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## **CONDITIONS OF SHARING**

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# How to Do Things with Performance in Relation to What is Given?

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In this text we - Annette Arlander, Hanna Järvinen, Tero Nauha and Pilvi Porkola - describe briefly our workshop “What is given?” during the 8th SAR conference in Helsinki in April 2017. The workshop was organised with the aim to share something of the work undertaken within the Academy of Finland funded four-year research project group How to do things with performance?

By asking what can be done with performance as research, the project partakes in recent discussions in artistic research, in performance philosophy, and performative and performance writing as well as in the emergent discussion of performance studies in Finland. Through performing research, artistic research defines what is the context or the world where this performance takes place. Hence, a critical attitude towards the political, social, economic, and philosophical premises of research is inherent in the process – not as given, but as produced and articulated in and as the acts of research. Moreover, artistic research does not produce only postulations about the world; rather, its processes and performances will actualise in the world as real and material events. Therefore, we ask what can be done with performance - what actualises when a performance takes place, when it is documented, and when it is written about. In what ways can we understand 'performance' today in the international, multilingual context where words, documents, and practices connote differently but are shared in online environments? We bring together four views on artistic research in performance. Our ambitious aim is to update the theory of performativity vis à vis new materialist theories of agential realism and non-philosophy. We will focus on these general concerns in issue 11 of Ruukku.

Here, in this short text, we will focus on the experiences of our first workshop together, “What is given?” and describe briefly, how to do things with performance, in these given circumstances. We all understand performance and its potentials in different ways. Therefore, we did not try to define performance, but to articulate some of the material-discursive practices and agential cuts involved (to use the terminology of Karen Barad). With hindsight we could even call our efforts interdisciplinary, in combining for instance artistic research, dance history and performance philosophy.

The session or workshop was structured in four parts on the basis of an idea by Tero Nauha, and approached the theme of the conference, specificity, by asking “What is given?” in performance: in the conditions, that allow knowledge to become comprehensible? The session aimed to create conditions for a specific investigation on the given in and for performance. How do the given conditions specify a relation to or with things in the world? In our workshop we asked what is given in performance, in terms of context, relationships, history and reflection. The collaborative session proposed four approaches on the topic, presented by the members of the research group. Each part included a dimension of participation or an action together with the workshop participants. Visual artist Karolina Kucia was invited to create a specific spatial arrangement for the session. Thus, the workshop was a demonstration of four different aspects on the topic of givenness. The session questioned the givens of performance, in that the performative elements questioned their own making. The four parts of the workshop each specified the discussion and participation allocated in the structure of that part of the session. Pilvi Porkola did a performance piece with laundry, *The Laundry Case*, which she discusses in this same issue (Ruukku #8) in Finnish. Hanna Järvinen invited the participants to take part of an exercise in imagining past dance movements starting from photographs, related to her work with choreographer Liisa Pentti on *Jeux:Re-imagined*. Annette Arlander told about participatory performances called *Swinging together* and invited the participants to swing in relationship to projected images from those events. Tero Nauha challenged the participants to take the role of performers and philosophers in order to engage in a boxing match of intellectual pugilism, which proved both engaging and problematic.

The three-hour workshop “What is given?” at the SAR conference in Helsinki was an important challenge for our research project, because that was the first time when we tried to juxtapose and share together, not only our views on performance but our actual practices as well, at least on some level and in ways that were possible in those circumstances. We created four very different participatory performances that placed in sequence demonstrated some examples of how things can be done with performance. While asking what and how things can be done with performance definitions are not of much help. With some kind of performance, you can do something in some circumstances, and with some other kind of performance something else. Therefore, it was encouraging for us to experience that our presentations and performances, placed in the same time and space, provided perspectives on the topic without trying to homogenize or standardize them. And by doing that they also focused on what is given, that is, the conditions of sharing in that situation. Hopefully this very brief presentation can work in a similar manner, within the given circumstances for this kind of text. (28.8.2018)

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