

Opening Hours

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The organization of bodies, in motion, or as presences, in the logic of an exhibition is at the core of contemporary curatorial activity. In view of its recent growth in importance, this article offers an analysis of various examples of *durational formats* based on the experience of temporality they provide, so as to examine the development of a system of temporality regimes. The aim is to analyze those projects that integrate the structural lines and codes of the artistic institution and of the exhibition format. In particular, their rhythms are dictated by the conventional duration of an exhibition, and the temporality regime of its reception will match the opening hours of the museum. This fact determines the distance between these practices and other attempts to bring liveness into gallery space.¹ The following considerations will not concern us: the various ways in which museum space can be used as *another* stage, to reconstruct a situation that is theatrical in nature; choreographic interpretations of an object-based exhibition, or practices based on interaction between different mediums, always within a one-time mode of activation. It is the temporal dimension of the exhibition, and its modalities of extension, that are going to be seen as the distinguishing feature. These then are works conceived of according to the logic of a certain site specificity, and the museum is the place they will occupy via the ritual of exhibition. Such works favor empty spaces, which direct attention to the presence of the body and of movement, the better to illuminate the context in which they appear.

The idea of an *occupation of duration*² as a process that will augment the traditional way an exhibition is made part of the museum spatial frame appears as a recurrent motif in many artistic and curatorial approaches. This format is often presented as an experimental response aimed at getting round the constraints inherent to museums. Given the fact that it is seen more and more often, it is pertinent to wonder how far this format for presenting choreographic practices and performance in museums has become a norm, meeting a great variety of artistic and institutional needs. Performance often took place in the peripheral spaces of the institution. Performance, as a form of exhibition, is now no longer sidelined, limited to a celebratory or evening event, but is asserting itself right in the midst of the opening hours and working day of the institution. It is in this area of activity that the triangular relationship occurs between artists/work, the public, and the institution. It thus becomes a vantage point for discovering the distances and lines of intensity in the wider cultural and economic landscape. This area of institutional presence for performance practice seems illuminated and potentially open. What needs to be examined is the implication that this openness may have for the development of other modes of spectatorship, and for the reconfiguration of institutional praxis.

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Contexts

The projects that will be analyzed below should be seen as being at the turning point of experimentation on exhibition formats, at the fulcrum between the theatrical and the museum settings. These two discursive contexts, the *black box* of the theater and the *white cube*, are organized according to a whole series of default parameters. First there is the theater, with its full immersion, its reception regime at a set time and agreed appointment and “its duration shared by spectators and performers” (Biet and Triau 2006, 407). Then there is the formal logic of the white cube and its ideal of transparency, the experience offered by it based on a principle of autonomy and the disembodied aspect of perception.³ The resonance of these discursive contexts will inevitably have an influence on anything brought into the two types of space and will also determine its impact. The dialogue between these two settings has been a constant in the historical development of live art. The focus of the debate has mainly been on their spatial conventions, on shifts from one space to another, and about the transfer of these practices to a new sphere.

The phenomenon of the widespread introduction of choreographic work into art institutions, as it is currently manifested, is accompanied by other lines of activity concerned with questioning the museum set-up, and its privileging of exhibition as the means for shaping its discourse. Art institutions embody the profound structural changes to the modes of production, and forms of labor that are characteristic of late capitalism. The museum of contemporary art is no longer an exclusive place for contemplating objects: it offers all kinds of nonmaterial products, which function as a social platform for exchange and interaction. The institution has become a laboratory, a testing room, operating in the domain of the experience economy. The introduction of programs of performance is often accompanied by other discursive practices, in a desire for institutional self-reflexive examination.⁴

Historically exhibitions have been privileged sites for detecting ruptures and lines of force, and for hosting and setting off critical debate on art and its institutions. The cultural critic Brian Holmes, speaking more generally on what he calls the artistic device, says “the exhibition is the moment when an artistic project is valorized in our society, and therefore, when the economic conditions of its production come to bear upon its process, along with the ideologies that underlie and mask those conditions” (2006, 412). Since the mid-1990s, the increasing openness of museums to performance has come about particularly via exhibitions, signaling a new level of institutional recognition of these practices. Thus there has been a series of key exhibitions—a constellation that invites several possible lines of interpretation.⁵ It is important to note how several phenomena have simultaneously come together: the formalization of a series of positions vis à vis the revision of the roles of the institution and the exhibition. In the European context, one can mention formats derived from relational aesthetics, and the intense critical debate arising from it, and also point to *new institutionalism*⁶ to indicate a number of approaches that are recasting institutional critique. The museum is no longer just a place for collection, conservation, archiving, or display. There are those who see the museum as a factory—as a place where production takes place.⁷ The exhibition apparatus in particular is being subjected to interrogation. The white cube is the ideal structure of intermediation,⁸ by means of which the modern museum’s narrativity is made visible to the public. This form of intermediation had collapsed well before the time when work of an ephemeral or processual nature was introduced into it. Institutions, then, espouse various reception models whose style is participatory and dialogic, moving away from the individualistic ideal of contemplation that was laid down by the white cube tradition. Similarly, the history of exhibitions, together with analysis of their structures and sociopolitical implications, becomes a new field of interest. In *The Power of Display*, M. A. Staniszewski points to a kind of amnesia, brought about, of course, by the ephemeral nature of exhibitions, which was the consequence of a history of art based on the idea of autonomy, on works devoid of context (1998, xxi). Efforts to reconstruct historical exhibitions show the lack of documentation of installation—beyond that relating to individual works. Inasmuch as “an exhibition, like live performance elsewhere, belongs to a particular time”

(Copeland 2013, 49), there will be many common issues between attempts to reactivate or reconstruct an exhibition as a temporal event, and those relating to performance practices.

Experiences

I would like to examine three examples of museum performance as modes of exhibition, so as to analyze this format more precisely, going beyond individual works. As my point of departure, I will give an account of my own experience as a spectator, so as to articulate the specific problematics arising from its temporal dimension, and to formulate a number of lines of enquiry. I have chosen to make 2008 the start of the narrative, so as to be able to put its subsequent development into perspective. This date was when I began to encounter, more and more often, durational live performance that worked according to a logic similar to that of performance installation. These shows, limited to a European frame of visibility, were staged in French institutions (one foundation, one art center, and one gallery), and this was the context in which I had the opportunity to experience the work. The three examples of work I am going to talk about are designed on the basis of a duration. I was thus able to experience with the performers the test of extended time, in the mutual investment of our presence.

***La rencontre* [The Encounter]. October 2008. La Maison Rouge, Fondation Antoine de Galbert, Paris. *Sans Titre 2004–2008*, Marie Cool/Fabio Balducci**

The artist duo Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci introduce their performance series. In one of the rooms of the exhibition space, Marie Cool initiates a number of actions involving the slow manipulation of objects. In another room, videos by the artists play on a loop. The brief actions are repeated over a long duration and are shown randomly between 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. A visitor enters. There are tables, chairs, sheets of paper, all carefully arranged in geometric lines. The faint silhouette of the artist stands out against the white background. This body is going to perform precisely calculated corporal movements, reminiscent of the mechanical actions of a worker on an assembly line. The artist moves among the unremarkable objects and materials, which are like props that set off precise, careful actions. The face is calm, the gaze blank; the person is absorbed in performing a task, again and again, with a total lack of expression. The extreme precision produces a low-intensity spectacle, somewhere between the gestures of a demonstrator and a magic trick. There might be, for example, a cotton thread burning upward or paper sheets hanging in the space between the palms. Bodily engagement remains distant and withdrawn. It intensifies at the moments of transition between the pieces, when the body enters or leaves the space, or in breaks, with actions such as drinking a mouthful of water. The element of spectacle lies in variations in the states of concentration, in the display of a constantly maintained flow of energy, and the minutely detailed execution, which is always on the verge of being abstracted, or surprised by something unforeseen. After one has been watching for a time, it becomes clear that the spectator is not considered an essential part of the piece. No room exists for possible interaction between the artist and the visitor. The fact of their co-presence has no influence on the unfolding of the programmed movement and does not intensify the flow of actions. It remains a minor element among others in the spatio-temporal whole of the exhibition, in which activity carries on without any exchange of glances. Visitors' silhouettes become almost intrusive, momentarily breaking the tacit agreement there should be silence. Such subtle movements demand an attentive body, and this goes for the spectator too. It means that, in the effort to follow a movement and to understand its meaning, there is a sort of transfer of concentration.

***La cohabitation* [Cohabitation]. December 2008. Centre d'art de la Ferme du Buisson. "*Une exposition chorégraphiée*"⁹ [A choreographed exhibition], curated by Mathieu Copeland**

In the art center, three dancers move about surrounded by a number of visitors. One of the dancers, locked into a slow-motion walk, crosses the space diagonally. He advances slowly and cuts across

the middle of the room, and then starts to climb a flight of stairs without any change of pace. The slowness of the movements and the rather blank gaze of a state of obvious concentration has a distancing effect. This is a piece by the composer Michael Parsons, a series of walks entitled *Walking Pieces* (1969). Next, two female dancers, who are near the walls, perform a number of choreographed sequences arising from imitation of the movements of the visitors. The dancers perform a selection of pieces in the form of written protocols, including transitions and breaks.¹⁰ The exhibition is organized in a score of seven pieces that unfold in a set order, with the whole work spreading over a period of six hours. The structure is based on a compositional logic and conceived of as a “sort of musical movement with a number of themes.”¹¹ The passage of time becomes the basic element, with the continuous presence of the dancers in the art center space for the whole duration of the exhibition, namely 2 p.m. to 8 p.m., three days a week for two months. In this place the dancers are always there, on view, involved in a series of activities that one never manages to grasp as a whole. The continuity of the structure means that their presence becomes an everyday, almost commonplace thing. The focus is on the immaterial dimension of movement: actions disappear once they have been executed, vanishing unremembered into a volume of space. The test of time is experienced with or without spectators, and the performers are often alone. The set nature of the working time also modifies the performers’ relationship with the place where their activity takes place. Occupying this place for such a long time leads to a different level of acquaintanceship—a closer connection. The continual repetition of the sequence of pieces makes the performers’ spatial awareness ever keener. The art center space becomes familiar, and the performers’ mastery of the dimensions and distances grows more precise. Inasmuch as the structure of the project is conceived on a continuum, first regarding its duration (total or daily) and second regarding the time units of each piece, every task the performers do is taken into account. So changing clothes, warming up, taking a break, having something to eat, or leaving the exhibition space are no less activities included in the design and made visible. The art center becomes simultaneously a rehearsal room, a production site for new movements, an exhibition space, and a rest area. During opening hours, potentially on permanent exhibition, they work there and live there.

La visite (à deux volets) [The Visit (in two parts)]. Galerie Marianne Goodman, Paris, February 2009. This Situation, by Tino Sehgal

In the gallery, in a single room painted white and brightly lit, six people are standing round the walls. When my presence is noticed, the group of performers (or *players* as the author terms them) starts mumbling, louder and louder, as a chorus of greeting. After this vocal utterance in unison, each performer gets his or her breath back. They turn in on themselves in a sort of respiratory inhalation, which draws their bodies away from the walls, as if the walls were exerting a magnetic centripetal force. This draws them into a kind of collective rotation. Another spatial configuration appears, with each performer freezing for a few moments in a position that then dissolves. After these positions, with strong pictorial echoes, a conversation develops out of a pre-established set of quotations whose authors are never mentioned. Performers speak and execute choreographed sequences. The movement is gentle, almost slow-motion, uniform and unaccented; the voice does not match the rhythm of the body and maintains a normal speed. These are not bodies that are involved: they invest the act of moving with a quality of detachment, and the continuation of the oral element accentuates this distancing. Visitors become the stimuli that set off the mechanism of “this situation.” This developing discourse engages in an analysis of certain concerns of the social sciences, such as the nature of capitalism or the technologies of the self (inspired by what are recognizably quotations from Marx, Foucault, or Debord, among others). One is witnessing the discursive exercise of a community—an ephemeral community—but one that shares precise working hours: eight hours a day, five times a week, during the twenty-six days of exhibition. The prolonged duration enabled me to visit the exhibition twice. The relationship between performer and spectator was to be totally overturned when one of the performers remembered my first visit some days earlier. The memory of the spectator came up against the memory of the work (the memory of the device), and in this case up against the concrete memory of one of the performers. Like a resonance chamber, the elements making up the exhibition (the presences executing

bodily and oral actions) retain a memory of where we have been and what we have done. When this observation, this act of being present, is actually used to modify the structure of the piece, the experience becomes doubly troubling for the spectator. As Dorothea Von Hantelmann (2010) points out, the artist offers a *counter-memory*, inherent to the body, which will become part of the archivally oriented hegemonic culture of the museum.¹²

Formats

These three pieces present ongoing activities taking place over a longer time span than the theatrical norm: the time of the performance is a matter for contractual agreement. These pieces are subject to the temporal constraints of the particular institution, with its opening hours functioning as temporal markers. Thus the choice of an institutional duration is part of the framework of each of the projects: they have not been extended from a pre-existing original, but created to fit the specific temporality of an exhibition. This then is dictated by the particular hours of the host institution: nine hours a day in the Maison Rouge, six in the Ferme du Buisson, and eight in the Marian Goodman Gallery. The works are available for visitors to experience for a continuous period when the performers are physically present without a break. This continuity of the experience offered is based on a desire for uniformity that will make it possible to present a particular product (moving bodies, or bodies that are present, spoken or gestural activity) in homogeneous conditions. They are also pieces that combine, as Gérard Genette puts it, the “duration of persistence” of displayed objects, with the “duration of process” typical of live performance (1997 [1994], 63). Despite being of a similar template, these three examples have quite distinct temporal structures. Aside from their internal mechanics, they offer a different temporal experience to both performers and spectators.

The series of short pieces by Cool/Balducci is arranged along the time line of the exhibition, delivered and repeated randomly. The institution’s opening hours demarcate the temporal zone for its presence—the field of possibility. In this time slot, busily performing her tasks, the artist is potentially available for viewing. The space fills and empties according to when breaks occur, and the part involving the objects has variations in intensity created by the interplay of activity and repose. These objects do not have an existence independent of the movements. The visitor’s presence and that of the artist co-exist, but never directly meet. Because the visitor is not directly addressed, one only grasps a few fragmentary moments: the piece on the tectonics of the sheets of paper, the ephemeral tracery of the cotton thread, or the disappearance of the artist into the “wings” of the museum. The whole work is based on a suspensive temporality—a bid to stop the passerby and make him/her interrupt their daily routine.

In *Une exposition chorégraphiée*, the seven pieces proceed according to a pre-established score, which, with minor adjustments, remains the same throughout the duration of the exhibition. The succession of pieces unfolds without interruption, with breaks being part of the choreographic structure. The various pieces follow one after the other, without simultaneity or juxtaposition. It is primarily time, activated by living presences, that is on display. The pieces are very diverse in nature, and they also present a variety of temporal logics. They include the everyday actions that act as temporal parentheses at the beginning and end of each day (Ondák), the long walks in slow motion that make time denser for both the performer and the viewer (Parsons), the allusions to the present by way of shouted stock market news (Portnoy-Backström), or the intermediate moments that double the various possibilities for a break (Lacey). This passage through the subjectivity of time encapsulated within the parentheses of the institution, with its natural tendency to overrun, necessitates the use of a stopwatch. The changes of pace and the internal logic of each piece add complexity to this tension between lived duration and measurable duration. This is particularly the case in the absence of an audience. The presence of spectators often means support, a temporal marker, or a reference point that helps one stay focused. Contact with a possible visitor, always of a distant kind, plays an

important role for concentration levels.¹³ The immersive dimension of the temporal experience acts as a distance marker between dancers and audience, repositioning their spatial proximity.

The situation created by Sehgal is a fixed arrangement in a loop, which makes possible a combination of micro-situations. The rhythm of the piece is twofold, and is based on the variation between poses and choreographed sequences. The vocal element and the improvisational dimension of the conversation add another temporal layer. The slowness of the movement contrasts with the quickness of the words. One's attention is more drawn to the discourse and its way of being addressed and the movement can imply a distraction. The machine made of bodies, movements, and oral elements is set and renewed with each new arrival. The process is constantly set in motion, allowed to run until a certain point, and then reset. When one has been watching for a certain length of time, one comes across certain postures and figures again. The spectator always remains some way away, on the sidelines, but is constantly appealed to.

Taking as the analytical focus the way in which temporality regimes are brought into play involves thinking about two interconnected threads: on the one hand, the production of a certain modality of spectatorship; on the other, the increasing complexity of the use of space and temporal frameworks in the museum that is a place of work and production. Thus, looking at the examples, one may have a suspensive but fragmentary temporality made up of independent parts, an immersive temporality extending over a period, and an inclusive dialogue-type temporality. These different dynamics lead to a range of positions with regard to spectators: negation of them by absorption¹⁴ in Marie Cool's activity, their coexistence at a distance enforced by dancers in Copeland's project, or their structural involvement and measure of participation in Sehgal's conversational situation. Evaluating this format will center around three areas that raise concrete questions. First I will consider two temporalities relating to the cinema: performance as a stretch of time, a lengthy linear event and, in the video model of the loop as a means of occupying a duration. I will also cite a number of examples that have drawn on the notion of endurance by emphasizing the physical presence of the body. Finally, I wish to raise the question of artists' space for maneuver and its relation to work in the occupation of time within museums.

Has the Film Started Yet?¹⁵

Catherine David makes the point that "in many contemporary shows, visitors often have the feeling they have arrived too early, that is, before the event has taken place, or too late, after the event, of which there remain only . . . remnants that are difficult to interpret, or that they are not given the means to make sense of" (David 2002, 66). Only ever able to see partially, the spectator often arrives in the middle, without being able to make out a beginning or clear ending. In the case of *Une exposition chorégraphiée*, the total experience of the duration is limited to the performers. Only the performers, and perhaps the staff of the art center, can have a feeling of completeness, and become the memory bank of the show. With a single day as the time scale, the set of pieces occupies six hours. During this period, the fragmentary presences of visitors figure momentarily, without their being able to understand the structure. Since they are unknown to the visitor, the durations of the individual pieces cannot be identified or picked out from the mass of temporal matter. By contrast, the basis of Sehgal's structure is the variation, during a given time frame, of a sequence which is repeatable and potentially infinite. Once the rules of the game have been understood, its reception mode exploits predictability and anticipation. The performance on display, according to the model of exhibiting video, whether it is an extended line without development or in a loop, has the potential to go beyond the temporal frames of the reception space. Its limits will ultimately be determined by the patience, stamina, or curiosity of the spectator. The challenging of the spectator by extended time scales sets the works outside the representational framework of theater. Here the inclusion of a live temporal sequence, which is repeated as part of the structure in accordance with written protocols (Copeland) or precise instructions laid down by the artist (Sehgal), marks a

fundamental difference from single events occupying a gallery for one evening, or those entailing endurance and some form of non-repeatable physical or intellectual expenditure. On the one hand, there is the temporality of the single program, which is linear and has a beginning and end, whether it be a single long session, or a sequence made up of various items, which may already be going on when the visitor arrives. On the other, there is the temporality of the loop—a continual repetition of a fragment that is not developed.¹⁶

It seems important to me to point out the connecting line that links these points to questions regarding the cinema in the context of exhibition. There are obviously questions about the mode of exhibition of pieces based on duration that apply equally to cinema and to performance. I would like to emphasize the point that efforts by museums to exhibit cinema are certainly a methodological precedent for dance and choreography. *Cinema on display* (Païni 2002) or *expanded cinema* not only involves a widening of the traditional settings it is experienced in, with the move toward art institutions, but also allows openness to experimentation in terms of duration (in spaces that are best able to accommodate it). In the same way, expanded choreographic practices seem to exploit the same double impetus. The notions of duration and experimentation with temporality are constituent parts of the historical development of performance. Furthermore, the moment when it appeared as a discipline, in the context of experimental cinema, coincides with the model of temporal register, the filmed capture of process, of activities taking place over a duration: eating, walking, sleeping. The project of the Dutch artist couple Bik van Der Pol “Sleep with Me” (Rooseum Museum, 1997) therefore seems to me to be representative: they invited people to sleep in the museum during the projection of Andy Warhol’s film *Sleep* (1963), making it necessary for the museum to extend its opening hours. The focus was on one of the activities excluded from the museum, while also offering a different attention regime regarding the work.

Between Acts of Presence and Endurance

Beyond blockbuster exhibitions and the never-ending succession of supposedly radical gestures filling the field of media these days,¹⁷ the relationship with endurance is a constant of the history of performance. In the tradition of performance, the expansion of time is often associated with working procedures that focus on the engagement of the body and its intensity. This expansion of time becomes the advent of reality. Hans Thies Lehmann says that the stretching of time is an acknowledged characteristic of what is known as post-dramatic theater, and numerous contemporary works can be found that display elements of what he calls “a durative aesthetic” (2006, 156). The Spanish choreographer La Ribot, in the tradition of these experiments, very much takes on board this dimension of duration linked to the experience of exhaustion. In *Laughing Hole*,¹⁸ for example, weariness has a part in a device that leads inevitably to excess—to the shattering repetition of one gesture, one single action for six hours. The nature of this piece nevertheless remains that of a stretched-out event, developing amid the theatrical conventions (wings, costumes, a rhythmic crescendo of intensity leading up to the final applause). This would be the right moment to make a fundamental distinction between two very different forms of extended temporality, on the basis of their degree of intensity. The temporality in La Ribot’s piece could be described as having the character of a performance event: a long event taking place in a museum or, alternatively, in a theater. The three examples analyzed above (and this also applies to *Rétrospective par Xavier Le Roy* and the piece by Manuel Pelmus and Alexandra Pirici¹⁹ for the 2013 Venice Biennale) involve the management of a design on a temporal continuum, as a process of production and mode of experience beyond a simple extended event. They are arranged according to an “exhibition” temporality decided by an outside authority (the museum, the gallery, the fair), for the number of weeks that constitute the standard duration of a temporary exhibition. In connection with these experiments, but with a quite literal relationship to endurance, one must mention *X-events*, the series of protocols by the French choreographers Annie Vigier and Franck Apertet (*Les Gens d’Uterpan* [*The People of Uterpan*]), which explores the notion of bodily endurance in a museum context. They stage long

performances that test the limits and stamina of the performers. Simple actions such as walking, running, or falling become ways of putting the executants to the test, continuing for as long as they can tolerate. Naked bodies under harsh lighting are cast into the observation space of the white cube. The involvement of their continual presence becomes part of the framework of the conventions of the exhibition space, in which everything is made visible, even the in-between times: the setting-up time, break times, the moments when one performer takes over from another, warming-up exercises, and the daily rituals of starting work.

The fact that choreographed activities are exhibited over a long period means that the visitor's own temporality becomes involved. The ability to endure the process of being a spectator sites the area for negotiation between time and presence that is opened up by this type of practice. The choice to stay for a longer or shorter time, to leave, or to come back several times will determine the duration of the experience and will be an indicator of varying levels of commitment to the work. While the continued presence of the performers is laid down by contract, the coming and going of spectators is necessarily intermittent and unpredictable. Unlike in the theater or cinema, here the duration of experience is indefinite, and depends on individual inclinations. If the structure is designed on a continuum, the spectator can interrupt it, bringing a distancing effect or critical gesture. The matter of the investment of time, and the transaction between time and experience, has a particular significance in the present economic climate.

Working Time

In an interview, the choreographer Jérôme Bel expressed his views about the exhibition of dance. He spoke of the complexity of the subject and pointed out the difficulties inherent in the museum as a place for choreographic practices. If the experience of dance is to be offered to the public, the performers will have to be present during museum opening hours, for the usual period an exhibition lasts. This choice will raise practical problems relating both to the production of work and to the performers' labor conditions.²⁰ In the same vein, Claire Bishop also alludes to the growing trend for contemporary performance to be on display for a duration of time. Particularly in the case of performance that follows delegated procedures, it becomes necessary to put in place a system of work rotation (Bishop 2012, 231). For museum performance, engagement in the work, as well as the unbroken filling of the duration, go on even if the exhibition space is empty. The direct display of artists at work, from when the place opens until it closes, in a temporal frame that has no highlights, means that the existence of the pieces will not depend on the spectator as a legitimating authority. The idea of the exhibition as a potential space for social exchange means that the time of production, the time of presentation, and the time of reception (and critical evaluation) no longer come one after the other, but happen simultaneously. From this point of view, the processes involved in performance, such as composition, rehearsal, training, or transmission procedures, are times that are of equal importance to the actual meeting of performer and spectator. The parts of the production process of a performance that are normally marginal for the audience are now in full view. What this offers is the chance to show the essential qualities of artistic modes of production, focusing on the body as the producer of movements in a given time and space. In the welter of experimentation in formats, one constantly encounters this idea of the exhibition as a place for the training of visitors, as much at a physical level as at a social or behavioral. In the exhibition *Move, Choreographing You* (Hayward Gallery, London 2010–2011), the focus is nonetheless on the key moment of the encounter of spectator and performer, or between spectator and work to be set in motion. In this exhibition, the piece by Xavier Le Roy and Mårten Spångberg, *Production* (2010), was created by performers activating certain pieces (Simone Forti or Pablo Bronstein). They engaged in a series of work practices, using material taken from the exhibition archive and their experiences as initiators of the pieces. These practices²¹ led to a new relationship with spectators, but also continued when nobody was there. In the catalogue of the exhibition, Noémie Solomon (2010) said that the essential element of the piece lay precisely in the fact that it considered the museum

space as a place for labor and rehearsal, thus getting away from the material conditions in which choreography usually takes place. This fact would destabilize ideas about production and representation, by allowing the participants to take time for their own rehearsals (Solomon 2010, 123). Following a similar logic, but in a non-participatory and radically different way, there is a category of practice that could be called “performance in retreat.” In the course of the gestural series by Cool/Balducci, the artist is seen working facing the public. It is the visible execution of a particular activity, which, in obedience to the opening hours of the institution, unfolds a rectilinear, uniform movement. With regard to her practice, Marie Cool explained that being in contact with the viewers reduced both the amount of attention given to the material and the precision of the movements.²² Choosing to show this kind of work as an exhibition mode in a gallery or museum would reflect a desire for a symbolic return to the studio, and its operating time. The gallery space would thus become a kind of extension of the studio, and the time of exhibition would be the time of practice. In a context where one is constantly face to face with the spectator, turning a museum into a studio makes public activities that normally go on more privately. The idea of the exhibition as a studio or rehearsal room has been espoused by such artists as Boris Charmatz (see Ostende 2010). Regarding his project in Rennes, Charmatz said that the ideal situation for a visitor to his *Musée de la Danse* would be to encounter a dancer in the process of working (Ostende 2010, 73).

Conclusions

After a period of being fine-tuned in various contexts, among which one is bound to mention Sehgal’s early work at the beginning of the 2000s, the exhibition format analyzed in these pages would seem to have reached a certain equilibrium. In contrast to the experimental rhetoric for which it is the vehicle, it appears to have begun a process of normalization: it has the appearance of a formula adapting itself to a variety of narratives. Thus the standardization of this format allows it to be used by proponents of a wide spectrum of practices and standpoints, like a discursive toolbox. This absence of specificity makes it a vantage point for observing links between performance and institutions. The exhibition format makes it possible to get away from the traditions of dance and performance in the museum context, where it has been a specific activator or a catalyst of presences that often occur around the institution’s temporal markers: openings, private views, final and special days, commemorations. When performance becomes involved in the museum in the form of exhibition, as a live sequence that has the potential to be edited, it problematizes its relationship to the event at the point where intensity is concentrated, and shifts its reception thresholds and expectations. These exhibitions take more time to experience, and interrogate the economy of time and its value in our society. This constant negotiation with temporality leads to the development of other modalities of spectatorship, which are of various types. On one hand, there is the mode of more or less face-to-face interaction, where spectators set off a choreographic or conversational process. On the other, there are pieces that set out to neutralize their presence by means of distancing mechanisms, which leads to a new relationship to contemplation, allowing mutual absorption between artist and beholder: the transfer of introspection and a rest for a media-saturated eye. The focus on the time-effort-experience dynamic leads indirectly to the model of the ideal spectator: a person able and willing to keep watching for hours, observing details, taking notes, participating—a person who would come several times. These are people who make decisions about the time they will be present, about how their attention fluctuates, how engaged they are, and what their critical temperature is. In the fruitful dialogue between performance and museum, one can sometimes see a complicity between certain lines of discourse at the level of the institution and the *modus operandi* of certain artistic practices. Thus the presence of these practices redoubles the questions raised by the very discursive apparatus of the museum. The exhibition of bodies either moving or existing as presences has implications that go well beyond their aesthetic dimension. The museum setting is hijacked to experiment with the co-presence of spectators and practitioners, to make alternative use of its space, to set up work situations, and to evaluate how flexible its boundaries really are. The distinction between production and reception, between process and product, is weakened.

The potential of the museum apparatus for transparency makes it possible to look behind the scenes of production: the forms and temporalities of artistic labor in the context of late capitalism. It means occupying the working hours of the institution with a workforce that embodies the characteristics of the perfect post-industrial worker: cognitive skill, readiness to collaborate, openness, and flexibility.

Despite its ambivalent nature, and perhaps precisely because of it, this format challenges our pre-conceptions about spectatorship, about artistic labor, and about institutional practices, as well as the scope and limits of their social function. Its adoption makes it possible for institutions to test their capacity for responsiveness—to strengthen their lines of discourse and to realize their political agendas via artists and audiences. It remains to be seen to what extent the inherent potential of this notion of the exhibition is capable of bringing about a real reconfiguration of the contemporary art institution as a collectively negotiated construction.

Notes

1. Here the term gallery refers to the museum space where works are traditionally exhibited and made available to the public. All of the examples discussed have been displayed in a very wide variety of art spaces (museums, art centers, foundations, art fairs, galleries). I will therefore use the term art institution without specifying the particulars of each space.

2. This idea is called to mind by numerous examples: *Il Tempo del Postino* [*Postman Time*] (2007, Manchester International Festival) by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Philippe Parreno, the serial project *Rooms* (2011–2014), *Une Exposition Chorégraphiée* [*A Choreographed Exhibition*], by Mathieu Copeland, or the project *Per/Form* (2014, CA2M, Madrid) by Chantal Pontbriand.

3. “The space offers the thought that while eyes and minds are welcome, space-occupying bodies are not” (O’Doherty 1999, 15).

4. See the example of the Museo Reina Sofia, in 2008/2009: the creation of the department *Artes en vivo* [live art] was accompanied by the setting up of a study center and a research program.

5. In Europe, one can point to the following examples: monographic exhibitions such as *Trisha Brown, Danse, précis de Liberté* [*Trisha Brown, Dance, a précis of Freedom*] at the Centre de la Vieille Charité, Marseille 1998; *Anna Halprin à l’origine de la performance* [*Anna Halprin at the beginnings of performance*] (Musée d’Art Contemporain de Lyon, 2006); Yvonne Rainer *Space, Body, Language* (Kunsthhaus of Bregenz and Museum Ludwig in Cologne, 2012); exhibitions pairing dance and the visual arts such as *Move, Choreographing You* (Hayward Gallery, London, 2010/11) or *Danser sa vie* [*Dancing one’s life*] (Pompidou Center, 2011/2012); experimental exhibitions such as the editions of Pierre-Bal Blanc’s project *La Monnaie Vivante* [*The Living Currency*], among many others.

6. This term (Ekeberg, 2003) as an experimental methodology, codifies the debate around art institutions. It sets out to classify a number of curatorial, artistic, and educational practices. Since the 1990s, a number of institutions, particularly in northern Europe, have attempted to change their working methods and move into areas with a more critical and social dimension. This term, therefore, has an accompanying rhetoric: flexibility, fluidity, processual approaches, openness, participation, discursivity, and the inclusion of working methods derived from artistic practice.

7. In line with the stated aims of institutions such as Baltic (Gateshead, UK), which calls itself an “art factory,” other places such as the Rooseum (Malmö), the Palais de Tokyo (Paris), and the Kunstverein (Munich), among others, set the processes of production above the function of traditional exhibition. The famous words of Alexander Dörner, pioneering director of the Hanover Museum in the 1920s, envisioning the “museum as a power station, a producer of new energy,” are often quoted (1958, 147).

8. See Manuel Borja-Villel, “Les musées interpellés” [The museum questioned], conference at the Pompidou Center, 2009.

9. *Une Exposition Chorégraphiée*, whose first version took place in the Kunsthalle of St Gallen in 2007, involved the following artists: Jonah Bokaer, Philipp Egli, Karl Holmqvist, Jennifer Lacey, Roman Ondák, Michael Parsons, Fia Backström, and Michael Portnoy.
10. The transition pieces were created by the American choreographer Jennifer Lacey.
11. From the press release published at the time by La Ferme du Buisson (2008).
12. Hantelmann takes the notion of “counter-memory,” which was developed by Rebecca Schneider following Foucault, as being a memory inextricably linked to the body and applies it to the work of Sehgal as a challenge to the museum logic of archives based on objects. See Schneider (2001, 42).
13. Words taken from an interview in Paris in 2009 with one of the performers of the exhibition, Mickaël Phelippeau.
14. I am referring to the notion of absorption developed by Michel Fried (1980) in his analysis of modern painting, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (7–70).
15. Title of Maurice Lemaître’s experimental film (1951).
16. The difference between these two modes of representation in museums has been specifically examined in *Rétrospective par Xavier Le Roy*. See the interview with Xavier Le Roy in the publication *Rétrospective par Xavier Le Roy* (2014, 27–8).
17. As I write, Marina Abramović is beginning her 512 hour sojourn in London’s Serpentine Gallery.
18. I am here referring to the version shown in 2009 in Space 315 in the Pompidou Centre.
19. Manuel Pelmus and Alexandra Pirici, *An Immaterial Retrospective of the Venice Biennale*, Romanian Pavilion, 2013.
20. “If one wants to offer visitors the experience of dance in a museum space, the dancers have to be there from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., for the two or three months that exhibitions generally last. Aside from the exhaustion of the dancers, the cost of paying them is exorbitant, and museums are often unable to afford such an expense” (Jérôme Bel, in an interview in the magazine *Danser* (Noisette 2011), in the context of the exhibition *Danser sa Vie* (2011/2012).)
21. “Written for three dancers, *Production . . .* was based on a body of rules according to which, whenever there were no visitors in the gallery, the dancers could take advantage of this time to rehearse their own work. When they noticed a visitor watching them, they had to stop immediately and talk with them about what they had seen” (Bishop 2014, 109).
22. Interview by Laurent Goumarre (2010).

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