

Performing Arts and Performance Art: Interspaces and Flexible Transitions

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Abstract : This four-year artistic research project has set the goal of exploring the adaptable transitions within the realms between the two genres. This paper will single out one research question from the entire project for its focus, namely on how and under what circumstances such transitions between a reinterpretation and a new creation can take place during the performative process. The film documentation that accompany the project were produced at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg, Austria, as well as on diverse everyday stages at various locations. The model institution that hosted the project is the LIA - Lab Inter Arts, under the direction of Helmi Vent. LIA combines artistic research with performative applications. The project participants are students from various artistic fields of study. The film documentation forms a central platform for the entire project. They function as audiovisual records of performative origins and development processes, while serving as the basis for analysis and evaluation, including the self-evaluation of the recorded material and they also serve as illustrative and discussion material in relation to the topic of this paper. Regarding the "interspaces" and variable 'transitions': The performing arts in the western cultures generally orient themselves toward existing original compositions - most often in the interconnected fields of music, dance and theater - with the goal of reinterpreting and rehearsing a pre-existing score, choreographed work, libretto or script and presenting that respective piece to an audience. The essential tool in this reinterpretation process is generally the artistic 'language' performers learn over the course of their main studies. Thus, speaking is combined with singing, playing an instrument is combined with dancing, or with pictorial or sculpturally formed works, in addition to many other variations. If the Performing Arts would rid themselves of their designations from time to time and initially follow the emerging, diffusely gliding transitions into the unknown, the artistic language the performer has learned then becomes a creative resource. The illustrative film excerpts depicting the realms between Performing Arts and Performance Art present insights into the ways the project participants embrace unknown and explorative processes, thus allowing the genesis of new performative designs or concepts to be invented between the participants' acquired cultural and artistic skills and their own creations - according to their own ideas and issues, sometimes with their direct involvement, fragmentary, provisional, left as a rough draft or fully composed. All in all, it is an evolutionary process and its key parameters cannot be distilled down to their essence. Rather, they stem from a subtle inner perception, from deep-seated emotions, imaginations, and non-discursive decisions, which ultimately result in an artistic statement rising to the visible and audible surface. Within these realms between performing arts and performance art and their extremely flexible transitions, exceptional opportunities can be found to grasp and realise art itself as a research process.

Keywords : art as research method, Lab Inter Arts (LIA), performing arts, performance art

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