

Hesitation Waltz - Status Quo

By Julia Keren Turbahn and [Simone Gisela Weber](#)

Pre-Corona Concept

In the modern functional systems such as the economic, political, but also the private relationship systems in which we move as humans in the 21st century, humans should act as fast and effectively as possible.

The key to success is action and not hesitation.

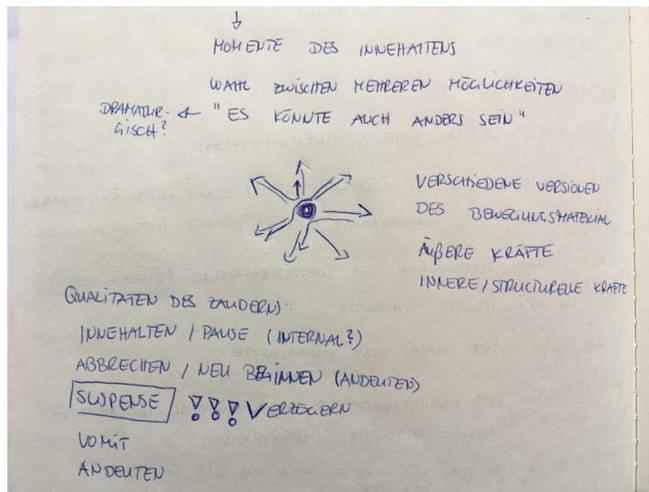
For the Apart Festival, we are writing a concept about how to see hesitation as a productive force, an active gesture of questioning. For this, we draw primarily on the publication of the cultural scientist Joseph Vogels, who describes procrastination as a specific form of perception and experience.

Procrastination as a power to reflect on the existing relationship to the world.

We have so far understood the phenomenon of hesitation on a very subjective and personal level of experience. Both of us, Julia and Simone as two individuals whose common denominator is often tarrying, wanted to translate the productive power of that state artistically. In our longstanding practice of writing each other a weekly letter, our hesitant world view or our hesitant *being-in-the-world* was a constantly present theme. In private areas of life as well as in our artistic development we tell each other again and again about our faltering or even stuttering.

Everything could also be quite different.

In the concept for Hesitation Waltz we formulate our interest in the physical, performative quality of procrastination and its specific rhythm. How can a state of hesitation be used to develop a quality of movement? What body knowledge and performative quality can be located in the state of hesitation? How can the concept of hesitation become a choreographic concept? Studios are booked. Collaborators for music and costume found. We are awaiting the start of rehearsals.



Our concept about the productive and progressive power of hesitation was accepted by the Alumni Festival. Our joy to be able to continue a new play and our work on this topic together was great. We prepared ourselves for a conventional stage production. We knew the ada studio, we were preparing for a performance with a small but delicate audience. We booked studios, thought out concepts for sound and costume together with Nikola and Bettina and meticulously planned our rehearsal schedule, which we had to arrange with our side jobs and private commitments.

Suddenly, however, our very personal concern and interest in rethinking our hesitation to work artistically was lifted to a completely different existential level. Our personal hesitation took on a social dimension. Suddenly we had to give up our hesitation and had to hesitate even when we didn't want to.

What is happening here right now?

But then Corona came. Slowly and at first unnoticed it crept into our everyday lives. From day to day the consequences are accelerating. We are talking about a global pandemic. As a logical consequence, the apart-festival was put into a state of suspense. We are waiting for decisions from outside and inside.

The real hesitation begins at all levels.

Actionism vs. Hesitation

Hesitation is not necessary and productive in every decision-making process. It is important to differentiate exactly what context is involved. On a political global level, hesitation regarding decisions in the Corona crisis can suddenly cost valuable days in the fight against the virus. Countries react with a time lag to the rapid spread of COVID-19 and decision making, especially at the political level, becomes a balancing act between overhasty actionism and hesitation.

Shortly before we could start, the rapid and frightening worldwide spread of the COVID - 19 virus slipped into our plans. A pandemic that both shakes everything up and shuts down at the same time. Our plan, which was just waiting to be implemented at a rapid pace, stumbled again and again over political and structural hurdles and open questions. And then everything turned out quite differently.

What was a thought experiment has now become reality.

A question that is often asked half-heartedly and perhaps even with some humour. *What if...?*

What if we can't work for political reasons? What if we were not allowed to work? What if we are not allowed to enter a studio? Abstract questions on the level of work can always be paired with personal ones: What if I hadn't moved to Leipzig at the time, but had moved to Hildesheim as planned? What if I hadn't gone to Finland but to England to do my semester abroad? What if I had no twin sister? What if I had decided against studying? What if I had not stayed at home today? Would I be who I am? What would have become of me? Where would I be now?

I don't really believe in fate. But I do believe that every single decision, no matter how small, has a big impact.



And I believe in relinquishing control. I believe in the sentence "*it comes as it comes*", which often conflicts with my tendency to tarry. Hesitation, that is partly the need for control, a reflexive pause, if you want to put it in a positive way, but also a self-restrain.

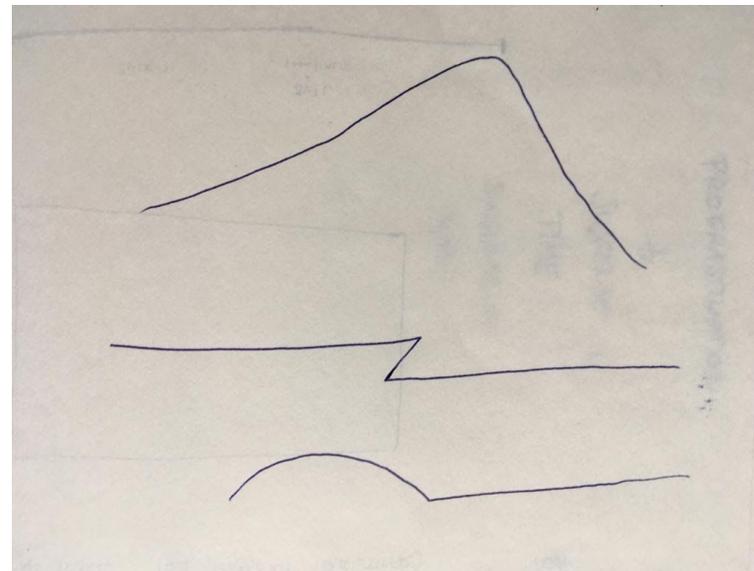
Just don't do it

Back on a personal level, the hesitation can take on another meaning. Corona virtually forces us to break with our culture of doing. 'Just do it' no longer works here. With the legal requirements 'Just do it' must not work anymore. On the other hand Corona does something with its own state of mind. We are restricted in our work in our social life. Everyday life as we know it is no longer available for an indefinite time.

Hesitation Dialogue

Hesitation as a pause, a break in which one's own life and the conditions of existence are raised to potentiality: Which possibilities are available to me at all? For one week we discuss whether to start rehearsals and if so, in what form? Theoretically, the two of us can still go to the studio. An inner dialogue of hesitation: Stay the fuck at home. A decision not to go into the studio is an acceptance of the current situation coupled with an inner feeling of uncertainty that makes it difficult to feel inspired. The mind set for creative work seems to be unavailable. On the other hand there are only two of us. To leave everything now leads to nothing. Maybe in the current situation it is important not to stop the creative work completely? After long discussions and hesitation we come to the decision to postpone our rehearsal start. To wait and see how the situation develops.

And now this stopping oneself is not voluntary. It is a waiting for rules and measures that are not in our power of decision, but are decided at the national and regional political level. We are also waiting for a statement from the festival organisation, which in turn is waiting for senate decisions. It is a waiting at all levels. The question *what if...?* can stop, but also serve to reflect on the possibilities and potential of a situation. The question cannot be answered, but should we ask ourselves this question more often out of joy and fantasy? Now, we ask ourselves this question quite often.



Celebrate the radical deceleration?

Use the crisis as a chance. Celebrate the forced deceleration as an opportunity. Transform the restrictions of public life into a drive for action in private life? I observe a hamster wheel of hectic productivity that spreads mainly online. It is far too easy to become a forced optimist now. I find it hard to really enjoy and use the exploding range of performances that are streamed, or online classes that are offered on Zoom. It is reminding me too much of the magic of the real that I appreciate so much in the theatre or in a moving together in space. I don't mean to speak ill of the productivity and creative ideas that are offered. Nevertheless, I find it important to question what the motivation behind it is. Who am I productive for, why and how?

At first, however, a new intensity of hesitation was a companion. Is it even time for art? Is it even the time to leave the house to rehearse? Is it even legal, or would we be doing something forbidden? It is still allowed to leave the house to go to work? Still not all professions are free to go to the home office and drive to their workplace. Or is behind this doubt to even start the rehearsals, to bend to the virus, not a completely different fundamental question: What is it that we do? Is it work? What is our workplace? Work is still associated with a fixed salary with which you can cover your daily expenses. Often we cannot do that with our art. We have no routine, we adapt to the possible circumstances, often work unpaid, work on entertaining projects, work everywhere and let ourselves be spontaneously inspired for a process. Is it then work that we record when we go into the studio?

Are we systemically relevant or would it border on ignorance and hedonism? Would we disregard our obligations as citizens?

Is it a luxury that we can still dedicate ourselves to making art from time to time with creativity through our complex system of numerous secondary activities? Does this border on luxury, which we should now do without in order to fulfil our social obligations?



Drawing by Alejandro Salas Strus

Because that is what especially young people - superspreaders - can now do: Showing responsibility, staying (the fuck) at home and thereby preventing the infection of possible risk groups. These thoughts allude to an existential question about the matter of course of an identity, and question an outdated concept of work. My father still sends me the Handelsblatt in the hope that the choice of a possible master's program will be a little more clever. He often still thinks that I am pursuing a hobby and have lost touch with reality. At some point I would have to earn money regularly, because how else would I get my pension. Work still means that you do something for society, that you keep the system going, and you are rewarded for that in monetary terms.

And now also us?

The Apart Festival is going online as well. A continuation. No matter how, no matter what? Inside I feel a hesitation as a first impulse. Is this really a solution or just another contribution to the online abundance?

How do we continue to work?

We try to answer with productive hesitation. The state itself shifts into the foreground. The pause as a possibility to observe what is happening.

Hesitation as a possibility of perceiving and experiencing. The work in the studio is less goal-oriented. It is both confusing and relieving. The fact that it is not heading for a final state allows a playful research. To give the sense of possibility all the range it needs. But at the same time, it is impossible to ignore why we have this freedom and that we are perhaps precisely because of the real uncertainty in life outside the studio in search of something tangible inside the studio. Always bringing the possibility of a concrete end product into the studio space. As accelerator and decelerator at the same time.

We are now talking about a situation of deceleration, indeed society is in a real experiment, which even Hartmut Rosa, whose scientific hobby-horse has not allowed himself to dream of the acceleration of modern society in this way. One even speaks of an unavailability, a loss of control caused by the imperceptible virus.

It is a rethinking, a reprogramming of our perception of the environment and our closest surroundings. The time that has now been sold at forced auction, and quite free of charge, but at a high cost to some who have lost projects and jobs, and social solidarity in spite of "social distancing" can change our *"(...) being in the world (...)"*. And we can *"(...) be open again to what we encounter in everyday life, and take on another form of relationship with other people, with our own bodies, with nature."* (Hartmut Rosa) Nevertheless, it is a state of emergency that confronts us with an unavailability (Hartmut Rosa) The virus cannot be seen, cannot be smelled. It lurks behind its invisibility. An alienation takes place. The door handle, the shopping trolley, etc. could be carrying the invisible deadly virus. It is everywhere, but somehow nowhere. We have no control over it and neither the private person nor medicine and certainly not politics can stop it.

Rhizome

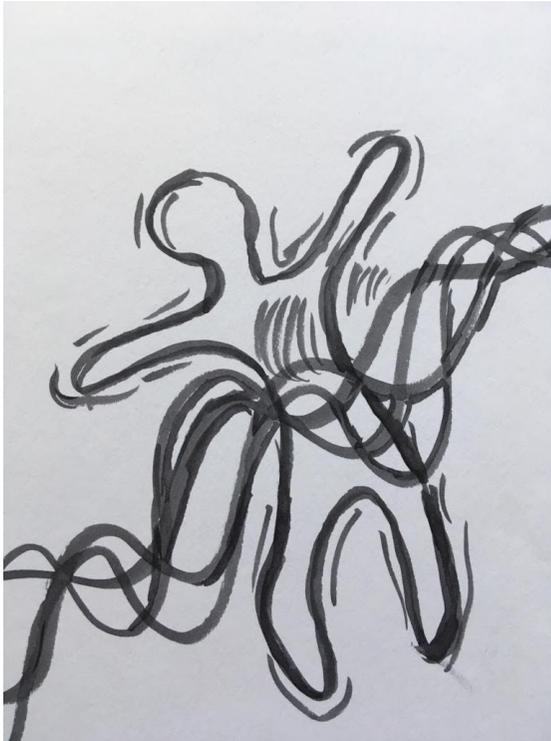
We move in a kind of in-between. I have to think of the concept of the rhizome by Deleuze/Guattari, which is derived from a term for the root network of plants. They juxtapose the image of the rhizome with that of the tree, in which thinking is characterized by links that are hierarchical and build on each other. The rhizome is to be understood as an alternative concept, since, like the underground root network of a plant, it is a structure without a clear beginning or end, centre or boundary line and is characterised by a net-like, dynamic connection. Thus the rhizome embodies a form of the in-between:

"Between things" does not denote a locatable relationship that goes from one to the other and vice versa, but rather a pendulum movement, a transverse movement that goes in one direction and the other, a current without beginning or end that washes its two banks under and flows faster and faster in the middle."

But aren't these similar conditions that we already deal with in art anyway? It is not only on the production level that we often have to give more out of hand than we actually fear? The production and its surprises as well as the uncontrollability of the performative delivers a completely different level of reality, which we have not yet imagined. We always have to improvise, actually. We are used to moving creatively in precariousness and dealing with uncertainties, be they creative or existential. We find solutions for lack of budget, even if it means having another job on the side, we plan our rehearsal plans as if there were more than 24 hours a day for us, so that everyone can pursue their many activities.

But also in creative processes there are decelerations and also unavailabilities. A process does not run according to a pattern, a concept cannot be implemented 1 to 1 and often has to face human imagination and subjective interpretation. What is written on paper is not necessarily transferable to a 4-dimensional space - and body relationship.

What is perceived is sometimes subject to the rules of surprise and the uncontrollable, and distances itself from the inner perceptions of the artists.



But isn't that precisely the one challenge that motivates us to keep going and at the same time the magical quality of the performative arts? It sharpens our senses and we do not restrict our perception. As Margaret Atwood says: *"An artist never averts his gaze. He looks at everything. The worst and the most beautiful. Without looking away."*

And perhaps this very state of emergency is precisely the moment when we can face the hesitation most realistically, accept it and rethink. The festival will take place digitally. A format that is exactly the opposite of the performative arts, which are still predominantly a live art form. Everyday life and society will be decelerated, but on the digital level an acceleration is happening and, to which we will now, after initial doubts, jump on. It's a different kind of work, definitely, but nevertheless it allows us to take a closer look. The rehearsal videos of countless improvisations, otherwise disappearing on the hard drive, are closely watched. What could we share with this virtual audience? And there you might find a rarity, a little twitch, a look or even a beginning that would otherwise have remained unrecognized.

