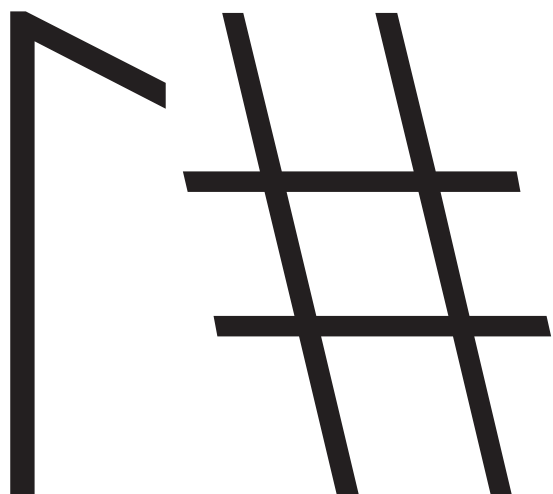


Reflections from the inside (of a working process)

**Manufactured Series
Duet #1: A Disabled Voice**



A duet means tenderness

The Manufactured Series is conceived as a series of ten duets, each between a human and a nonhuman body. Each duet is an encounter unfolding between the two and their consecutive intertwining by means of movement. The nonhuman bodies within the work are mainly hand-crafted. That is, Manufactured focuses on things that have a relation with the human hand in their process of coming to be.

In the first duet in the series, the dancer Katja Cheraneva is collaborating with a Cathedrale Thomas Wooden Radio produced in the 1980s. The collaboration between them unfolds similarly to a conversation, during which the two bodies study each other, their characteristics and their possible modes of relating. Surfaces are, for example, expressed as wood and as skin respectively. Sound waves are transmitted in the one case, received in the other. Ear connects to antenna, the conversation continues from there, intimacies becoming movements.

The first duet aims for a relation between the dancer and radio, in which both performers are equally present, without one dominating the other. In this sense, the duet, as a mode of togetherness, is what we want to reach through the working process and not necessarily a given when we begin.

The process starts by defining different relations between the two performers and consequently this begins an unfolding and deepening of how they relate. A first step is, indeed, function: the radio is (made) for the ear to listen. What does this initial relation imply? How can the actions of turning on, of tuning in and of listening be zoomed into? By working towards making them reciprocal, a gradual unlearning of habitual dichotomies of human “subject” vs. inanimate “object”, “activity” vs. “passivity” and the like, takes place. Tenderness emerges, which is, essentially, what the duet is or evokes.

Note how a relation between a dancer and a radio is conditioned by electricity. Our vintage radio is further conditioned by its electric cable since it takes no batteries. The work consequently becomes structured in plugs, allowing for electricity to guide the choreography. Plugs are placed

Body as it \ searching (for voices)

not only along the walls, but also hang from the ceiling, allowing the radio a maximum range of movement in the room. Once having decided on a plug, however, the radio's movement is limited to the length of its electricity cable in either direction.

Interference

What then does a radio essentially do? As a receiver of audio waves, it "picks up" specific frequencies with its antennae and makes them audible. Invisible and otherwise inaudible radio waves fill the room –indeed the atmosphere– until a radio receiver "translates" them into audible signals for the human ear(s).

Interference occurs when something disturbs the radio waves to reach the receiver. It is the relational mode between the two performers we focus on first, since the human body stands literally in the way of the radio waves reaching the receiver. Every movement of the human body –but also of the receiver itself– implies an obstruction of the signal and thus a change of what is audible through the radio. Hence, in the framework of this mode of relation, interference is movement becoming sound and sound becoming movement.

A slight rotating of the elbow, or a careful stretching of the right foot can already have enormous consequences for the receiver. In turn, a sudden change of the radio signal can put the body of the dancer in a state of anxiety, forcing it to change its position. Still, auditory changes are not always easily perceivable. Neither are movements. In fact, there is often a certain ambiguity concerning who moves whom or what a change is. The duet is not about demonstrating a virtuosic manipulation of each other's (vulnerable) bodies. It is about tuning in and listening, about paying very close attention to those bodies.

Moving on to another plug, the bodies interfere with each other by means of their voice(s), i.e., by means of the sounds they produce. Bodies here become spaces of resonance. What silences are hidden in those spaces? Concerning white noise, for example, how many sounds make up this silence, if one listens closely enough? The dancer begins an exploration of

her voice to meet those frequencies. She searches for other parts of her vocal apparatus that can be used in order to imitate a hissing speaker, lips, tongue, teeth, breath. As she moves her own body to explore its sonic qualities, the radio moves with her, changing its voices. The voices transform and interfere with each other in a constant renewal. The performers now become sounding apparatuses acting and reacting.

Gradually, there is a swift of registers and an opening up to the question of what a body is. The physical bodies of the performers, initially perceived as two distinct entities, become extended to include air particles and their waves, voices and sounds. One no longer perceives two bodies exactly, but an assemblage of interacting body parts, both mechanical and fleshy, material and immaterial. Sometimes this assemblage shrinks down to a hand, a knob and the action of turning. Sometimes to a scream and a twisting torso. This reorganization of body parts towards a different kind of relation could be called dance, among other things. Indeed it is from this moment onwards that the duet starts appearing and unfolding, starts “working”.

Transmission

The second relation that we focus on between the human body and the radio receiver is transmission. It includes the production of a (new) radio signal that the radio can receive. Essentially, the dancer creates her own radio station, extending the assemblage even further to include a wireless microphone and a short-range transmitter device. As a result, her voice can be heard coming out of the radio itself.

When previously, by causing interferences, the dancer plays with the radio signals that are already present in the room, she remains outside and around the radio receiver’s physical body. When transmitting, however, she produces a new signal that allows her quite literally to enter the receiver. In the process of doing so, her body becomes sound, becomes voices.

In fact, during transmission, everything becomes sound –there’s hardly any physical movement. Even the room, which resonates: its walls reflecting the voices that the dancer has become. Continuously and repetitively, the

dancer lets her voices pass through the microphone and come out through the receiver's speaker. She varies them, changing their volume and pitch, while she –they– gradually move closer and closer to the receiver from the opposite corner of the room. This is the last plug.

The voices and their spatial reflections are picked up by the microphone and transmitted through the radio in a cumulative manner. Feedback is produced as the result, distorting the sound signal that the receiver amplifies. This feedback, the radio's voice, is also changing its volume and pitch as the dancer changes hers. As she continues voicing, the feedback is reinforced. The duet culminates when the voices that the performers have become, start a joint, polyphonic singing. Singing voices are the result of this electrified duet.

Reversing the process that the duet unfolded, the microphone is turned off. After a short while, the radio is turned off as well, and the last plug is pulled. This ends the dance, among other things.

**There is a moment of rest.
Two organisms are resting in front of each other.
Facing each other.
There are small adjustments and the distance between
their bodies
becomes smaller and smaller.**

**The adjustments are very small and
the movements of the organisms become fragmented.
It is as if each movement
marks a very specific space.**

**There is a moment
where everything changes.
Something becomes louder while
something else becomes much quieter.**

**There is a specific tension that arises from this interaction.
The whole body is listening.**

The skin becomes very active and merges into the skin of the other.

It wants to touch.

Every spatial adjustment matters and the effects are both audible and visible.

There is something that interferes though it does not change the other but slightly alternates its established rhythm.

The sounds keep changing from being recognizable, to creating a completely new landscape.

All the limbs are stretched out and the reach becomes longer and longer.

There is a certain lightness and a sense that the gravity has disappeared.

The room has changed its orientation and now it's tilted very slightly to the left. It seems as though both organisms are falling.

There is a tuning of one body into another, a feeling as if there are very thin strings that connect everything in the room. Those strings keep shaking and crossing each other without ever touching.

All of a sudden, there is a violent interference.

But this only lasts for a very short moment.

There is a break.

The break does not last so long, it only takes a few steps.

Something starts.

There is a door opening.

There is a resemblance of something from the past.

The voices that are in the distance become more apparent.

The sound is now placed inside the organism and it moves through its different parts.

There is a slight shake and a drop.

The drop affects the sound and the voice, changing it slightly. There is a change in both voices.

There is a very close proximity.

There is tension and almost no air in between.

The body is twisted. There is a squeezing

and a breath that reaches into the space and leaves the room, entering the walls.

There is very heavy breathing.

Someone is out of breath while the other one is out of touch.

There is a change of position in the room.

There is caring for the other and moving in the same direction

to carefully place all the limbs on to the floor and tilt them slightly.

There is a complete switch of situation.

Now, there is a trace that is being marked.

That trace signifies different modes of

existence of the sound.

The organism enters those traces, reacting to them and

taking them inside its body, transforming them into the sound of the physicality.

There is an abstraction of something that seemed to be

concrete.

And there is a need for a concrete ground underneath the feet.

**The space is a labyrinth and both bodies are moving through it.
There are the paths that are crossing each other and the
paths that can lead you to the dead end.**

Nothing is changing.

There is an attempt and a wish for change.

**The head is now tilted and a slight sound produced by two nails is
entering inside the other body.**

**There is an entanglement of sounds in the room that
merge into each another.**

There is melting of the skin and a very soft drop.

**It's like there is a rubber band stretched between the one that
remains fixed and the one that has more freedom of movement.**

There is a change of sides.

There is an attempt to find silence and to understand how the one is related to the other.

All of a sudden the whole floor elevates towards the ceiling

but then, very violently, drops back.

There is a wandering and a dreaming while the organism is present.

There is a very slight click that is produced by the turning of a limb.

There is a light that shines

through and there is a force that is required.

There is a continuous sound that is very, very high.

Within this sound there are the memories of those that are forgotten now.

Memories are bouncing from wall to wall and back. The body attempts to remember.

There is a speculation of what might be sounding within

something that is very simple.

There is a silence that is now hanging heavy in the room.

Now, there is a change of position and a separation. There is a wandering and a sense of abundance. There is now a tension within the chest.

The wires that are going through the body are of different colors. The little red streams are essential for giving the organism life.

If the red strings are cut, the body will die.

Or, at least, some of its parts.

It has a lot to hide and what it exposes is not always true to what it looks like.

It is all in one piece but it is possible to dismantle it and take it apart.

Nevertheless, by taking it apart it becomes something else.

It won't be functional until a moment where the parts will be back together.

**Its parts are all connected and interdependent.
When one stops to function,
the other ones follow.**

By Katja Cheraneva

The body of this object is made of wood. When I look at the wood, its color reminds me of many pieces of furniture my grandmother used to possess of a 70's design. Wood that gave warmth to a room with a subtle presence.

The wood that covers the object is a shell that hides many details of its insides from our view. There are eleven pieces of wood assembled together to form this shell.

The object is about 25 cm high and 10 cm in width, though after a close inspection one can see that the measurements are not absolute. The object suggests that it has a clear front and back. Its back is solid wood of a different kind, while its front is ornamental, yet purposeful. Slightly below its center it has another round object installed to it. This part becomes inseparable from the main body. It consists of different material, such as a metal frame around a round transparent plastic window, and paper behind the window with numbers and lines drawn on it.

This is the first description/impression I have written about the radio after seeing it in a local second hand store near Marienplatz in Frankfurt. I was intrigued by its archaic look and resemblance to a cathedral. Just by looking at it, I had a feeling I was traveling back in time. At first, I didn't even know that it was a radio and only during my second visit to the store I learned about the function of this object that had caught my attention.

The process of getting to know this new partner of mine began by looking at all its material qualities, "hearing" the stories it had to tell, learning how it came into being. What are the different stages of making this object? What are the materials used in order to form the object, and what happens to the material in the process of becoming?

Getting to know the radio was like reading a book wherein each new chapter unfolds yet another aspect of the story. An object becomes a score that choreographs bodies to get in touch with.

Reflections on the Encounter. Fieldwork Notes.

It transgresses
It reacts to (something) in a specific way
It transmits
It produces
It hides
It obscures
It liberates
It contains
It connects
It transforms
It consists of (?)
It gets, or is given
It welcomes (someone) in a formal way
It receives
It is manipulated
Tuning
Discovers uncovers
Searching
It aligns
There is a range when the sound appears and disappears
and sometimes those ranges overlap
Focus, out of focus
Parasite - a body that serves someone else's purpose
Interfering with the quality

In order to figure out how to encounter a partner that is not aware of my presence, it was important to acquire a theoretical knowledge of it, but also learn its physicality through imitating its properties and movements. There were choreographies directed by the interaction with the radio. For example, in order to switch the radio on, one must stretch their arm and reach towards the furthest knob on the left, folding the thumb and index finger around the knob to give a bit of pressure and to activate other arm muscles. Using a little bit of force, the arm rotates to the right until a click is heard indicating the radio is on.

There are movements that are involved in assembling the parts of the radio together. Taking it one step further, there are also movements that are involved in creation of all the parts of which the radio consists. Together with Fabrice and Marialena, I looked closely into all these processes in order to understand, or come closer to understanding a particular way as to how the radio happened to be in the world.

But this still didn't solve the question of how do I and the radio relate to each other? How can I avoid a mere translation and figure out strategies where both bodies instead of competing, can communicate? Eventually, it became important to have both our bodies in an active state of interaction. We turned our attention towards the whole physical and technical manner in which the radio functions. What are radio waves? How does sound travel? How does a radio receive the transmission? What does a radio do? Etc.

notes #765

*morning improvements, radio standing in the space unplugged.
The relationship of the two bodies in the space, while one is active,
the other one remains "listening"*

- *sparks of energy/electricity, test where it travels in the body, what parts are answering to this stimuli*
- *connecting body parts*
- *thinking of the inner organs of the radio, the electrical circuit, all the small details and how each one influences the other in different ways depending on it's placement*
- *tuning has appeared at times*
- *storing and carrying energy*
- *playing between accumulation of energy in different parts of the body, playing between the scale of the electrical sparks*
- *involve the whole body!*

*guideline: it can almost not move. It can circulate within,
but almost not move.*

To have an object as a partner was a somewhat bizarre experience. It was new for me to think of an object as a partner of equal relevance. Therefore, it was both very interesting and also very challenging. In my past experiences of relating and encountering human bodies in space, i.e. dancing together, there was always an incredible sensitivity, listening and support. During all those years of practicing dance, I learned how to read other bodies in order to co-exist with them in the space. I knew, that I wasn't dancing alone and I didn't have to carry all the responsibility, that my partner would support me when I needed it. That a partnership is work that requires investment from both parties. But in the case of the radio, this seems simply impossible. It doesn't recognize if I am tired or in a bad mood. It can't feel my body even though my body is able to interfere with the radio waves and therefore produce a rupture in the sound coming from the radio's speaker. I couldn't merely rely on the sensitivity of a dancing body, instead I had to have a sensitivity through the listening. Ears became the most active part of my body and the connections with the radio could only take place if I was actively listening. I figured that this mode of performativity required me to fully acknowledge the differences between our bodies, instead of finding their similarities.

Listening was followed by "tuning". An act necessary for the interaction to take place. Like the tuning of the radio, tuning between my body and the body of the radio meant a continual negotiation that took place either physically or vocally. In order for tuning to work, I had to find the right station on the radio, or better put, find an ambiguous space in between the stations, where the radio's sound signals merge and distort. With great care, I would turn the tuner through the FM stations while walking in the designated spaces. I needed to hear and experience how the radio reacts to different locations. I would hold the radio in my hands and move around the room, switching between the plugs hanging in the space. Or place it on the floor and instead move my body closer and further away from it.

Try out #65748

*try out movement, positions and distance to the radio in order to understand how I can interfere/affect the radio
It is more interesting to find a way to interact with it without physical manipulation*

The encounters would manifest in a form of togetherness that would look as if both bodies influence each other through their physical and sonic movements. Sometimes it felt as if there were strings attached to my body and the body of the radio. My body interferes with the body of radio, as much as the body of the radio interferes with mine. All of a sudden there is a sense of interdependency because neither subjects would be able to exist in that particular way without one another. Those moments would have the ability to transform our bodies and also the surrounding space. All of a sudden I would think of the room as a web of radio waves full of invisible motion that never stops traveling, entering and exiting the space. That togetherness was very fragile. At times when the tuning didn't work it would be as if the strings I imagine between the radio and I would disappear. I would feel overpowered by the conditions I was in with my estranged partner. Then both our bodies would become objects instead of being the subjects. Therefore, in order to keep that togetherness at stake, it required constant attention, active listening and delicacy. Those qualities were directed by the radio and became important aspects in the negotiation of our meeting. When an encounter produced togetherness, it felt magical and opened up a possibility for both the radio and I to depart from our accustomed roles and create an entrance into an abyss where emptiness is full with invisible movements and dreamy landscapes.

listening is what moves the object

*A phantom machine
a duet with the radio*

How to undo our relationships to the object and re-establish a different interaction?

Journal #1

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Manufactured Series

Duet #1: A Disembodied Voice

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Choreography: Fabrice Mazliah in Collaboration
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Performance: Katja Cheraneva and Thomas Radio

Dramaturgy: Marialena Marouda

Production Management: Johanna Milz and
Jeanne Charlotte Vogt

A Production of Fabrice Mazliah / Work of Act

Financed by the City of Frankfurt and the
Hessian Ministry of Arts and Sciences

in cooperation with Künstlerhaus Mousonturm