

Generative tension in cross-disciplinary collaboration: Call for online provocations and panelists at MOCO 2019

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ABSTRACT

We pose a question of great significance to the MOCO community, that is: *what aspects of your practice/research are invisible to your collaborators?* We seek responses from individuals and teams engaged in cross-disciplinary research and collaboration spanning the broad array of practices implicated in the field of ‘movement and computing.’ Responses may be in the form of a succinct online provocation (in image, sound, writing, video, or other), and may be submitted independently or collectively. In addition, a group of panelists will be invited to convene for a public discussion at MOCO 2019, drawing on the body of provocations to address the notion of *generative tension in cross-disciplinary collaboration*. The intention of this panel is to draw out and mobilize critical differences between the motives and methods of various disciplinary communities as a source of mutual inspiration and innovation.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **General and reference**; • **Human-centered computing**; • **Social and professional topics**;

KEYWORDS

Movement; computation; uncomputable movement; collaboration; destabilization; cross-disciplinary

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1 OVERVIEW

Cross-disciplinary research and collaboration is integral to the growing field of movement and computing, in which practitioners across the arts, sciences, and humanities gather to examine issues related to movement analysis, representation, and generation, and likewise the role of movement in computational systems. Now in its 6th year, MOCO is uniquely situated to interrogate not only the differences in perspectives and approaches that circulate between the disciplinary communities involved, but more importantly, the effects produced by these differences over time. These differences

may relate to implicit or explicit understandings of things like bodies, gestures, choreography, composition, algorithms, data, performance, and more broadly to time, space, interaction, movement, and computing. Over time these differences may come to matter differently for different participants in a collaboration, inciting tension that can at once hinder and inspire innovation.

Building from the panel and associated call for provocations at MOCO 2018¹ in which we asked: *what escapes computation in interactive performance?*, this year we ask: *what aspects of your practice/research are invisible to your collaborators?* In asking this question, we do not seek to reconcile perceived differences in perspectives or work towards a shared vision between collaborators and communities, nor do we seek to highlight difference for difference’s sake. Rather, we ask this question to draw out the effects that these differences may come to make over time in relationships between individual collaborators, and between disciplinary communities. In this panel our focus is not ‘difference’ itself, but rather the processes of differentiation, differencing, and differences-in-the-making experienced between various people, personalities, practices, and practice-based perspectives.

2 CALL FOR PROVOCATIONS—OPEN TO EVERYONE!

In advance of the 2019 conference in Arizona, we invite succinct online ‘provocations’ from within and beyond the burgeoning MOCO community, to address a question of critical import, that is: *what aspects of your practice/research are invisible to your collaborator(s)?* Provocations may be in the form of image, sound, writing, video, or other hybrid forms, and will be shared on a dedicated site online. Responses may be submitted individually or collectively, inspiring dialogue in the production of provocations. Everyone is welcome to submit, regardless of association with or plans to attend MOCO 2019. In addition to the blog, submitted provocations will be printed and distributed in the public spaces of MOCO 2019 to inspire conversation.

3 PANEL @ MOCO 2019—PANELISTS SELECTED BASED ON PROVOCATIONS

Those who plan to attend MOCO 2019 and wish to be considered as panelists must submit a provocation. From the pool of online provocations, 6-8 MOCO attendees will be invited to convene for a public discussion at MOCO 2019 on the theme of *generative tension in cross-disciplinary research and collaboration*. We engage this conversation in order to explicitly articulate that which is lost or set aside to make room for that which exists in the liminal. Building from the aforementioned conversations hosted at MOCO 2018, this panel

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¹<http://moco18.provocations.online>

focuses on *human* infrastructures and asks how unique convenings of various people and their practices impact cross-disciplinary research processes and outcomes.

4 GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PROVOCATIONS AND PANELISTS

In the provocations, as well as the panel, contributors are asked to draw on their own experiences in the field of movement and computing to address questions such as:

- What is included and excluded, intentionally or not, from the representations of time, movement, bodies, interaction, gestures, etc. which are integral to your practice/research? In what ways do these exclusions matter to you?
- How does that which is invisible or excluded also iteratively shape your practice with regard to movement and computing?
- Who gets to claim expertise and ownership of knowledge and know-how related to movement versus computing—or alternately, in both areas—and what are the implications of acting as a representative of your disciplinary community in a cross-disciplinary context?
- What is the role of collaboration, both implicit and explicit, in projects related to movement and computing? In past MOCO proceedings, who becomes implicated (beyond stated authors and participants) in papers related to transmitting choreographic knowledge, producing software platforms to support learning in dance and music, and movement analysis more broadly?

5 PANEL STRUCTURE

The panel will be comprised of artists, designers, and engineers selected from the open call for provocations. Panelists will begin dialog in an online forum leading up to the conference. During the 90-minute conference session, each of the five speakers will offer a succinct, 5-minute provocation related to the theme of generative tension in cross-disciplinary research and collaboration. The remainder of the session will involve a panel discussion guided by the facilitators, as well as questions from the public.

6 BACKGROUND & RELEVANCE TO MOCO

Reviewing the MOCO proceedings from the past five years, it is clear that human infrastructures have a profound impact on the cross-disciplinary work presented. Our aim with this panel is to invite participants to look back across the research conducted by this intimate community to better understand the conditions in which collaborative encounters have become at once destabilizing and generative. In discussing perceived differences that emerge in the course of collaborative work, it is important that the exchange not turn to critique, for we believe that:

Critique is all too often not a deconstructive practice, that is, a practice of reading for the constitutive exclusions of those ideas we can not do without, but a destructive practice meant to dismiss, to turn aside, to put someone or something down—another scholar, another feminist, a discipline, an approach, et cetera.[4]

Our goal is to cultivate and care for differences as they come to matter in the relationships between people, ideas, movements, methods, and materials integral to members of the MOCO community. In this panel, and the associated blog, we aim to create spaces for cross-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary discourse that not only accommodate difference, but which require the effects produced by critical difference to thrive. The questions we are asking with regard to ‘critical difference’ resonate in feminist and decolonial discourse, and have been articulated in various ways by authors such as Barad [1–5], Haraway [10–13], Butler [6, 7], and Grosz [8, 9].

This panel is inspired in part by the UNCOMputable MOVement #1 (UNCOMO #1) event hosted off-site during MOCO 2017. UNCOMO #1 was organized by Adam Russell (Leelatropé, UK), with participants from Motion Bank’s Choreographic Coding Lab #8, and was open to all MOCO delegates. Further, it is an elaboration of the panel and call for provocations on theme of *what espaces computation in interactive performance* at MOCO 2018. By elaborating inquiry from these past events, we invite discussion regarding the ways in which the boundaries of the MOCO community itself, now in its sixth year hosting an international conference, are constituted through the inclusion and exclusion of different conceptions of movement, computing, and computing movement.

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