do it and what will happen once you are wearing the gear. The glasses you will put on by yourself and it is important that they close tightly around your eyes so that there is no light coming in at their edges. Your hair should not go inside the glasses and you should also avoid it hanging down in front of them. Once you have them on, we will ask you to push your chairs backwards a bit, which will help to give us space to guide all of you into the garden. Once you have pushed your chairs backwards, we will come to put the headphones on your ears and then lead you into the garden one by one. As there are 9 of you and only 3 of us, some of you will be waiting a bit longer while sitting with the headphones. Don't worry, we will come to get you!

Once in the garden we will guide you to sit down on a chair exactly identical to the ones you are sitting on right now. It will feel familiar. Then we will leave you there to experience the garden on your own. After a good while, we will come back to pick you up and lead you back into this room, where you will find each other again sitting around this table. At that moment it will be possible to talk more about what you experienced within the garden.

Please go ahead and put on the glasses. And now, please move your chairs backwards to make a bit more space between you and the table. We are going to put the headphones onto your ears and lead you into the garden.

The audience is left for 20 minutes infront of an RGB light installation. The white-out glasses they are wearing create an effect of seeing an endless color space, that is slowly modulating throughout the duration. It starts with white, modulating in an almost impercpetible manner through light pastel colors; slight green, cyan, blue and purple. Later, the lights are used at their maximum intensity, which produces an experience of heat on the bodies visiting the garden, at the same time as it creates a white-out effect. In the final sequences the white lights and the neon lights in the room are turned off. The effect is that the colors become much deeper and more intense from clear cyan, to dark blue and black, with small appearance of green creating counter images of slight purple. The sound that the visitors hear in the headphones, start from the sound of a garden; birds, wind and bees that literally feel like they are flying around their heads. The second part of the sound sequence is a fire and it gives the feeling of being inside a huge forest fire. In time this corresponds with the moment where the lights create heat on their bodies.

After a good while, white noise is mixed into the fire sound - it becomes more abstract but could almost feel like a storm or hurricane. After yet another while, the white noise is mixed with the sound of a real storm and rain. The rain turns into a running flood and the sound of crickets calmly produces the existing image that continues to play when the visitors are led back out of the space again. When the visitors are once again sitting around the table, we remove their headphones and tell them that they can now take off their glasses. When all of them are back out of the experience, Mette or Manon continues, depending on who has already done the introduction.

Welcome back.
How are you feeling? Would you like a glass of water?
As the experience can be quite intensive for some people, we would like to propose to just take 10 or 15 minutes to come back out of the experience before you will once again leave the room. If there is anything you would like to say about what you experienced in the garden, you are most welcome to share it. Together with Mette we are interested in creating an ephemeral collection of experiences and memories of this garden, so if there is anything you would like to add to this catalogue please do so.

We discuss freely with the visitors for about 10-15 minutes. In this discussion we leave as much space for the visitors to speak as possible. We listen to their answers, interested in their experience. We try to ask more questions to make them specify what they felt and to put their non-verbal sensations into words. We loosely formulate and reformulate the content of the questions below as it fits in the conversation.
-How would you describe this sensorial experience you just had?
-How did you feel about "loosing" your sight and replacing it with this color space?
-Did you feel immersed in the landscape?
-Could you describe which part of the garden you felt most enclosed by?
-What did you think about while being in the garden, did it give you other associations and thoughts?

-Did you feel manipulated and if yes in what way?
-Do you think sensory-manipulation in general is a problem?
-Did the garden make you think about nature?
-What kind of nature experiences did this evoke?

Depending on how the conversation goes, we flexibly bring elements from the process into the conversation. The parapsychological Ganzfeld Experiment, made to test people's telepathic abilities – which the whole garden was inspired by – can be described.

> Experimental procedure:[9] In a typical Ganzfeld experiment, a "receiver" is placed in a room relaxing in a comfortable chair with halved ping-pong balls over the eyes, having a red light shone on them. The receiver also wears a set of headphones through which white or pink noise (static) is played. The receiver is in this state of mild sensory deprivation for half an hour. During this time, a "sender" observes a randomly chosen target and tries to mentally send this information to the receiver. The receiver speaks out loud during the thirty minutes, describing what he or she can see. This is recorded by the experimenter (who is blind to the target) either by recording onto tape or by taking notes, and is used to help the receiver during the judging procedure. In the judging procedure, the receiver is taken out of the Ganzfeld state and given a set of possible targets, from which they must decide which one most resembled the images they witnessed. Most commonly there are three decoys along with a copy of the target itself, giving an expected overall hit rate of 25% over several dozens of trials.

When mentioning the Ganzfeld experiment, or sensory deprivation in order to have extra sensorial experiences – we may try to bring the conversation towards other topics that touch upon society in relation to sensory manipulation, rather than staying in the idea of perception being pure or innocent. For instance, sensory deprivation used in torture methods: immobilization, sensory over stimulation through strong light and loud music, plugging the ears and nose, covering the eyes, sleep deprivation etc. This turn in the conversation is only possible if it feels right in relation to the responses of the visitors (if some of them experienced the work in a torturous way, this becomes easier to link to). We always try to stay in tune with their experience and not to force a reflection on the politics of sensory manipulation.

To finish we would like to invite you into the room where the experience took place, so that you can see where you were. If you prefer to keep the illusion you are also welcome to leave without seeing anything.

We allow conversation to continue a few minutes longer in this space, when it empties out we finish the performance by saying: Thank you for coming to the garden.

5 The Light Forest A Site-Specific Walk (Sensorimotor Choreography)

The Light Forest was a site-specific walk that took place during the Sommerszene Festival in Salzbrug in 2010 and repeated again in 2011. The walk was a 45 minute uphill journey. It started at the Mozart sculpture on the Kapuzinerberg, and finished at the Franziskischlössl at the top of the mountain. The spectators were invited to follow LED lights that were placed on trees and bushes throughout the forest. For most of the spectators this was a well-known natural area, transformed into a performative site with all its theatrical potential due to the shadows cast by the lights on the forest stage.

From the first performance in 2010, to the remake in 2011, the proposition varied slightly. The first year the spectators had seen *evaporated landscapes* inside a normal theater beforehand. Afterwards, they were lead to Kapuzinerberg and invited to silently walk together in a big group, like a nomadic people, following the light trees as they would appear ahead of them. I was there to do an introductory talk and to function almost like a guide through the forest. In spite of the clear instructions to stay together as a group, many people got lost or decided to walk at their own pace and not to be subjected to the pressure of having to walk with the group. When Michael Stolhofer invited me to come back to repeat the walk the year after, I decided to adapt the proposition, due mainly to the fact that we would no longer show *evaporated landscapes* beforehand, and in order to allow people to walk alone or in small groups through the forest. That year, I stayed to welcome people at the bottom of the mountain at the Mozart Sculpture. Towards the end of the evening, I joined those who were still at the top of the mountain, at the Franziskischlössl, looking at the incredible light installation that the city suddenly appeared to become.

More than anything, this proposition was about how to make a performance that would activate the bodies of the spectators in a very concrete manner and ask them to participate by simply walking through the forest. The fact that the mountain was rather steep, made the walking experience into a really physical one, where most people at the top were both sweating and working to catch their breath. In my mind, this highlighted the choreographic character of the walk, further connecting it to the other experiments I had made with creating artificial natural environments inside the theatre.

6 Speculations
Discursive Practice Performance

Speculations was created about a year before the rehearsals of *The Artificial Nature Project* started. It was made during a two week-long research project (Summer:Intensive 2011) that I was invited to participate in by Christine De Smedt. Initially, it was supposed to be a very big research project, but finally we ended up being only three; Christine, Vladimir Miller and myself. I remember it as an unusually luxurious time, where we spent two weeks sharing a huge space, working on our individual projects, while trying out a number of different ideas for and with each other. Christine was working on her portrait performance series and I remember Vladimir making videos of crystals refracting light and spending a lot of time on his sewing machine. At that time, I was preparing *The Artificial Nature Project* and had decided to make a first performative attempt of staging the ideas I was exploring. *Speculations* was at the same time suppose to be my contribution to *The Double Lecture Series*[10] that I was organizing some months later together with Mårten Spångberg at the MDT in Stockholm, a context dedicated to discursive production within the performing arts. While preparing for this event and working on my presentation, I remember reading something more or less to this effect… there is no "sense" in speaking about non-verbal discourses (including dance, music, visual arts) unless it is to articulate their relation to other fields of discourse (scientific, social, political). It made me think that this is exactly why I am doing what I am

doing – in order to articulate the relation between verbal and non-verbal production within my work. I remember thinking that it was important to do this, because I felt that dance, and consequently choreography, remained locked up in its non-verbal territory, rendering dance a highly peripheral art form, without a voice of its own.

I named what I was doing *discursive practice performance*. At the time, *discursive practice performance* was another way of naming a practice that I wanted to distinguish from the more established form of the lecture performance, or other post-dramatic ways of working with texts that could have similarities to what I was searching for. What distinguished this methodology of producing text was that I was using movement techniques to develop a discursive practice. I also focused on how movement was created by language itself, as well as how physical movements, gestures and words could be placed next to each other in an egalitarian relationship. I started to imagine a dance or choreography that could only come into existence through verbal articulation, speech activity and its relation to physical action or bodily presence. I wanted to find out how such a speech choreography could expose the thoughts *behind* a choreography *as* a choreography in itself. Or how the social implications or political motivations of a choreography could remain visible, rather then be absorbed in the processes of translation from one field of expression into another.. While creating *speculations*, I considered what I was doing as a way of documenting my process of making *The Artificial Nature Project*. But as *The Artificial Nature Project*

had not even started to come into existence at that time, I felt I had to redefine what I meant with documentation. I came to the idea of proactive documentation, which to me at the time meant a form of documentation that contains the thinking process behind a future work, at the same time as it produces a performative reality of its own. I defined proactive documentation as follows:

Proactive documentation is a strategy for how to document work as a productive activity that produces new forms of artistic expression, rather then as a secondary practice done as a side activity to the actual work of art.

Proactive documentation does not turn live performances into dead documents. It is not an image of the event, nor a video, not even a written account of the situation. It is the production of a performative event in itself. This event could take the form of a text, a video, an image, or a live performance but one that must be created to perform in itself.

Proactive documentation considers that an idea can be materialized in many different forms and benefits from this multiplicity to come into existence. Long-term research potentially has many different outputs, creating a kaleidoscopic perspective on an idea, in its many representations.

Proactive documentation shows the mechanisms of how thoughts and references get transformed and bastardized in the artistic working process.

Proactive documentation fictionalizes the document, going beyond truthful reproduction of sources, to produce a virtual world created by the use of language and imagination.

Proactive documentation does not explain the process of making art, it materializes it by blurring the borders between the art object, the process and its documents.

Proactive documentation addresses artistic performance work as a form of immaterial labor that must resist simple models of quantification and evaluation.

I wanted to proactively document work because I was convinced that in order to find a way to expose knowledge specific to performance it had to be performed. I wanted to create a slippery ground, where thoughts were laid out in the open without being explained, framed and formatted. What was at stake was to find an articulation of a different knowledge than what we know can be derived from explanatory, reflexive, critical and theoretical approaches. What I attempted to do was to expose thinking processes as an ongoing activity, constantly transforming its principles of functioning.

Imaginary Choreography

In the performance I used speculation, imagination and description as ways to process the sources of influence I was dealing with. *Speculations* contained descriptions of scenes that I literally wanted to do with a group of performers, producing an imaginary performance using ekphrasis – the description of a work of art, possibly imaginary, that contains the experience of it – as an approach to language. The piece also contained descriptions of things that would be absolutely impossible to realize on a stage or in a theater and in that way opened up the choreographic structure to the outside world – the dimensions of social or political relations that the thinking suggested. These "outside world" descriptions were, for instance, derived from newspaper images of post-tsunami landscapes, which I processed to the point where they were no longer contextually recognizable, but created a post apocalyptic landscape in the horizon of the spectator's imagination – the actual "outside world" turned into another type of outside world: that of the virtual[11]. Another of these descriptions was a passage from a book that was adapted, becoming a narrative that on the one hand contained concrete information and on the other, produced a performative fiction. The passage was from Naomi Klein's *Shock Doctrine*, where she speaks about how disaster capitalism uses the effects of natural disasters as an impetus to install new laws, protected by the state of exception that the flood-wave leaves behind. The factual aspect of this information, I explicitly avoided sharing during the show in order to allow the fictional reality and the second kind of virtual "outside" to come into existence.

Speculations departed from an imaginary performance simulated in language, where what was described was not only the actions of the imaginary performers, but also the possible reactions and behaviors it could induce in an imaginary audience. This produced a double reality; the actual performance taking place in the space, with the real audience members in the room, running parallel to the virtual performance with its imaginary public. The idea of this double reality was to allow a space for the real audience to project themselves into the situation, by producing a link between their bodily presence and the ghostly presence of this secondary public.

Imagination thus became a tool both for myself as the maker of the performance, as well as for the audience as active imaginers of the situation. Not only a tool that allowed me to fabricate the performative possibilities of future ideas, but also a tool for the audience to participate in the performance in a very active way, by filling in the gaps and holes within their own mental projections.

This approach gave shape to another form of extended choreography than the one later articulated in *The Artificial Nature Project* namely: language or speech choreography. *Speculations* took an approach that extended choreography beyond the body of the performer, but also beyond the walls of the theater, by using language and imagination to connect to the virtual. An approach that disembodied movement

from the body of the dancer or performer, by understanding choreography as something produced in the space between words, places, temporalities, as well as between different forms of reality.

Storytelling, Orality and Speech Practice

What made *Speculations* a choreographic proposition, rather then a theatrical one, had little to do with me being a choreographer or claiming it as such. Rather, it had to do with the process of its making. *Speculations* never existed as a written text, it only existed in the practice of speaking it. It was made by applying certain movement strategies to speech, insisting on the spoken and narrative quality of the words, rather than a literary or theatrical use of language. When training with contemporary improvisational movement principles, what one learns is that movement specificity comes from following a specific articulation of a task and repeating it until one reaches a certain level of perfection (depending on the school, this idea of perfection leaves more or less space for deviance and interpretation). Repetition in lived experience is nevertheless the tool that one uses to develop ones understanding of movement. Applying these kind of movement principles to speech meant defining the speech task, articulating its aims and practicing it until mastering its execution. The rules I used were as follows:

1. Speak freely for 5 minutes on the topic of nonhuman choreography, agency and immaterial choreography.

2. Listen to the recording of this free speech, while noting down the most striking ideas that correspond to the topics of interests.
3. Repeat the free speech using the newly acquired keywords, developing the discourse further, talking once again for 5 minutes.
4. Repeat this process until a discourse is formed in a way that allows you to repeat the content and meaning of the discourse but without necessarily repeating the exact words or formulations.

Or

1. Imagine a fictional performance situation that would embody the topics of interest and describe it with as much detail and precision as possible.
2. Describe it so that it produces bodily effects or includes bodily reactions.
3. Produce narratives or stories that stage the references you are currently interested in, leaving the source behind and allowing the story to take on a fictional life of its own.
4. Search for links between the stories that allow for passages between realities to take place.

While exercising these speech practices, I discovered that they linked my work to oral traditions of storytelling, where narratives are being told and retold, repeated but also transformed through experiential transmission. I felt that it was in this experiential form of speech transmission, that what I was doing also connected to dance and choreography; by being a form of expression that had to pass through the body of the transmitter in order to exist and be communicated. I had the feeling that by focusing on bodily presence and the capacity for the voice to produce bodily sensation, I could find the potential of language to create virtual choreography.

The text on the following pages is a transcription of a scene from *Speculations* based on one of these speech practices. The scene happens in a total blackout. The transcription is only one actualization of the text that varies slightly each time it is being performed in accordance with the speech score I use to memorize the different parts of the text.

The sound cuts and leaves a silence behind. Out of the silence appears a landscape. It's not an entirely natural landscape, it's more like a landscape made out of millions of little pieces lying around glittering in the sun. They all have different shapes and sizes, textures and densities. But, what unites them is that they're broken into such small units that it's impossible to say what they were before they got splintered. I mean, they're exactly the opposite of a clear object that has a clear function and utility, like a glass that asks you to drink from it, or a chair that somehow invites you to sit down… or a book… that you know that you could read… It's much more like the kinds of objects that you have no idea what to do with, like an object that doesn't tell you where it comes from, or which culture it belongs to, or which social function it might have. It's more like the kind of object that you think whether or not you should throw it out for a really long time. It's also exactly the opposite of the roof that is lying in the horizon on the left… because this roof clearly signifies how it has been ripped off the house it used to belong to, and how it no longer has the functions that it used to have. It no longer protects or shelters the people who lived in the house, but rather it creates a hill or a little mountain that is somehow an abstract shape in this landscape. There is also a cloud, which moves very differently from how a usual cloud would move, it has a much thicker quality and it stays together as a shape. The shape is changing all the time, but somehow it doesn't dissolve into the air. The cloud is drifting and it's passing several houses that are all kind of broken and falling apart. But then it stops and lingers over a very strange sight. It's a tall building. And on top of this building there is a boat. It looks a little bit like the boat has come down from the sky and has been parked on top of this building. It looks very strange because the building and the boat are both completely intact. The boat looks like it could fall down on either side of the structure at any minute. It's kind of balancing in some extreme state of equilibrium. It looks like a tourist boat or the boat of some rich person. And somehow it is exactly the opposite of what you see in the rest of the landscape, because on the ground all the little pieces are gray and muddy and black, kind of oily…. sticky…. covering most of the surface. Once in a while there is an object in a clear color. For instance, the red bucket here in the foreground of the image or the green inflatable thing that is moving in the breeze blowing in from the sea on the right. There's a girl with blue gloves walking through the landscape. Once in a while she bends down and starts to search for something in all the little pieces on the ground. It doesn't seem like she's finding what she's searching for, because she keeps getting back up and continuing on towards the left. There's another woman who wrote a book about this landscape. She wrote especially about the beach area and the fishermen who lived on the beach. Basically they were living off fishing and selling their fish to the surrounding restaurants in the bay area. Now the fishermen are living in shelters about two, three kilometers away from the beach. The woman writing this book is very upset with the fact that the fishermen can no longer come back to the beach after everything has been splintered. Basically they are put into protection camps, but at the same time there are these hotel chains that are building hotels in the exact same spots where the fishermen used to live. The woman seems very upset about this because the government has allowed the hotel owners to build on this beach, as long as they make it part of the bay area's reconstruction plan. So, as long as it's about improving the economy of the bay, they can build wherever they want, even when the territory used to belong to the fishermen. There's a strange displacement going on in this landscape."

Interview with Mette Ingvartsen and Petra Sabisch about *Speculations*

Petra Sabisch: ***Can you describe what you did in*** **Speculations?**[12]

Mette Ingvartsen: What I did was to work a lot on sources and materials that I'm anyways busy with since a while. There's lots of book references, also references to images from the media, and references to other artworks and so on. The whole performance is built through 3 different modes of expression: describing, speculating and imagining situations that are not actually there. Most of the situations come from real sources, like a film scene and a book, or, from a concrete place. I try to create a fiction with these preexisting materials.

Exactly... I'm interested in the kinds of fiction you produce, when you create a difference between the real situation and the imagined situation you describe. For instance, in the beginning, when you say, we are in a big theater, while, in fact, we just entered into a studio space. When does the speculative part actually start for you?

For me the speculative aspect shows up in different places. On the one hand, it has to do with the question of how to animate objects and how to give back the force of things to the things themselves. This is an abstract thought that gives a lot of space for speculation about how to be together in a theatrical space and how to think about this space differently by imagining a parallel material performance.

I mainly use description and imagination, but the whole thing with speculation also has to do with what this future performance – which I am currently working on at the same time – can become. So, on the other hand, let's say, this performance is a speculation on what the next performance might turn out to be.

But then the speculation is there throughout the performance, no? Also in the references to a future show.
Yes.

So the speculation is not only in one part?

No. It's not done like that... I think all of the modes are active all the time. I'm actually describing the whole time, I'm also imagining the whole time, and this is somehow also speculating the whole time. The three modes are connected and quite difficult to separate. One thing I really try to work on, is the idea of a parallel or double reality. So there is the reality of the audience being in the space with me...

Yes, that is very clear...

... and then there is the second reality, which comes from sometimes even imagining another audience, so not only what the performers do or what the situation might be on stage. I'm also imagining that there are other people watching and so I try to describe the experiences of these other audience members. I find it interesting how this description hopefully gives space for the real audience to *imagine* their experience, so that their actual experience is doubled by what they think another experience of the situation could be. And in this space, between the real and the virtual/imagined, there's a lot of room for the spectator to complete the performance. That would be the idea. I don't know, if this works the whole time, but that would be the idea.

For me, it was working, because I am all the time following your storyline and imagination and my own imagination of the situation. So there are already two temporalities. It's interesting to think about this piece in terms of time. It's quite complex, the real time mixes with the past of the references, and creates projections of the future.

... when the audience sits in the dark, when the dark is present, or when the ... how is it called these engines you use?

They are called leaf-blowers.

... the moment when the leaf-blowers come in, you actually do what you are talking about. The silver plastic materials become leaves falling in the opposite direction. You don't use words and at the same time you actualize something that you said before but it becomes something new.

The temporality of the speech is something that I would like to work on more. For this performance it came a bit intuitively that I speak in the present tense. What I did was to write certain keywords and then improvise around them until the text was formed. A lot of the time, I speak in the present tense even when I'm speaking about an event from the sixties. For instance, I say "Yves Klein stands here and he directs the 3 naked women around" and not «Yves Klein stood in this place when he directed the 3...». While working on it, I had the feeling that when I spoke in past tense, the double temporality didn't *happen*.

That's interesting and I think that there is still something to elaborate in the sense of, whether it is in the past or in the future, or, whether it is happening here or in another space simultaneously. So, this type of multiple temporalities...

It's funny, I was already thinking in the show, what would change if you spoke in the future tense. I saw other performances where the future tense functioned as an announcement of what was going to happen, thus becoming a play with expectations.

Yes.

Which is different from a play with imagination actually. It's very interesting to compare the differences...

I tried it. I tried to say "there will be".

... in this future show...

Yes. "There will be this, there will be that"... But while I was working on it, I showed it to one person and he said, "Ya, but it's funny that you are so assertive of something that is actually connected to something that doesn't exist yet." The way you speak makes it seem as if the piece is already made. Now, I find it interesting to assume that a reality exists, even though it clearly does not. The existence, which the performance has in language, is already enough of an existence, even if we know that there are no metallic people. So I thought, and this only became clear through performing it, that this type of imagining or speculating about a performance *is* a certain type of performing, that can also stand on its own. But what type of performing is it, when it stands on its own and how does it function?

What I do when I improvise around certain topics, is to have a beginning sentence. The beginning sentence is very clear, so in case I forget where I am, I can always come back to this phrase to restart. I was interested in how the text is being written by itself in the performative act of saying it. So that it is not a pre-written and then staged text, but that the staging is writing the text. As a principle for writing a text, I find this very interesting right now.

How does this text become theatrical – even though I think of it rather as a discursive text than a theatrical one – by the way it is being performed? The way of addressing the audience, the tonality and intonation are things that are immediately worked out while the text is being written.

As we are already there, maybe we can pass from your work to the more open issue of discourse production?

Ya.

What is the relation of your performance, and more generally, of your whole work, to discourse production?

What is the relationship between....

How do you – with* Speculations *that you presented here – produce a discourse? How does it work to generate discourse, to produce knowledge out of discursive practices? How do you understand and do this in the work?

The frame of presentation was important for me in the production of this work. I made this performance for both the *Moving Agendas* festival in Århus last week, and then, for the *The Double Lecture Series* here in Stockholm. This work is about giving access to the thoughts and the ideas behind a choreography; access to how I am thinking movement. In other pieces I have made, I'm more actualizing the movement itself, in physical terms, working on how the movement of either bodies or materials is executed. I find it interesting to shift from actualizing choreography towards creating a choreography with words.

With *Everybodys,*[13] an artist platform based on discursive sharing, I've been working a lot on discourse production as a way of creating verbal articulations regarding embodied knowledge and methodologies to produce choreography.

I feel that this performance has a link between those two interests: So, on the one hand, you have the knowledge production that comes from inside the field itself; the interest in researching together, in regards to how we can think movements today and what kind of strategies we can have to make them happen. On the other hand, there is my interest in how a discursive practice actually becomes a performance in itself. This is a very interesting space, because it extends the choreographic to go beyond the movement of the body.... So, it really starts to include movement in the broadest sense, in opposition to dance that only exists through bodies.

I think that I'm always working like that actually. I'm always thinking movement projects in relation to very concrete phenomena that I observe. For instance, immaterial labor and immaterial knowledge production led to a piece about how to think a choreography written in the relations between bodies (*GIANT CITY*). And people don't always get that my pieces have a connection to something really concrete, because the works don't *represent* the ideas. The works materialize the ideas in a different way, because the stage reality doesn't just illustrate what can be said in words.

I find it very stimulating for the moment to include the theater situation in the creation of a work, that is – considering what it means to be in the theater together with an audience, who has certain expectations and reasons for coming to the theater in the first place. I find it important to propose these types of discursive frames and insist on them being valuable as performances, just like any other performance. It's crucial, not to make a distinction between this discursive work and more conventional movement/dance work as choreographic proposals.

What you are saying actually concerns the irreducibility of including these two dimensions of materiality in language and the discursivity of movement. A discourse is already both. It's a relational assemblage, which cannot be reduced to words. But often, discourse is used only for a wording practice. And what I found interesting in this festival, in this* Double Lecture Series*, is precisely to link one performativity to the other.

Throughout the other interviews that I've done so far on the* Double Lectures Series*, people were explaining their relationship to discourse production, but also to reality. Why is it important to make and think about discourse production today? Why is it important to make a* Double Lecture Series*? What does it mean to your practice?

Well, I think there are several reasons, why this is important. One reason is of course to insist on the production of discourse in the community, which is extremely important for the field to go further. But then, in proposing it as a series and as a festival, there is another reason that is about giving visibility to these practices as performative practices and not only as something you do next to the real performances. To actually say that this is a form of performance that should be as accepted and normal as any other type of performance. Because even when discourse-performances are shown in other festivals, they are very often shown as an appendix to the main program, like the small thing that is shown in the little theatre, not even a theatre, but in the foyer... Thus, they are not properly understood as works.

You could say, that this type of work that has been developed over the last fifteen years, has started to form a sort of movement, where language is used and plays an important role without falling into the trap of being conventional dramatic theatre. And this line between discursive and theatrical expression is a very delicate line to draw.

And also in relation to the audience, it's a very different proposal, no? I think of these discursive practices as a different way of access.

Yes. It's also interesting that regarding dance we often discuss the accessibility of a performance in terms of its non-verbality, its being difficult to understand. In the discursive work, there is another access point created, sometimes in combination with other practices that are more physical or nonverbal. This creates a discursivity that is constituted between words, physical actions, audience relations, temporal leaps and connections to histories and futures. This is a very different understanding of choreography then the one produced by silent, present and dancing bodies.

Well, thank you.

Thank you.

7 The Artificial Nature Project

We started with everybody in Rennes, on the 24th of June, 2012. Prior to this period, a series of preparations had already taken place to try-out the rather unusual project that we were about to embark on. The most determining moment, after which it was decided that we would go ahead with the project, happened already 11 months earlier in a studio at Kaaitheater in Brussels. Together with lighting designer Minna Tiikkainnen, sound designer Peter Lenaerts and some of the performers of the project; Manon Santkin, Sidney Leoni and Martin Lervik, we spent several days examining the capacities of the nonhuman "performers" that we were going to collaborate with. With 10 kilos of confetti, a lot of collected trash – bottles, plastic bags and newspapers, but also balloons, serpentines and other potential party materials – we literally started throwing things around. At the time we had the two leaf-blowers that I had used to make *Speculations*, which proved to be very effective in terms of blowing life, force and expression into all these nonhuman materials. The technical complexities of the ideas that were developed in that first period, necessitated a specific attention to machines, materials, lights and sounds. During a two-week technical residency at BUDA Kunstencentrum in Kortrijk, where we were lucky to have a big theater at our disposal. I worked with Minna to develop the scenic dispositive of the performance. Sidney joined us again and worked in parallel on the physical manipulations of the confetti that had now increased volume from 10 to at least 30 kilos. We also acquired another 2 stationary air blowers. When we finally arrived in Rennes in June, the gathered materials ready at our disposal were; 100 kilos of silver confetti, 4 stationary air blowers, 4 portable air blowers, a lot of safety blankets, plexi-glass reflective mirrors, 1 newly constructed air balloon shaped as a mega confetti, 2 huge round black balloons, long black serpentine strings and a lot of differentiated trash and arbitrary objects. From there we started.

The first week of rehearsals was organized in two blocks; half of the day was dedicated to researching what we could do with all these collected materials. The other half we used to read, discuss and study texts[14] that I had gathered and distributed prior to our arrival in the studio. Together with Bojana Cvejić, who spent the first week with us in the studio giving lectures and creating a frame for talking about the selected texts, we started developing a collective discourse on the agency of things. There was one book that I had been particularly inspired by; *Vibrant Matter* by Jane Bennett, that I remember being taken apart completely by Bojana and Franziska Aigner, who criticized the lack of stringency in her arguments. I continued to be fascinated and inspired by this text, but in the group a lot of attention was shifted towards John Protevi's text on Hurricane Katrina. It served to connect us to the topic of the forces of nature, while also being an extremely complex analysis of the entire network of factors that were at play within

the catastrophe. Out of this text emerged a methodology; a mapping practice that we used several times throughout the process, where we would write down our specific and most urgent interests, and then try to create a discursive and material map of relations, by laying out the written cards as a cartography of thoughts.The discursive work that we engaged in was highly important, in order to be able to create the non-verbal manipulations of the material. It also gave sense and a clearer meaning to the work we were making physically, by adding a conceptual and perceptive backbone to why we were doing what we were doing. Yet, it did not save us from the difficulties that working with the nonhuman performers created within the group. The unexpected tiredness and negative affects of interacting with noisy machines and confetti sprayed with a fire retardant product, and thus the need to wear protective gear, made it very difficult to relate to each other. Simple things like not being able to see each others faces, and thereby missing out on the details of affective expression, lead to plenty of heavy discussions, misunderstandings and arguments, also about the position of humans in relation to the dead materials lying immobile on the floor. These questions were difficult to answer, because of course none of us thought that the expression of dead confetti was more important than the wellbeing of the humans in the group, nevertheless we spent our days focusing most of our attention on these dead materials. The questions that arose confronted the core of the project, as they related to searching for a theatrical expression of a non-anthropocentric world. The strategy was to set up a thought experiment and an experimental protocol within theatre that would allow us momentarily to not place ourselves in the center of theatrical attention. It was not an easy task, but we insisted, worked and sometimes struggled and fought with the relation between the human and nonhuman actors, until we finally managed to put together the performance that premiered at Pact Zollverein in Essen on the 2nd of November, 2012.

In the section that follows, you will find different documents that were produced before, during and after creating *The Artificial Nature Project*. The documents are organized in a manner that I hope will facilitate an understanding of what the project was, how it has been made and the questions and reflections it entailed. It starts by an email conversation I had with choreographer Ula Sickle in the 6 months leading up to the very first rehearsal period. With Ula, I had committed to engage in an ongoing discussion regarding our respective works, and we corresponded as an ongoing practice about how the concerns of our works were developing. After this dialog, you will find a running commentary that I wrote on the piece in close correspondence to how it appears on stage, trying to unravel its specific poetics. In the last section you'll find a more detailed score of the performance.

Material Choreography:
Email Conversation between Mette Ingvartsen and Ula Sickle

Hi Mette, Sun, Jun 5, 2011 at 5:06 PM

I've just read your note of intention for *The Artificial Nature Project*. I find interesting your desire to reverse the relationship between humans and objects – so that the human being is not only an actor on things, but is also acted upon by the so called inanimate objects he/she manipulates. It seems clear that your interest after *evaporated landscapes* is to explore further the idea of creating choreography with objects as well as bodies, as an extension of the choreographic process, so that objects and bodies or object-bodies and human-bodies have equivalent agency upon each other. But beyond this interest in giving objects agency, I am curious about the relationship you have to the images of disaster that you say have also inspired this particular work (as well as to a certain extent *evaporated landscapes*). I quote from your text:

… Most possibly these questions do not only arise in me because *evaporated landscapes* has started to talk back. They also arise because of how natural forces more and more force us to reconsider the relationship between human/inhuman, animate/inanimate, subject/object, harmony/chaos, protection and threat.

In Massumi's article in the guardian, *The Half-Life of Disaster*, he speaks about how images of disaster overwhelm us with their horror and power, and then slowly the horror of the event is forgotten as the media zooms into the details of life struggling to make a comeback after an overwhelming event, the small and minor details, only to be finally replaced by the next spectacular event in the flow of imagery the media feeds off of to keep itself in business …

To what extent is your project about a reversible agency between objects & bodies in a literal sense, and to what extent do you also want to evoke the power of disaster images – let's say their spectacular aspect, in relation to the scale of human agency and how the tension between the two occurs within the gaze of your public? To what extent are you concerned by the tension between the spectacle/spectacular on the one hand, and the mundane, or everyday on the other? Again, I quote from your text:

… There is an absurdity in the fact that the performers both create and struggle against what they've created. It is about how to operate in a spectacular world without getting absorbed by it. I am interested in how the spectacle and its construction can be visible at the same time.

xx Ula

Hi Ula Wed, Jun 8, 2011 at 2:50 PM

I think it is interesting to think about how the theatre is also a machine that mediates expressions, not like newspapers, YouTube, internet or other channels of information flows, but nevertheless mediating. I have earlier been very interested in spectacularity because I observe it as one of the basic modes of communications that we are surrounded by today. Indeed, in the article of Massumi there is an interesting discussion about how long a disaster remains "interesting" for the public due to its increase and decrease of spectacularity. But, what is also really interesting in what he talks about is the in-distinction between natural disasters and acts of war, like for instance a terrorist attack or how the US military guard was recalled from Iraq to do services in Louisiana after hurricane Katrina. He also speaks about the in-distinction between the natural and the manmade disaster, once again using the Katrina as an example to show how both the effects of climate change and the effects of all the engineering that was done on the Mississippi river, were very related to how bad the flooding turned out.

This is in a certain way where the "natural" intersects with the political. Where nature is not separated from how humans act upon it, even when nature has powers we cannot even imagine to control. I am very interested in this intersection. However, I am not a political activist, or at least I do not think that the theater is the most effective place for political activism, and that my aims as a performance maker have to be connected to the questions of the choreographic field itself. I would like *The Artificial Nature Project* to function as a micro-cosmos, where we can somehow experiment with our relation to materialities. This is something that I think can have effects on how we treat things and maybe also on how we experience our own reception of spectacular expressions. Why do "we", whoever this we might include, want spectacularity? I think, if I am interested in working with spectacularity in this performance, then it has to do with also showing the construction of the spectacular. Not in a de-constructivist sense of removing the effect, but rather searching for how we can both experience the effect of the spectacular but also find out how it functions as a mechanism on our bodies.

xx Mette

Hey Mette, Thu, Jun 16, 2011 at 4:49 PM

Sorry for the wait - I'll give you a few questions in response so you have more to work on :-) If there's too many feel free to choose the most pertinent!

Can you talk more then about this mechanism you describe? How does the spectacular act upon the body in your performance – and what is this relationship between, on the one hand the theatrical machine and its capability to build images clearly described in the first section (The imperceptibility of things / Cellular world) and the human performer that (re-)activates the same materials, or activates new ones, but is also acted upon, which comes only later in the performance you describe (The force of things & The capacity of things)? Where does this dramaturgy lead us?

As an extension of this question – there seems still at first glance to be a difference in scale between the human body on stage and the kind of spectacular images you can create with, for example, gold dust, which is lightweight and can be had in large quantities, which can fill a space and remain suspended for a time in the air, can swirl or fall … this image reminds me of the marionettes that Kleist describes. They touch us because of a certain weightlessness or lack of gravity that the human body, and certainly heavier materials, are always subject to. Does scale and weight have a role to play in your performance and what about the choice to work with many performers?

xx Ula

Hey Ula, Tue, Jul 5, 2011 at 9:27 PM

I am interested in starting from something very simple and minimal like confetti, in order to create different appearances of this matter. The dramaturgy, for the moment, lead us from something almost imperceptible to something that functions organically and in harmony, to becoming something chaotic and uncontrollable. I guess the storm in the end is where the dramaturgy leads, which is somehow also the point that I want to make. That material has a forceful existence that we cannot entirely control in spite of our attempts to do so.

Relating to spectacularity, I cannot say how it will function yet as I do not know to what extent the images will be spectacular. I think the spectacular often absorbs you as a spectator, makes you forget that you are watching, being emerged in the experience of watching. This type of spectacularity is often used to manipulate, sell products or achieve a goal. I wonder if this could also be different? Does the spectacular always have a manipulative agenda? I think the spectacularity I talk about exposing, relates to the mechanism that absorbs the spectator and how one can become aware of how that happens.

In regards to the second part of your question, for sure scale and gravity means a lot. All matters are subject to gravity, even the lightest ones that fly around easily. I'm thinking a lot about how to develop the choreography in relation to the properties of the materials I work with; how matters act differently depending on size, weight, form, connotation and so on.

The question of how the expressive possibilities of the body differ from the expressive capacities of things, has been a question in dance for a very long time already. When I try to imagine the history of what I am interested in, or at least some references to it, then everything from Loïe Fuller's *Serpentine Dance*, to Oscar Schlemmer's object bodies, to Jerome Bel's *Nom donné par l'auteur,*[15] comes to mind. I think what I want to make has nothing to do with the aesthetic expression of these works, but is nevertheless related to them in regards to wanting to rethink choreography, movement and what theater and dance can be understood as in a certain time period. I am trying to understand the difference, for instance, between what Jerome Bel was interested in, in relation to objects, and what I'm interested in right now regarding materials. I have no idea what he was trying to do, except from how he speaks about it in his *Catalogue Raisonné*. But when I look at the work, I see something that has to do with how daily

objects have particular functions and uses attached to them. When the objects in the performance start to enter into a different kind of relation, detached from functionality, it creates a new system of sense making that is at once very humoristic, but of course also questioning the use of objects, consumption and materialism. That piece to me, very much works through a semiotic reading of objects – however a reading that is based on disengaging the usual semiotics of the object. What I am interested in today is something else. It has to do with the expressivity, sensoriality and affectivity of objects. Or, maybe even thinking about semi-objecthood blurring the borders of what an object is, by for instance understanding unformed matter as an object, when it composes a larger body. It's a thought about what happens to matter when it is animated and how this affects the physical body in return. It's very clear to me, this difference between semiotic and affective expressivity, but maybe it doesn't appear so from the outside?

xx Mette

Hey Mette, Tue, Jul 12, 2011 at 12:18 AM

I'm not so clear when you speak about matter – do you mean a material? Like the difference between the confetti and falling shoes? Or how a whole bunch of shoes falling suddenly become a material again (like the smaller elements that make up the confetti?) – By objects forming a body do you mean that they congregate to literally form a larger mass?

Your working title – *The Artificial Nature Project* – suggests that you already have a quite clear guiding principle by which you want the transformation of everyday objects (and theatre materials) to take place, or what you want them to express? To what extent do you want to evoke nature-scapes and natural phenomenon? Does working with objects and changing or shifting their function (and thus signification) always go in this direction? Are the bodies you want to suggest bodies of water, masses of mist or clouds, rainfall, storms, etc.? Are there also other organisms… ? Or does it all happen on a more abstract level?

xx Ula

Hey again Ula, after a long pause… Oct 5, 2011 at 2:19 PM

I'm trying to clarify for myself what kinds of materials I actually want to use. I think there are several different directions to go in and they change very much the content of the representation. If I include materials that signify the absence of humans, like clothes, shoes, books etc., I think the readings tend to go much more in a semiotic direction. If I use confetti, serpentines, larger pieces of metallic paper and so on, the connotations are more abstract, at least that is what I expect before starting to throw things around. If I use building materials, like cardboard, styrofoam and pieces of wood, the connotations would go more towards the destruction of buildings and architecture. I would like to have a clear opinion about which materials to use, but feel that I can only find out what these things express by actually working with them.

This also relates to your second question about the representations of nature. It's a delicate area, because staging catastrophes somehow seems ridiculous to me, it will not be dangerous for the audience to be in this performance and it will at best be a reflection on the effects natural catastrophes have on human bodies. This theatrical approach I somehow find less interesting than thinking the performance through the choreographic procedures that I am interested in developing. I think the idea of extending choreography into materials; materials being moved by humans and by machine extensions of human actions, is where the project becomes specific to dance, theatre and performance. The performance is more about what I call "a self created problem", than about representing nature. However, depending on the materials we choose to work with – what is represented will appear more or less evident, more or less representational.

But, I don't want to be scared of representation either. I don't want to be scared of actually talking about something concrete and problematic that has direct connections to the world. I am helped a lot by the work of Aernout Mik, who also stages crises situations in his video works. On the one hand, the work is entirely representational, but on the other, the representation is surpassed by the staging. The staging becomes a comment, not only on the social or political situation that he addresses but also on how such imagery is mediated. Of course the video images function very differently than the live performance space, but nevertheless I find it interesting to think about how a "model of the world" can be produced by extracting or isolating certain parts of an image until its meaning is transformed entirely by its representationIt is a very good question what kinds of representations I would like to evoke. I am interested

in the force and power of the materials that I am working with. I have a tendency for abstraction. In the sense that I think that actually working with the materials in order to find out what they can express – not what I want them to express – is a way to go. It has to do with attributing agency to the objects, to say that in the process the objects and how they react to different treatments will be a factor that guides the process. I already experienced that my movements changed and were being modified by the movement of the materials. It is me who has to adapt to the nature of things and not the things that have to adapt to me. In more abstract terms, this addresses questions of anthropocentrism, or maybe rather anti-anthropocentrism. To actually physically search for the place where materials start to speak, communicate and express. It brings another artwork to mind, Der Lauf der Dinge by Fischli and Weiss. In that work there is something about how the materials seem to be communicating by themselves, even though everything of course has been constructed down to the smallest detail. The movement of the camera in particular makes this construction appear, nevertheless the agency of the materials tends to overpower this experience of it being constructed. What is displayed are the chemical and physical properties and processes of the materials and it is rather hard to say what this machinery of operations represents – besides being staged material processes.

What I want to do, locates itself somewhere between these two axes. Between staging material processes and showing perhaps stylized representations of social and political contexts that have to do with the loss of human control over things.

xx Mette

Hey Mette, Fri, Oct 28, 2011 at 3:48 PM

So here's a final round of questions -

Reading your response, I can very well imagine what kind of motion and activity your performers could provoke in materials – you've spoken about the bodies on stage literally manipulating and throwing materials or blowing and pushing them around with machines, but what kind of motion do the materials actually produce in the bodies? Is there some other motion besides this activity of keeping things moving? Maybe you could mention some concrete examples from your research?

Also do the materials only fall or go up and down in the vertical plain (somehow this seems to be their main motion) or do they also have activity/agency once they have landed, are they handled on the ground? Is the way they pile up, occupy or block the stage important?

How is it that you will express this agency of materials? Do the materials gain a certain autonomy or independence of expression or even of action? What does the loss of human control look like? Your example of Fischli and Weiss suggests a sort of domino effect where humans are no longer needed to keep setting new events in motion? Or where they are unable to stop them from doing so. Does one material start to act upon another?

By the way, there have been some other works/references in my mind since awhile, in terms of choice of referential materials and the signification they can evoke. You probably already know of them. A key one is Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (the final explosion scene where articles of bourgeois consumption fly through the air) – but also Jeff Wall's *Destroyed Room*, the image showing the aftermath of some destructive action (actually modeled on a painting by Delacroix), which made me think about how things would look in the end, maybe being as important as the process which evolves during the performance? Also in terms of the absence of any figures in relation to the original Delacroix image.

xx Ula

Dear Ula, Wed, Oct 16, 2011 at 15.22 PM

I think I know why the *Zabriski Point* comes into your mind, because it is in the introductory text I wrote that this whole interview is based on! It's nice, it's like finishing by coming back to the beginning, as if we have made a full loop. The *Destroyed Room* of Jeff Wall is a nice reference that I didn't know.

As we have discussed earlier the question of which materials to use is still an important issue to resolve. In the previous rehearsal period I realized that a strict idea of, for instance, only using party materials like confetti, balloons, serpentines and so on will not work. I want it to become much more messy and I think the fact of mixing all kinds of materials, also waste materials, gives an entirely different reading. Funnily enough this brings questions relating to consumerism, materialism, ecology and sustainability that I'm also interested in thinking further about.

I don't want the piece to become moralistic, not at all in fact, but I find it interesting to think about how we can look at trash in a different manner. Trash is normally material things that have lost their value, or that are no longer attributed value. I find it a challenge to re-attribute value to trash. In the rehearsals we started to gather and recollect the materials as an action, close to the action of cleaning up. An action that you can easily imagine after a hurricane or tsunami, where everything has been destroyed. In the theatre, this action becomes interesting because of the fact that we are reusing all the objects that are in the performance. The performance becomes a kind of recyclable eco-system that generates, destroys and reassembles itself again. This maybe brings me to answer your question about how the materials produce activity in the performing bodies. It's one of the questions that I am still searching to answer. I have found several approaches until now in thinking about the relationship between agency and power, in relation to who is moved by what. Here are some examples:

The humans controlling the materials. On one hand, I like to consider the performers as operators of an animated world that they are creating. This leaves them in a rather superior position in relation to the materials, which I think is only a starting point that then needs to be inverted and destroyed.

The materials controlling the humans is what is happening automatically when the performers focus all their attention on moving the materials. In this activity they stop being expressive of themselves and

start to move in function of the materials. It could however also be a situation where some of the performers blow things at other performers. The confetti that we work with makes the airflow hit the skin in a completely different way than when it's just "empty" air and it creates an immediate effect on the bodies. To think about how human bodies are affecting and being affected by their material surrounding is interesting to me. I think placing focus on this relation changes our way of considering materialities. **The relationship between humans and materials being in constant oscillation** is maybe a better way to determine this second approach, as the materials do not do anything unless they are set in motion.

The materials acting alone without human interaction. This opens a possibility to work on natural phenomenon and the agency of things. We found one thing during the rehearsals that we were all very surprised by. A big balloon staying in the air with the help of one single air-blower statically placed on the floor. Somehow this image defied gravity in a way that was totally unexpected and it was as if the balloon started to have a life of its own, hovering magically in the air.

Your question about whether one material starts acting upon another is pertinent. I think it is somehow in the assemblage of materials that agency can be found; in how they move in relation to each other, influence and make each other visible through their difference. It is in these complex relations of material movement that the "things" start to acquire meaning beyond their material qualities, which will be a starting point for the work. What exactly these materials are able to express can only be found out by actual material experimentation. I don't want to assume beforehand that I know what a material is capable of doing.

xx Mette

Performers: Original Cast of *The Artificial Nature Project*

Franziska Aigner

Christine De Smedt

Maud Le Pladec

Sidney Leoni

Martin Lervik

Guillem Mont De Palol

Manon Santkin

Performers

Sirah Foighel Brutmann (replacing Maud Le Pladec)

Ilse Ghekiere (replacing Christine De Smedt)

Jaime Llopis Segarra (Replacing Guillem Mont De Palol)

Time Score

PART I:

00:00 – 10:00	Situation 1 - Blackout (galaxy)

PART II:

10:00 – 18:30	Situation 2 – Post-Apocalyptic Situation
18:30 – 25:00	Situation 3 – Absorption (cloud)
25:00 – 27:30	Situation 4 – Agricultural Labor (hitting down)
27:30 – 30:00	Situation 5 – Environment (rain)
30:00 – 33:45	Situation 6 – Landscape (pouring)
33:45 – 38:45	Situation 7 – Planting (spreading)
38:45 – 41:45	Situation 8 – Surface Reflection (sea)

Part III:

41:45 –44:45	Situation 9 – Preparing (a self created problem)
44:45 –51:15	Situation 10 – The Self Created Problem (spreading the fire)
51:15 – 01:01:00	Situation 11 – Disaster Management (extinguishing versus increasing the fire)
01:01:00 – 01:05:00	Situation 12 – Cleaning Up (flickering light/cleaning/collecting blankets)
01:01:00 – 01:06:30	Situation 13 – Reconstructing Material Autonomy (flying blankets)
01:06:30 – 01:08:30	Situation 14 – Resonance (closing the window)

01:08:30	End (Blackout)

General Notes on Non-Subjective Performativity (from my notebook)

In the performance we represent an anonymous community of workers. Our job is to manipulate the materials in the most sufficient manner for them to become expressive. To do our job, we have to understand what the materials are trying to say. We have to listen, sense, touch, test and try. At the same time, the performance fictionalizes that the materials have a will of their own. Evidently, dead materials do not move unless we make them move and this is where the intention and imagination of us as performers within this reality becomes extremely important. It is through our mental activity and bodily investment that a possible experience of material agency can be created.

To achieve making a performance where the balance between human and nonhuman performers is reconfigured, we need to reduce our human performance presence by removing traits of our personality and faciality. This reduction of the visibility of us as performers can partly be accomplished by using the costumes that cover our faces, which will also unify us as a group of workers, partly by foregrounding the expression of the materials in the actions we do. We are nevertheless extremely visible as human figures throughout the entire performance. This means that our performativity is located somewhere else, in how we carry ourselves, in how we stand and direct our attention, in how we hold our heads, in how we walk, and of course mainly in how we think about why we manipulate the materials as we do. It is in our gestures, postures and in the intentionality of our actions that the specificity of this non-subjective performativity is created.

Thinking of ourselves as workers and operators of the materials, but also of the situation, is useful to frame our actions within the fiction of the performance. Not in order to erase our own performative agency – but rather to find a balance in relation to that of the nonhuman actors. This proposes a shift in how to understand performativity, by thinking about all components of a stage performance as equally important – rather than placing ourselves in the center of attention – thus leading to a non-anthropocentric perspective of theater production. The types of workers we become through our actions can be identified and analyzed but while performing, we focus on our relation to the material in each moment, rather than (only) on the image it produces.

The type of workers that we represent is not unified throughout the performance – just as the types of work we do have been invented, as have their categories:

In Part I:

We are not yet active. We leave the stage entirely to the nonhuman performers.

In Part II: Manual Materials

1 Post-apocalyptic scientific researchers
2 Material workers or hylomorphic researchers
3 Being one with the material, being absorbed by the object that we are trying to create.
4 Field workers and agricultural workers
5 Creators of an environment

In Part III: Machine Manipulations

1 Machine workers, technicians, operators
2 Workers in a catastrophic site (accident)
3 Insufficient workers creating their own problem (doing and undoing actions)
4 Team workers and collaborators
5 Opponents of the materials

Throughout the whole performance we are unfolding the potential expressivity of the materials. We depart from the idea that the materials have endless capacities and abilities to transform and that we are the facilitators of their unfolding. This is in fact a rather abstract idea that demands a lot of imaginative labor from our side as performers. Despite the fact that our actions appear to be the very practical, concrete and functional movements of workers in service of the materials, what we are actually doing, is filling these movements with imagination and intention.

The Artificial Nature Project
A Running Commentary

Blackout (Galaxy)

The Artificial Nature Project starts with a complete blackout**.** At first you can't see anything in the pitch darkness. Then, little by little there are tiny light glimpses that start appearing and disappearing in front of your eyes. It's a magical effect, impossible to detect where the lights are coming from, as if some organic phenomenon, like a swarm of fireflies, would be moving in front of your eyes. Yet the image cannot be reduced to one single representation of a natural phenomenon. What is in front of you also resembles flickering stars in a far away galaxy, or simply light reflections appearing without a clear source or means of production. The swarm of reflections moves from the center of the stage, up under the ceiling and then moves back down to the ground. The color is white with a slight greenish glow and the intensities are changing as the swarm moves through space. After a while, the swarm expands and becomes a vertical band in the space, only to transform into an entire wall of falling particles. The sensation of space morphs from an enclosing darkness towards an overwhelming wall of vibrating and shimmering light.
This first scene in the performance functions as a sensory preparation for what follows. Something clearly happens to perception in the pitch dark, as if it would have the capacity to sharpen our senses. The darkness almost creates a feeling of time slowing down, while allowing the retina of the eye to tune in with the time of perception. The indeterminacy of the image is purposefully meant from the very beginning to create a doubt in recognition as to what materials are being used. CUT

Post-Apocalyptic Situation

The previous light experience is conceived as a door through which you enter into a post-apocalyptic environment. It functions as a time of transition from one reality to another, almost as in teleportation. As a concept, teleportation belongs to the genre of science fiction. And even though *The Artificial Nature Project* has a very matter of fact quality to it, a science fictional mode of thinking remains useful to understand its poetics. The matter of fact quality is maybe best explained by the example of a scientist doing laboratory research in order to uncover the true behavior of a specific element of matter or material. Indeed, we literally spent hours experimenting and manipulating the materials in order to find out what they were capable of doing. The science fictional aspect of our approach was also connected to imagining and projecting agency onto the inanimate particles, attributing to them a desire to move, to speak and to express – which gave sense to and created a logic for our physical "matter of fact" manipulations. The light-cut that just took place, drops us directly into a situation that has been going on for a while and

the arrival into this apocalyptic environment happens very abruptly. The stage is visible due to a neon light square that surrounds it. The square demarcates the space and gives a fictional character to the sequence. The kind of abrupt cut that just happened, occurs only twice within the entire performance, whereas the rest of the dramaturgy is composed of situations that modulate and transform in degree rather than in kind. However, these cuts are very important to mark radical changes and to transform the functioning of the space. The darkness and the two-dimensionality of the first sequence are replaced by a location; a site that the bodies on stage now inhabit.

The situation has something dystopic about it. It's rather dark in the space and the slow, careful manipulations of the materials give a sensation of potential danger. We are in a fictional world where there are no natural resources left. The only resources remaining are the artificial particles lying immobile on the ground. The materials are shown in their zero-degree expression, or maybe what we could call their primary qualities. Exposed in how they appear, when they are not yet being manipulated. From this departure point, the performers start to give minimal impulses into the material, making it seem as if it is moving by itself. It glides and slides along the ground, pours over a knee or out through a hole under an arm. Through this action we are trying to create a short moment of hesitation. How much of this movement is stimulated, how much of it is happening by itself?

When first we created this sequence we used large mirror surfaces that could be hidden underneath the reflective materials, making it possible to separate the movement of the materials from the movement of the bodies touching it. By using an extension of the hand, the materials could move three meters away from where the hand would actually be touching and pushing it. Finally, the contrast between the black floor and the silver materials turned out to be as effective in creating a sensation of the material advancing autonomously in space, independent of our human movement instigations, and we did away with the mirrors. The material now resembles mercury, lava or simply an unidentifiable moving mass.

Material Agency

The trick of making it seem as if the materials are moving on their own while in fact it's the humans creating the movement, is a paradoxical game and fiction is a helpful tool to understand its rules. If as spectators we stay with the fact that the humans are moving the materials, we will never be able to actually see what is going on in the materials themselves. We will never encounter the uncanny feeling of the materials having a life of their own and an agency beyond the human hand conducting their movement. While, if we want to "believe" that the materials are moving by themselves we will constantly be disturbed by the presence of the visible manipulations that are continuously happening in order for the materials to stay in motion. My point is that the agency of this nonhuman world is still occurring in relation to human

performers and spectators that cannot be separated from it. This approach seems appropriate to use in theater that is, after all, a human, social and collective place, rather than attempting to remove human agency entirely. This doesn't mean that during the performance we as performers aren't attempting to produce encounters with nonhuman objects as 'actants', as Bruno Latour defines them within his Actor-network theory. With actants, Latour denominates a nonhuman category of actors in order to circumvent the anthropocentrism that focuses and attributes the power to act solely to humans. He explains the nature of an actant as a source of action, *"something that acts or to which activity is granted by others. An actant is neither an object nor a subject, but an intervener. An operator is that, which by virtue of its particular location in an assemblage and of the fortuity of being in the right place at the right time, makes the difference, makes the things happen, becomes the decisive force catalyzing the event."*[16] In a homicide trail, for instance, the agency of things can be made clearly visible. Imagine a gunpowder residue sampler that can prove that gunpowder was found on a suspect's hand. Imagine the results of the sampler being shown over and over again to a jury, until they are convinced that the person under trail is guilty. By being in the right place at the right time, the machine, in collusion with the skin cells of the hand, leads the jury to a final verdict. The sampler, in this moment, gains force over the human hand that did or did not finally shoot the gun. It is interesting to think about what this procedure – of shifting one's attention from human to nonhuman actors – could lead to when thinking about theater, where

the human actor/performer/dancer is so unquestionably the center of attention. The paradoxical aspect of trying to shift the position of the human performer in theater, in order to find a way for nonhuman agency to take the central position, is a task that displaces and transforms theater. It does this, not by succeeding in achieving the impossible task of understanding isolated nonhuman agency, but by giving rise to a different way of treating the relationship between objects, materials and humans on stage. It is this renegotiating of relations that, in *The Artificial Nature Project,* gives rise to a specific kind of image. An image related to the appearance and disappearance of the performers in the materials. Or, an image related to the organizing principles that emerge from focusing on the performativity and expression of nonhuman materialities.

The Triple Image

The triple image composes itself between the human and the nonhuman actor. It destroys separations between binary oppositions such as human/nonhuman, living/dead, moving/still, animate/inanimate. It poses the question of who is entitled to perform on stage. By giving space and attention to nonhumans, as an attempt to avoid the anthropocentrism that too often inhibits this attention, the inanimate world is given a platform to speak, to act and to participate in human theatrical fictions. In the triple image, there is always three elements temporarily coexisting; the bodies, the materials and the movement con-

nections in between them. When the triple image is at its best, it produces a doubt, by creating a third entity; a human/nonhuman connection where the collaborative totality can no longer be separated. A doubt arises as to the particular form of agency that is active within the image. What makes the nonhuman move versus what the nonhuman sets in motion? At times, this merging connection can appear as a body in itself – as an organization of human and nonhuman forces working together to create another logic of motion and rest. What is created is not a body of flesh and blood in the form of a human figure, but rather the massive appearance of thousands of little particles flying though the air creating a huge monstrous body.

The possible connections between the humans and the particles are multiplied through how the movements are differentiated- each new form of movement manipulation proposes another kind of visibility of both the bodies and the mass. The forces of the living bodies are transferred into the particles, making them appear as autonomous forceful entities in their own right.

Watching the triple image, the focus between the body and the materials is in constant oscillation. It almost functions like a weight balance; when the visibility of the material increases, the humans disappear, or when the humans increase their performative presence, the material retreats. It could almost

be quantifiable in percentages, 10 % human presence equals 90 % material agency. Obviously it is not that simple when thinking this relation as a transformation that happens over time. Nevertheless, the focus-oscillation between body and material is what makes the triple image gain the capacity to endure, as it is a visibility mechanism based on mutual dependency.

Fictional Versus Formal Composition

When the performers reappear, they are in a very different state then when they were calmly pushing and sliding the materials over the floor. They now appear as workers, simultaneously processing the materials in different ways. It is as if there are several tendencies inherent in the material and in how the performers treat it. One tendency goes towards liquidity. Another is about transforming the material by smashing it down on the ground, as if the smashing would be necessary in order for the material to become fluid. The performative approach behind this labor is imaginary and produces a fictional logic. And even though the labor and the actions that the performers do are very concrete and matter of fact – the approach to making sense of them through fiction, is very different from a purely formal logic that would focus only on rhythm, speed, space and direction. The imaginary dimension helps to multiply the possible images that can be projected onto what is happening on stage, and by this we attempt to create another kind of triple image. This new type of image aims to open up the interpretative possibilities of the

piece by composing with at least 3 different ideas in mind. For example; concentrating on rhythm, speed and spacial configurations, while at the same time staying attuned to the logic of producing through imagination and material speculation. In this section, we work with the image of agricultural workers, a group of alchemists transforming the material, alongside the idea of creating an abstract sculpture, as a way to let the 3 images co-exist.

Eco-system and Principles of Construction

The entire sequence of how the material is moving from the beginning of the performance until now, is constructed according to a logic of dispersion, as the material will never pull itself back together without the help of humans. It is based on the idea that each action participates in a chain of actions, always leading to a change in the space. In the beginning, when one of the performers created a pile in the back of the space, he was in fact preparing a pile that you would later see being used in the next step of the performance's development.

The agricultural work continues as the performers throw the materials high up into the air, letting the particles fall down over most of the space. This specific part of the performance is conceived as a landscape. It is not representing a landscape, but it functions like one, in the sense that it lets your eyes drift

within an environment that is stable but full of microscopic changes. If you look at one of the groups of performers moving, you see microscopic changes that are different from those you perceive when you look at another. If you look with a peripheral vision, you see an overall state of liquidness. Our general approach was to avoid representing nature directly, but rather to deal with forces or processes of nature like gravity, magnetism, turbulence, equilibrium or chaos. Instead of thinking of a river we think of liquidness, or instead of thinking of the sea we think about surface reflection. Understood from a more poetic perspective; we discussed how the process of watching changes in air-pressure, or the velocity of materials, could evoke sensations of natural forces, without actually representing them. In that sense, we tried to avoid being nostalgic about the loss of "pure" nature that needs to be saved and protected. Rather, we attempt to fictionalize possible interactions between human and nonhuman actors in order to imagine an auto-poetic ecosystem that produces expression. This is of course the origin of the title and corresponds to how we attempted to create an artificial nature. The performative eco-system that we developed is based on the following principles:

1. Any element can be connected to any other element in the system. The elements that we consider connectable are everything from bodies, particles, safety blankets, mirrors, machines (as producers of wind and as extensions of human force), costumes (as protection), space, light (all the lamps are opera-

tive materials), sound (the acoustic sound produced by the materials, the sound produced through mikes and speakers), the theatre space itself.

2. Any action has a consequence on the entire environment, direct or fictional. The material has a logic of dispersion that the performers are constantly dealing with and building upon. The sequences are built as chains of causes and effects, where the effects are sometimes suspended in time. That means that an action might seem arbitrary while it happens, but later on in the performance, the effect of the action becomes functional for the development of the situation.

3. Every connection between elements changes and transforms both or all elements in the connection. When the performers touch another element, like for instance the lamps, their way of moving changes, the lamp is at the same time changing its position and the light that it casts transforms the entire stage situation.

4. Energy is always transformed into expression. In biological ecosystems, the energy of the sun is continually transformed into heat. Without the sun, most eco-systems on earth would stop. In the system we develop, the theater and the attention of the audience is the "sun", which constantly creates 'heat' for expression, or the possibility for expression to take place.

Time and Duration

Time is the focus of the next sequence. In it, the performers spread the materials out over the entire space. What the performers are doing is a job that can only be done in this particular speed. If they go any faster, they destroy what they have already done. Again, as in the opening sequence, a natural slowing down of time takes place. The patience we ask from the audience is one of understanding that this action can only be fulfilled in the time it takes. While doing this activity of spreading the particles to cover the floor, the performers become very visible and it opens up a time for resting, reflecting, and simply looking at the action as it is being carried out. Once the action is completed, the performers leave the stage empty and quiet. The lights are dimming so slowly that it is impossible to see the light change as it happens – it only manifest over time. The glittering, flickering surface constantly changes appearance, but so slowly that an optical illusion is created. Is the surface moving or not? Are the materials on the floor vibrating or not? The intention behind this entirely quiet and non-eventful scene is to create a very attentive state of active perception. Again we use the second type of triple image to compose the sequence; we work with an imaginary image of the sea surface, a moon landscape, a burnt out oil field or a still dying fire. Giving this image duration, in which nothing else is taking place, opens up the possibility to see the microscopic changes and movements in the materials. They are operating and expressing through their vibrancy. But in order for us to see it, we have to give it time.

In Jane Bennett's book *Vibrant Matter* she describes a certain state of material receptivity that is interesting in relation to this. She describes an encounter she once had with a large men's plastic work glove, a dense mat of oak pollen, an unblemished dead rat, a white plastic bottle cap and a smooth stick of wood. She explains how these objects, in the exact configuration that she found them, spoke to her. Not that she exactly understood what they were saying but rather they created affects in her. *"In this assemblage, objects appeared as things, that is, as vivid entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them, never entirely exhausted by their semiotics*. [...] *Not Flower Power, or Black Power, or Girl Power, but Thing Power: the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle."*[17]

In the book she describes the sun, the morning and a specific state of being sensorially receptive. I am triggered by the physical state she describes she was in when these objects started "talking" to her. One needs to *want* to make the shift of perspective from human to nonhuman utterance in order to be able to "be surprised by what we see".[18] It is a similar kind of altered receptivity, which this particular part of the piece works on establishing. During the work we discovered that when one looks at the particles falling in all different scales and tones, there is a tendency to become immune to the expressions they utter. They always somehow look the same once falling. For this reason, it became very important to introduce a break and this slowing down of time that now goes on for another 9 minutes. It functions as a kind of resetting of material expectations. When one of the performers reenter with two air blowers – after all the hard manual manipulations the performers have been doing by hand – a smile or a soft laughter often moves through the auditorium. The performers are setting up the scene with a lot of attention to detail, again taking their time, creating a suspension of expectations. Setting the scene also functions as a build-up of tension, that will be released once the machines are put into action. One element after another is introduced, signaling that all the objects are to be understood as performers in this section. The attention to a cable might be as important as to the main action in the center of the fire, or the eye of the hurricane. The fiction that is building, of a potentially dangerous site, is not acted out but created by installing the tools properly, in a very careful manner, without disturbing the environment.

Explosion and Chaos

On the count of 3, the scene explodes into a fire of particles flying everywhere. It is as if the previous nine-minute long sequence served to reverse the laws of gravity. In the first hand-manipulated part, the particles were always falling in more or less the same manner, due to the limitations of human force and laws of gravity. However, with the force of the newly introduced machines, the materials defy gravity and

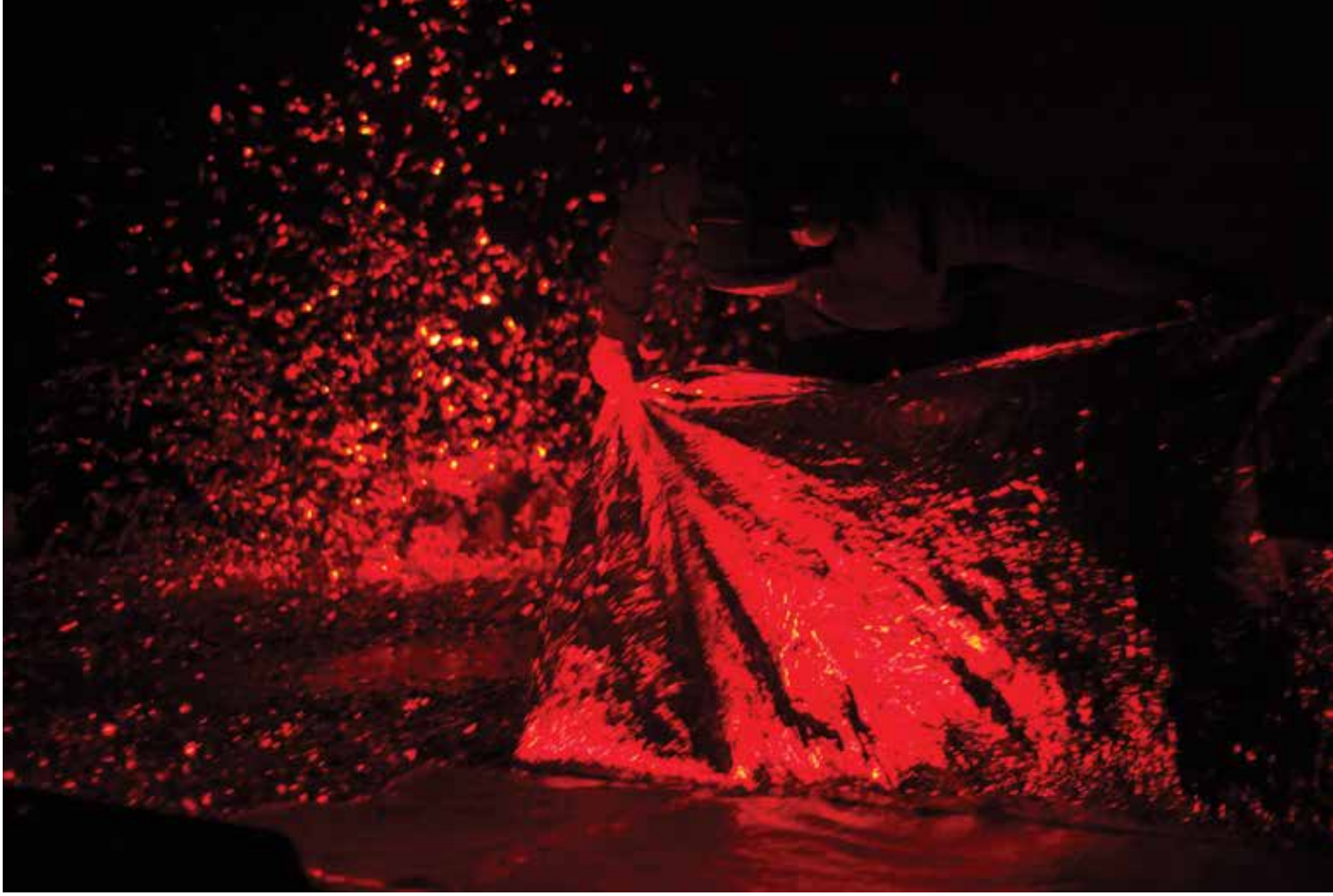
easily fly 8 meters upward from the floor. In this sequence the light once again becomes a central actor in how the materials change appearance. The lamp hanging above the stage opens and closes its zoom to

change the sensation of the space. It reduces the red light until we see something that reminds us of the extremely low light levels at the beginning of the performance. The space and the performers disappear for a little moment.

This scene is at the same time very close and very far from one of its sources of inspiration: *Lessons of Darkness* by Werner Herzog – brought into the process by Minna Tiikaainen, I think because of how it fictionalizes a catastrophic situation. Herzog's own account of what he calls ecstatic truth, a form of truth that "can be reached only through fabrication and imagination and stylization" is about creating an experience of the sublime. He uses documentary footage of the oil burning during the Kuwait-Iraq war, but in order to make a science fiction movie, a movie in which the earth no longer resembles anything we know about it. He was widely criticized for capitalizing on war and aestheticizing horror. In a talk he gave at the Berlin Film Festival, he defended his approach by explaining how he thinks about truth as not being factual, but rather something fabricated. He gives one example after another of how he encountered different ideas about truth through his film making, and why he does not want to be held in contempt for treating the war in Kuwait-Iraq irresponsibly. Even though it interests me whether or not this movie is politically in/correct, what interests me more is Herzog's approach of using real footage to produce fiction. In one of the scenes of his movie, we see workers struggling to extinguish fires in the burning oil fields. We see them calmly (filmed in slight slow-motion) operating tools, tractors and enormous water hoses.

We see them washing themselves clean with strong blasts of water, while they still have all their clothes on. We see them wearing heavy protection gear. We see them discuss the situation and try to find solutions to the burning oil geysers projecting fire high up in the air. At a certain moment, the workers set up a barrel of explosives in order to blow up the site, in what seems to be an attempt to stop the burning. The result is just another kind of spraying oil disaster. What interests me in this scene is the contrast between the extreme spectacularity, the "ecstatic truth", and the totally non-spectacular work the workers are doing. I am allowing myself not to look at this material for what is represents in terms of facts, but to follow Herzog's suggestion and to look at what it tells as an image (through the slight slow-motion he uses) and how it becomes a fiction.

The relation between fact and fiction is something crucial in *The Artificial Nature Project*. The fiction is not in the mundane actions you see if you only focus on the actions of the performers; people looking at the fire, changing position to see it from another angle, carrying cables, adding fuel, collecting particles in buckets, putting out the fire with a safety blanket, using the walls and the reflective surfaces to move the fire particles through the space and blowing themselves clean after having been in the fire. Rather, it's happening in the combination of the particles flying all over the space and in the link between the machines, the objects, the bodies and the imaginations of the spectators. I already spoke about two different kinds of triple images used to create the fictional levels of the performance. The first triple image emerged in the intersection between human and nonhuman actions and movements. The second triple image was generated by focusing on always having several imaginations active in our minds while creating the choreographic manipulations of the materials, aiming to open up the interpretative possibilities of the piece. In this final section, a third type of triple image is constructed as a tool to compose spatial relations. The third triple image is composed by staging a minimum of three simultaneous actions across the stage area, making it impossible for the spectator to see all the events occurring at once. This suggest a chaotic, wandering or traveling gaze. In order to see all elements of the image, the audience's gaze has to move and "edit" the situation live. This multiplication of actions, created by the fact that all the performers have different and opposing agenda's, makes the scene and the space very chaotic. As opposed to the previous part, where the performers were constantly working together in order to create a common and harmonious environment, they now have different ways of acting in the space. Each performer has their own score of actions, meetings and trajectories, solidified through repeated improvisations. The chronology of the actions are written in relation to the encounters with the materials and also with other performers. Based on a principle of doing and un-doing the actions of others, the performers enter into a network of chaotic relations.



Self-Created Problems and Manmade Disasters

While working on this, we were busy with how to stage the idea of manmade disasters, in an attempt to find a choreographic logic that would make the scene go out of control. In his text on hurricane Katrina, John Protevi describes the relation between natural forces and human interventions and how they gave rise to self-created problems. He describes how historical facts interacted with present day nature events in New Orleans. He speaks about how meteorological and geographical factors, as well as human interventions, participated in worsening the hurricane's destructive effects. He also recounts the past history of slavery in the city, coloring how the governmental rescue was organized and how the solidarity between the victims was canceled out due to the fear of a black uprising. Particularly relevant in exposing the relation between human and nonhuman forces, is his description of how the modifications of the Mississippi river led to a manmade disaster. He specifies that if the Louisiana coast line would have remained as it looked 100 years ago, the storm surge would have been weakened due to the resistance of the natural landscape. However, the human interventions; levee constructions and attempts to re-channel the Mississippi river, were a big part of why the flood walls and levee constructions around the New Orleans canal broke down and left the city so heavily flooded.

Of course, how the hurricane disaster would have looked had the Mississippi river not been altered along the way, is pure speculation. To think that the flooding could have been avoided is surely naïve and purposeless, but it is interesting to observe this situation in relation to the human desire to control the environment. This example is not the first, nor the last time a natural disaster also becomes a manmade disaster, due to human interventions on location before (or after) the natural disaster hits. Another example is the Fukushima catastrophe. Not only was the coast destroyed and people killed because of the tsunami, the natural disaster also set off a series of manmade problems. The nuclear power plant built in an unsafe place created a much bigger and longer lasting problem than the flood wave itself. What is symptomatic for both of these events is the anthropocentrism they reveal; the decisions made to build and construct in ways that are not thoroughly thought through, but arise from human needs, desires and economic structures. What makes a natural phenomenon a disaster is exactly that it cannot be predicted and cannot be thought of in advance. It is exactly at the moment when nature entirely disregards the desires of human beings that it becomes clear how absurd it is to disregard the forces of the nonhuman world in the first place.

The Artificial Nature Project indirectly relates to these questions of anthropocentrism, notions of control over agency and self-created problems. But, as the theater is not a place where anyone will ever be in real danger, and nor is it a place where control will be entirely lost, we had to search for a more abstract and choreographic form to express these questions. We found a self-reflexive logic that also speaks about theater, in the sense of working on a theatrical machinery of causes and effects, where causes to spectacular

effects are made visible as they are being created. We worked a lot with the idea of concrete absurdity and with trying to accomplish a certain action while it is simultaneously being undone. For instance, the chaos of trying to put all the particles into the corner while someone else is trying to remove them from that same corner. Or, of trying to clean the entire floor, while others are making the light flicker in a manner that makes it impossible to see what is left to be cleaned. This approach creates a theatrical absurdity and an expression of insufficiency that leaves a big mess behind. While making the piece, we were considering to include the entire cleaning process of the performance, as part of the show. Letting the performance dissolve into a long sequence of taking care of the materials, putting them back in place, preparing them for the show the next day, as we did every day during the rehearsal process. We thought of this as a reference to the long and tiresome work that has to be done in order to bring disaster areas back to everyday life. But, we quickly realized that the fictional transformation of the materials in this artificial world would be reduced once again to their matter of fact reality, being simply old and used confetti. And even though the connotations of separating trash, or the fiction of managing nuclear waste or rebuilding an environment from scratch would not have been the wrong directions to go in, we decided to stay with the open-ended-ness of keeping the materials in a state of transformation.

Extended Choreography

The blankets that are now flying in the air, was a way to open up the ending – freeing the image from disaster connotations – and turning the performance back into a self-contained system that reprocesses its own materials. The blankets, first introduced as tools to operate the primary material, finally find their way into the air, creating a sensation of bodily lightness. At the same time, the blankets demonstrate a material resistance, making the choreography into something that needs to be operated, adapted and improvised by the performers, rather than just executed. The materials never move exactly as planned. The soft struggle the performers experience while collaborating in order to make the blankets fly, shows the preconditions of a choreography that is not fully within human control. A choreography that composes itself as an extension of the human body, in the air, in the currents and fluctuations and in the expansion of what movement and choreography can be understood as. The notion of choreography that we attempted to develop with *The Artificial Nature Project* (together with the other pieces in this series), extends choreography beyond the movement of human performers and dancers on stage. It's a way of thinking choreography in the intersection between elements, rather than in the things themselves. To think choreography in between material and immaterial actors, who collaborate in ways that cannot be predicted but only tested, tried, rehearsed and elaborated. Or, a way to allow for difficult and complex encounters to take place between humans and nonhumans, when their different forces meet in a stage environment.

The focus of these works has been to create strong bodily sensations but from sources that are nonhuman. An experience that does not rely on kinesthetic transferal from body to body, but rather on the physical translation from one medium of sensation to another. What is the sensoriality of a non-living thing? How does this form of sensation relate to the experience a human body can have of it?

The Artificial Nature Project imagines a world where the logics of human control are altered, where the hierarchy between humans and nonhumans within theater is questioned. This is an attempt to make choreography and dance in a manner that questions theatrical anthropocentrism. And although the performance only allows a temporary look onto this altered state of functioning, it might at the very least offer a strange experience of dead matter uncannily starting to talk back to us.

Now the performance is finishing. The performers are moving the materials to cover the lights in the back of the space, which has a dimming effect. It's like a window being closed before a total blackout reinstalls itself in the theater.

Score
The Artificial Nature Project

The following score of *The Artificial Nature Project* was developed in close collaboration with the performers. It was made as a response to a collective discussion, which took place on the 31st of August (2012), where a lot of concerns were crystalized. It was a conversation in which questions were posed regarding how to understand the conceptual foundation of the project and specifically our human performance presence in relation to the expression of nonhumans. The descriptions of the situations that follow in the detailed score were used to define the specificity of our performative approach in each section.

The performance score is divided into 5 different categories: **Situation, imaginary plot, nonhuman expression, human expression and scales of visibility/invisibility**. The divisions might seem overly detailed but were needed in order to understand the relation between the different elements in play throughout the performance. Besides this general score each of the performers also developed their individual scores. These performer's scores contained spatial patterns, lists of actions and encounters with materials and other performers and were especially developed to elaborate the different approaches that the performers took during the third part of the piece.

Part I
Situation 1: Blackout (galaxy)

Situation: The audience is surrounded by a penetrating darkness. Light particles appear and move in front of their eyes. The representation is abstract and unidentifiable at first, then gains recognition as the light increases.

Imaginary plot: This scene should function like a teleportation. Bringing the spectator from one world into another. The world they are being brought into is a world where other principles of experience exist. The aim is to put focus on minute perceptions in order to create a ground for how to watch the rest of the performance. The slowness of the scene has a calming effect and there is a mesmerizing, enchanting feeling created by the light reflections.

Nonhuman expression: The nonhuman expression is all there is in this part of the performance. What performs are the little light reflections that keep on changing and modifying their appearance. The basic lighting principle behind this scene, aims to unfold the sequence as if the light would be autonomous, making every transition invisible or unnoticed. This creates the illusion that the material has an own desire to move, to increase or decrease in luminosity or to extend or contract in space.

Human expression: none

Scales of visibility/invisibility: The effect of this scene is created by using side-lights that are hidden very far out on each side of the stage, hidden from view by light-absorbing theater curtains. The levels of light are so low that it would remain invisible to the eye, if it would not hit a reflective surface as it does here. The microscopic reflections create the effect of a self-illuminated natural phenomenon.

PART II
Situation 2: Post-Apocalyptic Situation

Situation: The second part of the performance establishes an idea of being in a world where there are no natural materials left. There is a post-apocalyptic feeling attached to this state of things and to the appearance of the materials.

Imaginary plot: We are exploring the materials as if we would be material researchers on an archeological site carrying out a specific task. It could relate to work taking place in potentially dangerous sites after catastrophic situations, like for instance carefully having to burry an explosive material or to cover a nuclear power plant with cement in order to avoid an accident that would pollute everything around. As "workers" we are searching for the expressive qualities of the materials and our actions are defined by the materials. We try to decipher, read and listen to what the materials have to tell us.

Nonhuman expression: This situation starts from the materials essential qualities; the expression it has when no energy is put into it. The capacities of the materials are still to be uncovered and we are discovering them together with the audience. Fictionally speaking the materials have a minimum desire to move by themselves and they stay in a state of potentiality, where anything can still happen to them.

Human expression: In this world all our actions are made in relation to the potential danger of the materials. There is a carefulness and attentiveness in how we treat the materials. The way we stand, sit, touch, look and behave towards the material is what makes us appear as researchers, archeologist, nuclear disaster workers and so on.

Scale of visibility/invisibility: It is important for the activity level to remain very low in this part, as the material movement is still very delicate and small, it is easily overpowered by our human actions. Gestures, gazes, turning our heads, looking with a certain type of interest or intention are all part of what creates tension in the situation. Despite being covered in protective gear, every movement and even mental intentions takes part in the choreographic construction.

Situation 3. Absorption (cloud)

Situation / Imaginary plot: The goal of the material research is to find out how to become one with the particles. Instead of working with the materials at a distance, we start to cover our own bodies with it. In this moment it becomes clear that our project as material researchers is to bring out the expressive qualities, but also to examine how we can enter into composition with the material. The danger metaphor dissolves as our bodies compose a symbiotic relation with the material that literally absorbs our human presence.

The labor task is to discover other types of relations with materials that would do away with object/subject separations. The transfer of subjectivity and performativity – through passing energy and force into the materials – is one way of thinking about this. The idea of absorption is another; becoming one with the material in order to compose a much larger nonhuman body. In terms of visual representation, the link between our bodies and materials produces a quasi-natural turbulent process. It does not represent a natural phenomenon but it produces an organism that functions almost like a weather turbulence.

Nonhuman expression: The materials express a force and an unpredictability. They vibrate and are animated by the energy that is put into it. But, as we are disappearing in the mass, it comes across as an autonomous organism moving by itself. It is a massive, overwhelming cloud of particles moving through space containing uncountable movements and complexities within it.

Human Expression: The aim is to be absorbed by the material. To become one with it and in this sense, to disappear behind it. Our work is to transfer energy into the material in order for it to gain the capacity to express, thinking of the material as an extension of the body in a machinic connection.

Scale of visibility/invisibility: There is a certain urgency in making this absorption happen. As if the material needs us to be able to "speak". This is possibly the moment within the performance where human subjectivity is reduced the most. Where expression dissolves into intensity, speed, force, vectors and sensations.

Situation 4: Agricultural Labor (hitting down)

Situation: Out of this cloud emerges another situation. It is almost like a hallucination. Our bodies reappear and the force we put into the material all of a sudden becomes very visible. This shift from invisibility to visibility creates a direct image representation of workers. The work we do is transformed, just as the material is transformed by our actions. The social situation of us doing this activity together becomes part of the image.

Imaginary plot: As material researchers we have to figure out how to transform the quality of the material. The actions we do spread in the group. This process of actions contaminating each other follows different tendencies that occur in the material due to the turbulent state it is in. The images evoked have to do with fieldwork. We become agricultural workers in some weird activity of transforming the "crops". As if pouring and hitting the materials would change the quality of the materials through a process of alchemy.

Nonhuman expression: The material is in a state of turbulence. This turbulence gives rise to different tendencies in the materials to transform. It has a desire to change in different directions. The sound produced by throwing the material down on the ground is interesting in terms of immaterial expression. We hear the sound of the material before we see it, in that way destabilizing what the material is and what it is capable of expressing.

Human expression: We become very visible as workers in this section. The focus is put on rhythm, speed and the duration it takes to transform the material. Our work – sharing and collaborating on the task that has to be completed – adds to the social representation in the situation. A ritualistic connotation can appear though the type of movements we use (repetition and rhythm).

Scale of visibility/invisibility: Our bodies become extremely visible, especially in relation to the invisibility of the previous section.

Situation 5: Environment (rain)

Situation / Imaginary plot: We are creating the environment we want to have around us. The environment includes opening up and covering the entire space. It is not just something that is there, but something that needs to be produced; sustainability being an active and laborious choice that we insist on creating. As material researchers, in this part we are enacting or creating an image of nature as we know it. Trying to produce the sensation of rain on our own bodies.

Nonhuman expression: In terms of image, what we create is particles falling (like raindrops). But it is also an unstable space, a space in constant production. The material falls according to the laws of gravity and in this moment we really begin to be able to see gravity in the air. This is the activity in the piece that is most clearly a direct representation of nature (rain).

Human expression: The visibility of our bodies is 50/50 in relation to the materials. We are not only producing the environment but also producing it to experience it. Literally creating the environment in order to be affected by it; to feel how it is to be inside it, to receive it on our bodies, to see it falling. There is again an urgency in making this environment function as an environment by covering the entire space. It is also a way of transforming the material from a mass, to becoming falling particles, to finally recompose it once again as a liquid.

Scale of visibility/invisibility: The throwing gestures that have been present for a long time already, now become very visible. The intention put into the throwing communicates a lot. The quality of the throwing, the rhythm, the speed and force are part of what articulates the relation between the humans and the material. Throwing as high and straight as possible is more important than throwing frantically. Throwing in a way that always touches another person's "cloud" and staying connected as a larger organism creates the environmental feeling in the space. Watching the materials falling either in the air or on the ground creates the sensation of us doing this to also feel it.

Situation 6: Landscape (pouring)

Situation: The next step is a clear consequence of the rain. This situation functions like a landscape. Little changes are happening all the time but the landscape stays the same. To achieve this state of calmness, where microscopic changes become visible, there needs to be slowness and time involved. The situation should have a mesmerizing and calming effect.

Imaginary plot: Connected to the sensation of watching a landscape, this situation exposes the patience or impatience that one has with it. I come to think about certain paintings of Gerhard Richter. He painted clouds... of course entirely realistic in their representation and awfully virtuosic in their execution, but nevertheless producing sensation. Not the same sensation as in nature but an artificialized way of producing sensation. His external reference is "real" nature, a real cloud. What we are doing here is rather composing sensation, but without an external reference of what the image represents. It is an invented fluidity and an invented landscape.

Nonhuman Expression: The material starts to appear as a liquid. The pouring quality is a surprise especially after having seen the material as particles in the previous sections. There is an ongoing continuity and calmness present in the movements of the material.

Human Expression: Half of the group is entering into composition with the material by pouring it closely to their body and by that, merging with it. The other half is entering into composition with the ground in order to become part of the surface; as rocks on grass or stones in the sea.

Scale of visibility/invisibility: This division of activities within our group, makes the attention divided between those who are active and those who are passive in the space. The functioning of visibility is more complex that just being seen or not being seen. The inactive bodies are visible, but by looking at the "fluids", they produce a heightened attention and focus on the material movement. The bodies moving are once again almost absorbed by the materials by merging with it.

Situation 7: Planting (spreading)

Situation/ Imaginary plot: Out of this artificial nature landscape comes cultivation. As if the stage is transformed from being an autonomous landscape (I know we are also producing it) to becoming an agricultural field. The aim of the cultivation is not to grow flowers or plants, nor to harvest wheat or corn products, rather it is about cultivating an artificial surface. As material researchers we are trying to spread and cover the entire floor with the material. Planting it or treating it as an agricultural or gardening material.

Nonhuman expression: In this moment the material again changes its composition; little grains and particles to be spread out over the floor. But the floor also starts to perform something. As if the empty spots call for attention and everything starts to be organized around these empty spots.

Human expression: The focus is on creating this surface. We start using a more quotidian body, doing functional actions as a worker would do it. This connects the last action we do before leaving the space to the actions we do when we reenter. Again there is a sensation of practicality to it, but also a sense of precision and almost anal perfection.

Situation 8: Surface Reflection (sea)

Situation: The stage is empty, entirely covered in a thin layer of particles. It's a still-point where you are not sure whether or not the material is moving at all.

Imaginary Plot: Making surface reflections on an artificial sea, moon landscapes, a burnt out oil field.

Nonhuman expression: The light is manipulated in a manner that makes it impossible to see if it is really moving or not. It creates a vibrant sensation, connecting it to the first scene in which the materials are moving by themselves in a very minimal manner.

PART III
Situation 9: Preparing (a self-created problem)

Situation: We reenter the situation with tools, which proposes a big shift in the whole project up until this point. The tools immediately connote workers, as they are literally the tools that people use for cleaning gardens and city streets. There is a sense of suspension in the situation, as the machines will clearly lead to a yet unknown effect. The performance quality is practical and we are preparing in an efficient, slightly stylized and careful manner. The matter of fact-ness of the situation allows it to not be metaphorical. We are not representing workers, we are actually preparing for what come next.

Imaginary plot: As material researchers, we extend our capacities by including these tools. This creates a new apparatus within the performance. It makes us appear as machine operators, technicians, or all types of workers that use machines or tools. We are still on the same quest as before, attempting to bring out the expressive qualities of the materials and to figure out what they are capable of doing. However, the attempts get more and more extreme.

Nonhuman expression: The cables and the machines are as performative if not more so, than the materials. They are part of creating this new apparatus that it being set up. They perform their function and this above mentioned suspension. The machines are in a state of potentiality with latent capacities. We do not yet know what they are capable of producing, however we know that they are capable of a lot. They also signify a change from hand manipulations to machine manipulations.

Human Expression: Our performance intention is practical and direct. We are collaborating to set up the space. But, we are not dividing functions as it would be most efficient to do, rather we allow the different objects and elements to perform as well. Carrying a machine is therefor different than a cable, a pair of glasses or ear-protectors.

Scale of visibility/invisibility: The focus is on how we make the objects perform. We do it practically, functionally but also carefully, with an attention to the things that we are moving around. To name things “objects” applies specifically to this part, as it does to all our gear; the machines, cables, mirrors, headphones and glasses are very different from the more abstract materials operated until now. These objects cannot change shape or function, but they can make the more abstract materials change their shape and function.

Situation 10: The Self Created Problem (spreading the fire)

Situation: 1, 2, 3 GO! A hard cut makes us enter into another reality. It's loud and it's dark. It has a sense of being a catastrophic situation from the very first moment. It is a self-created problem that we at first seem to be able to operate and control. The situation starts by having a central focus where we all know what to do.

Imaginary plot: The Herzog movie: *Lessons of Darkness,* is a very relevant reference and something that could almost be considered part of the performative score of this situation. If we look at the workers in that film, they are behaving calmly, even when the situation is completely messed up. For the first 5 minutes of the fire scene, this kind of calmness is used to create our performance presence. We are taking time to figure out what the situation is and what needs to be done. This scene is also potentially funny, inasmuch as it can be overwhelmingly complicated.

Nonhuman expression: The materials gain a very different expression through the speed of being projected through space. The colors depart from deep red and start to modulate and change the appearance of the material completely. With the wind, the particles suddenly have a much more aggressive quality and will-fullness. In the center of the fire, the particles are blown up in the air until it empties out on the floor, but without getting completely empty. The material is added little by little, first carefully from the back with the hands, then with buckets. The particles are put into the fire by sliding it on the floor and we also go into the fire to make clouds inside of it.

Human expression: There is a feeling of danger lurking. We are careful in how we treat the materials, not knowing if it is explosive or what mixing it into the fire might do. We look at it and observe the situation to figure out how to behave. Little by little we start to spread the "fire" particles and the activity into the whole space, creating multiple points of attention.

Scales of visibility/invisibility The light plays a big role in the visibility of this scene. We sometimes disappear because the lights are so low that we become invisible.

Situation 11: Disaster Management (extinguishing versus increasing the fire)

Situation: The actions in the space start to complexify. There is not one, but three centers of attention in the space and the effect is an expression of chaos. Actions start to become counterproductive; some of us are trying to maintain the fire/storm while others are attempting to put it out. Some of us even place materials so as to be affected by them ourselves. The situation tends towards the absurd. The actions in themselves are not funny but the effect of doing, undoing, redoing...produces some strange senselessness that is potentially humorous.

Imaginary plot: As material researchers, we are increasing the number of actions we are performing. Trying all kinds of different things in order to make the materials gain force. We have to produce this stormy environment, almost as scientists who are trying to produce these miniature tornados in order to be able to study how they move and according to which principles they behave. The references to this situation are all kinds of very strong natural phenomena; tornados, storms, fires, hurricanes, that all effect bodies tremendously.

Nonhuman expression: The material starts to appear more aggressive because of the air force coming from the machines. At times it can look as if the particles are actually attacking us and creating a strong uncomfortable effect on our bodies. The safety blankets are also introduced, first in the sense of being a tool used to extinguish the fire. Later, they also become the main material as they are being manipulated in one of the corners.

Human expression: We are clearly affected by being inside this "material storm". There is no panic in the performativity, but the effect of the chaos is producing an appearance of panic in the space, due to all the different motions. There is an urgency to all our performative actions. Standing, looking calmly is done in order to find out what to do next. We are walking or running with urgency and a clear intention. We avoid sliding and falling by measuring our actions in an efficient and practical manner. At the same time, we are searching for a state of being affected by the situation.

Scales of visibility/invisibility: The focus is constantly shifting between all the elements. We go in and out of visibility, materials disappear in one place, only to reappear in another.

Situation 12: Cleaning Up (flickering lights, cleaning, collecting blankets)

Situation: The situation becomes even more complex. By manipulating the light, it becomes quite difficult to see anything in the space. At the same time as producing this darkness, we also try to clean the space, which is obviously counterproductive. The space looks very messy, while in fact it is being cleaned up. One of us is collecting blankets even as they keep escaping, while all the rest are blowing the particles to one side of the space.

Imaginary plot: As material researchers, we are both producing the flickering lights and cleaning up simultaneously. There is an absurdity to this situation that could be connected to the absurdity of it taking months or years to clean up certain kinds of waste.

Nonhuman expression: The flickering lights play a very important role in this part. It is a way of modifying the whole situation in a very simple manner. It produces the effect of a catastrophic and a stormy space in a state of urgency. The blankets are starting to fly through the air, which is a way of introducing them as "bodies". It also introduces what will be happening next; the blankets being thrown around and then lifted into the air.

Human expression: Our intentionality has to do with the efficiency of cleaning. What is unusual here is that the cleaning is done as part of the catastrophe. This is again an absurdity that could potentially be funny. We are not waiting for "the storm to pass", rather we insist on trying to clean even when it is totally dysfunctional to do so in the flickering lights.

Scales of visibility/invisibility: The flickering light makes us shift our focus. We see the stage, but only in brief moments. Again people, things and materials appear in little glimpses, but a lot of what is going on is hidden. This has a very dramatic and exciting effect.

Situation 13: Reconstructing Material Autonomy (safety blankets)

Situation: After the big mess has been cleaned up, a new experiment with the recently introduced blankets starts. First the blankets are manually thrown in the air; an impossible task. Then those of us with the air-blowers start to help, which makes the blankets fly. There is a moment where we try to control the blankets and to keep all of them in the air to produce a moment of rest in the dramaturgy. It looks a bit like a well functioning experiment, where the creators of the experiments stay nicely on the outside. But this only lasts for a very short moment, as the projectile force of the blankets gets used to create an almost war-like image of materials being projected through the space. (In either case we do not have full control over the blankets and have to adapt everything accordingly!)

Imaginary plot: As material researchers, we are trying to make these blankets become expressive bodies. It again reminds us of scientific experiments where certain parameters and frames are set-up in order to examine a certain material's behavior. How do the blankets move when we blow from a certain point and where do they go when we reduce the space around it.

Nonhuman expression: The materials are flying through the air, creating a sensation of lightness, but at the same time also a sense of corporeality. It is as if all the blankets become one large body but composed out of all the individual pieces. There is a bodily feeling connected to the way each blanket twist and turns in the air. Again it is a very chaotic and complex movement pattern that is created by these elements flying through the air. Once the blankets are being projected through the air they start to have a more aggressive feeling to them. A kind of material attack, as if they become weapons.

Human expression: At first we are slightly more removed from the materials than in earlier parts. This gives a more controlled sensation when it works, but a very urgent feeling when it does not and when we have to deal with the inherent material resistance. Later on when we shoot out blankets from the corner, the urgency is sustained as a performative quality, and sometimes we scream.

Scales of visibility/invisibility: The human bodies are at first visibly controlling the materials, but later on the materials gain a forceful autonomy.

Situation 14: Resonance
(closing the window – blackout)

Situation: After the storm, chaos and noise we come back to a very calm situation. Everything dies out and the situation is a moment of letting the material movements resonate. We cover the neon lights that are still shining at the back of the stage, as a way of closing the performance and making a manual blackout.

Imaginary plot: We are arranging and cleaning up the materials. Caring for them. Lifting them very carefully, and placing them in piles, almost as if we would be preparing for the next performance.

Nonhuman Expression: The materials are back in their zero-degree expression, they lie immobile on the ground, but there is a crackling resonance in the sound they make. The light is being modified and its removal determines and prepares the end of the performance.

Human Expression: We try not to make sound in the space, letting the resonance of things settle, at the same time we are coming back to the sensation of our own bodies after the chaotic activity we have been in for the past 25 minutes.

Scales of visibility/invisibility: The lights are being covered by us, creating an effect on the entire space, darkening the environment until there is only darkness.

7 Afterthought - The Permeable Stage

Permeability in fluid mechanics and the earth sciences is a measure of the ability of a porous material, for instance sandstone or rock, to allow fluids to pass through it. A concept signifying a movement or a passageway of one form of matter through another. It signifies the forceful resistance of materials, as well as their fragility. I mention this natural definition of the word because it brings us back to the quality and behavior of substances and materials, some of the main topics *The Artificial Nature Series* has tried to address. I also mention permeability because in perhaps a more metaphorical sense of the word, it relates to immateriality, ephemerality, evaporation and dissolution. When the concept is applied to theater and in our case to the idea of nonhuman choreography, permeability could perhaps also signify an understanding of the stage being surrounded by a porous membrane allowing for a flux of movements to happen between what is inside and outside of its territory. The process of transforming movements from outside the theater context into stage expressions, has been inherent to the creation of the works in *The Artificial Nature Series*. Starting from observing the actual physical configurations and movements of clouds, winds, hurricanes, storms, trees, oceans, fires and volcanoes, I have tried to create a material understanding of how these movement processes are entirely interconnected with human, industrial and immaterial labor production. These material movements connect to a larger concept of immateriality through their elusiveness and by how they also reflect aspects of our current network societies. In this sense, evaporation, invisibility and processes of transformation have been both conceptual and material motivations for developing this entire poetics.

What I have tried to expose throughout the chapters of this book, is how these works have been permeable to specific questions, problems, theories, narratives, histories, political discourses and social imaginations; thoughts that were not always explicitly expressed within the works themselves. By permeability of these works, I understand their capacity to allow these thoughts to pass through them, both during their live presentation but also while being reactivated throughout this book. I also think of their permeability as a way to permit the performances to become vessels for other thoughts, those provoked by subsequent performances, by the critiques and reflections they have entailed or by discussions that they will perhaps, through this writing, continue to be susceptible to.

Permeability #1: Making nonhuman choreography for…humans

The first issue I would like to bring our attention to is a paradox created by the fact of composing non-

human choreography. What I was searching for with *The Artificial Nature Series* was to decentralize the expression that was presented on or off stage, so that it was performed either entirely by nonhumans or through the collaboration between human and nonhuman actors. Nevertheless, all the performances I made were meant to be looked at by humans. This asymmetry produced a paradoxical problem: In the works, the human performer is deprived of his or her central position on stage that has been given over to that of nonhumans, while the spectator, visitor, participant or audience member remains human and ends up in the very center of attention.

I became increasingly aware of this problematic towards the end of making this series. Because of my interest in the agency of objects, I had been reading a few texts by the Speculative Realists,[19] a group of philosophers critiquing the Kantian notion of the correlation between thought and being, a relation that presupposes that anything outside of human perception would be unknowable. Within Speculative Realism and Object-Oriented Ontology, the argument is contrary to this presupposition; that the ontology of objects exists beyond our human perception of them and that a correlationist understanding of the world has to be broken in order to critique the anthropocentrism it entails. I remember being very fascinated by this way of conceiving of the autonomy of the object, yet remaining doubtful due to the fact that these thoughts around the autonomy of objects were inevitably produced by humans. This problem is not easy to overcome, as the perspective from which we can think non-anthropocentrism always remains human. Nevertheless, the attempt to do so is a way of reconfiguring our conceptions of and our relations to the world, or in my case to theatrical and choreographic creations.

During the processes of making *The Artificial Nature Series*, we often talked about how to think of a nonhuman public. We discussed the possibilities of presenting the pieces, for instance, for stones or animals as a way of detouring the anthropocentrism of the public, like we were trying to detour the expressions we presented on stage. However, we never seriously pursued these ideas. Sometimes I still wonder why? I think it quickly became clear that an integral part of the performances was in fact to rethink human spectatorship. The goal became to create sensorial participation by calling for active sensorial perceptions and sensorimotor awareness in the spectator. The aim was that their bodily movements would take part in determining the outcome of their experience. In *The Light Forest* and *Speculations* these forms of sensorial participation were directly and explicitly articulated by asking the spectators to move around freely in order to receive the performances. In the remaining three pieces, the sensorial participation was rather created by slowing down the time of perception and by working with microscopic expressions of light, sound, color and material movements. Our interests were to change or at least to challenge how the spectator would have to physically implicate him or herself in the performance. Replacing the human spectator with stones or plants was for this reason not an option. But in spite of us not pursuing the idea of performing for a nonhuman public, it is not an unimaginable, nor uninteresting task to think further

about it in regards to achieving a more radical decentralization of theatrical reception. Krõõt Juurak, an Estonian performer, dancer and artist has, for instance, already explored making performances for pets, where no human beings are invited to participate as spectators (the performers are human). As I have not witnessed her performances, I can only speculate about how the cats and other species have reacted to the movements performed and their potential effects. In either case, Juurak's work connects directly to ideas of species companionship and how to rethink our relationship to other forms of life, especially that of animals.

Permeability #2: Implementing non-anthropocentrism

The second series of thoughts I would like to make these works permeable to, come from Donna Haraway's notion of species companionship and from a talk entitled *Staying with the trouble* that she gave in a conference in 2015.[20] In this talk, she spoke about three different major conceptions of the world; the Anthropocene, the Capitalocene and the Chthuluscene. In it, she humorously proposes that the icon of the Anthropocene epoch could be "fossil-making-man", burning fossils as fast as possible, symbolized by a burning effigy at one of the Burning Man Festivals. The effigies of these burning men have, over the years, grown larger and larger and are now being "performed" / burned in the deserts of Nevada. Interestingly, the festival has grown so big that every time someone takes a snapshot of one of the burning effigies, one has to sign a contract that the copyright of the image is owned by the burning man organization. Haraway uses this rather anecdotal but also funny example to introduce a connection she later makes between the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene. The fact that the effects of fossil fuels are driving the earth into total destruction at the same time as their extraction guides and determines economic processes worldwide, is only one of the reasons why Haraway proposes the Capitalocene as *the* word that could define our current epoch.

But what interests me more than these first two notions – in regards to drawing a more complex understanding of anti-anthropocentrism – is the Chthulucene and her figures for sympoiesis or multispecies becoming. Her concept of the Chthulucene is connected to understanding and learning from the intelligence and the complex cellularity that exists within the natural world of microbiology. Her concept is connected to how microbiologist Lynn Margulis has been able to show "that the origin of complex cellularity on this Earth is an endosymbiotic event. That is, some bacterial sorts of critters ate others and got indigestion and stuck around with each other."[21] From this perspective Haraway explains how for instance bobtail squids are capable of developing new crucial characteristics for their survival by entering into bacterial endosymbiosis. The fact that several forms of nonhuman life have been capable of developing and adapting to new living conditions, might propose a model of adaptation, transformation, multicellular evolution and development that humans could learn from. The concept of the Chthulucene is especially interesting to think about in relation to the autonomy of the natural world and how it has functioned and

developed before human presence on the earth. Haraway proposes that we study the intelligent processes of symbiogenesis taking place within the subterranean environment of the earth, to invent possible modes of resisting the processes of the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene. What is also interesting to think further about in the perspective of microbiology, is how nature has the capacity to outlive humans. A surprising example of this is, for instance, to be found in the landscapes surrounding the city of Chernobyl, where 30 years after the worst nuclear accident happened wild life is flourishing.[22] Researchers and scientists are still trying to figure out how the presence of wild animal and plant life has been able to survive, develop and flourish within the conditions of radiation. Before they find their answers, we might speculate about how this could be connected to the Chthulucene and to an understanding of the earth that dates 1.5 billion years back.

Permeability #3: Nonhuman time

With this perspective of nonhuman time, or with a notion of the earth that knows nothing of human presence, it perhaps becomes easier to conceive of a non-anthropocentric perspective without always returning to the survival of the human species (even though for Haraway this is a goal). In such a perspective it might be possible to accept that our existence on the planet will terminate, and that the question simply is in how long. But rather than speculating further about the dystopic future of mankind, I will instead turn to thinking more concretely about the question of time as it is used in *The Artificial Nature Series*.

One thing I was not aware of while making the performances was that all of them remain within a rather common use of theatrical time. They last between 30 and 90 minutes and even though they have a relatively slow and extended pace, they do not question or transform how theatrical time is conceived. The experiences I proposed were thought of as alternatives to other much faster distributions of time and demands for attention, as they can be found in mainstream cinema, theater, dance, video gaming and screen-interfaces and not in relation to notions of time that can be derived from nature, which is rather on the scale of days, years, decades and centuries. Obviously these works are what they are, exactly because of how they use and address time. But, some of my choices of intensifying perception and condensing sensorial experience might also have to do with an internalized understanding of how the current performance economy works. Or, with how I understand what is possible and not possible to achieve in terms of transforming the frames (and markets) in which these performances have been presented.

The performative conditions of these works were such that it was impossible to think about them lasting for 24 hours, 24 years or 240 years for that matter. When thinking about other works that manage to alter these conditions of dance, choreography and performance I don't find many examples of works that really endure. (Jan Fabre has recently made a 24 hours long performance with huge success, maintaining

an economy of spectacle and intensification). However, when I look at the visual arts, I do manage to find works that endure over a longer period, while still remaining time and performance based. There is one piece specifically that I admire for managing to maintain a performative quality, despite existing already for almost 40 years. It is a piece of Land Art by artist Walter De Maria called the *Lightning Field*. It's located in New Mexico, where a field has been selected for its high incidence of lightning. "The work consists of 400 highly polished, precision-engineered, stainless-steel poles, set in concrete foundations 3 feet deep with pointed tips (attracting lightning) and arranged in a grid measuring one mile by one kilometer."[23] The visitor / spectator is invited to pass 24 hours in a cabin in highly protective conditions in order to view the work in solitude. From May to September the chances of seeing the work "in action" increases, for the rest, the looming potential of lightning striking one of the poles is what allows the performative tension of the work to endure for the last 40 years.

For myself, this challenge still remains; to not only transform the format of spatial configurations and with that the conception of spectatorship, but also to question the notions of time that historically have defined theatrical and choreographic experiences.

Permeability #4: A micro history of nonhuman agency in dance

Now that we have opened the permeability of *The Artificial Nature Series* to the works of others, I would like to continue by imagining a historical lineage of works that preceded them. This time I will not focus on the lineage they are opposed to; the history of the natural body in dance as I mentioned earlier in the poetic principles, but rather to a history that relates more closely to the agency of things and nonhuman actors in dance. There is one work that keeps coming back to mind: Loïe Fuller's *Serpentine Dance* from 1891. In this dance, she created circular movements with two sticks covered in fabrics that were also attached to her body. A colored light was projected onto the fabric making it change its appearance, creating a mesmerizing flow of movement. An early film of this dance exists, reinforcing its relation to the new technological developments of the day. In this film, the dancer is still in the center of the dance, yet the focus is on the extension of her body, through the movements that the fabrics create while covering and hiding the actual movements of her limbs. About three decades later, Oscar Schlemmer continued to erase the visibility of the human performer with the dancer remaining on stage. In his *Stick Dance* from 1927 a dancer is wearing a black body suit, with wooden sticks fastened to it. As he moves his limbs, the sticks change their configuration and dissolve the image of his body into geometrical shapes that appear, helped by the dimming lights that make his black suit invisible. In 1972 Jan Van Munster creates light choreographies for film and video by swinging a lightbulb over his head. In *Circles* the general lights dim in the space while his body becomes invisible, leaving only a light circle to be drawn out in the air above him.

To continue this historical dematerialization process of bodily movement, I would like to continue to think through the visual arts to find a work that takes this process even further. In Ann Veronica Janssen's piece *Blue, Red and Yellow (2001)*, movement is no longer being performed by a performer, rather it is the spectator herself who is the object of bodily experience. In Janssen's installation, as a visitor you enter a box filled with smoke, which makes it impossible to orient yourself in space. The smoke has different colors according to where you move within the box, which means you are walking through a color field that encloses itself around you. Once in a while you encounter the edges of the box, other times you bump into a person that you did not see arriving. Your sense of spatial orientation is removed by the impossibility of seeing, inviting you to question your habitual patterns of sensorimotor movement.

The pieces in *The Artificial Nature Series* are connected to this lineage; a territory composed by an overlap between dance and the visual arts, defined by a shared interest in dematerialization processes (of the body in dance and of the art object in visual art), resulting in the emergence of other forms of spectatorship.

Permeability #5: Questioning non-subjective performativity

These processes of dematerialization within performance complicates the position of the human performer. One huge blind-spot I had while making *The Artificial Nature Project* was to underestimate this complexity. I thought that because the project was a conceptual and experimental frame, it would allow us to bypass the question of addressing human subjectivity directly. I had already in many of my earlier works (also group works) been insisting on erasing the personal, the autobiographic and the self-expressive, to propose a constructivist notion of the body and of subjectivity. In these earlier works (*to come, Why We Love Action* and *GIANT CITY*) the focus still remained on the movement and the expression of the body. Thus, they did not cause the same types of problems for the performers – of feeling disregarded or moving in service of the nonhumans (or in service of the horrible choreographer I sometimes felt myself being by insisting on working on material agency). I know that part of our frustrations were directly connected to the physical conditions of the work we made. The terrible noise of the leaf-blowers, the dust and intoxication coming from the confetti that for some of the dancers led to allergic skin reactions or airway irritations (indeed nothing natural or healthy about this performance), as well as the darkness we all were submitted to in the rehearsal space, all contributed to unforeseen and unexpected trouble. I remain grateful to the performers who stayed with me throughout this process and who invested their bodies, but also their thoughts, energy and affects into how to create an expression of a dystopic world in which humans produce and create their own manmade disasters.

A second complication that gave rise to conflict was the difference between what the performers felt while they were performing and how the spectators received it. The best example we have of this hap-

pens during the "cloud", when the performers are working incessantly on producing a huge cloud of silver particles that entirely absorb their bodies. This moment is often described by the spectators as a moment of almost magical bliss, whereas the physical labor that it demands of the performers is exhausting and almost impossible. While they put huge effort into animating the materials, the performers are literally being erased from the image. I think this contrast, between performer and audience experience, was one of the reasons why we needed to work with a science-fictional frame and with the idea of the performers being workers. It was a way to understand the anonymity of the performance presence we developed, as well as to work on imaginary and theatrical layers of performative activity as an antidote to their non-subjective performance presence. What occurred in *The Artificial Nature Project* was the problem of how to understand the subjectivity of the performers within a particular set of material relations proposed by the performance. The effect was that we all had to use our theatrical imagination and fictional strategies to try to solve something that still remained a problem.

However, I think the conflicts or difficulties of understanding subjectivity that we encountered also have to do with a larger problematic, of how to combine a materialist, non-anthropocentric, perhaps post-human understanding of the body with complex articulations of human subjectivity.

In her book entitled *The Posthuman*, Rosi Braidotti argues that there is a need today to reconfigure our understanding of subjectivity so that it is articulated in relation to the forces of the post-human condition we are living in. Her proposal of affirmatively rethinking posthuman subjectivity is on the one hand, a direct critique of humanism (and the atrocities committed in its name) and on the other, an experiment with thinking about what contemporary, bio-technologically mediated bodies are capable of doing and becoming. According to her, the post-human condition is not only the fact that bodies today are being threatened by the devastating effects of global capitalism, advanced technologies and the necropolitics it entails. She also sees the post-human turn as an opportunity to displace the centrality of "man" and the understanding of human agency within the world. She argues that because the global economy today thrives and profits from targeting any form of "life", the figure of the human is subsumed under the global networks of control and commodification and is consequently in trouble. Understanding the crisis of the central position of the human (man) in her perspective, is what will allow us to reconfigure our relation to other forms of life/*zoe*, which are equally threatened by the excesses of post-anthropocentric capitalism. Her approaches are openly anti-capitalist, anti-individualist and anti-humanist in favor of striking an alliance "with the productive and immanent forces of *zoe*, or life in its nonhuman aspects."[24] "These non-profit experiments with contemporary subjectivity actualize the virtual possibilities of an expanded, relational self that functions in a nature-culture continuum and is technologically mediated".[25] Non-anthropocentric performativity should in this sense be understood as the subjectivity emerging in the intersections between all different kinds of living matter, with no supremacy of human presence. It

would include the performance of humans, animals, plants, cells, genes, even media technologies and machines understood as forms of intelligent matter that have the capacities to transform and directly interact with other forms of life. Human subject formation or subjectivity would thus have to spring from an understanding of how we treat permeabilities between nature/culture, body/technology, human/animal, man/machine, plant/insect, living/dead, present/future, movement/stillness, global/local, agency/passivity and object/subject. Despite the fact that reflections on human subjectivity are not at the center of *The Artificial Nature Series*, these notions and connections remained central to the creation of the movement and choreography within it.

Permeability # 6: The autonomous life of performance

I remember the first time I presented *evaporated landscapes* in 2009 and how all of a sudden I had the feeling the performance acquired a life of its own. It was as if the performance started to talk back to me, informing me of everything I had not been able to think about while making it. It told me about tsunamis and environmental disasters, although what I had been working on was topics of immaterial labor and invisible flows. Part of what the performance told me, was mediated through the people who watched it, their words and reflections made me think that in fact I had no idea what I had made. The feeling of autonomy that the performance acquired resonated with what I was hoping for, to enter into a material dialog with matters whose language I would first have to learn.

Writing this book has been a way to try to prolong this dialog and to allow the works of *The Artificial Nature Series* to continue to actively produce movement and thought. Throughout the writing process, I have tried to delineate permeable passageways between the working methods I've employed to construct movement inside the theater and the larger questions that my performances responded to. Hopefully these permeable paths will also show how choreography is not only something taking place inside theaters, but also constantly in the world that surrounds us.

7 Pleasures

Premiere: Steirischer Herbst, Graz 2015
Concept, Choreography: Mette Ingvartsen
Performers: Sirah Foighel Brutmann, Johanna Chemnitz, Katja Dreyer, Elias Girod, Bruno Freire, Dolores Hulan, Ligia Lewis, Danny Neyman, Norbert Pape, Pontus Pettersson, Hagar Tenenbaum, Marie Ursin (permanently replaced by Gemma Higginbotham)
Replacements: Ghyslaine Gau, Calixto Neto, Manon Santkin, Mette Ingvartsen
Light: Minna Tiikkainen
Music & Soundtrack: Peter Lenaerts,
with music by Will Guthrie (Breaking Bones & Snake Eyes)
Set: Mette Ingvartsen & Minna Tiikkainen
Dramaturgy: Bojana Cvejic
Assistant choreography: Manon Santkin
Assistant light: Nadja Räikkä
Technical director: Joachim Hupfer & Nadja Räikkä
Sound technician: Adrien Gentizon
Company Management: Kerstin Schroth
Assistant production: Manon Haase
A production of Mette Ingvartsen / Great Investment
Co-production: steirischer herbst Festival (Graz), Kaaitheater (Brussels), HAU Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin), Théâtre National de Bretagne (Rennes), Festival d'Automne (Paris), Les Spectacles vivants – Centre Pompidou (Paris), PACT Zollverein (Essen), Dansens Hus (Oslo), Tanzquartier Wien (Vienna), Kunstencentrum BUDA (Kortrijk), BIT Teatergarasjen (Bergen), Dansehallerne (Copenhagen).
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69 positions

Premiere: PACT Zollverein, Essen 2014
Concept, Choreography & Performance: Mette Ingvartsen
Light: Nadja Räikkä
Set: Virginie Mira
Sound Design: Peter Lenaerts,
with music by Will Guthrie (Breaking Bones)
Dramaturgy: Bojana Cvejic
Technical director: Nadja Räikkä & Joachim Hupfer
Sound technician: Adrien Gentizon
Company Management: Kerstin Schroth
A production of Mette Ingvartsen / Great Investment
Co-production: apap / szene (Salzburg), Musée de la Danse/ Centre Chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne, Kaaitheater (Brussels), PACT Zollverein (Essen), Les Spectacles vivants – Centre Pompidou (Paris), Kunstencentrum BUDA (Kortrijk), BIT Teatergarasjen (Bergen)
With the support of Théatre National de Bretagne (Rennes), Festival d'Automne à Paris, DOCH – University of dance and circus (Stockholm).
Funded by: The Flemish Authorities & The Danish Arts Council. This work has been funded with support from the European Commission
Supported by: Stockholms University of the Arts

The Artificial Nature Series

Premiere: PACT Zollverein, Essen 2012
Concept and Choreography: Mette Ingvartsen
Dance: Franziska Aigner, Sidney Leoni, Martin Lervik, Maud Le Pladec, Guillem Mont De Palol, Manon Santkin, Christine De Smedt
Replacements: Ilse Ghekiere, Jaime Llopis Segarra & Sirah Foighel Brutmann
Lighting Design: Minna Tiikkainen
Sound Design: Peter Lenaerts
Dramaturgy: Bojana Cvejic
Technical Director: Hans Meijer & Joachim Hupfer
Assistant choreography / production: Elise Simonet
Assistant light: Milka Timosaari
Light technician: Susana Alonso
Sound technician: Adrien Gentizon
Company Management: Kerstin Schroth
A production of Mette Ingvartsen / Great Investment
Co-production: PACT Zollverein (Essen) - With the support of the Départs / European Commission (Culture program), Festival d'Automne (Paris), Les Spectacles vivants – Centre Pompidou (Paris), Théâtre National de Bretagne (Rennes), Kaaitheater with funds from the Imagine 2020 – Art & Climate Change (Brussels), Kunstencentrum BUDA (Kortrijk), apap / szene (Salzburg), Musée de la Danse/Centre Chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne
Funded by: The Danish Arts Council, Hauptstadtkulturfonds (Berlin) and The Flemish Authorities
This project has been funded with support from the European Comission
With the support of Mokum and the School of Dance and Circus (Stockholm)

Speculations

Premiere: MDT, Stockholm 2011
Concept & Performance: Mette Ingvartsen
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Production: Mette Ingvartsen/ Great Investment
Supported by: The School of Dance and Circus (Stockholm). Summer Intensive 2011 organized by Christine De Smedt/Les ballets C de la B.

All the way out there…

Premiere: Kaaitheater, Brussels 2011
Concept and Choreography: Mette Ingvartsen and Guillem Mont de Palol
Light Design: Jorge Dutor

Sound Design: Gérald Kurdian and Peter Lenaerts
Voice trainer: Dalila Khatir
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Advise: Jeroen Fabius
A production of Mette Ingvartsen / Great Investment
Co-production: Kaaitheater (Brussels), HAU Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin) - With the support of the Départs / European Commission (Culture program), Musée de la Danse/Centre Chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne, MDT (Stockholm)
Funded by: Haupstadtkulturfonds (Berlin)
With the support of: Kunstencentrum BUDA (Kortrijk), Antic Teatre (Barcelona), sommer.bar 2010 a project of Tanz im August & Kerstin Schroth (Berlin) and School of Dance and Circus (Stockholm)

The Extra Sensorial Garden

Premiere: Outdoor - Mellemrum Festival, Copenhagen 2010. Indoor: Kaaitheater, Brussels 2012
Concept: Mette Ingvartsen
Realization: Mette Ingvartsen and Manon Santkin
Sound Assistance: Gérald Kurdian
Technical director: Joachim Hupfer
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Co-production: Mellemrum festival, Denmark and Kaaitheater, Brussels
Supported by: sommer.bar 2010 a project of Tanz im August & Kerstin Schroth (Berlin) and the School of Dance and Circus (Stockholm)

The Light Forest

Premiere: Szene Salzburg 2010 and 2012
Concept: Mette Ingvartsen
Production: Szene Salzburg
Production Management Salzburg: Andrea Kahlhammer
Technical Director: Wolfgang Weissgerber
Rigging: Flo Ilsanker and Udo Kirchmayer
Supported by: School of Dance and Circus (Stockholm)
Thanks to: www.mk-illumination.com and www.schurrer.at

evaporated landscapes

Premiere: steirischer herbst festival, Graz 2009
Concept: Mette Ingvartsen
Lighting Design: Minna Tiikkainen
Sound Design: Gérald Kurdian
Technical director: Joachim Hupfer
Sound technician: Adrien Gentizon
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Co-production: steirischer herbst festival (Graz), Festival Baltoscandal (Rakvere), PACT Zollverein (Essen), HAU Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin) (With the support of the Départs / European Commission (Culture program), Kaaitheater (Brussels).
Funded by: Haupstadtkulturfonds (Berlin) and Kunstrådet (Denmark)
Research supported by: Tanzquartier (Wien), Siemens Arts Program and LE CENTQUARTRE (Paris)
Coproduced by NXTSTP, with the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union
A production of Mette Ingvartsen / Great Investment

GIANT CITY

Premiere: steirischer herbst festival, Graz 2009
Concept and Choreography: Mette Ingvartsen
Dance: Sirah Foighel Brutmann, Dolores Hulan, Mette Ingvartsen, Sidney Leoni, Guillem Mont De Palol, Chrysa Parkinson, Manon Santkin, Andros Zins-Browne
Lighting Design: Minna Tiikkainen
Sound Design and Dramaturgy: Gérald Kurdian
Technical director: Oded Huberman
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Co-production: steirischer herbst festival (Graz), Festival Baltoscandal (Rakvere), PACT Zollverein (Essen), HAU Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin) - With the support of the Départs / European Commission (Culture program), Kaaitheater (Brussels).
Funded by: Haupstadtkulturfonds (Berlin) and Kunstrådet (Denmark)
Research supported by: LE CENTQUARTRE (Paris) and Musée de la Danse/Centre Chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne
Coproduced by NXTSTP, with the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union
A production of Mette Ingvartsen / Great Investment

It's in the Air

Premiere: PACT Zollverein, Essen 2008
Choreography and Performance: Jefta van Dinther and Mette Ingvartsen
Light Design and Set: Minna Tiikkainen
Sound Design: Peter Lenaerts
Dramaturgy: Bojana Cvejic
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Technic: Oded Huberman
Co-production: PACT Zollverein (Essen), Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin), Kaaitheater (Brussels).
Funded by: Haupstadtkulturfonds (Berlin) and Kunstradet, Danish Arts Council (Denmark)
Supported by: Eurotramp (Germany), Les Brigittines (Brussels), Charleroi/Danses, Centre Chorégraphique de la Communauté Francaise de Belgique (Brussels), Ballhaus Naunynstraße (Berlin) and sommer.bar 2007 a project of Tanz im August & Kerstin Schroth (Berlin).
A production of Mette Ingvartsen/Great Investment and Jefta van Dinther/Sure Basic

Why We Love Action
Premiere: PACT Zollverein, Essen 2007
Concept and Choreography: Mette Ingvartsen
Performer: Eleanor Bauer, Jefta van Dinther, Lucia Glass, Mette Ingvartsen, Peter Lenaerts, Kajsa Sandstrom, Manon Santkin
Sound Design, Photography: Peter Lenaerts
Stunt and stage fight workshops: Peppe Ostensson, Maria Winton, Kristoffer Jørgensen
Light Design: Marek Lamprecht
Technic: Oded Huberman
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Co-production: Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin), Kulturhus (Aarhus), PACT Zollverein (Essen), Uzès Danse, Centre de développement chorégraphique de l'Uzège, du Gard et du Languedoc-Roussillon and Great Investment
Funded by Hauptstadtkulturfonds (Berlin)
Research supported by Kaaitheater (Brussels), Nadine (Brussels) and Theater In Motion (Beijing)
Thanks to: All of Nadine, Mårten Spångberg, Elke Van Campenhout, Bojana Cvejic, Heike Langsdorf, Camilla Marienhof, Tawny Andersen, Inneke van Waeyenberghe

to come
Premiere: PACT Zollverein, Essen 2005
Concept and Choreography: Mette Ingvartsen
Developed and Performed by: Mette Ingvartsen, Naiara Mendioroz Azkarate, Manon Santkin, Jefta van Dinther, Gabor Varga
Sound Design and Photography: Peter Lenaerts
Costumes: Jennifer Defays
Production Management: Hanne Van Waeyenberge
Co-produced: WERKHUIS produkties (Brussels), PACT Zollverein (Essen), DWA-danswerkplaats
Supported by: The Danish Arts Council

50/50
Premiere: Mousonturm, Frankfurt 2004
Choreography and Performance: Mette Ingvartsen
Music: Deep Purple, Leoncavallo, Cornelius
Sound Design: Peter Lenaerts
Thanks to: Podewil (Berlin), P.A.R.T.S (Brussels), Hannah Sophie Hohlfeld, Mårten Spångberg & Bojana Cvejic

Out of Order
Premiere: Beursschouwburg, Brussels 2004
Concept: Mette Ingvartsen
Created and Performed by: Kaya Kolodziejczyk, Manon Santkin and Mette Ingvartsen
Produced at P.A.R.T.S (Brussels), 2004
Thanks to: Jan Ritsema, Bojana Cvejic, Peter Lenaerts, Ula Sickle & Mårten Spångberg

Manual Focus
Premiere: Mousonturm, Frankfurt 2003
Concept: Mette Ingvartsen
Created and Performed by: Manon Santkin, Kajsa Sandström and Mette Ingvartsen
Produced at P.A.R.T.S. (Brussels), 2003
Thanks to: Bojana Cvejic and Peter Lenaerts

Solo Negatives
Premiere: 2002 (presented at TANZ IM AUGUST 2003)
Created and Performed by: Mette Ingvartsen
Music: Chopin, [‘aisikl]
Sound Design: Peter Lenaerts
Produced at P.A.R.T.S

For information about where these piece have been performed please consult the calender on: metteingvartsen.net

Other Selected Activities 2010-2016

Seminars
Final PhD Seminar
Stockholm University of the Arts
Opponnents: Goran Sergej Pristas and Vanessa Ohlraum
13th of June 2016

NoTHx (Séminaire Nouvelles théâtralités)
Theatre Nanterre Amandiers, France
2nd February 2016

Séminaire Actualités Culturelles
ERG, Brussels
3-hour long interview with Christophe Wavelet about work
23rd February 2016

The Permeable Stage: 75% PhD Seminar
MDT, Stockholm
Opponent: Clementine Deliss
Presentations by Mette Edvardsen and Sarah Vanhee
30th of April 2015

Extended Choreography or how to make nonhumans dance: 50 % PhD Seminar
The School for Dance and Circus, Stockholm
Opponent: Lena Hammergren
Fall 2013

PhD Introduction Seminar
School for Dance and Circus, Stockholm
Fall 2010

Lectures

Lecture on *7 Pleasures*
Dansens Hus in Oslo, Norway
9th of March 2016
Lecture on *Early Works*
Scenekunstskolen in Copenhagen
4th of March 2016

Running commentary on *7 Pleasures*
The University of the Art in Helsinki
26th of January 2016

Running commentary on *7 Pleasures*
Conference: POSTDANCE at MDT, Stockholm
14-16th of October 2015.

Speculations / Lecture about artistic research
Conference: Operations on the open heart
University of Applied Arts Vienna in collaboration with Society for Artistic Research
30th of October 2014

Running Commentary on *The Artificial Nature Project* and *Speculations*
Conference: Topologies of the Ephemeral
Uferstudios/ Freie Universität, Berlin
24th and 25th of January 2014

Running commentary on *The Artificial Nature Project* Dansens Hus, Stockholm
16th of March 2013

Speculations
Conference: Are you alive or not?
Invited by David Weber-Krebs and the Rietveld Acadamy to play at Brakke Grond, Amsterdam
20th March 2015

Discursive / Performative events

The Permeable Stage – Performative conference
Curator of a 10-hour long performative conference
Kaaistudios in Brussels, Belgium
8th October 2016

The Red Archive:
A 3-hour long performative presentation and discussion at Kunstencentrum BUDA, Kortrijk
22nd of March 2014

The Double Lecture Series
Curated in collaboration with Mårten Spångberg
MDT, Stockholm
28 September – 2nd October 2011

everybodys
Contribution to Special Edition #0
Les Laboratoires d' Aubervillier
1st of May 2011

Movement lecture on GIANT CITY.
Contribution to the **"Walk + Talk"** series by Philipp Gehmacher
Kaaistudios, Brussels
18th of March, 2011

Contributions to **"Expo Zero"**
Collaborative live exhibition project by Boris Charmatz.

Singapour in 2009, Berlin in 2014, and London in 2015.

Workshops / Teaching

CND, Paris
Teaching at CAMPING (Dance Schools from all over Europe)
20-24 of June 2016

P.A.R.T.S, Brussels
2. year students (X-week)
23-27 of February 2015

CCN / E.X.E.R.C.E, Montpellier
Creation of a performance in 1 week with 19 students and professional dancers
9-15 January 2015

RISK Workshop #2, Copenhagen
Dansehallerne
20-22 December 2014

DOCH (School for Dance and Circus), Stockholm
Creation of a piece with the BA students in dance
3-week long workshop
Performance shown at MDT 1-4th of June 2013

Performance Studies, Hamburg University
BA students
6- 9 of January 2013

SPOR FESTIVAL
Workshop at Entréscenen, Århus
2-4 May 2011

Performance Studies, Giessen University
Choreographic Writing Practices for MA students
1 week in 2010

Photo Credits

Cover image

© Hans Meijer. (2014). Photo of *The Artificial Nature Project* taken during general rehearsal

Opening pages

Page I	Photographer unknown. Press photo of *evaporated landscapes*
Page II	© Kerstin Schroth. (2014). Melting Ice, NYC
Page IV	© Per Morten Abrahamsen. (2010). From the outdoor version of *The Extra Sensorial Garden*, Mellemrum Festival, Denmark
Page VI	© Jan Lietaert. (2013). Sidney Leoni in *The Artificial Nature Project*
Page VIII	© SZENE Salzburg/Sabine Bruckner. (2010). *The Light Forest,* Salzburg

Chapter 1 on evaporated landscapes

Pages 12-14, 16	© Tania Kelley. (2010). Photos of *evaporated landscapes*
Page 15	© Wolfgang Silveri. (2011). Photo of a bubble in *evaporated landscapes*

Chapter 2 on The Extra Sensorial Garden

Page 22	© Per Morten Abrahamsen. (2010). From outdoor version of *The Extra Sensorial Garden* at Mellemrum Festival, Denmark
Page 26, 29	© Kerstin Schroth. (2012). From indoor version of *The Extra Sensorial Garden* at Kaaistudios, Brussels

Chapter 3 on The Light Forest

Pages 30-48	© SZENE Salzburg/Sabine Bruckner. (2010). *The Light Forest,* Salzburg

Chapter 4 on Speculations

Pages 40-63	© Studium Generale Rietveld Academie. (2015). *Speculations* when it was performed in Amsterdam.

Chapter 4 on The Artificial Nature Project

Page 68	© Peter Lenaerts. (2012). Photo from rehearsal period (discarded scene)
Page 82, 83	© Peter Lenaerts. (2012). Photos of the original cast taken during the rehearsal period in Rennes
Page 84, 88, 89, 91-92	© Hans Meijer. (2016). Photos of replacements, taken at Centre Pompidou Metz, France
Page 93, 94	© Peter Lenaerts. (2012). Photos taken during rehearsals
Pages 95-151	© Hans Meijer. (2013-2016). Photos of *The Artificial Nature Project* taken during general rehearsals and shows

Notes

Chapter 1: Poetic Principles of Performance

1 I am using poetics in the Aristotelian sense of the word. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle offers an account of 'poetry' which in Greek literally means making. The book contains principles regarding Greek drama, comedy, tragedy, lyric and epic poetry. What I borrow from him is not his understanding of theater but of how poetic principles are extractable from pieces they come out of.

2 Noë, A. (2004). *Action in Perception*. Cambridge: MIT Press p.1

3 Noë, A. (2004). *Action in Perception.* Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 128 last paragraph

4 Massumi, B. (2005). "Fear (The Spectrum Said)".

5 Massumi, B. (2005). "Fear (The Spectrum Said)".

Chapter 2: evaporated landscapes

6 I read especially:

Grosz, E. (2001). *Architecture from the Outside*. Cambridge. MIT Press

Koolhaas, R. (2002). "Junkspace". Online: [http://lensbased.net/files/Reader2012/rem+koolhaas+-+junkspace.pdf]

7 Many of them were by Maurizio Lazzarato, but also Paulo Virno, Negri and Hardt

8 Relational movement is a term I developed during *GIANT CITY* where the motion of each body is dependent on the motion of others. We worked on how air would have a thicker materiality by imagining we would be able to move each others bodies without touching.

Chapter 3: The Extra Sensorial Garden

9 This description is from Wikipedia, due to the clarity of the set-up, but I first encounter the Ganzfeld Experiment in Brian Massumi's book *Parables of the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* in which he analyzes our faculty of seeing.

Chapter 5: Speculations

10 The *Double Lecture Series* was an artist initiated performative lecture series combining choreographic proposals with more theoretical contributions. The 5 choreographers; Xavier Le Roy, Christine De Smedt, Eleonor Bauer, Mårten Spångberg and Mette Ingvartsen each selected another person to do a second lecture on the day of their performance. For more information: [http://mdtsthlm.se/archive/1531/]

11 I use the virtual in the way Deleuze defines it in his book on Bergson, 1988. On Page 96 he argues that the virtual is the opposite of the possible, real yet not actualized. In this sense the virtual is a productive potentiality.

12 This interview is an extract edited out of a longer interview by Petra Sabisch that will published in her book: *Topologies of Practices* When we made the interview on the 4.10.2011 *Speculations* was called *Thoughts for the future*.

13 Everybodys is an artist initiated platform that I was part of founding in 2005 together with Alice Chauchat, Petra Sabisch, Krõõt Juurak, Mårten Spångberg and others. For more than 5 years we were very engaged in developing an online platform and published as well 4 book with artists writings regarding artistic practices.

Notes

Chapter 6: The Artificial Nature Series

14 a) Bennett: J. (2010). *Vibrant Matter: A political economy of things*. Durham: Dukes University Press

b) Bennett, J. (2004). "The force of things. Steps towards an ecology of matter". In: *Political Theory,* 32(3): 347–372. CA: Sage Publications

c) Herzograth, B (ed.). 2009. *Deleuze/Guattari and Ecology*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

d) Harman, G. (2007). "On Vicarious Causation". In: *Collapse Volume 2*. England: Collapse

e) Franke, A. (2010). *Animism. Much Trouble in the Transformation of Souls, or: The Sudden Disorganization of Boundaries:* Berlin: Sternberg Press

f) Melitopoulos, A and Lazzarato, M. 2010. "Machinic Animism": Online: http://film.ncu.edu.tw/word/Machinic_Animism.pdf

g) Massumi, B. 2011. "The Half-Disaster of Life". UK: The Guardian

h) Klein, N. 2007. *The Schock Doctrine.* London: The Penguin Group

i) Guattari, F. (1989). "Three Ecologies". UK: Article in The New Formation Magazine #8

j) Salter, C. (2010). *Entangled.* Massachusetts: Institute of Technology

k) Protevi, J. (2009). *Political Affect. Connecting the Social and the Somatic.* Minnesota: Minnesota University Press

15 a) Fuller, L. (1891). *Serpentine Dance.* View Online link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCJ7glJLRyE

b) Schlemmer, O. (1927). *Stick Dance.* Or 1922. Triadic Ballet

c) Bel, J. (1994). *nom donné par l'auteur*. Video link:

http://www.jeromebel.fr/film/videos?spectacle=Nom%20donn%C3%A9%20par%20l%E2%80%99auteur

16 This quote comes from *Vibrant Matter* page 9 by Jane Bennett but in it she quotes Bruno Latour from *Politics of Nature*, p. 75.

27 Bennett, J. *Vibrant Matter* p. 5 and 6

28 Bennett, J. *Vibrant Matter* p. 5

Chapter 7: The Permeable Stage

19 Graham Harman, Ray Brassier, Quentin Meillassoux, Iain Hamilton Grant and others

20 It is also the title of her new book. I have only had access to the online talk in the moment of writing this.

21 Haraway. D. (2015). From a transcription of an talk: http://opentranscripts.org/transcript/anthropocene-capitalocene-chthulucene/

22 Oliphant, R. (2016). Article in the Telegraph: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/23/wildlife-returns-to-radioactive-wasteland-of-chernobyl/

23 Tufnell, B. (2006). *Land Art*, London: Tate Publishing, p. 57

24 Braidotti, R. (2013). *The Posthuman*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 66

25 Braidotti, R. (2013). *The Posthuman*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 61

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** All performance marked I have attended live*

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