

*Avhandling / Av_handling (Dissertation / Through_action)*¹

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Doctoral dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Fine Arts in Choreography by due permission of the Malmö Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts, Lund University, Sweden.

This dissertation has been carried out and supervised within the graduate programme in Choreography at Stockholm University of the Arts. The dissertation is presented at Lund University in the framework of the cooperation agreement between the Malmö Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts, Lund University, and Stockholm University of the Arts regarding doctoral education in the subject Choreography in the context of Konstnärliga forskarskolan.

To be publicly defended on Saturday September 3 2016 at
1:00pm-5:00pm in KTH R1 Experimental Performance Space,
Drottning Kristinas väg 51, Stockholm by Malin Arnell.

Faculty opponent

Teresa María Díaz Nerio and Camila Marambio

Examination committee

Cecilia Lagerström, Nina Lykke, Nanako Nakajima, and substitute Tova Gerge

Avhandling / Av_handling (Dissertation / Through_action) was articulated / manifested over the course of 72 hours, and situating itself within and proceeding from KTH R1 Experimental Performance Space, a decommissioned nuclear reactor hall 25 meters below ground on the campus of Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), between 27th and 29th of May 2016². The opponents and the examining committee where invited to become part for 42 hours; so was the audience—as agentially intra-acting components.

¹ The English word dissertation translated to Swedish makes “avhandling.” When you break the word into its composite parts (“av” and “handling”), “av” can be translated to *by, of, for, from, or with*. I chose to translate it to “through,” because I have pursued my research through the actions of my practice (of action). “Handling” can be translated to *action, document, or deed*. I chose “action” to emphasize the continually shifting unfoldings of this research, and to echo Hannah Arendt, who maintained that *actions have no end*.

² This included an ongoing continuum of entanglement with: 1 co-producer, Mario Fjell; 1 lighting designer / technical director, Angela Ariza; 3 assistants, Linda Arnell, Magdalena Görska, Clara López Menéndez; 9 hosts, night guards, kitchen crew, Claude Blüna, Sophie Erlandsson, Elisa Erävalo, Ulrika Gomm, Geraldine Lombano, Kalo Lööf, Susana Santa-Marta, Ida Sidenvall, Andrea Svensson; 1 sound artist, KOEFF/Johanna Rosenqvist; 20 co-workers / performers Linda Arnell, Fia Backström, Claude Blüna, Katarina Bonnevier, Åsa Elzén, Sophie Erlandsson, Mario Fjell, Ulrika Gomm, Magdalena Görska, Annica Karlsson Rixon, Leffe Kronlöf, Jorun Kugelberg, Indra Linderöth, Clara López Menéndez, Tilda Lovell, Frida Sandström, Imri Sandström, Wibke Straube, Andrea Svensson, YES! Association / Föreningen JA; 1 representative from Malmö Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts, Lund University Ylva Gislén; 2 supervisors, Hanna Hallgren, Anna Koch; 1 director of Doctoral studies, Camilla Damkjaer, and other discursive-material becomings.

ABSTRACT

If we are being-*of*-the-world, how can we ever avoid participation? From this question *Avhandling / Av_handling (Dissertation / Through_action)* unfolds. It invites to engage in an ongoing continuum of entanglements, where the moment of connection is unavoidable. This invitation demands that we are attentive to our mutual co-constitutiveness, that we take responsibility for what gets excluded as well as what comes to matter.

Avhandling / Av_handling (Dissertation / Through_action) introduces, purposes and explores a specific format, the live dissertation, an academic instance that demands performative responses from opponents and the examining committee during the public defense. It is a dissertation in choreography written through space-time-language-matter with and for human and more-than-human bodies, and other discursive-material becomings. By this *Avhandling / Av_handling (Dissertation / Through_action)* recognizes the force of *ethico-onto-epistemological* entanglements through intra-action. It engages a posthumanist and agential-realist reworking of the notion of performativity, in which all bodies (not only human bodies) come to matter through the world's performativity—its iterative intra-activity. In this framework, knowledge is made as a direct material engagement, a cutting *together-apart*—a process by which cuts enact violence but also open up and rework agential conditions of possibility.

During *Avhandling / Av_handling (Dissertation / Through_action)* diffractive choreographic methods and techniques, which had been developed through diverse intra-active studies—actions, collaborations, works that span throughout 2010-2016, were re-activated, applied, manifested, and experienced. These practices were made present through specific agential forces that enacted them—such as breath, text, touch, voice, vegetation, spatial proximity, motion, distance, asphalt, material walls and material voids (the reactor hole), pain, and disgust. These practices also enacted processes of queering causality, agency and relationality, and dislocating authority, while (my / the / our) human and more-than-human body/bodies pursued embodied affinities, and a state of *becoming-with*. Through these re-activated intra-active studies *Avhandling / Av_handling (Dissertation / Through_action)* examines and articulates choreography and performance as ever-present negotiations of vulnerability, intimacy, force, and power as enactments that are *of*-the-world.

As part of the choreographic practice Sugar Rush Productions | Maria Åkesson together with Tsomak Oga, Sooz Romero, and Debora Vega were video documenting *Avhandling / Av_handling (Dissertation / Through_action)*. This documentation together with other remains (as a non-representative residue) will be made available after the defense here: dissertationthroughaction.space/

Keywords: duration (space-time-language-matter), knowledge production (tacit, embodied, experiential), performance art (body art, live art, happenings), choreography (diffractive methods and techniques), performativity (human and non-human agentiality), embodiment, (vulnerability, intimacy, force, power), participation (mutual co-constitutiveness), invitation (contractual engagement and accountability), environment (void, fullness), body/bodies (human and more-than-human), embodied affinities, orientation, posthumanities, agential realism, feminism, artistic research, expositional strategies, enactment (re-enactments), live dissertation (through live act(ion)s), documentation (affective, embodied), Hannah Arendt, Karen Barad, Gina Pane, YES! Association / Föreningen JA!

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Date