

# **Appropriation in European Contemporary Dance**

**by**

**Eleonora Zdebiak  
3630935**

**supervision:  
Bojana Cvejić**

**second reader:  
Maaïke Bleeker**

**Master of Theatre Studies  
at  
Utrecht University  
August 2012**

## Index

<b>1) Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1) Introduction.....	3
1.2) Definition of the Term Appropriation.....	4
1.3) The Choice of the Three Performances.....	4
1.4) Appropriation and Theories on Artistic Production.....	5
1.5) Method.....	6
1.6) “Choreographic Forms”.....	7
<b>2) The History of Subject Positions and Appropriation.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1) Subject Positions and Choreographic Practices in Modern Dance Throughout the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century.....	8
2.2) Appropriation in Visual Arts and Modern Dance Throughout the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century.....	13
<b>3) The Performances.....</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1) <i>Rire</i> by Antonia Baehr.....	15
3.2) <i>50/50</i> by Mette Ingvarsten.....	17
3.3) <i>Le sacre du printemps</i> by Xavier le Roy.....	18
<b>4) Appropriation in European Contemporary Dance: Discussion of the Three Performances.....</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1) Emerging Production Manners.....	19
4.1.1) Postproduction and Sampling.....	19
4.1.2) Flexibility and Virtuosity.....	21
4.2) Subject positions reconsidered.....	23
4.2.1) Position of Artists.....	23
4.2.2) Approaching the Audience.....	24
4.2.3) Horizontality and Emancipation.....	26
4.3) Emerging Modes of Expressivity.....	27
4.3.1) Expressivity of Forms.....	27
4.3.2) Connecting, Networking, Sharing.....	29
4.3.3) “Self-expression”.....	30
4.3.4) Selecting, Inserting.....	31
4.3.5) Experiencing.....	32
<b>5) Conclusions.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>6) Bibliography.....</b>	<b>36</b>

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1) Introduction

The topic of my MA thesis stems from my interest in appropriation as a production method. Appropriation interests me in that it produces and implies particular relations between the artist and the spectator, the artist and the artwork, contemporaneity and history, and has shifted approaches to production, expression and subjectification. My interest is to analyse these issues in the context of contemporary dance in Europe. Their recent appearance indicates basic changes of the approaches to the production in this field.

In contemporary dance in Europe appropriation has been productively applied as a production method only from 1990s. The 1990s is in general agreed upon as a benchmark in dance history that indicates the emergence of the new choreographic trends in European contemporary dance. As André Lepecki writes, from early 1990s “a variety of choreographers coming from diverse training background, different social and national contexts, conflicting aesthetic lineages, and sometimes dissonant political views have dedicated themselves to explore the role of dance within the broader realms of art and of society.” (Lepecki in Carter, 2004, 171). They have focused on rethinking dance not in the sense of breaking with the past approaches (as it was with the pioneers of American Modern Dance and the pioneers of Post-modern Dance) but rather on “see(ing) the past as a common ground, as the surface [they are] inevitably destined to wander on.” (Ibid, 170). Furthermore in the focus of those choreographers (Jérôme Bel, Xavier Le Roy, La Ribot, Boris Charmatz to name a few) was to question the well established definition of dance that bounds body with movement. This “body-movement bind”<sup>1</sup> was formed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the rise of modern dance and has been functioning since then. Disrupting the relation between the body and movement necessitated different choreographic approaches and practices and appropriation is one of them. But the use of appropriation is not limited to this aspect.

Early approaches to and uses of appropriation in European contemporary dance were mostly informed by post-structuralist thought and resisted the individualistic subjective expression through operating in a semiotic field. Later approaches (those that I intend to focus on in this MA paper) approach and apply appropriation techniques in order to achieve different modes of expressivity that would go beyond the approaches that were prevailing in and still are largely forming and informing dance creation, performance and perception, namely: the subjective expression (expressing the inner self through movement) and the objective expression (approaching movement not as a self-expression but as an object in itself).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The concept “body-movement” bind is developed in doctoral dissertation of Bojana Cvejić, *Choreographing Problems: Expressive Concepts in European Dance*, Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, Kingston University, London, 2012. It is part of her claim that modern dance introduced a change in the relation between the body and movement compared to ballet: the dance bound the movement to the body as a form of subjectivation of the dancer or objectivation of the form.

<sup>2</sup> Bojana Cvejić in her doctoral dissertation discusses two historical ideas of choreography in modern dance that imposed the synthesis between body and movement and that appointed two main modes of expressivity: the subjective

I will examine appropriation procedures in the following choreographies: *50/50* by Mette Ingvarsten (2004), *Le sacre du printemps* by Xavier Le Roy (2007) and *Rire* by Antonia Baehr (2008). On the basis of the analysis of these works I attempt to find out what opportunities the various manners of appropriation provide the contemporary choreographers with and what those opportunities mean to the authors of dance in terms of their productive process, their artistic expression and their positioning as political subjects.

In concrete I will focus my discussion on the following questions:

1. How does the application of artistic appropriation affect contemporary choreographic approaches and choreographic practices?
2. Which subject positions are implied by the use of the various procedures of artistic appropriation?
3. What do the various procedures of artistic appropriation indicate in terms of the subject's modes of expressivity?

In conclusion, my main aim is to analyse and evaluate what the use of artistic appropriation as a production method means and has done for contemporary European dance practices.

## **1.2) Definition of the Term Appropriation**

In my MA thesis I consider appropriation an artistic production method. By artistic appropriation I mean an intended and apparent usage of already created form(s) of an author that is not engaged as the author of the newly created artwork. The objects of appropriation I will examine here are physicalities, bodily forms such as gestures, body languages, bodily regimes.

There are many techniques of appropriation mostly described in the field of visual arts. What they denominate differs largely: from very broad concepts embracing a large scope to very precise and particular methods. Therefore the terms that describe appropriation techniques can be quite ambivalent to the extent that appropriation can be claimed in any artistic approach, especially if we consider art a mimetic practice and if we do not (necessarily) consider appropriation a conscious decision. My interest here lies in the latter.

I will consider in this MA thesis only appropriation techniques that are based on conscious and apparent re-usage of already existing forms, and that are conceived by the artist applying them as valid production methods: the artists decide by conscious choice and admit to use an existing form in the newly created work.

## **1.3) The Choice of the Three Performances**

I have chosen the three choreographic works: *50/50* by Mette Ingvarsten (2004), *Le sacre du printemps* by Xavier Le Roy (2007) and *Rire* by Antonia Baehr (2008) as they differ in the use of appropriation from the early practices present in European contemporary dance from 1990s and indicate new approaches relevant in approaching dance.

---

expression based on “a pure, 'absolute' expression of human experience in bodily movement” of the subject of dance (Cvejić, 2012, Introduction, 9) and the objective expression in which “dancing is reduced to a physical articulation of the movement, whose meaning lies, tautologically, in itself.” (Ibid, 9).

The early practices of appropriation, mostly recognizable in works of Jérôme Bel, Mårten Spångberg, Tino Seghal are informed by the post-structuralist thought defining an “approach to the body and movement as a signifier of cultural codes often conceived in chains of smooth sliding signifiers that resist the desire for individualistic subjective expression.” (Cvejić, 2012, chapter five, 9). The application of appropriation in some of the works of those choreographers indicates movement as a structured “text” to be recognized by the audience, and it mostly aims at the critique of representation.

In the works I intend to discuss appropriation is employed with a different aim. It focuses on exploring possible modes of expressivity that significantly depart from the established modes, such as individual subjectivity or formal objectivation. The works also develop new modes of production that are based on practices focusing on reusing and rearranging already existing bodily formats taken from various social and cultural contexts.

#### **1.4) Appropriation and Theories on Artistic Production**

In discussing the three performances and their impact on practices of contemporary dance in Europe I will refer to literature from three fields: visual arts, dance studies and (post)Marxist theory.

In visual arts methods of appropriation as well as the discussion of the application of those methods, both practical and theoretical, have already acquired quite a long history. Therefore the literature dealing with this framework has developed rich conceptual base and terminology that will be helpful for my discussion of appropriation in dance. I will provide a short historical outline of the approaches to appropriation in visual arts based on David Evans' introduction (*Introduction. Seven Types of Appropriation*) to his edition *Appropriation* and on selected texts from this edition in order to provide me a base for analysing appropriation in dance. In the ensuing discussion (chapter 4 *Appropriation in European Contemporary Dance: Discussion of the Three Performances*) my main reference text will be *Postproduction. Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World* by Nicolas Bourriaud in which the author introduces and discusses the concept of postproduction as one of the recent modes of production of an artwork in visual arts. I will refer to this text and ideas developed by Bourriaud, especially to the figure of DJ, in discussing the three choreographies as I believe there is a strong parallel between the postproduction approaches introduced by Bourriaud and the approaches of Baehr, Ingvarsen and Le Roy. Bourriaud's text accurately describes a certain cultural and social background functioning nowadays in post-Fordist societies. Therefore the theoretical framework proposed by him will serve me not only to discuss artistic practices and approaches of the choreographers but also it will help me in positioning them in present discourses, both in the dance field and in more broad sense of culture, society and politics.

In order to be able to reliably situate the artistic approaches and practices, as well as positioning of the three choreographers in the dance field I will refer to literature from dance studies. I will draw a historical outline of the developments in the line: Modern Dance, Post-modern Dance and early 1990s contemporary

European dance<sup>3</sup>. I will focus only on this modern dance line of development in Western dance, and omit developments in ballet tradition, as the choreographers and their works discussed originate from this line, refer to it and introduce shifts in its further developments. My main literature reference providing me with historical framework for Modern and Post-modern Dance will be the seminal text of Sally Banes *Terpsichore in Sneakers. Post-modern Dance*. I will also refer to the doctoral dissertation of Bojana Cvejić, *Choreographing Problems: Expressive Concepts in European Dance* in which, apart from referring to Modern and Post-modern Dance, she largely focuses on developments in the contemporary dance in Europe from the 1990s. Moreover I will use writings of Modern Dance and Post-modern Dance choreographers and texts by the three choreographers whose works I will discuss.

As I have mentioned earlier those approaches and practices are not only limited to developments in the dance field but stretch into the socio-cultural and the political strata. To position the discussed choreographers and their works within that broader context I will refer to Walter Benjamin's text *The Author as Producer* and to Maurizio Lazzarato's discussion of subjectification in contemporary post-Fordist societies. This (post)Marxist framework will serve me to situate the three choreographers and their works within the larger framework of cultural and social production.

## 1.5) Method

In order to situate and properly discuss new approaches to appropriation practices and their impacts on contemporary dance in Europe I will draw a brief schematic historical overview of:

1. the subject positions and choreographic approaches in modern dance from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
2. the appropriation methods present in visual arts and in modern dance from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

Furthermore I intend to describe the selected works of my analysis. In my argumentation I will run a detailed analysis of the performances in terms of:

- the techniques of appropriation used
- the productive practices that occur related to the application of appropriation(s)
- the implied, expressed and intended subject position(s)
- the impact of appropriation on the emergence of new expressive modes

Further I will compare the historical developments and the contemporary practices and argue why the differences traced in the analysis provide artists in the field of contemporary dance in Europe with new production and expression modes, which empower them to make a stand in the contemporary artistic and political discourses. I will support my argumentation with suitable theoretical framework.

---

<sup>3</sup> For the sake of accessibility I will name this line modern dance, written with small letters to differentiate it from the historical Modern Dance

## 1.6) “Choreographic forms”

In the analysis I will refer to the “original” material that has been appropriated in the three works by the term “choreographic form”. Based on that term I will also apply further terminology.

I conceive of “choreographic form” as an expressive unit of specific shape and structure that is performed by subjects through embodiment with the intent of communication. It is nomadic and performative, meaning that it is separable from the individual and from the body. It does not belong to any particular body, but to any body possible. It requires body in order to be performed thus it depends on body but it is not attached to any specific body in particular. It is like a sign described by Derrida as that which “can be cited, put between quotation marks; in so doing it can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner that is absolutely illimitable. This does not imply that the mark is valid outside of a context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any center or absolute anchoring.” (Derrida in Schechner, 2002, 144). “Choreographic form” like “restored behaviour” of Schechner is “out there”, separate from “me”, marked and framed, and can be worked on, stored and recalled, played with, made into something else, transmitted, and transformed (Schechner, 2002, 34-35).

Furthermore the “choreographic forms” stand in for the bodily regimes they constitute and represent. They are constructs that are codified through cultural ideologies. As codified forms of expressions they are created and belong to culture, and so are imposed on, appropriated, exercised, performed by subjects, as Brian Massumi writes: the subject becomes “an expression of the system. The system expresses itself in its subjects’ every ‘chosen’ deed and mystified word – in its very form of life.” (Massumi, 2002, XVI). As they are constructed with recognizable codes “choreographic forms” often remain invisible when embedded in their original contexts.

The “choreographic forms” are choreographed. Andrew Hewitt has developed the concept of social choreography “to denote a tradition of thinking about social order that derives its ideal form the aesthetic realm and seeks to instill that order directly at the level of the body.” (Hewitt, 2005, 3). He states that “all of the body's movements are, to a greater or lesser extent, choreographed” (Ibid, 17) and he sees choreography as a model through which social order is installed, rehearsed and reflected, “as a *blueprint* for thinking and effecting modern social organization” (Ibid, 14). I do not elaborate extensively on the concept of social choreography but focus instead on the idea that ideology is constituted and exercised on the bodily level. The various bodily regimes are choreographed. What emphasises their choreographic aspect is that they can serve as a material for choreographies. Staging them by procedures of appropriation indicates that they are conceived of as choreographed. This can be supported with the consideration of how the notion of choreography has lately become very broad, which is to be understood from the statements of various choreographers. William Forsythe, for example, says that choreography is “organizing things in space and time” (Cvejić, 2012, introduction, 3) and Le Roy states it is “artificially staged action(s) and/or situation(s) (ibid, 3).

## 2. The History of Subject Positions and Appropriation

### 2.1) Subject Positions and Choreographic Approaches in Modern Dance Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

The ideas of the new artistic movements usually grouped under the names “historical avant-garde” and “modernism” reflected the socio-political changes such as, the industrial revolution, the urbanization, the technological developments concerning transportation and communication, the expansion of the entertainment industry, and also the rise of totalitarianism and later the World War I and II. Their artists aimed to diametrically break with artistic and social norms. They were leading a Bohemian lifestyle and headed for an utopian society that would make art a basis of individual everyday life. They were practising art in their everyday life and blurring boarders between art and life in order to have their lifestyle invested in creating and experimenting with the self while opposing tradition.

Avant-garde artists aimed to shock and provoke while Modernist artistic practices aimed at providing intellectual “escape” territories: “The avant-garde sought to confront and change the oppressions and obsessions of bourgeois culture. Instead of trying to alter the status quo, however, the modernists looked to new modes of aesthetic order that could help people to transcend the chaos of the industrial city.” (McConachie, 2010, 388). Technological inventions were fast assimilated and productively used. Artists were fascinated by the new possibilities but were critical about the inventions of the industrial era. The involvement of some protagonists in socialism and fascism manifested either through: representing particular ideas in artistic practices and works; through partaking in propaganda, through engaging in relations with political representatives. Artistic ideas were often employed to serve political aims of the authorities.

Modern dance pioneers such as Rudolph von Laban and Isadora Duncan radically parted with ballet tradition and considered movement the free and natural expression of an individual. They defined dance as a harmonious expression of spiritual being, as “an expression of serenity, [...] controlled by the profound rhythm of inner emotion” (Duncan in Drain, 1995, 248). They focused on “natural” movement which meant “gestures that imitated or represented forms in nature – [...] for Duncan, the movements of waves and trees.” (Banes, 1987, 17). In addition Rudolph von Laban systematized movement in a notation as a method of analysis and production<sup>4</sup>. He gave ground to two important characteristics of modern dance:

- 1) bringing movement to its “natural” state and bounding it with individual expression
- 2) grounding the position of the choreographer as a creative individual, whose ideas are to be perfectly executed by the dancers.

Isadora Duncan developed the solo format, an indicator of an emancipated subject that can manifest her/his own inner feelings. She drew great inspiration from drawings on Greek vases and was dancing bare-foot in loose tunics. She was inspired by classical canonical music (Beethoven, Wagner, Chopin, Schubert) and performed emotional interpretations of the chosen music. She found narration for her compositions in

---

<sup>4</sup> This universalized movement and made the dancer a reader

Greek mythology. In opposition to ballet which was focused on moving from the extremities, Duncan believed that “natural movement” is initiated in the solar plexus. She spread her ideas of natural body in her works and teachings.

In arts at that time Expressionism developed. The modern artistic subject was perceived as embedded in metaphysics of the inside and the outside, expressing, often cathartically, “emotion”, inner feeling that is projected out, externalized and dramatized, as a form of private revolt. The individual subject was perceived as a monad-like container, isolated, alienated, alone individual filled with anxiety (Jameson, 1991). Creativity, expressivity, subjectivity, spontaneity, uniqueness and authorship (developing own recognizable and unique styles) were favoured qualities that found full realization by the Modern Dance practitioners.

Modern Dance that developed around 1930s in the USA was supported and elaborated by the dance critic and theorist John Martin. To him dance in its essence had to be about expressing emotional states and experiences (“intuitive perceptions, elusive truths”). Modern Dance rejects arbitrary forms and starts all over again building on the principle that emotional experience can express itself directly through movement - “feeling through with a sensitive body” with a result of “the appearance of certain entirely authentic movements” (Martin in Copeland and Cohen, 1983, 27). Martin distinguished four elements to define the principles of Modern Dance:

- The discovery of movement as the substance of dance which meant the beginning of the self-contained independent art Dance to him. A leading doctrine in modernist art was “that modernist art confines itself to exploiting or to exhibiting only those properties that are essential to a work in the medium it employs” (Cohen in Copeland and Cohen, 1983, 161). In that sense establishing movement as a substance of dance could have been considered embedded in the modernist approach.<sup>5</sup>

- Metakinesis: “the relation that exists between physical movement and mental – or psychical, if you will – intention” (Martin in Copeland and Cohen, 1983, 23). Dance was considered universal for the audience could identify with the dancers through metakinesis.

- Individualism: “(T)he modern dance is not a system; it is a point of view” (Martin in Huxley and Witts, 2002, 300) and it rejects standardization.<sup>6</sup>

- Dynamism: dance as an “unending tide of movement” (Wigman in Huxley and Witts, 2002, 403).

A difference to ballet tradition was that each dancer could be a potential rebel:

“since the modern dance was predicated so heavily on personal, often intimate, formats, on subjective content, and on individual quests for movement styles that would express not only the physicality of the choreographer, but also his or her thematic concerns and theories of movement, every slight shift in technique or theory from teacher to student came to mean not further refinement but further revolt. [...] In this system [...] (t)he ‘tradition of the new’ demands that every dancer be a potential choreographer.” (Banes, 1987, 5).

---

<sup>5</sup> However Modern Dance apart from bonding movement with inner states, strongly relied on music and was employing corresponding expressive costumes, décors and lighting and in this sense confined broadly to the romantic form of Gesamtkunstwerk.

<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless strict techniques developed that the dancers and students were to obey.

The representatives of Modern Dance, Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey graduated from the professional dance school Denishawn. Their main claims were: one must be chosen to be a dancer/choreographer and must have a burning need to dance and create. They maintained the idea of “genius” and perceived dance as a sort of religion, “(t)here are always ancestral footsteps behind me, pushing me, when I am creating a new dance, and gestures are flowing through me.” (Graham in Carter, 1998, 70). They conceived dance representations of internal experiences and produced coherent and readable narrations. Both based their choreographies on techniques they developed. Graham Technique, the contraction/release technique, based on the breath cycle, dramatizes psychological connotations of pain and ecstasy. Humphrey Technique, fall/recovery, based on “pulling the body from two possible kinetic and symbolic ‘deaths’ - the stable position of standing upright and laying down” (Banes, 1987, 4). In general Modern Dance techniques focused on exploiting breath and gravity and had “the angular, jagged, percussive rhythms of an age fascinated by jazz and potential wonders and horrors of machines” (Ibid, 4).

Around 1950s in the USA, which was not so affected by wars' destruction, capitalist climate developed; the climate of the age of abundance, of “the sensory overload environments of 20<sup>th</sup> century consumer society” (Copeland in Copeland and Cohen, 1983, 311). The new medium of television arose and “an environment designed to stimulate wholly artificial desires” (Ibid, 311) slowly excluded the idea of naturalness (and with it of natural movement). At that time in the USA Modern Dance became fully institutionalized and “had developed into an esoteric art form for the intelligentsia” (Banes, 1987, XVI).

In Europe modern dance, so called *Ausdrucksanz* represented mainly by figures like Mary Wigman and Kurt Jooss, significantly decreased during the World War II. This for the reason that many dance schools were closed and some of the practitioners emigrated (Kurt Jooss). After the World War II those who stayed (Mary Wigman, Gret Palucca) and those who came back (Jooss) (re)activated dance education. The new generation graduating from reopened schools, whose most significant representative was Pina Bausch, has developed the form of *Tanztheatre* which had a great influence on the further progress in European modern dance. Despite those changes modern dance in Europe was largely dominated by classical dance and the so-called “modern ballet” which were fashioned by state theatres and operas.

In the USA the choreographer Merce Cunningham rejected the ethos of personal commitment and ideas of expressionism. Contrary to Modern Dance choreographers Cunningham claimed that:

“any movement can be a material for a dance; any procedure can be a valid compositional method; any part or parts of the body can be used; music, costume, décor, lighting and dancing have their own separate logics and identities; any dancer in the company might be a soloist; any space might be danced in; dance can be about anything, but is fundamentally and primarily about the human body and its movements” (Ibid, 6).

He combined the techniques of Graham and Balanchine<sup>7</sup> to his own technique. It involved very complex and complicated combinations of movements based on isolating body parts, on tilts and twists and fast, unexpected changes of positions. Contrary to Modern Dance choreographers in his performances he used

---

<sup>7</sup> American Ballet technique

dance, music, costumes, décor and light design independently. For his composition, that took place only in the very evening of the performance, he made use of chance operation based on the I Ching. His works did not involve expressivity, symbolism, narration nor meaning-making processes but were perception-oriented. He was not “interested in making sure the audience puts the elements together to ‘get’ a particular message from the dance event, but rather in presenting a variety of experiences – aural, visual, kinetic – which the spectator is free to interpret, select from, or simply absorb” (Ibid, 6). He aimed to “open up unexplored possibilities” (Cunningham in Carter, 1998, 29). His approach to dancers remained hierarchical but he addressed them as aesthetic/art objects rather than as vehicles to transfer feelings and emotions. With Cunningham dance moved towards visual arts. As Modern Dance was relying on music Cunningham's works were visually oriented – a shift in watching and processing dance that refers to popular culture that focused on overflowing and overpowering subjects with visual information. Cunningham was teacher and organizer of artistic events at the Black Mountain College, established by former Bauhaus teachers and students that nurtured the idea of interdisciplinarity. The college that “had created a paradigm [...] for the entire [American] avant-garde” (Banes, 1987, 9).

Post-modern choreographers starting in the 1960s were inspired by Cunningham. Numerous representatives, like Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, Lucinda Childs, Trisha Brown, David Gordon formed an informal group the Judson Dance Theatre. Their meetings were based on interaction of ideas during which they presented their works and processes often only to themselves. “Outside” audience consisted of people knowledgeable in arts and eager to be surprised, shocked and provoked (Ibid, 13). They did not perform in theatres but in studios, art centres and site-specific locations. They did not form companies or repertory – works were performed once to underlay the ephemeral presence of the performance<sup>8</sup>. Post-modern choreographers were close with visual artists but did not integrate each other’s works in their own productions. Visual artists engaged in performative aspects inspired by approaches in dance, and choreographers drew inspiration from visual arts, especially from Minimalism.

Early Post-modern choreographers were focused on problems defining dance. They were reconsidering the medium of dance with an analytical approach. The “formal qualities of dance might be reason enough for choreography, and [...] purpose of making dances might be simply to make framework within which we look at movement for its own sake” (Ibid, 15). Making dance for the Judson Dance Theatre choreographers often included making a self-reflective proposition of what dance is or could be. In her influential *No Manifesto* Yvonne Rainer wrote:

“No to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make-believe no to the glamour and transcendency of the star image no to the heroic no to the anti-heroic no to trash imagery no to involvement of performer or spectator no to style no to camp no to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer no to eccentricity no to moving no to being moved.” (Rainer in Carter, 1998, 35).

Post-modern choreographers considered the body the subject of dance. The democratization of the body

---

<sup>8</sup> At that time Performance Art developed and influenced other artistic practices

replaced an aim for virtuosity. The body was engaged in casual, everyday postures and actions. Any everyday movement was treated as material for dance. There was a refusal to differentiate a dancer's body from another body and a claim that everybody can dance. Choreographers' focus was on the process more than on the product. They did not pre-choreograph movement material but developed tasks and scores to be executed. Choreographies were based on structures (mathematical, arbitrary assemblages, fragmentation, juxtaposition, improvisation) that provided the viewer the possibility to recognize the underlying form and the audience was invited to an active engagement based on finding and recognizing those structures. Furthermore, the Post-modern choreographers developed improvisation practices, especially Contact Improvisation, that were perceived not only as a dance technique but also as "an alternative social network [...] [which] performance seem[ed] to project a lifestyle, a model for a possible world, in which improvisation stands for freedom and adaptation, and support stands for trust and cooperation" (Banes, 1987, XIX-XX). Post-modern choreographers engaged in addressing the following contemporary issues: participation, democracy, cooperation, ecology; issues of censorship, war, personal intervention and civic responsibility; support to the anti-war, student, black power, feminist and gay movements.

Later Post-modern choreographers creating in 1980s answered the developing and mutating capitalist market that imposed the general climate of artifice, specialization, conservation and competition. They restored narrative meanings to dance. While still enthusiastic about reconsidering the medium of dance their main question was not what dance is, but what dance means. They took up virtuosity and were mixing various styles: ballet techniques, Cunningham technique, Graham technique, modern jazz, tap and others. Décors, costumes and light were the new media to support dance. Music served as a base to dance. Language was integrated as well as fragmented layered narration. Mass culture had a strong impact. As a new development they were preserving dances on film and videotape. They re-established the hierarchical relation between the choreographer as the author and the dancer as the interpreter of author's design. They formed companies with repertory, and returned to performing in theatres.

At that time the period started to emerge that was named by many theoreticians Postmodernity. It has been characterized by the accessibility of information, the rapid development of communication technologies, globalization, multi-nationalism/culturalism, post-colonialism, interactivity, hybridity, consumerism. And by the dissolution of an autonomous sphere of culture (which was before treated rather as a mirror image of the world) into the explosion and expansion of culture throughout the whole social realm, everything becomes "cultural", "from economic value and state power to practices and to very structure of the psyche itself" (Jameson, 1991, 48).

Post-modern artists<sup>9</sup> focused on "uncovering strata of representation, [...] structures of signification:

---

<sup>9</sup> Early Post-modern choreographers differ in their approaches from post-modernist artists as they headed more into the direction of minimalism and formalism, that were in general approaches associated with modernism. As Sally Banes writes: "In dance, the confusion the term 'post-modern' creates is further complicated by the fact that historical modern dance was never really *modernist*. Often it had been precisely in the arena of post-modern dance that issues of modernism in the other arts has arisen: the acknowledgement of the medium's material, the revealing dance essential qualities as an art form, the separation of formal elements, the abstraction of forms, and the elimination of external references as subjects. Thus in many respects it is post-modern dance that functions as modernist art." (Banes, 1987, XIV-XV). The later Post-modern choreographers creating in the 1980s through they practices of mixing styles,

underneath each picture there is always another picture.” (Crimp in Evans, 2009, 78). They have been influenced by the idea of simulacrum: no “reality” but only its representations that become “reality” (hyperrealism) and have been deconstructing, exposing “reality” (various existing power relations, classifications, meanings and values). Operating with sociological and political realms they have been stating the end of the unique, of personal style, of originality and have imposed intertextuality. They have been tracing the subject with terms like: hybridization, fragmentation, decentralization, nomadism, performative identity.

In Europe new, influential choreographic trends emerged in the 1990s that were corresponding to developments in post-modern artistic approaches. Choreographers have no longer been necessarily coming from dance educations, they have been referring to past approaches, their works have been strongly embedded in, and have been attentive to contemporary discourses. They have been mostly freelancers embedded in networks of production houses, festivals and artistic venues at which they have been performing, giving lectures, workshops and taking part in debates. The three choreographers whose works I will discuss belong to that European trend.

## **2.2) Appropriation in visual arts and modern dance throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

Appropriation in dance clearly appeared as a production means in the 1990s, in trends developed by European contemporary dance choreographers. They deliberately have been applying appropriation in their productive processes and performances. Their early works using appropriated material were mostly informed by the post-structuralist discourse. Influential for those choreographers were the theoretical concepts of the post-structuralists: Roland Barthes and Jaques Derrida among others. Those authors have introduced the following concepts and problems: the death of the author and the concept of the “text” (texts aren't produced by authors, but by intertextuality and other texts); the focus on the active and significant role of the viewer in the process of reception; meaning making as a process based on the idea of the chain of empty signifiers deprived of an essential centre; the end of originality: citation as a form of writing and reading.

Those approaches had similarities with approaches developed in visual arts around a decade before, in the 1980s. Then the term Appropriation Art was coined and works denominated as Appropriated Art were mostly focused on “uncovering strata of representation” (Crimp in Evans, 2009, 78). In 1977 Douglas Crimp organized the exhibition “Pictures” that has been treated as “the epochal exhibition that launched a new pervasive art based on the possession – usually unauthorized – of the images and artefacts of others.” (Evans, 2009, 12). Artists presenting their works at “Pictures” and also the later appropriation artists were usually aiming to criticise consumer culture, to question authenticity, originality, authorship and to amplify an active role of the viewer, to undermine individual style and personal expression. They were also revealing various existing power relations and manners of subjectivity imposition. Appropriation became thus a practical mode based on constructing critical spaces of reading and performing the “already-written”. As Sherrie Levine

---

integrating new media and fragmented layered narration, could be compared with post-modernist artists.

(presenting in “Pictures”) writes in her *Statement* from 1982 based on appropriated phrases (mainly from Roland Barthes):

“Every word, every image is leased and mortgaged. We know that a picture is but a space in which a variety of images, none of them original, blend and crash. A picture is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. Similar to those eternal copyists Bouvard and Pechuchet, we indicate the profound ridiculousness that is precisely the truth of painting. We can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. Succeeding the painter, the plagiarist no longer bears with him passions, humours, feelings, impressions, but rather this immense encyclopedia from which he draws. The viewer is the tablet on which all the quotations that make up a painting are inscribed without any of them being lost. A painting's meaning lies not in its origin, but in its destination.” (Levine in Evans, 2009, 81).

Important for appropriation artists was the theoretical concept of simulacra developed by Jean Baudrillard. He announced the contemporary world to consist of simulation and simulacra what according to him has resolved in an impossibility to distinguish reality and its media representation. He defined simulation to be “the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal.” (Baudrillard in Evans, 2009, 80). An artist Richard Prince whose works are mostly based on rephotographing existing pictures, said about his works: “These pictures have the chances of looking real without any specific chances of being real.” (Prince in Evans, 2009, 84).

Contrary to modern dance practices appropriation as a production means had already been applied in visual arts from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although the pioneers of modern dance and American Modern Dance choreographers (mainly Ruth St. Denis but also Martha Graham) used Oriental forms as inspiration for their creations, they did not consider their practices appropriation, rather inspiration to the creation of authentic movement. Post-modern choreographers used methods of pastiche and were appropriating everyday movement, but appropriation was not yet manifested as a means that they were consciously using. In the 1980s later Post-modern choreographers used a mix of styles and quotations in their works with a “pick-and-mix” approach.

In visual arts the clear denomination of appropriation as a means and aim of an artistic production/artwork became distinct from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was associated with the historical avant-garde and modernism. Techniques and concepts developed by the avant-garde like readymade, montage and collage were the base for the development of appropriation. By applying those techniques artists, despite the aesthetic reasons, engaged themselves against the bourgeois elitism of high art and strived to blur art and everyday life.

Important for the development of appropriation was the fascination and the impacts of the advancing technical processes of reproduction (photography, phonography and later, film). As Walter Benjamin writes in his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* published in 1936, technical reproduction allows the reproduction to be fully independent from the original, able even to present something of the original that normally is out of the reach for the original. Benjamin argues that the technical process of reproduction significantly affected the artwork and changed its function: the unique aura of art, its

“spirituality” was destroyed as art became more accessible and determined by its exchange value. Furthermore this meant a key change in the orientation of the artist and the addressing of the artworks: politics became a field of intervention for the artists.

In the 1950s the Situationists stated the necessity of plagiarism as a political tool, as a language of anti-ideology: “staying close to an author's phrasing, plagiarism exploits his expression, erases false ideas, replaces them with correct ideas” (Debord, 1995, 145). They developed the method of détournement, hijacking words, fragments, utterances and images circulating in popular media and re-composing them to create insubordinate, counter messages.

From the 1950s on appropriation was a means in art movements indicating American avant-garde like Fluxus, Pop Art, where its function was mostly a critique of traditions of expressionistic art and ideas of individualism. Artists' inspiration and focus was on bringing in the banal and commercial: popular culture (TV, advertising). They were working with the idea of everyone thinking/being alike, as Warhol said:

“Everybody looks alike and acts alike, and we are getting more and more that way. I think everybody should be a machine. [...] do the same thing every time. [...] over and over again. [and I approve of it] because it is all fantasy. [...] How many painters are there? Millions of painters are all pretty good. How can you say one style is better than another? You ought to be able to be an Abstract Expressionist next week, or a Pop artist, or a realist, without feeling you've given up something. I think the artists who aren't very good should become like everybody else so that people would like things that aren't very good.” (Warhol in Evans, 2009, 41).

Nowadays appropriation in visual arts functions as a production means that focuses on “re-cycling,” ongoing circulation and re-usage of forms aiming for a diversity of ends and is more about re-directing and confusing circuits of exchange. A more recent approach to appropriation is presented by Nicolas Bourriaud in his book *Postproduction. Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World* published in 2002. Postproduction is a concept introduced by Bourriaud to analyse those modes of production in the arts from the 1990s that are based on sharing and networking and finding new ways through and with already circulating signs. These approaches correspond with approaches to appropriation present in the three choreographies that I will discuss in detail in chapters: *Emerging production manners*, *Subject positions reconsidered*, *Emerging modes of expressivity*.

### **3. The Performances**

#### **3.1) *Rire* by Antonia Baehr**

Antonia Baehr's performance consists of six scenes, each is the performance of a different laughing score. She enters stage dressed in a three piece men's suit, welcomes the audience and explains that she asked her friends to write a score for her 40<sup>th</sup> birthday and that she selected some that she will perform tonight. She

mentions that for each score of laughter the name of the author will be projected on the back wall. She sits on a chair placed in the centre of the stage. The lights form a diffuse spot on her. There is a music stand with scores in front of her. She adjusts herself and the score and performs the first laughing sequence from the score, like a chamber concert musician. After she finishes she shifts on the chair to face the audience, takes out an mp3 player and puts on headphones. From time to time she performs sequences of laughter. In between she is obviously listening carefully. She gradually starts to perform movements with her head and upper body as if accompanying some heard rhythm/melody. She acts as if she was listening to music. The audience does not hear the file played but only her performing different sequences of laughter. When finished she stands up and bows. She performs the action of bowing after accomplishing each of the six scores. Starting the second score she returns to the position of the musician, enacts a metronome and starts a new laughing sequence which she reads from the score. The sound appears technically modified and soon the audience realizes that Baehr only reads the laugh with movements of her body and with opening her mouth but does not produce the sound. The latter is recorded which gets obvious when she does not synchronize her bodily performance with the sound heard. Slowly she enters in a dialogue with the recorded voice and creates a duet. In the subsequent sequence she draws a triangle in the air in front of her: the rhythm consists of 3 beats with accents on the corners of the triangle. She starts to perform the score according to the rhythm established by the movements of her hand. At the beginning the laughing sound is very simple, consisting only of sporadic utterances of: "ha". Then it slowly gets more and more complex to the point that the laugh she performs stops being organized. It starts to overpower the steady movements of the hand and the given rhythm. At first it is not clear whether it is like that in the score or whether it is Baehr who just bursts with laughter. Her hand gives up the rhythm. Then she stops in a manner proposing that the sequence was indeed noted accordingly in the score. In the following scene she takes the stand and the chair away and brings a black bag. She takes balls from the bag and throws them onto the floor – one, or two, or more at a time. The balls are of different sizes, weight, material and colours. Baehr follows balls with her gaze and imitates their bouncing with nodding movements of her head. With her laughter she copies the rhythm of the bouncing ball(s) until it(they) stops. The sound of the laughter she produces depends on the size and material of the ball: small ball – high sound, big ball – low sound, puffy ball - soundless, etc. The audience understands fast what the task is about and there is a shift in reception: the audience becomes curious how Baehr will deal with the task, for example when she throws several balls of different sizes at the same time. Afterwards she brings the bag away and enters centre stage. She performs a laughing sequence accompanied by a set movement sequence. Each position and movement is bound with a specific laugh. She treats them as choreographic material. The lights get darker and she turns to the audience but her face is invisible. She stops performing the movement sequences and laughs soundlessly: only the rhythm of her breath is heard. As the audience does not see her face, the laughter might as well be interpreted as a sound of fear or of being cold. In the last scene she takes place behind a rectangular magnifying glass hanging on the right backstage. She stands behind the glass, only her face is displayed in the glass. It is magnified and deformed. She performs a laughing sequence that is intense in terms of usage of voice and body. From a certain moment on the voice is

being modified with an echo effect. The sound of laugh transforms and evokes associations of unhuman, possibly animalistic sounds and noises (chicken, horse, donkey). After the sequence Baehr bows and leaves the stage.

The production of Baehr's performance is accompanied with the publishing of the book *Rire*. The release of the book as well as the première of the performance are preceded by a research on the theoretical framework on laugh and by a series of lectures and workshops led by various experts from philosophical, scientific, cultural, and bodily training backgrounds. In this book Baehr describes her motives to work on laughter and introduces her processes of production. There are also texts by theoreticians she invited to contribute and an interview about her works led by Xavier Le Roy. A large part of the book consists of the reprinted scores that her friends and relatives gave her and of the documentation (pictures and notes) of workshops and laughing exercises proposed by the experts. Baehr invites the readers to practise the scores and exercises.

### **3.2) 50/50 by Mette Ingvarstsen**

Mette Ingvarstsen starts her solo *50/50* standing with her back to the audience, wearing only a red, curly wig and sport shoes (sneakers). A recording of a drum solo is being played: in the beginning there are slow loose beats that gradually increase in speed and resolve in a rhythm, that becomes very fast and undergoes several changes. Ingvarstsen responds to the rhythm of the drums with moving her buttocks exactly to the beats. While shaking her bottom she slowly raises her arms and gives more space and focus to movements of her bottom that eventually affect her whole body. The body responds, it follows the shaking of the buttocks and Ingvarstsen holds connotation of go-go dancer. The drums are then accompanied by guitar sound, and transform into a rock song (Deep Purple's *Strange Kind of Woman*). Ingvarstsen takes off the wig and starts walking, jumping and gesturing always remaining with her back towards the audience. Strong wash light comes from the floor upstage, so the audience can only see her silhouette. She imitates the leader of the rock band that is being heard during a concert – the recording is recognizable from a concert for audience responses are being heard and the tone and speech of the singer is explicitly addressing the crowd gathered in front of him. And so with her back to the theatre audience Ingvarstsen acts as if she would be the singer turned towards an imagined audience, as if facing an audience gathered at the back of the stage. Her gestures addressing and inciting the concert-imagined-audience are perfectly synchronized and matching the recorded vocal expressions of the singer. Her body performs moves and gestures typical of codes of a rock culture. While the cheering audience is still heard Ingvarstsen stops imitating the singer and starts slowly walking along the back wall still with her back to the audience. She attempts to sing a melodic line of an aria. A recording of her voice is being played. In the recording she also attempts to sing the same melodic line of an aria. She synchronizes her live singing with her recorded singing, which effects in a doubling of her voice. While singing she slowly turns to the audience and slowly walks front along the diagonal line of stage. The

back lights are still on therefore her face and details of her body remains invisible. She is obviously unable to sing the melodic line of an aria well. When she arrives to the front of stage, front lights fade in and make her body and face fully visible. She stops singing while the recorded voice remains for a while and then stops. In silence she performs a chain of exaggerated and deformed facial expressions and gestures representing various emotional states, such as anger, fear, happiness, hope, etc. The expressions develop slowly, in a slow-motion in an ongoing line of transformation. Each expression comes from the previous one in the sense of “flow” of physical movement and not as a result of any psychological order or causal order. Her whole body is involved in those transformations. It remains unclear what exactly the connection between the face and the body is. At a certain moment the recording of her voice trying to sing the melodic line of an aria is being played again and transforms into the original music of Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* sung by Luciano Pavarotti. When the aria changes into an instrumental part Ingvarstsen puts the red wig over her head and face and imitates the pantomime-like gestic-vocabulary of opera. As with the rock concert at the beginning she accurately reproduces the expressive gestures according to the music being played and its libretto. After some time the aria changes into a rock guitar solo. Ingvarstsen finishes her solo with moving her body and shaking her breasts to sound and rhythm of guitars, again bringing in an associations to a go-go dancer.

Together with working on *50/50* Ingvarstsen has written and published *YES manifesto* in which she states her approaches to dance creation.

“Yes to redefining virtuosity

Yes to conceptualizing experience, affects, sensation

Yes to materiality/body practice

Yes to investment of performer and spectator

Yes to expression

Yes to excess

Yes to “invention” (however impossible)

Yes to un-naming, decoding and recoding expression

Yes to non-recognition, non-resemblance

Yes to non-sense/illogic

Yes to organizing principles rather than fixed logic systems

Yes to moving the “clear concept” behind the actual performance of

Yes to methodology and procedures

Yes to animation

Yes to style as a result of procedure and specificity of a proposal.

Yes to complexity” (Ingvarstsen, <http://metteingvarstsen.net/2011/09/50-50/>)

### **3.3) *Le sacre du printemps* by Xavier le Roy**

In his staging of *Le sacre du printemps* Xavier le Roy appears on the empty stage and stands in the

middle with his back towards the audience. He is casually dressed: a red t-shirt, pants and shoes. He prepares his body to move, takes position and starts moving his arms and upper body slightly before *Le sacre du printemps* of Stravinsky is being played from a recording. It reveals fast that his movements are those of an orchestra conductor. He continues to imitate the conductor. There is no orchestra in front of him and the music is played from a recording throughout the whole performance. For some time he remains with his back towards the audience, giving the time to understand what he is doing, and then he turns to face the audience. In this way he performs conducting towards the audience. With gestures of a conductor he addresses specific places in the audience that correspond with the usual spacing of instruments in the orchestra. According to the placement of instruments in the orchestra he points at the particular place in the audience that would be the place of the particular instrument addressed and that is then heard in the orchestra. The speakers, that are posed under the seats of the audience, do each perform only the parts of the instruments that would be performed by the instruments in that spot in the orchestral set-up, so that the spectators are literally surrounded by orchestral music being played. They are posed into the audio-perception of the musicians and are addressed as if they were musicians. Twice in the performance Le Roy stops the music with the gesture of his hand. On his sign the technician stops it. Once Le Roy stays in the middle of the stage and the music starts without him orchestrating it: he searches for a suitable moment to join in with his performance of conducting. The second time he stops the music and then goes aside and drinks water. Afterwards he returns and restarts the music with a gesture of his hand, the technician presses play and Le Roy immediately starts to perform conducting. He performs the entire score of *Le sacre du printemps*.

## **4) Appropriation in European Contemporary Dance: Discussion of the Three Performances**

### **4.1) Emerging Production Manners**

#### 4.1.1) Postproduction and Sampling

Nicolas Bourriaud's concept of postproduction discusses modes of production of artworks that are based on reusing forms as cognitive and productive tools in the production of new artworks. Postproduction is selecting, working with forms "that are already in circulation on the cultural market" (Bourriaud, 2002, 13) and inserting them into new contexts. Bourriaud names artists that apply postproduction methods "postproduction artists" and compares them to DJs and programmers. According to Bourriaud those two figures represent western contemporary culture: "[A] new cultural landscape [is] marked by the twin figures of the DJ and the programmer, both of whom have the task of selecting cultural objects and inserting them into new contexts" (Ibid, 13). Postproduction artists are "users of forms" who invent new usages for the

forms they appropriate in order “to decode and produce different story lines and alternative narratives.” (Ibid, 46). They do that by inventing new uses for forms in their own creations and by re-editing historical or ideological narratives. They are “semionauts” (Ibid, 18) who find original connections and combinations by finding new potential uses and by utilizing already existing and circulating forms.

In the three discussed choreographies Antonia Baehr, Xavier le Roy and Mette Ingvarsten use appropriation in a way equivalent to this concept. Most of all I consider Bourriaud's comparison to the figure of the DJ fruitful to the analysis of the usage of appropriation in the three choreographies. The appropriative procedures they are based on could be named “sampling”. In the field of music the term describes the practice of appropriating a set of values and re-composing them to a new music piece. More than in the description of this appropriative act in the production of digital music I am interested in the artistic practices of selecting “samples” from existing works, of pre-producing parts and facilitating them as “samples”, and of mixing several “tracks” that do each consist of compositions of the chosen “samples” during the actual performance, the DJ-Set.

Mette Ingvarsten, Andrea Baehr and Xavier Le Roy sample “choreographic forms” like a DJ samples bits of music. This analogy is the most apparent in *50/50*. Mette Ingvarsten uses two spectacular sources for her production process, pop-culture (a rock concert) and the high art context (opera). Instead of creating symbols for the two genres she picks two concrete examples: Deep Purple's *Strange Kind of Woman* and an interpretation of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*. She takes samples that call up the modes of representation from those sources. She cuts the smallest, shortest samples that do still provide recognizability of the appropriated choreographic forms, for example a situation in which a rock singer addresses and stirs up his audience, or a pantomime scene from an opera. There is a sequence in the work, during which Ingvarsten is standing with her back to the audience and is accurately performing gestures of the singer of Deep Purple while his voice is being heard from the recording. The cheering of the audience from the Deep Purple concert that is being heard from the recording evokes the expectation that Ingvarsten would perform a Deep Purple song in the established mode. The stage situation remains the same – strong back lights that reveal only Ingvarsten's silhouette - but she stops performing the gestures, remains with her back towards her audience and starts to sing a sample of an aria from *Pagliacci* very inaccurately. This transition from one track of her performance to another is an analogue to the crossfade from one music track to another during a DJ-Set. But also her production processes in the preparation of the actual performance have a lot in common with the manners of digital music production. She has been working on contrasting qualities like “accurate”/“inaccurate” that she has surely been rehearsing and is then in state to apply like a DJ enacts a filter or a sound effect. Another example of this approach to the samples is recognizable during the sequence when she performs physical expressions of emotional states. The exaggeration in those gestures in slow-motion creates a similar effect as playing a Single (45rpm) on LP Speed (33rpm).

Xavier Le Roy samples almost the entire movement material of Sir Simon Rattle's conducting of *Le sacre du printemps*. Furthermore he samples the orchestral set up. By playing the music from a recording and setting the audience in the space of the musicians he converts the sampled movements of conducting into

choreography. Deprived of the effect of their original context, the guidance of the musicians, the movements he performs are to be perceived as choreography. He omits the musicians or speaking in terms of the DJ, he mutes their physical presence.

Antonia Baehr collects a huge variety of samples of various orders. In her performance she samples the set-ups and the suitable movement vocabularies of a chamber concert, consumption of popular music from an mp3-player and headphones and those of diverse bodily and rhythmic tasks. In contrary to Ingvarsten Baehr does not interweave those samples. Her mix is a set of selected “songs” that she performs subsequently without overlaps or fades. Most of all she appropriates the laughter that she is provided with by the scores, as well as the structures of their notation systems. She embeds the performances of the different laughing scores into the sampled set-ups of music presentation formats and of movement compositions. The staging situations appear very suitable to the contents presented. She does not use the friction of the content and the form of presentation to speak of the original contexts of sampled presentation forms, like Xavier Le Roy. Instead she makes a statement on the sampled content: the gesture of laughing.

Apart from the sampling techniques Ingvarsten also decides for ways of staging: lighting, spacing, fronts, timing and use of props. She uses a wig, an accessory of a clown and also an emblematic reference to commedia dell' arte coming up from *Pagliacci*. The sneakers she uses represent popular culture. A reference to Post-modern choreographers is made with her *YES Manifesto* which is clearly a response to Yvonne Rainer's *No Manifesto*.

Baehr asked friends during her production processes, artists and relatives to notate laughter for her. She requests the scores for her birthday. She then collects, reads, interprets the received scores and decides for ways of staging them. This leads to the implantation of compositions authored by others and further to the translation of the gesture of laughter into various scoring systems.

Le Roy's practices embrace learning the conducting movements of Sir Simon Rattle. Partly he does that by imitating them from the video documentation *Rhythm is it*, partly he recalls movement sequences from his attendance to a rehearsal of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra as an observer. He then re-creates the conducting through filling and reconstructing the gaps in the video documentation with his assumptions. He decides for a specific staging of the transposed and re-arranged sample of an orchestra concert set-up and composes a spatial sound experience. He divides the recorded music in channels that represent the instrument groups and distributes the sound to the speakers that are placed under the audience seats in a manner that resemble the placement of the musicians in the orchestra concert.

#### 4.1.2) Flexibility and Virtuosity

For the three works I discuss Baehr, Ingvarsten and Le Roy have been developing their own sampling techniques including practices as selection, imitation, interpretation, manipulation, re-contextualization, re-arrangement, transposition, insertion, reduction, detourage, re-composition, re-reading, re-writing, re-playing, montage, re-placement and re-construction. Despite those sampling techniques the three artists do

also develop techniques to master the physical skills required for the performance of the chosen samples and for the performance of the required qualities (I have been naming them “filters” in the comparison with the practices of the DJ). There is a deciding shift that takes place regarding the physical training required to perform the choreographic sequences. The performers do not necessarily need to possess an excellent command of any established dance technique but they need to develop their individual techniques - “filters” - that are oriented at gaining physical skills particular to the specific production. The virtuosity, that has manifested in the history of dance as mastering of established dance techniques and that in the 1960s was entirely rejected by the Post-modern choreographers is now being replaced with flexibility. With the ability to acquire diverse techniques, be it bodily techniques or others, for the sake of virtuoso performance of the chosen samples. Antonia Baehr had to become an expert of reading and performing the variety of scoring systems of laughter that she was provided with. Mette Ingvarsten developed professional command of an amateurish approach to classical voice and Xavier Le Roy developed virtuosity in performing the movement material of Sir Simon Rattle’s conducting. The physical practices that the production processes of *Rire*, *50/50* and *Le sacre du printemps* share are learning and rehearsing the appropriated “choreographic forms” which results in the embodiment of the samples and the embodiment of specific bodies (conductor, rock singer, opera singer, pantomime actor, diverse bodies laughing).

Moreover the performer usually rehearses alone independent of any teacher or master. The autodidactic training does not necessarily require the performer to master the discipline entirely. The performer does only need to obtain virtuosity for the required samples. Baehr did not have to learn and perform all possible laughs, Ingvarsten did neither become a rock, nor an opera singer, she did not become a pantomime actor, and neither did Le Roy become a conductor.

In her *YES Manifesto* Mette Ingvarsten argues for a redefinition of the term virtuosity along the lines drawn here. She claims for virtuosity in adjustability and for the ability to develop and master new methods and techniques required for different productions that are based on flexible organization of principles. The procedures and methodologies used, as well as the material resolving may exceed traditional approaches to dance creation and definitions of dance. Moreover Ingvarsten states the necessity of developing specific procedures and methodologies suitable for each production. Her claim for virtuosity refers to the way in which the newly created material is dealt with in the production process but also in the actual performance. It is also about virtuosity in developing and dealing with concepts that are formative and expressive forces in the performances.

Contrary to Modern Dance and Post-modern Dance<sup>10</sup> in European contemporary dance developing since the 1990s the specialization of the dancer has been replaced with specificity. This is key to the understanding of the work of the performer. Despite of the developing and mastering of diverse performing techniques the performer needs to cope with an indefinite number of analytical tasks. Dramaturgical thinking, research, visual composition, spatial composition, timely composition and discussion of theory are

---

<sup>10</sup> Although Post-modern choreographers advocated “democratic body”, they were themselves educated dancers and often their works, despite their claims, were not to be executed for non-dancers.

just some of the challenges that will arise in any production process of works similar to three works considered here.

This replacement of specialization with specificness is also represented in the biographies of the choreographers. Xavier Le Roy is an educated bio-chemist. Antonia Baehr studied Film and Media Arts and completed her Master in Performance Directing. Only Mette Ingvarstsen as a graduate of PARTS and a student of SNDO has acquired a professional education in dance.

The retreat from specialization points at the fading of the idea of separate fields, be it artistic, cultural, social, economic, etc. that have been represented by specialists. The same regards dance. The specialization in dance dissolves and is replaced with a need for so called “flexible specialization”. This also manifests in the application of the term choreography in a more and more broad understanding. This move away from specialization and towards “flexible specialization” is evidently visible in the three works that use appropriation as a main production method. It is because the performers of those three performances, who are also their choreographers, focus on appropriating diverse “choreographic forms” that require a particular physical involvement that does not “fit” the traditional denomination of dance.

This optimizing of “the self”, the ability to be flexible and skilled in learning and assimilating new and diverse aspects is a prevailing mode of functioning in the contemporary post-Fordist societies. Hybrid figures arise who “combine their different functions without necessarily being confined to any single one of those categories.” (Lazzarato in Raunig, Ray and Wuggenig, 2011, 53).

## **4.2) Subject Positions Reconsidered**

In contemporary post-Fordist societies “overproduction is no longer seen as a *problem*, but as a cultural ecosystem.” (Bourriaud, 2002, 45). The developments of new media, that gained broad influence since the early 1990s, the broad availability of the internet through the invention of the World Wide Web (1989, CERN-institute), in particular are among the reasons for the paradigmatic change in the positioning of the subject towards content, for the change in the relation of the learning to the holders of knowledge and for the organisation of knowledge and content and their linguistic structuring in general. This process has led to an abundance of information that is accessible to everyone possessing access to a computer and an internet connection.

### 4.2.1) Position of Artists

Baehr, Ingvarstsen and Le Roy are the producers, the choreographers and the performers in their works, but they are also recipients during their productive processes as their main production procedure is appropriation. The materials they re-organize and perform were created by others. The distinction between the choreographer and the performer blurs. Moreover, Baehr, Ingvarstsen and Le Roy embody different roles that constitute the “choreographic forms” they have sampled. Thereby they call up the subject positions

entangled with those forms and also re-think positions of the performer in dance and make performative and choreographed roles of further systems of representation visible.

The manner that Antonia Baehr involves her 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, the private occasion on which she obtained the laughing scores from friends and relatives and the fact that she mentions those circumstances make her appear as a friend and relative during the performance. The scores that she is provided with make her a reader, an executor, a receiver. Her request makes her a distributor of tasks. Apart from their roles as the producers, choreographers and performers of their works Ingvartsen and Le Roy appear as imitators, manipulators and executors. Ingvartsen embodies a variety of bodily regimes: the rock star, the opera singer, the pantomime actor. The manner she puts stage light in relation to poses and gestures allow her to embody male and female sex without even changing costumes. Le Roy articulates subject positions through applying or misapplying them and calls for subject positions that are analogue to the ones he applies. He calls for subject positions through the reorganization of the performing space. He considers the following roles/subject positions: conductor, musician, choreographer, performer, audience/viewer/listener, subject of the ritual, master of ceremony.

#### 4.2.2) Approaching the Audience

The procedures of appropriation applied in *Rire*, *50/50* and *Le sacre du printemps* have impact on the subject positions of the audience.

In *Rire* the audience, despite their “common” role as perceivers, obtains an author and performer position to a certain degree. Of course Baehr is and remains the author and the performer and the audience has no impact on the actual performance. Within the production process and the performance Baehr well proposes a sort of game in which the audience can acquire the position of an author and performer of laugh. She asks some of her friends to compose and to notate laughter for her. By asking them to become authors of laughter she establishes laughter as a form separable from their individuality. With the request to note “their” laughter she asks them to (re)own the laughter in the understanding of the authorship to a text. Later in her process she again takes “their” laughter away from them by reading and interpreting the notations during her performance. The authors in the audience who recognize their scores often react laughing in a manner that remarkably recalls the laughter performed by Baehr. Hence, on the one hand the authors regain the authorship of the laughter through uttering it, performing it. On the other hand their individual laughter is simultaneously and instantly (re-)appropriated, heard performed by Baehr. Of course there is a lot of people viewing her shows that did not provide her a score, but the universality of laughter embraces every human that could have provided her a score, everybody watching and reacting with laughter becomes a potential author and performer of laugh.

The audience in Ingvartsen's performance is being put into different roles. It is being entertained and dissociated from their traditional position as dance performance audience. The audience is put in different positions, is presented with material that traditionally does not confine to the definition of dance and is

confronted with constant shifts of involvement and alienation from what they experience. The switches between the formats disallow the audience to fully identify with any given role. Through appropriating “choreographic forms” Ingvarstsen evokes series of recognitions, connotations and non-recognitions that aim at provoking the audience to think and experience affects. This is emphasized by the staging Ingvarstsen has chosen for. Through stating two fronts, she is either facing the audience or remains with her back towards it. Furthermore through confusing fronts when she disturbs frontality with indeterminacy. This is achieved with light effects and use of props, for example when only her silhouette is visible, or when her face and head are covered with the wig.

Le Roy emphasizes the spectators' role as the receivers and their position as non-producers when he puts the audience into the position of the musicians but leaves them without any possibility to produce music. As the audience is surrounded by specially placed speakers it finds itself in the auditive field the musicians would experience during the live concert and therefore can experience the music spatially. This is being stressed with the visualisation of conducting presented as a choreographic sequence. Their position as the spectators of a dance performance is also re-configured. In *Le sacre du printemps* Xavier le Roy encourages the audience to experience music and dance differently: to see music as movement, to see dance as rhythm and melody, and to see both of them as “choreographic forms”.

Furthermore the three choreographies render visible power relations inherent in the samples they appropriate. Most exemplary of this is Le Roy's staging of *Le sacre du printemps*. He bares the power relations, that are inherent in the orchestra concert, as well as its hierarchical construction. The descending hierarchical line that starts from the score, via the conductor, via the musicians and ends with the audience is rendered visible and is thereby being subverted. By turning the conductor to face the audience, by omitting the musicians and the live music he points at the positions of the audience, the musicians, the conductor and the score in the traditional orchestra set-up. There the audience is in the position of listeners who are to be delighted, who are supposed to relax and who shall not reflect the working conditions of the labour group “musicians”, that is working to satisfy the pre-assumed needs of the audience. The audience appears to fill the most privileged position but, in fact, possesses the least impact on the performance (the concert). This is what Le Roy points at, when addressing the audience as musicians. He puts the audience in lights, deprives them of their “safe” and comfortable position and exposes them to a request they can not fulfil nor answer. The audience is posed in the place of the musicians without any ability to produce music: there are no instruments provided and probably most of the spectators would not succeed playing *Le sacre du printemps* on any instrument. The music is played from a recording. The audience's “new” position shows how much it depends on other positions and how passive and powerless it is during a concert. In Le Roy's staging there are no musicians present at all. In the hierarchy of producing music in the orchestra set-up they are treated the least important: those who execute the score under the conduction of the conductor. In this set-up they are invisible what is surpassed in Le Roy's concept with their absence. Because the music is played from a recording and the audience is not able to produce music it is stressed that the traditional set-up would be impossible without the musicians. The conductor normally addresses the musicians who execute his

commands to provide the “right” interpretation of the score for the audience. He serves as a medium. Le Roy deprives the conductor from his power over the musicians. He also stresses the relation between the conductor and the score. In the usual orchestra concert the conductor is supposed to provide an interpretation of the score. Hence, seemingly higher in the hierarchy the score depends on the conductor's interpretation. The fact that Le Roy uses a playback sets the two, the music and the conductor, separately. The conductor is rendered powerless towards the music in terms of its production, he only fits his movements to the music in some sort of karaoke. But at the same time he is no longer a servant of the music. He can stop and restart his movements at any time without the music being disturbed, he can also decide to coordinate his movements with the music when it stops and restarts. His position is embedded in a set of dependencies which can be displayed, disturbed and played with. A far fetched connotation to the position of the catholic priest during the mass can be brought up: before the Council of Trent the priest was leading the mass with his back to the people like the conductor and as Le Roy in the beginning of his performance. After the Council of Trent it was decided that the priest faces the fold during the mass. The former position of the priest set him to the position of enacting the communication between God and the fold. In this understanding Le Roy's orientation at the beginning and his turn later, do visualize the transposition of the conductor from a medium enacting the score to a performer of a mere gesture system. By transposing the orchestra set-up, the conducting and the various dependencies resulting from it into a dance performance context Le Roy examines the hierarchies embedded in the form “dance performance” as well. As he presents as dance performance what traditionally would not be referred to as dance he re-conceives what dance and choreography is and could be and by that he examines positions and relations of the choreographer, the dancer and the audience as well as relation between the body and the movement. Furthermore through dealing with those forms he touches on broader contexts of artist-artwork-spectator relations and even broader on the ritual and roles and dependencies inherent in this form.

The three choreographers presume that the spectator is familiar with the samples used, and can relate to those. They assume that the spectator functions in the networks of forms and can find own ways in the circulations of those forms. In the three works the audience is encouraged to re-think the notion of dance and choreography and to find itself part of “choreographic forms” that may be sampled.

#### 4.2.3) Horizontality and Emancipation

The new modes of production by means of sampling offer a diversity of acquirable roles. The vertical modes organizing hierarchical systems, like the relation of the master to the student in Modern Dance, are broken through the variety of accessible roles. The model prevailing in the three choreographies is organized horizontally. This resolves in alternation, constant shift and change of the roles. Subjects are constructed or invited to switch the positions in the horizontal plane. Hierarchical systems are not excluded but integrated into networks and therefore provide options of re-organization. This versatile approach to the positioning is not only encouraged and stimulated but also required. The three choreographers choose specific positions

which serve their productions the best. The spectator is first put into a certain position and being organized according to the particular “choreographic form”. The articulation of those positions invites for a conscious perception of subject positions and for rethinking subject positions. This leads to the emancipation of the choreographer, the performer and the spectator. Baehr, Le Roy and Ingvarsten as the choreographers and the performers consciously manipulate the roles they choose to undertake and to project on the audience. Also the audience is rendered aware of the roles proposed or imposed on them and can critically reflect them. This is similar to the approaches present in performances from the early 1990s in European contemporary dance. The difference is that the works of the three choreographers do not only aim at a critique of certain power relations and positions. They use the existing set-ups of subject positioning to unleash the freedom of reuse and circulation. By means of appropriative procedures they provoke a confusion that distorts fixed set-ups and renders subject positions utilities that can be altered.

### **4.3) Emerging Modes of Expressivity**

The three choreographies that I analyse differ from the past approaches to expression as they are not concerned with self-expression of inner feelings through movement, with objectifying bodily movement through its analysis, or with a critique of representation. Baehr, Le Roy and Ingvarsten employ postproduction methods in a search for new modes of expressivity.

In *Yes Manifesto* Ingvarsten claims for expression, but remains far from the idea of self-expression fashioned by the Expressionists and the Modern Dance choreographers. She calls for expression based on materiality and bodily practice that is based on “conceptualizing experience, affects, sensation” and does not necessarily resolve in subjective or objective expression. She considers expressions existing codes that are to be un-named, decoded and recoded. She insists on creating performances that are base on and express “clear concepts”. In order to develop and work on concepts that are suitable for specific productions, she calls for “inventing” and producing adequate procedures and methodologies. She says yes to a style being a result of those developed practices and of the “specificity of a proposal”. However, she does not ask for developing a recognizable style of the choreographer but instead of a style of each particular performance resulting from developing and rehearsing specific concepts and methods of dealing with them.

#### **4.3.1) Expressivity of Forms**

*Rire, 50/50* and *Le sacre du printemps* point at the expressivity of appropriated “choreographic forms” in their contexts as well as in newly created contexts. They bring forward the expressions that are inherent to the appropriated samples and utilize new possible expressions through re-contextualization. Forms from established categories are materials that delimit the perception of culture as they form regimes and ideologies. Re-using and re-contextualizing them, finding new usages expands the perception: reprograms forms. “By manipulating the shattered forms of the collective scenario, that is, by considering them not

indisputable facts but precarious structures to be used as tools, [postproduction] artists produce singular narrative spaces of which their work is the mise-en-scene. It is the use of the world that allows one to create new narratives” (Bourriaud, 2002, 46).

The form of conducting undertaken by Le Roy consists of various expressive gestures, gesturing systems ranging from conventional indications for tempo, dynamics and articulation uttered towards the musicians, of illustrative emotional interpretations of the music provoking a specific reading by the musicians and of signs of non-verbal everyday communication between the conductor and the musicians. As the “pure” conducting technique is a form of conventional language<sup>11</sup> that is to be learnt it is obviously separated from the individual. The same can be said about the non-verbal everyday communication, like nodding, etc. The third mentioned gesturing system of conducting consists of the conductor's bodily performance stirred by the music that evolves/stems from a specific emotional reading of the music. The illustrative emotional gestures performed must be understood by the musicians and translated into manners of instrument play, also they are understood by the audience of Le Roy's staging and heretofore influence the perception of the music. Those gestures are not performed by Rattle but by Le Roy, who is not a conductor. Hence, Le Roy's imitation of Sir Rattle deprives his particular interpretation of *Le sacre du printemps* of Rattle's individuality. It is presented as reproducible by others.

Ingvartsen reuses expressive forms from the contexts “rock concert” and “opera”. She makes use of a pantomime scene and an aria from *Pagliacci* and of animating gestures from a Deep Purple concert. Each of those expressions is strongly codified. She takes particular, individual expressions of those forms and by cutting them, reducing them to the most idiomatic and inserting them into her performance she re-contextualizes those forms and deprives them of their individual character. The forms are recognized and identified but are deprived of their original individuality: it could be any rock and opera singer, it could be any opera and rock concert, any pantomime actor. Moreover she uses those forms in the creation of her artistic work which in fact does not deal with a rock concert nor with an opera. The forms serve Ingvartsen as vehicles to achieve her artistic aim: namely to deal with affects, to evoke and explore them.

Baehr, apart from appropriating scores that indicate an expression through reading and enacting, samples forms such as “chamber musician”, “popular music consumer”. She also samples rhythms that she embodies and thereby points at their expressivity, for example when she follows and copies rhythms of bouncing balls with laughter. By that she stresses the rhythmic aspect of the gesture of laughter and exercises the expressivity of the rhythm that exceeds any meaning-making understanding of the laughter. Baehr presents laughter bare of context and focuses on its materiality: on its physicality, audibility and bodily manner of functioning. The audience often reacts to Baehr's performance with laughing. This reaction of laughing on laughing points at two aspects. At some points it gets difficult to distinguish if it is Baehr

---

<sup>11</sup> "(L)anguages are conventions of some sort: whatever the vehicles of meaning may be they are said to have a meaning, or they mean what they do, by virtue of rule-like or rule-governed conventions" and further: "any minimal language contains at least a vocabulary and a grammar and provides for some form of selectively linking elements of a vocabulary and other morphemic components, in accord with grammatical rules in order to form admissible sentences." (Margolis in Copeland and Cohen, 1983, 376-377)

bursting with laughter herself or if she follows the score. This leads to a variety of reactions (and points at a variety of performative aspects of laughter): “I laugh because your interpretation of laughter is funny”/“I laugh because your laughter is funny”/“I laugh because I do not know if you are laughing for 'real'”, and therefore I laugh with my “authentic” laughter. The question of the authenticity of laughing becomes redundant. The gesture of laughing wins importance. This laughing in reaction to laughing also points at the functionality of laugh: “I laugh because you laugh”.

In his analysis Henri Bergson examines what is comic, what is laughable, what causes laugh. He approaches laughter as a social gesture appealing to intelligence. He perceives laughter as a means of correction through humiliation, however, he does not consider laughter a moral criterion. The utilitarian aim of laughter is, according to Bergson, the improvement of the individuals of a society and of the society in general. As the cause of laughter Bergson names any form of mechanisation, that would be caused by the absentmindedness of the individual. This unconsciousness would lead to a mechanical inelasticity that threatens society, because society would demand flexibility and adjustability. Laughable are then all mechanical manifestations of a character and Bergson conceives of gesture as the most suitable manifestation for producing the comic: gestures and not actions are laughable as gestures “mean the attitudes, the movements and even the language by which a mental state expresses itself outwardly without any aim or profit, from no other cause than a kind of inner itching. [...]”; gesture slips out unawares, it is automatic.” (Bergson, 1924, ch3, section I, paragraph 10). Bergson states that what necessitates the production of laughter are: “Unsociability in the performer [achieved through mechanization], insensibility in the spectator [unemotional involvement]” (Ibid, ch3, section I, paragraph 11) and the third condition: automatisisation. He also adds that “there is something esthetic [sic] about it [laughter], since the comic comes into being just when society and the individual, freed from the worry of self-preservation, begin to regard themselves as works of art.” (Ibid, ch1, section II, paragraph 8).

With *Rire* Baehr develops this thought further, she suggests that “our laughs are works of art”. Through her staging she separates the laughter from its probable causes and focuses on the gesture of laughter itself and the gesture of laughter becomes laughable itself. Thus laugh does not have to be a reaction to any performance, the performance of laughter itself can cause laugh. Laugh as a bodily function does not necessarily pronounce individual expression to some contextualized situation as commonly adopted in Western culture. Laugh is also a bodily reflex deprived of any individuality.

Through their approaches and production processes the three choreographers initiate the creation processes that focus on developing specific concepts. Those concepts, though initiated by the choreographers belong to the performances they constitute. They are the expression of the performances. As Bojana Cvejić writes when speaking of concepts as “products of theory's undertaking” (Cvejić refers to the works from the early 1990's): “I start from the problem that initiated making of the performance and thereafter expand the idea underlying the problem by creating concepts that aren't the thought *of* the choreographer, in spite of their being related to it, but *of* the performance.” (Cvejić, 2012, introduction, 7).

#### 4.3.2) Connecting, Networking, Sharing

Important for postproduction artists are the ideas of connecting, sharing and networking. Not only in terms of accessing and using the circulating samples, but also in terms of inserting own works into the circulation of forms. In this way the “sampling artists” add their expressive forms to the “collective equipment” (Bourriaud, 2002, 9) that everyone can have access to, can develop (new) own access to and can re-use. Their works offer new accesses to the expressive formats they appropriate and the formats can be re-accessed and reused.

Baehr connects, shares and networks through the exploration and distribution of the gesture of laughter. Nevertheless those networking practices do not have significant impact on the performance itself, which in its status belongs to the ownership and authorship of Baehr. Le Roy appropriates conducting material and implants it to new networks. Also the focus that Le Roy puts on the expressions and movements of Sir Simon Rattle make this aspect of conducting accessible to Le Roy’s spectators and provides another manner of reading music. He attaches his viewers to a cognitive emotional understanding of the qualities in the music by their visualization and the manner he addresses the audience. As Le Roy Ingvarsen shares the samples she uses in a different context and broadens the understanding and expressivity of those forms as well as she inserts them into different networks. Moreover the frankness with which Ingvarsen appropriates idioms of rock concert and opera states that it would be a simple act to perform those forms.

#### 4.3.3) “Self-expression”

The emphasis that the modernist art movement of Expressionism put on the individual perspective on expressing subjective emotional experiences and psychic structures presuppose a separation of the inside and the outside of the subject, where the inside (inner self) appears as essential that is projected outward, externalized as a desperate communication, as “the outward dramatization of inward feeling.” (Jameson, 1991, 12).

The “self-expression” that takes place in the three choreographies discussed is constructed. The three choreographers do not consider an inner self in the understanding of the Expressionists, instead “the self” consists of the composition, imposition and performance of parts and bits.

Apart from expressing discourses through appropriating the “choreographic forms” and apart from the expressivity of the performances, the three choreographers find ways to express themselves in their sampling techniques. As Baehr says, “I am the one who laughs. [...] I like to laugh. I laugh often. I am often seen laughing.” (Baehr, 2008, 6 and 11) and in the performance she laughs with laughers given her by others.

The three choreographers undertake the solo format, which is usually connoted with the idea of the self-expression of an artist. The use of this format can be read as an attempt to express their ideas. Nevertheless they question this format. Through reusing the solo format they suggest a re-configuration of it. Johanna Burton writes, that an understanding of the artwork as “a connective tissue mediating the flow of collective

and individual histories [can provide] the opportunity to insert oneself, however promiscuously, within them.” (Burton in Evans, 2009, 209). And Lucy Soutter writes that appropriation in contemporary art “no longer need[s] to signify anything in particular: not the death of the author, not a critique of mass-media representation, not a comment on consumer capitalism. On the contrary, it seems that appropriation is a tool of the new subjectivism, with the artist's choice of pre-existing images of references representing a bid for authenticity” (Soutter in Evans, 2009, 166).

Antonia Baehr states in her book that *Rire* is the self-portrait through the eyes of the others (Baehr, 2008, 6). This self insertion into the work is also present through the intimacy that she involves in her production processes. She deals with laugh which is considered an intimate/personal expression. She mentions to be described as a person who laughs a lot. She involves friends and relatives into her process. She connects the production of her performance to her 40th birthday (the scores are presents). She blurs the borders in between work time and leisure time, by asking for working means and obtaining them at an occasion that is clearly denominated as private. She invites the audience to recognize their scores in the performance, to recognize their self-portraits performed by her and allows the audience its intimacy leaving them in dark during the performance (they can laugh). The aspect of intimacy is also present in *Le sacre du printemps* through the appropriation of gestures of everyday communication such as nodding, smiling, etc. that are present in Rattle's conducting and their performance towards the audience. In *50/50* the effect of intimacy is discussed through Ingvarsen's nakedness and her play with lights and spacing. She calls up a voyeuristic gaze, deconstructs it and flees its regime. She carefully choreographs the visibility and exposition of her body parts and thereby escapes the clear, traditional denomination of male and female. She devices and isolates her body parts and therefore destroys the illusion of an indivisible body.

#### 4.3.4) Selecting, Inserting

Producing through activities of selecting, manipulating, distributing, networking and reusing becomes a mode of “self-expression” that is beyond the subjectivist expression as it does not involve subjective expression of the inner self. Nor is it an individual expression as it operates through the re-usage of “choreographic forms”.

It is a constructed expression based on re-combining forms that are accessible to everyone. This is stressed in the strategy of “facelessness” applied in Ingvarsen's *50/50*. The physical representations present in the particular examples which she performs are deprived of the face: the rock concert is performed backwards, she sings in the dark, she imitates the opera pantomime with the wig covering her face. During the whole performance her face is only visible in the extreme facial transformations of the facial and bodily expressions. Thus she samples “choreographic forms” in a way that her face either remains invisible for the audience or is strongly distorted. Face which is usually taken as a reference point regarding individual self-expression becomes unreadable in Ingvarsen's performance. The expressivity is transposed to the body performing samples of various expressive “choreographic forms” and therefore avoids or confuses the idea

of an individual self-expression understood in a way Modern Dance and Post-modern Dance practitioners did.

“Expression is always fundamentally of a relation, not of a subject. In the expression, process and product are one.” (Massumi, 2002, XXIV). Thus the expression appears through relation and the methods of sampling, of reusing, connecting, combining, manipulating, interpreting, networking and sharing, used by the three choreographers are necessarily based on relation. This necessity also implies that whatever is being expressed is always expression of a point of view.

#### 4.3.5) Experiencing

Connected to finding new, more suitable ways of expressing are the “new” modes of experiencing in and through communication.

In *Le sacre du printemps* Xavier le Roy encourages the audience to experience music and dance differently: to see music as movement, to see dance as rhythm and melody, and to see both of them as “choreographic forms”. Thus he invites the audience to a “thoughtful experiencing”, by this I mean the manner of experiencing that stimulates both the critical thought and the sensual involvement. The same can be said about *50/50* and *Rire*. Through transforming the appropriated “choreographic forms” Ingvarsten gains the ambivalency of the familiar/unfamiliar, the recognisable/unrecognisable and brings the attention of the viewers to the way of experiencing. On the one hand they cannot but experience, on the other they become aware of the manners of their experience. Through that Ingvarsten aims to evoke intensities of affects that the audience gets aware of. Through sharing the gesture of laughter Baehr provokes at once laughter in the audience and a better understanding of the gesture and its “choreographic form”.

Moreover this leads to the idea of reinforcing of experiencing and expressing in communication. This is the case in *50/50* that provokes and explores affects both on the position of the performer and the spectator, in *Rire* that re-circulates the laughter and in *Le sacre du printemps* that exposes the feature of the (bodily) communication based on the relational aspect of experiencing and expressing. This is illustrated in the activity of conducting where the “movements that are meant to prompt musicians to play appear at the same time to be produced by the music they are supposed to produce” (Le Roy, <http://www.xavierleroy.com/page.php?sp=a0f7e349ea6cabcd6b97cfb20f2582d9c062cba9&lg=en>).

## 5) Conclusions

The primacy of industrial production with its hierarchical and class-oriented organization of the societies in nations started to break down the least from the 1970s. Starting from the economic failure of the better part of the mass production that was no longer adjustable enough to cope with the rapid developments on the markets the Fordist era, and the low permeability it had offered to its subjects,

underwent radical changes. First the breakdown taught the representatives of huge corporations to adapt their processes of production to more flexible structures, the enterprises that endured the end of Fordism became globally operating groups which has, despite the immediate drastic consequences this process meant for the national employment markets, on the long term lead to a significant decrease of the relevance of the nations. The globalisation is characterized by the workings of capital that is no longer bond to national regulation and the entry of communication as a major working field into the processes of production. “(P)roviding services and manipulating information are at the heart of economic production” (Hardt, 1999, 90) of the post-Fordist era. Communication became part of production in various aspects, the replacement of command with communication on the labour side, a rapid feedback loop in-between production and consumption on the client side, the arise of information as a product to mention a few. The diversification of the markets is mirrored with the displacement of class struggles with social movements. The exploitation of the working class by the holders of capital may have crucially decreased, but this most of all due to the differentiation of working circumstances and working relations. The term “immaterial labour” describes this paradigmatic shift. This labour that produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity based on human contact and interaction, that produces social networks, forms of community, subjectivities and sociality defines and fixes cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms and public opinion. Be it audiovisual production, advertising, fashion, the production of software, photography or cultural activity, the “immaterial labour constitutes itself in forms that are immediately collective, and so to speak, exists only in the form of network and flow. Precariousness, hyperexploitation, mobility and hierarchy characterize metropolitan immaterial labour. Behind the label of the “independent or dependent” worker is hidden a true and proper intellectual proletariat, recognized as such only by the employers who exploit them” (Lazzarato quoted in Grlja, in TkH and JDL, October 2010, 46).

The development of the WWW was accompanied by a rapid development in electronic components that lead to a significant decrease in prices for computers, playback devices, capturing devices, storing devices and further consumer electronics. Interestingly enough the term „consumer electronics“ does no longer denounce devices that are suitable for the consumption of media, but for the production of picture, audio, video and data of various formats also. Many devices that are gathered under the term „consumer electronics“ provide functions, that had formerly been available only for professional media production. Comparing those developments with the inventions of photography, film, radio, TV-broadcast of the 20<sup>th</sup> century leads to one general conclusion: the only „new media“ invented that would provide new modes of perception is the re-programming/re-organisation of already existing formats of perception. It is the availability, the applicability and the interconnectedness of information and information-proceeding devices, that – concerning the productive processes leading to their commercial launch – have also derived from the re-organisation of appropriated knowledge, that provides the contemporary subject with a fundamentally new access and relation to content.

The other key development that is maybe less visible is the differentiation of the interfaces for data exchange. Internet platforms, peer to peer connections, VoIP, Social Media, Internet-Radio, Video-streaming,

blogs, online-libraries are nothing but interfaces that organize information and the exchange of information, and that are applications of the shift from vertical to horizontal organisation of information. Those developments of course have not led to a complete abolishment of hierarchy, new power-relations have arose in this manner of information organisation that are often hard to trace. But considering the relation of the subject to the information there is well a paradigmatic shift: the consumer became a “prosumer.” As a fusion of the terms producer and consumer the term describes a change in the understanding of consumption. Consumption has become productive. The private sphere of a relevant part of the societies has to some extent become public in the virtual sphere. This may have a variety of reasons. One very simple reason that was an argument for the subjects to use the new possibilities of social media during its upcoming was the geographical spreading of families and communities as a result of migration related to work and education. By now social media became a part of contemporary culture. Social life takes more and more place in social media and the consumption of this media consists in the adducing of immaterial labour.

The way the three choreographers have been making use of sampling techniques in the three works is symptomatic for the increase of relevance that immaterial labour underwent due to the reasons mentioned above. Moreover, the sampling techniques have lead to changes of the predominant approaches in three fields that performance artworks in general deal with.

At first the procedures of production have significantly changed. The material, the „choreographic forms“, the samples that the three works deal with have not been produced during the production process in accordance to a traditional dance practice. They have been appropriated and brought, apart from their own expressivity, the bodily regimes of the original contexts into the play of the newly created artwork. This fact underlines that “choreographic forms” are nomadic and performative.

Furthermore this new approach to the production of dance resolves in a shift of the responsibilities of the artist. The conceptual part wins relevance, the re-composition of the sampled materials, the choice of samples are the key activities of the named works. Analysis, research, discussion of theory, in short: scientific methods have been a deciding part of the creative processes. The artist/performer/choreographer becomes the master of his/her own productive processes and copes with the responsibility to decide, according to the needs of the particular work, what disciplines will have to be bodily mastered. The notion of virtuosity changes in two ways. On the one hand the flexibility of thought, the ability to re-consider the workings of the power relations of our world, that find entry into the artworks via the chosen samples creates a new understanding of artistic virtuosity. Whereas the virtuosic exercise and performance of bodily tasks moves to the toolbox of the artist, who is now to decide whether in the current production the virtuosic command of a dance technique or virtuosity in any other bodily technique is required. In the three discussed works the bodily techniques they acquire are like the VST- Plugins<sup>12</sup> of a DJ that is at all moments of the

---

<sup>12</sup> Virtual Studio Technology– Plugins are sound drivers that are able to perform effects and generate midi instruments in real time. This allowed the producers of digital music to enact software effects that have formerly only been accessible as hardware devices to transform parts of a mix (tracks) during a live performance using software as Steinberg Cubase, Logic Audio, Adobe ProTools or Ableton live without converting the digital audio information into

performance capable of enacting them.

Secondly, the versatile approaches of dealing with samples and “choreographic forms” from various contexts that the choreographers show in the mentioned works lead to a stressing of the subjectifications produced by capitalism. The accession of term individuality with the idea of point of view, does, despite the questioning of the notion of authenticity, result in the following principles. A variety of subject positions and with this a variety of points of view can be acquired. The audience develops strong awareness for subject positions: for the subject positions the audience is presented with, for the subject positions the audience takes, for those projected onto the audience and even for subject positions that the performance does only implicitly articulate, for instance by omission. The variety of positions acquired and their alternation is an invitation to re-think the subject positioning produced by discourses in general. This practice of re-thinking subject positions emancipates all subjects taking part in the actual performance, the producers as well as the perceivers.

The spectator of the three works are expected to produce thought and the role they are proposed as re-thinkers of subjectification surpasses the understanding of the term „prosumer“ as vindicated by media industry and advertising. The concession the information industries made towards the consumer allowing the usage of new functions and the share of data in networks should not be misunderstood as an invitation to emancipated thought. It is most of all result of the reorganisation of those industries based on economic necessity. The “prosumer” may well develop revolutionary thought and make use of the possibilities of new media. But the struggles on data privacy are just one example that reveals that the interests a corporation like Facebook are by no means the emancipation of their consumers. The staked out borders of the freedom of the new possibilities only show up when the subject emancipates and struggles to put them to a test.

In his text *The Author as Producer* Walter Benjamin states, that the author shows revolutionary thinking through her/his work and its relationship to the means of production (productive techniques, technology). As he writes, the author's “work would never merely be developing products, but always at the same time working with the means of production themselves. In other words, his productions must possess, in addition to and even before their characteristics as works, an organizing function.” (Benjamin in NLR, July-August 1970, 6). And further, “the place of the intellectual [...] can only be determined, or better, chosen, on the basis of his position in the process of production.” (Ibid, 4). Benjamin points at the importance of the production processes and the positions embedded in those, forming the position of the author: how s/he is subjected and hence what is her/his political position. It is the work with the means of production themselves that particularly characterises the three performances and that is not part of the general understanding of the „prosumer“. The „prosumer“ is well expected to produce during consumption but is not expected to produce alternatives to consumption and that is what Baehr, Ingvarsen and Le Roy offer with the three works,

---

an analogue signal that could pass analogue hardware effects and then would have to be reconverted to a digital signal, in order to be controlled via the digital interface before being rendered to the final analogue audio mix. The development of VST-Plugins meant a revolution to audio programming because approaches that were known from a studio environment were now also available to producers performing live.

because they call for an emancipated subject that is capable of re-thinking subject positions and aspire social and political change.

Thirdly the three works open up ways to new forms of expressivity. They articulate the power relations inherent to the „choreographic forms“ they sample. The transposition of the samples into new contexts makes the power stratum of the original contexts, that typically remains invisible, apparent. Furthermore the three choreographers achieve expression of their concepts with the appropriated samples and with the virtuosity of their re-compositions and performance. The third mode of expressivity that occurs is the self-expression of the artists, that is, as the works themselves, based on reusing, sharing, connecting, networking, manipulating and inserting. This self-expression always exists in relation and results in expression of points of view.

*Rire, 50/50* and *Le sacre du printemps* are political works. Not in terms of uttering statements but in their use of new modes of production, their critical approach to and reflection of subjectification processes and in their dealing with new forms of expressivity. The three authors of those works originate from post-Fordist societies and found ways to subvert the subjectification processes of the diverse hegemonic systems inherent to them. They contribute to the stream in the dance field that aims at disturbing the idea of the “body-movement bind” referring to dance, but do not limit their works to that aspect. The works rather aim to express the points of view of and on the contemporaneity in order to position themselves within the current streams of thoughts, approaches and practices. Appropriation is their main mean to that purpose.

## Bibliography

- Baehr Antonia, *Rire*, Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers, 2008
- Baehr Antonia, *Rire*, 2008, DVD
- Banes Sally, *Terpsichore in Sneakers. Post-Modern Dance*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, 1987
- Barthes Roland, *From Work to Text*, in *Image, Music, Text*, selection and trans. Stephen Heath, Fontana Press, 1977
- Barthes Roland, *The Death of the Author*, in *Image, Music, Text*, selection and trans. Stephen Heath, Fontana Press, 1977
- Baudrillard Jean, *The Precession of Simulacra*, 1981, in *Appropriation*, ed. D. Evans, Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2009
- Benjamin Walter, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 1936, in *The Continental Aesthetic Reader*, ed. C. Cazeaux, London and New York: Routledge, 2000
- Benjamin Walter, *The Author as Producer*, 1934, trans. John Heckman, in *New Left Review* 1/62, July-August 1970
- Bergson Henri, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, 1924, trans. C. Brereton and F. Rothwell, The Project Gutenberg Ebook
- Bourriaud Nicolas, *Postproduction. Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*, Lukas and Sternberg, New York, 2002
- Burton Johanna, *Subject to Revision*, 2004, in *Appropriation*, ed. D. Evans, Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2009
- Butler Judith, *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution*, 1988, quoted in R. Schechner, *Performance Studies*, New York and London: Routledge, 2006
- Cvejić Bojana, *Choreographing Problems: Expressive Concepts in European Dance*, Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, Kingston University, London, 2012
- Copeland Roger, *Merce Cunningham and the Politics of Perception*, in *What is Dance*, ed. R. Copeland and M. Cohen, Oxford University Press, 1983
- Cunningham Merce, *Torse: there are no fixed points in space*, with J. Lesschaeve, in *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, ed. A. Carter, 1998
- Crimp Douglas, *Pictures*, 1979 and *Appropriating Appropriation*, 1982, in *Appropriation*, ed. D. Evans, Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2009
- Duncan Isadora, *Depth*, in *Twentieth-century Theater. A sourcebook*, ed. R. Drain, London and New York: Routledge, 1995
- Debord Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith, New York: Zone Books, 1995
- Derrida Jacques, *Limited Inc.*, 1988, quoted in R. Schechner, *Performance Studies*, New York and London: Routledge, 2006
- Evans David, *Introduction. Seven Types of Appropriation*, in *Appropriation*, ed. D. Evans, Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2009
- Foucault Michel, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, 1972, quoted in R. Schechner, *Performance Studies*, New York and London: Routledge, 2006

- Graham Martha, *I am a dancer*, in *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, ed. A. Carter, 1998
- Hardt Michael, *Affective Labor*, in *Boundary 2*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Summer, 1999)
- Hewitt Andrew, *Social Choreography. Ideology as Performance in Dance and Everyday Movement*, Duke University Press, 2005
- Ingvarstsen Mette, *50/50*, <http://metteingvarstsen.net/2011/09/50-50/>, accessed on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012
- Ingvarstsen Mette, *50/50*, 2004, DVD
- Jameson Fredric, *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Duke University Press, 1991
- Le Roy Xavier, *Le sacre du printemps*, <http://www.xavierleroy.com/page.php?sp=a0f7e349ea6cabcd6b97cfb20f2582d9c062cba9&lg=en>, accessed on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012
- Le Roy Xavier, *Le sacre du printemps*, 2007, DVD
- Lazzarato Maurizio, *The Misfortune of the "Artistic Critique" and of Cultural Employment*, in *Critique of Creativity: Precarity, Subjectivity and Resistance in the "Creative Industries"*, ed. G. Raunig, G. Ray and U. Wuggenig, Mayfly Books, London, 2011
- Lazzarato Maurizio, *Conversation with Maurizio Lazzarato*, in *Exhausting Immaterial Labour in Performance*, Le Journal des Laboratoires and TkH Journal for Performing Arts Theory, no. 17, October 2010
- Lepecki Andre, *Concept and Presence. The Contemporary European Dance Scene*, in *Rethinking Dance History. Reader*, ed. A. Carter, London and New York: Routledge, 2004
- Lepecki Andre, *Exhausting Dance. Performance and the Politics of Movement*, New York and London: Routledge, 2006
- Levine Sherrie, *Statement*, 1982, in *Appropriation*, ed. D. Evans, Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2009
- Margolis Joseph, *Art as Language*, 1974, in *What is Dance*, ed. R. Copeland and M. Cohen, Oxford University Press, 1983
- Martin John, *Dance as a Means of Communication*, 1946, *Metakinesis, Extantion of Range, Form and Metakinesis*, 1933, in *What is Dance*, ed. R. Copeland and M. Cohen, Oxford University Press, 1983
- Martin John, *Characteristics of the Modern Dance*, 1933, 1946, in *The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader*, ed. M. Huxley and N. Witts, Routledge, 2002
- Massumi Brian, *Introduction. Like a Thought*, in *A Shock to Thought. Expression after Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. B. Massumi, Londin and New York: Routledge, 2002
- McConachie Bruce, *Theatre Histories: An Introduction*, New York and London: Routledge, 2010
- Prince Richard, *Interview with Peter Halley*, 1984, in *Appropriation*, ed. D. Evans, Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2009
- Rainer Yvonne, *"No" to spectacle...*, in *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, ed. A. Carter, 1998
- Rainer Yvonne, *A Quasi Survey of Some "Minimalist" Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of Trio A*, in *The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader*, ed. M. Huxley and N. Witts, Routledge, 2002
- Schechner Richard, *Performance Studies*, New York and London: Routledge, 2006
- Soutter Lucy, *The Collapsed Archive: Idris Khan*, 2006, in *Appropriation*, ed. D. Evans, Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2009

Warhol Andy, *Interview with Gene R. Swenson*, 1963, in *Appropriation*, ed. D. Evans, Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2009

Wigman Mary, *The Philosophy of Modern Dance*, in *The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader*, ed. M. Huxley and N. Witts, Routledge, 2002

Virtanen Akseli, *Immaterial as Material*, in *Exhausting Immaterial Labour in Performance*, Le Journal des Laboratoires and TkH Journal for Performing Arts Theory, no. 17, October 2010

Editions, Readers, Journals:

*Appropriation*, ed. D. Evans, Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2009

*Critique of Creativity. Precarity, Subjectivity and Resistance in the Creative Industries*, ed. G. Raunig, G. Ray & U. Guggenheim, Mayfly Books, London, 2011

*Exhausting Immaterial Labour in Performance*, Le Journal des Laboratoires and TkH Journal for Performing Arts Theory, no. 17, October 2010

*The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader*, ed. M. Huxley and N. Witts, Routledge, 2002

section *The Critique of Originarity*, in *Art in Theory*, ed. C. Harrison and P. Wood, Blackwell Publishers, 1992

*The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, ed. A. Carter, 1998

*What is Dance*, ed. R. Copeland and M. Cohen, Oxford University Press, 1983