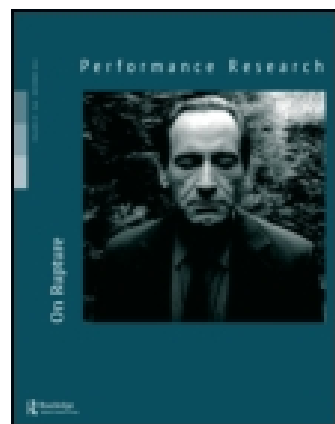


This article was downloaded by: [Katerina Paramana]

On: 12 December 2014, At: 05:21

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rprs20>

On Resistance through Ruptures and the Rupture of Resistances

Katerina Paramana

Published online: 09 Dec 2014.

To cite this article: Katerina Paramana (2014) On Resistance through Ruptures and the Rupture of Resistances, Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts, 19:6, 81-89, DOI: [10.1080/13528165.2014.985112](https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2014.985112)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2014.985112>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

On Resistance through Ruptures and the Rupture of Resistances

in Tino Sehgal's *These Associations*

KATERINA PARAMANA

ON THESE ASSOCIATIONS

You enter Tate Modern from the river entrance. Because today is a rainy day, it is packed with even more people than usual. In an effort to avoid the mob, you walk straight towards the bridge, where there is more room to breathe. You happen to look down and notice a large group of people running at full speed from the east to the west end of the Turbine Hall. Surprised, you stick around to find out what is going on. The group plays games, forms configurations, runs very quickly and walks very slowly, sings and talks to visitors. The games have rules that, if you spend enough time with the work, are decipherable. Some of the visitors join in; some share your bird's-eye view. Individuals from the group approach visitors and have conversations with them. You become curious about the content of these conversations and walk down to the Hall to eavesdrop on one and perhaps participate in one yourself. One of the work's participants approaches you. He tells you a touching story, which leads to a philosophical conversation about arrivals and departures. He suddenly stands up, smiles at you and says, 'This is *These Associations* by Tino Sehgal,' before disappearing into the group, walking backwards into the dark.

This is the work that I participated in from July through October 2012 during the regular opening hours of the museum along with about 250 participants – about 70 participants in each four-hour shift.¹ It was the richest experience I have had collaborating as a performer in a work. We were recruited over the course of about a year mainly through workshops (I was asked to join the project after a workshop in June 2011), but also during the presentation of the work through conversations with Sehgal and his collaborator to replace participants who had left the project. The majority continued to participate for various reasons and with varying

frequency. These 250 individuals were asked to join the project because they/we fulfilled the needs of the work: we represented a cross section of society (students, scientists, craftspeople, philosophers, artists, psychologists, lawyers, writers, teachers, accountants, herbalists, dramaturges, unemployed thinkers, museum guards, and so forth of different ages and ethnicities) and were intelligent and sensitive to others (Sehgal 11 June 2012).

Sehgal points to the production of objects, the 'transformation of "nature" into supply goods', as the problem in both communism and capitalism (Sehgal cited in Hantelmann and Jongbloed 2002: 91). He is therefore interested in the production of time, attention and relationships instead of the production of material objects that is conventionally the concern of the museum (Sehgal 8 May 2012). During the rehearsal period, we discussed the ideas of the project and experimented with different material for the work. Sehgal spoke about the relationship of individuals to collectives throughout history, expressing the opinion that it was problematic both in communism and in capitalism (Sehgal 17 July 2012).

Jeremy Gilbert and Jodi Dean offer useful descriptions of the problematic relationship of the individual to the collective in capitalism and communism. Gilbert argues that capitalism's individualism is characterized by what he calls a 'Leviathan logic': it considers 'the individual as the basic unit of human experience', the social or the collective as 'exist[ing] purely by means of a negation and delimitation of the free activity of individuals' (2014: 69–70),

¹ Although Tate Modern is referred to as an art gallery, it is an exempt charity run by a board of trustees (Tate 2014) and its primary function is to collect and exhibit artworks – as opposed to exhibit and sell art which is the primary function of an art gallery strictly defined. For this reason the Tate galleries fall under the definition of 'museum' as agreed by the Museums Association (2014). Tino Sehgal presents his work in museums (according to the aforementioned definition) because his work draws its strength from the museum's history, function and the discourse surrounding it. It is therefore important that 'museum' instead of 'art gallery' is used in discussing his work and why I intentionally do so here.

and 'the collective subject [as] composed of atomised individuals who relate to each other by virtue of their vertical relation to the locus of sovereignty' ('verticalism') (60). The collective therefore 'can ... only act in a meaningful or purposeful way if its agency, rationale and intentionality are understood to be formally identical to those which define the individual subject' ('meta-individualism') (69–70). Individualist tradition conceives the individual 'as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them' (MacPherson cited in Dean 2013:72) and understands the individual 'not as ... fundamentally interconnected with others' but as 'a proprietor of capacities engaging other proprietors' (Dean 2013:72). Collectivity is perceived therefore 'only and always as a threat to personal freedom and a condition of generalised negation' (Gilbert 2014:71), 'as stifling and oppressive or romanticized as the communitarian ground of authentic identity' (Dean 2012:226–7). Yet, traditional communism was also characterized by 'verticalism' and 'meta-individualism', considering 'ideological homogeneity' necessary (Gilbert 2014:70) and 'the social as ultimately governed and informed by a single ordering principle' (93). 'The communist party and the Soviet Union' were criticized for being 'overly unified, hierarchical, exclusionary, and dogmatic' (Dean 2012:207).

Dean and Gilbert, as well as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2009), have proposed some alternatives. Dean suggests that a collectivity – much like the Occupy Wall Street – needs to be characterized by 'diversity, horizontality, individuality, inclusivity, and openness (where openness actually means the refusal of divisive ideological content)' (Dean 2012:207). She emphasizes, however, that 'vertical and diagonal strength' needs to be added to 'the force of horizontality', that the collectivity needs to 'attune itself to the facts of leadership' (209), and trust its 'desire for collectivity': 'acknowledg[e] how autonomy is only ever a collective product, fragments are parts of ever larger wholes, and dispersion is but the flipside of concentration' (224). Hardt and Negri propose a redefinition

of the term 'multitude' as a 'constant process of metamorphosis grounded in the common' (2009:173). Gilbert, building on Hardt and Negri's thinking, understands the 'multitude' as a 'collectivity which empowers but does not suppress the singularity of its constituent elements' (Gilbert 2014:201–2), that is capable of exercising political agency' and is 'neither composed of individuals nor itself constitutes a meta-individual', but is instead 'a potentially infinite network of singularities' (98).

Sehgal emphasized the importance of maintaining individuality while in collectives that try to achieve something together (Sehgal 8 May 2012). Most who participated in the work understood that this was what the work was trying to do: to question, experiment with and physically articulate, within our small collective in the Turbine Hall, a reconfiguration of the relationship of the individual to the collective that would gesture towards this reconfiguration in society. This concern was addressed, for example, through the walking and running variations that reflected different understandings and physical manifestations of collectives across history (Sehgal 17 July 2012). It was also addressed through spending time together as a collective, as well as with the visitors through individual encounters (sharing personal stories on topics chosen by Sehgal) and collective ones (playing physical relational games and forming configurations that drew attention to different ways of being, relating and working together as individuals who were part of a collective). The work's concerns were most explicitly addressed through our singing of quotes from Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger – with some alterations to relate to our contemporary moment. Below, the emboldened are the texts that were sung:

Thus we ask now: even if the old rootedness is being lost in this age, may not a new ground and foundation be granted [Sehgal = created] again to man, a foundation and ground out of which man's [Sehgal = humans'] nature and all his [Sehgal = their] works can flourish in a new way even in the atomic [Sehgal = technological] age? (Heidegger 1966:53)

Today we have begun to ‘create’, as it were, that is, to unchain **natural processes of our own** which would never have happened without us, **and instead of carefully surrounding** the human artifice [Sehgal = **the world**] **with defences against nature’s elementary forces**, keeping them as far as possible outside the man-made world, **we have channelled these forces**, along with their elementary power, **into the world itself**. (Arendt 1998: 148–9)

As I understand it, Sehgal’s proposition for ‘a new ground’ upon which ‘humans and all their works can flourish’ is the re-establishment of human relationships, the slowing down of time, the spending of time with others and the production of a new kind of attention to the world and people around us that can be accomplished using ‘natural processes of our own’ – our capacity to be social and create relationships. Like Arendt, Sehgal seems to believe in the power of people ‘acting in concert’ (Canovan cited in Arendt 1998: xviii–xix) – in our case working together in the Turbine Hall and involving the visitors – to improve the human condition. He seems to have faith in the plurality of a group to act, take initiatives and create relationships in order to make the world one in which they can live.

Sehgal’s thinking – and *These Associations* specifically – also echoes that of art scholar and curator Nicolas Bourriaud and sociologist Richard Sennett. Art exhibitions, Bourriaud argues, produce ‘a specific sociability’ because they create ‘free spaces and periods of time whose rhythms ... encourage an inter-human intercourse’ (2006: 161). Sehgal spoke about the museum’s ‘contemporary sensibility’ (‘you can still talk to your friend while watching the work’), that it creates the illusion that it ‘addresses masses as individuals’ and that the Turbine Hall in particular makes the ‘opening of civic conversations’ possible because it is a transitional space (Sehgal 8 May 2012). For Bourriaud, the artwork itself represents ‘a space in social relations’ that ‘can be a machine for provoking and managing individual or collective encounters’ – encounters Sehgal also produced – by establishing ‘relational micro-territories

that could be driven into the density of the contemporary *socius*’ (2006: 161–4).

Sennett is also concerned with our social interactions – the type and time of interactions we are afforded.² He suggests that ‘we need to develop the kinds of intermediary institutions that give people a sustained sense of living together in time’. For him, rethinking unions as a way to establish long-term relationships with ‘ethnically and skills diverse’ strangers is a solution (2012). This is what, in a way, Sehgal produced: a community of strangers with different skills who spent time together.

Based on a philosophy about immateriality and the importance of attention to relationships and time spent together, *These Associations* created a temporary collective of participants who, through their participation in the work, created ruptures in the flow of time and movement established by the museum and in the unsuspecting visitors’ trip to Tate. I perceived these ruptures as a form of resistance to the material economy of the museum, but also to neoliberalism’s production of the social. The work was successful in a number of ways. For example, it received many good reviews that replicated Sehgal’s discourse – a success in itself. Alex Needham from *The Guardian* stated that ‘Sehgal created something that seemed unprecedented – a piece that you transformed by participating in, which was kaleidoscopically changing, seemed global in reach and scope, and which was infinitely generous to its audience’ (2012). Adrian Searle, also from *The Guardian*, claimed, ‘*These Associations* is one of the best Turbine Hall commissions.... It is about communality and intimacy, the self as social being, the group and the individual, belonging and separation. We’re in the middle of things. It is marvellous’ (2012). Ben Luke from the *London Evening Standard* felt that ‘[a]s soon as one of Sehgal’s participants walks towards you in the Turbine Hall, you are thrust into this compelling world’ (2012) and Genevieve Hassan from the *BBC News* claimed that she was certain that ‘if [she] visit[ed] again [she’d] encounter something totally different – and yet still feel part of something’ (2012).

² Sehgal and Sennett were to join in conversation at an event at the Goethe-Institut London but due to illness Sennett was not able to attend (Sehgal and Sennett 2012).

The work was also nominated for a Turner Prize and, most importantly, elicited good responses from visitors, whose conversations with the participants affected many of them in – as one visitor articulated to me in a conversation – a ‘profound manner’. In addition, unlike much work currently made, the participants were paid, albeit at the London minimum wage. Furthermore, many participants enjoyed the experience of being part of the work and formed lasting friendships with other participants. Yet, what I considered the work’s most potent resistance to neoliberalism was not realized and its greatest potential – to perform its own philosophy in the collective it created – evaporated.

With *These Associations*, it seemed to me that Sehgal’s response to neoliberalism was the creation of a specific mode of sociality that emphasized the importance of relationships and of time spent together (the participants with the visitors, but also the participants with one another) as individual parts of a collective. Following Michel Foucault’s thinking on neoliberal governmentality, Clive Barnett argues that neoliberalism (both an ideology and a governmental programme (see Gilbert 2013)) extends ‘economic rationality into all areas of social life’ (Barnett 2010: 286), affecting the production of relationships, our interactions, exchanges and encounters and our relationship to time and space. Although Sehgal does not accept the term ‘neoliberalism’ (Sehgal 19 June 2012), the aforementioned mode of sociality that he proposed nevertheless opposes the characteristics and effects of neoliberal capitalism: the acceleration of time, the overproduction of objects, the breaking down of social relationships due to technology and the economic rationalization of social life, the emphasis on the individual and the promotion of self-care and personal responsibility. In other words, the ethics that Sehgal proposes through *These Associations* is antithetical to neoliberal ethics. Yet, it is neoliberal ethics that I suggest that the work eventually reproduced.

In the remainder of this article, I argue

that the work’s potential to effect change evaporated because the work, soon after its opening, ceased to perform its own philosophy vis-à-vis the relationships it produced within the work, between the maker, his collaborator and the participants. The work ceased to be an effective response to neoliberalism, for the extended performance of collective social relations was not realized. I argue that this was a result of a shift from the work’s ‘care’ (where time and attention was given to the work, its concerns, the relationships it produced and the organization of its constituent parts) to the work’s ‘management’ (where emphasis was placed on hierarchies and ensuring the execution of the work), which ruptured the ethos and therefore sociality of the work. I suggest that the shift from ‘care’ to ‘management’ and the resulting rupture of sociality can be articulated as a shift in the work’s social structure from an *association* to an *organization* that reflected and reproduced neoliberal governmentality and rationalities such as personal responsibility and self-care. I maintain that this was not a natural transformation of dynamics in the group or simply a natural shift as the work moved from its rehearsal to its presentation mode, but a result of actions that opposed the work’s rationale and ethos. If the work’s concern with the reconfiguration of the individual to the collective was to be enacted through the collective it created, a different kind of time and attention needed to be given to the work throughout its existence. I conclude with questioning the unavoidability of such an occurrence in our current economy.

ON ‘CARE’ AND ASSOCIATIONS

Bruno Latour explains that ‘the social’ (from the Latin *socius*: ‘a companion, an associate’ with whom you ally because you have ‘something in common’ (2005: 6)), is ‘a trail of associations ... a type of connection between heterogeneous elements’ that ‘might be assembled anew in some given state of affairs’. He understands it therefore as ‘a peculiar

movement of reassociation and reassembling' (5–7) of the collective, which he considers not a singular entity, but a procedure of collecting through association (2004: 238). The social and the collective, thus, are neither final nor concrete, but processes that need to be questioned, attended to and nourished; they need to be 'cared' for. To explain in more concrete terms the shift from the work's 'care' to its 'management', I will use the writing of sociologist Dave Elder-Vass to articulate how the work shifted from an *association* to an *organization* with neoliberal characteristics, rupturing the nature of the social on which the work was founded and therefore its resistance to neoliberalism.

Elder-Vass argues that when we talk about change, we cannot think in terms of society in general. For him, there are only groups whose specific formations result in 'causal emerging properties'. While he acknowledges the importance of who is part of the group and the mental conceptions and actions of the individuals and of the group as a whole, his focus is on its organization – on the specific set of relations among the individuals that makes the group more than the sum of its parts – and what new properties emerge from it that the individuals did not themselves possess before entering it. These emergent properties are where Elder-Vass locates the potential to effect change (2010).

Depending on their organization, groups can form different social structures, such as *associations* and *organizations* (116). An *association* is 'a group of two or more people who have a continuing commitment to the group as such' (149). Because of this commitment,

the group can persist beyond the duration of a single social interaction situation. Its members are likely to have a sense of the group's continuation as a group even when they are not engaged in interaction with each other and they will tend to engage in repeated interactions. One implication is that there is a degree of stability in the membership of the group over a period of time, although associations may allow some turnover of membership. (Elder-Vass 2010: 149)

Commitment in an *association* results from members feeling that the group 'gives them some continuing benefit or meets some continuing need that they have' (150). The strength of commitment to the group depends on factors such as 'the extent to which goals are perceived as shared among members of a group, the frequency of interaction between an individual and the members of the group, and the number of individual needs satisfied in the group' (March and Simon cited in Elder-Vass 2010: 150). Lastly, in an *association* 'the tendency to accept the normative standards endorsed by the group is increased' and the interactions 'generate a degree of consensus about the status of the individual within [it]' (Elder-Vass 2010: 151–2).

The social structure of *These Associations* constituted an *association* insofar as we were a group of individuals who were committed to the project over a period of time despite the instability of our encounters in time and the length and frequency of our interactions. This commitment arose from a combination of factors, such as a) the relative financial stability it gave to some participants, b) the alliance with the work's concerns and the ideas and values upon which it was based and c) a mode of sociality that was based on time spent together in the Hall but also outside of it, on respect and the welcoming of everyone's ideas and feedback on the work, despite Sehgal's and his collaborator's directorial role. Participating in the work felt important because we were interrogating/working towards something: we were experimenting and discovering through the work how to be with one another, observing what happens when individuals make different decisions than the group and how we can find one another physically and metaphorically after having been separated because of these decisions.

These norms, roles and 'rules' of the exchanges and encounters between the maker of the work, his collaborator and us (the participants), had been established through an ethics of encounter and work during workshops and rehearsals. However, although they were

accepted by the group and created a degree of consensus, disagreements with regards to practical aspects (for example, length of breaks and shifts), as well as the materialization and performance of conceptual aspects of the work, were expressed and heard. Even situations that were handled inappropriately (for example, when one of Sehgal's assistants censored the personal stories that participants were to share with visitors, characterizing them as 'too much' for the visitor instead of aiding participants to effectively communicate the material) were to a great extent resolved. The relations and interactions among the members of this *association* were relatively democratic and egalitarian, participatory and informal and the work was 'cared for' by giving time and attention to the relations it produced and the concerns it interrogated.

It is this 'caring' for the work and the relations it produced that, if sustained, had the potential to effect change by producing knowledge – what Elder-Vass would call 'emerging properties' – that affected our practices of being in the work that could influence such practices outside of the work.

ON 'MANAGEMENT' AND (NEOLIBERAL) ORGANIZATIONS

Elder-Vass explains that *organizations* are a type of association, but they are more complex in at least two ways: 'they tend to be strongly structured by specialised roles' and 'are marked by significant authority relations between at least some of the roles' (2010: 152).

[I]t is the authority vested in those holding the managerial roles ... that makes roles so strongly binding in organisations[O]rganisations can use hierarchical control to generate the benefits of coordinated interaction.... [T]he management role includes the development of the role specifications themselves and their continuing elaboration in response to the goals, performance and circumstances of the organisation. (Elder-Vass 2010: 163)

In addition, *organizations* have the ability to 'instantiate wider norms and depend upon

the norms that they instantiate', to (a certain extent) 'shape their [members'] beliefs about their responsibilities and obligations' and to 'use the commitment of members to the organisation ... as a lever to influence their conformance with these norms' (164).

The shift from the work's 'care' to the work's 'management', which resulted in the rupture of the work's sociality and therefore the rupture of its resistance to neoliberalism's production of the social, was manifested through a change in the relations produced in the work soon after the work's opening. Roles and hierarchies that existed but were originally not felt as such due to a collaborative spirit and ethos became strongly structured and specialized as in an organization: the participants executed the work and Sehgal, his collaborator and assistants were to ensure this execution. Furthermore, the specialization of the roles was reinforced by the time spent together. Where it seemed (to me) that the work's antidote to neoliberalism was spending time together as individuals who were also part of a collective, spending time together became merely individuals occupying the same space at the same time.

Most importantly, however, what ceased was the attention to the work by interrogating its concerns and therefore the relations it produced. Instead, engaging with the work involved only aesthetic concerns. Except for some feedback sessions requested by the participants or a meeting that was intended to ensure the quality of our conversations with visitors, the work and the relationship of the individual to the collective ceased to be interrogated, replaced by a governing of the 'conduct of conduct' (Barnett 2010: 285–6). In conversations I had with participants, it became clear that several felt isolated, feeling as though they were working in a machine where their opinions were not of value any longer.

The commitment to the work of most participants continued, but it seemed more of a commitment to being committed to the work – acting professionally. Having also observed the work as a visitor during that time, except for the physical exhaustion, I observed a loss

of morale and a resulting lack of energy to treat, for example, the personal stories the participants shared with the visitors as what Sehgal called ‘a gift to the visitor’ (Sehgal 17 July 2012). Physical and emotional exhaustion in this kind of work is expected, of course, as is an overall change in dynamics when a work is presented for a lengthy period of time. But, in this case, it was the rupture of sociality – the shift in how the relationships in the work and how the work itself was ‘cared for’ – that had the most dramatic effect on the work’s potential.

Although I am not arguing that this shift was intentional, nor that Sehgal ceased to care about the work, I suggest that what happened mirrors what occurs under neoliberalism when state services are reduced and followed by an ‘increasing call for “personal responsibility” and “self-care”’ (Lemke cited in Barnett 2010: 282). In the absence of the social net that was initially created, the participants in *These Associations* were left to be responsible for themselves and their well-being. We began to function as atomized individuals and the work felt as an arena (much like the neoliberal market) where individuals operated freely, but where conduct was monitored and problems became the responsibility of the individual. Even if the removal of the social net was intended to empower us by making us responsible for the work, what we were actually responsible for was our well-being and participation, while important decisions regarding the artwork and the collective were made by management. As the working shifts did not always allow for interaction among the participants, it was made even harder for some to continue being part of the work. And although some treated their participation as a 9 a.m.–5 p.m. job, many struggled psychologically to continue.

Although I believe that this reproduction of neoliberal governmentality and rationalities was not intended, the lack of time and attention given to the work’s concerns and the relations it produced ruptured its ethos and sociality and therefore its resistance to neoliberalism’s production of the social. Part of this change stemmed from the emotional

and physical fatigue that had influenced everyone in the project. However, part of the change also stemmed from the demands of artistic overproduction that *These Associations* was supposed to resist. Sehgal found himself in the position where he had to attend to the making and presentation of two works in two different countries (*This Variation* was being presented in *Documenta XIII*) as well as needing to spend time with his family. In both countries, institutions required the presentation of his work seven days a week (Sehgal 25 October 2012). His collaborator ensured its presentation in his absence, but not the function of the collective or the interrogation of the work’s concerns.

If the work’s concern with the reconfiguration of the individual to the collective was to be enacted through the collective it created, a different kind of time and attention needed to be given to the work throughout its presentation. In order for the work to maintain its ethical centre it needed to maintain the manner in which it was ‘cared for’, not simply be ‘managed’. This could have been realized by a decision to reduce artistic production in order for the artist to spend time with the work and by extending the circle of ‘power’: by delegating responsibility outside of the small management circle and organizing meetings that nurtured the relationships in the work and allowed for conversations that continued to interrogate the work and its concerns theoretically and practically. But how easily can an artist reject offers for the presentation of his work when they come from institutions that are appropriate for its presentation? And although many of the participants, because of our interest in the work’s concerns, would have been happy to continue these conversations despite the unpaid extra hours, others were not willing or able to provide free labour.

The position that Sehgal found himself in may well be compared to Jeremy Gilbert’s thoughts on Mark Fisher’s *Capitalist Realism* (2009).

[O]ne of the most intriguing elements of Fisher’s account of ‘capitalist realism’ is his emphasis on its ideological efficacy even in the face of

explicit rejection by the very subjects whose behaviour it organises.... We know that we don't like neoliberalism, didn't vote for it, and object in principle to its exigencies: but we recognise also that unless we comply with it, primarily in our workplaces and in our labour-market behaviour, then we will be punished (primarily by being denied the main consolation for participation in neoliberal culture: access to a wide range of consumer goods), and will be unlikely to find ourselves inhabiting a radically different social terrain. (2013: 13)

Claire Bishop – although writing about *These Associations* from the perspective of a visitor – describes our predicament well:

In [plac[ing] an emphasis on everyday (rather than highly skilled) forms of performance], [Sehgal's] pieces, like so much other participatory art under neoliberalism, serve a double agenda: offering a popular art of and for the people, while at the same time, reminding us that today we all experience a constant pressure to perform and, moreover, this is one in which we have no choice but to participate. (2012b)

Does this make the shift in the work's 'care' unavoidable? Bishop argues that for both Guattari and Rancière 'art and the social are not to be reconciled, but sustained in continual tension' (2012a: 278). Perhaps, as she notes, part of the problem is that the work attempted to 'bear the burden of devising new models of social and political organization – a task that [artists] are not always equipped to undertake' (284). Having been part of such a work, I have to agree with Bishop, but for different reasons. Perhaps the work was not appropriately 'equipped', but only with respect to tools for following through with its ideas: time and attention. The work seemed to have suffered from the same problems as many social movements: it ran out of time, energy, attention and money. Within neoliberalism, precarity and the lack of time and attention are what most of us struggle against. *These Associations* was a manifestation of this. But this does not make the work less valuable. It instead makes it more important for this kind of work to be made, but with an awareness of its needs so that it is properly cared for (and funded) in

order to interrogate its concerns and resist neoliberal ethics.

Bishop proposes that participatory work should not be judged according to simplistic ethical criteria because many artists – Santiago Sierra, for example – 'reify *precisely in order to discuss reification*, or ... exploit *precisely to thematise exploitation itself*' (2012a: 239). Yet this is still an ethical judgement, arguing that although Sierra uses unconventional strategies, he does so in order to question our ethics and make a social critique. *These Associations* did not intentionally shift to an *organization* with neoliberal characteristics to expose the unavoidability of this shift or our predicament in neoliberal capitalism – the shift was not an artistic decision but an outcome of how the work was 'cared' for. It is therefore important to look at each work and identify the relations it produces in it and outside of it and nuance how and why it produces these relations and to what effect. Art, politics and ethics should not collapse, but should always be in a dialogical relationship that is carefully examined. Our encounter with 'an other', whether that 'other' is a person or an artwork, is, in the end, always social and ethical.

CONCLUSION: ON PROMISES AND TRUST

Hannah Arendt, whose philosophy is sung in the work, believes that power 'can spring up as if from nowhere when people begin to "act in concert", and can ebb away unexpectedly from apparently powerful regimes'. She nevertheless warns that, although action is hopeful, it can at the same time result in negative effects over which we have no control due to the unpredictability and complexity of interaction between the initiatives of different individuals (1998: xvii–xviii). Arendt suggests that remedies for this unpredictability include the possibility and ability for 'further action' that can intervene in the current state of politics by interrupting current processes (or by changing their direction) and 'the human capacity to make and keep promises' (Canovan cited in Arendt 1998: xviii–xix).

Equally important to the work's rupture of sociality and therefore resistance to neoliberalism's production of the social was the rupture of promises and therefore of trust. The work's biggest potential and its strongest tactic of resistance to neoliberal ethics and rationalities evaporated, for the work ceased to perform its own philosophy in the relationships it produced within the work, between the maker, his collaborators and the participants. If in *These Associations* each of us (the participants, Sehgal and his collaborator) raised questions of ourselves, the group and the work, and in doing so challenged how we reproduced structures and philosophies of thought and action through our relationships and interactions within the work, perhaps something more would have been produced despite the lack of time and money. And yet perhaps, since the restrictions of the work's consumption by an audience have been lifted, the collective created can reconstitute itself under different terms, engage in 'further action', make new promises and keep them.

REFERENCES

- Arendt, Hannah (1998 [1958]) *The Human Condition*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Barnett, Clive (2010) 'Publics and markets: What's wrong with neoliberalism?', in Susan J. Smith, Rachel Pain, Sallie A. Marston and John Paul Jones III (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Social Geographies*, London: Sage, pp. 269–96.
- Bishop, Claire (2012a) *Artificial Hells: Participatory art and the politics of spectatorship*, London: Verso.
- Bishop, Claire (2012b) 'In the age of the Cultural Olympiad, we're all public performers', *The Guardian*, 23 July, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jul/23/cultural-olympiad-public-performers?gclid=Article:in%20body%20link, accessed 21 August 2014.
- Bourriaud, Nicolas (2006 [1998]) 'Relational aesthetics', in Claire Bishop (ed.) *Participation: Documents of contemporary art*, London: Whitechapel Gallery, pp. 160–70.
- Dean, Jodi (2012) *The Communist Horizon*, London: Verso.
- Dean, Jodi (2013) 'Collective desire and the pathology of the individual', in Arne De Boever and Warren Neidich (eds) *The Psychopathologies of Cognitive Capitalism: Part one*, Berlin: Archive Books, pp. 69–87.
- Elder-Vass, Dave (2010) *The Causal Power of Social Structures*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Gilbert, Jeremy (2013) 'What kind of thing is "neoliberalism"?', *New Formations: A journal of culture, theory and politics* 80–1: 7–22.
- Gilbert, Jeremy (2014) *Common Ground: Democracy and collectivity in an age of individualism*, London: Pluto Press.
- Hantelmann, Dorothea von and Marjorie Jongbloed (2002) *I Promise it's Political: Performativity in art*, Cologne: Museum Ludwig.
- Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri (2009) *Commonwealth*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Hassan, Genevieve (2012) 'Tino Sehgal takes over Tate Modern Turbine Hall', *BBC News*, 23 July, www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-18957938, accessed 9 September 2014.
- Heidegger, Martin (1966 [1959]) *Discourse on Thinking*, New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Latour, Bruno (2004) *Politics of Nature: How to bring the sciences into democracy*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Latour, Bruno (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An introduction to actor-network-theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Luke, Ben (2012) 'Tino Sehgal: The talk show host at the Tate Modern', *London Evening Standard*, 31 July, www.standard.co.uk/goingout/exhibitions/tino-sehgal-the-talk-show-host-at-the-tate-modern-7994219.html, accessed 9 September 2014.
- Museums Association (2014) www.museumsassociation.org/about/frequently-asked-questions, accessed 26 October 2014.
- Needham, Alex (2012) 'Best art exhibitions of 2012, No 3 – *These Associations* at Tate Modern', *The Guardian*, 19 December, www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2012/dec/19/these-associations-tate-modern?intcmp=ILCMUSTXT9386, accessed 9 September 2014.
- Searle, Adrian (2012) 'Tino Sehgal: *These Associations* – review', *The Guardian*, 23 July, www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2012/jul/23/tino-sehgal-these-associations-review, accessed 9 September 2014.
- Sehgal, Tino (May–October 2012) Comments during workshops and rehearsals for *These Associations*, From author's personal notes, Tate Modern, London.
- Sehgal, Tino and Richard Sennett (20 October 2012) 'Tino Sehgal in conversation', Goethe-Institut London, www.goethe.de/ins/gb/lon/ver/acv/bku/2012/en9798367v.htm, accessed 21 August 2014.
- Sennett, Richard (6 February 2012) Talk about his book *Together: The rituals, pleasures and politics of co-operation*, London: London School of Economics, Old Theatre, Old Building, www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_W2otr-1KY, accessed 24 October 2014.
- Tate (2014) www.tate.org.uk/about/who-we-are, accessed 26 October 2014.