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## CHAPTER 7

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# URBAN CHOREOGRAPHIES

### *Artistic Interventions and the Politics of Urban Space*

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GABRIELE KLEIN

ON a sunny day in May 2002, a crowd of people appeared at Hamburg's main station, listening to radios that they held in their hands. Suddenly, they all stopped at the same time and began performing identical movements: they opened their hands, stretched their arms, and turned the palms of their hands upward: danced as if in a disco.

For the participatory performance *Radioballet*, the Hamburg-based performance collective LIGNA broadcast movement instructions via the local independent radio station FSK (Freies Sender Kombinat). Every participant in the performance received the broadcast individually via headphones and separately followed instructions, such as “Don't step on the tracks!” “Beg for money! (accompanied by “Hello” and “Please”), “Say farewell!” (accompanied by the suggestion: “pull out an imaginary red handkerchief” and “wave the departing train of the revolution goodbye”).

In a video of the performance in Leipzig's Main Station in 2003, LIGNA said that the *Radioballet* “examines the realm between permitted, suspect and forbidden gestures” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q13pfa5QNZI>). The participants' movements performed actions—such as begging or loitering—prohibited by station regulations. This was a reference to the privatization of train stations in Germany, which were public spaces up to the mid-twentieth century, at which time they were partially privatized. Today, train stations in Germany are subject to the domiciliary rights of the formerly state-owned, now private corporation of the *Deutsche Bahn* and its subsidiaries. Security firms, the German border police, and the Hamburg state police now patrol what was originally a public space. According to LIGNA, their performance *Radioballet* meant to create an alternative public sphere that sidestepped the ban on political assembly effective in the train station. At the same time, the performance pointed out something important, but did so in a manner different from that of a demonstration or political protest, on the one hand, and from artistic performances, on the other hand: it highlighted the link between art and politics, between the aesthetic and the political, by bringing into focus the choices made in the creation of a choreographic score and the

ways in which relationships between artists and activists, movement and action, experience and reflection can be performed in practice.

In their book *TO ALL!* the members of LIGNA—Ole Frahm, Torsten Michaelsen, and Michael Hüners—describe their project as follows: “The *Radioballet* is an aesthetic strategy that dissolves spatial norms, while simultaneously producing an actual modification of the space. Therein, lies the political nature of the *Radioballet*. The gestures are not performed symbolically, they represent nothing, they are not theatrical” (LIGNA 2011, 44).

Eleven years later—in 2013—LIGNA opened the Dance Congress in Düsseldorf/Germany with a participatory performance called *Tanz aller (Dance of All)* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeXEYBawuL8>). Again, all participants received an MP3 player and headphones and followed the instructions individually on the square in front of the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus, the city’s main theatre. They heard instructions for movements based on Laban’s eight effort actions, for example: “Your arms combine with other arms to form a forest of gestures. Suddenly. Flexibly. Firmly. Whipping.” But some instructions also related to the group itself and the space that it inhabited:

“Remain together as a choir,”  
 “Spread around,”  
 “Open your eyes,”  
 “Become a crowd,” and so on.

The movement instructions were interrupted by philosophical questions that encouraged reflection, such as

“Your body is an irreplaceable place in the world. That’s the policy of every body,”  
 “Does the crowd always need somebody to lead it?”  
 “Can the crowd not also produce different movements?”<sup>1</sup>

*Radioballet* and *Dance of All* are not merely performances in public spaces that question key aspects of theatre, such as the place of theatre, the theatricality of the everyday, and the relationship between actors and audience, between presence and mediality. They also address recent discourse on the potentiality of community and provoke reflections on the experience of crowds.

The performances revisit a concept spearheaded in Germany during the 1920s by *Ausdruckstanz*: the movement choirs. The idea of movement choirs has an ambivalent history: On the one hand, the idea of movement choirs was motivated by a socialist idea of equality among all. It also complied with a rather virulent (anti)thesis of community versus society from the still young field of sociology at the beginning of the twentieth century (Toennies), which was translated in the movement choirs of *Ausdruckstanz* into physical emergent movement systems produced by improvisation. On the other hand, the concept of movement choirs also aestheticized the early mass-theoretical discourse surrounding the self and the crowd (Le Bon 1896; Ortega y Gasset 1994), and the leader

and the crowd (Freud 1922). Is a translation of the movement choir possible in a post-Fordian and neoliberal society and in the theatricalized environment of postindustrial cities that are deeply based on consumer culture?

This chapter discusses the relationship between the theatricalized urban space of neoliberal and post-Fordist European cities and the “critical moves” (Martin 1998) of artistic performances based on the LIGNA projects described earlier. I wish to delineate three primary arguments in the following chapters: first of all, I posit that performances such as those by LIGNA do not undermine, disturb, or change the order of public spaces, but rather question the political through artistic reflection and possibly even weaken it in the process. The chapter demonstrates that this artistic act of reflection is produced via an aesthetic experience of social figurations in interaction with the materiality of an urban order, which is defined as bodily-sensual (i.e. aesthetic). To this end, I will enlist the concept of urban choreography. The final chapter substantiates the argument that the aesthetic is an immanent moment of the social and political, as both only come into being through patterns of perception and bodily-sensual experience. It is against this backdrop that LIGNA’s performance projects will be examined.

## PERFORMANCE PROJECTS IN POST-FORDIST EUROPEAN CITIES

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Contemporary European performance art and choreography have in particular developed aesthetic concepts that address cultural and political life in public spaces and experiment with participation in public life (e.g., in line with LIGNA, the artistic work of Blast Theory, Forced Entertainment, Gob Squad, Lab of Insurrectional Imagination, La Pocha Nostra, Ligna, SheShePop, Turbo Pascal, Rimini Protokoll, Femen, Pussy Riot, Toyshop Collective, Space Hijackers, as well as the “Choreographic Objects” of Dana Caspersen and William Forsythe).

These performance groups contextualize their work in public spaces in terms of current transformations in the social fabric of postindustrial and neoliberal societies. They are looking for new approaches to the political and conceive their work to be experimental fields of the social.

Participants in the *Radioballet* thus also hear, for example, “thoughts on the *Radioballet*, on gesture and public spaces” in addition to the description of movement sequences:

The camera-monitored entertainment zones rule out the unexpected as an unpleasant situation. This form of control sets boundaries not only around buildings such as the Main Station, but also boundaries between the gestures performed by the bodies moving through these public spaces. . . . Idleness is a forbidden practice in a society that capitalizes all gestures. Control, which meanwhile threatens to become normality, ostracizes deviant behavior. . . . The participants of the *Radioballet* exercise boredom. (LIGNA 2011, 54)

*Radioballet* and *Dance of All* can be understood as contributions to an ongoing debate on event culture, musealization, and the theatricality of public spaces. Like political protest, these artistic performances have always taken place as an integral element of enacting the public (Klein 2013b). Be it a revolt, an uprising, an ordered demonstration, a street battle, a celebration, a festival, or a ceremony—public gatherings must be staged in order to gain visibility and to be effective. Theatricality is therefore not something added by an external agent, but rather a genuine element of protest.

However, unlike public protest, which is also sometimes organized by artists, artistic projects such as *Radioballet* or *Dance of All* are more artistic interventions, that is, forms of art in public spaces (installations, temporary events, or also project-based ventures) that are temporary, contextual, and situational, with devised elements, intending to irritate, disturb, or alter perceptions and which are, in the case of performances, also of a transitory nature. Generally, “artistic intervention” is not only a discourse-theoretical term that serves to define art projects in public spaces, but is also used by artists themselves to describe working processes, events, or projects (von Borries and Hiller 2012; Cvejić and Vujanović 2012). Artistic intervention is here understood as a form and an aesthetic reflection of protest in public spaces.

The historic origins of artistic interventions in urban spaces are well known: examples include the Happening (Kaprow), Nouveau Réalisme (Tinguely), Fluxus (Paik, Beuys), Viennese Actionism (Brus, Mühl, Nitsch) and early performance art (Horn, Naumann, Export, Ono, Abramović). Since the 1960s and 1970s, the performing arts (visual arts, music, theatre, dance) have in particular been increasingly concerned with urban public life, simultaneously and in reaction to the transformation of industrial cities. At the same time, these projects were also instruments and effects of the social transformations taking place primarily in urban agglomerations—revealing themselves in the resultant industrial wastelands, as well as in the social consequences associated with the disappearance of widespread industrial manufacturing.

Since the 1990s, European urban performance art and contemporary dance have drawn on performing arts traditions born of the 1960s that essentially emerged from visual arts. The Israeli performance collective “Public Movement,” the “Volxtheaterkarawane”—an Austrian art project against racism—and “Reclaim the Streets (RTS)” —a global collective and resistance movement, initiated in London, which shares the ideal of communally owning public spaces—are just a few examples of the many projects that test figurations of social practice in an interplay of artistic and participatory types of action in various theatricalized urban landscapes. In performance research, these new social and political contexts are interpreted as post-Fordist following Hardt and Negri (2000), Virno (2004), and others. However, their performances are embedded in very different social and urban contexts and are—also in European countries—based on different national and urban fundings and art programs for “freelance artists.”

Under these influences of post-Fordist and neoliberal concepts of creative and immaterial labor, artistic work has itself acquired a different social meaning. Creativity, originality, improvisation, spontaneity, innovative enthusiasm, the combination of work and life—all of which used to be genuine features of the artistic avant-garde—have now

become required characteristics of labor for all in neoliberal politics and under post-Fordist conditions of production. In this sense, artists are seen as pioneers in terms of their lifestyles and working methods (Boltanski and Chiapello 2007). Creativity has become the guiding mechanism of contemporary societies (Reckwitz 2012).

The post-Fordist transformation of labor (Klein and Kunst 2012) since the 1960s has also brought about a change in the social appraisal of art. While art in the modern period derived its social legitimacy from its autonomy and critical distance (Adorno 1984), the role of the artist has changed to the extent that it is now increasingly defined by its function within the social fields of education, culture, and science. Under the new neoliberal conditions of artistic production that take the artist as a model for the dispositive of creative labor in general, highly charged conflicts arise between artistic autonomous, innovative participatory projects, and contractual work for different clients that jeopardize artistic independence (cities, communities, schools, authorities, churches, educational and cultural institutions, associations) (Brandstetter and Klein 2012).

Integrated into and dependent on the neoliberal politics of the city and their public institutions—cultural as well as educational—artists find it increasingly difficult to contrive critical and resistant positions that enable them to assert autonomy. The negotiation of autonomy and hegemony therefore characterizes many contemporary performances and choreographic projects.

In this respect, it is not a random occurrence that these performance projects in public spaces are emerging in an age in which (not only) European cities are experiencing radical processes of transformation in their city structures and new organizations of the “city flow,” which served as the kinetic foundation of the modern city and society at the beginning of the twentieth century (Sloterdijk 1989). Today, in postindustrial cities, theatricalization, musealization, event culture, and the touristic reorganization of (inner) cities, accompanied by peripheralization, segregation, a marginalization of the outskirts, and increased pauperization, are important keywords in the “upheaval” that industrialized modern cities are experiencing during their transformation into postindustrial cities (Löw 2012).

The postindustrial city is based on an urban concept that directs the “flow of movement” and “human currents” in a manner different from that which was characteristic of the functionalized city of modernity. While the transportation infrastructure of the modern city was based on automobility even in the 1960s and individual transportation as well as streets were planned only according to the ruling principle of speed, transportation in the postindustrial city—between its center and the peripheries, as well as within the urban centers themselves—is characterized by deceleration and disruption due to expanding public transportation systems, multidimensional transport infrastructures, and thus also the development of public spaces as places that allow “consumers” to linger.

The theatricalization, musealization, and rise of event culture in inner cities are infrastructurally accompanied by the implementation of pedestrian zones, cycle paths, “plazas,” 20 mph zones, the conversion of old industrial factory buildings into touristic and theatricalized locations for art and culture, the glazed, “transparent” architecture of (post) modern office buildings for the “incandescent” person, the dissolution of the separation

between working, residing, and living, and a new relationship between the center and the periphery—all examples of a new choreographic order that has changed the concept of the European city, a concept that had developed gradually since the twelfth century.

This aspect raises questions on the materiality of postindustrial urban space. How has the relationship between body, movement, and space, between “flesh and stone” (Sennett 1996) changed in postindustrial cities? In other words, what are successful artistic strategies for resisting the politics of this “city flow”?

## THE POSTINDUSTRIAL CITY STAGE

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There is a consensus in performance studies and dance studies that participatory performance projects in urban spaces do have a social and political impact: they provide alternative views and perspectives on urban life. In their working methods, they devise tools to test modes of public participation.

These projects have departed from the customary space of the theatre and have entered the public arena or other urban places (e.g., schools, hospitals, homeless shelters). Or else they have declared the theatre itself to be a place of social experimentation and political participation, have reinterpreted it as a forum of assembly and thus question the traditional framework of bourgeois theatre predominant since the 18th century.

Participatory performance projects thus address the political dimension and the public relevance of performance art by penetrating the public space and addressing everyday politics as incorporated power politics. At the same time, these projects are driven by theoretical questions concerning the art of theatre itself, such as: What is the space and role of theatre in a theatricalized society? How is the relationship between actor and public defined? How can the theatricality of the everyday be presented and reflected in and as theatre?

For LIGNA, the *Radioballet* is a political statement; it critically references political inscriptions in the design of the train station’s architecture:

Various agents govern the control regime dominating train stations. The architectural devices have created a uniform space flooded with light that knows no dark corners. Expensive materials, regularly cleaned surfaces and floors produce a clean slat. ... The space is subject to aesthetic norms. Gestures by visitors are categorized as permitted or prohibited. (LIGNA 2011, 45)

Of course, social spaces have always also been shaped by rules, unwritten principles, inscribed norms, and established habits, as well as by marginalization and practices of inclusion and exclusion—and this not only applies to the (partially) privatized spaces of train stations or to the representative public space in front of the Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf. LIGNA’s projects succinctly demonstrate that—while they also address fundamental aspects of theatre production—they must likewise be viewed as embodied

practices from a sociological perspective on the body. It is therefore essential that we take into account questions concerning those practices of embodiment found both in the choreographic order of urban spaces and in the choreography of performers: By which choreographic order is urban space characterized? How can we describe the relationship between choreographed space and the movement order of the performers? Which gestures are (il)legitimate gestures in what public places? In what ways are spatial orders and temporal structures—as embodied in the movements and practices of the performers—part of the social? Which figurations affirm the choreographed space of the city, and which undermine it? How do artists develop their projects? Which (research) practices are produced?

A standardized and choreographed flash mob, such as “One billion rising,” in which one billion women around the world first participated on February 14, 2013, to the song of “Break the Chain” (and from then onward, every year on that same date; see <http://www.onebillionrising.org>) to protest the discrimination and subjugation of women worldwide, was prepared by an artist and organized via digital networks.

A flash mob such as the “Harlem Shake” spread through social media networks and was adopted by various groups (e.g., as an authentic dance by Australian aborigines, as a protest flash mob in Tunisia and Egypt in March 2013, or as a joke by a German soccer team in Frankfurt). The political actions of “Pussy Riot” or “Femen” are inconceivable without their preliminary and subsequent media coverage and dissemination. Yet, in spite of their interconnectedness in the media, all these projects illustrate the argument put forward by theatre studies that every public assembly—even when closely linked to social media—requires the co-presence of actors and spectators (Fischer-Lichte 2008). But it is more than a requirement: rather, in times of increasing mediatization and digitalization, public assemblies and interventions explicitly declare their objective to be a co-presence of actors and spectators. Here, performance art and choreography prove to be a suitable field in which to experience communication in public spaces. By means of the bodily-sensual (in other words, aesthetic practices), it is feasible to question the possibility of and the ways in which strangers from different cultures and backgrounds, with different lifestyles and beliefs, can communicate.

Even if co-presence can no longer be defined as a specific quality of the theatrical in terms of immediate presence—whether in the theatre or in everyday situations—these bodily-sensual practices demonstrate the relationship between (1) the social and the aesthetic, and (2) between the political and the artistic, and (3) between the choreographic order of urban space and its disruption. In order to examine (1) the social patterns of perception, (2) the circumvention of norms by artistic devices, and (3) the relationship between the materiality of urban macrostructures and the emergent orders of the participatory projects operating on a microscale, the following three research perspectives are important:

- The perspective of bodily-sensual practices: How do LIGNA’s performance projects, which are based on practices of body and movement, examine practices of self-empowerment, and in what ways are bodies used in the process?

- The perspective of the theatrical: Where do the interventions in train stations or in public places take place? In what ways is the environment arranged? Which theatrical devices are used (e.g., costumes, masks, texts, chants, roles)? Which patterns of action can be discerned in each practice and figuration?
- The perspective of choreography: How is a “collective body” formed by choreographic organization—as a movement choir (such as in *Dance of All*), as a flash mob (such as in *Radioballet*)? Which space and time patterns do the interventions follow? How is the relationship between social figurations of scenic actions and choreographed space designed? When and how do artistic interventions undermine the choreographic order of the urban space? How do they generate an “alternative” choreographic order? How do they reflect this order with aesthetic devices? And finally, do the performed movement instructions in *Radioballet* and *Dance of All* evoke alternative systems of organization and circumvent established patterns?

## URBAN CHOREOGRAPHY: RESEARCH CONCEPT

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The term “urban choreography” is based on a notion of social choreography, which was first prominently put forward by Andrew Hewitt (2005). Hewitt analyzed the writings of authors from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century from a perspective of literary studies in terms of the extent to which the term “choreography” served as a metaphor for the modern.

In his introduction, Hewitt formulates a theory of the connection between choreography and the social, emphasizing that the aesthetic is inherent in the social order itself (2005, 12). Accordingly, he concludes that a choreographic perspective on everyday practices should above all follow two paths:

one tracing the ways in which everyday experience might be aestheticized (dance aestheticizes the most fundamental and defining motor attributes of the human animal); and another tracing the ways in which “the aesthetic” is, in fact, sectioned off and delineated as a distinct realm of experience. This is what I mean by the aesthetic continuum of social choreography. (Hewitt 2005, 19)

In this definition, Hewitt draws attention to the connections between the aesthetic and the social—a claim also made by other authors (Martin 1998). However, the question as to how choreography should be defined and examined as a specific form of the aesthetic *and* the social remains unresolved. Thus a choreographic viewpoint does not generally concentrate on “the aesthetic,” but simultaneously on the materiality of urban space and the time-space relationships of bodies, their rhythms, dynamics, and formations.

The sociological perspective that I wish to advocate here describes both on the macro-level of social structures (in this case, the materiality of the urban space) and the micro-level of social situations (in this case created by participation by the performers in a performance). The subject of debate here is not the relationship between order (choreography) in terms of a set of rules or instructions and movement as performance, understood as an attempt to resist this order by circumventing it (Lepecki 2006), but rather the complex relationship of macro- and micro-structures in the choreography itself—in other words, between the social order, symbolized, proscribed, or inscribed in the choreographed urban space, and choreography as a social situation, generated by people as an emergent order (Klein 2015).

Choreography as an inscription of social order into an urban space represents an antecedent order (i.e., the implementation of power structures). Choreography as an emergent order in a social situation is performative. Emergent order does not mean that power relationships are not inscribed, but rather that they are produced in a different manner and are structured in other ways. Its success or failure—as a new alternative order undermining the conventional order—depends on the specific relationship of both structures to one another. From this sociological point of view, interaction between people (as well as objects) is impossible outside an existing order. A circumventing order (i.e., a resistance to order) is in itself also a form of order. The question is, what qualities do individual patterns of order contain, and how do these different structures correlate and react to one another?

Therefore the term “social choreography” is here combined with the sociological concept of “social figuration” as put forward by Norbert Elias (1978). Elias introduced the term “figuration” in order to solve the basic theoretical problem of sociology, namely conceptualizing macro- and micro-structures together. Following Elias, figuration is an “interdependence network” of agents that are immanent in social orders. Therefore, they do not precede the figuration, but are created by interdependent actions. Figuration can thus be understood simultaneously as a representative and as an emergent order.

The term “figuration” is helpful for developing the concept of social choreography, as it addresses the interactions of bodies and takes this as a basis for the social. This idea distinguishes the sociological idea of figuration from, on the one hand, action-theory concepts that focus on the actions of individuals, and, on the other hand, from structural-theory concepts that suggest previous orders.

The organization of bodies in time and space (i.e., choreographic order) can be defined as the basis for a social figuration, in that the term “figuration” also opens prospects for a concept of choreography that does not see order as an organized compilation of individual actions, as generally defined by sociological theories of action, and propagated by a form of subject theory found in the traditional philosophy of consciousness. Instead, figuration describes the interdependence of bodies and their movements as themselves forming a fundamental basis for the actions of individuals and thus for the social. The concept of social choreography therefore develops a choreographic perspective on social figurations: it focuses on practices of bodily interaction and on the materiality of figurations. From this perspective, social choreography specifically means

spatial and time-based figurations that organize bodies, materialities, and objects, which then relate to each other in an interactive and intercorporeal manner (e.g., in traffic, at demonstrations, on dance floors).

Urban choreography can be understood as a social choreography in urban space, as a figuration that interweaves the macro-structure of *urban space* and the micro-structure of *urban places*. First of all, urban choreography encompasses social spaces as choreographed environments, that is, urban public spaces as panoptical spaces with macro-structures that have been objectified by urban planning, transport infrastructure, and architecture. These materialized choreographies regulate the movement flow and behavior of people and thus also patterns of social perception and experience. Second, urban choreography addresses social figurations in public places in terms of their movement orders—in other words, in terms of their inherent corporeal interactions.

Research on urban choreography addresses the relationship between macro- and micro-structures, order and movement, structure and situation, whereby order materializes itself objectively, on the one hand (in traffic infrastructure, architecture, buildings, etc.). And on the other hand, it is part of human figurations, highlighted by the intertwining of people's movements. The relationship between macro- and micro-structures in social figurations proves to be ambivalent: on the one hand, it leads to a conventionalization and standardization of social norms and rules, while on the other hand, it provides potential for disruption and intervention. From a sociological point of view, the manner in which this ambivalence is revealed is central to the study of urban choreographies.

The concept of urban choreography follows a critical theory of modernity, which characterizes social and cultural patterns of society, especially in its bodily-sensual practices. Here the *interacting bodies* are of paramount interest. From the perspective of urban choreography, the (single) body is not only a medium of public intervention in the sense that it serves as a bearer of signs and symbols, or is endangered in risky actions. The “dis-placement” and “de-positioning” of bodies that lie on the street, chain themselves up, and get dragged away, demonstrate the vulnerability of the private and intimate body in relation to the power of politics and to the inscribed practices of inclusion and exclusion in public spaces. The intervention of a single body (e.g., the “standing man,” Erdem Gündüz, who stood at Taksim Place in Istanbul for eight hours in 2013, merely gazing on a poster of Atatürk; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUOoHY4PjN4>), is in itself a protest against power politics in public places and against the public space as a panoptical space of power (Foster 2003; Foucault 1992). To undermine the order of urban space, intervention requires a choreographic organization of the bodies. Not the single, but the collective body is politically effective in occupying public space in order to undermine its structure and disturb its inscribed materiality of power (Klein 2013a). Furthermore, collective actions are often creative and theatrical, conceived with humor and irony; by means of these theatrical practices and their ephemeral figurations, they themselves remove the binarity of the artistic and the political.

An analysis of urban choreography focuses on ways in which the social and the aesthetic are combined in choreographic orders and body practices in urban spaces. The central claim on which the concept of urban choreography is based is that the choreographic order of urban space includes a political dimension, which finds its visible

expression in the movement order of public bodies. Therefore, it is of prime importance to reflect the relationship between the politics of urban spaces and the political aspect of artistic intervention.

In contrast to LIGNA's projects *Radioballet* and *Dance of All*, the movement order of many artistic interventions and protest performances in public space is not fixed, as we can observe paradigmatically in flash mobs, when performers simultaneously follow a previously agreed score upon an arranged signal. These movement orders, generated by "structured improvisations," can instead be phrased in the language of contemporary choreography and understood as a regulated and structured improvisation of an everyday practice. As choreographies that produce an ephemeral order and do not perform an order of representation, these "improvised," "spontaneous" forms of public interventions demonstrate a contemporary understanding of choreography, which sees choreography not as necessarily related to dance or as a fixed, prescribed, repeatable order that is governed by rules and into which one must fit, but rather as a common process, as an emerging and contingent order that is created from scratch by the participants. This order is generated in practice, in the moment of performance in terms of a "real-time composition." Due to the unpredictability of the choreographies of political interventions that develop in real time, the situational decisions of the performers and their ability to act creatively in a politically volatile situation and under "time pressure," while at the same time noticing the movements of others and interacting with them, gain fundamental significance. Here we can see the aesthetic ambivalence in how the creative practice of interventions is interpreted not only as resisting ruling norms, but also as part of the post-Fordist regime of creativity.

From this perspective of contemporary choreography, *Radioballet* and *Dance of All* cannot be seen as real time compositions, that is, as regulated improvisations, which occur as choreographed orders in the moment of performance. Both performances are based on a carefully prepared, theoretically reflected, and deliberately planned script that dictates the movements. The prescribed movements partially comply with the rules of swarm dynamics, translated into social figurations, that is, not overtly adapting one's own actions to those of others, maintaining an intermediate distance in order to avoid collisions, aligning oneself along an undetermined, continually shifting epicenter; determining the epicenter through one's own actions.

Every movement solely follows the specifications that the participants hear via headphones. Centrally conceived instructions are obediently executed. Commands thus become the foundation of executed movements. Action, in terms of purpose-driven activity, is no longer differentiated from simple movement.

The headphones communicate the instructions to each participant individually, not collectively—and produce, via media, a virtual community of individuals. In *Radioballet* this is accompanied by instructions such as

"Don't look anyone in the eye!"

"Speak with no one!"

"Concentrate on your movements!"

"Listen to the radio!"

The reflexive questions mentioned at the beginning of this text, moreover, had the effect that individual participants moved to some extent synchronous within the crowd in a sequence of prescribed, clearly delineated figures and gestures, while dwelling on their own thoughts in the process. No one knew what information the others were receiving, which questions were being asked. It is this simultaneity of moving and thinking, of staying true to oneself and forming a crowd, which prompts, on the one hand, reflections on the political in the act of aesthetic (i.e., bodily-sensual) implementation. On the other hand, the political is also simultaneously defused and action is perceived as a political “as if,” insofar as the movements are not interpreted as an attack, intervention, or assault, but rather as something self-referential, aimless. Not strategy, but style, not a transgression of boundaries and violation of norms, but spectacle and momentary irritation, not disturbance and threat to the existing order, but peaceful playfulness and the creation of a controlled and reliable alternative order, are central here.

This playful affirmation of the spatial macrostructure simultaneously allows for a political reading of the performance: for predictability staged by peaceful self-referentiality, by playfulness, and by the affirmative “as if” of the artistic act, which disperse all suspicion of political action. The space is also thereby designated as a space of alleged freedom in which everything is supposedly allowed. Why not peacefully make art in a train station? Is that not proof of democratic freedom? Why not perform subsidized art projects on the representative square in front of a subsidized theatre? Is this not an expression of the fact that not only the bourgeoisie profits from subsidies?

At the same time, this playful-artistic practice demonstrates what is excluded, not possible, and subject to punishment—more than merely forms of political resistance. Would the *Radioballet* also have the same effect if performed with homeless people or refugees in the train station? In this respect, the isolated and self-referential participants may at second glance appear more menacing, irritating, and unpredictable than a group of united demonstrators or a performance with “dangerous bodies” (Schmincke 2009). In this respect, we have to distinguish between the process of production and the effect (van Eikels 2013). In terms of their production methods and the creative process, the performances reflect a classical understanding of the relationship between choreography and movement: choreography is defined as an act of giving clear instructions. However, in terms of effect, the bodily practices, scenic organization, and the dispersed—and in dance terms not altogether “virtuoso”—choreography, which also ironizes the aesthetic concept of ballet, encourage both participants as well as passersby to question the relationships between individual and collective, between the social and the aesthetic, between a political act and artistic intervention. It is the bodily-sensual (in other words, aesthetic practice), with which both performances have been created, that allows for this openness and indecisiveness. The artistic reflection of potential political intervention is made possible through these artistic concepts and aesthetic practices.