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Reconsidering Liveness in the Age of Digital *Implication*

Eirini Nedelkopoulou

The increasing use of ubiquitous and network technologies in art and performance entails the renegotiation of liveness on the basis of different inter-agential perspectives. Focusing mainly on United Visual Artist's (UVA) work *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre* (2011), this chapter discusses artists' framing of participatory encounters with technology, which are neither prosthetic, representational or utilitarian. Departing from the oppositional binaries and hierarchical tensions that defined the relationship between the physical and the digital over the past decades, this chapter rethinks liveness in art practices that attempt to displace the centrality of human agency. The chapter diverts from Philip Auslander's view that digital liveness is 'an interaction produced through our engagement with the object and our willingness to accept its claim' (2012, 10) and proposes a shift of perspective that aligns with our emerging new network reality. In this context liveness is regarded as an encounter, a gathering, where human and non-human participants *are implicated* and become part of 'a larger operation' (Hansen 2015a). Reflecting on Mark Hansen's (2015a, 2015b) 'phenomenology of implication,' I ponder on the reconfiguration of embodied performativity in response to ubiquitous and networked environments.

UVA's work experiments with technologies, which are active, responsive, and, as Hansen would argue 'atmospheric' (2013). In this sense, technologies can be active in different ways. If technological interactivity used to be offering to humans the possibilities to do things, *now* interactive networks signify a shift in interactivity by responding to humans in ways that are not always initiated by humans. The physical and the digital in *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre* merge into a number of processes,

and constitute together the same performance event, which functions beneath participants' imagination and perception. This chapter is particularly concerned with networks that are invisible, lack interface and are self-generating, exploring how the implication of participants within this event is potentially asynchronous. In suggesting that the *nowness* of interaction is not what matters the most, the potentiality of implication comes to the foreground of the performance eventness.

Liveness = Implication?

A network it is not a technological ready-to-hand object in the same way a hammer, a telephone, or a camera is. Geert Lovink claims in *Networks Without Cause* that networks have 'a specific ambiguity', as they 'at once talk about the social as well as the machinic. […] Networks integrate sociality with software, interfaces, and routers' (2011, 73). A network system evades human subjectivity as it partly functions as a consequence of data and information provided by participants and users. This system is not non-living, but organic in the sense that it 'acts, senses results, compares to its goal' (Ekeus 2010, 9) and is characterised by continuous and natural development through feedback loops.

For Lovink, a network system's informality, fluidity and invisibility are aspects that can cause 'panic and confusion' to its users (2011, 73). Connected to this, Sherry Turkle (2011) amongst others has discussed the anxiety that the emergence of networks brings to the foreground of our experience and which is often associated with our loneliness, invasion or lack of privacy, and commodification of interactivity. Nevertheless, Lovink underlines that networks are at the infancy of their potential and as 'social-technical formations under construction' (74) override any real/virtual binaries.

In this context of uncertainty and excitement about what networks can do to us and to our environment, especially when the operations expand beyond the user and the device interaction, there is a question about liveness in networked practice. Technological innovations, from RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) databases, the Internet of Things, distributed cognition, have been welcomed by artistic practice. The work of CREW, KMA, Blast Theory, Paul Sermon, The Builders Association, as well as art museums and galleries (The Museum of London, Tate Modern) to name but a few, focus on the relational and ubiquitous aspects of responsive and distributed systems experimenting with new directions in the making and reception of art practices. In his essay 'Digital Liveness: A Historico-Philosophical Perspective' Auslander following Hans-Georg Gadamer's view on art aesthetics argues that:

> some technological artifact - a computer, Website, network, or virtual entity—makes a claim on us, its audience, to be considered as live […]. (L)iveness is neither a characteristic of the object nor an effect caused by some aspect of the object such as its medium, ability to respond in real time, or anthropomorphism. Rather, liveness is an interaction produced through our engagement with the object and our willingness to accept its claim. (2012, 9)

What we consider as live performance changes in the same way that our relationship with our objects, our world and ourselves changes through technology. In the same discussion Auslander proposes that liveness 'derives neither from the intrinsic properties of the virtual entities nor from the audience's perceiving them as live' (2012, 10). Nevertheless, there is an important ontological context to liveness too that

needs to be explored in response to the embodied performance of a network system. This is not about the ontology of 'live' or mediated performance (Auslander 1999, Phelan 1993) or the ontological status of the performer (Auslander 2002) as discussed in the past. Rather, liveness here is closer to what Hansen identifies as 'ontology of potentiality' (2015a, 259), which lies in ways of being and becoming implicated, innstigated by the machine instead of the human. Reflecting on the functionality of networks in art practice, I suggest that the performances of living and non-living components, the internal system and responsive processes indicate a type of liveness, which is not always result of conscious attention and awareness. Yet the network activity is no less live.

In his discussion about interactive technologies and networks, Auslander insists on placing humans in the centre of a liveness locus, which is defined by a clear divide between the status of subject and object during their exchange. Auslander turns to the phenomenological experience of intentionality when he identifies liveness with a 'specific relation between self and other, a particular way of 'being involved with something' (2012, 10). However, networked practices that integrate social media, GPS, RFID, new sensor technologies, evidence a shift in the status of objectivity. That means that the function of a network is not based on the differentiation between the participants and the other, the object, the technology.

I propose that Hansen's 'phenomenology of implication' (2015a, 2015b) describes more accurately the 'live' experiential event. That is, participants are 'involved *in* something', and this is a physical environment made accessible by different technical networks. The following exploration of *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre* discusses the implication of human agency within a technical network that migrates into the physical environment of a gallery space. The discussion of liveness in

this artwork departs from Auslander's 'intentional distance,' between self and other, the body and the technology, to identify with Hansen's broader environmental logic of 'collective becoming' (2015a). Hence, liveness identifies with both self's and other's implication within a ubiquitous milieu. Neither the implicated body nor the different technologies are 'the center or agent of sensory processing' (Hansen 2015b, 222) in this scenario of potentiality. Instead, implication appears as a challenge to any 'assumptions concerning the functioning of the phenomenal body and its correlation with the environment/world' (Hansen ibid.). Perhaps then, the discussion of 'the claim' that technology makes on its audiences is not the essence of liveness in the context of technical networks. Not because the technology or the networks cannot make claims on individuals audiences. Rather because of a paradox. That is, an important part of the technology 'works largely outside the realm of perceptual consciousness, yet at the same time inflect their every sensation' (Hansen 2015 a).

Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre

In March 2011 Théâtre de la Gaîté, Paris, having been closed for almost twenty years, re-opened its doors to the public renamed as La Gaîté Lyrique. With the motto 'A digital revolution in Paris' the president and director Patrick Zelnik and Jérôme Delormas connected the gallery's opening with the emergence of an era where 'our relationship to knowledge, our ways of thinking about the world, our social relationships' and artistic creation are transformed and challenged (cited in aqnb 2011). They asserted the objective of La Gaîté as being to feed 'the debate about the stakes of the digital revolution in progress and thus to put into perspective some of the most innovative and exciting creative productions of our time' (ibid.).

The London based UVA were commissioned to create an interactive mega-

installation, *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre*, to launch the re-opening of the Parisian landmark. Founded in 2003 by Matthew Clark, Chris Bird and Ash Nehru, UVA is a cross-media company, having at the centre of their practice experimentation with evolving new technologies and materials. UVA's stated aim is to explore 'the tension between real and synthesised experiences, the questioning of our relationship with technology, and the creation of phenomena that transcend the purely physical' (UVA, 2015).

The title of the project (*Nothing to Hide, Nothing to Fear*) evokes the Orwellian dystopia of an information society that widely propagandises the need to see, to be seen, cooperate and obey. Based on La Gaîté Lyrique's hi-tech infrastructure, *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre* turns the building into a ubiquitous environment, a circular intelligent system that echoes Jeremy Bentham's 'peripheric building' which is 'divided into cells […] like so many cages, so many small theatres,' according to Foucault's description (1979, 200). However, the panoptic structure proposed by UVA does not intend to demonise the use of network technologies or even present a human versus technology story. Rather *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre* explores the potential of *an all-seeing* network, which lies in human-non human interaction.

La Gaîté is a networked stage divided into different spaces allowing different acts to happen. Over 350 ceiling speakers, a network of architectural lighting, RFID readers embedded at all entry points, in all spaces and the high-speed ubiquitous connection of the building constitute an interactive infrastructure, which offers a technological canvas to the artists in residence. In *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre*, UVA engage the participants as well as its technologies into a system of operations, constructing a panoptic environment where the ubiquitous technology is always on.

Audience's involvement in the interactive milieu of La Gaîté starts before they

enter the venue, as participants log on to the gallery's website to book their tickets. A personal fact sheet appears with a list of questions regarding their preferences, their choices, their mood, and so on. What is your favourite colour? Your favourite band? How tired are you? The answers to these and more questions constitute an individual record, which is linked to a RFID tag with a unique ID for each visitor embedded in their tickets/passes. A number of antennas placed above most of the doorways inside La Gaîté are connected with RFID readers, which pick up the unique visitor's ID and send the information from the tag and its location through the RFID building system.

The company orchestrates the sound, audio and RFID capacities of La Gaîté to create, 'Universal Building Gesture'. This is a system, a sound and light-scape which spreads through the large open spaces across each of the floors. 'Universal Building Gesture' ties the different installations of *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre* together acknowledging the visitors' presence. The production consisted of four installations designed by UVA, here I will focus on the three specifically designed for La Gaîté – 'Room 101', 'Assembly' and 'Ensemble'. These, along with the 'Universal Building Gesture', will be the focus of my discussion and in the following paragraphs I will map out a participants' experience of the spaces.

Walking Through La Gaîté

Visitors enter La Gaîté and the building instantly wakes up. A wave of different sound effects permeates the space. The visitors listen to voices breathing in and out, often speaking incomprehensible lines. Simultaneously bright, dimmer and dark lights accompany the soundscape and follow or guide the participants' route within the building; it is not clear who leads whom. Alexandros Tsolakis of UVA, in our discussion in January 2013, explained that the 'Universal Building Gesture' functions

into an operationally cyclical movement of light and sounds, urging visitors from one area to the next'.

As audiences move forward and come closer to the individual rooms of the gallery, another part of the 'Universal Building Gesture' is activated through the RFID readers. 'Visitor no # is lonely,' 'Visitor no # wants to get out of here,' 'Visitor no # does not want to use Facebook' are projected on LED screens. Following the free-flowing spatial movement of the 'Universal Building Gesture', the visitors soon enter the individual installations of *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre*. Guided one level up from the main entrance, to the mezzanine area, to encounter an interactive installation, the 'Assembly', the visitors are scanned and categorized (See Figure 1). This time, their faces are the primary data input, as the participants stand on a podium and see a multiscreen canvas of digital faces projected on a wall across them. Their own faces captured and projected next to an array of faces of strangers, who do not necessarily cohabit the podium the same time. Technically what happens is that 'a facial recognition system isolates their face, tracks their eyes, nose and mouth, and then mixes those features with features taken from other faces to produce a range of composite faces' (UVA 2010, 2). The visitors' data is stored and combined with other participants' data, who partook in the work earlier on that day or the previous days of the exhibition. Present and past visitors contribute to the making of a responsive canvas, which in animated through algorithmic patterns. In effect, the installation software *decides* on the combination and structure of the digital material based on the structure of their faces, the distance between their features and the size of their head.

[FIGURE 11.1. TECHNICAL TRIAL OF 'ASSEMBLY' IN *RIEN À CACHER, RIEN À CRAINDRE*, 2011. COURTESY OF ALEXANDROS TSOLAKIS (UVA)]

The visitors move on to explore the rest of the mezzanine area. And there, under the podium they encounter a field of LED strips forming an immersive installation entitled ‘Ensemble’. A ripple of light and sound sets off as soon as individuals enter the field of LED strips, with the visitors’ movement affects the pitch, volume and type of sound, modulating the colours and visual patterns of the LEDs. Sensors placed between the vertical LED strips register the presence, absence and mobility of the individuals as they walk through the space. The audiovisual ripple travels across the space, pulsating, evoking a laser effect until it *hits* a static or a slow paced body. And although the ripple continues its journey, it leaves behind gaps, dark patches in parts of the lightscape where the beam hit and scanned a still body. The more members of the audience group together and stand still the bigger the dark patch they create.

The visitors leave the mezzanine behind to head downstairs, to the petite salle where another installation, ‘Room 101’, is situated (See Figure 2). They enter the installation at a maximum of ten at a time, discovering a dense atmospheric haze of lights and localised sounds. A kinect scanner picks up the participants’ presence and single beams of light emerge sweeping across the dark room accompanied by striking sound motifs and target different bodies in the space depending on their activity, mobility and shape. Some participants become immersed into their personal digital maze, the rest can only see an array of beams of light framing their co-participants. In the first case, laser lines turn into a maze-like series of walls and paths, a geometric grid of lights, which spread across the space surrounding each participant. Within the 3D labyrinthine space individual participants come to grips with the potential offered by this generative compositional forms and structures and playfully explore the potential of their physicality within the system while the system reconfigures its

behaviour in more/less crowded/louder occasions. Interestingly the further this virtual maze is explored by the participants, the more its shape and function is reconfigured. Some individuals try to escape the maze by speeding up, others wander around attempting to experience different parts of their individual maze until it dissolves turning back into two-dimensional laser lights.

[FIGURE 2. *ROOM 101* IN *RIEN À CACHER, RIEN À CRAINDRE*, 2011. COURTESY OF ALEXANDROS TSOLAKIS (UVA).]

With or Without Interfaces: The Role of Technology in *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre*

In recent years a variety of practices in theatre, performance and art have exhibited a fundamental shift towards interactivity and participation, facilitated by the use of network technologies as participatory platforms. Interactive work by Blast Theory, KMA, CREW, The Builders Association, CoLab, Gob Squad amongst others, re-thinks the social, affective, functional and relational qualities of participants' presence within technological performance spaces. The artistic activity of the above companies demonstrate how digital culture invites audiences to engage with a work of art as collaborators evidencing that participation and interaction is one of the defining principles of digital culture.

Responding to the postmillennial shift of cultural production towards new forms of communication, materiality and connection, UVA's *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre* admits that interaction has to be conceived differently. UVA stage this

moment in time where technology is not contained in discrete apparatic packages; it is not simply in front of us, above us or around us but technology is diffused into our physical environment. This type of technology, which lacks visible interface and evades the physical environment, is identified as 'diffusely atmospheric' by Hansen (2013).

Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre's main framework, the 'Universal Building Gesture', along with installations such as 'Room 101' could be considered as an attempt to approach atmospheric technology in art. The 'Universal Building Gesture's' connection with the building and each of the installations is based on a network system. *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre*'s technology is mainly neither instrumental, nor anthropomorphic, neither representational nor prosthetic. And although visitors will occasionally encounter individual focal points – for instance, the screens in the 'Assembly' or the LED strips in 'Ensemble' – the artwork overall lacks specific interfaces as well as a centrally controlled hub, contradicting the connotations of its panoptic design. Part of the system, the architectural lighting, the ceiling speakers, the RFID readers are individually responsive. Identifying with Hansen's definition of atmospheric media, I suggest that the networked environment of *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre* is 'no longer object centered, resolutely personal, individually framed' and the technical engagement 'is impersonal, collectively accessible […]' (2013, 73). The project comprises a network that actually interweaves living and non-living operations into a series of processes of liveness instead.

Audiences stroll around La Gaîté within an interactive environment that is transformed and affected by their presence and vice versa. Sound and light patterns define immaterial routes that participants contribute to, while their data is dispersed, re-assembled or even attached to different parts of the networked

architecture. The audiences are not given specific tasks to do, a narrative to complete, something to construct, a puzzle or quiz to solve, a treasure to find. The screens of the 'Assembly', the ambient sound in the open spaces of La Gaîté, the ripple of light in 'Room 101' and the LED strips of the 'Ensemble' and the 'Universal Building Gesture' offer subtle cues to follow. These cues escape some visitors' attention, who instead continue travelling in the space. All visitors are surrounded by a hazy sensation of being part of an audio/light scape, to which they contribute to its making. It is this sensation that implicates the participants into the event of *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre*.

There is an inclination to see technologies as providing instruments to be used for a specific purpose. UVA do not offer to their visitors a ready-to-hand technology for the completion of a purposeful task. The lack of constant interfaces or even ready-to-hand interfaces challenges both the visitors' role in the current environment (What is my role here? What do I do next?) and technology's functionality. If technology is not ready-to-hand then it must be broken, what Martin Heidegger identifies as present-at-hand. For instance, when a hammer breaks, it loses its usefulness and appears as merely there, present-at-hand. When a thing is revealed as present-at-hand, it stands apart from any useful set of equipment but soon loses this mode of being present-at-hand and becomes something else – typically, that which must be repaired or replaced. Yet when the technology is not recognised as fulfilling its familiar uses – as a visible interactive interface or a representational or even an anthropomorphic medium – then audiences' intentionality is challenged as well. Evan Thompson and Dan Zahavi explain that intentionality 'in a narrow sense […] is defined as object-directedness' (2007, 71). Therefore, with ubiquitous and invisible technology audience's intentional

states are likely to be questioned or even confused. What is *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre*'s technology about then? What is its *aboutness*?

Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre's technologies are neither tools to use, nor simulators of human communication. The networked system of the artwork follows a distributed, impersonal or even beyond perception modes of communication. Liveness in this context diverges from phenomenological intentionality. *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre*'s condition of liveness neither requires the spectators' and actors' co-presence, face-to-face interaction, as Erika Fischer-Lichte would argue (2008, 67), nor is determined by individuals' 'willingness to accept' an object's 'claim' (Auslander 2012, 9). The artwork is defined by both human/technology interactive and system-internal processes, which often escape human consciousness, yet they are still integral to the happening of the work. Regarding the differentiation between intentionality and implication Hansen claims 'Like intentionality, implication designates a relation between an experiential event and an objectivity informing that event, but it differs fundamentally from intentionality on the question concerning the status of that objectivity' (2015b, 222). In effect, technology is part of an *autopoietic feedback loop* that depends on participants as well as the technological network.

Feedback Loops in Performance

Visitors enter the dark 'Room 101' and walk in the space to be shortly detected by the kinect scanner followed by a ripple of light. The participants will soon find themselves embedded into individual mazes that are generated by their own movements. Simultaneously the individuals' movements will be re-informed again by the maze's algorithmic patterns. Both technology and bodies are involved in what Fischer-Lichte

describes as an ‘autopoietic feedback loop’ (2008, 39), which determines the liveness of an event. Although Fischer-Lichte does not touch upon ubiquitous and interactive technologies in performance per se, she strongly argues that ‘mediatized performance invalidates the feedback loop’ as it severs ‘the co-existence of production and reception’ (2008, 68). This is not the case for *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre*. Not only because most of the project is not autonomously created, but also because this non-autonomous part of the system does not function according to a logic of technology that identifies with the invitation of explicit modes of interacting. This technology is part of a system that sets a stage or a situation in which visitors find themselves implicated instead. The project is made as it is experienced – or sensed – and it is experienced as it is made. *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre* features an autopoietic feedback loop, that is a self-generative, a self-organising system.

UVA’s artwork is determined by algorithmic variables that respond to the engagement of audience members and vice versa. That is, bodies and technologies are engaged in a process of determining and being determined. Even in front of a screen-based interface of ‘Assembly’, the participants soon find out that they are not sole agents, but co-determinants in the making of artwork. The multiple copies of their faces will be scanned and compared in relation to thousands of other imagery that could be considered compatible according to the algorithmic variables to offer every time new combination of images. The information is speedily processed and renewed; new canvases with new portraits will replace the older ones. The network performance relies on a system, which is ‘self-generating’, ‘ever-changing’, ‘unique’ and ‘unrepeatable’, to use Fischer-Lichte’s terminology. Liveness of the event emerges through this loop of combined organic and non-organic variations that produce other variations.

Experiential and technical feedback overlap, defining individual and collective spaces for the participants, who traverse from 'Assembly' to 'Ensemble' and then to 'Room 101' through the 'Universal Building Gesture'. *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre* presents a space-laboratory where technology and participants perform. Their interdependent performances stretch the boundaries of collaboration and interactivity beyond human conscious awareness. Indeed, the autopoietic feedback loop of UVA's network system is, 'kept in motion' as Fischer-Lichte would argue and 'not just through visible and audible actions and attitudes of' the individuals 'but also through the energy circulating between them' (2008, 59). Although Fischer-Lichte's sentiment effectively encapsulates the atmosphere of the circular self-generating system of *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre*, I object to her concept of *circulating energy.* Rather I prefer to describe the inaudible and invisible activity between human and non-human components of the interactive event as 'worldly sensibility' (Hansen 2015a). Namely, 'worldly sensibility' refers to an ontological potentiality and more specifically explicates the role of technology, which can 'enhance human experience' imposing 'a new form of resolutely non-prosthetic technical mediation' (Hansen 2015a, 4).

La Gaîté's aspiration to celebrate the social through the digital and vice versa is put into practice in these moments of the audience's becoming part of an environmental sensibility. What visitors *sense* relies to a big extent on inaccessible operations – a haze of ever expanded spatiality, a social atmosphere of unfamiliar interactions, the unintentional gatherings. Visitors experience the outcomes of their interactions with the networked system; yet they hardly grasp the operations behind audio/visual scape they come across. *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre* experiments with new modes of becoming in the sense that it challenges technological instrumentalisation. The project's interactive and ubiquitous practices facilitate the

making of a *live* environment. This making effectively departs from ready-to-hand operations and face-to-face communications. Reflecting on Meike Wagner's and Ernst Wolf-Dieter's sentiment that social and technical nature of feedback-loops 'maintain the network in a process of co-evolution' (2010, 175), I propose that liveness aligns with the sense of co-evolution, improvement and potentiality. I refer to potentiality as being-in-the-world-anew beyond human/technology divides.

A Walk in the Woods: When the Human and the Non-Human Become Implicated

Auslander recognises that 'our anthropocentrism is the territory we are not willing to cede to the dominance of the digital' ([2006] 2011, 197). And he is right; we are not ready to cede our anthropocentrism. However, his claim about 'the dominance of the digital' echoes the outmoded mediatised versus 'live' debate. The emergence of ubiquitous networked media in our everyday life has expanded human subjectivity in ways that are not human, yet they impact on human experience.

Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre belongs to a context of practice that is networked, and experiments with how technology affects embodied performance relations. According to Turbulence.org and Michelle Riel 'any live event that is network-enabled, including any form of networking in which computational devices speak to each other and create a feedback loop' is identified as a networked performance (cited in Chatzichristodoulou 2014, 22). An emerging generation of artists, such as Blast Theory, Coney, CREW, KMA, have engaged with ubiquitous technologies, locative media and augmented reality to create networked performance spaces. Trying to unpack the notion of 'live' in reference to the networked-environment of this interactive work, I suggest that 'live' refers to both the internal

system processes (which remain ungraspable, unrevealed and inaccessible to the audience's perception) *and* to the responsive processes between visitors and the network. A networked-system appears to reorientate participants' experience and that happens by implicating them within the spectrum of non-human and human processes that reconfigure the performance space. Different perspectives, which challenge human subjectivity, are generated and accommodated in a 'live' milieu.

Any attempt to shift the human perspective to a non-human angle still remains far from reality. It is indeed difficult, if not impossible, to think beyond our human capacities. Interestingly, Spike Jonze's sci-fi film *Her* (2013), which is unfolded around the romantic relationship between Theodore (Joaquin Phoenix) and an operating system, Samantha (Scarlett Johansson), demonstrates this impossibility of grasping something that evades the human consciousness. Samantha is very much anthropomorphized until the point that she starts evolving significantly and hectically fast, transcending human consciousness and materiality. And that is the point of separation between the human and his OS lover. Nevertheless, the non-anthropocentric attempts that networked performances, such as *Rien à Cacher, Rien à Craindre* make, do not target the conscious understanding between the human and the non-human. On the contrary, these practices concern new modes of interacting in networks structures, which are generated by algorithmic variations. Often these modes of interactivity overlap with the human experiences that Weiser envisioned about ubiquitous technology almost 25 years ago. Namely Weiser argued that 'Machines that fit the human environment, instead of forcing humans to enter theirs, will make using a computer as refreshing as taking a walk in the woods' (1991). And indeed some of the works by Blast Theory, KMA, Coney and UVA, take place within a physical space,

which is permeated by different technologies. Weiser defines this type of technology as ‘calm’ in a sense that it ‘informs but doesn't demand our focus or attention’ (1995).

Networked performances concern ‘real-time […] embodied transmission’ (Turbulence.org and Riel cited in Chatzichristodoulou 2014, 22) and when they make use of calm technologies, they could offer a playful ramble into an interactive environment. Similar to a walk in the woods, certain behaviors are expected to happen between the visitors and the environmental surroundings; to observe, stop, look around the space while being surrounded by nature. In both the forest and the networked performance environment, the landscape sometimes falls into the background of visitors’ attention and stays unnoticed. Yet there will be a bird or a tree or the light between leaves that will attract visitors’ attention. What people perceive or do not perceive in this context depends on each individual’s experience. In both cases people become part of a bigger physical milieu, which happens because of either technical or natural processes that take place without overloading visitors with information. Ubiquitous media and network systems as calm technologies are run by internal processes for purposes other than storing and manipulating human data. No matter how relaxing a walk in networked performance surroundings could be, audiences always leave behind their traces (such as written or verbal responses, their movement, other data etc.). The number of processes, human and nonhuman, contribute to the creation of the performance milieu, which is not just a product ‘of subjective synthesis’ (Hansen 2015a, 257), but an interagential one.

Networked performances invite us to rethink some of our assumptions concerning participants’ embodied experiences and their correlation with a techno-environment. In this instance, the eventness of the performance concerns the implication of a body without making it the centre or agent of sensory processing. The

idea of new modes of collective becoming is closely linked to the nature of network systems. Commenting on the ubiquity of networks N. Katherine Hayles indicates 'you would never get with a database alone. Now you get that power to really move into the environment, surveil what's happening and also communicate between the devices' (2009, 48). Networked performances attempt to evidence the hidden possibilities of a potential collective becoming; these possibilities are related to new ways of experiencing ourselves and the world – and for understanding how we experience the world and ourselves.

There is a (post)phenomenological disposition in the making of networked performances, as the practices invite participants to 'reach for the invisible in order to learn from [their] failure to grasp it' (Bleeker et al. 2015, 16). The networked structure of these artworks is more than simply algorithmic. The structure is equally technical, relational and practical. The locative and mobile media (UVA), sensor technologies (KMA), and augmented reality (Blast Theory) affect, enhance and even demote aspects of the audience's experience, as well as the functionality of the space and how the space contributes to the making of an organic environment. It turns out that the advent of network and ubiquitous technology prepares for a new era in our engagement with our surroundings. And technology is not the *other* that we have to interact with. Echoing once again Hansen's potentiality of implication in ubiquitous and networked settings, I contend that the temporary or even momentarily loss(es) of cognitive mastery or perceptual access over specific parts of the networked performance experience are very much recompensed by what could be gained in participants' involvement within larger environmental gatherings.

Conclusion

Drawing on Auslander's view that media and our technology in general 'are simultaneously cause and effect of a given historical moment's social formations' (2011, 194), I suggest our specific moment in time asks for new ways on being in performance space. New potential performance ecologies are not (or try not be) exclusively anchored to human agency. Our network culture flirts closely with the potentiality of the Internet of Things and its use in all aspects of human activity when things 'will become agents that […] "speak on" matters from an altogether different point of view, that lend a Thing-ly perspective on micro and macro social, cultural, political and personal matters' (Bleecker 2009, 174). What Bleecker envisages here is not the need to create more refined 'technical frameworks,' but more 'habitable worlds' instead (2009, 174). In this emerging reality, liveness relates to a performance subjectivity that lies in the intertwining between the technical and the experiential, both nested in the same physical surroundings.

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