WHAT´S THE TIME?

Rosalind Goldberg in Conversation with Chrysa Parkinson

8/12

— The Dancer as Agent Collection —

WHAT´S THE TIME?

Rosalind Goldberg in Conversation with Chrysa Parkinson

8/12
— The Dancer as Agent Collection —

Editor: Chrysa Parkinson
Copy editors: Anna Petronella Foultier, Jeroen Peeters
Proofreader: Peter Samuelsson
Graphic design: Anna Giertz
Printing: Åtta.45 Tryckeri AB
Cover image: Brynjar Åbel Bandlien
Publisher: DOCH School of Dance and Circus,
Stockholm University of the Arts
With the support of Sarma (Brussels)
ISSN 1652-3776
2014:1

Special thanks to Anna Efraimsson, Cecilia Roos, Frank Bock, Frédéric Gies, Katye Coe and Kristine Slettevold for their work on The Dancer as Agent Conference.

Introduction

The Dancer as Agent Collection invites an unwrapping of The Dancer as Agent Conference. Of the sixty dancers who attended the conference in November 2013, sixteen accepted commissions from DOCH to draw, write and speak about ideas that had been present there and have continued roaming since, occupying other times and places. Twelve numbered objects were made, including essays, conversations, maps, films, materials, active texts and a virtual location at Oralsite.be, in which the complete collection is housed.

Using a variety of approaches, dancers articulate the dynamic interplay between the act of dancing, its history, the languages it generates and the values it brings to daily life. The collection creates a context in which the contours of agency that emerge from dancers' artistic practices can be bounced off, wandered through, felt, fit and shared.

WHAT´S THE TIME?

Rosalind Goldberg in Conversation with Chrysa Parkinson

Rosalind Goldberg and Chrysa Parkinson were both in Stockholm at The Dancer as Agent *conference, but did not have the opportunity to speak to each other much at the time. They met again during the course of three video phone conversations, initiated by Chrysa as part of the conference documentation, in mid-September 2014. These have been transcribed and edited. Rosalind was finishing her master's thesis and rehearsing and Chrysa was in Berkeley, where she lives part-time. Chrysa also lives in Brussels and works in Stockholm, where she is currently heading the New Performative Practices MFA at DOCH, Stockholm University of the Arts. Chrysa is a dancer. Since these conversations Rosalind has graduated from the MA in choreography at HZT – Inter-University Centre for Dance, Berlin. She is based in Berlin and in Stockholm where she works within several collaborations, as well as alone. She also curates workshops and lectures in Berlin.*

CP: So I wanted to start with knowing where you are right now in the world.

RG: I am in Berlin at my home here, my apartment in Neukölln.

CP: You are living there. That is your base?

RG: Yes, I am mainly here. Back and forth sometimes to Stockholm and more around in Europe. But I am mainly here, yeah.

CP: And you are working on a thesis, a master's degree?

RG: Yes, exactly. I am finishing my master's now. End of this month I will finish writing. The topic is on the body and its formation within and through a choreographic process and event, holding on to the notion of affect in relation to Gilles Deleuze. I have to deliver this writing and then I have to defend it.

CP: And what is the program?

RG: Master's in Choreography at HZT. It is the Inter-University Centre for Dance, Berlin. It is a bridge university, a collaboration between the old east art university [Hochschule für Schauspielkunst 'Ernst Busch' Berlin] and the old west art university [Universität der Künste Berlin]. They made a collaboration, so it has three dance programs.

CP: And how many people are in your master's program?

RG: We are eight.

CP: Do you work together a lot or is it more independent?

RG: It is very independent, very individual. And the group we are also very different. I mean it has been good that we are so different, in a way. Like you have to find a way of articulating your work differently. And when you are in a group of people that do and are

interested in the same things mainly. So that has been very challenging but has also sometimes been a pity to not really be able to go into the depth of things. Since it is more description than a work, I would say.

CP: And you are now both making pieces and dancing for other people?

RG: Yeah, I do. At the moment, I work as a dancer with Anne-Mareike Hess. We have been swapping roles in the last four years. Four years ago I worked for her in *Never Ending up North* [2010] and then my two last works *MIT* [2013] and *Jump with Me*! [2014] we collaborated on – I was the choreographer and now I work with her again as a dancer in the piece *Tanzwut*.

CP: Is it always a duo situation?

RG: No, it is not. She always has bigger groups and I did a solo for her and when it was a duo that I did it was another dancer that was part of the work. So it is quite nice to follow each other. We work very differently, with different strategies but it is nice to have someone that knows you so well you can be more clear, more straight.

CP: And functionally, what do those roles mean to you between each other? Like when you are the choreographer, how does that change? I mean I imagine it has to do with organization and funding and those… sort of editing, directing…

RG: Yeah, these kinds of things but it is also that when I am the choreographer I have the final decision. I am responsible, so then when I am a dancer I feel my responsibility differently. I can just feed a certain idea. I don't have to have this overview. My role is to find a

way of working it out and give feedback through my strategies or understanding or my inclination or all these kinds of things in relation to her ideas. And to find an interest for myself and in such a way develop the work. When doing I try to enable such a situation so I can receive such feedback from the people I am working with so I can find how I want to develop the idea.

CP: When you say 'When I am doing,' you mean...

RG: When I am making choreography.

CP: When you are the choreographer.

RG: Yep, yep.

CP: Then you are setting up a context where they can feedback from their subjective material, point of view.

RG: Yeah, exactly. That's very important. Because I am working very much with different ways of concentrating on different things and then we function so differently, so I need to hear what is happening in order to know how to go on.

CP: I only ever work as a dancer or I maintain that. It's an identity rather than a role. I say I am a dancer and then I do whatever's necessary – if it means making material or researching the project, even directing other people. What I am actually doing changes a lot but I think what remains constant is that I consider material my area of work. So whatever I'm given, if it's a text or a movement or a set of relationships I treat them as material that might be edited or cut or handled or reshaped.

At a certain point with this choreographer that I worked with for many years in New York, Tere O'Connor, I remember saying, 'What if this time we didn't work with a fourth wall? What if this time we actually made contact with the audience?' And he said, 'No, not now.' And I just remember feeling 'but... but...' and thinking, 'Well, okay that's not the piece that he's trying to make, so if I want to do that I have to find another context to do that in.' I love that his answer was, 'Not now.' It was so sure.

RG: But are you calm in that? Don't you want to bring it somewhere else sometimes?

CP: No. I am not clean like that. I get agitated and disappointed for sure. But when I'm working with an artist I respect my learning curve is very high. I'm getting a lot out of those situations, so it's more like tension than conflict. I'm always interested in the problem of enacting and embodying something that I am not the author of but am having an authorial relationship to my experience within. So all this training in different ways of seeing things, different ways of feeling things, different hierarchies of perception is super relevant. Maybe in this situation the actual proportions of my body are extremely important material in relation to the space, whereas in another situation that's not the case. It's less important: my sense of weight or my sense of character or something else is the real material I am working with. They are not always comfortable but I get very interested when there's a refusal, because it makes a very sharp line. That's also why I work for more people. I prefer to work in many different contexts.

To jump sort of quickly to the essay that you sent me [Rosalind Goldberg, 'What one can form – with choreography']. You describe choreography as a place in which it's possible to move, disturb or displace discursive structures through new constructed man-

ners, which are themselves forming a new materiality and in that way, new discourses [Frey, Steffen, Rosenthal, Väth (eds.), *Gender Studies,* 2004]. This question of where the body is determined, what determines body and where the responsibility for that lies in a group situation where you take roles – like I am the choreographer therefore I put these boundaries and descriptive language in place that form a body. In fact the performer is forming a body in relation to the boundaries or hierarchies that have been placed on them and it may not always be the body that had been imagined or that had been expected. So there is a resistance or as Karen Barad said, "The universe kicks back." You can say that your body is culturally determined but your body is also pushing back.

RG: Yeah, exactly. I mean discursive practices or how the body is determined cannot happen alone somehow. So me having an idea, of course, is already coming from somewhere and me putting it out it transforms immediately.

CP: Once it hits matter it just...

RG: Yeah. It is actually that what is in between. Or maybe I can speak concretely about the piece that I did with Anne-Mareike, called *MIT*. I was setting up a practice that was built on imagination and this imagination was fictional. It was like different air layers. I was giving her pictures, paintings, I was talking her into it. It was about touching this air layer or becoming touched as a way of explicitly forming body. I was was triggering her imagination. But what triggers her imagination is not what triggers mine. I could only continue to develop this practice through the way she was responding to words or paintings or everything I gave her. It was also very much on her responding sensorium. I ended up giving her so many tests so she could stay inside the realm of tasks and imagination,

stay within that practice. That was the way of practicing that practice. We tried to not influence it by thinking about how it looks or understanding a certain aesthetic or style or way of acting. Instead the idea was to be so concentrated you even can't think about how it's being perceived while you are working. And it is the work that matters and the materiality that is generated through that work.

CP: It is a very nice feeling when that happens. That a language material or sensory material someone gives you can override the sense of the image you are producing or that the image you are producing is not about you, but is about it somehow. My experience with that level of focus is that when an artist has an existing practice it is often easier for me to let go of imitating or generating a performance image that has a reference. I mean, I probably do that anyway but maybe I'm not working on that. But a lot of the time in freelance situations and in the kind of experimental work that many freelance projects are engaged with, they are creating a new practice for this situation. It is not something that has a long history. Like working with Deborah Hay you are entering an artist's practice or working with Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker I am entering a practice. Working with ZOO it was sort of in between – there is something existing but it is also changing. With Mette Ingvartsen, there was a practice that had emerged quite recently and we jumped on it. Working with Andros Zins-Browne we had no practice for what we were trying to do. We didn't know how to do it. So I wonder how you established what you were doing as a practice?

RG: It had very much to do with practicing concentration. So the fictional air system was a tool in order to do that, but what was practiced was the ability to go through different tasks within that system. You could hold onto the different tools. It was about attentiveness. Sometimes there could be six things that she is atten-

tive to but the main thing was for her to stay interested in the task. And if not, if she suddenly was not interested in the task then it was about finding a way into the work again in order to stay interested.

CP: So you know the quality of mind – both of you recognize the quality of mind.

RG: The quality of mind… what does it mean?

CP: Well people think about it differently. Like I think Meg Stuart talks about states, being in a state. I think of it as – when you say a kind of concentration – I can imagine, 'Oh, now I am in this concentration and now.'

RG: State I think about as one thing maybe or something that can travel but in one boundary that is set. I was maybe thinking of the fictional air system as the boundaries but then can I concentrate on them differently? How can I only focus on the resistance that is imagined in relation to the air? Or how can I only focus on what it does under my armpit? Or how can I only focus on just standing within it? How can I focus on all these three things at once? How can I allow myself to be in that but not be interested, so to actually go out – this is also part of it. So I am interested in not only to be concentrated constantly but to allow the concentration to travel and to have different intensities and to also have the possibility to go out, and then how long does it take to find an entrance again? And what do you do in the meantime? As a way of being so attentive you don't think about time anymore somehow.

CP: So I guess in working with Anne-Mareike you found the language to create a condition where that concentration was possible. With another person you would have to find another…

RG: Yeah, I think so. At the same time, when I am working on this next project, again with attentiveness, we had similar strategies. But, of course, Anne-Mareike needs her specific ones and other people need their ones. It just takes some time to find out a way of relating to that work and then a way of trusting or trusting to be bored when doing something. It is a way of following every interest in a specific theme so the idea itself can constantly be materialized and also get a history in the body. Of course it is a history in the body if you are going to do it over and over again but it is not about 'the' concentration it is about 'handling' concentration. That's why I talk about concentration instead of states. Concentration can travel through many different states and I'm interested in the travel and the experiencing of that traveling.

CP: It could be an ongoing practice, that you notice while you are having dinner with your friends or family or on the bus or in the studio and then the choreography becomes a location in which that practice is engaged.

RG: Yeah, absolutely. I think so.

CP: And the interest in multi-attentiveness comes from where? How does that arise for you?

RG: How to be onstage. Also what is body and how do we present the body onstage? And when thinking of the practice for this air system, thinking of a sensorial body that is constantly changing – how can we be an active being? How can that continue when we meet onstage? How can an idea be presented rather than represented? That has been a big question for me. How can the work continue? So from that I was thinking of attentiveness as a way of working with the idea, presenting the idea.

CP: Because it escapes any representation if your attention is able to be multi then there isn't a particular form it has to take.

RG: Exactly. Of course you will never come away from representation on stage; as soon as there is something there, it is a picture. When Anne-Mareike is performing it's an attempt to not go into an idea about what it is. But do it.

CP: That's a very exciting thing to nurture, to practice strongly.

RG: But so there I would talk about it as a practice. Are you agreeing on that, or?

CP: Yes. Lately I've been noticing that a lot of dance training, even the most contemporary forms, emphasize concentration over awareness. Because concentration is a tool, sometimes you need to concentrate on something in order to bring it into general awareness. But I notice that performers develop an appetite for concentration that sometimes overwhelms the possibility of awareness. If that makes sense. That the satisfaction of holding a thought in your mind or holding the necessity of an action or really fine-tuning your perception to one thing at a time is like weight-lifting or something. Not to be pejorative but it produces a sense of work and focus and clarity and that you are making one thing happen. But actually performances sometimes are so fragile in terms of the context you can create for a concentration to actually focus and happen. The situation of performance involves so many types of concentrations, that sometimes I think moving towards having a more porous attention... I think sometimes it is a hard move, to go from being trained into really working on performance. And I think it is the kind of hidden pleasure of performing, that onstage you get to be aware of many many things at once.

RG: Yes, of course. The works somehow sets the frame of possible things to be attentive on. But of course, in the performance situation there is so much more, which is great. In that moment how does the work meet the audience somehow? There is the practice that has been done. And then there is the meeting which is, of course, also calling attention and is challenging in this case the multi-attentiveness by Anne-Mareike. But it is in between them that something is happening. In between the audience and the performer.

CP: You provide a surface that has a certain kind of stickiness as a performer and hopefully some attentions will stick to you and others, maybe not. But you can't control that at all. That is the curious thing about performing: you have to be very very specific and at the same time no one but you really has to be. They are free to...

After speaking a bit more about their daily lives, Rosalind and Chrysa ended their first conversation and resumed the next day. Chrysa asked Rosalind if it would be alright to build a portrait of her, asking questions about her background as an opportunity to bring out detail about a person who is not well known. Rosalind laughed and agreed.

CP: Do you have a background in classical forms? Did you study modern dance and ballet?

RG: Yes, I did. I started with Isadora Duncan dance.

CP: Me too, that's funny. In Stockholm or where?

RG: In Stockholm. With Kathleen Quinlan. She had the children's company called Lilla Baletten – the small ballet. So we were dancing

original dances by Isadora Duncan. She got the heritage from Lisa Duncan – she met her and came to Stockholm. So that was my start.

CP: Did you start very young with her?

RG: No I started with her when I was twelve. Before that I was doing children's dance.

CP: What does that mean, children's dance?

RG: It was running to music. Stopping with music. Following rhythms. I did the eurhythmy with children's dance. It was a little more free and to live music and all these things.

CP: In a dance studio?

RG: It was in a big atelier with a wooden floor.

CP: Was it just you children? Did you see adults dancing?

RG: No, it was only us and the one leading – an older woman. It was very exciting but only a few years. That was when I was five and six. And then I had a gap and then I started again.

CP: Do you remember what you were interested in in that gap?

RG: I wanted to dance but we were living in the countryside so it was hard coming into the city. And I have so many siblings so it was impossible mainly. I was going to school. I was dreaming a lot and had a plan for my future at the same time.

CP: Do you remember it? Your plan for the future? I've always had an image of what dancing was going to be and that's always changing. It gives me faith in dance as a form.

RG: Images while dancing?

CP: Well yes, I've been very confronted by how different what I actually do is from what I imagine. But no, I meant of what the life would look like, what I could expect. The Isadora story, definitely – but also Margot Fonteyn. She was very humble about her skills and very poetic in how she thought of art and moved through the world. There was a biography, and at nine years old, that was my image of a dancer: a group of people in the 1940s standing in front of a tiny airplane with coats on going somewhere...

RG: Of course the Isadora picture was very clear for me. How to bring forth an idea or ideal. This has been following me so clearly because that was the starting point.

CP: That was the first time you met an ideology in dance, probably.

RG: From afar, there are all these ideas of what a dancer is: hard work and skills. But there with her, dance was more than that.

CP: I guess it wouldn't have been the first time you met an ideology, but the first time you responded to one. You were learning the dances, right?

RG: Yes. But not only learning the dances: it was so clear 'Now Rosalind! Now you're ready for this dance... Now I'm going to teach you this solo because now you have the experience necessary to dance this solo.' It was like a mystery, what kind of experience I have

now in order to be able to dance this solo. Why can only I dance that and not the others – why does it take so long in order for me to be able, or allowed to do this solo? So it was also embedded in being chosen to do the dances, the ideology was so there, so present.

CP: Did you begin to understand at a certain point why you were or were not ready for those dances?

RG: In one way of course I had been *speculating*! But in another way I was thinking I was too young for all of the dances. We were children! Like twelve, thirteen. But I was dancing with Kathleen until I was twenty-one, so that's a long time.

CP: At twenty-one that's a huge portion of your life.

RG: Yes. But in relation to Isadora's story, with all those composers, lovers, tragedies... I thought of myself as too young when reflecting on it later. I would dance them now completely differently because they are so full of life and death.

CP: I have the feeling the dances I did were children's dances. But I was only doing that for a couple of years.

RG: Later on we did the Brahms evening, full of solos. You would get to do one or two. But first we did the children's dances: mainly this 'children dancing on the tips of your fingers,' waving flowers in the air. There were all these images embedded in the movements.

CP: I was not at all trained in it, it was a starting point. But I do feel that the way of moving that I found there, my first way of moving, has left strong traces. In photos from that time it's clear: the mattering of the body, that way of skipping, the gesture of my hand, the

relation of up to down... I think that form, Isadora's approach, or the Isadorable's approach is probably what I got [Temple of the Wings, The Quitzow family, Berkeley California]. They created a place where the movement of my body was present and material and familiar to both me and to them. Really very different from the other training I had as a child, which was to refine and limit those movement relationships – to define them into certain flows, directions or affects. The Isadorable's were more about just getting you to move how you moved.

RG: I remember that Kathleen was saying, 'Rosalind, I see you're thinking about something else.' Concentration is so *taught*. You have to concentrate on something in order to perform this work.It's not about the right picture, it is about your picture. It has to be clear in order to put it out and make it alive. It's a somatic approach in a way.

CP: Did you also study other forms?

RG: At the same time I started to dance Ballet and Jazz. Later also modern techniques. We lived in the countryside but closer to the city so I could take the train myself. I went into Stockholm, back and forth, six days a week.

CP: How old were you?

RG: Around thirteen.

CP: Was anyone else in your family dancing?

RG: My mother was doing Eurhythmy so there's a link but she was coming from music. She was a piano pedagogue. None of the other siblings were interested.

CP: I think I chose dance as a child because no one else in my family was doing it. 'My domain.' I really liked that. There were plenty of people to connect to outside the family but within it, no one knew as much about this as I did.

RG: I don't know why it was so clear to me that I should dance. I knew I should work with art. Dance is what I could do the best. I had this plan when I was ten years and it was absolutely crystal clear. 'I finish school and then I go to art school in London and then I'm done and I make a career. Then at thirty I will start medicine.' I had this idea that I would be *done* for some reason. But now I'm thirty and I continue.

CP: I remember saying, 'Yes I want to be a dancer and I am going to be a dancer but I might change my mind.' I really am confused about whether I said it because I thought it was what adults could understand or if I said it because I believed it but I think it might have been to avoid hearing adults say, 'You might change your mind.' I just put it in there myself.

RG: But you never changed your mind.

CP: Well, I changed my mind a lot, but always within the form. It's meant extremely different things to me. In your family your mother was a teacher, so she was always dealing with music as an art form and how to transmit that.

RG: She was a teacher, yes. That's her work. My father worked as a drama teacher, but they did their own idealistic project on the side. [*laughter*] Like poet-evenings, theater performances, children's performances etc. They had their own group.

CP: Do you teach now?

RG: I feel like all through my life I've been concerned about how things are taught. How you are bringing out an idea. How are you making an idea be understood? Maybe because both of my parents are teachers but also because of having these moments of understanding so much through a certain way of teaching and then others where it doesn't function at all. It's actually not the form, it's just how close someone is to a certain idea.

CP: How they inhabit it.

RG: Then it can be so many different forms and how you can get to understand something, so weirdly... Just because someone has such a particular view on something.

CP: Did any of your siblings become artists?

RG: Yes, my brother, he's a theater director. He's a year and a half older than me. We are close but not so close artistically. We got educated differently, he started later. We are always talking about work, but I haven't been so close to him while he's working.

CP: I don't know enough about Swedish culture to say things about this. But. It seems to me there's a very strong tradition of theater that has a very long history and a lot of the work stays within that history. There's a continuous progression, maybe some transformation in how people act and how things are set onstage but it's very much in line with the tradition. Whereas in music there's this strange disconnect between the classical tradition, which people are often quite familiar with, and a pop mentality that emerges from it. They

have skills they put toward a different kind of music. In dance there's this very rich, in that it's various, practice of 'hobby dancing' where people have dance classes in schools and these ongoing amateur relationships to dance but the development of a contemporary experimental scene in dance is new. There's a tradition that has more to do with theater in dance and then there's this new thing. This group of people trying something – sort of awkward and excited – but there's not many role models in that experimental approach.

RG: There's something about Stockholm, maybe. There's something that's held onto in relation to how things are presented. I moved away from Stockholm because I thought 'If I want to work with dance I need to go away from here.' Otherwise I would start to produce what was there.

CP: I recognize that feeling. But I have different things with it. One is that I can't fit the frame and the other is almost like a premonition of disappointment. I think 'If I stay here I'm going to have a problem.' Of course you can't really know that. Not being *able* is different from not wanting to do something. They have similar results and probably similar sources. When I'm 'home,' I know this identity. I see what this would produce. It's not that I disrespect anyone who's there...

RG: But of course then not knowing what else can happen in another context... How much can one be formed differently by another context...

CP: Did you work in Stockholm as a dancer?

RG: I worked for half a year in Stockholm before I left for Berlin.

CP: So your path was pretty clear to you in that way. You were twenty-two when you left and you're thirty now. You had an intuition about the right place for you to be.

RG: I didn't think I would be in Berlin for such a long time. I thought I would be done after five years. I would come back and actually have something to bring with me. It was so clear. But I think I've stayed because you can form your way of living differently. There are so many people going in and out of this city, living so many different kinds of lives here, in different times. This thing about how you structure a day. How do I work? What is my rhythm? When do I go to a studio? When do I go and dance?

CP: Writers talk about that a lot. With dance we have some assumptions. We have a traditional structure for the day, which very few people actually do anymore. Two hours of class in the morning and six hours of rehearsal, which is actually a very peculiar situation that's considered standard. What does your day look like?

RG: I wake up quite early, around six. Then I go to the library for four hours to write and then I go to rehearsal until half past six. It's a nice combination. It's tiring but I really enjoy thinking about my own work, writing and then working for someone else.

CP: It's great to reflect and then act and that they're not exactly the same materials that you're working on. One of the things that interests me about the way people use the word practice, what it means to them, is the relation to time and duration. How time spent doing something allows that thing you're doing to become a filter for other things. Or just where something is placed in your day creates a ground that you can push off from. There's a question of consist-

ency and how practices develop consistency and then produce consistency also.

RG: I think I use practice in different ways. It's a daily thing, the practice of my body. The practice of reading and the practice of writing as things that are my ongoing sensitization. Being sharper, interested, available. And then there's the practice for a piece: a certain way of doing something, of practicing concentration. That's what I was thinking about with *MIT* – how to concentrate as a way of meeting an audience with a material, an idea. The development opened an idea and formed the material of an idea into another materiality, a corporeality.

CP: Do you mean another person's corporeality?

RG: It could be me. Thinking of my idea, or mind, as something that is already material and trying to make it into another material in order to handle it differently. To touch it, be able to work with it. I find that through practice you can produce a certain know-how that is so specific to the idea. That's why I find it interesting with practice. The know-how is so embedded in the body more than on the paper.

CP: It sounds like you are interested in transformation. That there's a change that occurs in materializing that has an effect back. That exchange changes both sides of the material and concept.

RG: One of the strongest qualities with dance and choreography is the ability to transform an idea to a materiality and that way transform the idea, to disturb a certain understanding.

CP: At some times my body speaks to me very strongly. At other times not so much. It has to do with contexts – some are more

about creating image so I get more involved in the imagined projection and my body is just a tool to produce that image. At other times my body's actually where the idea is coming from. I have to ask. Those take different qualities of time also, I think – different amounts, different experiences of time and different consistencies of time. For my body to really have the time to tell me what to do or how to work I need to spend longer amounts of time there. It doesn't go so fast.

RG: The whole *MIT* project was only from the body and the process of describing that work afterwards was so hard, to finally find words. It was the first time I really got a feeling for the gap between what I do and the naming of what I do and to really appreciate that gap. Not to be frustrated by that.

CP: In relation to time and forming time you spoke about watching people make a lot of different choices about how they arranged their lives and that that was surprising to you and somehow a part of the reason why you're still there.

RG: Yeah. It was surprising to me. Stockholm has a strong main rhythm: working from eight until five or nine until six. And you're free over the weekend. It's harder to choose your way of working. This is something I grew up with. But also, doing a dance education. The rhythm that's implied in that.

CP: Where was your education?

RG: At the Balettakadamien in Stockholm. It was very affecting to come here and see how people were using the twenty-four hours so differently. To me it was important to try things out.

CP: There's an implied critique of the standard organization of the dancer's day, you're questioning it. And I'm also interested in what was it about what other people were doing that inspired you, what was the actual difference?

RG: At first it was more just a feeling. The life that I live that is so constructed, forms a certain way of thinking. Training. Then go to rehearsal. Work until six. Go home. We worked exactly like that in the beginning.

CP: But now you to go to the library and write for four hours and then go to rehearsal another four hours.

RG: This is new. I've never tried it out to such an extreme before. Daily training is very important for me. It's a necessity because these two things are happening. I have to write. If I don't write I won't get my master's and I need to get my master's. But mainly I work with Anne-Mareike, who never trains. I need to. Her training is the work itself. I do my own training. Very regularly. In this project I was interested in what it would do to my body if I only do *this* work, not my training. Will 'the work' come in to my body faster? If I don't do my own practice and just give myself to her practice, this way of training, see what kind of warm-up this work actually needs. I don't know. It's the first time I'm allowing that for myself right now.

CP: What is your daily practice, or training?

RG: It started with a yoga base, but it's a lot about feeling weight differently, sensing, going in, sensitizing and thinking, articulating from inside. Trying to be particular in how I move slow or fast.

I need a lot of time for the weight shifting, sometimes it goes on forever and sometimes I give it less. It's usually about two or two

and a half hours. Depending on the project. I did a jumping project and we needed to strengthen the whole body so I did that for myself.

CP: Did that start out of there just not being someone you wanted to study with or was it something you really wanted to develop yourself?

RG: Money. Not having the money to go to class. The first year I was here I trained with the Sasha Waltz company. I needed a group. And here, in the daily training, a lot of people come who don't have dance training so that was a decision, to be with a group that are training and want direction and community. But I had a need to find a certain time in my body. Not only in a structure. I needed to be able to question the time it took me to feel something – a somatic influence.

CP: That your body was determining the tempo. You were recognizing the feedback from the body.

RG: To find different timings.

CP: What do you think that produces? Were there limitations you wanted to get away from?

RG: First it was to question when I worked the best. When am I most capable? When am I smartest? Am I efficient? How much time do I need? How much pressure? How little? I've understood that being super structured doesn't produce, for me, lots of ideas. I have to work continuously and maybe get up at the same time every day and work a certain amount of hours but what is happening within these hours? When am I working, when am I training, when am I

working with others? That needs to be justified to a specific project. Each project needs such different things. To allow myself to work on something for a year, to allow myself to be poor in order to not have pressure to produce *the* piece in *that* time. These economical structures that are forming the time… I can be very good in that. I can produce very fast. I can do that. But what does it do? What is it saying? Why produce so much? How can an idea change differently if I give it an immense amount of time or if I only give it five days?

CP: Adapting your use of time to the kind of idea that you're working with. Jonathan Burrows, he can work three hours at a time comfortably and he can work anywhere, a kitchen a living room or a studio. When he works it's very intense. He'll leave and do some homework, play with structure, different things, but in the room in those three hours you get very excited and very disappointed and throw everything out and start over again or advance an inch. It's very intense. Many people I've worked with, especially when they're working intensively on improvisational practices, they take very long work periods. One thing for three hours. Then another one thing for another three hours. Jonathan's micro and macro structures are very close. The structure and the content are not so different. With other people arriving at the content takes a long time. And then for some people, if they work for too long on something it becomes another piece. You've got two pieces in one. That's also an esthetic parameter, in Europe especially, at this point we like to see dances that are about one thing. We like a consistent theme that runs all the way through and even if the piece is just like a patch of fabric, we're fine. In New York in the 90s, pieces were like novels. All sorts of things would happen in one piece and you call it one piece because you gave it a title.
[*laughter*]

RG: That tendency of a one principle performance, it's very strong at the moment, but it also feels like it's named so it's on it's way to pass.

CP: It's gotten fragile because it's been recognized. I'm trying to say there's a difference between artists who know this is how they like to work and they use a schedule that fits them because this is how their work gets made best and artists who change their format depending on what they're working on. I don't know if it's because you're a younger artist so you're still figuring out how you want to make things, or because you're able to have a certain resistance – you don't have an identity that you have to continuously confirm.

RG: Maybe also being scared of that, this identity that needs to be confirmed, what that might do to the work. How to handle it when so many people have interpretation rights before you about what the work should be. I'm sensitive to that. Expectation, what should be done, how fast the next work should come. Here in Berlin there are so many people coming and going. Many shooting stars that are falling fast again. You are easily known quite fast, at least in the city, and can receive quite good funding and then it's three years and gone.

CP: That's very hard. It's hard on everyone – the people who don't get the attention and the people who do. There's a problem with sustainability.

RG: It's something I relate entirely to time and economy. I can feel it come into my own work. That's why I'm so concerned. What is that time for me? Of course I can't step out of time and economy but I can at least go to what I'm interested in. I can develop this, follow this development and give it the time it needs. I can stay with my work and not bother with anything else.

CP: Can you do that with space in Berlin? Can you say you want to work for six hours a day for six weeks and then with another project two hours a day for a year? I think it's difficult in some places.

RG: It has been possible here because you can find very cheap studios, like very cheap. Now I've been in university for two years with these amazing studios that I will continue to get for two more years. They're really trying to give support with their studios. I'm in a very good position. I have access. So it's possible. But it's also possible because life is cheap here. You can live a quite good life for little money and have a possibility to rent a studio. Of course you then accept a life that is maybe not the richest but for me that's fine for the moment.

CP: A light economic footprint. You do what you need to do without it costing you or anyone else a lot of money. You stay on a survival level, meaning comfort, inspiration, community, mobility – all of those things. I feel like there's a new generation of people who are not interested in being famous, they wouldn't mind having money but they're not arranging their life around having a high income.

RG: I feel that in my friends.

CP: It's partly necessity. The economy crashed.
[*laughter*]

RG: I don't want to question funding. I'm half based in Sweden – it's fantastic what you can apply for there. It's a cultural politics that at least has been quite good. But also I'm thinking about how to relate to funding – I mean I've been receiving funding, so I know how to relate to that but there's also a time in that – you have to keep a certain rhythm of applying. I've been needing to decide for myself

about that. I feel this rhythm and I should apply now but I don't want to formulate the idea in that way because the idea needs to go on, it needs to be worked, it needs to get much more material before I want to sell it. Once I go into this application it's almost a selling mode. Then I'm outside of it.

CP: I've heard that it's more difficult to get attention from the funders in Berlin if you live there, if you're from there.

RG: I don't know. There's just so many people. So many communities and scenes within the scene and ways of relating to each scene. But there's something that's happening here that's new. I never thought it would happen in Berlin because even though it's so soft and allowing so much in many ways, it also has this very harsh aspect: keeping your thing for yourself.

This Swedish guy Daniel Almgren Recén, he got funding for a project he wanted to do, talking about work strategies. It was at first part of his Life Long Burning Project. So he set up a meeting: *How Do We Work It*? Lots of things happened in that meeting. He invited designers and choreographers in order to talk about work and how to do work. There was a contradiction between the designers he invited and all these choreographers he invited. The designers were selling products. There was a clash, it didn't work out.

There was a clash in how to relate to economy but that was good because a group formed to talk about work, about thirty dancers and choreographers coming together to share strategies and support each other. And now there's sort of a *community* starting. Write applications together, share offices, share texts. We meet once a month, the first weekend of each month. It's new, it started in June, and there's like this *rush*, so many people that want to join. Let's see how long it will last.

— The Dancer as Agent Collection —

Drawings
Brynjar Åbel Bandlien

1
Bodies In and Out of Work
Varinia Canto Villa

Appreciating Skill, Performing Articulation
Cecilia Roos

Two essays
wherein the job of dancing is considered

2
Living the Tribe, Leaving the Tribe
Frédéric Gies

Tribal Currencies
Chrysa Parkinson

Two essays
wherein esthetic tribes are conjured

3
Breaking the Mould
Efva Lilja

Letting Our Speech Go
Juliette Mapp

Two essays
wherein the dancer's voice is raised

4
Location, Location, Location
Rebecca Hilton and Chrysa Parkinson

A written discussion
wherein specialists place dances

5
Death Craft

Tilman O'Donnell in conversation with Chrysa Parkinson
wherein the death of an institution and the craft of dancing are lived through

6
Sharing the Creature

Ursula Robb in conversation with Chrysa Parkinson
wherein a dance struggles to survive

7
Curating your Moves

Michael Helland in conversation with Chrysa Parkinson
wherein light is cast on the process of choosing

8
What's the Time?

Rosalind Goldberg in conversation with Chrysa Parkinson
wherein a schedule becomes plastic

9
A Dancer is Moving with...
Manon Santkin

A map for conversation
wherein the invisible can wander

10
Naming
Rebecca Hilton

A card
wherein the dancer is called out

11
oralsite.be
From Several Room Including This One
Frank Bock, Katye Coe and Stefan Jovanovic

A performance in writing
wherein a conversation between two events, three people and several locations takes place

12
oralsite.be
The Dancer as Agent Online

A presentation of films, materials, active texts and gifts wherein the collection is completed and visitors can touch upon what matters to them

— The Dancer as Agent Collection —
oralsite.be