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IntuiTweet

**Corporeal Excavations of Social
Networking**

The *IntuiTweet* project elaborates a dance perspective on Twitter emphasizing corporeal, expressive and aesthetic depth. The act of basing tweets on an intuitive corporeal moment, sending them to a social network, and then re-integrating them into our bodies only to re-tweet the new movement is an example of relational performative engagement through social media. It is also a form of dance improvisation.

Twitter has been both celebrated as a medium to convey our social zeitgeist and dismissed as a fundamentally superficial and disembodied epiphenomenon of social networking. This project began as an impulse to challenge the latter sentiment and to extract depth, physicality and poetry from a pervasive mode of cultural expression. Poets know the power of using a few carefully selected words, visual artists know the power of an image, or even fragment of an image, and dancers need very little to generate haunting improvisations: a word, sound, or colour is sufficient. The *IntuiTweet* project began as an attempt to access and share intuitive moments between three dancer-researchers (Keinanen, Kozel and Rouhiainen) and it has expanded both artistically and philosophically. This presentation will provide a glimpse into the current stage of artistic research, briefly describing three modalities of performance and some emerging philosophical thoughts.

Three Modalities of Performance

The first modality of performance is the Immanent *Performance of Everyday Life* by which micro and somatic moments are enhanced and shared through Twitter. These can best be described as periods of structured improvisations. At the time of writing this text four improvisations have taken place over the course of a year. Only once were the dancers co-located in a single city. The

third and fourth improvisations integrated TwitPic and YouTube for visual material, affirming that a fragment of movement intuition could be captured not just through words but through images.

Most of the improvisation occurred in public places (streets, public transit, workplaces) or in private homes as we went about our daily lives in our separate cities and countries. Some access to dance studios was available but the performance component was very much that of everyday life. The tweets generated are like performative scripts useful both for future improvisations and acting as archives or traces of past movement. Future and past dimensions coincide.

The second and third modalities relate to performances that are still being developed out of the improvisations just described. The second modality is called a *Participatory Performance with Dancers*. This is an open composition in a theatre space combining the improvisations of participants and dancers. Material from the prior improvisations will be integrated, both visual and textual, along with material generated by dancers and audience/participants at the time of performance. The intent is to make the space of the theatre porous by means of the social media.

The third performance modality is a *Participatory Performance across Multiple Social Networking Platforms*. This performance model integrates various forms of social media over a period of weeks or months in order to build a community of performers. The space of social networking will be punctuated by several site specific moments where the mediated corporeal exchanges will be anchored, almost unveiled, by the grounding in a shared physical space. There will be no dancers separate from the participants.

Philosophical strands

IntuiTweet exemplifies and extends some principles of Relational Aesthetics, drawing this approach to contemporary art from the 1990s into dialogue with current participatory performance and media practices. Asserting that art is a state of encounter, and that intersubjectivity is not just the context but is the work itself, the relational approach to aesthetics is strongly relevant to artistic practices using mobile social media (Bourriaud 2002). Yet there is more depth and poetry to this work than relationality.

In the recent première of *Dawn* (2010) composed by Franck Krawczyk for Christian Boltanski's installation *No Man's Land* (Park Avenue Armory, New York City) audience members were invited to record the concert using their hand held devices and upload the files so that these could later be merged into a collective composition. The care and delight with which people used their devices during the 90 minute piece were striking. The individual perceptual moments were not lost in the collective of relationality, they made up the fabric of the larger, shifting whole. Phenomenology makes up an important basis for *IntuiTweet*: how fragile and fleeting moments of embodied living in the world can be captured, shared and woven into an artistic experience that in turn expands as other voices and other bodies filter, interpret and forget those earlier moments.

Marc Augé writes, forgetting is essential to remembering, it is through oblivion that we can hold onto anything at all and find a place in the world (Augé 2004). This is as true of personal narratives as it is of bodily memories, our social media does not dilute or transform this dynamic: with our shared media, we preserve and forget, excavate intuition and free it to evaporate or be distilled in another's body.

References

- Augé, Marc (2004) *Oblivion*. Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis Press.
- Bourriaud, Nicholas (2002) *Relational Aesthetics*. Dijon, Les Presses du Réel.