TONE PERNILLE ØSTERN

Professor in Arts Education with Focus on Dance, Head of Arts, Physical education and Sports at the Department of Teacher Education (NTNU).

Østern_movement1_time1_flow1_force1

Movement is everything. Movement is everywhere.

Østern_movement2_system1_body1_being1_force2

Movement for me is the neighbour going out with his garbage and there is like a pattern in how he moves. But movement is also the small tiny intensities and affects that all the time go on inside your body.

Østern_movement3_connection1_force3

We are always filled with movement with affect.

Østern_movement4_evolution1_environment1_culture1_being2

Movement is also something that goes on in society. So there is traffic movement, masses that move, people that get transported in airplanes. This is movement. And also there is a lot of movement in nature. So movement is something that gives us life and that keeps us alive.

Østern_movement5_gravity1_force3_being3

Nature is actually moving all the time. Gravity is one of the exiting forces that acts on materials and on us all the time. Gravity create a lot of movement. It keeps the atmosphere to the earth. Then we have the wind blowing, lots of different weather phenomena, and also we have movement in the cyclus of the different seasons, we have trees growing. A tree is usually alive much longer than a human being. So nature really moves in everything. All the time nature keeps moving.

Østern time2

In dance you can time like the more chronological time, so you count 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 and you have this rhythm, a pulse that is chronological in a way, so that's one way to relate to dance, which is with time.

Østern_time3_flow2_nothing1

There is also another kind of time experience, that I personally would find more important. The kind of sensation when you don't experience chronological time. It's more like a flow. Maybe this experience of flow dissolves the experience of chronological time.

Østern time4 connection2 flow3

Exactly in this experience of flow you can have a very strong feeling of connection. A connection to other people. But you can also have this feeling of connection to animals in a way. I don't know of course, but I think that animals don't have this chronological time experience, they probably have a more present time experience.

Østern_time5_flow4

Time becomes flow.

Østern_connection3_space1_body2_object1

In the connection with and through your body you can have this feeling or this question: where does my own body stop? And where does the other bodies start? If I dance with another person we can become very fluid in a bodily way of connecting. And the same thing can happen when I seek to connect with materials.

Østern_body3_entanglement1_connection4

We are not really like centered subjects. I'm not just centered within my own body as a disconnected individual, but I am always already connected or entangled, really woven together with others and also with discourses, with ideas about body or gender, for example, or race.

Østern connection5

Feeling of non-separateness.

Østern_changel_connection6

To be performative means that something makes something happen. So when we meet we produce something together.

Østern_body4_being5_connection7_object2

In our relation we are performative on one another. The watch is not alive, but in our relation - as we relate there is an enactment .. There is enactment of some performative agencies we bring with us.

Østern_being6_connection8_culture2_object3

But also non-organic material is a performative agent in a relation, because it can relate to a stone etc.

Østern_movement6_evolution2_infants1_language1_consciousness1

Babies fx needs to go through a lot of moving experiences and from that play and movement discoveries slowly language and thinking start to develop. But the affects are there from the very beginning. We function very affectively. It's very visible in young children, and we tend to forget it when we grow older, but it's always the way we function.

Østern_movement7_time6_change2_nothing3_energy1

One of those precious moments opens up in improvisation, when you take a risk, and you go into something, a movement where you don't really know what you are doing, but you still feel you should go with this, whatever this is, and in that slightly, or sometimes risky, sensation, it's like a gap that opens up for something new.

Østern_learning1_energy2_nothing4_time7

This gap I would call a gap for artistic creativity and a gap for learning, like really existential learning.

Østern_nothing5_time5

When you have this feeling of falling into the gap, or the gap of the unknown opens up, you can really have this feeling that time and space suspends. And that again connects to the sensation that time can dissolve.

Østern_nothing6_time8_space2

You can have this feeling that time is suspended, which means that you forget about time actually. And when that moment is over, you couldn't tell if that moment was 30 seconds or an hour. The sensation of suspension of time means that you forget about time, and in a way you forget about space, or space becomes you. You become very 'with' the space.

Østern_nothing7_force4_time7

Sometimes you need some impulses that forces you to become a bit disorientated. So this "Falling into a gap" and "disorientation" stick together, is my experience, so it's easier for these gaps to open up, when you become a bit disorientated, you become estranged.

Østern_time8_object3_space3

This is what I mean with dis-orientation, that you give some impulses that make the whole situation more fresh in a way. It can also be materials, it can be spaces, different audiences, it can be anything.

Østern_being7_nothing8_learning2_stories1

I think that's why they exist in the first place, because they fulfill some kind of capacity, or maybe longing, that we have as human beings, that our sensational capacity give us. Dance is one way of experiencing and searching and investigating and understanding and creating knowledge.

Østern_body5_being8

I think there is very little difference between a human body and an animal body, because we are also animals.

Østern_body6_being9_culture2

A human body is made up of lived materia. And the lived materia is different from inorganic materia. It's real, you can touch it, but it's also affective. I think what is specific about the human and animal body is that it has affective capacities.

Østern_connection9_body7_being10_language2_communication1_energy3_object4

Affects are like intensities that become before feelings, because we can name feelings. Affects are non-verbal. And they are happening all the time. These affects, these intensities make the material body come alive, in a way. But you can never separate it, because the affects are also material. They are like energies and in a physical way you, I'm not a physicist, but I think you can measure different energies like electrical impulses takes place in our bodies all the time. So the way we encounter the world and one another is really material, affective and relational.

Østern_body8_culture3_being11_connection10_intelligens1_environment2

We are very deeply relational, so we have this capacity and this need for relating outwards in the world. And of course what is difference between a human and a animal body is the cognitive layer, that the human brain has this different capacity for rational and cognitive and symbolic thinking.

Østern_being12_intelligens2

But there are a lot of things we still haven't discovered. I think animals are very very similar to us. But there is a cognitive difference.

Østern_body9_technology1_evolution3_being13_connection11_culture4

It would be very interesting to experience the future and see if the human body fuses with a robot body and becomes a cyborg. In many ways we already are. We are very infused with technology, aren't we, with our mobile phones, for example. I think they are very much part of our sensational capacities and our relational capacities.

Østern_technology2_being14_learning3_evolution4_consciousness2_culture5

Researchers are developing humanoid robots that become more and more like us, also with affective capacities... If they start to feel empathy and somehow becoming conscious, and being able to learn by themselves.. What is the difference?

Østern_reality1_connection12_wave1

Diffraction is different from reflection. Reflection is an optical phenomenon, you look in the mirror, you look at yourself. Diffraction is also an optic phenomenon, but it's more interested in what is created in the relation, in the encounter.

Østern_connection13_wave2

Water fx, when water has a wave and encounters some kind of hintering, the waves will get a new pattern. The old wave pattern will still be, but it will transform into a new pattern. The focus is not to reflect back on me as I would be a static I, separated from the meeting. But what is created in the meeting? And how is something of me there, but also something of the encounter?

Østern force5

The colour yellow, for example, wanted to be something else than we thought the colour wanted to be. It was like the colour wanted to be something more playful. It was an experience of resistance in a way. Friction.

Østern_movement8_change3

Experiencing these movements. These shift. The dynamic shifts, when I stand on the bus... I think I am very oriented towards the movement level.

Østern_intelligens3_body10_being15_language2_consciousness3

The mind and language, and all this that maybe is connected about the idea about mind, kind of comes out of the body, and how the body is made and functions. The kind of human bodies we have, they give us some prerequisites for how we can think and develop language and how we function in the world.