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Rooted in Transitory Places of Gathering: Performing Spacing in Tino Sehgal's Performance "These Situations" at the Palais de Tokyo[1]

Jean-Luc Moriceau **0000-0001-9986-6549**, Philippe Mairesse, and Yannick Fronda

Abstract

Tino Sehgal occupied the Palais de Tokyo with bodies of performers moving in the museum space, creating "situations." We interpret this from the perspective of "spacing" proposed by Beyes and Steyaert: a processual and minority construction of space. The approach is situated in the turn to affects that allows exposure as openly as possible to the aesthetic experience and triangulates between the performer's position and the spectator's. Performing spacing appears first and foremost as a paradox: how to produce what escapes major production? We then analyze how spacing is produced by means of a limited number of rules, which nevertheless leave some scope to the spontaneous. For performance purposes, a certain degree of policing (Rancière) seemed necessary and kept unchanged part of the distribution of the sensible. Beyond this political aspect, by turning to two sentences by Arendt and Heidegger sung by the performers, we wonder whether the digital age, in its liquid transience and ephemeral connectivities – as well as spacing – can provide a place to settle. We conclude with a reflection on the possibility of representing, performing, and writing about spacing as organizing.

Keywords

Spacing, artistic performance, Tino Sehgal, distribution of the sensible, dwellingyaert

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Tino Sehgal is given carte blanche to work in the immense space of the Palais de Tokyo, a leading public contemporary art museum in Paris. He does not put any painting, sculpture, or installation there. He just puts moving bodies – three hundred bodies. These bodies, at the beginning indiscernible from spectators, walk, run, sing, or stand motionless; they enter into interactions forming a kind of choreography. These are performing bodies, and this is performative, that is, it has an effect on the participants. They generate "situations."[2] It is difficult to imagine a simpler configuration, and yet it communicates a powerful impression. Something gets moved in the sharing and in the constitution of space, in the performers, in the work/viewer bonds, in us who observe and experience. The artist affirms that what is thus performed is political.

As far back as forty years ago, K.E. Weick (1979) recommended the use of verbs in their gerund form, instead of nouns, to stimulate process thinking. Thinking and speaking of organizing, instead of organization, make us see it less as a constant and unchanging entity; rather, the intermingled processes of constant production, various dynamics that coalesce to make the organization emerge, take shape, work, and act. Even more unsettling, substituting spacing for space could orient "the understanding of organizational space toward its material, embodied, affective and minor configurations" (Beyes & Steyaert, 2011, p. 47). Space is no longer imaged just as a container, but

> as processual and performative, open-ended and multiple, practiced and of the everyday. Such a reframing of space as spacing implies exchanging a vocabulary of stasis, representation, reification and closure with one of intensities, capacities and forces; rhythms, cycles, encounters, events, movements and flows; instincts, affects, atmospheres and auras; relations, knots and assemblages.

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(idem, p. 45)

Tino Sehgal's performance allows us to feel and thus better understand how much organizing and spacing is production. As with a sculpture, all functionalist and symbolic purpose would have been removed; everything that prevents us from seeing this organizational and spatial production would have been carved out as clearly and sensitively as possible. In this neutral parallelepiped, we see the organization taking shape and dissolving; we see it emerging, asserting itself, as though only for itself, without having anything to function for. We witness social organization producing space: body positions and movements, human interactions, rhythms, noises, accelerations and decelerations, entries and exits, usages, appropriations, repetitions, habituations, what seem to be forbidden places, more intimidating regions, lighting… all this distorts and reforms space, curves it, fills it, loads it with affects and expectations, connects it to other places, other experiences.

What can such an artistic performance of spacing tell us about organizing? We will look at the paradox of trying to perform spacing; then some of the ways spacing is researched. We'll then wonder whether this allows some place for the minor, and finally whether it might provide a place to dwell and flourish in our digital age.

Our approach belongs to the turn to affect and triangulates the spectator's and the performer's experiences. From the performance, no trace remains: no recordings or pictures were allowed. Our account of the piece is not based on recordings but on our personal ethnographic experience and memory as a participant or a spectator. One of the authors was hired as a participant and took part in the performances for two months, three times a week, four hours each run. He went through enthusiasm, exasperation, revolt, anger, exaltation, or contempt and had a privileged position to live, experiment, and learn from the inside. Otherwise the performance was observed

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as spectator. Our approach was not to judge or analyze the performance or to connect with it first through a research question or preselected concepts, but rather to open ourselves to the experience of being there (Letiche & Lightfoot, 2014; Moriceau, 2016), body and mind, to let ourselves be contaminated by the performativity (Stewart, 1996). We were not looking for data, but rather attending to affects, that is, to surges that throw themselves together in a moment as an event and a sensation, both animated and inhabitable (Stewart, 2007). A diary was written by the performer, and personal notes by the observers.

Our goal is not to prove or achieve a particular point. Rather, in the movement of non-representational theories (Lorimer, 2008; Thrift, 2007), thus in resonance with the calls of Beyes and Steyaert (2011), to set in motion and challenge our reflexivity on spacing on the occasion of Tino Sehgal's singular performance. The performativity of performance is described with a performative idiom (Pickering, 1994), that is, not only people have agency; spaces and places also act and give rise to affects.

Movements, Fish Shoals, and Rhythm

Let's start with the visitor's experience.

> I first see a set of performers starting to move in the basement space of the Palais de Tokyo sometimes running,[3] sometimes walking. Sometimes these bodies stop and sing words in chorus. Here they are running on the stairs. Their eyes meet our own. A smile. They breathe a thank you when I make room for them to climb a few steps, following what I guess being a trajectory, a line, a displacement. I feel sympathy with their effort, the exercise seems difficult, singular. They resemble a shoal of fish, an organic form that moves with accelerations and changes in direction. They seem to follow a "logic," a movement of their

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> own of which we perceive a hidden code, not yet deciphered, or yet to be deciphered. I start to feel being one of them. Fascination! My body is caught in this machine, touches these movements and takes me into an aesthetic (body and feeling) experience.

This aesthetic experience makes us feel the generative production of space by bodies in motion, in their sometimes organized, sometimes disorganized mundane movements. The distribution of bodies whose face, cloth, shape matter far less than their geographical positions and gesture in relation to the others creates the naked space rather than take place within it. The various effects, impressions, sense experienced by the spectator are produced by the spacing produced by the distribution of bodies. This is what interests us: how the political rearrangement of bodies due to the application or questioning of rules creates the spacing, in turn creating the organizing of an ephemeral community. The space changes from being a symbolic cultural spot to an empty container, to a place where we meet, to a landscape with rows of bodies, to an aquarium with shoals of fish choreographing a fast dance, to something that we fully forget, to a maze where we look for toilets or the coffee place. At some moments, the space looks small, then big, void or full, strange or intimate, absent or present, indifferent or singular, cool or hot, pleasant or inconvenient. Sometimes it looks organized, ordered, functional, beautiful, and at other times, messy, uncanny, any old place.

Physically, or architecturally, the space has not changed, not moved, not done anything. But here space has already gained the three dimensions identified by Lefebvre (1991) in the production of space: conceived, perceived, and lived. The aesthetic gaze makes us oscillate between these three poles or gives us all three at the same time, in the same rich experience that surprises us by the way it affects us.

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As researchers, Lefebvre's approach encourages us to enrich and complexify the issues of space for organizations. Researchers first considered these issues in terms of efficiency and production: to introduce a change in culture (van Marrewijk, 2009) or to foster collaboration (Fayard & Weeks, 2011).[4] Then symbolic aspects were taken into account: how spatial arrangements might communicate certain messages or come with specific connotations (Gagliardi, 1990; Yanow, 2006). But space was not spacing, being still relatively static, and the users' active role within it was incomplete (De Molli, 2019).

However, Lefebvre, especially in his later approach in terms of rhythmanalysis (2004), invites research to pay attention to rhythms that communicate and spread throughout the organization and are a key part of organizing. On the one hand, rhythms appear as regulated time, governed by rational laws, often imposed by managerial command, but on the other hand, they put researchers in contact with what is least rational in human beings: the lived, the carnal, the body. Rhythms communicate via affects more than with meaning or sense making. The rhythmanalyst thinks with his body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality.

> Facing the performance, we get contaminated by a set of various pulsations that start from the performers' bodies and steps, invade the space, reverberate from wall to walls, take our bodies and make them move or incorporate the rhythm. Space is a territory, full of vibrations, pulsations, ritornellos. Our experience is bombarded by such rhythms that emanate from others, form groups and encounters, that will bounce and reverberate on the walls, differently according to the positions of each one. While observation preserves what is studied at a distance, the opening of the bodies to rhythms and reverberations allows the physical, human and social geography of the place to enter in us, to be experimented and be lived for a moment. And let us wonder how capitalism, organizations, social, space

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> interpenetrate the carnal, the living, the more intimate, animal, or preconscious and preindividual parts of us.[5]

But this is not yet the "spacing" Beyes and Steyaert (2011) are after. For them, spacing is the material, embodied, affective, and minor (re-)configuration of space, as a way to bring space back into critical organization theory. By a minor configuration, they mean a diversion of space, a re-appropriation, a breath in the race for performance, and above all the possibility of creativity: the invention of other uses of space, outside the functional, organized, ordered, planned, policed, predefined, authorized, scripted use. Other ways of living and using space, decorating it, frequenting it, placing other walls and openings, setting up other connections and routines. The organizational space is a space of performativity, where everything must be optimized, everything must be designed for management purposes. Spacing introduces a slowdown in the race for organizational efficacy, to invent other passages, other rhythms, other ways to be in space.

The paradox is that Tino Sehgal's performance has eliminated all the aspects of usual organizational scripting of space. He has done it to such an extent as to destroy and remove all physical additions to the naked architectural structure of the building, added year after year by the organizers–curators of the Palais de Tokyo, organizing exhibitions and reconstructing the spaces in relation to it. Tino Sehgal wants us to see the space that is ordinarily occulted. Moreover, he wants us to co-construct with his performers a new moving space of relations and physical co-existence. We could then interpret the performance as a production of spacing. But in this case, all the performance would have been organized for this production of spacing, spacing would be the production… and then no more spacing in Beyes and Steyaert's sense.

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Spacing would no longer be minor. The question is then if there is still some room for spacing, as a minoration of the usage of space, in the performance at the Palais de Tokyo.

Pace, Rules, and the Minor

It's time to see the same part of the performance, but this time from the performer's experience. This is part of the diary of the author who acted as a performer.

> I run. For ten, fifteen minutes, I run, quicker and quicker, slower and slower. I stop. I sit down, kneel or lie on the floor. I run, I follow the group, I manage my distance with the others, I calculate the mean direction of the group and try to follow it. But the direction that the group follows changes continuously, so I have to move, to change direction, thus contributing to the shift of the group in the space. We run, we run, we all stop, standing, sitting or lying down, and wait. We wait, looking in chosen directions and not moving a finger, or slowly. From time to time some of us move, from one position to another, carefully decided among the innumerous possibilities in the space. They stop, sit or stand. I wait, I think. I think of what I am doing here, why, for how long. I think of myself, my life, my love life, my professional life, my art, my research. One of us makes a step. One step, and stop. Then another step after a while, in another direction. Then another. Then another of us stands and steps too. Then a third one, then several others. One step at a time, all together, in different directions. Soon we are all stepping in rhythm, step – stop – step – stop – step, slowly, less slowly, quicker, much quicker, very very quick now, running and crossing each other in complicated lines avoiding contacts. I run, faster and faster, attentively avoiding the others but running into them, the noise of our steps, breathing, the sweat, the brushing of bodies one against the other, of the feet on the floor. I choose someone, I choose a second one, I focus on the two, I carefully strive at staying equidistant from both. But they move,

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run, walk, never stop. The distance between them, between me and them, is continuously changing. I have to move continuously in order to stay at the same equidistant spot, we build a triangle. They don't know I build a triangle with them, they are focused on building triangles with others, who in their turn are focused on building triangles with others. Sometimes the person is chosen by several, close packs occur suddenly, then loosen across the whole space. The group is scattered or gathered, dispersed and united, one and multiple. Some start jogging in the same direction, a subgroup almost invisible among our dislocated triangles. I notice them, three or four, slightly embarking on a bifurcating trip across the space and the bodies. I follow them, I jog and swirl, sometimes following sometimes leading, others join us, soon we are all a school of fish, a cloud of starlings, a swarm of locusts. It is incomprehensible how or why we move in this or that direction, it is simple and mysterious. We are all jogging about one meter from one another, sometimes we're getting closer, our arms touch, a foot avoids a leg, I pass my fellows, I follow my own way. Alone suddenly. I return to the group as if returned by an elastic band. The group is now gathered in one end of the space, tightened, still jogging, trotting slowly, disordered and collected, hesitating. Then suddenly it starts. All of a sudden, the matt high beat of our eighty feet slamming the floor, legs as mill wings, bodies horizontal. The run. The quickest we can, on the two hundred meters across the whole space. A horde of horses. No words, strong breaths, frictions, hammering, wind of the speed of forty bodies running together the fastest they can. At the end of the room we hit the wall and bump back, we turn back and go on running, a little slower, to where we come from, avoiding the concrete pillars in the room. The wind of our speed, again, the hammering of the feet, again. The wall at the end. Then back again, slower, then again crossing the whole room, slower, again, slower, slower, again, slower, slower, walking now, walking slowly, slow motion walking, almost stopping but still moving. It takes hours to cross the room now. And come back. One of us stops and sits

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> down, the others go on. A second one stops, she lies comfortably on her side. I pass her, make some slow steps more, stop. Turn on myself, looking around me slowly. I settle down and wait, immobile, one arm touching the other, my hand on my thigh. I look on things, people, space, time. I don't think, I look. My looking is a description. It is as if my look was building what it sees. We are all motionless now, looking, lying down, sitting, settled in a disordered organized setting across the whole space. Time passes by. Some of us move now and then. It's long, it lasts. Visitor stand around us, or walk slowly between our lying, standing, sitting bodies.[6]

Performers, and hence spectators, are invited to play and experiment with different paces, and this is an occasion of radical estrangement. No doubt, pace is part of our experience of space. Often overlooked or taken for granted, the importance of pace becomes striking when it suddenly slows down or accelerates beyond usual norms. Pace is social, regulated, and controlled. All you have to do is go to a country where pace is organized differently to realize how alien we feel, often irritated and embarrassed by what we feel is a weird pace. Nowadays, the pace of research seems to have accelerated, and we feel alien and perhaps alienated by this acceleration. Some call for slow research to regain righteousness and responsibility (Stengers, 2016; Ulmer, 2017). Accelerated research prevents us from taking the time to feel an atmosphere, to listen and give a voice to the participants, to experiment with different rhythms and different ways of producing space. Beyes and Steyaert (2011) urge researchers to experiment with slowness. Slow research seems necessary in order to live writing and research through locality, materiality, and artisan craft. It is a kind of return to an originary, to paying attention to sensory impressions, affects, materiality, milieus. A slow ontology promotes alternative rhythms of inquiry through participating and through writing, experimenting with varying degrees of intentionality and

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awareness. Here, humans are not the sole authors of space, and landscape could claim some authorship for the research.

Looking for the performer's point of view enables one to reach to the construction of the performance (Paes, forthcoming). Performers were hired for two months, trained, and had to exercise, and there was a long rehearsal period to make sure the rules were engraved in the brains and the bodies. However, the performance was mainly organized around a small set of rules that had to be followed. Organization and space were then produced according to a preset and purposive design.

> We had rules to follow. The triangle rule. The mean distance rule. The slow walk rule. The singing rules. The run rule. The configuration rule. The speech themes rule. We had to choose where and when to shift from one rule to another, collectively, without speaking. We were taught five ways of going through all the rules, five chains of rules, and we had to switch from one chain to another, spontaneously, collectively.[7]

Using a very restricted name of rules, we see the organization being formed. We are here as if in front of a kind of laboratory of organizing. Organizing is based on local rules: I want to get closer to one type of person, to move away from others, and in total, global organizational movements are being formed. Organizational movements are here to be seen as formed from individual decisions or local rules, without the actors being aware of the effects at the global level or even being able to predict the movement with certainty. Such organizing movements have been observed in cities, for example. Artists often gather in certain inexpensive neighbourhoods because of lack of resources. The neighbourhood often becomes more lively, vibrant, improving its reputation, attracting a trendy population. But this influx raises prices,

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which quickly become unaffordable for most artists, forced to migrate to other parts of the city (Vivant, 2009).

And yet, no global movement in the performance was foreseeable. Probably never, during all the exhibition period, were two performances identical. We see here another facet of the paradox. The shift from one set of rules to another had to be made "spontaneously, collectively." Each one has to know when a collective shift has to occur. And each one has to spontaneously feel and know when this collective shift has to happen. The shift is not ordered by the clock, by Tino Sehgal, or any outsider position. It is simultaneously and spontaneously acted by forty performers with no leader or discussion. And each one is calculating in his own head, which strategy to adopt, and in relation to whom the rules would be followed. There does not seem to remain any space for spacing.

Tino Sehgal thinks about groups – collective and individuals – modern and ancient societies, movements and bodies and wants his art to emphasize forgotten or dismissed ways of human social grouping and organizing. He claims liberalism has lost something, even though it has brought individual freedom, which he greatly favours. His issue is: how to be individually free from any constraint and nevertheless participating fully in a group? How to be a liberal and a socialist? How to bring in more ethics into liberalism, at the individual and collective level? He speaks of the other and caring for the other (Sehgal, 2016a, 2016b).

There were moments when individual performers could break the collective unity and address a visitor.

> We the performers always have the possibility and duty, at any moment (except during the singing), to extract ourselves from the performers' group, walk out to a visitor and start talking to her, abruptly telling a personal story from our own life (…) I hang on the look of a

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> visitor, I stop running, I walk towards her. I stop, close to her, she is surprised, I start directly, speaking: I was maybe six, or seven…[8]

Then the performer told a very intimate remembrance of his youth, to a complete stranger, who had not asked for anything. For a short while the conversation went on about the political aspects of the situation. Initiatives and very personal happenings were authorized and were part of the intended performance, as if even deviations and encounters had to be organized, not qua content but qua forms.

And yet, in such moments, something seems to actually happen. The performer suddenly irrupts into the visitor's intimacy and vice versa the visitor is somehow entering the performer's universe. The visitor suddenly knows things about the performer that no one else knows – he has an access to her deep being. They can look at her running with a totally new look, knowing – perhaps – what she has in mind while running. Reciprocally, a part of each visitor she spoke to is running with her day after day. Tino Sehgal's situations are performances. A performance is not just a representation of social life. It is an important part of social life (Schechner, 1988; Turner, 1994). It is not through the effectuation of the right movements at the right place and time that something happens, but because something actually happens in the here and now. Performing is not imitating or faking. Performing is at the same time being, doing, and showing doing (Schechner, 2002). Much is prepared and rehearsed, but the mere representation would probably fail to produce the effect.

Performing is an activity that affects both the performer and the viewer. That is why not all the performance can probably be controlled.

Something quite fraudulently might happen in the well-organized and controlled performance. This is probably where spacing might happen. Spacing is performative. It has to be performed

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and not merely exhibited or represented. Here it is as if some spacing were organized, would even stand as a rule. That is where the paradox runs, and what needs to be further thought through.

Politics of Performing Space

Is there a place for the minor in the performance? Let's take another extract from the performer's diary.

> Disturbing as a way to participate in organizations which exclude me? In order to become kind of participants, when they don't see how to do anything else, some visitors would in fact try to disturb our mysteriously ruled Brownian agitation. Either ironically, they mimic our gestures and moves, some following our runs for a while and smiling at us (we never know if they smile at their satisfaction of being integrated and participating, or at their clever disruption of our secret organizational rule). Or more violently, intruding into the group and targeting one of us aggressively or seductively. One visitor physically interrupted the movements of Alice, embraced her with insistence, pushed her outside her trajectory, until Henri walked up to him and started speaking to him eye to eye, forcing him to listen and pulling him to the side. The interruption stopped the disturber. Why did the visitor try to disturb to the point of aggressively accosting the woman? I had noticed him for some minutes, he was agitated, like feeling ignored, unseen, he was visibly looking for something to do and being seen, here, visible, an active participant not a ghost. I understand that he was playing the same strategy as I did [with my previous intimate confidence]: disrupting organizations which exclude us, is disturbing as a way to create participation. That is precisely what we are suggested to do with impolite groups of visitors who defy our walking or take up the space for their own personal affairs, chatting and laughing loudly without any

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> attention to us. One of the rules advises us to disrupt their disturbing behavior by walking up to them, addressing them directly, separating them from one another, in order to get them to participate in our situations not theirs. In fact, this is what happens with the talk rule, which allows us to go and talk to any visitor at any moment, telling personal stories. Every time we walk up to someone and start speaking, we interrupt him. The visitor has her own pace, her own understanding of being there with us (which can be staying distant and critical). Running towards them, addressing them suddenly and personally, disrupt their personal being-there, their own way of part-taking. Disrupting their participation results in getting them and us participating together in the same situation: the disturbance (of what was going on) is the liminal situation where participation (in what will go on) arises. Disrupting participation in order to participate, is the ground for participation: outcome three. We the performers always have the possibility and duty, at any moment (except during the singing), to extract ourselves from the performers' group, walk up to a visitor and start talking to her, abruptly telling a personal story from our own life.
>
> The result of this violent act of intrusion into a visitor's intimacy may be the reason why he becomes a participant (what many expressed like this: I feel participating with you, I feel co-author of the artwork with you). A deep participation feeling is involved here; the visitor becomes a participant not by contract or convention, but by flesh and bones, by blood and skin, a participant from the inside.[9]

Here the disturbances seem to play an ambiguous role. Under the apparent Brownian movement, and the apparent indistinctedness between visitors and performers, in a universe where borders seem to be deliberately blurred, there is a strict distribution of the sensible. Rancière (2000) calls "distribution of the sensible" a set of conventions that allows meaning to be shared, sense to be presented, but that at the same time distributes the shares, the rights, and legitimacy. Here there

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is a clear distinction between visitors and performers, each group being allowed to do certain things and forbidden to do others. A performer has the right to address directly, in a quasi-violent way, a visitor, but the contrary is impossible. Probably, for Tino Sehgal, we need such a distribution for the performance to "work."

What is at work here? In a way, it seems that performance has a general purpose of disturbance – it wants to disrupt our habits of seeing, behaving, and thinking. But for this to happen it would have to be immune to disruption; or rather, some uncertainties and disturbances are integrated into the general functioning, but it is necessary to be protected against external disturbances. Rancière calls "police" everything that is done to preserve the distribution of the sensible in place and to prevent other speeches, other interventions than those planned. The distribution of the sensible is a form of organization that operates at the sensible/sensitive level. In the situation described, the police was very upfront and could have become as violent as the perturbation.

In the performer's notes the interpretation is more optimistic. The disturbances, caused by performers, would break the usual distribution of the sensible between visitors, who observe and evaluate, and performers, who play their role. This would allow real participation. Visitors would thus be part of the performance, part of the work of art. But disturbances from the outside are nuisances. They must be regulated, in order to be eliminated.

Another example given by the performer is the following: in what is performed, something happens that is not specified. Rules are not followed exactly; sequences of rules are modified by one person or the other. Who follows whom? This question is ongoing for the performer, who has to follow the group but can decide to create a diverging subgroup. No one among the performers or the visitors can have the real perception of the global event. This awareness is part of the individual local action in a way that is different from the distancing by reflection or

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reflexivity, critique or scepticism. It is a distancing-by-closeness, which the performers practice physically in every move they make. They come close to one another, very close, their bodies are never far from each other, but they distance themselves suddenly and keep their bodies apart, and at the same time keep the connection strongly. A game of closeness–distancing is played all along, which is fascinating in its strange pace and its metaphorical strength. Touching each other is not allowed. This strange rule given by Tino Sehgal makes full sense in relation to the necessity of distancing within the closeness, which appears as a practical manner of spacing. But once more, all such minor moves are included in the design of the performance and participate in its achievement.

Places to Dwell, Tarry, and Encounter

Getting closer and taking distance grounds all the moves in the performance. The group of performers move continuously, running, walking, speeding up and slowing down, standing still before they make the next move. And they also sing. Two songs, or perhaps better two psalms, rather like ritual melodies, rise from time to time from the group. The words are distorted, echoed, repeated, but two sentences emerge slowly if one listens carefully. One song tells:

> Today we have begun to create natural processes of our own, and instead of surrounding the world with defenses against nature's elementary forces, we have channeled these forces into the world itself.

The second song responds:

> Thus we ask now: if the old rootedness is lost in this age, may not a new ground be created, out of which humans' nature with all their work can flourish even in the technological age?

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The first sentence is from Hannah Arendt (1958, pp. 148–149). The second was written by Heidegger (1955/1966, p. 55). Tino Sehgal claims his performance to be a reactivation of ancient forms of collective being, enabling (disturbing) new forms of encounters.[10]

Hannah Arendt, in *The Human Condition*, expresses her concerns about the technological age that arose more than sixty years ago. While tools until then helped the *homo faber* within the human world, machines now require man to be their servant. They even form a world in which human gestures and the human relation to the world are replaced by a mechanical world that becomes difficult to inhabit.

> For a society of laborers, the world of machines has become a substitute for the real world, even though this pseudo world cannot fulfil the most important task of the human artifice, which is to offer mortals a dwelling place more permanent and more stable than themselves.
>
> (Arendt, 1958, p. 152)

Heidegger redoubled this concern and saw the danger of a growing thoughtlessness, or rather that only calculative and optimizing thinking is possible: "the approaching tide of technological revolution in the atomic age could so captivate, bewitch, dazzle, and beguile man that calculative thinking may someday come to be accepted and practiced as the only way of thinking" (1955/1966, p. 56). For Heidegger, thought can only rise from a rootedness. And it is precisely the work of art that expresses the roots of a place, and it is likely that great works can only flourish if they are rooted. For him, therefore, it is not a question of rejecting any technique, but of adopting an attitude of equality of soul that leads to serenity: saying yes to the unavoidable use of technical devices, but strongly "deny them the right to dominate us, and so to warp, confuse, and lay waste our nature" (p. 54). Calculative thinking cannot grasp the meaning of

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technology, a meaning that at the same time shows itself and withdraws, that is, presents itself as a mystery. Release in relation to things and openness to the mystery might together be fit to recapture the old and now rapidly disappearing rootedness in a changed form.

If Tino Sehgal has chosen these two sentences and gives them to sing like a song from the depths, he certainly has something to tell us about technique, the world, and rootedness. Let's turn to another excerpt from the performer's diary:

> We meet in the dressing-room. Or in the lobby. Or at the bar. Or most often I meet the other performers by joining the running group – I was late and the group had already started. Catching the pace, I run besides Jacques, Emmanuelle or Anne, give them a little hello, a smile, a glance: no talk is allowed. And my running moves me close to other colleagues – are we workers, colleagues in the workplace? My place is moving, I move as the place moves and my moves carry me from place to place, looking for the right one. For example in the triangle exercise when I have to keep equidistant from two other runners, my moves result from trying (in vain) to keep in place, to stay still equidistant from both. An impossible task: they too try to achieve the same – with two other members. And it moves us continuously, catching up one with another and immediately separating. Is it exhausting? I think not. It's not funny either. The visitor curiously never laughs at us… It is work. Not a job (though I'm paid for it) but an activity, a vital activity although it is metaphorical. It's vital to stay tuned, stay in the group and keep my distance at the same time. Vital to play my part, in the spectacle but above all in my being here. A job consisting in working hard at making my presence valuable. A good metaphor of organizational contemporary life: where each employee has the freedom and pressure of continuously justifying her employment. My presence, like that of the others, creates a value because we create the group itself. The group to which I belong is created by my moves in the search for my place. Moving for searching

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> where to belong creates my belonging to the move itself, that is to the life of our group. If we stopped moving, soon we would not be differentiated from the visitors, if we do not move in pace, idem. When I leave for encountering a visitor, I feel the elasticity of my connection with the group. While I talk, they move. In which place will I find them again? Where will my place be after the interruption? At the same time my place now is here, facing this visitor and chatting. Until it's time to run away, to a new place, from place to place.[11]

The performer expresses his attempts at place making, that is, at transforming the museum space into a place to dwell. His dwelling is not something he achieves alone; his place has to be in relation to the group – however each group member tries to make his place in relation to others. Place making appears as a task that is never achieved and at the same is already done. Very clearly, performing and attending are about creating the place where to be, where to ground our encountering. Encountering is the way by which the group's moves occur, always already missed encounters between the performers and between the performers and the visitors. They try to meet, to be together, but the run, walk, moves, and the distances keep them apart at the moment they gather. They have to "meet," to gather as a group; not a massive, unique, collective body, but a fluid shoal of moving bodies. The performers' bodies encounter each other in their distance and closeness, and above all, in their continuous attempt to get closer while escaping from the closeness.

For Casey (1996), place is an event, the coming together of people and things, and we experience the world always already from our emplacement. Place is thus an intrinsic part of our being-in-the-world. And as Ingold (2008, p. 1808) adds: "there would be no places were it not from the comings and goings of human beings and other organisms to and from them, from and to places elsewhere." Gatherings are making places occur, and "take place." Place happens by the coming

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together of people (and other beings) and will change or dissolve when they leave. As one moves, she goes from one place to another, and at the same time, finds her place in the new location: "To travel between places, is to move between a collection of trajectories and to reinsert yourself in the ones to which you relate" (Massey, 2005, p. 130; Pink, 2009, p. 31). Hence, we could have a joyful and exciting travel between places, leading to each time new encounters, discovering and making together places to share, which could well resemble our liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000).

However, this is not what Tino Sehgal wants us to feel, nor is it what the performer is experiencing. This jumping from place to place seems to prevent any lasting and satisfying encounter. And we might come back to Heidegger to get an insight. For Heidegger (1927), the "Dasein" space is not that of geometry or of science. It follows a personal geography of the places he has known or the elements useful to his activity. His space takes the shapes of his world making. When he later commented on sculpture, Heidegger (1969) related places to a clearing away that brings forth a locality preparing for dwelling. And sculpture can be seen as

> an embodying bringing-into-the-work of places, and with them a disclosing of regions of possible dwellings for man, regions of the possible tarrying of things surrounding and concerning man.
>
> (p. 8)

For Heidegger, even though places occur, they have to provide where to dwell and to tarry. And if in the sentence sung by the performers, Heidegger wonders about the possibility of new rootedness where human nature could flourish, the transient and never-lasting encounters performed there fail to provide a dwelling and tarrying place, for human nature to flourish – in

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the sense meant by Heidegger. We may have some suspicions when we refer to rootedness with Heidegger, as well as to the place of togetherness and the encounter in his thinking. But the sung phrase selected by Tino Sehgal as well as Hannah Arendt's both question the possibility of the flourishing of human nature in a new world of machines, calculative thinking, and technology – wondering if one can find a place one can live in, stay in, and create.

Both Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger's sentences were referring to the by then new stage of technology (the age of electricity and the atom). Tino Sehgal refers to our digital age, of ever more transience, liquidity, and jumping from place to place. One possibility is then to read the performance, as well as the performers' and visitors' experience, as a new way of dwelling, prophesied by Tino Sehgal, for our digital age. A dwelling less embedded in static places or cultures, a dwelling rather made of the search for dwelling. A dwelling made on moving ground, a kind of permanent "spacing" or place making that one must strive to rebuild every moment, but which allows communities and their work to flourish, as the performance manifests. Testimonies are that such a dwelling happened in Paris, but will it be felt as satisfactory? And can such a major event as the one in Paris, reproduced in other places, still keep something minor, or minoring? Can it lead to human dwelling and flourishing?

Conclusion

In Tino Sehgal's "situations," we are in a way witnessing the factory of organizing. Everyone acts and moves according to each other and according to a few simple rules. The empty space seems to take on different configurations from human movements. There are a few strong moments and intimate words. Our reading sees it as a metaphor for liquid modernity, new workspaces (flex-offices, open spaces, etc.), and generalized acceleration (Rosa). Then Tino

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Sehgal's work questions us about our organizations, about the place they can tolerate for the minor, the possibility of dwelling in them.

When we look at the academic literature linking space and organization, a huge proportion is about control or about making the organization more pleasant (or bearable). Spacing is above all a minor usage of the functional use of space, the insertion of a slowing down, of creating spaces where to live. It is about inventing some escape routes, some detour from and hijacking of control. But such steps aside are always threatened to be re-entered as functional and productive dynamics for the organization.

Are modern organizations places where human beings can dwell? Is there room for the minor? Toni Sehgal makes us see organizing as both a human-making and a quasi-inhuman place to be. Spacing cannot be represented. It can happen (provided the police is not too powerful) as the search for place. There is always a minor usage of the major organization. While in many ways Tino Sehgal's performance was intended to make a minor usage of the space of the Palais de Tokyo, it did so by proposing an organization that in turn becomes major and tends to exclude other minor usages. But the same applies to academic research. Wanting to represent, program, or explain spacing, to explicitly want our research to produce spacing is probably immediately doomed to rendering it major. Wanting to explain everything, to know everything, to say everything does not leave room for spacing. Spacing sometimes occurs in some research texts. There is no recipe. One needs probably to connect to one's own pre-individual practices, one's flesh and imaginary to feel the political dimension inside, and then to try and express it. For Beyes and Steyaert, research has to be a performance. Research needs to experiment with the aesthetics and embodiment of research itself. There is no recipe. But it is in the possibility of spacing that there is still some space for freedom, breathing, and hope.

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[2] The title of one of his art pieces is "These Situations." Tino Sehgal likes to speak of creating situations, instead of performances or artworks.

[3] Excerpts from field notes taken by the first author during his visit to Tino Sehgal's solo show, Palais de Tokyo, 18 October–10 December, 2016.

[4] For this paragraph, we base ourselves on the interesting synthesis proposed by De Molli (2019).

[5] Excerpts from the first author's field notes, November 2016. See note 2.

[6] Excerpts from the second author's field notes, taken during his participation in Tino Sehgal's performance "These Associations," Palais de Tokyo, 18 October–10 December, 2016.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Second author's field notes, excerpts. See note 6.

[9] Second author's field notes, excerpts. November 2016.

[10] Excerpts from second author's field notes during rehearsal, October 2016.

[11] Second author's field notes during his participation in the performance "These Associations," Tino Sehgal solo show, Palais de Tokyo, 18 October–10 December, 2016.