

Performing Science: blurring the boundaries between art, research and academic communities

Rebekah Rousi

Postdoctoral Researcher of Cognitive Science

Printmaker and Performance Artist

Department of Computer Science and Information Systems

University of Jyväskylä

rebekah.rousi@jyu.fi

Research paper/ project presentations

Theme: Arts-based research and/or artistic research and diversified communities of scholarship

When and where does the art performance stop? Are there boundaries? Reflecting on John Dewey's (1934/2005) *Art as Experience*, one could say that art has no boundaries. The act of doing, of creating, and each process, is experienced aesthetically. One can even go as far as to say that the aesthetics of our actions can be viewed as a series of unique artistic and genuine experiences and expressions (Adorno 1970; Shusterman 1992). Through these aesthetics a narrative unfolds, action turns to progress, and consciousness expands and morphs with each portion of new knowledge. Likewise, once we start seeing our lives and its contents as a part of this artistic experiential process it is impossible to disconnect one action from the other. Consciously, as an artist, after intentionally opening the art performance so to speak, there is no way of determining what it includes, and more importantly, what it excludes.

This presentation discusses a performance project that was initiated in 2004 called *The Researcher*. *The Researcher* began as a probe into academia as an institutional system, which constitutes and reconstitutes itself through the rigor of categorization, critique and measurement. It was an attempt to articulate the often invisible mechanisms of subordination and exclusion, which are many times reinforced through its apparently objective stance of social and cultural deconstruction, and self-iteration. The performance began as a photographic series, and was planned as a lecture using Germaine Greer's (2003) *Quarterly Essay 11 Whitefella Jump Up: The shortest way to nationhood* as a starting point. *The Lecture* was cancelled due to an apparent conflict of interest, but was eventually materialized in 2007 in a piece called *The Longest Lecturer Marathon - the world's longest powerpoint presentation*, performed at the ANTI Festival, Kuopio. A semiotic, cultural studies approach was taken towards dissecting every word in the slides that discussed cultural studies and life-long learning, in 27 hours of physical theatre - created as a by-product of the material and rhetoric rife in cultural studies and teacher education at that time.

The Researcher has continued in the realm of human-technology interaction from 2009 onwards. Here, the boundaries between art, science and particularly academic scholarly communities overall are not only blurred, but dynamic - constantly interacting between iteration and genuine experiences of insight and epiphany. Art feeds science, and science feeds art. Both are a continuous performance by those who are aware of these deliberate processes of articulation (Grossberg 1986, 2014), as well as those who are not. In addition to the performative scientific work by the author, this presentation critically analyzes the interplay of pieces by Marc Quinn, EUBORDERSCAPES, Symbiotica and the performance of scientific scholarship. The presentation looks at performative acts, conscious and subconscious (explicit and implicit) as vehicles for articulation, between knowledge representation in the positivistic scientific sense and that which, while adopting and applying knowledge in scientific traditions, can be folded back on itself to render explicit the inner building blocks of these framed performances.

References

- Adorno, T. (1970/1997). *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. R. Hullot-Kentor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dewey, J. (1934/2005). *Art as experience*. London: Penguin.
- Greer, G. (2003). *Quarterly Essay 11 Whitefella Jump Up: The Shortest Way to Nationhood* (Vol. 11). Black Inc..
- Grossberg, L. (1986). On Postmodernism and Articulation - An Interview with Stuart Hall. *Journal of communication inquiry*, 10(2), 45-60.
- Grossberg, L. (2014). *We gotta get out of this place: Popular conservatism and postmodern culture*. London: Routledge.
- Shusterman, R. (1992). *Pragmatist aesthetics: Living beauty, rethinking art* (Vol. 27). Oxford: Blackwell.