

Grazer
Kunstverein
is moving!

As you enter the forest, you lose your feigned stability. The minimal movement of the hands and the head increases and spreads to the whole body. The abdomen pulls back to generate space for the breath and with it to carry the smouldering words and sentences together with feelings upwards. The legs begin to tread earth. They beat a rhythm accompanied by the phrase “I love that track.” The rhythm is an imagined one, same is the track. The movement of the body is increased: it is no longer just the hands that move in the repetitive spinning movement, but the whole body is in an acceleration that comes from the legs. But the body cannot get away, does not comply with the urge. The movement is accelerated and – because it needs to be expressed – turns into excitement in and on the body. You are seized by a desire that originates in the mo(ve)ment and that oscillates between the intoxication of a little adventure, of a piece of music that has become dear to you or that of a physical arousal. The immediate change between motives is comparable to affect, which is without cause or direction. Just as motives can change, different affective states are passed through. The state of intoxication and pleasure changes into wonder, some despair and disorientation. In affect, your body loses its mastery. Out of control, you look for your centre at the status of its excitement.²

Texts by Bettina Landl

First and foremost, the body's excitement increases in the tension between holding and pushing away. The energy attaches itself to the body and brings out the invisible forces. Affects are evoked that pass through different “Ebenen.” According to Deleuze, the “Sensationsebenen” are detached from a context, they can switch from one “Valenz” to another, open up to different meanings.³ The possibility of opening up and turning over makes the sensation immediate. The excitement that breaks out on the body and in the reflection changes from unfounded pleasure to wonder and some despair as mentioned. There are forces at work that cannot be controlled, that can move from one side to the other, from one affect to the other. The effects are immediate, they cannot be traced causally. Rather, in their change from one side to another, they are increased in their “Resonanz”⁴ in a similar way to images.

The “Sensation” appears as movement on site. Landscape, form, image, movement of thought and body are subject(s) to an order that does not

correspond to any conceptuality or causality, that does not point in any direction, but is rather equivalent to a “Sensation.”⁵ By “Sensation” Deleuze means, with recourse to Cézanne, the immediate effect that emanates from the figure: “The figure is the sensual form related to sensation; it acts directly on the nervous system.”⁶ Since sensation can be experienced directly without a diversion through a narrative, different levels converge in it, such as those of subject and object, of the sensing and the sensed, of different affects as well as of different areas of perception such as seeing, hearing or tasting. In this moment, you are on a discovery tour in the wilderness, the rhythm – the holding and pushing out – passes from the thinking to the movement to the images or vice versa. The rhythm and the forms release intensities that cannot be transferred into a linear logic, but like the adventurer, step back and forth on the spot. This back and forth between the existing, between the intensities, can be understood as resonance, as a vibration between the elements.

In *Grazer Urwald* you move between two poles: first between receiving and escaping and then between desire and excitement. The increase in movement and the simultaneous staying in place make it possible to experience “die Wirkung unsichtbarer Kräfte,” which Deleuze describes for the relationship between sensation and movement in Bacon’s paintings: “Movement does not explain sensation; on the contrary, it is explained by the elasticity of sensation, by its ‘vis elastica.’ In short, it is not movement that explains the levels of sensation, rather the levels of sensation explain what persists in movement. And indeed, Bacon’s interest is not precisely in movement, although his paintings make movement very intense. Rather, it is a movement in general, a spasm, which identifies a completely different problem as his problem: ‘Die Wirkung unsichtbarer Kräfte auf den Körper’ (therefore the deformations of the body attributable to this deeper cause).”⁷ This quote addresses various points that apply to this specific project, but also to other works that are part of *Der Grazer Kunstverein zieht um!*: The “Spasmus,” the “Bewegung auf der Stelle,” the “Wirkung unsichtbarer Kräfte” on the body and its “Deformation.” But to what extent can, what Deleuze says for painting, be transferred to the transformation of a moving institution? In painting, movement is not experienced as such, but as a sensation. The simultaneity of different elements in painting allows “die unsichtbaren Kräfte” to become visible through their inherent tensions. In relation to

the trans-scene, a similar phenomenon takes place with reversed signs: you stay in place so that the movement cannot continue in space and time. Rather, energy is released that would otherwise remain hidden behind the movement. The energy, or the forces – as Deleuze calls it – is what remains of the movement, what jumps out at you in both painting and installation and has an immediate effect. The sensation that triggers an immediate experience is described by Blanchot as “Faszination.” „La fascination est la passion de l’image,” which carries away and absorbs the gaze in a „unbeweglichen Bewegung“ („un mouvement immobile“) and a „Grund ohne Tiefe“ („un fond sans profondeur“) – „einem Kontakt auf Distanz.“⁸

The respective circular movement is trapped in a space, limited to excerpt-like visibility and to a motif of movement, but at the same time delimits itself beyond itself and these limitations. The circular movement has a paradox of limitation and dissolution, of standstill and movement. For circling is itself an infinite movement without beginning and end, passing and recurring at the same time. It lifts itself out of time. Spatially, the circle on and in which the work takes place marks the distance to the centre and the border to the outside. The rotary movement is therefore itself a movement on the boundary. Although it has a direction within the circle, it always returns to its starting point, so that it detaches itself from the dimensions of space just as it detaches itself from time. The categories of space and time are abolished: the space of movement is reduced to the circle, which is caught in the field of vision but at the same time extends beyond it, while time stretches infinitely in duration. During each mo(ve)ment - repetitive and divergent at the same time, each different from the other, a pattern of movement is established in duration that combines the parallel and successive movements in a picture-like simultaneity.⁹ This is how you enter and leave the forest. This is how you experience this “Sensation” in the duration of the now – as a mo(ve)ment.

- 1 Text on the occasion of *Grazer Kunstverein moves to Grazer Urwald* (St. Peter) by Lukas Meßner.
- 2 “Give me your hand” is what comes to your mind.
- 3 Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon. Logic of Sensation*, 1995, p. 30.
- 4 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 45f. According to Deleuze, resonance is comparable to Marcel Proust’s *memoire involontaire*. It can also arise independently of a past, a memory, move between two impressions.
- 5 Cf. Deleuze 1995, pp. 27-34. “Sensation” brings together concepts such as “Rhythmus”, “unsichtbare Kräfte” and “Resonanz”.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 7 Deleuze 1995, pp. 30/31.
- 8 Maurice Blanchot, «La solitude essentielle», in: Maurice Blanchot (Ed.), *L’espace litteraire*, 1968, p. 25.
- 9 Cf. Annamira Jochim, *Meg Stuart. Bild in Bewegung und Choreographie*, 2008.

Shaking¹

You are welcomed by an insistent sound to which everything is already moving up and down in a regular rhythm. *Sound Truthing* lasts over 60 minutes, delaying the beginning and heightening the anticipation. Through the repetition, simultaneity and duration, your movements unravel iconic qualities. The iconic is characterised by Boehm² and Imdahl³ as a particular density of meaning that emerges from the spatiotemporal organisation of vivid circumstances. By capturing various successively interlocking moments in an overarching simultaneity, the image that the walk through this area of the city constructs brings about an image as „unmittelbare Evidenzerfahrung.“⁴ Boehm has repeatedly emphasised the temporality in which static images occur in their potentiality. Everything is already present in the picture, but it always grows together in a new way. Through a certain „Valenz der Konkretisierung,“ the image always happens anew, past and future meet and combine in the „Paradoxie eines werdenden Gewesenseins“⁵. The crossing of possible views in the simultaneity of an image, which is space, can be related to the ongoing movement. The walking movement unfolds in a spatiotemporal continuum that is differentiated by the rhythm, dynamics and articulation of the mo(ve)ment. The continuum is broken up by the repetition of a movement pattern that varies in itself. The duration creates a picture-like simultaneity that absorbs the succession of individual movements. One of these continuous, repetitive movement motifs is Shaking⁶: a shaking, vibrating or trembling of the whole body or individual body parts. When you enter the area, *Sound Truthing* wraps you in experimental sound, which is partly interspersed with fragile field recordings. At the same time, most of the space remains empty and silent.

The regular up and down starts from your knees rather than your feet, you mostly stay connected to the floor. You slowly move forward. It is a rippling mo(ve)ment from the knees that goes across the whole body and back again, as if tapped from outside. It repeats continuously. The repetition of the moment of movement and its multiplication on the outside cause a concentration and accumulation of energy. The rocking movement of every (living) being around you connects with each other, thus uniting all into one block. The perceivers and their movement together form a concentrated but vibrating mass. Within this agglomeration and the seemingly self-contained constancy of the up

and down movement, slight deviations arise from movement to movement and from being to being. Slight, barely noticeable changes in the dynamics create a swelling and a diminishing. In the field of tension of alignment and deviation, of holding on and pushing forward, energy is released, but it is held in place by the mo(ve)ment and therefore condenses.⁷ The energy accumulates. The energy that is otherwise absorbed by locomotion and external changes accumulates in repetition, spatial restriction and temporal expansion. Held in place, the vibration can be experienced on your body and in the exchange with your closest environment. It has an effect in depth and in breadth: on the one hand, a depth effect is created in the duration, as you devote yourself more and more to the details. Different layers are continuously being transported upwards or broken through.

Your attention penetrates inwards, while the energy from inside your body penetrates outwards. This phenomenon is similar to zooming in closer and closer to the body, thus bringing out the vibration at your body's border. Here, the energy that flows through your body and comes to the surface in twitches or undulations becomes visible. On the other hand, you are caught in the dynamism of the context. Every being drives each other on, supported by the pounding, booming music. An exchange of energy takes place. The subject, that is *you*, empties itself and experiences itself as a stranger (object), caused by the diversions of the other.⁸

While standing at the corner of two crossing streets, you start tossing your head back and forth. Then, in addition to the back-and-forth movement, you alternately add your arms to the left and right. The hands form a sign with the thumb and index finger spread out, which is set in a quick sequence at different positions: first the right arm moves up right and down again, then the left moves up and down again. This way, the hands circle the head, swaying back and forth. Then you begin to shake your upper body for a moment, and shortly afterwards start again with the rotating movement of the head and the staggered arm movement. Due to the incessant repetition and the very fast sequence of movements, the individual movements can no longer be clearly separated from each other. They constantly overwrite each other with the same, yet varied movement. At the same time, the upper body separates itself from the still lower body through its rotating movement. The individual moving body parts seem to be torn apart because

they move back and forth independently of each other and very quickly. The body's boundaries become unstable due to the blurring parts and the abolition of a unity. The contours and lines of the body, especially the upper body, dissolve due to the constant overwriting of the fast movements. The face as the main characteristic of a person becomes an indeterminable form that dissolves in the movement. Then, you compare this blurring with Deleuze's corresponding remarks on the figures in Francis Bacon's painting⁹ as a kind of a (performative) expression.

In this situation your body – disoriented, headless – is moved instead of moving. It loses itself in the mo(ve)ment and to the mo(ve)ment, surrenders itself and the control over its actions to a force that seems to render it without willingness.¹⁰ The loss of control manifests itself similarly to the fragility of the body's boundaries not only in the blurred parts but also in the coordination of the individual body parts. This is how you get connected with the constructed environment. This is your devotion.

- 1 Text on the occasion of *Grazer Kunstverein moves to Andritz* by Dennis McNulty.
- 2 Gottfried Boehm, „Die Wiederkehr der Bilder“, in: Gottfried Boehm (Ed.), *Was ist ein Bild?*, 1995, pp. 11-38.
- 3 Max Imdahl, „Giotto. Zur Frage der ikonischen Sinnstruktur“, in: Gottfried Boehm (Ed.), *Max Imdahl. Gesammelte Schriften. Band 3: Reflexion- Theorie-Methode*, 1996, pp. 424-455.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 437.
- 5 Gottfried Boehm, „Die ikonische Figuration“, in: Gottfried Boehm/ Gabriele Brandstetter/Achatz von Müller (Ed.), *Figur und Figuration. Studien zu Wahrnehmung und Wissen*, 2007, pp. 33-52.
- 6 Cf. *The Shakers* by Doris Humphrey, whose interest was in the ecstatic movement material that characterised the Shakers' worship and gave them their name. See also Gabriele Brandstetter, „Grenzgänge II. Auflösungen und Umschreibungen zwischen Ritual und Theater“, in: Gabriele Brandstetter/Helga Finter (Eds.), *Grenzgänge. Das Theater und die anderen Künste*, 1998, pp. 13-20.
- 7 In *Sound Truthing* the condensation actually becomes visible; steam forms under the transparent mackintoshes as the dancers sweat and condenses on its edges. Cf. Gerald Siegmund, *Abwesenheit. Eine performative Ästhetik des Tanzes*, 2006, p. 430.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 431.
- 9 Pirkko Husemann, *Ceci est de la danse. Choreographien von Meg Stuart, Xavier Le Roy und Jerome Bel*, 2002, pp. 29-31.
- 10 Cf. Gerald Siegmund, *Abwesenheit. Eine performative Ästhetik des Tanzes*, 2006, p. 409.

Transistor¹

Midway through, after the virtual platform has been traversed by other players and gradually empties, you remain alone in the left front space on the second level, surrounded by transparent walls. The framing of the built environment makes you seem isolated from the rest of the scene. You stand still, your feet firmly on the ground. This is your imagination. This is your construction. You try to feel safe. At the beginning, only your hands move. Fixed on two points in front of your body, they turn back and forth as if they were moving two knobs. You softly touch the glass in front of you, try to feel its shape. Then you continue: with the rotation of the hands, you emit sounds – at first only a low humming: “Brrrh.” Your thoughts and the turning of your hands are supported by the wafting of the generated sound. Continuing to search, scanning with the hands, the head accompanies the hand movements. The finding of the words and their “escape” becomes a physical act. Individual letters repeatedly emerge, the letters become words and word fields such as “Blue, Blueish.” The colour blue is complemented by another colour: “White.” Fields of association are opened up. Suddenly, a whole sentence gushes forth:

“PROTECT ME FROM WHAT I WANT”

Immediately, the text is interrupted again and the search for a place to hide begins anew: “Brrrh.” Diagonally, in the space in the back on the right, visible through a hole, an object forming a counterpoint floats in the air. In addition, the movements of the thoughts and the body are accompanied by a light projection on the right. The language and its attendant images pass by in an irregular rhythm, sometimes stopping or flowing very quickly. Is this your shelter? The abyss in front of you, the images whizzing by on the right and the flying object in the background forms an antipole to your firm stand, which is dissolved in the course of the scene. You try to avoid this. The movement is interesting on several levels related to the idea of pictoriality. The body is transformed into a “transistor” that forms a resistance to stop or let an exchange between inner and outer impressions flow. Being stuck and being pushed away as a rhythm forms the scene. This is your perception. The colour and its distribution on the stage finally become clear together with the rhythm under the aspect of intensity and you relate this to Deleuze's logic of sensation.²

Your hand movement itself becomes the receiver, because on the hands, it seems, reception becomes possible through the sense of touch. In the correlation between touching and emitting sounds, the transmission of information becomes visible. Receiving and sending take place on and in the body of the player, who is *you*. Your body becomes a receiver and a transmitter at the same time – a transistor through which the impulses flow or in which they get stuck. In your body – in its expression and its movement – impressions that break in from the outside and out from the inside are experienced. The interpenetration of inside and outside becomes clearer as the perspective of the player changes from one moment to the next, from narration to commentation, to feeling or dialogue. There is something visible / covered in white. / Come into the shack, the shack is fine. / I want to go into the shelter. / No darling. / I want you to go into the shack. There is something else visible in a landscape, fake landscape in a landscape. By partly reflecting on your own situation, by looking at yourself from the outside, so to speak, you become a “witness” (a “witness figure”³) of yourself. But your body is missing. You are in an in-between space. You are in an in-between time. You think about refuge, about the feeling of safety and you long for protection. “Brrrh.”

The emergence of your own sensations in the commentation or the contemplation of your own situation from the outside, corresponds to a shift from the *Ich* to the *Es* and from the *Es* to the *Ich*, as it happens – according to Blanchot – in reflecting and is especially related to the creation of the image. Since you are concerned with reflecting in relation to the image, your imagination is called a “*theorie fictive*.”⁴ However, it is less theory because your reflections about the idea of a shack are interwoven with the practice of exploring. It is from this mo(ve)ment from inside to outside, from distance to distancelessness and vice versa, that the fascination of the image of a shelter emerges. The space in which *you* are situated – which you have constructed yourself – exerts an attraction precisely because it is intent on distance(lessness).⁵ This ambiguity refers both to the properties of the image itself and to the perception that Blanchot locates in the term “image.” In the essay «Les deux versions de l’imaginaire»⁶ he mentions the imaginary, which he associates less with the psychoanalytical concept than with the act of perception. There, the imaginary is in direct proximity to the experience of a sensation in the image, the “*vivre un événement en image*”⁷, which

is experienced in two ways: one sensation refers to the transition from distance to distancelessness and is associated with being moved, in which there is no longer any control, no longer any outside. Therefore it becomes real. The other sensation takes place in the opposite direction, from inside to outside. In the movement outwards, however, the presence of the image is intensified. The ambiguity between touching and distancing leaves the image in a state of limbo.⁸

Blanchot’s idea of the image is relevant for the *Grazer Kunstverein moves to an in-between space*, because the player starts with exploration. In reflecting on the image he or she is part of, the transition between seeing and feeling, feeling and interpreting as well as interpreting and seeing, indeed between author (artist) and recipient, between production and reception, this transition is fluid. The image itself, based on the phenomenon of a shack, is fluid. So is the player. Blanchot does not distinguish between external and internal images, between an image object and an ephemeral idea. “Brrrh.” The player switches between the perspectives of producer and recipient in the intersection of sending and receiving. The perception of the spectator is also mirrored in this interweaving. The utterances intermingle with the experience of the spectator, who moves between what he or she perceives from the outside and what is revealed to him or her from the inside. (i.e.) You can no longer distinguish between what you see, imagine or remember. You participate in an image-generating process in which inner and outer images become intertwined.⁹ At the same time, this process can be followed on the player’s body. The emergence or interruption of contexts in the individual words and sentences, the way of thinking and the turning of the hand open up a field of association that lives on in different directions, in the player and in the viewer. The shack is a fiction at any time.

1 Text on the occasion of *Grazer Kunstverein moves to an in-between space* (Puntigam) by Edward Clydesdale Thomson.

2 Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon. Logic of Sensation*, 1995, pp. 15-18.

3 Ibid 1995, pp. 47-52.

4 Cf. Philippe Fries, *La théorie fictive de Maurice Blanchot*, 1999.

5 Cf. Maurice Blanchot, «La solitude essentielle», 1951, in: Maurice Blanchot (Ed.), *L’espace littéraire*, 1968, pp. 25-28.

6 Maurice Blanchot, «Les deux versions de l’imaginaire», 1951, in: Blanchot 1968, pp. 345-360 and Maurice Blanchot, “Bacon (Two Versions of the Imaginary)”, in: Dorine Mignot (Ed.), *Gary Hill*, 1993, pp. 170-172.

7 Maurice Blanchot, «Les deux versions de l’imaginaire», 1951, in: Blanchot 1968, pp. 355-358.

8 Ibid, pp. 358f.

9 On the interweaving of inner and outer images, see Hans Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie. Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft*, 2001, pp. 19-22.

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